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ABSTRACT OF THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM.

1973.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND PARENTS  
IN A TYNESIDE COUNTY BOROUGH.

BY P. J. HOBEN.

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The specific stimulus for the investigation was the recommendation of the Plowden Report of 1969 of a minimum programme of practical methods by which primary schools could involve parents more directly in the life of the school. However, because of the high degree of authority of the headteacher in matters relating to school policy, it was considered that the implementation of a programme of innovation of this type would be to a large extent dependent on the initiative and goodwill of the individual headteacher. Accordingly, the research was focused upon forty-three primary headteachers in a Tyneside County Borough, representing all the primary schools of one Local Education Authority.

Two measuring instruments were used in the research - an attitude scale designed for the research and a structured survey interview. The attitude scale was used to provide quantitative data about the attitudes of five principal categories of headteacher respondent and the interview to provide qualitative detail about attitudes to parental involvement with schools, feelings about the headteacher's role in this area, and information about contacts in current use by the schools in the survey sample.

The combined evidence of the experimental attitude scale and the survey interviews, led to the conclusion that there was a relationship between the attitude of a headteacher to parental involvement and the type and frequency of contacts provided by a school, although in this survey this attitude appeared to be related to the age of the headteacher.

A further analysis of the interview transcripts revealed possible attitudinal barriers to closer parental involvement with primary schools and offered possible explanations for dislike of particular types of contact between schools and parents. These attitudes appeared to be related to a particular view of the respective roles of parents and teachers.

The experimental attitude scale proved to be a reliable and valid measure of these attitudes, with a split half reliability co-efficient of .62 and when correlated with quantitative data obtained from the survey interviews, the degree of correlation was calculated to be .72.

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VOLUME TWO

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**PART ONE**

**CHAPTER ONE**

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

Teachers in British schools have traditionally enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in their choice of methods to involve the parents of their pupils in the life of the school. This autonomy has been established over a period of many years and has consequently acquired considerable institutional strength. In recent years, however, the literature of education has reflected the ideals of a movement towards more active parental involvement with schools. These ideals challenge the traditional autonomy of the teacher by proposing a more direct relationship between schools and parents than has hitherto been customary - that schools and parents should be 'partners in more than name'.<sup>1</sup>

H.H. Stern<sup>2</sup> described this aim in 1960: 'A clear division of education into distinctly separate provinces of the school and the home is no longer considered possible; schooling to be effective is regarded as dependent upon the intelligent support and co-operation of parents. Without these, the children are not receptive enough and the teacher's task is continually frustrated.'

The Plowden Report<sup>3</sup> 'Children and their Primary Schools', published in 1967, reflected this view and proposed practical means by which schools could achieve closer relations with parents. While recognising and commenting upon research establishing the importance of pre-school environmental factors,

the report drew heavily upon the evidence produced by the 'National Survey of Parental Attitudes and Circumstances Related to School and Pupil Characteristics',<sup>4</sup> in making recommendations intended to foster more direct contact between school and home and concluded that the initiative for this must come for the school. The Flowden Committee considered that the evidence indicated that more educational effort should be devoted to changing some parental attitudes to schools and education. Primary schools were urged to establish more direct contact with parents by providing them with more information about the day to day running of the school, open days, regular meetings between teachers and parents, frequent written reports, and making special efforts to contact those parents who did not visit the school. The Flowden Committee felt that by these methods, 'Schools can exercise their influence not only directly upon children, but also indirectly upon their parents.'<sup>5</sup>

Any programme of innovation, however, faces certain difficulties, unless it is based upon some realistic appraisal of the roles and attitudes of the major participants. If not, it may fail to fully consider the consequences of change and the aims of the particular programme of innovation, however admirable, may not be achieved. Further, any such programme of innovation which is concerned with the relations between parents and teachers, must by definition touch upon roles which contain elements of potential conflict.

In a critical commentary upon the Flowden proposals for improving relations between school and home, Bernstein and Davies<sup>6</sup> pointed out that this potential conflict had perhaps not been



adequately considered: 'Our primary schools have only recently begun to move away from being relatively 'closed' social institutions and in all but a few cases, there is a genuine lack of clarity about the boundaries and content of roles to be played by staff and parents towards each other. This is without doubt an area of great difficulty.'

There may well be a certain resistance in schools to the proposal that teachers revise their traditional view of the respective roles of parents and teachers; particularly if we consider that this new role demands that it is no longer sufficient to think of a school as a community consisting solely of pupils and teachers. Certain misgivings about the proposed new relationship between parents and schools were in fact expressed at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Headteachers at Blackpool in 1969,<sup>7</sup> where a motion was proposed calling for caution over parent participation in the life of the school.

Empirical investigation of the attitudes of teachers to this new proposed role in relation to parents and of the type of contacts with parents currently provided by primary schools, may well be a worthwhile area for research. Nevertheless, the problem of how research of this kind can best be achieved within the limitations of a small scale survey remains. Perhaps a first essential is to consider the salient characteristics of primary schools as they are at present organised? In British schools the headteacher has a high degree of authority in matters relating to school policy, combining in a single role, both administrative and policy making functions. The implementation of a programme of innovation such as that recommended in the

Flowden Report, will be to a large extent dependent on the initiative and goodwill of the individual headteacher.

This research, therefore, was focused upon forty-three primary headteachers in a Tyneside County Borough. These headteachers represented the entire primary schools of one Local Education Authority in the North East of England and the respondents, therefore, were those whom the Gittens Report 'Primary Education in Wales',<sup>8</sup> had described as 'the first link between parent and school.'

The approach to the investigation is both quantitative and qualitative. The method employed in gathering and interpreting material is empirical and observational. The quantitative work is mainly concerned with designing and administering an experimental attitude scale to measure attitudes towards parental involvement with schools. In what is understood as qualitative work, considerable use has been made of material drawn from interviews with the headteachers. The inclusion of this material is seen as an essential probe into the attitudinal complexities which lie behind any apparently statistically significant differences between different categories of headteacher revealed quantitatively. This includes assessment of the material from extensive tape recorded interviews with the survey respondents.

The questions asked in the survey interviews were aimed at revealing as specifically as possible the attitudes of the headteachers to parental involvement in their schools; how they perceived the headteachers role in this area, and the contacts

with parents currently provided by the primary schools in the survey. In order to obtain the most candid responses possible, anonymity was assured to each of the respondents.

The investigation had three major objectives. First, to survey the type and frequency of current contacts with parents provided by the primary schools in the survey sample and to compare them with the type of contacts proposed by the Flowden Report. A second objective was to investigate the attitudes of particular categories of headteacher (classified by age, sex, type of school, size of school and the social class composition of the headteacher's school catchment area). An important related question was to test empirically the experimental attitude scale designed to measure a headteacher's attitudes to parental involvement with his or her school. The final major objective was to investigate the relationship between the attitude of headteachers to parents and the type and frequency of contacts provided by schools, in an attempt to isolate and describe any attitudinal barriers on the part of headteachers to closer working relationships with parents.

The primary concern of this study are the attitudes, values and opinions of the headteacher respondents with regard to parental involvement with the school. In the opinion of the researcher, these attitudes and opinions will best be analysed by making use of the material in a manner, which while objective, ensures that school situations and the characters involved in them do not lose their intrinsic human reality. As Waller<sup>9</sup> put it:

'If I am to help others to gain any useful insight, I must show them the school as it really is. I must not attack the school, nor talk overmuch about what ought to be, but only about what is.'

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**CHAPTER TWO**

## A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The interaction between the home and the school and the effects of this interaction on the educational performance of children at the primary school stage, has been the subject of increasing educational interest in recent years. That this increase in interest is reflected in the literature of education, can be illustrated by a brief comparison of two government reports on education at the primary stage, the Hadow Report of 1931, and the Plowden Report of 1967.

In the 'Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School',<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Hadow concluded the introduction with the words, 'what a wise and good parent will desire for his own children, a nation must desire for all its children.' The report itself, however, made no attempt to define the role of a 'wise and good parent' in education; indeed the entire report contained only three very brief references to parents, in all, less than three paragraphs. By contrast, the Plowden Report, 'Children and their Primary Schools',<sup>2</sup> published thirty six years later, acknowledged parents as partners with a vital role to play in the education process. A whole section of the report was concerned with the 'home, school and neighbourhood', and a complete chapter to participation by parents.

Under the provisions of the 1944 Education Act, two Central Advisory Councils were constituted, one for England and one for Wales. The Central Advisory Council was requested to examine the problem of why so many children did not complete their education and used a ten percent national sample of maintained and direct

grant grammar schools to do so. In its conclusions, the report 'Early Leaving',<sup>3</sup> published in 1954, stressed the influence of home background and social factors on length of schooling, attainment and the educational potential of children. The report recognised that little research was available on the interaction of home and school and urged a thorough investigation.

Two years later, Floude, Halsey and Martin,<sup>4</sup> published the results of a survey in Middlesbrough and Hertfordshire which enquired into 'some of the social factors associated with the selection for and success in, secondary education.' 'Social Class and Educational Opportunity', became one of the most widely quoted books in the literature of education and although it investigated the relationship between home and school, only in terms of selection for different types of secondary education, it did establish that environmental factors other than intelligence, such as material and cultural background, influenced selection.

Later in the same decade, two other important contributions to the study of the relationship between home background and attainment were published. 1959 saw the publication of the Advisory Councils Report 'Fifteen to Eighteen',<sup>5</sup> which became known as the 'Crowther Report'. Its terms of reference were, to 'Consider in relation to the changing social and industrial needs of our society, and the needs of its individual citizens, the education of boys and girls between fifteen and eighteen.' The report concluded that a high proportion of the most able children from the lower social classes, were not receiving the education to which their ability entitled them. It also showed



that the pupils who stayed longest at school tended to be those whose parents had remained at school above the minimum leaving age, and whose fathers were in occupations which placed them in the higher socio-economic level.

In the same year Elizabeth Frazer<sup>6</sup> examined environmental factors in relation to school attainment, in a study of four hundred school children in Aberdeen. She pointed out, that while it was generally agreed that home background had an important effect on school performance, relatively little attempt had been made to determine how great this effect was when the factor of intelligence was discounted, or which aspects of home environment were most influential. The results of her research 'Home Environment and the school', established that the three most important factors in the home environment appeared to be parental attitudes to education and the future occupation of the child, abnormal home background, and the level of parental income. The highest correlation obtained was between attainment and parental encouragement. The results showed that educational attainment was more closely related to home environment than intelligence; giving additional support to the importance of home background in a child's progress at school.

At about the same time as these studies, other research was examining less easily identified, but possibly more educationally relevant features of home background.

Bernstein,<sup>7</sup> investigated language and communication in the home in a paper published in 1958 entitled 'Some Sociological Determinants of Perception'. He noted that different social groups appeared to use different types of language which he

described as 'elaborate' and 'restricted' codes and that there appeared to be a relationship between the type of language code used in the home and the development of learning ability.

In 1960, in an international survey of parent education conducted in France, the United States, and Germany, Stern,<sup>8</sup> found that much experimental work in this field had been done, but this had not led to permanent or stable organisation. In comparing the British scene concerning parent education, he considered that by comparison with other countries an unstructured and informal approach to parent education was characteristic of the situation in Britain. He concluded that parents need assistance in order to make an effective contribution to the educational system; that schools are dependent on the support and informed co-operation of parents; and that public education is impaired when parents are either indifferent or hostile, towards schools and education.

In the period after the publication of Stern's survey, a great deal of evidence was produced concerning the relationship between progress in school, intelligence and certain features in the home environment, with strong emphasis on the need for understanding and co-operation between teachers and parents. The Newsome Report,<sup>9</sup> 'Half our Future' 1963, was concerned with the education of pupils aged from thirteen to sixteen, of average and less than average intelligence, and estimated that almost half the nation's children were receiving inadequate secondary education. The effects of neighbourhood, social background, and the influence of the family was stressed in the report. The Robbins Report<sup>10</sup> 'Higher Education', published in the same year, emphasised that the educational handicaps of the children of

unskilled workers did not appear to have decreased.

The Newsom Report, for the first time, stressed the importance of co-operation between the school and parents and urged that the role of the parent in education should be regarded in a new way by teachers:- 'The schools cannot do the job alone and parents cannot delegate their responsibility for guiding their children. Many situations would be helped simply by the school knowing more of the home circumstances and the parent knowing more of what goes on in school'.

In the three years between the publication of the Newsom Report and Plowden, the importance of a working partnership between parents and teachers was increasingly recognized. In 1964, Green<sup>11</sup> in the first book to be entirely devoted to relations between parents and teachers, commented that, 'there appeared to be a lack of research in this field based on English experience.' However, the importance of parental interest was emphasised in two important researches published in the same year, 'The Home and the School' J.W.B. Douglas,<sup>12</sup> and 'Education and Environment' by Stephen Wiseman.<sup>13</sup> (This research will be described in detail in the next chapter in an examination of the Plowden evidence).

According to Douglas, in a longitudinal study of a large cohort of primary school children initiated by the Population Investigation Committee, the influence of parental interest in the school performance of children was greater than the effect of the size of family, material conditions in the home or the academic record of the school. The research indicated the vital importance of the home in moulding both attitudes to

education and influencing school attainment.

Wiseman's study, which was to be used as a major part of the research evidence presented to the Plowden Committee, investigated the relationship between 'educational attainment and environmental factors'. The conclusions supported those of Douglas, in concluding that factors in the home were overwhelmingly more powerful than those of the neighbourhood or school. Parental attitudes to education and the school, were considered to be of far greater significance than either social class, or parental occupation.

The Plowden Report of 1967, 'Children and their Primary Schools', echoed the conclusions of Douglas and Wiseman in stressing the importance of parental attitudes, and presented detailed evidence for its conclusion that a closer relationship between parents and teachers was essential for educational progress. The Committee considered that parental attitudes to education were not solely the product of social class, could be altered by persuasion, and that co-operation from parents should be actively encouraged by schools. The Gittens Report<sup>14</sup> 'Primary Education in Wales', also concluded that there was a need for better understanding, closer co-operation and exchange of information between home and school.

The period between the publication of the Plowden Report and the end of the decade, has been characterised by an increasing volume of literature on the improvement of relations between parents and schools, and advice on how schools can organise and improve contacts with parents. In 1969, Sir John Newsom<sup>15</sup> with regard to the stress laid on co-operation between parents and

teachers in both the Newsom and Flowden Reports wrote, 'I am tempted to say that they made no point more crucial to the future of our schools'.

The Flowden Report had recommended that the Department of Education and Science should provide a publication for the guidance of teachers on the subject of parent-teacher relationships, and although Education Survey 41, (1967), 'Teachers and Parents',<sup>16</sup> dealt in detail with suggestions for improving home/school contacts; in 1968 the department published Education Survey No.5, 'Parent Teacher Relations in Primary Schools'.<sup>17</sup> In the same year, complying with another Flowden recommendation that local authorities should themselves produce booklets on good school/home practices, the Inner London Authority produced a booklet entitled 'Home and School'.<sup>18</sup> All three publications dealt in detail with methods of informing parents about the aims and organisation of schools, formal and informal methods of increasing contacts with parents, examples of good practices, and the welfare function of the school.

In spite of these publications, the extent and effectiveness of the various types of contact between parents and schools remains comparatively unexplored. McGeeny<sup>19</sup> examined and discussed examples of different types of school/home contacts in 'Parents are Welcome' 1969. He had previously collaborated with Michael Young<sup>20</sup> in a project initiated by the Institute of Community Studies, where parents in a number of London primary schools were encouraged not only to make regular visits to the school, but to become involved with the school in a practical way. Reporting this study in 'Learning Begins at Home', the authors

claimed beneficial results for the children in the schools, although they did not demonstrate that a slight rise in educational performance could be completely attributed to the new procedures.

The extent and effectiveness of the various types of contacts between homes and schools and the effect of parent teacher contacts on attitudes, particularly those of teachers and headteachers, still remain relatively unexplored, when contrasted with the volume of literature on other aspects of the relationship between education and the environment. This area, however, is obviously one of great importance, if the close co-operation of teachers and parents of the type advocated in the Flowden Report is to be successful. Yet, as R.G. Cave<sup>21</sup> draws attention to in, 'Partnership for Change: Parents and Schools' 1970:- 'Before any real advance can be made, the main factor inhibiting necessary experiment must be overcome. This factor is the basic psychological attitudes of both parents and teachers in this country - attitudes which have been shaped both historically and socially by very powerful forces indeed. It would be unwise to underestimate their strength.'

The use of sophisticated instruments such as attitude scales, to measure teachers opinions and feelings, has not been common in educational research in this country. Indeed, there would appear to be little recent research evidence of any kind, about teacher attitudes to contacts with parents. The only survey directed solely at teachers opinions about contacts with parents, apart from a recent survey by Spencer<sup>22</sup> confined to Catholic schools, appears to have been carried out in 1947 by W.D. Wall.<sup>23</sup>

In the Constructive Education Project<sup>24</sup> of the National Foundation for Educational Research, teachers attitudes to their relations with parents were tested by items which were arranged to produce Likert type scales. The scoring of these items showed a large majority of teachers in favour of meeting parents, although there was disagreement among the teachers in the sample about methods of doing so.

A study by Cohen<sup>25</sup> in 1967, used a 'role definition' instrument to compare the attitudes of students, college tutors, and headteachers, towards liaison between the home and school; in this case, the question of home visiting by teachers. Marked differences between the attitudes of the three groups were observed. The idea of home visiting by teachers received little support from headteachers in the sample, although the students and tutors both thought that teachers should visit the homes of problem children to discuss difficulties with their parents.

The most sophisticated study of teachers attitudes was an interesting research by Oliver and Butcher<sup>26</sup> of the Department of Education of Manchester University published in 1968. Three attitude scales measuring naturalism in education, radicalism in education and tender mindedness in education, were administered to a sample of three hundred teachers. The results were analysed by age, sex, political party, type of schools and religious affiliation. Tests of significance were applied both in relation to these categories and to differences in attitude between the groups of teachers. Significant differences in scores on all three scales were found when the results were analysed with regard to the political party and religious affiliation of the respondents.

On the scale of tendermindedness, teachers over fifty were significantly less tender minded than those in all other age groups.

The researchers made no attempt to relate scores to preferred types of contacts with homes, but this type of investigation could well be seen as an example of the type of research need to investigate the attitudes which determines teachers relationships with parents, and how they perceive the whole question of close links between schools and parents. As Ann Sharrock<sup>27</sup> states in the final chapter of 'Home/School Relations 1970', entitled 'The Task for Research': 'At this point in our educational history the climate of opinion favours the discussion of new methods of collaboration between teachers and parents and the enlargement of the parents place in the life of the school. If this development is to be built on firm foundations, it is essential that it should be supplemented by research - the influence of previous research findings and the problems posed by lack of information should underline this'.



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**CHAPTER THREE**

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE FLOWDEN EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO

IMPROVE SCHOOL/HOME RELATIONSHIPS

The Flowden Report of 1967, 'Children and their Primary Schools'<sup>1</sup>, devotes one hundred and seventy-nine pages of the main report to the five chapters of the section entitled 'The Home, School and Neighbourhood'. Of this section, two chapters, 'The Children and their Environment' and 'Participation by Parents', are concerned with a discussion of the relationship between educational achievement and home circumstances, and proposals to improve relations between schools and parents.

The discussion central to this part of the report is stated in Chapter Three paragraph eighty: 'Our argument in this and the following chapters is that educational policy should explicitly recognize the power of the environment on the school and of the school upon the environment. Teachers are linked to parents by the children for whom they are responsible. The triangle should be completed and a more direct relationship established between teachers and parents. They should be partners in more than name; their responsibility become joint instead of several.'

An examination of the evidence on which this argument is based, shows that it can be divided into two categories. First, a review of the conclusions of previous research, including the three previous reports of the Advisory Council for Education, and secondly, the particular evidence produced by the three surveys included in Volume Two of the report, 'Research and Surveys'.

Since the war a series of official reports on education have drawn attention to the importance of home circumstances on the educational chances of children from different social backgrounds. 'Early Leaving'<sup>2</sup> 1954, concluded that the home conditions of children from the professional and managerial classes enabled these children to benefit from a grammar school education, while the children of unskilled or semi-skilled workers were handicapped by theirs.

The evidence of the 'Crowther Report'<sup>3</sup> 1959, indicated that with many children of high ability from the lower social classes, the length of their education was related more closely to the occupation of their parents and the number in the family, than their intelligence test scores.

The effects of social background, the influence of the family and neighbourhood, were combining to produce this handicap. The Newsom Report<sup>4</sup> stressed that this handicap was still obvious in 1963, while the Robbins Report<sup>5</sup> on higher education in the same year, showed that the handicaps imposed on the children of manual workers throughout their years at school had not lessened, and effected relative chances of reaching higher education.

In essence these reports tell us that the chances of children from the unskilled workers home of going to higher education and stages along the way, are far less than those of children from middle class professional families. Further evidence of this polarisation of the degree of difference in the life chances of children of different social origins, is quoted in paragraph eighty of the Plowden discussion: 'Hindley found evidence of the widening gap, admittedly on a small sample in the pre-school years. This

polarisation continues according to Douglas at the primary stage. At eleven the scores and achievement of children from the different classes are further apart than they were at eight (page 84). In England this process persists in the secondary school.'

The Plowden Report then takes the discussion a stage further by posing a question demanding a more sophisticated analysis than had been produced by the earlier reports, by attempting to examine the reasons for the numerous exceptions to the general rule they had established. If on average, manual workers children are less highly educationally motivated than professional workers children, there are exceptions. Some children from manual workers homes are highly motivated, and some children from the homes of professional workers are not. What lies behind these individual differences? Or as the report asks, 'Our own enquiries have been directed to throwing light on the reasons for these exceptions. If we can pinpoint the factors which make good work possible in apparently unlikely circumstances, we may see what most needs to be done to enlarge the numbers of those who succeed. What is it about the home that matters so much? That was the question we wished to have explored' (Para.80).

In its attempt to answer this question, the report drew heavily upon the evidence of three surveys contained in Volume Two; the 'National Survey of Parental Attitudes and Circumstances Related to School and Pupil Characteristics'<sup>6</sup>; the 'Manchester Survey'<sup>7</sup>, conducted by a team from Manchester University directed by Professor Stephen Wiseman, and the 'National Child Development Study (1958 Cohort)<sup>8</sup>.

The National Child Development Study used a sub-sample of seven thousand nine-hundred and eight-five children, part of a cohort of children born in England between the third and ninth of March 1958. It gathered its evidence from three sources; from schools by means of a questionnaire described as an 'Educational Assessment Booklet'; from mothers interviewed by an officer of the Local Authority using the 'Parental Questionnaire'; and from the School Health Service by means of a 'Medical Questionnaire'. The report, although of an interim nature, being produced halfway through a three year project, concluded that there was a significant relationship between parental interest and tested attainment in reading:

'The proportion of good readers was higher among those children whose parents had themselves initiated some contact with the school, and this was true of boys and girls separately.'

(Flowden Vol.Two Appendix 10 Para.531).

The 'Manchester Survey' investigated the relationship between the educational attainment of primary school children and environmental factors, with particular reference to the environment within the school. The research was based on a fifty percent sample of Manchester schools, stratified by school type, giving a final sample of two thousand ten year old children in forty-four schools. The parents of a sub sample of two hundred and twenty children, randomly selected, were interviewed by the Social Survey.

The report concluded that there was a significant relationship between parental attitudes to education and attainment. 'We regard two of our findings as being of the first importance; that

environmental factors bear most heavily on the brightest of our children; and that factors in the home are overwhelmingly more powerful than those of the neighbourhood and the school - and of these factors of parental attitude to education; to the school and to books are of far greater significance than social class and occupational level.' (Plowden Vol.Two Appendix 9 Para.112).

The aim of the National Survey of Parental Attitudes and Circumstances Related to School and Pupil Characteristics', referred to in the main report as 'The National Survey', was to examine in greater detail than previous reports on education, the relationship between home, school, and attainment. While parental occupation was used as a measure of home circumstances as in earlier reports, a more sophisticated analysis was required: 'It therefore seemed desirable to attempt to estimate the influence of occupation irrespective of attitudes and of attitudes irrespective of occupation.' (Plowden Vol.Two Appendix 3 Para.1.).

In order to achieve these aims, the Social Survey Division of the Central Office of information was commissioned to interview the parents of a representative national sample of primary school children (for the purposes of the parental interviews it was decided to interview the mother only). A total of one hundred and seventy three schools were selected in the first stage of the sampling. In the second stage a number of children were selected within these schools, depending on the size of the school. This procedure gave an interview sample of three thousand two hundred and thirty seven parents. The data obtained from these interviews was linked with the information from the schools the children attended, covering facts about school size and organization and judgement by Her Majesty's Inspectorate on the quality of the school and the



competence of the teaching staff.

To supplement the representative sample, a special group of twelve schools where relations with parents was thought to be outstanding, was selected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, and the Social Survey interviewed a sample of the parents of children from these schools.

The analytic core of the evidence produced by analysis of the information, were the regression analyses reported in Volume Two of the Report. In a technical note G.F. Peaker<sup>9</sup> describes the function and method of stepwise multiple regression as a type of factor analysis where: 'The computer selects variables which turn out to be relevant on the evidence of the sample and rejects others'. The estimates of the total effects of broad classes of variables being considered to be more reliable than the estimate for individual variables, the variables were grouped into three classes; 'parental attitudes', showing effect on the child's progress of interest by the parents; 'home circumstances', showing the effect of the parents material and educational circumstances; and 'schooling', showing the effect of the variation of school circumstances.

The resulting conclusions obtained by this type of analysis extended those of earlier government reports on education by calculating the effect of parental attitudes and showing that: 'more of the variation in children's school achievement appeared to be specifically accounted for by the variation in parental attitudes, than by either the variation in the material circumstances of parents, or the variation in schools' (Appendix 4 Vol. Two Para. 17). The results also, in the opinion of the

committee, threw some light on the question posed in paragraph eighty-six of Chapter Three: 'if we know from previous evidence that both the attitudes and home circumstances of parents effect the progress of children in school what is the relative importance of each and the interaction between them? .....

Before the enquiry it was plain, as a matter of common sense and common observation that parental encouragement and support could take the child some way. What the enquiry has shown is that "some way" can reasonably be interpreted as "a long way"!  
(Appendix 4 Vol.Two para.4).

The evidence was considered by the committee to make it initially possible that parental attitudes to education could be changed by persuasion. In particular, that more educational effort could profitably be devoted to changing some parental attitudes to education.

Commenting on the results of the National Survey, the report states: 'Our findings can give hope to the school, to interested parents and those responsible for educational policy. Parental attitudes appear as a separate influence because they are not monopolised by one class. Schools can exercise their influence not only directly upon children but also indirectly through their relationships with parents.' (Vol.One Chapter 3 Para.101).

Based upon this assumption, the report proposed a minimum programme<sup>10</sup> to be adopted by all primary schools as an aid to fostering closer relationships between schools and parents, prefaced by the statement:- 'Attitudes declare themselves best by actions and we feel that the arrangements of all primary schools should as a minimum cover certain essentials.'

- a) A regular system for the head and class teacher to meet parents before the child enters.
- b) Arrangements for more formal private talks, preferably twice a year.
- c) Open days to be held at times chosen to enable parents to attend.
- d) Parents to be given booklets prepared by the school to inform them in their choice of children's school and as to how they are being educated.
- e) Written reports on children to be made at least once a year; the child's work should be seen by parents.
- f) Special efforts to be made to make contact with parents who do not visit the schools.

While the establishment of a Parent-Teacher Association as a formal institution in every school, is not one of the recommendations of the report, it urges serious consideration of this idea by headteachers. No evidence could be found in visits to schools in the United States by members of the Commission, of expressed fears that this type of organisation might interfere with the running of the school. Good leadership by the headteacher, however, was felt to be essential.

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CHAPTER FOUR

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

### 1. A Critique of the Plowden Analysis of the Problem

The evidence of the 'National Survey' and the supporting surveys of parental attitudes to education examined in the previous chapter, were considered sufficiently conclusive by the members of the Council to enable them to urge a national effort on the part of primary schools in fostering closer relations between teachers and parents, by means of a minimum programme to increase contacts. These increased contacts, it was hoped, would modify some parental attitudes which were either hostile or indifferent to education; with a subsequent improvement in the educational performance of their children. Parental interest and support were felt to be crucial for achievement, and the primary school must attempt to increase parental interest and support by these recommendations.

In making these recommendations, the Plowden Report appeared to assume that because parental attitudes had been shown to be variable, they were also malleable, and that the obvious source of the necessary knowledge of the learning process and child development, would be the teachers in the state primary schools; whom it was also assumed would provide the necessary encouragement and motive force, both to initiate these recommendations, and by their efforts make them effective.

While commenting upon parental attitudes to schools and urging closer relationships between parents and teachers, the Plowden Report largely refrains from serious comment about the

role of the teacher in the area of school/home relations, beyond assuming that teachers will accept this extension of role, because in the opinion of the Council the evidence demands it. The fact remains, however, that these proposals have been made for and on behalf of others - the headteachers and teachers of the nation's primary schools. Viewed in relationship to the undoubted demands on the teachers time and energies, the attitudes of the teachers and headteachers themselves, are crucial to the implementation of the Plowden proposals to increase contacts between parents and schools. If we accept that much of education and particularly closer home/school relations, is a matter of effecting attitudes as well as knowledge, some consideration of the attitudes of those teachers who will be part of any organisational change, is essential in any attempt to promote change within the educational system - a factor which does not appear to have received serious consideration in the Plowden Report, beyond the sentiments expressed in the closing paragraph of Chapter Four that, 'Much depends on the teachers. Every chapter could end thus - but perhaps it is even more apt here than elsewhere.'

This lack of any systematic analysis of the role and attitudes of teachers and headteachers in the proposals for increased school/home contacts, and the subsequent assumption of their desire to co-operate in their implementation, has been commented on by a number of writers. While efforts to increase co-operation and contact between the two social institutions the home and the school may well be imperative, as Anne Sharrock states, in 'Home/School Relations' Chapter Three: 'There may be danger in trying to increase contact and co-operation between the two

without understanding the sociological and other implications of their relationship.'

In 'Some Sociological Comments on Flowden', (an article in 'Perspectives on Flowden', edited by R.S. Peters), Basil Bernstein and Brian Davies<sup>1</sup> make the following detailed criticism of the underlying assumption regarding teachers support inherent in the Flowden proposals:- 'The question of 'who decides what?' in schools is generally neglected. There is no systematic exposition of the role either the head or assistant teacher. It is strongly argued that schools need to be permeable to parents and a very large number of devices are discussed in Chapter Four for improving their knowledge of and participation in school processes. The argument stops short though of universally endorsing Parent-Teacher Associations'.

The article then goes on to question whether the report, while conscious of the factor of teacher attitudes to change, consciously ignores any statement of it in the main report:- 'Given the positive fervour with which the report espouses other methods of parent participation; one suspects a capitulation to professional dislike of the parent-teacher association. One surmises that behind this dislike lies a genuine difficulty of defining the legitimate boundaries of parent-teacher interests and competences. Our primary schools have only recently begun to move away from being relatively 'closed' social institutions and in all but a few cases, there is a genuine lack of clarity about the boundaries and content of roles to be played by staff and parents towards each other. This is without doubt an area of great difficulty. It merely accepts in this respect the



importance of 'habit' in schools and the particular risk that innovation tends to run aground against the conservatism of teachers.'

T. Blackstone<sup>2</sup>, reviewing the Plowden Report in the British Journal of Sociology 1967, also drew attention to the fact that perhaps the Plowden Report had ignored the function of habit and stereotype in schools and the importance of these factors in respect of resistance to change:- 'Our primary schools have seriously failed to establish adequate relationships with parents, not only with the hostile and apathetic, but also with those who would like closer contact with the schools.'

## 2. The Effectiveness of Existing Types of School/Home Contacts

If, as these articles would imply, there exists a genuine difficulty among teachers about the legitimate boundaries of parents contacts with schools and the roles of teachers and parents in this area; the types of preferences shown by schools in the already existing types of contact, may either confirm or refute the suggestion that for various reasons headteachers and teachers may not support an increase in contacts between schools and parents, of the type advocated by the Plowden Report. Some evidence is provided about existing contacts by the Plowden Report itself, both on preferred types of contact and their apparent efficiency in attracting parents. In table fifty-two page twenty-nine of Volume Two of the report, is a table listing activities current in schools to which parents were invited, including figures expressed in percentages for the number of parents invited and those who actually attended. Of the eight types of contact listed, the most successful form of contact is

the 'open day', and the least successful the formal Parent-Teacher Association meeting. The evidence provided a year later by the Schools Council Enquiry One, 'Young School Leavers', is broadly similar. In a table showing parental contacts with secondary schools, the activities listed are identical, with the exception of careers meetings. Again the table published on page one hundred and sixty-nine of the report, shows the 'open day' to be most popular, and formal Parent-Teacher Association meetings least popular. Talks held in private between parents and either teachers or headteachers, were not presented as part of either table, although shown elsewhere in the reports. Other aspects of communication between schools and parents, such as school reports, newsletters, or home visiting, were not examined in detail by either survey. The average number of opportunities for parents to visit, provided by schools in the 'National Survey', is reported in the main report as between six and seven times per year. (Plowden Vol.One Chapter 4. Para.104).

There is no evidence on a national level, on the effectiveness of adaption, of the various types of contacts between schools and homes advocated in the Plowden minimum programme, since the publication of the report in 1967. Some evidence, however, is available on the more formal types of contact, although again no national figures are available, since in the case of Parent-Teacher Associations the number of unaffiliated associations is unknown. Some surveys have indicated the number of associations in primary schools. The questionnaires completed by the headteacher of the one-hundred and seventy-one schools in the 1965 National Survey, showed that seventeen percent of these primary schools had a Parent-Teacher Association and a similar figure was recorded

by the National Child Development Study. Some estimates for the formation of formal associations in particular areas since this time, include nine percent for London schools (Goodacre 1968), and ten percent in Islington schools (Benson 1967).

### 3. Regional and Cultural Factors

The contacts of parents with schools may well be affected by regional and cultural factors. The contacts of parents with schools in the Northern region would appear to be lower than elsewhere, according to Davis 1970, (Report on the Conference of National Bureau for Co-operation in Child Care). Reporting on interim results of a longitudinal study of the progress of a cohort of eleven thousand children born during one week in 1958, (The National Child Development Study), he reported that only seventeen percents of Northern parents had a Parent-Teacher Association available for them to join if they so desired, yet twenty percent of parents in the South West had this facility. In what would appear to be the only national study of Parent-Teacher Associations, A.E.C.W. Spencer<sup>3</sup> in 'Parent-Teacher Associations in Catholic Schools, 1969, using a five percent random sample of all Catholic schools in England and Wales, (One hundred and thirty-one schools in all), also noted regional differences: 'The distribution of Parent-Teacher Associations in Catholic schools reflects the great cultural divide between the North on one hand and the Midlands and South on the other. The proportion of Parent-Teacher Associations in the South and Midlands is still half as great again as the North.' These regional differences in parental opportunities for contact with schools, were also indicated in the Schools Council Enquiry 'Young School Leavers'. In 'Relations Between Home and School',

Anne Sharrock<sup>4</sup> commented, 'The rather worse position of the North for some other types of school/home contacts was confirmed in 'Enquiry 1.'

4. The Attitudes of Parents and Teachers Towards Co-operation  
between School and Home

The existence of a formal organisation for school/home co-operation in a school would presuppose the existence of other fairly substantial efforts within the school to encourage parent participation. While there is no national data available to show how far the Flowden recommendations for a minimum programme for school/home co-operation have been implemented in primary schools, what evidence there is on Parent-Teacher Associations, would appear to present a rather depressing picture. Why should this be so?

The Flowden Report stated that the Social Survey of 1965 among three thousand mothers of primary school children, a national sample representative of the social class distribution of the general population, presented an encouraging picture of a high level of parental interest in education: 'The interest shown by parents to the enquiry itself is highly encouraging. Only three percent refused an interview and interviews were carried out with ninety-five percent of the sample - a remarkably high response.' Derrick<sup>5</sup> in 1968, also found a considerably more favourable difference between his findings and those of Floude, Halsey and Martin in 1956<sup>6</sup>, indicating an encouraging interest in the value placed by parents in education in the period between the two studies, as the Flowden evidence had already indicated.

If parental attitudes to education could be described as 'highly encouraging'; perhaps parental attitudes to schools cannot explain the apparently low level of formal contact which exists. In attempting to refer to research to describe the attitudes of headteachers and teachers to contacts with parents in general, the relationship between the type of contacts chosen and the underlying attitudes these may reflect; an absence of research in this area becomes obvious. The only two research projects solely concerned with teachers opinions on school/home contacts, would appear to be Spencer's Parent-Teacher Association Survey, mentioned previously, and the research of W.D. Wall<sup>7</sup> 'The Opinions of Teachers on Parent-Teacher Co-operation', published in nineteen forty seven. This study surveyed one English County by means of a questionnaire sent to headteachers to elicit their general opinions on contacts with parents; the types of contact already in existence, problems, and suggestions for further co-operation. The results showed that the majority of headteachers acknowledged the need for co-operation with parents, although there was little agreement as to how this could be best achieved, except that informal methods were preferred by a large majority.

Spencer, in his 1969 study of Parent-Teacher Associations in Catholic schools, concluded that headteacher attitudes and regional cultures appear to be the major factors in determining the formation of a Parent-Teacher Association. Other research, while not attempting to investigate teacher attitudes to school/home relations as a first priority, such as the 'Flowden Report', 'Young School Leavers' and 'Constructive Education Project,' all corroborate the general conclusion that teachers prefer informal to formal methods, in their contacts with parents.

## 5. Towards a Definition of the Problem

What these researches do not explain, is why this should be so, and the basic attitudes which this preference must reflect. One explanation in terms of anatomy and habit, is proposed by Musgrove and Taylor<sup>8</sup> in 'Society and the Teacher's Role'. They suggest that in the late nineteenth century, due mainly to the Taunton Commission of 1866, there was an increase in the powers of headteachers and teachers at the expense of parents, and that this tradition has continued until the present day, where this situation has been accepted by teachers and parents as normal; even although compared to other countries, it is unique: 'The twentieth century has been remarkable for the exclusion of parents from direct contact with teachers and schools. Partly the parents have abdicated but probably more important the teachers have protected themselves from 'interference'. The Parent-Teacher movement has to all intents and purposes been still born.'

While this may be felt to be an exaggeration, B.J. Biddle<sup>9</sup> in a paper entitled, 'Patterns of Teacher Role Conflict', published in 1968, containing a cross cultural study of the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, and England, showed that the greatest degree of role conflict between teachers and parents was found in England. This would appear to offer some support for the general thesis of Musgrove and Taylor, without necessarily endorsing the extremity of their argument.

Further evidence that perhaps teachers and headteachers have some genuine misgivings about closer contacts with parents, is reflected in the National Union of Teachers Policy Statement on home/school relations published in 1969. While generally

agreeing with the concept of parent-teacher co-operation and favouring informal methods of achieving this, it defends the right of headteachers and teachers to determine both the frequency and nature of these contacts: 'The judgement of a headteacher and his colleagues should decide whether or not the school should have a Parent-Teacher Association and what form relations with parents should take.'

The problem which the Flowden Report appears to largely ignore, is that headteachers and teachers may have genuine fears that a carefully defined programme to increase contacts between parents and schools, may be a threat to professional autonomy. No details were given in the report of whether the twelve schools selected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate 'where the relations with parents was thought to be particularly good', were located in one region, or were selected on a deliberate national basis. If these schools were not truly representative of the attitudes of headteachers and teachers, in what sense are the Flowden recommendations on increased school/home contacts those of a minority report? A reasonable hypothesis, after an examination of the evidence for an increasing parental interest in education, could be that the apparently low level of school/home involvement expressed by the unpopularity of Parent-Teacher Associations may be due, not to parental attitudes, but to misgivings among teachers and particularly headteachers in the nation's schools; the direction from which Flowden expected the encouragement and motive force would be forthcoming.

## 6. An Added Dimension of the Problem

An extra dimension to this problem arises when an explanation is sought for the regional differences in the existence of parent-teacher contacts. Why should parents in the Northern region

apparently have less chance of formal contacts with schools than parents in other regions, and to what extent can this be explained in terms of schools and teachers? Certain evidence would appear to suggest existing contacts are less successful in bringing in working class parents to schools. In Appendix Three Volume Two of the Plowden Report, 'Parental Contacts with Primary Schools', there are consistent social class differences in attendance at every type of contact listed - from talks with the class teacher to open days. The lower the socio-economic status of the parents, the lower the chances of attendance at any type of school function. The provision of Parent-Teacher Association meetings and attendance at those provided was correlated with social class. Twenty-eight percent of children whose parents were managerial workers, and twenty-four percent of children whose parents were professional workers attended a primary school which had a Parent-Teacher Association. This was true of only sixteen percent of the children of unskilled workers.

The numbers of those in various socio-economic status levels are unevenly distributed throughout the country. The Northern region has a lower percentage of adult males in the professional and managerial classes than the rest of the country, and has a larger proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. (41.7% of occupied and retired males in Social Class V, but only 28.1% of Social Class I.). The regional pattern of Parent-Teacher Association formation would appear to have some correlation with social class distribution; highest in areas with a large percentage of middle class parents, and lowest in areas with a predominately working class population. An added problem in examining teachers



attitudes to increased parental involvement with schools, may be that either middle class parents act as a pressure group, or that teachers resist increasing contacts with parents in largely working class areas, because of status anxiety, or both.

## 7. Final Statement of the Problem

The problem which appears from the evidence discussed in this chapter, may be defined in the following manner. Do headteachers and teachers feel much more anxiety about increased involvement with the parents of the children they teach, than the Plowden Report anticipated, and how far are these fears connected with an imagined threat to professional autonomy? How far does the types and frequency of contacts chosen by headteachers, reflect these attitudes, and are there regional and cultural factors involved in their choice of contacts, possibly affected by the social class composition of the area the school serves?

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**CHAPTER FIVE**

## THE AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

In the opinion of the researcher, a small scale survey of school/home contacts and of the attitudes underlying a decision to choose particular types of contact and reject others, will best be directed at headteachers rather than teachers; particularly if the research is to be undertaken by one individual.

The Gittens Report 'Primary Education in Wales', stated that the headteacher is 'the first link between parent and school.'

Because of the high degree of authority of the headteacher in matters relating to school policy, such as what type of contacts with parents the school should provide; the type and frequency of these contacts are usually decided by the headteacher. Consequently, these contacts are more likely to reflect the attitudes of the headteacher of the school, rather than the teachers.

The investigation had three main aims:

- a) To investigate and describe the type and frequency of current contacts with parents provided by the primary schools in the survey and to compare them with the minimum programme of school/home contacts proposed by the Flowden Committee.
- b) To investigate the attitudes of particular categories of headteacher (classified by sex, age, size of school, type of school, and the social class composition of the school's catchment area), to parental involvement with primary schools. An important related question, was to test empirically an experimental attitude scale designed to measure headteacher's attitudes in this area.

- o) To investigate the relationship, if any, between the attitude of headteachers to parents and the type and frequency of contacts provided by the primary schools in the survey, in an attempt to isolate and describe any attitudinal barriers on the part of the headteachers to closer working relationships with parents.

The first aim of the investigation was to gather information about the various methods used by the forty-three primary schools in the survey sample to involve parents in the life of the school, and in doing so, to attempt to answer questions of the following kind. What type of contacts with parents do these primary schools provide and how are they organised? What is seen as the purpose of an 'open day' and how does their organisation differ from school to school? What methods are used to inform parents of their childrens progress? What part are parents encouraged to play in day to day school activities? It was also intended to compare the minimum programme to foster closer relationships between home and school recommended in the Plowden Report, with the methods adopted by the schools in the survey sample; to comment on differences, and describe areas of difficulty.

The second aim of the investigation, was to compare the attitudes of different categories of headteacher towards parental involvement with the school, by means of an attitude scale designed to measure a headteacher's attitude to parents. In doing so, it was hoped to test the empirical validity of the attitude scale itself.

The final aim of the investigation, was the most difficult one, of attempting to describe and analyse the attitudes of the headteachers towards parental involvement in the life of the school.

In what way, if any, are the frequency and type of contacts chosen or rejected by headteachers related to their feelings about parental participation in school life? If, as the available evidence would appear to suggest, headteachers prefer informal contacts with parents to more formal contacts such as Parent-Teacher Associations - why should this be so?

An important related question was to attempt to isolate and describe, any factors in the headteacher's attitudes to parents which would appear to hinder a movement towards closer relationships between parents and primary schools. How these headteachers perceive the respective roles of parents and schools in the education of a child may be revealing in this context. Two hypothetical factors were considered in the previous chapter - a possible fear that increasing parental contact with schools may be a threat to professional autonomy and that in schools where a large proportion of the pupils are the children of unskilled or semi-skilled parents; the values and life style of these parents may be seen by the headteacher as incompatible with those of the school. Consequently, the participation of these parents in the life of the school, may be seen as of little value.

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**PART TWO**



**CHAPTER SIX**

## THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

### 1. The Sample

The area chosen for the study was a county borough in the North East of England with a total population of 109,521 (1962 census). Post War Council building has been concentrated on three large estates on the towns boundaries. The town is bounded on two sides by the sea and the River Tyne, consequently the borough is a relatively isolated conurbation.

Primary education in the borough is provided for by nineteen Infant and twenty-four Primary schools, serving a primary school population of 10,620 children in 1971. These schools consisted of fourteen Junior Mixed Schools, two Junior Boys Schools, two Junior Girls Schools, one County Junior Mixed and Infants school and five Voluntary Aided Junior Mixed and Infant schools, four of which were Roman Catholic schools. The area is known and accessible to the researcher and constitutes a convenient educational unit for the purposes of the research.

As the research sample needed to be small enough to complete any necessary interviews within a six month period, the research was focused on the forty-three headteachers of these schools. If, as Anne Sharrock<sup>1</sup> states in 'Home/School Relations': 'Too little information is available not only about heads and teachers attitudes to home/school relations, but also about the relationship between the type of contacts chosen and the fundamental attitudes these may reflect'; it was felt to best serve the needs of the research to concentrate on the headteachers, who make the decisions about what type of contacts between home and

school are available. These headteacher subjects would be vital to the research, both in their role of 'experts' with specialised knowledge, and as key participants whose interviews would yield far more useful knowledge than a random sample of the total number of primary school teachers in the borough. It was also hoped that by focusing the research on this selected group, the opinions and information gained from them could be fitted together into a coherent and consistent pattern, presenting a general picture of the group itself. The total number involved lends itself to an attempt to obtain a hundred percent return of a complete group and in this case this was felt to be more desirable than a random sample because of the small number involved.

## 2. The Approach to Headteachers

Each of the forty-three headteachers in the borough was approached personally by the researcher. The nature of the research was explained, and what would be involved in terms of their co-operation. Each headteacher agreed to co-operate in the research thus giving a hundred percent return of the total population needed. This meant that the results of the research could be taken as completely representative of the views of the headteachers in the area in which the research was undertaken.

## 3.

### Choice of Measurement Instruments

The principal methods of gaining information in this enquiry which was concerned with collecting information about the types

of home/school contacts current in the schools, and the opinions and feelings about these contacts of the headteachers concerned would be by:-

- a) An interview with each of the headteacher respondents in the sample.
- b) A questionnaire sent to each of the headteacher respondents in the sample.
- c) If quantitative attitude data is required the obvious and most reliable instrument for this purpose would be an attitude scale, even though this type of measure has not been used to any large extent in educational research.

Although both questionnaires and interviews rely heavily on the validity of verbal reports, there are important differences between these methods. A questionnaire has the obvious advantage of being a much less laborious method of obtaining information than an interview. The impersonal nature of a questionnaire and the standardised nature of the questions and instructions for recording responses ensures uniformity of measurement. This uniformity may often be more apparent than real from a psychological point of view. A single standardised question in a questionnaire can have different meanings for different people. However, respondents may feel that they have greater confidence in their anonymity when completing a questionnaire and feel freer to express controversial views. A great disadvantage of the questionnaire is that they usually produce very poor returns. For respondents who have no special interest in the subject matter of the questionnaire figures of forty to sixty percent are typical, even in interested groups eighty percent is seldom

exceeded.' (A.N. Oppenheim,<sup>2</sup> 'Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement'). This problem is accentuated in educational research as Peter H. Mann<sup>3</sup> describes in 'Methods of Sociological Enquiry': 'It is unfortunately true, that far too many questionnaires are sent out these days. Education authorities in particular have been inundated with education students questionnaires and have been forced to put a ban<sup>on</sup> small surveys other than those normally for higher degrees, which have been carefully vetted by the appropriate officers.'

There is also the problem that answers to questionnaires have to be accepted as final, there is no opportunity to probe or clarify questions. The interview does not present this problem and has the distinct advantage of obtaining information of a more spontaneous and richer nature than a questionnaire sent through the post can hope to achieve. 'The interview is the more appropriate technique for revealing information about complex, emotionally laden subjects, or for probing the sentiments that may underlie an expressed opinion.' 'C. Seltiz, M. Jahoda, M. Deutsch, S. Cook. 'Research in Social Relations')<sup>4</sup>

It was considered that for the purposes of this investigation the interview had distinct advantages over the mailed questionnaire. Interview bias, if any, would be consistent, as the interviews would be carried out by a single interviewer.

Hence it was decided that the two main instruments for obtaining information used in the research would be the interview carried out by a single interviewer and an experimental attitude scale; the interview to give qualitative detail, the experimental

attitude scale to measure differences in the group quantitatively and for statistical examination of possible differences in attitude between sub groups within the sample.

#### 4. Anonymity

In enlisting co-operation for the investigation, the headteachers in the sample were given an assurance that no responses or opinions would be traced back to individuals. This assurance was felt by the researcher to be crucial in obtaining frank and revealing responses to a subject of some controversy.

In order to ensure this, each respondent was allocated a number which was used for both the interview transcript and the completed attitude proforma. In the case of the attitude scale proforma, this number was written on the front of the proforma. This procedure proved effective, as all forty-three subjects returned the completed proforma by post.

The numbers for each subject were allocated as follows:-  
The total sample (forty-three) was first divided into headteachers of Junior schools (twenty-four) who were randomly allocated numbers from one to twenty-four. The remaining headteachers of Infant schools (nineteen) were randomly allocated numbers from twenty-four to forty-three.

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**CHAPTER SEVEN**

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## AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF ATTITUDE AND OPINION

In a discussion on the concept of attitude as used in educational research in home/school relationships, Ann Sharrock<sup>1</sup> indicates that in this context the term is ill defined as simply an expression of preference for something by the particular group or individual concerned and that 'attitude' is taken to be synonymous with opinion: 'Generally the term has been used fairly loosely and a strict definition will not be adopted here as this would exclude some relevant work.' However, in order to design measurement instruments for this research which will attempt to describe and analyse the feelings, fears, prejudices and pre-conceived ideas of a group of headteachers about their relationships with parents, some operational definition of the terms attitude and opinion is necessary.

The literature in the social sciences contains numerous works concerning attitudes. It is an important and useful concept both in psychology and sociology and is in itself an interdisciplinary term. While attitudes inhere in the individual and are a function of his total personality and as such are of interest to the psychologist, their origins and development have obvious social references such as social groups, socialisation and reference groups. From this perspective they are of interest to the sociologist.

There are many definitions of the term 'attitude'. In 1935 Gordon Allport<sup>2</sup> defined attitude as: 'A mental and neutral state of readiness organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individuals response

to all objects and situations with which it is related.' In this definition Allport stresses three important and characteristics of an attitude. First that it is a 'state of readiness' to perceive objects in a certain way; secondly that an attitude is learned through experience - it is not innate, and thirdly that it has motivational qualities that lead an individual to take action in terms of his attitude. While this is a useful definition it could be equally appropriate to other concepts such as opinion.

Two other well known definitions are those of Thurstone<sup>3</sup> 'The degree of positive or negative affect associated with some psychological object' and Sarnoff<sup>4</sup> 'A disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects.' These definitions stress the evaluative component of an attitude, a component usually measured by use of an attitude scale. This measure produces quantitative information about an individuals degree of favourableness and unfavourableness towards an object. If this was the total purpose of the research these definitions would be adequate, despite their lack of emphasis on the cognitive and emotional components of an attitude. If, however, we are also concerned with some explanation of the underlying beliefs and feelings on which the evaluative component is based they are not completely satisfactory. These qualifications have been pointed out by Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall<sup>5</sup> in 'Attitude and Attitude Change': 'It is important to stress that any study of attitudes must take into account both the importance of ego involvement and the need to study them in the context of an individuals reference group.'

A comprehensive account of the nature and components of attitudes is given by Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey in 'The Individual in Society'.<sup>6</sup> They see attitudes developing

in relation to the individuals group affiliations, need satisfaction and the information to which he is exposed. They define attitude as: 'An enduring system of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings and pro or con action tendencies with respect to a social object.'

This definition specifies three main components of an attitude - the cognitive component incorporating all beliefs about the object including evaluative ones; the affective component referring to the emotions connected with the object; and the action tendency component which includes a tendency to behave in a particular way towards an object. The authors, however, make a distinction between tendency to action and overt action. Behaviour, while related to an attitude can also be influenced by other social or physical determinants. For example, a headteacher who normally has unfavourable action tendencies towards parents may behave in a manner at variance with this attitude at a Parent-Teacher Association meeting at which the local Director of Education is present!

Each of the three components of attitude may vary in multiplexity (the variation in number and kind of the elements making up the component) and along a number of dimensions, for example, valence. The consistency characteristic referring to the relationship between the three components is also important as Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey<sup>7</sup> indicate. It should be noted that in the definition an attitude is described as a 'system': 'In defining attitudes as systems we are emphasising the interrelatedness of the three attitude components. When incorporated in a system, these components become mutually interdependent.'

This definition of attitude is the most satisfactory for the purposes of the research and was accordingly adopted as a working definition. 'One of the virtues of this type of definition is that it incorporates a conceptual separation of the conditional stimulus (affect and emotion) and discriminative stimulus (cognition and action tendency) function of attitude objects' (A.C. Greenwald<sup>8</sup> 'Psychological Foundations of Attitudes').

It remains, however, to make some working distinction between attitude and opinion for the purposes of the research. While it could be said that an opinion is a belief that an individual holds about something in his environment that is less enduring than an attitude, lacking the affective components central to attitude, a simpler distinction will be made. Attitudes can be expressed in a non verbal manner - opinion is surely the verbal expression of an attitude. Therefore for the purposes of this research, the concept 'opinion' will be taken to indicate verbal expression of an attitude.

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**CHAPTER EIGHT**

## THE INTERVIEW

Having decided that one of the main two instruments of measurement of the research was to be an interview with each of the headteachers in the sample, there remained the problem of deciding which type of interview was appropriate to the research, its design and question content. Peter H. Mann<sup>1</sup> in 'Methods of Sociological Enquiry' describes the interview as 'A form of human interaction that may range from the most informal 'chat' to the most carefully precoded and systematised set of questions and answers laid out in an interview schedule.' If a survey is designed to mainly collect simple facts, the formal approach will suffice, but if an investigation sets out to study more complex matters such as attitudes, formal interviews may be too superficial and limit the enquiry. The choice between formal and informal interview methods depends on the character of the survey problem and the use to be made of the results. In practice, however, as C.A. Moser<sup>2</sup> points out in 'Survey Methods in Social Investigation', 'The choice is not between the completely formal and the completely informal approach, but between many possible degrees of informality.'

At one end of the scale of extreme informality is the totally non-directive interview which is more akin to the psychoanalyst's technique, with no set questions and usually no predetermined means of recording answers. This type of interview is also described in the literature as a non guided or 'depth' interview. Moser describes a technique used by

Zweig akin to this, although slightly more directed by the interviewer, as a 'conversational or casual interview.'

At the other end of the scale is the completely formal interview where set questions are asked in a particular order and the answers are recorded on a standardised form. There is a large degree of control exercised over both the presentation of the questions and the recording of the responses. The questions and response categories are governed by problems of quantification and standardisation. These types of interview were not considered suitable for an investigation where the aims of the interview were to investigate the underlying attitudes and feelings of the headteachers in the sample towards co-operation with parents; the type and frequency of structures used in the schools to accommodate school/home contacts and to ascertain how the structures used in these schools compared with the Plowden proposals for a minimum programme in this area.

There is, however, a type of interview described by Moser as a 'guided interview' and in 'Research Methods in Social Relations' by Seltiz et al as a 'focused' interview. In this type of interview most of the questions are open ones designed to encourage the respondent to talk freely on each topic. The interviewer, while allowing the respondent a great deal of freedom, aims to cover a given set of questions in a systematic way.

While freeing the interviewer from the inflexibility of more formal methods, this type of interview structure gives the interview a set form and ensures that the necessary topics are in fact discussed. The interviewer is free to probe and clarify,



yet at the same time keep within the general framework imposed by the questions. The respondents are all asked for certain information, yet are allowed the freedom to develop their opinions at some length. If properly used this type of interview can 'help to bring out the value laden aspects of the subjects responses and determine the personal significance of his attitudes' (Research Methods in Social Relations)<sup>3</sup>. The 'guided or focused' type of interview was chosen to be used in the research and an appropriate interview guide prepared.

1. Type of Question to be Used

In designing an interview guide for a 'focused' type of interview where it is intended that the social situation will be informal and natural, with the conversation flowing much more like two people sharing a common interest having a conversation, the type of question to be used is crucial. A closed question is one where the respondent is offered a choice of alternative replies - a situation which does not make for a free flowing discussion. This type of question is obviously unsuitable in this context. Open questions on the other hand raise an issue but do not suggest any structure for the respondent's reply. Although the answers have to be recorded in full, once the respondent has understood the intent of the question he can express his own ideas in his own language, unrestricted by any prepared set of replies. The requirements of the type of interview chosen for the research necessitates the use of open questions, in spite of the difficulty of recording replies in full.

## 2. The Interview Guide

The interview guide consisted of nineteen questions divided into three separate sections. The first section broadly classified as 'Motivation' (Why?), contained six open ended questions designed to encourage the subject to talk about general attitudes and feelings about co-operation between schools and parents. The second section broadly classified as 'Organisation' (How?), contained nine open ended questions to investigate the subjects reaction to more specific situations involving school/home co-operation; and to investigate the type and frequency per annum of structures within a particular school to encourage co-operation with parents. The questions in this section were also designed to unobtrusively ascertain how far the structures to encourage parent participation within individual schools compared to the six point minimum programme proposed by the Plowden Report. The third section of the interview guide broadly classified as 'Impact' (How Well?), contained four questions designed to allow the respondents to evaluate the organisational structures they used to encourage school/home co-operation; to describe any problems they had had in this respect and which method in their experience had proved most successful. A general introductory statement describing the Plowden proposals was to be read to the subject before the interview began.

### Motivation (Why?)

The questions in this section were designed to allow the subjects to talk freely about their general attitude towards parents and using the definition of attitude mentioned previously,

the three components of an attitude system - their beliefs about parents (cognitive component); their feelings about parents (the feeling component) and their disposition to take action in terms of providing organisational structures within the school to encourage parental interest and co-operation (the action tendency component). As the valence of the subject's attitudes was to be measured by the experimental attitude scale, it was hoped that the responses to the questions being spontaneous and unrestricted would provide some clues to the multiplexity of their attitudes towards parents and any interconnectedness with other attitudes.

Question 1. 'Do you think that the involvement of parents with their childrens schools recommended by the Plowden Report is worthwhile?' This question was designed to allow the subjects to express their general feelings in terms of agreement or disagreement with the general concept of co-operation between school and home.

Question 2. 'Do you think that most parents are anxious for more involvement with their childrens school?' This question allows the subjects to express their general attitude towards parents and more particularly their own view of parental attitudes towards their school.

Question 3. 'What kind of limits, if any, would you place on parental involvement with your school?' This question allows the subject to specify in terms of one school, his or her beliefs and justifications for whatever limits are imposed.

Question 4. 'If a group of parents approached you with a request to start a Parent-Teacher Association what would your reaction be?'

This question was designed to allow the subject to express feelings and action tendencies towards a particular institution and to record any facts or beliefs that the subject expressed towards . . . Parent-Teacher Associations.

Question 5. 'How can you be sure that there is a good relationship between a school and parents?' This question allows the subject to describe his or her general contacts and rationale for whatever feelings have been expressed about parents.

Question 6. 'What advice would you give to a newly appointed headteacher about dealing with parents?' This question was designed to allow the subject by projecting himself or herself into a hypothetical situation of giving advice to a newly appointed headteacher, to express beliefs, feelings, and action tendencies towards parents based on their own experiences.

#### Organisation (How?)

The nine questions in this section had a threefold purpose. Firstly, to allow the subject to express feelings and opinions about more specific forms of parental involvement with their particular school; secondly, to investigate the type and frequency of organisation within the schools to inform and co-operate with parents, and thirdly, to examine the programme used in individual schools to involve parents in relation to the minimum programme recommended in the Plowden Report.

Question 7. 'Do you think parents should be informed about the aims and organisation of a school?' If so what is the best way of informing them?' This question allowed the subject to express their feelings and beliefs about whether they believed parents should be informed and if so how they felt this should be done. The fourth recommendation of the Plowden minimum programme

'Parents to be given booklets prepared by the school to inform them in their choice of childrens school and as to how they are educated', is covered by this question.

Question 8. 'How are parents informed about their childrens progress in your school?' This question was designed to sample the subjects feelings about methods of informing parents about their childrens progress and the methods they used to do this.

The fifth recommendation of the Flowden minimum programme

'Written reports on children to be made at least once a year; The childs work should be seen by the parents', is covered by this question.

Question 9. 'Are you in favour of open days? If so how often should they be held and at what times?' This question was designed to allow the subject to express his or her beliefs and feelings about the idea of schools being open to parents on particular days, to describe the open days they held (if any) and their frequency. This question covered the third recommendation of the Flowden Minimum Programme 'Open days to be held at times chosen to enable parents to attend.'

Question 10. 'Do you have any arrangement for parents to see your or the class teacher in private?' This question allowed the subject to express their feelings and beliefs about the value or need for parental interviews in private, how they organised them and their frequency. The second recommendation of the Flowden Minimum Programme 'Arrangements for more formal talks in private, preferably twice a year,' was covered by this question.

Question 11. 'Do you think that parents should be given the opportunity to observe their children during a normal school day as distinct from special occasions?' This question was designed to allow the subjects to express their attitude to the idea of

informal parental visiting.

Question 12. 'Can you see any value in a headteacher or a member of staff visiting parents in their own homes?' This question was designed to investigate attitudes to home visiting by members of staff and any reactions to it, if it had been done, by the subject. The sixth recommendation of the Plowden minimum programme 'Special efforts to be made to make contact with parents who do not visit the school', was covered by this question.

Question 13. 'Should a school accept offers of help from parents with skills or talents?' This question was designed to allow the subject to express feelings and beliefs about parents helping and working in schools and if allowed, to evaluate and describe the organisation.

Question 14. 'Some infant schools have a system which gives parents an opportunity to meet the head and class teacher before the child enters school? Would this be worthwhile in the primary school?' This question was designed to allow the subject to express feelings and beliefs about whether this was necessary and if practised, how organised. The question was modified depending on whether the respondent was the headteacher of an infant or junior school. This question covered the first proposal of the Plowden Minimum Programme 'A regular system for the head and class teacher to meet parents before the child enters'.

Question 15. 'Do you think it is important to obtain information about a child's home background? If so how should it be obtained?' This question was designed to allow the subject to express feelings and beliefs about the necessity or desirability of a school needing information of this nature and the methods used of obtaining this kind of information.

## Impact (How Well?)

This section contained four questions designed to allow the subject to evaluate his or her own procedures for school/home co-operation and to describe both problems and successes.

Question 16. 'What percentage of parents usually attend functions organised by your school?' This question was designed to allow the subject to express subjectively the success of the organisational procedures described and to record methods used to evaluate them.

Question 17. 'Is there any record kept of which parents attend?' This question was designed to allow the subject to describe the method used, if any, and beliefs and feelings about the necessity of identifying those parents who never attend and need encouragement.

Question 18. 'Which of the methods you use for involving parents have proved most successful?' This question was designed to allow the subject to express his or her beliefs about a particular method which they felt to be successful and why they felt this to be so.

Question 19. 'Have you ever had any problems organising school/home activities? If so would you care to comment on them?' This question was designed to allow the subject to express feelings and beliefs about parents' shortcomings and their general attitude to them.

### 3. Interviewer Skill

An informal 'focused' interview of this type, clearly demands more skill than the formal interview. The conduct of an interview of this kind also demands a deeper knowledge of the subject matter than a formal interview. As the researcher had had previous interviewing experience in a study completed for the 'Diploma in

Advanced Educational Studies' at the University of Durham and experience of some hundred interviews in a project in industrial psychology, the experience needed to use this type of measurement instrument was felt to be sufficient.

#### 4. Recording Information

In order to ensure that the interview took the form of the relatively smooth flowing conversational pattern necessary to a 'focused' interview it was decided that each interview was to be entirely tape recorded and an exact written transcript of each interview was to be completed.

The interviews took place, by appointment and outside of normal school hours; in thirty-six cases in the home of the individual headteacher and in seven cases in the school itself. All of the respondents except one were willing for the interview to be tape recorded. In this one case the information was recorded by means of note taking by the interviewer. The average duration of the forty-three interviews was forty-seven minutes.

At the end of the interview proper certain facts were noted to facilitate comparison between sub groups in the sample by means of the quantitative data which was to be obtained from the attitude scale scores. Sex, type of school, size of school were noted, and the respondents were asked to indicate if they fell in the over or under fifty age group and their length of service as a headteacher. Each headteacher was also asked to estimate in percentage form the socio-economic status of the homes from which the children in the school came in the following two broad categories in terms of the fathers occupation - 1. professional and management;

2. skilled and unskilled.



## 5. Piloting the Interview Guide

In order to ensure that the order of questions and arrangement of the interview guide would produce the smooth flowing conversational type of interview desired, and that the meaning of the questions were clear; the interview guided was piloted with ten teachers. These teachers were asked to fulfil the role of a headteacher respondent.

As a result of these pilot interviews the order of questions in each section was changed and the wording of some questions slightly modified. The final interview guide to be used with the headteacher respondents is set out in full. (Enclosure 3 Page 80)

Preliminary Statement to be read before Interview

The Plowden Report (1967) 'Children and their Primary Schools' recommended that parents should be encouraged to participate more closely with schools in their childrens education. It proposed a minimum programme for all Primary schools to accomplish this, and urged that schools should try to foster closer relations between home and school by using various activities such as 'open days', special efforts to contact parents who do not visit, etc. I should like to talk to you about your own feelings and experiences in this matter.

Flowden Minimum Programme

The Flowden Report proposed a minimum programme to be adopted by all Primary schools as an aid to fostering closer relationships between home and school, prefaced by the statement:-

'Attitudes declare themselves best by actions and we feel that the arrangements of all Primary schools should as a minimum cover certain essentials.'

Flowden (Chapter Three Para.130)

1. A regular system for the head and class teacher to meet parents before the child enters.
2. Arrangements for more formal talks in private preferably twice a year.
3. Open days to be held at times chosen to enable parents to attend.
4. Parents to be given booklets prepared by the school to inform them in their choice of childrens schools and as to how they are educated.
5. Written reports on children to be made at least once a year; the childs work should be seen by parents.
6. Special efforts to be made to make contacts with parents who do not visit the school.

Survey Interview Schedule

	Headteacher	Transcript	Tape recorded	Minutes
A.	Motivation (Why)			
Q.1.	Do you think that the involvement of parents with their childrens school recommended by the Plowden Report is worthwhile?			
Q.2.	Do you think that most parents are anxious for more involvement with their children's school?			
Q.3.	What kind of limits would you place on parental involvement in your school?			
Q.4.	If a group of parents approached you with a request to start a Parent-Teacher Association what would your reaction be?			
Q.5.	How can you be sure that there is a good relationship between a school and parents?			
Q.6.	What advice would you give to a newly appointed headteacher about dealing with parents?			
B.	Organization (How)			
Q.7.	Do you think parents should be informed about the aims and organisation of a school? If so what is the best way of informing them?			
Q.8.	How are parents informed about their children's progress in your school?			
Q.9.	Are you in favour of open days? If so how often should they be held and at what times?			
Q.10.	Do you have any arrangement for parents to see you or the class teacher in private? (by appointment, anytime, etc.)			
Q.11.	Do you think that parents should be given the opportunity to observe their children during a normal school day as distinct from special occasions?			
Q.12.	Can you see any value in a headteacher or a member of staff visiting parents in their own homes?			
Q.13.	Should a school accept offers of help from parents with special skills or talents?			

- Q.14. Some infant schools have a system which gives parents an opportunity to meet the head and class teacher before the child enters school. Would this be worthwhile in the primary school?
- Q.15. Do you think it is important to obtain information about a child's home background? If so how should it be obtained?

C. Impact (How Well)

- Q.16. What percentage of parents normally attend functions organised by your school?
- Q.17. Is there any record kept of which parents attend?
- Q.18. Which of the methods you use for involving parents have proved most successful?
- Q.19. Have you had any problems organising school/home activities? If so would you care to comment on them?

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**CHAPTER NINE**

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## THE EXPERIMENTAL ATTITUDE SCALE

### 1. Type of Attitude Scale Selected for the Research

There are a number of different attitude scales which have been used in research in the social sciences. These scales differ in type, method of construction and scoring, but their objective is usually identical - to obtain a score which can place an individual on a numerical position on a continuum. This position will indicate his or her attitude towards a particular object. Most attitude scales are concerned with the measure of valence, that is the degree of favourability of an individual towards a particular psychological object, and attempt to measure the individuals position on the continuum quantitatively.

The five scaling methods considered in deciding which type of scaling method should be used in the research were the method of equal appearing intervals, the summated rating scale, the social distance scale, the cumulative scale, and a technique developed by Osgood and his associates known as the 'semantic differential.' As the research was concerned with the measurement of attitudes in a field where attitude scaling methods have been little used, it was felt necessary to design an experimental scale for the measurement of attitudes to be used in the research. Each of these scales has desirable features but the best method will be that which is most appropriate to the needs of the research.

#### a) The Thurstone Scale (Equal Appearing Interval Scale)

This type of scale can be used to measure attitudes towards



any psychological object and has been widely used. Having noted that all attitudes contained an evaluative characteristic, Thurstone constructed a scale for measuring individual differences on a hypothetical single dimension. The method necessitates the use of judges to assign scale values to each item in the scale. Thurstone considered that this type of scale constituted an interval scale; that is one where the distance between points on the scale are known and on which equal numerical distances represented equal distances along the continuum of whatever was being measured. 'Such a scale enables one to compare differences or changes in attitudes, since the difference between a score of three and seven is equivalent to the difference between a score of six and ten' (Seltiz et al 'Research Methods in Social Relations')<sup>1</sup>

It has been pointed out by later researchers that the attitude of the judges themselves can bias the judgement of items, although it appeared that only judges with extreme attitudes will do so, and in most cases the effect will be small. The greatest drawback, however, in attempting to construct a Thurstone type of scale is the lengthy and cumbersome procedures necessary.

b) The Likert Scale (Summated Ratings Scale)

Unlike the Thurstone procedure the Likert scale does not require the judging of attitude statements. Items for the scale are selected solely on the basis of response by the subjects to whom the items are administered in the development of the test. No attempt is made to find statements which are evenly distributed over a scale of, for example, favourability or unfavourability towards internationalism. Unlike the Thurstone scoring procedure,

respondents are asked to agree or disagree with each item on a five point scale expressing degrees of agreement or disagreement. The scale is not claimed to be an ordinal scale and does not provide a basis for saying how much more favourable one individual is than another.

A disadvantage of this scale is that the location of the neutral point is highly ambiguous. The score of an individual in the middle point of the scoring range can be achieved in two ways - by taking a consistently neutral position, or by answering some items in the strongly favourable category and others in the strongly unfavourable position. 'This is a weakness of the method when our interest is in determining whether an individual is favourable or unfavourable in his attitude towards an object' (Kretch, Crutchfield and Ballachey 'The Individual in Society')<sup>2</sup>

c) The Bogardus Scale (Social Distance Scale)

The Bogardus scale uses a list of statements describing relationships to which members of a given group might be admitted. The respondent is asked to indicate the relationships to which he would admit members of various ethnic groups. The closeness of relationship that the respondent is willing to admit is the measure of his attitude. With modifications it is possible to adapt this scale to measure attitudes towards any category of persons. Its use, however, has been mainly confined to measuring attitudes towards people of different nationalities.

d) The Guttman Scale (Cumulative Scaling Method)

The Guttman scale is mainly concerned with the problem of unidimensionality through an analysis of the responses given by

a pilot group of subjects. If these statements form a Guttman scale they are claimed to be unidimensional, that is they are measuring only one dimension of an attitude. In a perfect Guttman scale it would be possible to determine which items an individual had agreed with by his score. However, such a scale is not effective 'for measuring attitudes towards more complex attitudes' (Jahoda and Warren 'Attitudes')<sup>3</sup> It is also extremely difficult to decide which items to include in the scale. 'The Guttman method has been criticised for its neglect of the problem of representativeness in selecting the initial set of statements. Guttman has asserted that the selection of a sample of statements is a matter of intuition and experience' (Kretch, Crutchfield and Ballachey 'The Individual in Society')<sup>4</sup>

e) Osgood (The Semantic Differential)

The Semantic Differential is a technique developed by Osgood and his associates in their work on the measurement of meaning. The technique provides a means of measuring the meaning of any given concept for any individual in a quantitative way. A concept is rated on a seven point scale as being more closely related to either of a pair of opposites such as good-bad. Factor analysis had revealed three major factors - evaluative, potency, and activity. By using the evaluative factor it is possible to use this technique as an attitude scale. However, concepts with highly validated factor loading would have to be found and this technique has been largely ignored in educational research.

As the requirements of the experimental attitude scale to be used in this research needed to provide a basis for stating

that one individual in a group was more favourable than another, plus some attempt to satisfactorily define the neutral region and procedures which were not only carefully defined, but validated over a considerable period, it was decided that the Thurstone equal appearing interval scale best met the needs of the research of the five methods examined, in spite of the involved procedures necessary.

'Although the assumption that Thurstone type scales are true interval scales seems doubtful, it is still possible for them to constitute reasonably satisfactory ordinal scales. That is, they provide a basis for saying that one individual is more favourable or less favourable than another.' (Jahoda and Warren 'Attitudes')<sup>5</sup>

## 2. The Construction of An Equal Appearing Interval Scale

### The Collection of Statements and Sorting Procedure

The first step in the construction of a Thurstone type attitude scale is the collection of attitude statements to form the item bank from which the scale will be constructed. Accordingly, sixty primary school teachers were asked to write a short (approximately one-hundred and fifty words), description of their feelings towards parents and their involvement with schools. They were asked to write without any inhibitions and to express their feelings and opinions as contentiously as they wished. A close inspection of the attitude statements obtained from this source revealed that the range of these statements were deficient in the neutral and highly favourable range of the universe of interest. In order to correct this deficiency, statements of this type were

added to the item pool from current educational literature, producing an item pool of two hundred and twenty-four attitude statements.

These statements were then edited according to criteria for editing attitude statements given by Allen E. Edwards<sup>6</sup> on 'Techniques of Attitude Scale Construction' which may be summarised as follows:-

1. Avoid statements that are factual or refer to the past.
2. Statements should be short, rarely exceeding twenty words, and contain only one complete thought.
3. Avoid statements that are irrelevant to the psychological object under consideration or are likely to be endorsed by almost everyone or almost nobody.
4. Statements that appear ambiguous or introduce universals such as all, none, always, should be avoided.
5. Select statements that are believed to cover the entire range of the affective scale of interest.

By editing the statements in the original item pool accordingly and rejecting some, a final list of one hundred and thirty statements was prepared, expressive of attitudes covering as far as possible all gradations from one end of the scale to the other. (Appendix A Page 29<sup>a</sup>).

#### Judging of the Attitude Statements

In the original method used to judge statements described by Thurstone and Chave in 'The Measurement of Attitudes',<sup>7</sup> a large number of judges working independently classified the attitude statements which had been printed on slips, into eleven piles. Each judge placed in the first pile those he considered to be most favourable to the object under consideration, in the second

pile those considered next most favourable. The eleventh pile consisted of those statements considered to be most unfavourable, the sixth position was considered neutral, and the intervening positions to represent varying degrees of favourability or unfavourability.

This method was considered to be impracticable for the research and a later variation of this judging procedure reported by Edwards known as the Seashore and Hevner variation of the Thurstone judging procedure was used instead. In this method the statements and printed in booklet form with the numbers one to eleven printed under each statement. The judges then make their choice by circling the number corresponding to the category into which they believe each statement falls. This method eliminates the need for a large number of judges to be assembled at a particular place at a specific time.

Fifty-five teachers had agreed to act as judges, were each given a booklet and the judging procedure was explained to them. Of the original fifty-five booklets, three were not returned, and two had reversed the scoring procedure and were eliminated. This left fifty judgements in all to be used in the construction of the final scale. Thurstone and Chave used three hundred judges in obtaining scale values for the one hundred and thirty statements they used in constructing a scale to measure attitudes towards the church, but subsequent research indicates that reliable scale values can be obtained with much smaller groups of subjects. Uhrbrook (1934), obtained judgements of two hundred and seventy-nine statements from two groups of fifty judges. The correlation between scale values obtained independently from the two groups was .99.

Correlations as high as .99 were reported by Rosander (1956) for scale values obtained independently from two groups with as few as fifteen judges in each group.

The evidence suggests that a relatively small number of judges can be used to obtain reliable scale values for statements using the method of equal appearing intervals and that the number of judgements obtained for the scale to be used in this research (50), is sufficient to obtain reliable scale values.

### Calculation of Scale and Q Values

The data obtained from the judges was tabulated and is shown in Appendix B Page 309. Three rows are shown for each statement; showing the frequency, the proportion and the cumulative proportions.

The scale values were calculated using the formula:<sup>8</sup>

$$S = l + \left( \frac{.50 - \sum pb}{pw} \right) i$$

where S = the median or scale value of the statement.

l = the lower limit of the interval in which the median falls.

- the sum of the proportions below the interval in which the median falls.

pw = the proportion within the interval in which the median falls.

i = the width of the interval and is assumed to be equal to 1.0.

Thus for the first statement in Appendix B Page 309 we have

$$S = 9.5 + \left( \frac{.50 - 0.46}{0.20} \right) 1 = 9.5 + .2 = 9.7 \text{ (Appendix B Page 309)}$$

Thurstone and Chave used the interquartile range or Q as a measure of the variation of the distribution of judgements for a given statement. The interquartile range contains the middle fifty

percent of the judgements. To determine the value of Q we need to find two other point measures; the 75th centile and the 25th centile.

The 25th centile can be obtained using the following formula.<sup>9</sup>

$$C_{25} = l + \left( \frac{.25 + \sum pb}{pw} \right) i$$

Where  $C_{25}$  = the 25th centile.

$l$  = the lower limit of the interval in which the 25th centile falls.

$\sum pb$  = the sum of the proportions below the interval in which the 25th centile falls.

$pw$  = the proportion within the interval in which the 25th centile falls.

$i$  = the width of the interval and is assumed to be equal to 1.0

The 75th centile can be obtained by the following formula.<sup>10</sup>

$$C_{75} = l + \left( \frac{.75 + \sum pb}{pw} \right) i$$

Where  $C$  = the 75th centile

$\sum pb$  = the sum of the proportions below the interval in which the 75th centile falls.

$pw$  = the proportion within the interval in which the 75th centile falls.

$i$  = the width of the interval and is assumed to be equal to 1.0.

Q will be given by taking the differences between  $C_{75}$  and  $C_{25}$

$$\text{thus } Q = C_{75} - C_{25}$$

Thus for the first statement in Appendix A Page 297 we have

$$Q = 10.765 - 8.625$$

$$Q = 2.14 \text{ (Appendix B Page 309)}$$



## The Final Scale to be Used in the Research

Edwards<sup>11</sup> states that: 'In general what is desired in constructing an attitude scale by the method of equal appearing intervals in approximately twenty to twenty-two statements on the psychological continuum that are relatively equally spaced and such that the Q values are relatively small'.

Therefore both the score and the Q value (the degree of ambiguity attributed to each statement), are to be used as criteria for the selection of twenty to twenty-two statements from the one hundred and thirty statements for which these values have been collected in compiling the final scale.

## The Experimental Attitude Scale

A final list of twenty statements of opinion was selected from the original list of one hundred and thirty opinions. The selection was made with consideration of the criterion of ambiguity (Q value), the scale value (S) and by inspection.

A matrix was prepared (Enclosure 4. Page 97. ) covering the intervals from one to eleven, the interval numbers one to ten being plotted along the horizontal with corresponding  $\frac{1}{10}$  intervals being plotted vertically, thus covering the whole range of scores at intervals of  $\frac{1}{10}$ .

Each statement value from the tables was plotted according to its S value in the following manner - the statement number was entered in the appropriate block e.g. statement number 1 had a scale value of 9.70 and was thus entered in the ninth column and eight row as it fell in the interval 9.70 to 9.80, the interval

block being shaded. All one hundred and thirty statements were entered in this manner. The scores ranged from a scale value of 1.21 (No.4) to scale value 10.90 (No.3.).

On examining the chart it was evident that the interval row .8 to .9 and .5 to .6 were the most complete, both having 9 entries out of 10. As approximately 20 statements were required for the final scale the rows of .5 difference from the above two rows were examined. Row .3 to .4 containing 7 out of a possible 10 values was chosen in preference to row 0 to .1 which had 6 out of a possible 10 values. As a secondary consideration, before making the final choice values close to the missing interval values were looked for. Acceptable values for row .3 to .4 were found to exist (e.g. No.71 for value 6.3 to 6.4), however, for row 0 to .1 no satisfactory values for intervals .5 to 5.1 or 6 to 6.1 could be found. Thus the intervals chosen to be used in selecting the twenty statements to be used in the final scale were the intervals from 1.3 to 1.4 rising by .5 to the interval 10.8 to 10.9.

This procedure left a choice between certain statements that fell in the same interval block e.g. numbers 28, 46 and 91 all fell in the same interval block 1.8 to 1.9. In general choice was made by selecting the statement with the lowest Q value. In this case statement 91 had a Q value of 1.28 against 1.24 for No.28 and 2.02 for No.46. When two Q values appeared to have little significant difference, in this case 1.28 as opposed to 1.24, the criteria of inspection was used. The statement 'I think that close co-operation between teachers and parents is almost essential to education at its best', was given preference over the statement 'I feel the knowledge gained by the teacher about individual children by close co-operation with parents

would be of great value'; as it was felt desirable to include a statement indicative of general, rather than particular opinion, on the value of co-operation between school and home.

When a statement was not available for the chosen interval, the statement with a score value closest to that interval was chosen. When two such statements were equally spaced for the interval 4.3 to 4.4., the statement with the lowest Q value was chosen. The only exception to this procedure was the selection for interval value 7.8 to 7.9. In this case No.69 which had a score value of 7.75 was closest but since its Q value was very high (3.79), it was considered too ambiguous and preference was given to statement No.59 (scale value 7.66) which had a low Q value of 1.55.

The final experimental scale contained twenty statements ranging from a score of 1.37 (statement No.124) to 10.84 (No.47) with interval spacing of .5 or as close to .5 as was possible from the data. (Enclosure 5 Page 98).

#### The Administration of the Scale

The final list of twenty statements were arranged randomly and printed in the form of a booklet with the instructions printed on the cover, (Appendix C Page 326). Each of the forty-three subjects was visited, given a booklet, and had the procedure explained. A stamped addressed envelope was supplied and the completed attitude scale returned to the researcher with the statements with which the subject agreed ticked. All forty-four subjects returned a completed proforma, which was scored by using

the median of the statements agreed with. If a subject agrees with an odd number of statements his score is the scale value of the middle statement arranged in their rank order. If an even number of statements has been agreed with, the midpoint of the scale distance between the two middle statements is taken as the score.



ENCLOSURE FIVE

Experimental Attitude Scale 20 Items

		<u>Score</u>	<u>Q Value</u>
1. (124)	I think that real parent involvement in schools would be a great stride forward for the education service.	1.33	1.26
2. ( 91)	I think that close co-operation between teachers and parents is essential to education at its best.	1.85	1.28
3. ( 50)	I think that parents would better understand the difficulties facing teachers if links between parents and teachers were closer.	2.33	1.35
4. (128)	I feel that teachers can become aware of small anxieties which cause a child unnecessary worry, if parent-teacher co-operation is good.	2.87	1.68
5. ( 56)	I feel that special efforts should be made by schools to contact the parents of neglected children	3.33	2.65
6. ( 18)	I think that parents should be given a booklet prepared by the school telling them how their children are being educated.	3.83	2.65
7. (115)	I believe that from time to time parents could be consulted on certain aspects of their childrens education.	4.5	2.81
8. (117)	I feel that with selected parents consultation with the school on matters of policy might be constructive.	4.85	2.11
9. ( 70)	I believe in school/home co-operation but with mental reservations.	5.33	3.06
10. ( 73)	Sometimes I think that close contacts between school and home are necessary and sometimes I doubt it.	5.89	0.76
11. (71)	I do not receive any benefit from parent-teacher meetings but I think some teachers do.	6.27	2.90

		Score	Q Value
12. (121)	I think that few parents will attend meetings organised by the school which are of an educational nature.	6.88	2.40
13. (106)	I believe that efforts to involve parents in their childrens education fail because of the difficulty in involving fathers.	7.38	2.8 <del>5</del>
14. ( 59)	I believe that few parents will accept constructive criticism of their children by teachers.	7.66	1.55
15. (123)	I feel that the teacher is the expert and in educational matters parents must recognise that his is the last word.	8.39	2.46
16. (101)	I think that organised attempts at parent-teacher co-operation presents a danger of the usurpation of the teachers free time.	8.86	2.10
17.( 92)	I feel that much of the talk about the importance of parents being involved in education is just pious platitudes.	9.33	1.97
18. ( 17)	I think that parents become too interferred if encouraged by the school to participate in their childrens education.	9.85	1.83
19. ( 5)	I do not regard teaching as any kind of social work. Teachers should not become involved with the parents of their pupils.	10.41	1.83
20. ( 47)	I think that the only possible advice to a headteacher considering starting a scheme for increased parent-teacher co-operation is 'don't'!	10.84	0.66

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CHAPTER TEN

## THE PROPOSED STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF THE DATA

Although tables showing percentage responses by the survey respondents in the sample to certain questions used in the interviews are shown in chapters twelve, thirteen and fourteen, the major concern of the statistical treatment of the data was to use the scores obtained from the experimental attitude scale to:

- a) Investigate any possible statistically significant differences in attitudes towards parents, between different categories of headteachers within the survey sample.
  - b) Test the reliability of the experimental attitude scale.
  - c) Test the validity of the experimental attitude scale.
1. Use of the 'students' 't' test to investigate possible Significant differences in attitudes towards parents of different categories of headteachers within the survey sample

Information concerning each respondent's age, sex, type of school, size of school and an estimate of the social class composition of the school catchment area, had been obtained during the survey interviews. (For a detailed description of the criteria for size of school and social class composition of school see chapter eleven). These categories produced sub-groups of thirty-one and twelve, nineteen and twenty-four, nineteen and twenty-four, ten and thirty-three and twenty-two and twenty-one respectively.

In each case the mean response score and variance of each sub-group was calculated from the experimental attitude scale scores (see tables 1-5 Pages 124-5). The identification of statistically significant differences in attitudes towards

parental involvement with schools of each pair of sub-groups, was made by use of the 'students' 't' test, where 't' was obtained from the formula<sup>1</sup>

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_J - \bar{X}_I}{\frac{s}{(\sigma)} \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_J} + \frac{1}{N_I}}} \quad \text{where } \sigma = \sqrt{\frac{N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2}}$$

In order to calculate a 't' score for the difference between two means, it is necessary to assume that  $\sigma_x = \sigma_y$ . 'In order to check on this assumption, it is necessary to derive a frequency function that can be used for testing the equality of two variances ----- the 'F' distribution was derived partly in order to justify the assumption of the equality of variances which is needed in the 't' test when that test is applied to testing the difference between two means.' (P.G. Hoel 'Introduction to Mathematical Statistics' 1962)<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, in each case reference was made to tables of F distribution to justify equality of variances. (See tables 24-28 Appendix E Pages 332-8 for calculations). The results of the 't' test are shown in tables 1,2,3,4, and 5, chapter eleven, Pages 124-5).

## 2. The Reliability of the Experimental Attitude Scale

According to Anastasi<sup>3</sup> (1961): 'the reliability of a test refers to the consistency of scores obtained by the same individuals on different occasions or with different sets of equivalent items.' The usual procedure for determining the reliability of a Thurstone type attitude scale, such as the attitude scale used in this research, is that of equivalent form reliability. This procedure is described by Edwards<sup>4</sup> in 'Techniques of Attitude Scale Construction':

'It has been customary among those working with the method of equal appearing intervals to construct two comparable forms of the attitude scale ----- If both forms of the attitude scale are then given to the same group of subjects, the scores for the subjects in the two forms can be correlated and this correlation taken as a measure of the reliability of the scale.'

However, in testing the reliability of the experimental attitude scale designed for this survey, a problem of procedure arose. The headteacher respondents had already given generously of their time in completing lengthy survey interviews and the attitude scale proforma. It was felt that a further demand on their time to test the reliability of the experimental attitude scale would be unreasonable, and a method which did not necessitate any further co-operation on their part must be used for this purpose.

It is possible to calculate the reliability of a test from a single administration, by the use of split half procedure. It was therefore decided to use this method to test the reliability of the experimental attitude scale. While this is possibly a less efficient procedure for calculating the reliability of a Thurstone type attitude scale, in this particular case, it was felt that circumstances warranted it.

The attitude scale was divided for the purpose of split half reliability, into odd and even items. A table was produced showing separately the odd and even items of the scale, with which each subject had agreed. A separate score was calculated for the odd and even items (See Table 29 Appendix F Page 340 ). However a respondent completing a Thurstone type attitude scale proforma

checks only those statements with which he agrees. Statements with which he does not agree are ignored for scoring purposes. Two respondents had agreed with odd items only and one respondent with even items only, and could not be included in the split half procedure. The calculations were therefore based on the scores of forty respondents only.

The correlation between the two sets of scores was calculated using the product moment formula for the linear correlation co-efficient.

$$r = \frac{\sum d_1 d_2}{\sqrt{\sum d_1^2 \cdot \sum d_2^2}} \quad (\text{Spiegel 1961})^5$$

A table was produced showing the calculation of the degree of correlation between the two split half scores. (Appendix F Table 30 Page 341 ).

### 3. The Validity of the Experimental Attitude Scale

The validity of a measuring instrument such as the experimental attitude scale used in this research is defined by <sup>6</sup> Seltiz et al as: 'the extent to which differences in scores on it reflect true differences among individuals, groups, or situations in the characteristic which it seeks to measure.'

If an attitude scale measures a representative sample of all the beliefs, feelings and tendencies towards certain types of action with regard to the psychological object it is attempting to measure; it may be said to have content validity, or be intrinsically valid. It is often claimed that a Thurstone type of attitude scale, because of the lengthy preliminary procedure of collecting a large pool of attitude statements relating to the attitude in question and then exposing them to judgements, has

a high degree of content validity. Kretch<sup>7</sup> et al, describing a scale of this type states that: 'These scaling methods, therefore, can be said to have content validity for the measurement of the belief and feeling components of an attitude.'

However, a different type of validity must also be considered, that of empirical validity, according to Garret<sup>8</sup> (1967), who points out that: 'a test is valid when performances which it measures correspond to the same performances as otherwise independently measured.' Thurstone and Chave<sup>9</sup>, used a self rating scale consisting of: 'a horizontal line across the page on which we asked the subject to indicate by a cross where he estimated his own attitude to be. At one end of this line was printed the phrase 'Strongly Favourable to the Church'; at the middle of the line was printed the word 'neutral'; and at the other end of the line there was the phrase 'Strongly against the Church'; to measure the validity of their scale.

The problem of which criteria are an acceptable independent measure has always caused difficulty in attempts to establish the validity of an attitude scale. In the case of the particular experimental attitude scale, designed to measure headteachers attitudes towards parental involvement with schools, this difficulty also arose, as there appeared to be no standardised equivalent attitude scale available. It was decided, therefore, to attempt to use the survey interviews as independent criteria, in order to establish whether or not the experimental attitude scale was measuring the attitudes of the respondents towards parental involvement with schools with a high degree of validity. This meant that some method had to be found to produce quantitative

data from the survey interviews, before the two measuring instruments could be correlated, in order to calculate the degree of correlation between them.

### The Procedures Adopted

a) In order to produce quantitative data from the survey interviews, the following procedure was adopted. Five questions were selected from the first part of the survey interviews which dealt with general attitudes towards parental involvement with schools, similar to those measured by the experimental attitude scale. Criteria were established for rating the responses to each of these questions on a five point scale. (The questions and the criteria established for their rating on a five point scale are shown in Enclosure 6 Page 109 ).

Twenty-one transcripts of the survey interviews were selected at random from the forty-three available. These transcripts were given to an independent judge, together with the criteria for rating in a five point scale. The judge was asked to give the transcript response of each subject in each of the five questions a score in the five point scale using the established criteria. These selected transcripts were then rated independently by the researcher using the same procedure. A table was drawn up showing the two sets of judgements (Appendix F Table 31 Page 342 ) and these were then correlated using the formula to calculate the co-efficient of correlation if a linear relationship between two variables is assumed.

$$r = \frac{\sum xy}{\sqrt{(\sum x^2)(\sum y^2)}}$$

(Spiegel 1961)<sup>10</sup>

where  $x = X - \bar{X}$  and  $y = Y - \bar{Y}$

The resulting correlation was calculated to be .913 (Appendix F Table 32 Page 343 ). This correlation between the two sets of judgements was considered to be high enough to assume that the judgements of the researcher were relatively unbiased.

b) The researcher then proceeded to rate the remaining twenty-two transcripts, using the same procedure, and a table was drawn up showing these forty-three transcript ratings for each of the five questions selected from the survey interview. This enabled the two measuring instruments used in the research to be compared for validity by obtaining the degree of correlation between the experimental attitude scale and the survey interviews, as rated on the five point scale. Spearman's formula for calculating the co-efficient of rank correlation was used for this purpose.

$$r = \frac{\sum xy}{\sqrt{(\sum x^2)(\sum y^2)}} \quad \text{where } x = X - \bar{X} \quad \text{and } y = Y - \bar{Y} \quad (\text{Spiegel 1961})^{11}$$

where D = differences between ranks of corresponding values of X and Y.

N = number of pairs or values (X,Y.) in the data.

(These ranks and the calculation of the co-efficient of rank correlation are shown in Appendix F Table 33 Page 344 ).



Table to Show Criteria Established for Ranking Selected

Interview Questions on a Five Point Scale

Q.1. 'Do you think that the involvement of parents with their childrens school recommended by the Flowden Report is worthwhile?'

Criteria. Attitude to involvement with parents

Very Worthwhile / Worthwhile / Neutral / Not Worthwhile / Unworthwhile

Q.2. 'Do you think that most parents are anxious for more involvement with their children's school?'

Criteria. Estimate of Parental Anxiety for Involvement

Very Anxious / Anxious / Neutral / Indifferent / Very Indifferent

Q.3. 'What kinds of limits would you place on parental involvement with schools?'

Criteria. Heads limits on parental involvement with the school

No limits / Very Few Limits / Neutral / Some Limits / Many Limits

Q.4. 'If a group of parents approached you with a request to start a Parent-Teacher Association what would your reaction be?'

Criteria. Reaction to idea of Parent-Teacher Association

Very Favourable / Favourable / Neutral / Unfavourable / Highly Unfavourable

Q.5. 'How can you be sure there is a good relationship between a school and parents?'

Criteria. General Attitude to Headteachers Contacts with Parents

Very Sympathetic / Sympathetic / Neutral / Unsympathetic / Very Unsympathetic

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**CHAPTER ELEVEN**

## THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS.

Any investigation of relations between schools and parents must take into account both the attitudes of headteachers towards parents and how these attitudes effect the way a school organises co-operation with parents. If the school is seen as an organisation consisting of a system of interlocking roles, the attitudes and role behaviour of the headteacher will be important factors in the relationship between a school and parents. As Hoyle<sup>1</sup> points out, 'there is no doubt that the climate of the British school is to a large extent shaped by the manner in which a headteacher perceives and performs his role.'

The forty-three respondents of this survey were all headteachers of primary schools in a Tyneside County Borough. Nineteen were headteachers of infant schools and twenty-four were headteachers of junior schools. All of the nineteen infant headteachers were women, while the twenty-four junior headteachers consisted of nineteen men and five women. The majority of the respondents were over fifty years of age.

The small number of respondents, together with the restricted area from which the sample was drawn, places obvious limitations on this enquiry. A study of the attitudes of headteachers in a larger sample, or a different social context, may well reveal attitudes towards parents which vary considerably from the attitudes of the forty-three respondents of this particular survey. Nevertheless, because all the respondents in this particular survey are headteachers; their attitudes will have a direct influence on a considerable number of people; three hundred and fifty eight

teachers working in these schools; ten thousand six hundred and twenty children being educated in them; and the parents of these children.

In order to investigate and describe these attitudes, two instruments of measurement were used in the research. An experimental attitude scale was used to obtain quantitative data (attitude scale scores), and a focused interview with each respondent to obtain qualitative data about how the headteachers perceived their role in relation to parents, and information about school organisation concerning parents. These interviews, it was hoped, would help to explore the nuances and qualifications, which lie behind the kind of objective responses obtained from an attitude scale. While considerable use will be made in subsequent chapters of material drawn from the headteacher interviews, this chapter however, will be confined to an examination of the attitudes towards parents of the headteacher respondents, as measured by their scores on the experimental attitude scale.

The literature of education, and particularly articles about home/school relations in the educational press, frequently contain generalisations about relations between parents and schools - for example, the idea that relations between parents and infant schools are better than in later stages of education. The Plowden Report itself contained this particular generalisation in the chapter entitled, 'Participation by Parents'. It is intended in this chapter to use the quantitative data obtained from the experimental attitude scale scores, to attempt to examine statistically some of these generalisations, and their correlation if any, with the attitudes of the headteacher respondents in this investigation, within the limitations of a small scale exploratory survey.

## The Procedures Adopted

The final list of twenty statements, comprising the experimental attitude scale, had been arranged in random order and printed in the form of a booklet. Each survey respondent had been visited by the researcher and the procedure for completing the attitude scale had been explained to them. A stamped addressed envelope was supplied with the booklet, and the completed proforma returned by post. All forty-three respondents returned a completed proforma. (For a detailed description of the procedures involved in constructing the final scale see Chapter Nine).

Information about the respondents sex, age, type of school, size of school and an estimate of the social class composition of the school catchment area, had been obtained during the interviews. These five types of information formed the principal categories by which the scores were analysed. The mean response scores of each sub-group within these five categories was calculated from the attitude scale scores. The identification of statistically significant differences between the mean response scores of these sub-groups was made by the students 't' test. The mean response scores, the variance, and the 't' test results for each pair of sub-groups, are shown in tables 1-5 (The 0.05 level of statistical significance was adopted throughout).

### 1. Infant and Junior Schools

A common generalisation about relations between parents and schools, is that relations between the two are best and most intimate at nursery school, good at infant school, and that these

good relations established in the early stages of education, tend to deteriorate as the child passes through junior and secondary education. The Plowden Report<sup>2</sup> reflected this viewpoint when as part of a discussion on the merits or otherwise of Parent-Teacher Associations, it stated that they were least common in nursery schools, 'where relations between mothers and teachers are usually very intimate'.

The sample was accordingly divided into infant and junior school respondent sub-groups, in an attempt to investigate this particular generalisation. This produced an infant sub-group of nineteen, and a junior sub-group of twenty-four. In this case there appeared to be no statistically significant difference in attitudes between these two sub-groups, as measured by the students 't' test. (Table 1. Page 124 ).

## 2. Male and Female

Until very recently infant school headteachers and staff were exclusively female. It could therefore be argued that the closer and 'more intimate' relations with parents usually attributed to infant schools, could well be a result of attitudes to parents related to <sup>the</sup>sex of the teacher, rather than to any particular type of school. The exclusively 'female atmosphere', associated with this type of school, may be responsible for the closer relations with parents often attributed to infant schools. The sex of the headteacher may also be an important factor.

In order to investigate this proposition, the sample was divided into male and female respondents, producing sub-groups

of nineteen and twenty-four respectively. In this case there was no significant difference in attitudes towards parents between the male and female respondents as measured by the 't' test. (Table 2 Page 124).

### 3. Size of Schools

Another generalisation concerning relations between schools and parents, is that the larger the school, the more personal relationships of all kind become less close; both between teachers and pupils and teachers and parents. The Flowden Report used this generalisation in the chapter entitled 'Participation by Parents'.<sup>3</sup> In a discussion about Parent-Teacher Associations, the report stated, 'it may be the smaller the school, the less the need for a formal association.'

In order to investigate this proposition a decision had to be made in terms of this survey about what constituted a 'large', and a 'small' school. As this survey is concerned only with primary schools, the very large numbers of pupils associated with secondary schools were not in evidence. The largest school in the survey sample, a junior school, was attended by five hundred and thirty-one pupils, and the smallest, an infant school, by sixty-six pupils. On average, the junior schools in the survey sample had larger numbers.

For the purposes of this survey, schools with over three hundred pupils were designated 'large schools', and schools with under three-hundred pupils 'small schools'. This procedure produced a 'large school' sub-group of ten schools, and a 'small schools' sub-group of thirty-three schools. As measured by the



't' test, there was no significant difference in attitudes to parents between respondents in the 'large school' or 'small school' sub-groups. (Table 3 Page 124).

#### 4. Social Class

It is frequently suggested in the educational press and the literature of education, that good relations between schools and parents are most difficult in schools which have a predominately working-class catchment area. This can be attributed both to the lack of interest in the home in schools and education, and the attitudes of teachers and headteachers towards working-class parents. This relationship between socio-economic status and attendance at school functions was pointed out in the Flowden Report:<sup>4</sup> 'The higher the socio-economic group, the more parents attended open days, concerts and parent-teacher association meetings, and the more often they talked with heads and class teachers about how their children were getting on.'

Jackson and Marsden,<sup>5</sup> in their study of schools in a Northern town, identified a group of working-class parents who were reluctant about approaching the school. They kept a respectful distance from the staff and the headteacher in particular. In their view, 'all parents were unimportant but they were the most unimportant.'

The question of whether it is unfavourable attitudes towards working-class parents on the part of teachers and headteachers that produce these sentiments in parents was posed by J.B. Mays:<sup>6</sup> 'Do teachers realise sufficiently that education involves a tripartite partnership between school, home and locality? Or do they somewhat arrogantly assume that the parents ought to

collaborate with them implicitly and unquestioningly, and that the locality must either accept the norms supported by the school, or simply be ignored?

An attempt was made in this survey to investigate a possible correlation between the attitudes to parents of the headteacher respondents, and the socio-economic composition of a school's catchment area. As part of the interview, each respondent had been asked to estimate the percentage of parents of children attending their school who were manual workers, and the percentage of parents who were professional or 'white collar' workers. While this is an obviously crude definition of social class, it was necessitated by the fact that very few of the headteacher respondents kept any record of parental occupation in the admission register. These social class estimates on the part of each respondent were therefore necessarily subjective. However, as it is probably what the headteacher thinks is the social class composition of the school catchment area that will influence his attitudes to home/school relationship, their estimates of social class composition of school catchment areas were therefore accepted for the purposes of this research.

In order to divide the respondents into two sub-groups, made up on the one hand of those who were headteachers of schools with an almost exclusively working-class intake, and those who were not, the following criteria was used. One, that any respondent who had estimated that less than five percent of the parents of the children attending his or her school, were in professional or white collar occupations was designated as part of the 'low social class school' sub-group. And any respondent who had estimated a higher proportion of parents in professional or white collar occupations, was placed in the 'high social class school' sub-group.

This procedure produced sub-groups of twenty-one (low social class school), and twenty-two (high social class school). There was no significant difference in attitudes towards parents between the two sub-groups, as measured by the 't' test. (Table 5, Page 125 ).

5. Over Fifty years of age and under Fifty years of age

What, if any, is the relationship between attitudes and age? It could be claimed that one would expect an individual to become more conservative and are less likely to change firmly held opinions as they became older. If so, could one expect the attitudes to parents of the older headteachers in this sample to be more conservative and less able to adapt to social and educational change?

Research published in 1968 by Oliver and Butcher,<sup>7</sup> would appear to lend some support to this proposition. In an investigation of teachers attitudes to education, they used three attitude scales measuring radicalism in education, naturalism in education and tender mindedness in education, with a representative sample of three hundred teachers. On the scale of tendermindedness, teachers over fifty years of age were significantly more tough minded in their attitudes to education than those in all other age groups. The authors point out that, 'the older the teachers the more conservative and tough minded they were as described by their mean score.'

More recent research, however, published by Louis Cohen<sup>8</sup> in 1971, which examined the relationship between age and role conceptions of a national sample of three hundred and ninety-five headteachers of infant, junior and secondary schools, did

not support this result. Older headteachers, again those over fifty years of age, were found to exhibit less authoritarianism than younger headteachers. It was the younger headteachers who, 'gave greater support to browbeating methods in dealing with difficult parents.'

For the purposes of this survey the dichotomy was also made at fifty years of age. Those headteachers who were over fifty years of age were designated 'older headteachers', and those under fifty were designated as 'younger headteachers'. Thirty-one respondents were designated as 'older headteachers' and twelve respondents as 'younger headteachers'.

In this case, a significant difference in attitudes between the two groups was revealed by the 't' test. The 'younger headteachers group' had significantly more favourable attitudes to parents than the 'older headteachers'. (Table 4, Page 125).

### Conclusions and Implications

This chapter has attempted to analyse possible correlations between the attitudes of the headteacher respondents to parents and five principal categories of information about the respondents. These categories were designed to examine some common generalisations about relations between parents and schools; the mean response scores of each sub-group within these five categories having been calculated from the scores obtained from the experimental attitude scale. Of the five categories investigated only one, (the under and over fifty age groups), showed any statistically significant difference in attitudes to parents between the two sub-groups.

The type of school, sex, size of school and social class composition of the school's catchment area, all proved to have no significant relationship with the attitudes towards parents of the respondents in this survey. However, in the case of 'large schools' and 'small schools' as defined for the purposes of this survey, it may well be that the particular criteria for defining 'large' and 'small' primary schools used in this survey, may be responsible for the lack of any statistically significant differences between these sub-groups.

The question of why there should be no correlation between a headteacher's attitudes and the social class composition of a school catchment area revealed by the analysis used in this survey, has two possible explanations. The rather crude definition of working class, used in the headteachers' estimate, of the percentage of parents falling into various socio-economic grouping; or the arbitrary decision to designate only schools with less than five percent of parents in managerial or 'white collar' occupations, may well account for this.

Another possible explanation, however, and one which it may be possible to generalise outside the limitations of this survey; is that headteachers of schools with a large percentage of parents in professional occupations, may well have attitudes to parents just as unfavourable as those headteachers who have unfavourable attitudes to working class parents. These unfavourable attitudes towards parents of a higher socio-economic status, may be the result of what the headteachers see as interference rather than interest in the school, on the part of this type of parents. These feelings can be illustrated by the words of one headteacher respondent whose school was designated as 'high social class',

and whose catchment area included one of the highest percentages of 'white collar workers' in the entire sample. Respondent number twenty-one said as part of the focused interview:

'I find here in this particular district, the emphasis is on one thing only - the eleven plus. The children must get through the eleven plus at all costs. A lot of them have their children coached and any success the child has is due to them, and any failure is the fault of the school - and they're very quick to criticise.'

This survey showed a significant difference in attitudes towards parents between the over fifty and under fifty age groups of headteacher respondents. The under fifty group had significantly more favourable attitudes to parents than the older age group. This result could be said to agree with Oliver and Butchers findings of significantly more tough minded and conservative attitudes to education in the over fifties age group in their research. While it does not support Cohen's more recent research, which found that it was the under fifties age group which exhibited more authoritarianism in its attitudes to parents; the different composition of the sample could account for different results. It should be pointed out, as Cohen himself pointed out in his paper, that his results did not support American studies, which had found authoritarianism, close mindedness, and lack of educational innovation to be characteristic of the beliefs of older school principals.

The lack of any positive correlation between sex, type of school, size of school, social class composition of the school catchment area, and the attitudes towards parents of the respondents

of this survey, could be said to lead to two conclusions. Firstly, that many common generalisations about the relationships between parents and schools should be interpreted with caution; and secondly, that it would appear that a determinant of whether a school has good relations with parents is the headteacher. This would appear to be true regardless of the type, size or social class composition of the school's catchment area, or the sex of the headteacher. It is the attitudes to parents reflected in the total personality of the individual headteacher, that may well determine whether the relations between a particular school and parents is one of mutual respect and co-operation, or of mistrust and lack of co-operation. Whether or not this factor appears in the opinions of the headteacher respondents as they described them in the survey interviews will be examined in the following chapters.

Table 1.

Attitudes of headteachers to parental involvement with schools:

			Infant V Junior		
Category	No. in Group	Mean Score	Variance	't' test	Significance
Infant	19	4.82	3.142	.370	N.S.
Junior	24	4.28	3.204		

Table 2.

Attitudes of headteachers to parental involvement with schools:

			Male v Female		
Category	No. in Group	Mean Score	Variance	't' test	Significance
Male	19	4.59	2.68	.017	N.S.
Female	24	4.58	3.72		

Table 3.

Attitudes of headteachers to parental involvement with schools

			Large School (Over 300) Small School (Under 300)		
Category	No. in Group	Mean Score	Variance	't' test	Significance
Large School	10	4.336	3.31	0.465	N.S.
Small School	33	4.66	3.167		



Table 4.

Attitudes of headteachers to parental involvement with schools:

Over 50 years of Age v  
Under 50 years of Age.

4.

Category	No. in Group	Mean Score	Variance	't' test	Significance
Over 50	31	4.93	3.578	2.06	Sig. at 5% level
Under 50	12	3.70	1.26		

Table 5.

Attitudes of headteachers to parental involvement with schools

Low Social Class School v  
High Social Class School

5.

Category	No. in Group	Mean Score	Variance	't' test	Significance
High S.C. School	22	4.048	4.068	1.38	N.S.
Low S.C. School	21	2.106	4.21		

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CHAPTER TWELVE

## REPORTING TO PARENTS

This chapter is concerned with contact between schools and parents in its most limited form - how the primary schools in this survey provided for the personal element of a parent's interest in education. This personal element arises directly from the parents concern for the child, and at its most elementary, takes the form of a desire to know what the school is doing for the child, and the progress the child is making.

The question of how schools should report to parents about their children's progress is one about which there has been considerable discussion and some controversy. There would appear to be general agreement that a detailed written report on children at the infant school stage is of doubtful value, but there is some evidence to suggest that most parents would welcome some kind of written report about children of junior school age.

### 1. Previous Research and its Implications

In 1961, the Political and Economic Planning Unit, published the results of a survey into parent-teacher contact in a booklet entitled, 'Parents Views on Education'<sup>1</sup>. Almost half of the mothers interviewed for this research felt that they were not told enough about their childrens education and asked to be given more information by the school. The report added:

'About a third of the mothers with children at Junior schools commented critically on a school in this category. It was Junior schools that came in for most criticism'.

The Plowden Report, published six years later in 1967, produced similar evidence from the interviews with mothers held for the National Survey.<sup>2</sup> The report stated that:

'Approximately half the parents said they would have liked to have been told more about how their children were getting on at school.' While the evidence of these researches may suggest that parents wanted more information about their children's progress, the question remains - In what form should a school report to parents about their children's progress? In an ideal relationship between school and parent there would be little need for any kind of written report except for record purposes, but where the contacts between parent and school are infrequent, a written report may assume much greater importance.

The Plowden Report appeared to assume that written reports of a traditional kind were a thing of the past - the use of the past tense in this extract is perhaps significant:

'Written reports in the past have often been a waste of time, since they were so conventional they conveyed nothing to the parents. There is a genuine problem, parents need to know how their children are getting on, yet may fail to distinguish between effort and achievement, or be wounded by the truth and discourage their children. Useful reports are difficult to write and take time.'<sup>3</sup>

The report, however, concluded on balance that primary schools should send a written report to parents at least once a year. It stressed that this written report should be seen as a part of a general programme to inform parents about their children,

which would support discussion with parents about their children's progress.' An examination of the minimum programme to increase contacts between schools and parents recommended by Flowden, shows that direct personal contacts between parents and teachers were regarded as much more important. Among the means suggested to achieve these contacts were private interviews between parents and teachers, open days, and occasions where parents could see their children's work.

## 2. The Evidence of this Survey and its Interpretation

In order to describe how the primary schools in this survey reported to parents about their children's progress, the following procedure was adopted:

The forty-three headteacher respondents had all been asked as part of a structured private interview the question, 'How are parents informed about their children's progress in your school?' As a transcript had been prepared of each of these interviews, the entire response of each respondent was available for analysis and tabulation. A preliminary examination of the responses to this particular question, showed that a variety of methods were being used. Some schools used a traditional type of written report issued by the Local Authority; some used reports of their own design; some had rejected written reports entirely and used private interviews with parents. Some schools were using a combination of written reports and interviews between parents and teachers.

A coding frame was prepared using these various categories. The transcripts were re-examined and the particular type of procedure which each respondent described was recorded on an

individual coding frame and the numbers in each category were tabulated for the survey sample of forty-three schools.

Out of the schools in the survey the majority, twenty-four schools, (55.8% of the sample as a whole), did not use written reports at all. The remaining nineteen schools (44.2%), issued some type of written reports to parents. None of the nineteen infant schools in the survey sample used any kind of written report. Of the twenty-four junior schools, five issued no written report on principle, ten used the traditional type of report issued by the Local Education Authority and nine schools used a report of their own design (Table 6. Page 149).

There was great variety in the form of parental interviews. Some were an entirely private discussion between a teacher and parent which had been carefully timetabled and arranged in advance. Other schools set aside certain days for talks between teachers and parents, but did not arrange for private interviews. The majority of the schools in the survey which used talks between teachers and parents, did so as part of an occasion such as an open day, when other activities took place. Most schools made these arrangements during the day, although six schools provided opportunities for parents to meet their children's teacher in the evening (Table 7. Page 149).

Some schools used a combination of a written report and parental interviews to inform parents about their children's progress. Of the six schools which combined written reports with timetabled private interviews, three used the report form issued by the Local Education Authority and three used report forms of their own design. Four schools in the survey used written

reports but made no formal arrangements for parents to meet teachers, preferring parents to visit the school on their own initiative to enquire about their childrens progress. (Table 8. Page 150).

While these tables show a great variety of methods used to report to parents about their childrens progress, and that certain procedures were more popular than others, these tabulations suggest certain questions and further lines of enquiry. Why did none of the infant schools in the survey use written reports and were their reasons for not doing so similar to the Junior schools who had discontinued this type of reporting? Why did some Junior schools use a report form of their own design? Why did some schools prefer private timetabled interviews with parents to more casual arrangements? Why did some headteachers feel that a combination of a written report and interviews with parents was necessary?

In an attempt to answer these questions and to organise this mass of apparently unrelated evidence into a form suitable for a more searching analysis, the transcripts were re-examined under three broad classifications suggested by the Flowden proposals. These were, 'Written Reports', Interviews with Parents', and 'Seeing Children's Work.'

### 3. Written Reports

The use of written reports by primary schools has a long tradition. Their use was first officially recommended by the Hadow Report<sup>4</sup> of 1931 in its recommendations for primary schools. The report recommended that:

'In order to enlist the interest of parents in the progress of their children, a terminal or annual report on each individual



pupil, based largely on the school record, should be sent to them.'

On the evidence of this survey, perhaps the Plowden Report was over optimistic when it talked about the use of these traditional type of reports in the past tense. Almost a quarter of the schools in the survey sample were using a report form of the traditional type to report to parents about their childrens progress. This report form was one issued by the Local Education Authority. It consisted of a single sheet divided into traditional subject categories, with a space for class position, but little space for considered observations by either the teacher or headteacher, and made no provision for comment or observation by parents.

Describing the traditional written report of this type, Lawrence Green<sup>5</sup> wrote in 1968:

'They are teacher centred, full of exhortation - though it is often unclear whether it is the child or the parents who are bein exhorted, and written in academic language. They record, in a mechanical way, what has happened and pay little attention to what could be improved or altered. They are addressed to parents, but make little attempt to enlist their co-operation. Their manner is often scathing or patronising. They are not really communications but statements. They are out of date relics of a past educational era and in no way reflect the new and exciting ideas being put into practice in many schools.'

Nine schools in the sample had discarded this type of report form and used a report form of their own design. Their reasons for this varied, but can be illustrated by quoting the opinions of the respondents themselves. One headteacher had

discarded it because of the way in which it was set out.

Respondent Number fourteen said:

'We have written reports. Not the standard one, one of our own. The other one is very badly set out, with not enough room on them. You have to keep crossing things out.'

Another headteacher disliked the element of competition inherent in the traditional report form. Respondent number seventeen said:

'We issue written reports twice a year to take home, one that our particular school has evolved over a number of years. There's no competitive basis in it, no class position. The child is competing against its own potential.'

Another reason mentioned by respondent number twenty-two, was that a report should contain features not included in a traditional report:

'I give one full report and it's not the usual useless report. I've made my own, which contains such things as ability to work alone, how co-operative with other children - term work, not just examinations marks. Not these useless phrases!'

Some schools were continually experimenting, altering, and adapting their report. As respondent number eighteen described it:

'We've changed it three times already and still don't like it.'

Another respondent was more certain about the kind of information parents wanted and had designed a report accordingly. He felt that a report was essentially a two way communication. Respondent number twenty-four described this type of report in detail:

'The written report for the junior age group classifies general subjects on a five point scale, as I feel parents want some indication of their child's ability, even though the report is an individual one. There are two sections for each subject, one for attainment and one for effort, which I regard as being more important. The five point scale runs from A excellent, B very good, C average, D below average, E very weak. We have to explain this to parents as they are disturbed by C and its connotations of streaming. We also include a section on social attitudes. I include in the report a section on which the parents can put remarks or information they think would be helpful.'

Respondent number ten felt that even this type of carefully planned report was too formal to report adequately on individual children. He said:

'We give an individual report on each child, not class position or anything like that. I believe in giving an individual letter for each child, which just deals with that child.'

The preliminary tabulations of the transcripts had shown that none of the infant schools in the survey used a written report at all. Five primary schools had also discontinued the use of written reports. In both cases written reports had been rejected on principle, although the reasons given were different. Infant schools tended to prefer verbal reports and felt that written reports were unsuitable for very young children.

Respondent number thirty-one said:

'I feel that at the infant stage children develop at such different rates, in all sorts of ways. You cannot really report

on a child like this.'

These sentiments were echoed by respondent number forty-three, when she said:

'Quite frankly, I don't think its very sensible to give infants a written report - they're constantly changing position even more than weekly. The top of the class could change from week to week.'

The five primary schools who did not use written reports had rejected them less for developmental reasons than a feeling that written reports had great limitations, and that communication with parents should be a two way process.

Respondent number six described the language difficulties in written reports:

'I've cancelled written reports as such, because quite frankly I don't think they are worth the paper they're written on. To say a child is fair, could do better, not trying, good, is in my opinion a waste of time. I don't think the old type of written report is much good candidly.'

Respondent number eight described both language difficulty and the superiority of verbal communication:

'Reports can become very stilled - excellent, could try harder. This doesn't tell the whole picture you know. If you can talk to a parent and say - he's not really very good at his school work, but he's making an effort this year. You can't write all this down properly. I've come to the conclusion that written reports are a bit of a waste of time. You can discuss points with a parent much easier and they can question you about what you say.'

The schools in this survey used written reports in different ways and for different reasons. The majority of the schools in the sample as a whole, used some type of written report. None of the infant schools used a written report, although the majority of primary schools did so. Of the schools who used written reports, the majority used a traditional type provided by the Local Education Authority. A number of schools had designed their own report as they felt that written reports were necessary but the traditional form was inadequate. The schools which had rejected written reports entirely did so as a matter of principle, but their reasons were not identical. The infant schools tended to emphasize that the rapid development of infant children made a written report too difficult, while those primary schools which did not use written reports, stressed the language difficulties of a written report and the advantage of personal talks between teachers and parents as a means of communication about a child's progress in school.

#### 4. Interviews with Parents

The Flowden Report stressed the importance of the personal element in reporting to parents about their children's progress. This personal element arises directly from the parents concern for the child, and its most elementary, takes the form of a desire to know about what the school is trying to do for the child and something about the person directly responsible for the child - the class teacher. Commenting on this desire on the part of parents the report stated:

'Parents need more than anything else a chance of regular private talks with the teacher mainly responsible for the child.'<sup>6</sup> This need can only be met by some form of personal contact between parents and teachers in formal and informal situations, so that as the report quoted one parent as saying, 'parents know their childrens teachers at least as well as they know the milkman.'

How then did the schools in this survey provide for personal contact between parents and teachers for the purpose of reporting about childrens progress? The majority of schools in the survey provided some occasion where parents and teachers could discuss their children's progress. As indicated previously the infant schools relied on this method exclusively. There was a wide variety of methods used to provide these opportunities. Some schools used a carefully timetabled, completely private interview, where the parent and class teacher could meet in private for a certain length of time. Other schools arranged special occasions devoted solely to discussions between parents and teachers about children's progress but did not make any arrangement for individual private meetings. Parents were invited to attend during certain hours, either during the day or in the evening, and waited their turn to talk to the class teacher. The majority of schools provided opportunities for talks between parents and teachers as part of some other activities during an open day. A minority of schools did not make any formal provision for parental interviews but relied on the parents initiative to come up to school individually.

Nine schools provided opportunities for private interviews between teachers and parents to discuss children's progress. How were these organised and why was it felt necessary for them to be private? Respondent number twenty-four described how interviews of this type were arranged:

'Each parent is given an interview in private for ten minutes to a quarter of an hour with the class teacher and, if necessary, me. We send out and give them a choice of time and the parents indicate which particular time is suitable.'

Respondent number twenty-one made similar arrangements but the interviews were held in the evening:

'We also have an open evening where the parents are given about ten minutes for a private interview with the class teacher. We ask what time between half past six and eight thirty they would like to come. We give them an approximate time.'

Some schools relied exclusively on these private interviews for reporting to parents and did not issue a written report because they thought the private interview a superior form of communication. Respondent number six said:

'At least once a year every parent in my school who wishes to, gets the opportunity of a private interview with the teacher and I mean absolutely private, with the teacher first and then me if they want to. All of these are timed and fixed so there are no children. They are taken away and looked after. They get a quarter of an hour each.'

Some schools used these private interviews as an opportunity to discuss the child's written report with the parents. In the words of respondent number twenty-two:

'Each is given the opportunity of a completely private interview with the class teacher. This is arranged and timetabled. They read the report and sign to say they have read it.'

The majority of the schools in the sample, including all the infant schools, relied on more informal arrangements for talks between parents and teachers. Some set aside certain

occasions for these talks but did not make any timetabling arrangements. This type of arrangement was described by respondent number twenty-six:

'We have a parents evening where a parent can come and talk to the teacher about the child. We don't timetable it. I set aside a couple of evenings and tell the parents they can come up during certain hours.'

Most schools, however, provided opportunities for talks between parents and teachers as part of the activities during an open day. This type of arrangement was described by many of the respondents. In the words of Respondent Number seventeen:

'The parents have a general look around and then make a bee-line for the children's desks to see their books and work. The teacher manages to have a word with most of them.'

Or as respondent number sixteen described it:

'They can go around the school and talk to the teachers but not a set interview.'

A small minority of schools used a written report only. They made no formal arrangements for parents to meet the teacher mainly concerned with their child. The initiative for these discussions was left to individual parents. In the words of respondent number twenty-three:

'Parents can, of course, come up and discuss their children's progress if they wish.'

One question which remained unanswered was 'Do the headteachers who provided private timetabled interviews with parents, rather than the other more informal arrangements, have any particular reason for doing so?'



Respondent number four felt that this type of arrangement was much superior to a queue of parents waiting in turn to talk to the class teacher, as tended to happen during open days.

He said:

'There is no waiting. No great queues of people waiting. You see them for half a minute and say the same old things to them.'

Another reason given for using these private interviews as opposed to more informal methods, was that this type of arrangement was less inhibiting and made for frankness of discussion. As respondent number five put it:

'You've got to be honest with parents and you don't want the whole neighbourhood listening, like on an open day.'

The personal experiences of some headteachers had influenced their decisions about the most suitable method of arranging talks between teachers and parents about children's progress. His previous experience as a teacher had led respondent number six to arrange for talks between parents and teachers to be held in complete privacy when a child's progress was being discussed.

'I object to Mrs. Smith listening over Mrs. Robinson's shoulder to what the teacher is saying about Johnny Robinson and then going and telling Mrs. Jones. I loathed that system when I was a teacher and I find my system works well.'

One headteacher's experience as a parent attending open days, had made him conscious of the inadequacies of some arrangements for parental interviews and had consequently influenced the arrangements he himself had made for parental interviews.

Respondent number four described these feelings:

'My two went to the grammar school. The staff up there tried to tell me what was happening, but you always felt as if you were being talked down to. Really this was just a form of words they had memorised and this was just a placatory way of putting peoples mind at rest. I wouldn't waste my time doing that. I'm sure this has affected my own attitudes to formal arrangements of this type.'

Interviews with parents in the forty-three schools in the survey took many forms, ranging through every degree of formality; from a carefully organised private interview, to no arranged occasions for parents to talk to class teachers at all, although the majority of schools arranged for talks between teachers and parents during an open day. As in the case of written reports there were observable differences between infant and junior schools. The infant school arrangements tended to be much more informal. All the timetabled private interviews mentioned in this chapter were arranged by junior schools. There appeared to be a much greater variety of arrangements in the junior schools, covering every degree of formality from carefully timetabled private interviews to ad hoc arrangements, where parents were expected to visit the school individually if they wished to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher.

In general, the more organised and formal the arrangements for parental interviews, the more likely the respondent was to give detailed explanations about why the particular arrangements was being used.

## 5. Seeing Children's Work

If parents are to be informed about their children's progress

in a realistic manner, do they need to see their children's work? The Flowden Report certainly felt that if schools were to inform parents about their children's work and progress, parents should have access to their children's work at some time during the school year. This is mentioned specifically in recommendation number four of the minimum programme for parent-teacher contact:

'Written reports on children's work to be made at least once a year. The child's work should be seen by parents.'<sup>7</sup> The obvious question in relating this to the present survey is 'Did the schools in the survey, as part of reporting to parents, give some opportunity for parents to see their children's work, and if so, how did they arrange it?'

Thirty-five schools (81.4% of the sample as a whole), provided an opportunity for parents to see their children's work during an open day. All the nineteen infant schools used this method and sixteen of the twenty-four primary schools. The method of doing this varied from school to school. (Table 9. Page 150).

Some devoted the whole occasion to a discussion between parent and teacher, with work available to be seen. In the words of respondent number twelve:

'This year we're having an open evening when the parents can discuss the child with the teacher. The teacher will have the child's work and assessments.' Other arrangements were less formal and took place during the day with children present. Respondent number forty-three described one such occasion:

'The child is requested by the parent to take everything out of the desk and they go through with a toothcomb all the work the child has done and what is displayed on the wall. The child goes and points out her work on a frieze. We're right down to brass tacks with regard to the work the child has done.'

Four schools did not provide any formal arranged occasion, such as an open day for this purpose, preferring parents to come in individually on their own initiative. Typical of this approach was respondent number eleven, who said:

'I would rather the parents came in individually and saw the work and really discuss it.'

Some infant schools supplemented the other opportunities by the practice of allowing children to take work home to show their parents. Respondent number twenty-six described this:

'Infants like taking work home. I often say to a child - take the reading book home you've just finished and show your mother. Let her hear you read it. Or we'll wrap up a bit of art or written work and let them take it home.'

A variety of procedures to arrange for parents to see their children's work were being used. An analysis of the transcripts revealed that while these arrangements differed in formality and type, four distinct arrangements were being used by the schools in the sample. The majority of schools provided some opportunity for parents to see their children's work during open day; some provided for this during private, timetabled interviews; a few schools did not provide any arranged occasions for parents to see their children's work, preferring parents to come to school individually. The practice of allowing children to take work home to show their parents was mainly confined to infant schools.

## 6. Reporting to Parents and Headteacher Attitudes

This chapter has been concerned with relations between school and home in its most limited form, how these primary schools catered for the personal element of a parent's interest in education - a

concern on the part of a parent to know what the school is doing for the child, an interest in its progress, and a desire to know something of the person most directly concerned with the child - the class teacher. The arrangements that the schools in this survey used for informing parents about their children's progress was analysed under three broad headings suggested by the Flowden Report. These were written reports, interviews with parents, and seeing children's work.

What can be said about how the schools in this survey reported to parents about their children's progress? In a sense, the great variety of methods reported in this chapter presented a picture of the history of development in reporting to parents within one Local Education Authority. Some schools in the survey used a written report of the traditional type and no formally organised occasion for parents to meet class teachers to discuss children's progress. Parents were expected to visit the school individually for this purpose. The majority of schools in the sample did not use written reports, having rejected them in favour of direct contact between parents and teachers. The reasons for this tended to differ between infant and junior schools, the infant schools stressing developmental reasons for rejecting written reports, the primary schools the superiority of verbal communication for reporting to parents.

The majority of meetings for this purpose took place at open days, sometimes as a part of other activities. These open days were also the occasion where most schools provided an opportunity for parents to see their children's work. While some schools had to use written reports, they used a report of their own design, as they considered the traditional type of report form issued by the Local Education Authority to be inadequate. Finally, a minority

of schools had developed a programme for reporting to parents about their children's progress, which at its most organised consisted of a combination of a carefully designed report form and a private interview between parents and the class teacher.

This chapter has been devoted to an examination of the methods used by the forty-three primary schools in this survey to report to parents about their children's progress. These methods have been reported by the forty-three headteacher respondents of these schools in their own words. In what way, if any, are the methods of reporting to parents described by these headteachers a reflection of their attitudes to parents and their role in education?

While some allowance must be made for habit and tradition in any school, has a headteacher who has designed his own report form a more positive attitude to reporting to parents than one who has not? While most headteachers in the sample provided some opportunity for parents to meet class teachers, this was usually done at an open day where privacy could not be guaranteed. Have these headteachers a less favourable attitude to parents than those who organised timetabled private interviews? Are the former less conscious of parental needs and wishes, or are they simply less aware of them?

While these types of comparisons may be too difficult to explain simply in terms of particular attitudes to parents, are more extreme differences any easier to explain? Surely a carefully organised programme to report to parents about their children's progress, consisting of a carefully designed written report containing information which the head feels that parents want to know about, comment outside the basic subjects, plus some opportunity for parents to comment and provide information,

linked with a private interview, is a reflection of positive attitudes to parents? However, what would appear to be less favourable attitudes to parents may be difficult to explain simply in these terms. Can it be said that a headteacher who provides a written report for parents, but provides no arranged occasion for parents to meet class teachers to discuss children's progress, relying on the initiative of individual parents to visit the school, is indifferent to parents? While it may be significant that the four schools in this survey who relied on this procedure also used the traditional report issued by the Local Education Authority, there is another possible explanation. These different types of procedure could also be explained in terms of a headteacher's view of the role of the headteacher. He or she, may see meetings between a headteacher and parents to discuss children's progress as more important than meetings between parents and a class teacher.

There is certainly some confirmation for this type of explanation in the data from the Advisory Councils questionnaire for teachers in the Plowden Report, which provided information about preferences for particular types of contact with parent.<sup>8</sup> Headteachers and teachers were asked to rank in order of importance the schools methods of reporting to parents. The first choice of headteachers was individual interviews between headteachers and parents, while the teachers selected individual interviews between teachers and parents.

While it may be difficult to explain the relationship between the different methods of reporting to parents described in this survey and the attitudes of the headteacher respondents

responsible for them we can be more certain about the advantages and disadvantages of the methods themselves, in interesting and satisfying parents. Carefully designed programmes for reporting to parents are superior to limited ad hoc arrangements. In the words of the Plowden Report based on the evidence of the National Survey:

'These findings indicate the value of talks between parents and teachers and of open days in making parents feel better informed about their children's school life and also that their contribution towards their children's progress is of importance and is considered to be so by the schools.'<sup>9</sup>



Table 6.

<u>Written Reports</u>		
Sample as a whole	No.	%
Used some form of written Report	19	55.8
No written report used	24	44.2
Total	<u>43</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Type of Written Report Used	No.	%
Used traditional Type of Report (L.E.A.)	10	25.7
Used report of own design	9	20.5
Total	<u>19</u>	<u>46.2</u>
Infants schools Only	No.	%
Used Written Report	0	0.0
Used no written report	19	100.0
Total	<u>19</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Junior Schools Only	No.	%
Used written report	19	79.2
Used no written Report	5	20.8
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 7.

<u>Arrangements for Parental Interviews</u>		
Sample as a whole	No.	%
Timetabled private interview	9	20.9
Held during or part of open day	30	60.8
No formal arrangement	4	9.3
Total	<u>43</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 8.

Total Programme for Reporting to Parents

	No.	%
Timetabled private interview only	2	4.7
Timetabled private int. & written report	6	13.9
L.E.A. Report and open day	5	11.6
Open day only	24	55.8
L.E.A. Report & no formal occasion	4	9.3
Open day and own report	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

Table 9.

Arrangements for Seeing Childrens Work

	No.	%
During Open day	35	81.4
During timetabled private interviews	4	9.3
On parents initiative	4	9.3
Total	43	100.0

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**CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

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## CONTACTS WITH PARENTS

The previous chapter examined a limited form of contact between schools and parents - how the primary schools in this survey reported to parents about their children's progress. The school year, however, presents many more opportunities for these schools to provide other contacts, which will attract and inform parents about different aspects of school life. These different types of contact offer a great opportunity for schools to interest parents in what is being done, to explain why it is being done, and to explain any changes in organisation or teaching methods.

This chapter will attempt to examine these other types of contact which these schools have established with parents; how they were organised and what purpose they were believed to serve. All schools have to organise their relations with parents in some ways, but more needs to be known about the frequency of particular types of contact, why they vary between different types of school, and the relative effectiveness of different types of function. A mere reiteration of the fact that some types of contact with parents are more frequently provided by schools than others is not sufficient - what is needed is some explanation of why this should be so.

An unresolved problem in a survey of this type which proposes to examine contacts between schools and parents, is the difficulty of deciding what constitutes a formal contact as opposed to an informal contact. The use of these terms in educational literature has not always been consistent. Informal is often taken to mean any school function, apart from meeting of formal associations such as a Parent-Teacher Association, as well as individual meetings between headteachers and parents and teachers

and parents. Most headteachers when asked about contacts with parents on an individual basis would say, as did the survey respondents, that parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. As this particular proposition cannot be satisfactorily examined in this survey, formal contacts were defined for the purposes of this survey as any function or practice organised on the initiative of a particular school to make contact of some kind with parents. Informal contacts would be confined by this definition to individual meetings of a casual nature, and are accordingly excluded from the examination of contacts between schools and parents described in this chapter.

#### 1. Procedures for a Preliminary Analysis

In order to produce a table showing the frequency with which different types of contact with parents were provided by the forty-three primary schools in the survey, the following procedure was used. The interview transcript of each of the headteacher respondents was carefully examined for any mention of any type of contact with parents that the respondent stated was being used by his or her school. A coding frame was prepared, using the different types of function described by the respondents. Each transcript was then re-examined and the particular types of contact described in the interview, together with their annual frequency, were noted on an individual coding frame. (Appendix D Page 329 )

Finally a frequency count was made of how often each type of contact was used in the sample as a whole. These contacts were then arranged into a table showing how often each type was used in the sample as a whole. This table shows the contacts provided by these schools in descending order of frequency. (Table 10. Page 193 )

## 2. The Preliminary Evidence of this Survey

The primary schools in the survey used a variety of functions to provide contact between schools and parents, ranging from 'open days', to fashion shows. There was variation between schools of the same type, between infant and junior schools, between the way the same type of function was organised; and perhaps most important, there were differences in what headteachers saw as the purpose of these contacts.

On average, these schools provided six functions per year to encourage contact between the school and parents and to which parents were expressly invited. The infant schools on average provided more of these functions than the primary schools. (Seven per year as against an average of five for the twenty-four primary schools). Opportunities for parents to visit schools, regardless of the type, tended to be more informally organised in the infant schools.

The school medical examination was the only occasion which parents could attend which was provided by every school in the survey and is accordingly shown at the head of Table 10 Page 193 . It can be argued, however, that this particular occasion is not one which a school organises for the specific purpose of promoting good relations with parents. Although one respondent named it as his principal form of contact with parents, a school medical examination is a statutory part of the schools welfare function which all primary schools are obliged to provide, so for the purposes of this enquiry this particular occasion was disregarded.

The single event most commonly provided by all the schools in the survey was the 'open' day or evening. Thirty-nine schools

(90.7%) out of forty-three, held at least one of these annually, although the title and organisation of this event varied from school to school. Christmas activities to which parents were invited, such as carol concerts, were the second most common type of contact provided by the schools in the sample. Thirty-three schools (76.2%), provided a function of this kind. Thirty-one schools (72.1%), organised a harvest festival to which parents were invited, and twenty schools (46.5%), organised sports days which were used as a form of contact with parents.

Many schools held organised parent meetings (19 or 44.4% of the sample as a whole), although these were organised for a variety of reasons. In the infant schools these meetings concentrated on explaining new methods of organisation within the school such as family grouping, or new teaching methods being used by the school, such as I.T.A. The primary schools which held parent meetings tended to use them for a greater variety of reasons, ranging from meetings to inform parents about school camps, to meetings organised to explain to parents the abolition of streaming within first year classes.

A minority of schools (nine 20.9%), held Easter services which parents were invited to attend. Three schools held coffee mornings for parents, although this type of activity was confined to the infant schools as was the practice of allowing parents to accompany their children on school visits. Annual events associated with a particular day had been organised by some infant schools. Three schools held a special function on World Children's day to which parents were invited and one school held a May Day activity where parents were invited to watch their children doing Maypole Dancing.



A function which brought into school not only parents, but other members of the local community had been organised by some schools. Typical of this type of contact was a musical afternoon organised by one school to which local old age pensioners were invited.

### 3. A Further Analysis

The evidence provided by the tabulations shown in table and described in the preceding section confirms that the contacts provided by primary schools within one Local Education Authority during 1971, as reported by the headteacher respondents, are similar to those previously reported elsewhere. The frequency with which these events were provided by these schools is very similar to the table of parental contacts with primary schools published in the Plowden Report showing school functions to which parents had been invited. (Enclosure 7. Page 197 ). These tables were produced from the evidence of the parental interviews held for the National Survey. In both of these tables 'open days' are shown as the type of contact with parents most commonly provided by primary schools.

While these two tables have been constructed from information from two different sources - the Plowden table from evidence from parental interviews and table in this chapter from headteacher interviews, they both tell us something about the existence of different types of contact between primary schools and parents. At the same time they lead to certain questions which cannot be answered by this type of statistical evidence. Why are certain types of contact between schools and parents more common than others? How are they organised? What do the people responsible

for their organisation see as their purpose? How effective are they?

In order to attempt to answer these questions in terms of the schools in this particular survey, a different type of analysis is needed. The analysis of the contacts reported by the headteacher respondents was divided into five areas suggested by these questions, and the minimum programme to increase contact between primary schools and parents reported in the recommendations of the Plowden Report. These areas were - open days, welcome to school, helping in school, the effectiveness of existing contacts, and home visiting.

#### 4. The Open Day

The following recommendation was made in the Plowden Report in Chapter Four, 'Participation by Parents': 'All schools should have a programme for contact with childrens homes to include: open days, to be held at times chosen to enable parents to attend.'

The open day, of one type or another, was certainly the most popular single function to which parents were invited to attend, reported by the headteacher respondents in this survey. In order to explain this, a careful study was made of the responses to question nine in the headteacher interviews - 'Are you in favour of open days? If so, how often should they be held and at what times?'

There was a great variety among the schools in the survey, both in how the occasion was organised and in the names used to describe it. The majority of schools held the event during one day or evening. Some arranged it to cover a period of days, with one day set aside for each year group within the school; other

schools invited boys parents one day and girls parents the next. Some larger primary schools held it over a period of four days, with the parents of first and second year pupils being invited during the first two days, and the parents of the third and fourth year children on the final two days. Many different terms were used to describe what was basically the same function - 'parents days', 'calling in days', 'prize days', as well as the more common open day.

While the great majority of schools, (thirty-nine out of forty-three), held some kind of open day, there were differences between types of school. All of the infant schools held organised open days of one kind or another, four of the junior schools did not. The great majority of the headteacher respondents were in favour of open days and thought they served a useful purpose (86.0% of the sample as a whole). Four respondents were uncertain about their value and three respondents were not in favour of open days at all. (Table 11. Page 193).

The reasons expressed for doubt or disagreement about the value of open days varied. Respondent number twenty-six felt that they were too formal and believed that parents coming into a school during a normal working day was less artificial:

'No, I'm not in favour of open days as such. I think displays and set pieces are very artificial. I would like the parents to come in at any time to see what a school is normally like.'

Respondent number thirteen felt that open days did not give either teachers or parents sufficient time to discuss children's work:

'No, I'm not in favour of open days. The teacher with thirty parents can't give them more than a couple of minutes each. The teacher can't do justice and the parents can't feel that

they're getting a fair crack of the whip. I'd rather parents came individually and saw the work and really discuss it.'

Respondent number nine felt that the numbers of parents who attended an open day would disturb the normal working of the school:

'Not at all, if open day means that any parent can come on that day. It's chaos. Just leads to complete disorder.'

The majority of headteachers, felt that the open day was a useful method of contact and co-operation with parents. There were differences, however, in what was seen as the purpose of an open day, with subsequent differences in the way it was organised. Infant headteachers saw the open day as a combination of a social occasion and providing parents with information about the school. The junior school headteachers took a much more utilitarian view.-- They saw it primarily as a means of reporting about the work of the school, rather than a social occasion to be enjoyed, and felt that entertainment should play no part in the event. A typical expression of this attitude was given by respondent number twenty when she said:

'Parents don't go to school during the day while the children are there to hear them sing songs. They want to see their work and how they are getting on and what they can do to help.'

These sentiments were echoed by respondent number seventeen:

'I'm not in favour of the kind of open day where parents are entertained by concerts and a cup of tea.'

The infant headteachers were much more prepared to use an open day as a multi-purpose occasion. As respondent number thirty-five described it:

'We usually have a sing song or a bit of P.E., drama, something they can see. This might not be a good thing, but we try to combine it with going round the classrooms.' Or in the words of respondent number thirty:

'We usually end with a little concert. The parents like it, but whether it's of any real value I would question.'

The junior school headteacher respondents were much more positive about what open day arrangements should consist of. An open day should be primarily concerned with reporting about the work of a school, and entertainment and specially rehearsed activities should not be included. This majority opinion of the junior school headteachers was forcibly expressed by respondent number six when he said:

'My idea of an open day is where something is going on in the classrooms, whether they're having P.E. or something. A normal lesson where parents can see what is going on in art and craft - something like that. I don't think they should put on a special show for parents-it gives the wrong impression. It should be a normal working day, except parents can stand around. I know its still false but it's nearer what's normal.'

A minority of headteachers felt that different types of open days which served different purposes should be held throughout the school year. Respondent number three said:

'I think the kind of open day where you discuss the child's progress should be fairly early on in the year. Of this kind, I think once a year is enough. We have other ones where parents can see children's work and plays and musical items - just where the parents can be happy.'

Another respondent felt that an open day of any type should not be isolated occasions, but rather a small part of a total programme to increase contacts with parents. Respondent number twenty-four said:

'I think it should not consist of specially rehearsed activities and should only be part of a programme. The type I would favour would be where the parents could see displays of work showing the natural progression of work through the school - from the infants through the junior stage illustrating the child's development.'

One headteacher felt that the form and content of an open day should be dictated largely by what the parents in a particular area would be most attracted by, and that the attractiveness of the occasion to parents should override any pre-conceived ideas on the part of the headteacher about what was most useful for parents to see. Respondent number twenty-three said:

'If you have a poor environmental catchment area you've got to use the gimmicks to get the parents up - the novelties, variety, and not worry if they're not interested in Nuffield maths. If they've only come up to see their daughter in a play - well put on a play. You can get your ideas across then.'

Only seven schools in the survey sample of forty-three, held open days of any kind in the evenings. The majority of headteachers felt that while to some extent this excluded a proportion of fathers, a surprising number attended open days held during the day. The difficulty of arranging occasions where the teachers would all be able to attend was the most frequent reasons given for not arranging events during the evening.

One headteacher, however, felt that the advantages of an open day held during the day when there were children present, outweighed the disadvantage of inconvenience for fathers.

Respondent number three said:

'After all, it is a school. Let's have it in school time, with school atmosphere and let them see that schools are not the desperate places that some of them still think.'

### Formal and Informal Open Days

The difficulty of defining formal and informal occasions in examining contacts between schools and parents became obvious when respondents described a typical open day. If we regard an open day as a formal occasion, can there be an informal formal occasion? This difficulty of definition can be illustrated by using two descriptions of what is in definitive terms the same event - an open day.

### The Informal Open Day (Respondent number three)

'We fling the doors open at one-thirty and parents surge in, look around the room, look around the school and talk to the teachers. They poke their noses in the desks, play war with the child and play war with the teacher if necessary, look at the books and generally have a good time. Then I ring the bell. It is a signal for all parents to come into the hall. It is a signal for all children to get out into the field. It is a signal for all staff to get into the staff room, close the door, brew themselves a cup of tea and get their second wind. While that's going on I go into the hall, get up in front of the parents alone and tell them what the school has done in the last twelve months and what we hope to do in the next twelve months. If any of the parents want to get up and ask me questions they have a right to !

The Formal Open Day (Respondent number thirty-one)

'We have it in the evening now. I feel it's much better. We have a general display of work including basic subjects, maths, writing, to show the progression achieved through the school, and a guest speaker. The parents seemed very interested. We had a welfare worker here tonight.'

As the evidence of this survey illustrates, the term 'open day' is one which is used as a general term to describe functions which may be very different in content and organisation. The term covers a multiplicity of events. In some schools the open day was an occasion devoted primarily to parents having private interviews with teachers; in others it consisted largely of mothers watching children work as normally as possible. In other schools it was an all purpose occasion where mothers were entertained by children in specially rehearsed events and also spent time going around the classrooms looking at their children's work. Some schools arranged it during the day, others during the evening. The event covered every degree of formality and informality, from parents being provided with admission tickets to look at displays of work and listen to talks by guest speakers, all in the absence of children, to the open day where fathers, mothers, grandparents and friends all come to the school during the day and wander at will around the school.

There was a distinct difference in the schools in this survey between infant and junior school headteachers in what they saw as the purpose of an open day. All the infant schools used an open day of one kind or another, which usually was very



much a multi-purpose occasion of reporting and entertainment. The infant headteachers appeared to be much more willing to arrange open day activities of a purely social nature. The junior schools, with some exceptions, organised open days which concentrated almost exclusively on the working part of school life. The junior school headteacher respondents were much less likely to see an open day as an occasion which had social intercourse as an important part. In the words of one respondent, which typifies the attitude of most of the junior school headteachers: 'parents don't come to school during the day to hear children sing songs and have a cup of tea.'

The evidence of this survey then offers some explanation of why 'open days' are easily the most common form of contact with parents offered by primary schools. A clue to the popularity of the open day is its very adaptability - it can be all things to all men. Regardless of what particular aspect of school life the school wishes to emphasise to parents, be it reporting on the progress of individual children, showing parents a typical school day, or simply allowing children to entertain their parents and where 'the parents can be happy'; the open day can accommodate them all. And in doing so, can also accommodate the attitudes and priorities of the headteachers who use it, as a principal means of contact between schools and parents.

##### 5. Welcome to School

The following recommendation was made in the Plowden Report in Chapter Four, 'Participation by Parents':- All schools should have a regular programme for contact with childrens homes to

include - a) a regular system for the head and class teacher to meet parents before the child enters.

This recommendation would appear to include both a child's first introduction to school life, starting the infant school, and the transition from infant school to junior school. In order to describe the methods that the schools in this survey used to contact parents at these two stages, a careful study was made of the responses to question fourteen in the interview transcript. 'Some infant schools have a system which gives parents an opportunity to meet the head and class teacher before the child enters school. Would this be worthwhile in the primary school?' The question was re-phrased when interviewing infant headteachers to - 'Some schools have a system which gives parents an opportunity to meet the head and class teacher before the child enters school. Do you think this is worthwhile?' (Table 12. Page 194).

Thirty-two of the schools in the survey used some kind of system to inform parents about this period of their child's education, although the methods varied from school to school and between infant and junior schools. In general, infant schools were much more likely to have some kind of system to introduce a child and parents to school. The majority of infant schools in the sample used an informal system for this (17 or 89.5%), although two schools had introduced a formal system for accommodating this type of contact with parents. The majority of infant schools did this when a child was first brought to be registered. Respondent number twenty-eight, described an informal approach of this kind:

'No, not formally. Only when they come to put their names down. I usually introduce the child to the classroom and the teacher but I don't have a formal system.'

Two infant schools had organised a more formal system for helping and informing parents about their child's first introduction to school. Respondent number twenty-six described such a system in these words:

'We have this system here already. We have various ways of collecting possible admissions. We either send a message through the children, or write inviting them to come up and see us with their children. I talk to the parents and the children get used to the school.'

All the infant headteachers thought that a system of this kind, whether formal or informal, was of great benefit to the child, the parents and the school. Respondent number forty said: 'They've met the teacher, seen the class. The child has sat in a little chair. I think this is of real value, although I find more children now are going to play-school and they have a more independent attitude but it's still necessary.'

It also provided a useful opportunity to acquaint parents with the aims and organisation of the school. Respondent number twenty-seven described this:

'I tell the parents various things about the school and what sort of thing they should be doing with them - taking them on outings, this sort of thing.'

The idea of some kind of arrangement to ease the transition from infant to junior school was not so common, although in the case of the five schools which were junior and infant mixed, the need for this particular contact did not arise. All of these schools had an informal arrangement for introducing children and parents to school similar to the majority of infant schools. The majority of junior schools (15 or 62.5%), had made no

arrangements for a welcome to school of any kind. Many of the junior school respondents thought this type of contact with parents unnecessary. Typical of this majority opinion within the junior school respondents, was headteacher respondent number fourteen who said:

'No I don't think it's necessary. In our case, and in most schools, they've got brothers and sisters in the school who tell them all about it.'

A minority of eight junior schools did have some system of contact with parents at this stage, although these contacts were organised in different ways, with most of these schools having parents meetings after the child had started the school. An arrangement of this type was explained by respondent number twenty-two:

'Yes, I have a meeting for the parents of new entrants to explain general policy. I think I've already mentioned this. Not before they start but shortly afterwards.'

A few junior schools did use a formal arrangement for contacting parents at the beginning of their childrens life in the junior school. Respondent number seventeen described such a system:

'We do this too. It's done through the infant school. Letters are sent to parents and they are invited up. Not to listen to a dialogue or soliciting but to see the first year at work.'

One respondent described a comprehensive system to cover the transition from infant to junior school, which included bringing in infant children to the junior school before they started,

sending out teachers to the infant school to meet the children they would be teaching, and inviting the parents of new entrants to the school to explain aims and organisation. Respondent number six said:

'I have them up and I also send out staff to the infants to meet the children they will be teaching and have the children up here in the following week, so they won't come in September as strangers. After we've had the teachers out and the children in, we're having the parents in alone and we're going to talk to them.'

There was an attempt by all the infant schools in the sample, to give pre-school infants and their parents some idea of what to expect when the child begins school. The majority of these arrangements were informal, usually a short visit when the mother took the child for registration, when they were able to see the classroom and meet the teacher. Two schools used a more formal system, where possible admits were invited to come up to the school prior to registration.

The majority of the junior schools in the survey had made no arrangement for contact with parents at the transition from infants to junior school. The eight junior schools which did so, used a variety of methods, including invitations to parents to attend meetings in the junior school, usually a few weeks after the beginning of the school year; showing children their classrooms before the end of their last term in the infant school, and visits by the headteacher and classteacher to meet the children while they were still in their final term at the infant school.

## 6. Helping in School

The previous sections have concentrated on those contacts with parents which serve the purpose of providing parents with information about what happens in schools, their organisation and curriculum methods, and their general aims in relationship to the education of their pupils. These types of contact with parents are fairly well established and well tried methods of promoting closer co-operation with parents. A more recent suggestion, of which examples are given in Chapter Four of the Plowden Report, 'Participation with Parents', is that parents might give practical help within the school itself. In order to establish how the headteachers in the sample felt about this proposal, and to describe any contacts of this kind that were currently in operation in any of the schools in the survey, a careful examination was made of the interview transcripts; and in particular the responses to question thirteen, 'Should a school accept offers of help from parents with special skills or talents?'

The majority of infant headteachers within the sample expressed approval of the idea of parents within the school itself, (12 or 68.4% expressed complete approval). The remaining seven infant headteachers respondents expressed qualified approval. The proportions of agreement and disagreement were very different within the junior school respondents. A minority (7 or 16.3%) expressed complete approval, fourteen expressed qualified approval, and three respondents were opposed to this idea completely and saw danger in it. In the sample as a whole therefore, only a minority of the respondents (19 or 44.2%) expressed complete approval of the idea of parents helping in their children's schools. (Table 13 Page 194).

The headteachers who disagreed with this idea, did so for different reasons, although a strong thread of anxiety that parents might encroach on matters of professional skill, ran through many of the responses of both those who expressed disapproval, and the reservations of those who expressed qualified approval. Typical of this type of opinion, were the sentiments expressed by respondent number nineteen, who disagreed with this proposal:

'This is another dangerous one. You're up against a professional one. Are you going to have unqualified teachers in? We have outsiders like the police coming in - but parents? Many respondents were quite willing to have parents helping in school but felt this help would be best given outside of normal school hours. Respondent number two said:

'There's a danger here. I'd be quite happy to use their skills after school but not during the day. Professional problems would normally arise there.'

Other respondents who expressed qualified approval of the idea of parents helping in school, felt that a school must be selective with offers of help from parents, both in the kind of help offered, and in the people whose offers of help should be accepted. Respondent number thirteen felt that parental help in school should be strictly confined to certain areas and certain areas should be excluded altogether. He said:

'Yes, but at the same time as a professional I don't want the place cluttered up with a lot of unqualified 'do gooders'. I would say no in the three R's. I would keep them out of that. They could be involved with craft or music.'

A minority of headteachers within the sample were prepared to accept parental help in schools of any kind. Respondent number six said, in answer to the question about parents helping in school:

'In any shape or form, cash or kind, help or anything.', while respondent number thirty-one felt that:

'Any help you can get you should accept I feel - never refuse.'

One respondent felt that parental help of any kind was welcome, and had organised a helpers scheme to organise parents who were willing to work in school. She said:

'Certainly. As I said before if you have a parent who is more musical than a teacher, why not? We have a helpers scheme anyway and if these helpers have particular skills or talents as you say - so much the better isn't it? I would certainly use them.'

Many different types of help by parents were mentioned by the respondents - making costumes for plays, helping with games and school clubs, making various kinds of apparatus for mathematics, and parents in interesting occupations giving talks to the children about their jobs. On the whole, the idea of parents working in schools seemed much more acceptable to infant headteachers. Although a small minority of the junior school respondents were favourable, the majority of the junior school headteacher respondents had reservations about the idea, mainly objections of a professional nature, about the danger of using unqualified help in any capacity during normal school hours.

## 7. The Limits of Parental Co-operation

The attitudes of the majority of the headteacher respondents towards the idea of parents helping with their childrens education



by actually working in the school premises, leads to another possibly more interesting question, about the whole question of parents co-operating with schools; and in particular how headteachers see the value of this co-operation. One of the reservations expressed by some of the respondents about the difficulty of deciding whether a particular parent is a suitable person to be allowed to help during school hours and on the school premises, prompts a question of the type which was asked in the headteacher interviews. If a parent was a suitable, interested person who wished to help in any way possible, what limits would the headteachers place on the involvement with the school of a parent of this type?

The headteacher interview transcripts were re-examined in order to investigate this question and the responses to question three, 'What limits if any would you place on parental involvement in your school?', carefully noted.

The majority of the respondents had quite definite ideas about the limits to which even an interested and talented parent should be allowed to become involved in their children's education - the 'classroom door' was the limit. Out of the sample as a whole, thirty-four respondents (79.0%), felt that this should be the limit of parental involvement with school. This was the first example of similar proportions of agreement being found in the sample between infant school headteacher respondents and junior school headteacher respondents. The proportions of agreement and disagreement between the two groups were similar. Five out of nineteen infant school respondents would place no limits on the involvement of an interested parent with the school and four out of twenty-four junior school respondents would have no limits on parental co-operation of this kind. (Table 14 Page 195).

Typical of the majority opinion on this particular question was respondent number five, who said:

'We encourage them to come up but we don't actually involve them in the classroom. I think I would draw the line at them being involved in the classroom situation.' These sentiments were echoed by respondent number thirty, who also had thought about the possible limits of parental involvement in the life of the school. She said:

'Yes, I think I would have limits. I've got a few reservations about letting parents in on everything and anything. I think the classroom door would be my limit - the actual teaching situation.' Many of the respondents made a sharp distinction between parents being allowed into classrooms in an active rather than a passive role, as did respondent number five when he said:

'If a parent wishes to come and find out how we do things and why we do it that way, that's a different matter. But having a parent coming in and taking a small group for reading, why not go a bit further and have one coming in to take a small group for maths or P.E. The teacher could eventually go home!'

The practical difficulties involved in the idea of parents helping in the classroom, were pointed out by many headteachers. Respondent number forty-three, described these difficulties in the following words:

'I think by and large, you've got to take a common sense attitude. I wouldn't object on principle to parents in the classroom but I wouldn't say to a parent you can come in and hear your child read anytime you like. Any school day is short. You can't have parents sitting about in a two hour afternoon impeding the work. It doesn't make sense.'

A minority of nine respondents said that they would place no limits on the involvement of an interested parent with their particular school. In the words of respondent Number twenty:

'I don't think, if a parent was enthusiastic, I would place any limits on them.' One headteacher respondent felt that parents should be involved in their children's education at every level including working in the classroom. She said:

'I wouldn't have any limits on an interested parent. I'm most unprofessional I suppose, but I want to see parents in the classrooms working and helping and seeing what is going on.' Another respondent pointed out that the real problem in parental involvement in their children's education, was getting them to visit schools in the first place. He said:

'I can't think of any at the moment. I don't see any limits at all in parents helping that is. The problem is getting them in. There are limits from the parents point of view - getting them into school is quite an achievement.' This minority of headteacher respondents seemed to be less worried about interference by parents when working in the classroom and less insistent on making hard and fast rules about what constituted areas of work that should only be attempted by a person with a professional qualification. Respondent number twenty-five gave a detailed description of this minority opinion when she said:

'I wouldn't have any limits. I would encourage parents to do anything at all they were willing to do. We had a mother who came in one half day every week and went into the classroom. I never asked the teacher what she was doing, but I know she was hearing reading. It would have to be a very poor parent who

couldn't help a child in some way. You might get a parent who was more musical than the teacher and if that parent was willing to sing - why not? There's some things parents have real ability in. I wouldn't stop a parent doing anything at all that they could.'

While the majority of headteachers in this survey, believed in the value of co-operating with parents, and provided different functions in order to involve them with the schools, they saw quite definite limits in the extent of this involvement. The majority of respondents, and this attitude was consistent between infant and junior headteachers, believed that the useful involvement of parents in their childrens education should end at the classroom door. Anything beyond this was both potentially dangerous in professional terms and unrealistic in terms of the day to day activities of a primary school.

#### 8. The Effectiveness of Existing Contacts between Home and School

One of the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, was how effective were the types of contacts which are currently provided by primary schools to attract, inform, and involve parents in their childrens education? While a total answer to this question, even in a survey within one Local Education Authority, would require evidence from parents, teachers and headteachers about the effectiveness of school/home links; what this survey can provide is some evidence, even though subjective, from the persons most directly concerned with decisions about whether a school will use or reject particular types of contact with parents - the headteachers.

If the primary aim of a particular function or programme for co-operating with parents, is to attract them to school, one can make some judgement about the effectiveness of particular methods in a particular situation by simply asking the question, how many parents did attend? Question Sixteen in the interview transcript asked the respondents to estimate what percentage of parents usually attend the school-home functions organised by the school. The wording of the question was, 'What percentage of parents normally attend school-home functions organised by your school?' The replies were carefully analysed and the average percentage estimates for the sample as a whole, junior schools only, and infant schools only, were worked out.

The average of the individual headteachers estimates of what percentage of parents attended home-school functions was 78.5% - the lowest estimate being 25%, and the highest nearly 100%. There were differences when infant and junior schools were examined separately. The average of the estimates of parental attendance of the nineteen infant school headteacher respondents was 86.7%, and of the twenty-four primary school headteacher respondents was 77.0%.

Some headteachers in their reply to this question said the social class composition of the area was more important than the type of contacts the school used in determining the numbers of parents who would attend functions at school. Respondent number twenty, who estimated that nearly all the parents of children attending the school came to functions arranged by the school said:

'I think it's because of the area we drawn from. I don't think it's normal.'

## 9. Parents who Never Visit the School

In estimating the success of the methods used to involve parents with the primary schools in this survey, it is necessary to examine not only the success of a particular system in percentage terms, but to ask if the system contains any apparatus which has been deliberately created to improve the effectiveness of an existing system. A perennial problem for any school in the area of relations between home and school, is the apparently apathetic core of parents, sometimes large, sometimes small, who do not attend anything that the school organises, be it open days or private interviews - those parents frequently referred to by the headteacher respondents as, 'the parents you really need to see but who never come to the school.' Any serious attempt to involve parents with their children's school must surely include some effort to make contact with this type of parent. This factor was recognised as of vital importance in Chapter Four of the Flowden Report, 'Participation by Parents', indeed, one of the recommendations of the programme to increase contact between parents and primary schools dealt with this specific point - 'All schools should have a programme for contact with children's homes to include - special efforts to make contact with parents who do not visit the schools.'

A pre-requisite of any such special effort is to be able to identify these particular parents. In order to establish how the primary schools in this survey did this, the responses to question seventeen in the headteacher interviews - 'Is there any record kept of which parents attend?', were carefully examined.

The majority of the primary schools in this survey did not keep any such record, only nine schools in the survey sample (20.9%), had a formal system for identifying such parents. Of the nineteen infant schools in the survey seventeen (89.5%), kept no record, and of the twenty-four junior schools seventeen, (70.8%), did not record which parents did or did not attend school-home functions organised by the school. (Table 15 Page 195).

Some headteachers felt that this was not any business of the school. Respondent number sixteen said:

'Oh no! We never check up on parents like that.' Many of the schools who did not keep a record of parental attendance felt that it was unnecessary, as the parents who did not attend were known without this. Respondent number thirty-one said:

'No, we don't keep any written record as such, but of course we know I suppose who never comes - the teachers do.' Or in the words of respondent number twenty-eight:

'No, we know who doesn't come. I don't keep a record but we know who doesn't come.'

The minority of schools who did keep records of attendance and non attendance at functions organised by the school, tended to be those schools who used pre-arranged timetabled private interviews as part of their programme of contacts with parents. Respondent number twenty-two described such a system:

'Yes, each teacher has a list of times for interviews and we carefully tick off when each parent has been. If they haven't signed the report they haven't been.'

Although none of the infant schools in the survey used private interviews with parents as part of their contacts with parents, two infant schools operated a system for recording parental attendance. Respondent number twenty-six said:

'Yes, we try to. I would like to build up a proper file about each child. I like to know who comes and who doesn't.'

The great majority of the primary schools in the survey kept no formal record of which parents did not attend functions organised by the school, although most headteachers felt that they could identify these parents without a formal system. Those schools which did keep a record of non attendance on the part of parents, tended to be those schools which used private timetabled interviews as part of their programme of school-home contacts.

#### 10. Visits to Homes

Once a headteacher knows the identity of parents who never visit the school the problem remains - how are they to be persuaded to do so? One method of doing this is the controversial practice of teachers visiting parents in their own homes. J.B. Mays described the value of this practice in one Liverpool school.<sup>2</sup> In this way the teachers were able to talk to the most apathetic of their parents, 'the ones who never come to anything', as one respondent in this survey described them.

Some evidence about the attitudes of headteachers to home visiting was presented in 1967 by L. Cohen in a paper entitled, 'The Teachers Role and Liaison between School and Neighbourhood'.<sup>3</sup>



As part of this research, the attitudes of students, tutors, and headteachers, towards home visits by teachers to discuss the difficulties of problem children with their parents, were measured by a 'role definition instrument (R.D.I.), in a Likert type scale form.' The respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they felt that a teacher should or should not engage in the behaviour indicated in this particular item. Students and tutors generally gave support to the proposition of home visiting, whereas headteachers felt that a teacher should preferably not engage in such home visits, although there was a wide range of opinion within the group, indicated by the high variance score.

An examination of the responses of the headteacher respondents to Question Twelve in the interview transcript, 'Can you see any value in a headteacher or member of staff visiting parents in their own homes?', tended to support the evidence presented by Cohen. Thirty-six out of the forty-three headteacher respondents did not approve of home visiting by headteachers or teachers (93.5% of the sample as a whole). Examined separately, the results for the infant and junior school groups were similar, (84.2% of the infant school respondents did not agree, and 83.3% of the junior school respondents). None of the respondents who disagreed with the idea of home visiting had done so. Out of the seven headteacher respondents who agreed only four had actually visited homes as deliberate policy. (Table 16 Page 196).

While this evidence and the previous evidence described by Cohen are of interest in examining school-home contacts, what this particular survey can do if this proposition is examined in greater depth is give some explanation of why the majority

of headteachers are opposed to home visiting. The transcript responses to question twelve were carefully re-examined for reasons for agreement or disagreement with the proposal of visiting parents in their own homes as expressed by the headteacher respondents.

All the minority of headteachers who were favourable agreed that home visiting could help in making contact with parents who did not visit the school. Respondent number thirty said:

'I can see that it could be valuable. There are some parents you don't see.' Respondent number twelve felt that home visiting could help to clear up misunderstanding with this type of parent and described such visits in the following words:

'Yes, I've done this on several occasions. I found I was made welcome after an initial coldness. I was allowed in rather reluctantly in most cases but once we talked we cleared up misunderstandings and I've had much better co-operation from them when I've done this.'

Respondent number six also described visits of a similar nature, but was less optimistic about the possible outcome. He said:

'It's duty, I've done it. Some of them will welcome you very apologetically. They were going to come along but! - they would have liked to come along but! - I don't know if it's because they feel their own shortcomings or not. I think with some of them it could be that they themselves feel inadequate. It didn't really have any effect when I did it. I can only remember one who came along afterwards.'

The great majority of the headteacher respondents, however, did not agree that home visits to parents were necessary, or that

much good would come of such visits. Some headteachers considered that teachers or headteachers had no right to visit any parents home uninvited. Respondent number nineteen said:

'I would be against it. I don't think that headteachers should encroach upon children's or parent's homes. I think home should be a private place.' Respondent number four felt equally strongly about these visits being an invasion of privacy and used the example of how he would feel in a similar situation to illustrate this. He said:

'I would say that I would never ever visit a parent. I might change my mind but I think this is an invasion of their privacy. I should be highly annoyed if a headteacher visited me.. If my children's headteacher just knocked at the door for a chat I would think he is wanting to see what kind of a house you've got or what kind of a family we've got. I would feel as though there's an element of probing going on. You can only put yourself in the position, and I wouldn't.'

A number of respondents not only disagreed with the idea in principle, but pointed out what they saw as potential dangers. Respondent number fifteen said:

'It's fraught with danger, especially in the kind of home where the parents are not interested in their children.' Respondent number seventeen agreed and felt that visits to this type of family should be visited by persons other than teachers or headteachers. He said:

'No, I think it's a very dangerous thing. If a visit had got to be made, it's got to be made through either the school welfare officers or the school medical service.'

Other headteachers felt that it was the parents business to come to the school and if they did not take advantage of the opportunities offered the matter should rest there. In the words of respondent number fourteen:

'There might be some value in it but I certainly wouldn't let any of my staff visit the homes. It's not our job to visit the homes it's their job to come here.' Another respondent, while not taking this view of the respective roles of the school and the parent, felt quite simply that there must be some limit on the efforts of a headteacher and staff in providing for and encouraging contacts between parents and school. He described these limits:

'I feel that in our school we move heaven and earth to get co-operation from parents. There's always written word going home, and every encouragement given to come up. Everything possible is done and if they still won't come up - well there's a limit! I can't say it's wrong. If you've got a head willing to do it - good luck to him, but I think I've done enough. I think it should be a follow up by other agencies. There should be someone else to do this.'

Many of the respondents, while not agreeing with home visiting by teachers or headteachers, did not feel that there was no value in visiting the homes of parents who did not visit school. Their contention was that headteachers or teachers were simply not the best people to do this. They felt that this was a task requiring skills and training which were not part of a teacher's professional training. Respondent number twenty-six explained this particular viewpoint at length, when he said:

'I can certainly see some value in it, although I'm not sure that headteachers or teachers are the best people to do this.'

You see the type of family you mentioned who never come to school no matter how much they are encouraged would quite probably already have other social problems. They will probably be already visited by quite a number of various social workers. In a sense they are already overburdened with advice from a number of people and I'm not sure that in cases like this it isn't best for one person only to be connected with a particular family and try to build up some kind of relationship with them and gain their confidence. I'm not sure that adding more and more people to the list of people visiting them with various kinds of advice is necessarily a good thing.'

The reasoned and logical argument advanced in these words can be augmented by a description of a home visit by one male respondent in his own words. While admittedly a humorous situation to some extent, it illustrates the difficulties that can befall a well intentioned, but untrained home visitor:

'Well I'll tell you a story about that. There was one family where we had sent several letters and no one came. So I thought I'll go along and see Mrs. --- . So I went round and I knocked on the door. There were two women standing next door and I heard one of them say, 'I wish I was a blonde!' She appeared at the door and I think she had lots of callers! I wish I hadn't gone!'

The initial analysis of the responses to Question Twelve in the interview transcripts in terms of agreement or disagreement with the idea of home visiting by teachers or headteachers, showed that the great majority of the headteachers in this survey disagreed, (93.5% of the sample as a whole). This measure of

disagreement was constant throughout the sample, regardless of whether the respondent was the headteacher of an infant or junior school. These results were consistent with the evidence of research published by Cohen in 1967, that the majority of headteachers held unfavourable attitudes to home visiting, although there was variation within the sample.

The evidence produced by this survey, however, investigated these attitudes in greater depth, by using the verbal responses of the respondents to the interview question; in an attempt to answer the more interesting and more important question of why this should be so. The reasons given by the respondents in this survey for disagreement with home visiting, were many and varied. Some reasons for disagreement such as, 'it's their job to come to the school', could be described as simply resulting from stereotyped ideas about co-operation between schools and parents and their respective roles; other respondents disagreed because of firmly held beliefs about the privacy of the home. Some headteachers felt that if a school already, 'moved heaven and earth to encourage parents to visit the school', this was their limit, and at this point some other agency should come in to deal with the minority of parents who did not visit the school.

A proportion of the respondents thought that the dangers of such a practice outweighed any possible advantages; others felt that this was the responsibility of the Health and Welfare Authorities rather than the school. Finally some respondents, who were certainly in favour of very close co-operation, expressed reasoned and thoughtful arguments that home visiting of families who never visited school would better be done by persons better qualified by training and experience than teachers and headteachers.

If the type of analysis in depth, used in this survey to investigate the attitudes of headteachers to visiting the homes of certain parents could be said to indicate anything, it is the limitations of the type of approach which relies solely on quantitative data of the type produced by an attitude scale, which simply allows for agreement or disagreement with a particular item, whether or not it allows for different degrees of agreement or disagreement. The simple statistics of approval or disapproval conceal too many different reasons for these choices by the respondent, which quantitative data cannot allow for. Any conclusions reached from this type of evidence about attitudes to co-operation between school and home on the part of headteacher respondents are too simplistic to be of any real value. It is possible for a respondent to disagree with this particular item for reasons which in no way can be said to indicate unfavourable attitudes to much closer co-operation between school and home.

11. A Possible Relationship between Headteacher Attitudes and the Frequency and Type of Contacts with Parents

Types of School

What is the relationship, if any, between the attitude of a headteacher towards parents and the number and type of contacts with parents provided by the school? Can differences between types of school be explained in these terms? It is frequently stated that relations between schools and parents are at their best in nursery and infant schools and subsequently deteriorate as the child progresses through the different stages of education.

In this survey there were distinct differences in the frequency and type of contacts provided by the infant schools

in the survey when compared with the junior schools. The infant schools on average provided more contacts with parents than the junior schools; all the infant schools provided some type of open day for parents, not all the junior schools did so. There were also observed differences in the reported incidences of parents helping in school. In the arrangements for a welcome to school and on the headteacher estimates of the percentage of parents attending functions organised by the school, the average was higher in infant than in junior schools.

What explanation can be given for this in terms of the evidence of this particular survey? One possible explanation which can be illustrated by the section on the open day in particular, was that in the infant schools in the sample, more emphasis was placed on social intercourse between parents and teachers in any function they organised, and the use of items in these occasions which had the sole object of entertaining parents. One junior school respondent in fact described what could be called the infant school approach, when he said: 'If they will only come up to watch their daughter in a play - put on a play. You can get your ideas across then.' The typical attitude of the junior school respondent was, 'parents don't come to school to hear children sing songs.'

While it may well be true that a parent's first concern is to find out about their children's work and progress, if what many junior school respondents felt was 'cheap entertainment', is successful in attracting large numbers of parents to attend functions organised by the school, why not use it? Arrangements of the type commonly used in infant schools in the sample, where there appeared to be a mixture of both, may well be a more



successful means of attracting parents to functions organised by the school. In a practical sense, the effectiveness of any contact with parents is dependent on the numbers of parents willing to attend it, and towards this end the infant school respondents were much more likely to sacrifice notions about what parents should be willing to come to school to see, in order to provide what they knew parents enjoyed - a matter of re-organising priorities.

Another less speculative reasons for these differences between the two types of school can be given by the analysis of question two in the headteacher interviews. Each respondent was asked, 'Do you think that most parents are anxious for more involvement with their childrens school?' An examination of the responses to this particular question, showed that a higher proportion of the infant headteacher respondents (75%), felt that the majority of parents of the children attending their school were interested in what their children were doing at school, and were willing to become involved with the school in their children's education. A smaller proportion of the junior school respondents (50%), felt that the majority of parents were interested, or wanted to become involved with the school. These results could well indicate that the greater number of contacts with parents provided on average by the infant schools in this survey, were a reflection of the more favourable attitudes towards parents of the infant school respondents.

#### Attitudes and Individual Differences

Is it possible to develop these observed differences between different types of school, into an examination of the relationship

between the attitude of an individual headteacher towards parents, and the frequency and type of contacts with parents organised by a particular school? There are obvious qualifications which must be added to a hypothesis of this nature. In the case of a recently appointed headteacher, the type and frequency of contacts with parents provided by the school may be more reflective of the attitudes of the previous incumbent; while the influence of what other schools are doing may well influence decisions of this nature.

However, the interviews as a whole made it quite obvious that final decisions about the frequency and type of contacts with parents were seen by the headteacher respondents as largely a decision for the headteacher to make; and in this sense are most certainly a reflection of the attitude of one individual. If the headteacher does not see any value in a particular type of contact with parents, for example, an open day, most certainly the school will not provide it.

In general in this survey, there was a relationship between the number and type of organised contacts with parents organised by a school and the attitude of the headteacher towards parents and their involvement with schools. The more favourable the attitude of the headteacher towards parents, the more likely he or she will welcome their involvement with the school, and this favourable attitude will be reflected in the number of contacts for parents provided by the school. This can be illustrated from the interview transcripts. The headteacher of one school said:

'I would say that parents are crying out to be involved and all the parents I've talked to are very keen to help. They have

the same aim as we have to help the child.' It is surely no coincidence that this particular school provided the highest number of organised contacts with parents per year, in the entire sample.

This relationship between the attitude of the headteacher towards parents, and the number and type of contacts provided for by the school, can also be illustrated by an example from the other end of the scale of favourability and unfavourability. One respondent said in reply to Question Two in the interview schedule:

'I wouldn't say most - possibly a third are really interested in their children. Most of the rest couldn't care less.' Again, it is significant that this particular school provided no contacts for parents to visit the school organised by the school; but relied on individual parents taking this initiative themselves.

Headteacher attitudes towards parents would appear to affect not only the frequency of contacts with parents organised by the school, but whether a particular type of contact is used or not. Again illustrating this from the interview transcripts, one respondent said:

'I'd say the majority are not - a few are, but the majority are not.' Another respondent held very different views:

'Yes, I can say that the greater proportion of parents are anxious to know what is happening to their children in school and not only what is happening but why it is happening.' The first respondent was not in favour of open days and had provided none, while the second respondent provided an organised programme of contacts for parents including an open day.

The evidence of this survey into the type and frequency of contacts with parents, illustrates the crucial importance in

relations between primary schools and parents, of the attitude of individual headteachers towards parents and their aspirations for their children. Probably the most significant single factor in explaining why different types of schools provided more contacts with parents on average than other types of school, is the attitude of individual headteachers towards the parents of the children being educated in that school. The attitude of the headteacher towards parents may be the greatest single determinant of the number and type of contacts with parents provided by that school.

In the light of these conclusions, the frequently quoted phrase of Lawrence Green that 'in selecting certain ways of communicating with parents and rejecting others, the teachers of any school are revealing quite fundamental attitudes to education', must be rephrased. A distinction must be made between headteachers and teachers in commenting on the ways of communicating with parents selected by a particular school. A more satisfactory conclusion would be:

'The type, frequency, and organisation of contacts with parents organised by any primary school, reveal the fundamental attitude of the headteacher of that school towards parents and their role in their children's education.'

Contacts with Parents

Table 10.

Parental Contacts with Primary Schools.  
(School functions to which parents were invited)

Type of contact	Frequency of Contact	% in sample
1. Medical or dental examinations	43	100%
2. Open days and evenings	39	90.7
3. Carol concerts and Xmas activities	33	76.7
4. Harvest festivals	31	72.1
5. Sports days	20	46.5
6. Parent meetings	19	44.0
7. Easter Services	9	20.9
8. Coffee mornings	3	9.0

Table 11. Open Days

	No. in sample	% in sample
Favourable	36	86.0
Uncertain	4	8.3
Unfavourable	3	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Infant Schools	No.	%
Held Open Days	19	100.0
Did not hold Open Days	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Junior Schools	No.	%
Held Open Days	20	83.3
Did not hold Open Days	4	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 12. Welcome to School

	No.	%
Had a system	32	72.4
Had no system	11	27.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Infant Schools</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Had a system	19	100.0
Had no system	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Junior Schools</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Had a system	9	37.5
Had no system	15	62.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 13. Parents Helping in School

	No.	% in sample
Approval	19	44.2
Qualified Approval	21	48.8
Disapproval	3	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Infant Schools</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Approval	12	63.1
Qualified Approval	7	36.9
Disapproval	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Junior Schools</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Approval	7	29.2
Qualified Approval	14	58.3
Disapproval	3	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 14. The Limits of Parental Co-operation		
	No.	% in sample
No Limits	9	21.0
The Classroom Door	34	79.0
Total	43	100.0
Infant Schools		
	No.	%
No Limits	7	36.9
The Classroom Door	12	63.1
Total	19	100.0
Junior Schools		
	No.	%
No Limits	4	16.7
The Classroom Door	20	83.3
Total	24	100.0

Table 15. Parents who Never Visit the School		
	No.	%
Formal Method	9	20.9
No Formal Method	34	79.1
Total	43	100.0
Infant Schools		
	No.	%
Formal Method	2	10.5
No Formal Method	17	89.5
Total	19	100.0
Junior Schools		
	No.	%
Formal Method	7	29.2
No Formal Method	17	70.8
Total	24	100.0

Table 16. Home Visiting			
		No.	%
Approval		7	6.5
Disapproval		36	93.5
Total		<u>43</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Infant Schools		No.	%
Approve		3	17.6
Disapprove		16	82.4
Total		<u>19</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Junior Schools		No.	%
Approve		4	16.7
Disapprove		<u>20</u>	<u>83.3</u>
Total		<u>24</u>	<u>100.0</u>



Enclosure Seven.

Table of Parental Contacts with Primary Schools (20)

(School functions to which parents said they had been invited and said they had attended)

		% invited	% attended
1.	Open days and evenings Medical or dental examinations	81	72
2.	School plays, shows, concerts, services	75	64
3.	Jumble sales, social evenings to raise money for school	65	49
4.	Sports days, swimming galas	55	39
5.	Parent-teacher Association meetings, activities	25	13
6.	Prize days	14	10
7.	School outings	14	4

(Figures taken from Children and Their Primary Schools,  
Vol.2, App.3, Page 129).

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**CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

1. Principle and Practice

The policy statement of the National Union of Teachers<sup>1</sup> on relations between home and school states:- 'If the habit of co-operation between school and home is not established at the primary school level, it can never be restored later. The foundations, like those of educational matters generally, must be laid in the primary school.'

The sentiments expressed in this statement, of the importance of co-operation between school and home and the necessity of these good relations being established as early as possible, would no doubt be supported by the majority of primary school headteachers. It is when general principles of this kind have to be translated into action, in terms of deciding which particular types of parent teacher co-operation will produce the kind of relations between teachers and parents implied in the general principle, that controversy begins.

Of the many different methods to promote good relations between schools and parents that have been adopted by primary schools, none arouses a more emotive reaction within the teaching profession than the Parent-Teacher Association. The advantages and disadvantages of this particular form of formal organisation have been, and will continue to be, hotly debated.

2. The Limited Nature of Information about Parent-Teacher Associations

Facts, and any kind of accurate statistical information about Parent-Teacher Associations, are few and difficult to establish. Even

in 1972 it is not possible to arrive at an exact figure for the number of Parent-Teacher Associations on a national basis, as not all Parent-Teacher Associations are affiliated to the National Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations. A further complication is that some are affiliated both to area associations and to the national body.

The questionnaires completed by one hundred and seventy one headteachers of maintained primary schools in the 1965 National Survey undertaken for the Plowden Report, showed that seventeen percent of these schools had a Parent-Teacher Association and a similar figure was recorded by the National Child Development Study. However, twenty five percent of the parents interviewed for the National Survey said that there was a Parent-Teacher Association at the school which their child attended.

Apart from this kind of statistical information, research into Parent-Teacher Association is almost non-existent. The oft repeated assertion that the majority of headteachers and teachers prefer informal methods of co-operating with parents to a formal organisation such as a Parent-Teacher Association is apparently based on part of a 1947 survey by W.D. Wall<sup>2</sup> described in an earlier chapter. The only piece of research entirely devoted to Parent-Teacher Associations is that of A.E.C.W. Spencer<sup>3</sup> in 1969, which was confined to Catholic Schools in England and Wales. Because of the restricted nature of the sample, it may well be that the figures for Parent-Teacher Association formation may be connected with the distribution of the Catholic population, and may be unsuitable for generalisation in terms of the total population of non voluntary schools; although his conclusion that headteacher attitudes are vital to the formation or non formation of a Parent-Teacher Association may be more useful.

This apparent lack of the kind of research which produces something more than rather crude statistical information obtained from questionnaires is surprising when one considers the number of articles and arguments concerning Parent-Teacher Associations in the educational press. It would be difficult to discover any other educational institution which has been the subject of so much exposition and so little real analysis.

### 3. A Problem of Definition?

Perhaps some explanation of this can be seen as a problem of definition. While the term Parent-Teacher Association has been very widely used in the literature of education (since the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967, increasingly so); there would appear to be little agreement about precisely what is meant by a Parent-Teacher Association; its role; or the functions associated with it. Indeed, no English dictionary, including specialised dictionaries of sociology, appear to include the term. The only dictionary definition is that found in Webster's which defines it as 'an organisation of local groups of teachers and the parents of their pupils to work for the improvement of the schools and the benefit of the pupils'.

As Education Survey No. 5. 'Parent/Teacher Relations in Primary Schools'<sup>4</sup> makes clear:

'There is no uniformity either in the constitution or the activities of associations which bring parents and teachers together. Some are designated 'parent associations'; some include past parents; most are for parents and teachers; some are open to all members of the community and virtually become community associations even though they may be known as 'Friends of the School Association'. Many have a formal constitution often following the model put out by the

National Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations. Others have a loose casual organisation, or no constitution at all.'

This apparent lack of precise meaning may be of importance in deciding in which way the information produced by this particular piece of research can best be analysed; particularly if some insight into the attitudes of the headteachers in the sample is sought, rather than the somewhat superficial statistical approach which typifies the available evidence.

#### 4. The Evidence of this Survey and its Interpretation

The evidence of this survey consisted of the following: the responses of all the primary school headteachers in one Local Education Authority (forty-three in all), to the question, 'If a group of parents approached you with a request to start a Parent-Teacher Association, what would your reaction be?' This question was the fourth on the schedule of questions of a structured personal interview with each headteacher, which had been tape recorded and an interview transcript had been completed. The entire response of each headteacher to the question was therefore available for analysis.

When these replies were analysed and tabulated, the following facts emerged. Out of the forty-three primary schools in the sample, only one school had a Parent-Teacher Association, which had gradually run down to the extent where its only activity was an annual trip to a pantomime. None of the other forty-two schools had a Parent-Teacher Association at all.

Out of the forty-three headteachers interviewed the majority (twenty-nine), were not in favour of their school having a Parent-Teacher Association. Ten headteachers were undecided and a minority (four) were favourable towards Parent-Teacher Associations but had

not started one in their own school (Table 17 Page 229).

The majority of headteachers in the sample (twenty-seven), had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in any capacity. Sixteen of the headteachers had experience in various capacities. Eleven had experience of a Parent Teacher Association as a teacher; two as a parent whose child had attended a school which had a Parent Teacher Association; two as a headteacher of a school with a Parent Teacher Association and one headteacher had the unusual experience of being a member of a tennis club at a school which had a Parent-Teacher Association (Tables 18 & 19 Page 229).

There appeared to be a remarkable consensus of opinion in the sample about attitudes to Parent-Teacher Associations. The percentages of agreement, disagreement and indecision of those respondents who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association and those who had not, were remarkably similar. Sixty-six percent of the group with no experience of a Parent-Teacher Association were against having a Parent-Teacher Association in their own school, compared to sixty-eight percent in the group with previous experience. A slightly larger proportion of the group with no previous experience (twenty-five percent) were undecided as opposed to eighteen percent of the group with previous experience. Two respondents from each group were in favour of a Parent-Teacher Association (Tables 20 & 21 Page 230).

The majority of headteachers in the sample saw the decision whether or not the school should have a Parent-Teacher Association as a decision mainly for the headteacher. Only eight headteachers in the sample of forty-three mentioned any consultation with their staff.

What can we learn from this type of analysis? It certainly



confirms the view that the majority of headteachers prefer informal contacts with parents to a formal association such as a Parent-Teacher Association. It could also be said to confirm Spencer's conclusion that headteacher attitudes are vital in Parent-Teacher Association formation, although perhaps reason and common sense would lead us to the same conclusion. The only new information which we can extract from these tables would be that apparently previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in any capacity, makes little difference as to whether a headteacher approves or disapproves of Parent-Teacher Associations - the remarkable consensus between those headteachers in the sample who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in some capacity and those who had not, would certainly suggest this. Yet what this type of analysis does not do, is offer any explanation of why the majority of headteachers in the sample should be opposed to formal associations, even when they apparently have no previous experience of one.

##### 5. A Different Type of Analysis

Perhaps a different type of analysis is necessary? We know that attitudes are determined not only by facts and group affiliations, but by how an object or an institution is perceived by an individual and perhaps a group. The headteachers in this group may well perceive this particular institution in such a different way to some other groups, such as parents, or parental pressure groups, as to attach a totally different meaning to the same institution.

Bearing in mind the paucity of real information about Parent-Teacher Associations, it should be possible to examine both the literature on the subject, and the transcript responses of the headteachers in the sample, and produce theoretical models of Parent-Teacher Association perception by different groups. In this way, it

may be possible to examine in greater depth the under-lying attitudes to Parent-Teacher Associations of the headteacher respondents, in a way which producing percentage tables of different kinds cannot hope to achieve.

6. Two Theoretical Models of Parent-Teacher Association Perception  
by Different Groups

i. The National Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations in its suggested constitution for a Parent-Teacher Association, states as the objects of a Parent-Teacher Association:

- a) To encourage co-operation between the staff of the school, the parents and all others associated with the school;
- b) To encourage interest in the fulfilment of the educational requirements of the 1944/6 Education Acts;
- c) To engage in activities of all kinds affecting the education and welfare of the children attending the school.

One of the movements enthusiasts, Mr. A.N. Gillet<sup>5</sup>, wrote the following about Parent-Teacher Associations:

'Some of the best have an educational programme of talks, discussions, brain trusts and films, with which are mixed social events such as dances, refreshments, informal discussions and outings. The most important subjects are health, leisure activities and child studies, which concern parents directly; secondly the subject of education so that they understand the school and how to support it. The association may also take up questions which concern children in general such as road safety. It also provides equipment for the school which cannot be supplied by the Local Education Authority.'

By combining these two extracts, it is possible to construct a theoretical model of how a Parent-Teacher Association is seen by an

enthusiastic parental pressure group. It could be described as an 'Idealistic Model'.

### The Idealistic Model of a Parent-Teacher Association

A Parent-Teacher Association is an organisation with very wide aims, including the provision of information to parents on curriculum and teaching methods. There is an acceptance by both parents and teachers of the importance of parent education. The parents willingly learn about and discuss all facets of their children's education with a co-operative staff. The parents, teachers and all others associated with the school, fraternise in social activities of all kinds, in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

ii. The Plowden Report, 'Children and their Primary Schools', contains the following extracts on Parent-Teacher Association in the Chapter entitled, 'Participation by Parents?':<sup>6</sup>

'Many but not all of these exceptional schools had active Parent Teacher Associations. They had suggestions to make and questions to ask about the school and its work. It is one of the purposes of a Parent Teacher Association to stimulate and answer such questions. The Head and teachers had complete control where professional matters were concerned. ---- Yet we do not necessarily think that a Parent-Teacher Association is the best means of fostering closer relationships between school and home. They can be of the greatest value where good leadership is given by the headteacher. They may do harm if they get into the hands of a small group. It is significant that according to the Social Survey interviews, a smaller proportion of manual workers attended Parent-Teacher Association meetings than any other type of function. ----

They are least common in nursery schools where relations between mothers and teachers are usually very intimate, rather more common

in infant schools and frequently found in junior and junior mixed and infant schools. It may be that the smaller the school the less the need for a formal association. ----

Heads have to take account of what they do directly for children as well as indirectly through parents. In some schools at some moments in their history, particularly if heads cannot delegate to others the administrative work of running a Parent-Teacher Association, it may absorb too much of their attention.'

From these extracts from the Flowden Report it is possible to construct a theoretical model of how a Parent-Teacher Association was seen by the members of the Committee. It could be described as a 'Qualified Model'.

#### The Qualified Model (Flowden)

A Parent-Teacher Association is an organisation which is one of the ways a school can foster good relations with parents, but not necessarily the best way. The school influences parents directly by stimulating their interest in the school and its work, but where the head and teachers have complete control over 'professional matters'. It is of greatest value where good leadership is given by the head, but contains an element of risk if power becomes centred in a small group. It may sometimes take up too much of the head's time in administration and may not be necessary in smaller schools where the relations between parents and teachers are usually more intimate.

#### 7. The Theoretical Survey Model

##### The Procedures Adopted

As the analysis of the preliminary quantitative data produced by this part of the survey had already shown that a majority of the

headteacher respondents held unfavourable attitudes to a Parent-Teacher Association, and that there appeared to be a striking consistency in attitude between the headteachers who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association and those who had none; some explanation of these attitudes was sought, in order to construct a theoretical model.

The forty-three transcripts were carefully examined with particular reference to question four, 'If a group of parents approached you with a request to start a Parent-Teacher Association what would your reaction be?' Reasons for disapproval were noted and a coding frame prepared. The transcript replies were then carefully examined and the frequency of how often these reasons for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association occurred in the sample as a whole noted. (These frequencies are shown in Table 22 Page 230 .)

#### Reasons for Disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association

a) In a Parent-Teacher Association the social activities are well attended, while educational functions are badly attended.

This was the most frequently mentioned reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association and was given by twenty-two of the respondents (fifty-one percent of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number three, who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association as a parent member:

'My experience has been that if the staff said, "We are going to have a whist drive and dance because we want some funds to go on a school trip" - you could not get into the hall. It was packed! But when they said at our next monthly meeting someone is coming to lecture on different types of reading (and they had proper printed forms every term), you were lucky to get one percent of the parents there. Anything social yes! Anything educational, no!'

b) A Parent-Teacher Association is a much too formal way of co-operating with parents. Informal methods are better.

This reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association was given by twenty of the respondents (46.4% of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number thirty-four, who had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in any capacity:

'I've never thought that a Parent-Teacher Association was a vital part of a school. My parents know that if there's anything they want to know about the children they come up and 'I'll give them the time. I think it's done better informally like this.'

c) A Parent-Teacher Association presents a danger that parents will try to interfere with the running of the school.

This reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association was given by thirteen of the respondents (30.2% of the sample as a whole).

In the words of respondent number forty-one, who had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association:

'There is a danger of parents coming into the schools and attempting to take over and tell you your job.'

Or as respondent number fifteen, who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association as a teacher, said:

'I think the tail tries to wag the dog!'

d) A Parent-Teacher Association does not help because the parents you really need to see never attend.

This reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association was given by twelve of the respondents (27.9% of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number twelve, who had no

previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association:

'I have no experience myself, just what I've heard generally. The ones you really want to get at never attend anything like this.'

Or as respondent number thirteen who had had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association as a teacher, said:

'It doesn't attract the people you would really like to get after. There is no way of really doing this.'

e) A Parent-Teacher Association is only useful as a money raising organisation. This reason was seen as both a reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association and as something in its favour. This reason was given by ten of the respondents (23.2% of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number four who was not in favour of a Parent-Teacher Association and had no previous experience of one:

'I can see that a Parent-Teacher Association would be a big help, particularly in a school like mine in a deprived area. We don't get much in the way of a requisition allowance. You have to scratch for everything. They could certainly help in the provision of a tape recorder or a V.H.F. radio, this sort of thing.'

Or as respondent number six, who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association as a teacher, put it with refreshing candour:

'It helps the school funds. It's as simple as that! I've worked in one and we got quite a lot from them in extras which the Authority would not provide!'

f) A Parent-Teacher Association tends to be dominated by a small clique of parents.

This reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association was given by eight respondents (18.2% of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number twenty-two, who had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association:

'You tend, unless you're careful, as you do at all meetings to get the certain few who tend to be the treasurer, the secretary, the chairman - possibly for their own ends rather than the fulfilment of what a Parent-Teacher Association means.'

Or as respondent number sixteen, who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association as a teacher, said:

'In my experience of a Parent-Teacher Association you get the few who want to be on the Committee and tell the others what to do.'

g) A Parent-Teacher Association does not help, because it is only attended by those parents you really don't need to see.

This reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association was given by seven of the respondents (16.2%) of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number seven who had had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in two schools as a teacher:

'My experience of them in two schools was that the parents who were enthusiastic came. They were the ones you knew you had on your side anyway.'

Respondent number eight, who had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association, also felt that:

'You get the parents of children where there's nothing much to discuss. They're getting on quite well.'

h) A Parent-Teacher Association is dependent for success on the type



of area the school is sited in.

This reason for disapproval of a Parent Teacher Association was given by seven respondents (16.2% of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number forty, who had no experience of a Parent-Teacher Association:

'You would get some places where you could start a Parent-Teacher Association and you wouldn't get a good attendance. It would depend on the area in which the school was sited.'

Or as respondent number fourteen, who had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in any capacity, said:

'I think it depends on the area. I could see some value in some areas but not here.'

i) A Parent-Teacher Association is an organisation which attracts the wrong kind of parent.

This reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association was given by seven respondents (16.2% of the sample as a whole). In the words of respondent number thirteen, who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association:

'I've experience in schools, as a teacher, where we've had Parent-Teacher Associations, and we found it was the vociferous ones, and the ones who like to compensate for something lacking in their own working life who want to become committee members. A lot to say, and grasp a little power.'

Other reasons for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association which were revealed by the analysis, but which were mentioned by less than fifteen percent of the sample as a whole, were as follows:

Three of the respondents (6% of the sample as a whole) felt that

a distinct disadvantage of a Parent-Teacher Association, as opposed to less formal methods of co-operating with parents, was that it was difficult to ensure a suitable type of Parent-Teacher Association official over a long period. In the words of respondent number fifteen, who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association as a teacher:

'In Parent-Teacher Associations you have the problem you have in all organisations. Nobody wants to be an official. You can't find secretaries and you can't find treasurers. If the headteacher has to do it, it's a dead loss!'

Another reason for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association, which is obviously linked with the more frequently mentioned one of the importance of the particular area a school is sited in, is that working class parents would be unlikely to maintain the sustained interest necessary to run a Parent-Teacher Association. In the words of respondent number seven, who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association as a teacher:

'I wouldn't for the world belittle working class parents but I don't think they can keep up the sustained interest to run a Parent-Teacher Association.'

Two of the respondents (4.6% of the sample as a whole), mentioned the difficulties of involving teachers, particularly married women, in Parent-Teacher Association activities outside of normal school hours. In the words of respondent number twenty-five:

'I would very much have liked to have had a Parent-Teacher Association in our school, but when every member of your staff is a married woman and some of them are travelling in from outside the town - you have to be sensible.'

## The Survey Model of a Parent-Teacher Association

By combining these opinions expressed by the majority of headteachers in the sample (90.6% of the sample if we include the undecided group), it is possible to construct a theoretical model of how the majority of headteachers in one Local Education Authority perceive a Parent-Teacher Association.

### The Survey Model

A Parent-Teacher Association is an organisation which in theory promotes co-operation between parents and teachers; in practice however, it degenerates into social activities of little educational value. By its very nature it is too formal to promote good relations between parents and teachers although useful for raising funds. Those parents who would most benefit from it are unlikely to attend and it contains an inherent danger that parents will attempt to interfere with the running of the school. It is too easily dominated by a small clique and is to some extent dependent for success on the area the school is sited in.

### 8. A Comparison of the Theoretical Models

How does this theoretical model of how the majority of headteachers in the survey sample saw a Parent-Teacher Association compare with the 'idealistic model' hypothesised from National Federation of Parent Teacher Association literature, and the 'qualified model', produced from extracts of the Flowden Report?

The 'idealistic model' is one where a Parent-Teacher Association is seen as a real declaration of partnership between teachers and parents, in which mutual understanding between the two parties works as a two way process. The parents' interest in education is extended

beyond a narrow interest in the progress of their own children, into a wider understanding of the educational needs of all the children in the school and how they can help in this process. The teachers, by establishing a close relationship with the parents, based on mutual respect, obtain a better understanding of the children they teach. Both parties see parent education as a vital part of a Parent-Teacher Association and the various activities, including the social ones, are all seen as part of this general process.

The Plowden model, while still containing strong idealistic elements, such as the school stimulating parental interest in the school and its work, sees parent education in a more limited sense. The model contains certain cautions and qualifications, such as pointing out that this is only one way of promoting better understanding between teachers and parents. While it still urges partnership between teachers, it could be said that parents are seen somewhat as 'junior partners'.

The survey model produced by analysis of the opinions of the majority of the headteachers in the sample about Parent-Teacher Associations, is one conspicuously lacking in idealism. The model contains so many reservations, that it could be described as being all reservations and no ideals. Parent education is seen as largely irrelevant, as those parents who attend this type of function are the ones who have no need to. The social events are seen as a rather tiresome burden, with little feedback in educational terms. The parents are seen not as potential partners, but in terms of headteacher autonomy, as agents of a potential 'take over bid'.

9. The Power of the Reference Group in Determining Attitudes to  
Educational Institutions

While the previous comparison of the theoretical survey model of

Parent-Teacher Association perception, constructed from the opinions regarding Parent-Teacher Associations of the majority of the headteachers in the survey sample with other theoretical models, would appear to confirm the view that they see a Parent-Teacher Association in a very different light to other interested parties; (and certainly one would expect that a person perceiving a Parent-Teacher Association in such a way would hold hostile attitudes towards the institution, as indeed the majority of headteachers in the sample did); it does not explain satisfactorily why they hold such views; or the consensus of opinion between those who had previous experience of the institution and those who had none.

The group affiliations of an individual play an important part in the formation of his attitudes, particularly a group with which he or she identifies - known in the language of social psychology as a 'reference group'. Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey,<sup>7</sup> define a reference group as: 'Any group with which an individual identifies himself such that he tends to use the group as a standard for self evaluation, and as a source of his personal values and goals. The reference group of an individual may include both membership groups and groups to which he aspires to belong'.

The power of the reference group has perhaps been neglected in educational literature, although frequent reference is made to 'staff room opinion', which is probably a reference group for the teacher. How far does the survey sample of headteachers, which includes all the headteachers in one Local Education Authority, constitute a reference group, and can we explain their attitudes to Parent-Teacher Associations in these terms?

According to Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey,<sup>8</sup> one of the characteristics of a reference group is its consistency of attitudes and the way in which it develops a common set of beliefs.

values and norms shared by the majority of the members of the group. These are formed in the process of group interaction and once formed regulate the behaviour of the members. They describe this as 'group ideology'.

'An ideology - a set of common beliefs, common values, and common norms - develops in every enduring group. This ideology importantly influences the behaviour of the members of a group.'

If we regard the headteacher respondents as a reference group, both the remarkable consensus of opinion about Parent-Teacher Associations by the headteachers in the sample, and the apparent agreement between those who had previously experience of the institution and those who had not, can be satisfactorily explained. This group of headteachers have, over a period of years, produced their own ideology about Parent-Teacher Associations, which transcends personal experience and produces a remarkable consistency of attitudes in the majority of the group. While the theoretical model to some extent explains the group ideology towards Parent-Teacher Associations, can we further define it?

The group beliefs of these headteachers towards Parent-Teacher Associations contains two central factors - how the members of the group see their own role in the institution, (in this case the role of the headteacher), and how they see the role of the other necessary party, the parent, in relation to this. The majority of the members of the group could see little value in social intercourse with parents; they rejected the view that this had value, in that a great deal of informal talk about education went on at these activities. To them educational talks to parents, and social activities with them, were quite separate functions of a Parent-Teacher Association and many of them resented the social activities as a waste of time. In the words of headteacher respondent number thirty-five, who had no

experience of a Parent-Teacher Association:

'If it was going to help with school activities, yes, but if it was going to involve all these social activities outside of school, the way some of them do, no, I'm finished. This is not it at all.'

Respondent number thirty-eight, describing previous Parent-Teacher Association experience as a teacher, mentioned similar feelings:

'Then they were wanting me to play bingo and I had more to do with my time.'

Parent education is seen in this ideology in a very limited sense indeed, in that the success of a Parent Teacher Association would depend on the number of parents who turned up at educational talks. Those who did turn up really didn't need to: it was the parents who really needed to be 'got at' who never turn up.

In the words of respondent number sixteen, who had previous experience as a teacher in a Parent-Teacher Association:

'The ones you want to get at you only see at the dances. The other ones who are interested, well, they could come to school in the ordinary way.'

Similar sentiments were expressed by headteacher respondent number nineteen who had no previous experience of a Parent Teacher Association:

'The wise parent can do all they like, buying books and helping at home and they realise that if they have got good teachers and a good headteacher they will know what they are doing.'

The authority and autonomy of the headteacher were threatened by a formal organised parents' organisation such as a Parent-Teacher

Association. In the words of headteacher number twenty-two who had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association:

'I don't want parents running my school. I don't feel they are qualified to do so'.

Respondent number fifteen, who had experience as a teacher held a similar opinion:

'I wouldn't snub them, or pour cold water on the idea, but I would take delaying action until I retired! I think the tail tries to wag the dog.'

If the opinion of the majority of headteachers are thought of as expressing the group beliefs of a reference group towards a particular institution, in this case a Parent-Teacher Association, apparently satisfactory explanations emerge for the three analytic problems of this part of the survey. The hostile attitudes of the majority of headteachers in the sample towards the institution, are both the product and the reiteration of the ideology of this particular reference group. The consensus of opinion between the experienced and non experienced group can be explained in terms of the consistency of attitude one would expect to find in a reference group, and the influence of the group ideology in influencing the opinions of those members who have no personal experience of the institution. Finally, the fact that the vast majority of the group preferred informal relations with parents to a formal institution such as a Parent-Teacher Association, can be explained in terms of the group ideology. If organised parents' associations are seen as a threat to headteacher autonomy, as reflected in the group ideology, informal relations with parents both conforms to the ideology of the reference group and to some extent removes this threat by placing the onus for involvement on individual parents, who are much less



likely to attempt to usurp the authority of the headteacher than an organised group.

#### 10. Consensus and Group Interaction

A remarkable feature of the attitudes towards Parent-Teacher Associations of the headteachers in the survey sample was the consensus of opinion expressed in the group as a whole, and the cohesiveness of the attitudes of those headteachers who had previous experience of Parent-Teacher Associations, and those whose opinions were not the result of personal experience. How far can it be said that it is the attitudes of the experienced group which are reflected in the expressed opinions of the non experienced group?

A necessary prerequisite of consensus in any group is interaction of some kind among the members of the group. Newcombe, Turner and Converse<sup>9</sup> define consensus as:

'A consequence of reciprocal influence - not necessarily by deliberate efforts to persuade but more commonly, simply by expressing one kind of attitude rather than its opposite. When you hear only one kind of attitude expressed by most of the people, who, like yourself, are concerned, your own attitudes are likely to be influenced. And, insofar as this happens to many or most members of a group, their consensus is increased, through communication among members about the object of the consensual attitudes, particularly when communication includes members expressions of their own attitudes.'

While it would be realistic to assume a considerable amount of interaction of this type among any group of headteachers about matters concerning their role in relation to parents, how far can any evidence of this, with regard to Parent-Teacher Associations, be shown to have

occurred among this particular group of headteachers, from the evidence of this survey? A common generalisation about the teaching profession, is that they are notorious for 'taking shop', in or out of each others company. But can this survey produce evidence of interaction of a more concrete nature than this?

A fact which emerges from the analysis of the headteacher interviews was that two Parent-Teacher Associations had existed in two primary schools in the Local Education Authority, prior to the survey. One of these had been in existence during the years 1953 to 1967, and the other from 1950 to 1956. Out of the group of headteachers in the survey sample who had previous experience of a Parent Teacher Association in some capacity, sixteen in all, eleven of these (68.7%) had had this experience in one or other of these two local Parent-Teacher Associations. Thirteen of these sixteen respondents (81.2%) quoted experience of one or the other of these two local Parent-Teacher Associations as a justification for some expressed reason for disapproval of the institution. Of the respondents who had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in any capacity, twenty out of twenty-seven (77.0%), quoted the experience of others as a reason for their expressed opinions about Parent-Teacher Associations. Nineteen out of these twenty-seven respondents mentioned what they had heard from others who had experience of the two local Parent-Teacher Associations (70.6%).

It would appear, therefore, that the unfavourable attitudes of the majority of headteachers in the survey sample as a whole towards Parent-Teacher Associations, and the consensus of opinion in the group between those who had experience of a Parent-Teacher Association and those who had not, could be attributed to the interaction between the members, as one could expect in a reference

group of this kind. The majority opinion in the group of unfavourable attitudes towards Parent-Teacher Associations, could be said to be a result of the experienced groups attitudes towards the Parent-Teacher Associations they had personal experience of.

#### 11. A Myth and a Parable

There are a number of myths and parables about Parent-Teacher Associations. Perhaps the most popular one in the teaching profession is that unless the headteacher maintains ceaseless vigilance, the Parent-Teacher Association would take over the running of the school - just as they do in America! This particular myth was current and widely held in the profession at the time of the Plowden Report;<sup>10</sup> so much so, that the Report attempted to refute it in the following extract from the chapter 'Participation by Parents':

'In our visits to America, we repeatedly asked for instances where the Parent-Teacher Association had taken over the school. Though we could not explore so difficult a question in any depth on a brief tour we were unable to find such instances, and in general the high quality of parent-teacher relations impressed us as much as any aspect of education we saw in the United States.'

While it is obviously both difficult and dangerous to make judgements and comparisons about the institutions of another society, often out of context, myths once established die hard, and this particular myth will no doubt for some time to come influence the attitudes of many British teachers and headteachers towards Parent-Teacher Associations. Four years after the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967, one respondent (number thirty-eight) could still say:

'There, of course, (the U.S.A.) they can stalk into the classroom at any time and stand around and listen and watch and interfere, so

I understand. Then again, they also have control of the purse strings.'

The survey itself produced a local Parent-Teacher Association myth, described by a number of headteacher respondents, none of whom had any experience of a Parent-Teacher Association. This myth which was identical in each case, except that it was said to have happened in three different local Parent-Teacher Associations, could be described in the following manner, as it also contained the element of a professional parable.

### 12. The Parable of the Tape Recorder

In a certain Parent-Teacher Association parents raised money, by means of various social activities, to buy a tape recorder, which at this time the Local Education Authority would not provide. After duly presenting it to the school some time elapsed. Then the parents began asking the children, 'are you using the tape recorder that we bought for you?' And so it came to pass that certain classes were not using the tape recorder. The parents complained to the headteacher that some children were not having the use of apparatus which had been provided by the parents for the benefit of all the children.

Moral: Timeo parentes et dona ferentes!

### 13. A Deviant Member

The views of one respondent, were in such contrast to the group beliefs about Parent-Teacher Associations, as described in the theoretical survey model of a Parent-Teacher Association perception, that he could be described as a deviant member of the group. It is perhaps significant that he was a new member of the group, from a different area of the country. His feelings about Parent-Teacher Associations were in sharp contrast to the majority opinion and

were nearer the idealistic model of a Parent-Teacher Association produced from National Federation of Parent-Teacher Association literature. He said in answer to the question, 'What would you do if a group of parents approached you with a request to start a Parent-Teacher Association?':

'My reaction would be to encourage their interest and try to built it up. I did form a Parent-Teacher Association at my last school which was very successful. The social side was better attended, but I wouldn't use that as a criticism of a Parent-Teacher Association. It's obvious surely that people prefer to go to the cinema to see a film rather than attend a lecture on archeology! Anyway you're bound to get the odd few who won't attend anything, no matter how hard you try. This is no excuse at all for not having one for the majority who are interested and will attend functions. They are to be considered surely! I know a common criticism of Parent-Teacher Associations is that parents will try to interfere but I've had experience of quite a number and this has not been my experience.'

#### 14. Qualifications and Explanations

While both the concept of the reference group and the theoretical model of Parent-Teacher Association perception help to explain the majority opinion within the sample who were hostile to Parent-Teacher Associations, and the consensus of opinion between those who had previous experience and those who had none, any theoretical model or explanation in terms of a concept such as a reference group, has limitations and must be qualified.

Some respondents who expressed disagreement with the idea of having a Parent-Teacher Association in their school fully believed in involving parents in their children's education and believed that

the majority of parents wished to be involved. It would be unfair to dismiss this in the appealing but over simplified explanation of conformity to group norms about headteacher autonomy. Some respondents after a great deal of consideration of the idea of a Parent-Teacher Association, firmly believed that they could involve parents more fully by using informal methods, which were more suited to their particular school. There is support for this view in some of the Plowden evidence as reported in 'Education Survey No. 5'.<sup>10</sup>

'The parental survey conducted by the Central Advisory Council showed a marked connection between attendance at a Parent-Teacher Association and social class. Twenty-five percent of professional parents but only five percent of unskilled workers had attended meetings. During the pilot enquiry working class mothers who had been to Parent-Teacher Association meetings said they did not care for them as the more affluent and confident parents dominated the meetings and they were not able to express their views.'

This feeling was echoed in the words of respondent number three who was firmly in favour of involving parents with the school, but did not think that in his case a Parent-Teacher Association was the best means of doing this:

'These parents are ordinary working class people who are suspicious of authority in any shape or form, particularly when it is written down on paper. They don't like the formal approach. They'd rather you slapped them on the back and accepted a cigarette from them - or gave them one. In a middle class school you might have to have a different approach. There are schools in the town where even my approach would be too formal!'

Perhaps it could be claimed that the majority of respondents,

themselves the product of an improved system of education, have failed to consider that the system may have produced more enlightened and better educated parents and still carry a stereotype of ill educated and over anxious parents. Yet there are other explanations for these attitudes besides claiming that they are simply excuses, or the rationalisation of prejudice, although perhaps in some cases this may be true.

The majority of headteachers in the survey were in the over fifties age group. The promotion patterns in the Local Education Authority appeared to be typical of the North, in that the age of appointment for headteachers, even those of infant schools, tended to be old, by standards in other parts of the country. The vast majority of the headteachers in the sample were local people who had spent their working lives as teachers in the same area, and their experience and attitudes tended to reinforce each other.

While the advantages of a Parent-Teacher Association, apart from any beliefs about the relative advantages and disadvantages of formal and informal methods, can be advocated in the literature of education; a group such as this whose training and experience may have been in a tradition very far removed from the idea of welcoming parents as equal partners, could hardly be expected to enthuse about an institution such as a Parent-Teacher Association; especially as in their view, both what had been experienced by some and described to others about the two local Parent-Teacher Associations, appeared to confirm their worst suspicions of the institution.

The other problem may be seen as a professional one and may be capable of generalisation outside this particular group of headteachers. Teachers have always had feelings of insecurity about their status as a profession and remembering the traditional

autonomy of the English headteacher, it would be unrealistic to expect them to welcome what many of them, rightly or wrongly, see as an institution which is a potential threat to this autonomy.

This reluctance can be illustrated in the words of respondent number twelve, who could perhaps be said to be echoing the sentiments of not only many of the headteachers in this survey towards Parent-Teacher Associations, but the feelings of unease about this particular institution of many of the headteachers in the country as a whole; feelings which must be acknowledged and accounted for, in any realistic appraisal of educational change:

'My argument as a head is, that I have enough people over me as it is. There's the director and all the ancillary staff; interested members of the education committee who are managers and I've also got the inspectorate. I don't go and tell my doctor how to practice medicine or my builder how to lay bricks and I see no reason why parents should come and tell me how to run my school. Parent-Teacher Associations get to the point where it's their children and they know better than you.'



Table 17.

Attitudes to Parent-Teacher Associations		
	No.	%
Approve	4	9.3
Disapprove	29	67.5
Undecided	10	23.2
Total	43	100.0

Table 18.

Experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in any capacity		
	No.	%
No experience	27	62.8
Experience	16	37.2
Total	43	100.0

Table 19.

Type of experience of a Parent-Teacher Association		
	No.	% in sample as a whole
As a headteacher	2	4.6
As a teacher	11	25.6
As a parent	2	4.6
Any other	1	2.3
Total	16	37.1

Table 20.

Attitudes of Group with Experience of a Parent-Teacher Association		
	No.	%
Approve	2	12.5
Disapprove	11	68.8
Undecided	3	18.7
Total	16	100.0

Table 21.

Attitudes of Group with no experience of a Parent-Teacher Association		
	No.	%
Approve	2	7.4
Disapprove	18	66.7
Undecided	7	25.9
Total	27	100.0

Table 22.

Reasons expressed for disapproval of a Parent-Teacher Association		
Reason Expressed	Frequency in Sample	%
1. Social events are well attended, educational events badly	22	51.2
2. Too formal, informal methods work better	20	46.5
3. Parents will attempt to interfere with running of school	13	30.2
4. Those parents you really need to see will not attend	12	27.9
5. It is good mainly for raising money	10	23.2
6. A P.T.A. tends to be dominated by a small clique	8	18.6
7. The parents you really don't need to see are the ones who attend	7	16.3
8. It is dependent for success on the area the school serves	7	16.2
9. A P.T.A. attracts the wrong kind of parent	7	16.2

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**CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

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## THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER

### IN HOME/SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

The previous four chapters investigated the attitudes of the headteacher respondents towards the involvement of parents in their childrens education and described the methods used to involve parents in the life of the school. Evidence produced by the headteacher interviews and the experimental attitude scale was used to describe a possible relationship between the attitude of a headteacher towards parents and the type and frequency of contacts with parents provided by his or her school. This chapter, while drawing further on the opinions of the headteacher respondents, as expressed in the interviews conducted for this survey, will be devoted to a more general examination of the role of the headteacher in establishing good relations between school and home.

The Plowden Committee were in no doubt that closer relations between schools and parents than those existing at the time of the report, were both desirable and vital for educational progress. The Report stated that, 'education has long been concerned with the whole man, henceforth it must be concerned with the whole family.'<sup>1</sup> The Committee proposed a minimum programme to improve the existing contacts between schools and parents and urged that this programme should be adopted by every primary school. The evidence produced by the National Survey of Parental Attitudes and Circumstances Related to the School and Pupil Characteristics,<sup>2</sup> upon which these recommendations were based, left little doubt that, 'if close contacts are to be maintained between parents and teachers', the initiative must come from the school. Can we conclude from this that the

responsibility for this initiative must be placed on the headteacher, the one individual in a school with the necessary authority? Particularly as the Plowden Report itself made no systematic study of the role of the headteacher, even in the area of home/school relations.

It is frequently claimed that the English headteacher enjoys greater autonomy than his counterpart in any other country, and that this autonomy is of considerable institutional strength having been accepted by custom over a considerable period of time. However, as Baron<sup>3</sup> has pointed out, this autonomy and the implicit freedom in policy making which derives from it comes 'not from any positive powers accorded to him, as from the absence of restraining regulations.' A mere statement that the headteacher has complete autonomy does not explain why some headteachers use this autonomy to initiate close contacts between the school and parents and others are unwilling to do so. (Examples of this difference can be found in the previous chapters). What appears to be more important than the issue of autonomy is some explanation and definition of the headteacher's role in relation to parents; what he sees as his priorities; the framework he seeks to establish within the school to achieve closer relations; and how an individual headteacher sees his role in relation to parents.

The Gittens Report<sup>4</sup>(Primary Education in Wales), while reaching conclusions about home/school relations broadly similar to Plowden, examined more closely the question of whose was the responsibility for initiating contacts between schools and parents. It also made some attempt to describe the role of the headteacher. In a chapter devoted to the role of the headteacher, it stressed the crucial

importance of the headteacher and his attitudes on the life of the school:

'Even the best of schools and staffs will be influenced to their detriment by an indifferent or misguided headteacher. His or her attitudes affect the whole school.'

There is however, a status accorded to the head of an English school which is closely linked with the view that the school is to some degree a separate entity and not simply part of a 'system' (Baron 1965)<sup>5</sup>. Indeed as King<sup>6</sup> stresses, it is the school taking over from the parent on which the headteachers authority is based:

'The powerful legal legitimation of the principle of *in loco parentis* creates the headteachers authority over his pupils.' Traditionally, it would seem, the school and the home may have diverging influences almost by the nature of the educational system. Some of the examples quoted in previous chapters showed that some of the respondents at least, felt that some parents were an obstacle to what the headteacher saw as the purpose of the school. In the words of respondent number thirty:

'I think parents nowadays are inclined too much to set up battle royal on behalf of their children in matters which would be better left to the school.'

If we accept, however, as the evidence would suggest, the crucial importance of the headteacher - what is his role in relation to parents? Further, what do we mean when we talk in this context about the leadership of the headteacher? It is surely not enough to state, as the Plowden Report did, the necessity for closer relations between schools and parents. The 'missionary role' in this context is inadequate. To single out the headteacher as the individual responsible for initiating

these contacts, still leaves important questions unanswered. How can he or she best achieve this objective? What is the role of the headteacher in relation to parents? This particular aspect of a headteacher's role will surely lie in the field of human relations. He needs to get to know the parents and he needs to make an effort to ensure that the parents know him. The attitudes of the parents towards the school will affect the attitudes of the pupils. Communication with parents is a major part of the headteachers responsibilities.

In order to investigate how the headteacher respondents felt about communicating with parents, as well as their opinions about the total role of the headteacher in this area, the replies to question six in the survey interview were carefully analysed. The question asked: 'What advice would you give to a newly appointed headteacher about dealing with parents?'

While the headteacher must obviously protect the child and the school from what he considers to be undue pressure or special pleading on the part of parents-he must also avoid encouraging parental opposition by arbitrary and authoritarian dealings with parents. In the words of respondent number forty-three:

'I think any head is an utter fool who gets notoriety in the press for saying things like 'no girl can wear trows.' You've got to use common sense.' Here, surely a headteacher must attempt to make a working compromise. It is part of the headteacher's role to understand the nature of this type of potential conflict of loyalty and attitudes. He cannot achieve such a compromise if he ignores parental feelings and wishes, any more than if he



gives in to every pressure from parents. He must attempt to achieve compromise by helping parents to understand that while the child has rights, the school also has certain obligations to the needs of the community, which it must attempt to meet. When we talk about the role of the headteacher in relation to parents, this particular function is an important part of what we mean. If a headteacher fails to communicate on this level with parents, no one else can do it for him.

How is this kind of leadership best achieved, and what are the qualities necessary for it? Analysis of the responses to question six, showed that almost a quarter of the survey respondents felt that there were no rules for a headteacher in his dealings with parents. As respondent number eleven put it:

'I don't think you can lay down a rule or generalise about this.' Very few of the respondents in fact made any attempt to define the headteachers role in relation to parents. Most of the respondents described instead the qualities they felt were needed in a headteacher's role in relation to parents. The most frequently mentioned quality was 'to be a good listener.' In the words of respondent number fourteen:

'Just sit and listen and get to know all the facts before you say anything. Let the parent go on and on if necessary.'

Diplomacy was felt to be another very necessary quality for any headteacher in his or her dealings with parents. Respondent number twelve said:

'My advice would be never deliberately antagonise a parent, no matter how rude they are, or how much opposed to the school. It's in our interest and the child's interest that we should get on

good terms with the parents.' Honesty, and the ability to be able to admit to a mistake, were also thought to be very important by many of the headteacher respondents. As respondent number three described it:

'Always be honest. If you've made a mistake be prepared to apologise. Don't attempt to stand on your dignity. That to me is more important than anything else.'

Two other qualities felt to be necessary in this area of a headteacher's role which were mentioned by the respondents, were sympathy and accessibility. As respondent number thirty-two said: Sympathise with them. I don't think I've had anyone whose gone out really vexed. You're a peacemaker too.' Respondent number three described in detail how a headteacher needs to be accessible to parents and understand their difficulties in visiting schools. He said about parents:

'Be prepared to see them at all times. You must remember that we are tied to a job from nine to four and most of us are not overkeen on being involved after four o'clock. Parents are in a similar position. Fathers are tied to a job. Mothers may have young children to look after, or a part-time job. They may have aged parents to look after. We don't know all the circumstances. We've got to fit in with them in the same way as we expect them to fit in with us.'

A surprising number of the headteacher respondents in advising a newly qualified headteacher about dealing with parents, mentioned dealing with aggressive parents. In a realistic appraisal of the headteacher's role this is an important aspect of the human relations involved. While it would be naive to assume that all schools and all headteachers are doing all they can to co-operate

with parents, it would be equally naive to assume that all every parent desires is an opportunity to loyally support what the school is trying to do for the child. The school is a social organisation, with interaction between parents and teachers, parents and the headteacher, teachers and pupils and the headteacher and his staff. Tension, misunderstandings and even in some cases open hostility, can and do occur, between a headteacher and parents. The respondents who were all serving headteachers, were well aware of this problem. For this very reason, relations with parents is a part of the headteacher's role which can cause anxiety. Indeed, even the prospect of having to assume this responsibility, can in itself be a cause of anxiety. Respondent number thirteen described these feelings:

'Quite frankly, I used to think that if every I was promoted to head, the one thing that caused me continual worry was how I was going to deal with parents. I didn't really look forward to this aspect of the work. Yet it's just developed naturally.'

The qualities felt by the respondents to be most necessary to a headteacher in his relations with parents were the ability to listen, diplomacy, honesty, sympathy and accessibility. This is indeed a formidable list of virtues. Perhaps this may be some explanation of why respondent number twenty-one echoed what must be the feelings of many headteachers, when she said: 'Children are easier to deal with than parents'!. However, while this may well be an admirable list of the qualities desirable in a headteacher, it is in no way a definition of his role in relation to parents. One concise and interesting definition of role however, was given by respondent number twenty-four. He said:

'One could say that for a child to be properly educated, the partnership between the home and school must be such as to make parents feel that they are helping in a useful way in what their child is doing at school. A school must make parents feel that they are welcome and that their views are of importance in decisions about the child and that they are given all the information possible about their child at school.'

This would appear to be a useful definition of the theoretical aims of what a headteacher should be trying to achieve in the schools' relations with parents. But how can he best achieve these aims and what particular forms of contact with parents should a school provide to achieve them? The evidence of the previous four chapters, would suggest that a headteacher needs to use a variety of methods for communicating with parents, and that these methods should be adapted to the needs of the parents of his particular school. Many different approaches are necessary. A type of function which may be highly successful with the parents of one school may not be suitable for another, with different parents with different attitudes. Indeed, one school may have to serve the needs of different kinds of families for whom different approaches may be needed. While one headteacher may feel that a formal organisation such as a Parent-Teacher Association, has the psychological advantage of making interested parents feel that they are playing an active, rather than a passive role; another head may feel that his knowledge of the parents of the children attending his school, tells him that good relations will be better achieved by more informal methods.

Social events, such as those commonly reported in the infant schools in this survey, while achieving the object of persuading many parents to visit the school, are not enough in themselves. They may not give adequate opportunity for serious private discussion about individual children. More formal interviews may also be necessary. More formal occasions, such as those reported by many of the junior school headteachers, may in themselves be too formal to attract some parents, particularly those parents who may feel themselves to be socially and educationally inferior. They may be better combined with social activities of a more relaxed nature. Open days, particularly those which were reported to be organised in such a way that the numbers are kept to a minimum, would appear to combine the more informative nature of a parents' meeting, with the social intercourse associated with more informal contacts. Open days for single classes, year groups, boys parents one day and girls parents the next, were some of the variety of the open day described by the survey respondents. These can be particularly useful if they provide some opportunity for discussion, and questions about new teaching methods and new types of organisation within the school.

Discussions about individual children may well be better confined to more private talks between parents and teachers. The disadvantages of attempting to discuss a child's progress in a crowded classroom was pointed out by a number of the headteacher respondents. Perhaps the institution of small parent groups coming to school for coffee outside normal school hours, as was already common practice in some of the infant schools in the survey, could help to improve communications between schools and parents.

This type of communication would be at the most basic level of simple communication of facts about the child at school to the parent, and the child at home to the teacher.

A particularly difficult problem for any headteacher in his role in relation to parents, are those parents who for various reasons, never attend anything organised by the school. The parents referred to by many of the headteacher respondents as, 'the parents you really need to see, but who never come to the school.' As a direct contrast to the idea that parents should be encouraged to spend more time in school, is the suggestion that headteachers should devote more time visiting the homes of their pupils. Home visiting by teachers is a controversial subject. Some of the survey respondents, who were certainly in favour of close co-operation with parents, expressed reasoned and thoughtful arguments that the visiting of families who never visited the school would be done better by persons better qualified by training and experience than headteachers. Some headteacher respondents however, had visited parents in their homes, felt that both parties had gained from this and intended to continue to do so. Some headteachers may prefer to use the school welfare officer for this kind of liaison. Whoever does this type of liaison between school and parent and whether this is merely one of many different approaches used by a headteacher, one thing is clear. A pre-requisite of any such effort, will be some organised method of identifying parents who never visit the school. It is at these parents that this particular practice needs to be aimed at.

A large part of any discussion of the headteacher's role in home/school relations must be speculative. We may be much

more certain however that the attitudes of a headteacher towards parents is the most important factor in how a headteacher perceives and performs his role in relation to parents. In the final analysis this means that a headteacher should recognise that parents have natural rights and their co-operation in their children's education must be actively sought by the headteacher. To perform this part of the headteachers role successfully, a headteacher must accept this view of parents and the school. Respondent number twenty-five described such an attitude:

'I think you must realise in dealing with parents that this is the person who has priority of right with the child. The child is precious to the parent - more precious than it can be to you. Coming to the end of my career, I wish I could have learnt all this earlier. Parents have rights.'

The success of the contacts the school provides for parents will depend largely on the leadership given by the headteacher. The burden of responsibility is his. Indeed, as indicated in earlier chapters, the type and frequency of the contacts with parents provided by a school, may well be a reflection of the attitude of the headteacher towards parents and their place in the life of a school. The attitudes of a headteacher are crucial, if a school is to achieve good relations with parents. The evidence produced by an examination of the scores of the headteacher respondents on the experimental attitude scale, suggests that it is the attitudes of the individual headteacher and how he or she perceives the headteacher's role in relation to parents which is

more important than the sex of the headteacher, type of school, size of school and the social class composition of the schools catchment area. This conclusion that it is the attitudes of the individual headteacher towards parents which to a large extent determines the type of relations the school will have with parents was also supported by the evidence of the survey interviews described in chapters twelve, thirteen and fourteen. We may well conclude as J.B. Mays<sup>7</sup> stated in 1968:

'The head himself or herself, holds the key not only to the successful operation of the school in general, but in particular to the degree of co-operation which exists between school and home.'



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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

The previous five chapters each examined a different aspect of the ways the primary schools in this survey organised their relationship with parents and the attitudes of the headteacher respondents to parental involvement with primary schools.

Chapter Eleven 'The Survey Respondents', described a statistical examination which used the quantitative data obtained from the scores of the respondents on the experimental attitude scale in an investigation of the relationship between the attitudes of the headteacher respondents to parental involvement with schools and certain categories of headteachers. Chapter Twelve 'Reporting to Parents', used the qualitative data obtained from the survey interviews to examine contacts between primary schools and parents in its most limited form - how the schools in this survey reported to parents about their childrens progress.

In Chapter Thirteen 'Contacts with Parents', the evidence of the survey interviews was used to describe contacts with parents of a more general nature and to investigate a possible relationship between the type and frequency of contacts with parents provided by a school and the attitude of the headteacher to parental involvement in the life of the school. Chapter Fourteen 'Parent-Teacher Associations', described the attitudes of the survey respondents to this most formal of all the organised contacts with parents which a school can provide. Finally, Chapter Fifteen 'The Role of the Headteacher in Home/School Relationships', discussed the role of the headteacher in a schools relations with parents and described how the headteacher respondents of this survey saw the role of the headteacher in this area.

This chapter will be devoted to a general summary of the results described in each of the previous five chapters under six headings, each of which relates to one of the aims of the investigation described in Chapter Five. These are 'The Attitudes of the Headteacher Respondents to Parental Involvement with Primary Schools as Measured by the Experimental Attitude Scale', 'The Evidence of the Survey Interviews', 'The Relationship between the Attitude of a Headteacher to Parents and the Type and Frequency of Contacts with Parents Provided by a School', 'The Plowden Minimum Programme and the Contacts with Parents Organised by the Schools in this Survey', 'Possible Attitudinal Barriers to Closer Relations Between Primary Schools and Parents' and 'The Empirical Validity of the Experimental Attitude Scale'.

1. The Attitudes of the Headteacher Respondents to Parental Involvement with Primary Schools as Measured by the Experimental Attitude Scale

The scores of the headteacher respondents on the experimental attitude scale were used in a statistical investigation which had as its aim the investigation of a possible relationship between the attitudes of these headteachers to parental involvement with schools and different categories of headteachers. These categories were designed to investigate some common generalisations described in Chapter Eleven, 'The Survey Respondents' about relations between parents and schools and their relationship, if any, with headteacher attitudes.

Information about each respondent's age, sex, type of school, size of school and an estimate by each respondent of the social class composition of the school's catchment area, had been obtained during the survey interviews. This information formed the categories by which the scores were analysed. The mean response scores of each subgroup within these categories were calculated and the identification

of statistically significant differences between the mean response scores of these subgroups was made by the 'students' 't' test.

(Tables 24-28 Pages 332-9 ).

There was no statistically significant difference at the five percent level between the attitude of the headteachers in this survey and the type, size, social class composition of the school's catchment area or the sex of a headteacher. There was a statistically significant difference in attitudes to parents at the five percent level between those headteacher respondents who were over fifty years of age and those who were under fifty. The over fifty age group had significantly more unfavourable attitudes to parents than the under fifty age group.

(Table 4. Page 125).

This result is supported by Oliver and Butcher<sup>1</sup>, who found a statistically significant difference in attitudes to education between the over fifty and under fifty age groups of the teachers who took part in their research. The over fifty age group had more tough minded and conservative attitudes to education than the under fifty age group. It could also be claimed that this particular result is one which reason and experience would lead us to support, in that an individual would usually be expected to become more conservative and less likely to change firmly held opinions as he or she grows older.

The statistical examination of the attitudes of the headteacher respondents as measured by their scores on the experimental attitude scale, showed that in this survey it was the factor of age, a factor related to the individual rather than the characteristics of a particular school, which is related to the attitude of a headteacher to the involvement of parents with schools.

It would appear to be the attitude of the individual headteacher which may well determine the quality of the relationship of a school

with parents rather than the type, size, or social class composition of a particular school's catchment area. The attitude of an individual headteacher towards parental involvement with schools however, may well be related to age.

## 2. The Evidence of the Survey Interviews

### Written Reports

Schools in the survey sample which used written reports used them in a variety of ways. A minority of schools in the sample as a whole used some type of written report. Of these, the majority used a traditional type of written report form issued by the Local Education Authority, although a number of schools had designed their own report. In the opinion of these respondents a written report was necessary, but the traditional type of report form was inadequate. None of the infant schools in the survey used a written report, although the majority of junior schools did so.

Those respondents who had rejected the use of written reports had done so on principle. Their reasons for doing so, however, were not identical. The junior school respondents who did not favour written reports, had rejected them because of a feeling that written reports had serious limitations. The two way communication with parents which these respondents felt to be important, was in their opinions, better achieved by private interviews with parents. The primary reason given by infant headteachers for not using written reports, was that the rapid development of children at the infant stage made written reports impractical, although the superiority of personal talks between teachers and parents as a means of reporting a child's progress was mentioned by a number of these respondents. (Table 6. Page 149).

## Interviews with Parents

The majority of schools in the sample provided some occasion where parents and teachers could discuss a child's progress. These talks took many different forms, ranging from carefully timetabled private interviews to ad hoc arrangements where the parents were expected to visit the school on their own initiative if they wished to discuss children's progress. Most schools arranged for talks between parents and teachers to take place during an open day.

The arrangements made by infant schools tended to be more informal. All of the timetabled parental interviews were arranged by junior schools. There was more variety in the arrangements organised by junior school respondents. These covered every degree of formality, ranging from timetabled private interviews between teacher and parent, to the absence of any organised method for parents to talk to the class teacher. (Table 7. Page 149).

## Welcome to School

There was an attempt by all the infant schools in the survey to give pre-school infants and their parents some idea of what to expect when the child started school. The vast majority of these arrangements were informal, usually a short visit to the classroom when a mother took the child to be registered. Two infant schools had made more formal arrangements, where children who were due to be admitted were invited to visit the school with their parents, prior to official registration.

The majority of the junior schools had no arrangement to contact parents at the period of transition from infant to junior school. The minority of junior schools which did so used a variety of methods, including showing children their classrooms before the end of their

last term in the infant school and invitations to parents to attend meetings held in the junior schools a few weeks after the beginning of term. (Table 12 Page 194)

### Open Days

While the great majority of schools in the survey held some kind of open day, there were differences between types of school. All the infant schools held organised open days of some kind, four of the junior schools did not. A large majority of the headteacher respondents were in favour of open days and thought they served a useful purpose. Four respondents were uncertain about their value and three respondents were not in favour of open days at all.

There was a difference in this survey between infant and junior headteacher respondents in what they saw as the purpose of an open day. The infant school respondents appeared to be much more willing to arrange open day activities of a purely social nature. The junior school respondents, with a few exceptions, organised open days which concentrated almost exclusively on the working part of school life. Junior school headteacher respondents were much less likely to see an open day as an occasion which had social intercourse between parents and teachers as an important element.

The survey interviews also provided some explanation of why open days are the most common form of contact with parents provided by primary schools. Regardless of which particular aspect of school life the headteacher wishes to emphasise; be it showing parents a typical lesson; reporting on the progress of individual children; or allowing children simply to entertain their parents - the open day can accommodate each or all of them. In doing so an open day also accommodates the attitudes and priorities of the headteachers who use it. (Tables 10&11 Page 193)



## Helping in School

In the sample as a whole, only a minority of the respondents expressed complete approval of the idea of parents helping in their childrens' schools. The respondents who disagreed with this proposal did so for different reasons, although a feeling of anxiety that parents might encroach on matters of professional judgement or skill, revealed itself in the responses of both those who expressed complete disapproval and the reservations of those who expressed qualified approval.

A majority of infant school respondents within the sample expressed approval of the idea of parents helping within the school itself. The remaining seven infant school respondents expressed qualified approval.

Only a minority of junior school respondents expressed complete approval. The largest proportion expressed qualified approval. On the whole, the idea of parents helping in school seemed to be more acceptable to infant school headteachers. The majority of junior school headteachers had reservations about the idea. These were mainly objections of a professional nature about the dangers of unqualified persons of any type helping in school. (Table 13 Page 194).

## The Limits of Parental Involvement

The majority of the headteacher respondents expressed strong opinions about the limits to which even an interested and talented parent should be allowed to become involved in the life of the school. The 'classroom door' was their limit. This was the first example of similar proportions of agreement being found in the sample between infant and junior school respondents.

While the majority of headteachers believed in the value of co-operating with parents and organised contacts to involve them with the school, they put quite definite limits on the extent of this involvement. The majority of the respondents believed that the useful involvement of parents in their childrens education should end at the 'classroom door'. Anything beyond this was potentially dangerous in professional terms and unrealistic in terms of the day to day activities of a primary school. (Table 14 Page 195).

#### Parents who Never Visit the School

A perennial problem for any school in the area of relations between home and school is the apparently apathetic core of parents who do not attend any activity organised by the school. This was a factor recognised by the Plowden Committee, who urged primary schools to make special efforts to make contact with parents who do not visit the school. However, a pre-requisite of any special effort to contact these parents must be some organised system for identifying those parents who never visit the school.

The majority of the primary schools in the survey sample did not keep any formal record of those parents who did not visit the school. Only nine schools out of the forty-three in the survey sample had a formal system for identifying such parents, although most headteachers felt they could identify these parents without a formal system. The schools which did keep a record of non attendance on the part of parents were the schools which used private timetabled parental interviews as part of their programme of school/home contacts. (Table 15 Page 195).

#### Visits to Homes

Once a headteacher is able to identify those parents who never

visit the school, the problem of how to persuade them to do so remains. One method of doing this is the controversial practice of headteachers or teachers visiting parents in their own homes.

The preliminary analysis of the responses to the question in the survey interview which related to home visiting was done in terms of simple agreement or disagreement with the idea. The results of this analysis showed that the great majority of respondents disagreed. (Table 16 Page 196 ). This was consistent throughout the sample regardless of whether the respondent was the headteacher of an infant or junior school. This result was consistent with the evidence of research by Cohen<sup>2</sup> published in 1967, who found that the majority of headteachers held unfavourable attitudes to home visiting, although there was variation within the sample.

In this survey, however, these attitudes were investigated in greater depth by analysing the verbal responses of the respondents to the question, in an attempt to answer the more interesting question of why this should be so.

The reasons given by the headteacher respondents of this survey for disagreement with home visiting by teachers or headteachers were varied. Some respondents disagreed because of firmly held beliefs about the privacy of the home; others felt that the dangers of such a practice outweighed any possible advantages and some thought that this was the responsibility of some other agency. Finally, a number of respondents who were generally in favour of co-operation with parents, expressed reasoned and thoughtful arguments that this type of work would be better done by persons better qualified by training and experience than headteachers and teachers.

This type of analysis indicated the limitations of the type of approach which relies solely on quantitative data which simply allows for agreement or disagreement with a particular question, whether or not it allows for different degrees of agreement or disagreement. The simple statistics of agreement or disagreement conceal too many different reasons for these choices, which quantitative data cannot explain. Any conclusions reached as a result of this kind of evidence relating to attitudes to co-operation between school and home must be interpreted with caution. (Table 16 Page 196).

### Parent-Teacher Associations

A preliminary examination of the interview transcripts, showed that a majority of the headteacher respondents were not in favour of a Parent-Teacher Association and only one of the respondents had started one in their own school. The majority of survey respondents had no previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association in any capacity. There appeared to be a remarkable consensus of opinion in the sample as a whole about attitudes to Parent-Teacher Association's. The percentages of agreement, disagreement, and indecision of those respondents who had previous experience of the institution and those who had not, were remarkably similar. (Table 17 Page 229).

In order to investigate the underlying attitudes behind these percentage responses, a different type of analysis was used. By drawing upon the literature concerning Parent-Teacher Association's and the interview transcripts, three theoretical models of Parent-Teacher Association perception by different groups were produced. These were a model of a Parent-Teacher Association as perceived by a parental pressure group, the Plowden model and a survey model produced from the respondents own descriptions of their feelings about Parent-Teacher Associations. When these theoretical models were compared it became

obvious that the survey model of Parent-Teacher Association perception was very different from either of the other two theoretical models. The idealistic element contained in varying degrees in each of the other theoretical models was conspicuously missing in the survey model.

This theoretical model of Parent-Teacher Association perception by the headteacher respondents was used in an attempt to explain the remarkable consensus of opinion about Parent-Teacher Associations expressed by the headteachers in the sample and the expressed agreement between those who had previous experience of one in some capacity and those who had not. This explanation was given in terms of a reference group. The consensus of opinion between the experienced and non experienced groups could therefore be explained in terms of the consistency of attitude expected in a reference group and the influence of group ideology in influencing the attitudes of those members who had no previous experience of the institution.

The fact that the great majority of respondents preferred informal relations with parents to a formal institution such as a Parent-Teacher Association, can also be explained in terms of a reference group. If organised parent associations are seen as a threat to headteacher autonomy, as the survey model of a Parent-Teacher Association perception showed, informal relations with parents both conforms to the group ideology of this particular reference group and to some extent removes this threat by placing the onus for involvement on individual parents, who are less likely to attempt to usurp the authority of the headteacher than an organised group.

(Tables 18-22 Pages 229-30).

3. The Relationship between the Attitude of a Headteacher to Parents and the Type and Frequency of Contacts with Parents provided by a School

The evidence of the statistical analysis of the scores of the respondents on the experimental attitude scale and the evidence produced by an analysis of the survey interviews, both indicated the importance of the attitudes of the individual headteacher in shaping and deciding the type and frequency of contacts with parents which a school provides.

The evidence produced by the statistical analysis of the scores of the headteacher respondents on the attitude scale, showed that it was the factor of age, which was significantly related to the attitudes of a headteacher. The characteristics of the particular school of which the respondent was the headteacher, appeared to have no significant relationship with the attitude of the headteacher to parental involvement with schools. It was the attitude of the individual headteacher towards parents which appeared to be significant, although as the evidence suggested, this attitude may well be related to the age of the individual.

The qualitative evidence produced by the analysis of the survey interviews, showed that the final decision about the type and frequency of contacts which a school should provide for parents, was seen by the respondents as largely a decision for the headteacher. In this sense, therefore, these contacts could be seen as a reflection of the attitudes of a particular individual. A further analysis of the interview transcripts confirmed this view and offered various explanations as to why this should be so.

The infant schools in this survey, on average, provided more contacts with parents than the junior schools. The analysis of the

responses to question two in the interview schedule, showed that a higher proportion of the infant school headteacher respondents (75%), felt that the majority of parents were interested in what their children were doing at school. A smaller proportion of the junior school respondents (50%), felt that the majority of parents were interested in their childrens education, or wanted to become involved with the school. This would appear to indicate that the larger number of contacts with parents provided by the infant schools in this survey were a reflection of the more favourable attitudes towards parents held by a larger number of individual infant school headteachers.

There were also differences between infant and junior schools in the reported number of occasions of parents helping in school and in the estimates of the number of parents attending functions organised by the school. In each case the average was higher in the infant schools. A possible explanation for this can be illustrated from the opinions of the respondents about the 'open day', described in Chapter Thirteen.

The infant school respondents, in the context of this particular type of contact, put more emphasis on the importance of social intercourse between teachers and parents. Consequently, they were more willing to use items which had the sole object of entertaining parents. The 'infant school open day', appeared to be a much more multi-purpose occasion.

The junior school respondents, on average, took a much more utilitarian view of the purpose of an open day. In the words of one junior school headteacher respondent: 'parents don't come to school during an open day to hear children sing songs and have a cup of tea.' On average, the infant school respondents had a much more flexible

approach to the 'open day' and this more flexible approach may well be a reflection of the more favourable attitudes to parental involvement with schools indicated in the responses to question two in the survey interview. Again, the analysis of the survey interviews illustrated the importance of the attitude of the individual headteacher in relation to the type of contacts for parents provided by a school. Four schools in this survey sample did not hold 'open days' at all. In each case the individual headteacher held an unfavourable attitude to this particular type of contact with parents.

In general, in this survey, there appeared to be a relationship between the attitude of a headteacher towards parents and their involvement with the school and the type and number of contacts with parents organised by a particular school. The more favourable the attitude of the headteacher towards parental involvement with schools, the more likely he or she will welcome parents. Although age may well be a determinant of the attitude of a particular individual, the attitude of the headteacher to parents, will be reflected in the type and number of contacts provided by the school. Conversely, the number and type of contacts which a school provides for parents, may themselves be a reflection of the attitude of the headteacher.

#### 4. The Flowden Minimum Programme and the Contacts with Parents Organised by the Schools in this Survey

The Flowden Committee proposed a minimum six point programme to foster closer relations between primary schools and parents. The ways in which the schools in this survey organised contacts of this kind have been described in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen. How do the methods used by the schools in this survey to organise their relationships with parents, compare with the proposals of the Flowden



Committee and which, if any, of these proposals appear to be least popular in these schools? In order to make comparisons of this type, the six specific proposals incorporating the Plowden Minimum Proposals are examined separately in terms of the conclusions of this survey.

1. 'A regular system for the head and class teacher to meet parents before the child enters school.'

This proposal which would appear to include both childrens first introduction to school life in the infant school and the transition from infant to junior school, was examined in Chapter Thirteen 'Contacts with Parents', under the heading 'Welcome to School'.

Most schools in the survey had some system to inform parents about this period of their childrens education, although in general, infant schools were much more likely to have some system to introduce a child and its parents to school. There was some attempt by all the infant schools in this survey to give pre-school infants and their parents some idea of what to expect when the child started school. The majority of these arrangements were informal, usually a short visit when the mother took the child for registration. The child and parent were then taken to the classroom to meet the teacher. Two infant schools used a more formal system, where the parents of those children due to be admitted to the school were invited to visit the school prior to registration. (Table 12 Page 194).

All of the infant school headteacher respondents thought that a system of this kind, whether formal or informal, was of benefit to the child, the parents, and the school.

Some kind of arrangement to ease the transition from infant to junior school was not so common and many of the junior school headteachers

respondents thought this type of contact with parents was unnecessary. The junior schools which did so used a variety of methods. These included invitations to parents to attend meetings held in the school; showing children their new classroom before the end of their last term in the infants school; and visits by the junior school headteacher and classteacher to meet the children while they were still in their final term in the infant school.

2. 'Arrangements for more formal talks in private, preferably twice a year.'

This proposal was examined in Chapter Twelve 'Reporting to Parents', under the heading 'Interviews with Parents'. The majority of schools in the survey provided some occasion where parents and teachers could discuss childrens progress. Interviews with parents in the forty-three schools in the survey took many different forms. Some schools used a carefully timetabled, completely private interview, where the parent and class teacher could meet in private for a certain length of time. (Table 7 Page 149 ).

Other schools arranged special occasions devoted solely to discussions between parents and teachers about childrens progress, but made no arrangements for individual private meetings. Parents were invited to attend during certain hours, either during the day or in the evening. They then waited in turn to talk to the class teacher. The majority of schools in the survey sample provided opportunities for talks between parents and teachers as part of other activities during an 'open day'. A minority of schools did not make any formal provision for parental interviews but relied on the parents to visit the school on their own initiative. In general, the more organised and formal the arrangements for parental interviews, the more likely the headteacher respondent was to give detailed

reasons and explanations about why a particular type of arrangement was being used.

3. 'Open days to be held at times chosen to enable parents to attend'

This proposal was examined in Chapter Thirteen 'Contacts with Parents', under the heading 'The Open Day'.

The open day or evening was the single contact with parents most commonly provided by all the schools in the survey. Thirty-nine schools out of forty-three, held at least one open day per year, although the title and organisation of this event varied from school to school.

The evidence produced by the analysis of the survey interviews showed that the term 'open day' is one which is used as a general term to describe functions which may be very different in content and organisation. The term covered a multiplicity of events. The 'open day' in some schools was an occasion devoted primarily to parents having private interviews with teachers. In others it was an all purpose occasion where mothers were entertained by children in specially rehearsed events and also spent time going round classrooms, talking to teachers and looking at childrens work.

Some schools arranged this event during the day, others during the evening. The event covered every degree of formality and informality and was given a variety of names. Some schools arranged it to cover a period of days, with one day set aside for each year group within the school. Other schools invited the parents of girl pupils one day and boys' parents the next. Some larger schools held it over a period of four days, with the parents of first and second year pupils being invited during the first two days and the parents of third and fourth year children on the final two days. Many different terms were used in this survey to describe what was basically the same function.

The term 'parents day', 'calling in day' were used as well as the more common 'open day' or 'open evening'.

The majority of the headteacher respondents felt that an 'open day' was a useful method of contact and co-operation with parents. There were differences, however, in what was seen as the purpose of an open day, with subsequent differences in the way it was organised.

There was an observable difference between the way the infant school respondents and junior school respondents saw as the purpose of an 'open day'. The infant school headteacher respondents appeared to be more willing to arrange open day activities of a purely social nature. The junior school respondents, with some exceptions, organised 'open days' which concentrated almost exclusively on the working part of school life and were much less likely to see an open day as an occasion which had social intercourse between parents and teachers as an important part.

The qualitative detail supplied by the survey interviews offered some explanation of why 'open days' are easily the most common form of contact with parents offered by primary schools. The popularity of the 'open day' lies in its adaptability. Regardless of what particular aspect of school life a headteacher wishes to emphasise to parents, the 'open' day can accommodate it. In doing so, it can also accommodate the attitudes and priorities of the headteachers who use it as a principal means of contact between a school and parents.

3. 'Parents to be given booklets prepared by the school to inform them in their choice of childrens school and as to how they are being educated.

This proposal of the Plowden Committee was included in question seven in the interview schedule which asked 'Do you think parents

should be informed about the aims and organisation of a school. If so what is the best way of informing them?' The analysis of the responses to this particular question showed that while the great majority of the headteacher respondents felt that parents should be informed about the aims and organisation of a school, none of them were in favour of the idea of a primary school issuing a booklet to explain aims or organisation and none of the schools in the survey sample had in fact done so.

The majority of the respondents felt that primary schools could explain their aims and organisation better by direct contact with parents in such contacts as 'open days' or parents meetings. As respondent number three put it: 'this is better for junior children than issuing booklets and such.'

Respondent number six described such a meeting: 'I called meetings here towards the end of July so I could have a talk to the parents about the aims of the school. ---- I told them what we were doing and asked for their co-operation.'

Many of the respondents were in favour of written communication with parents on specific issues but were not in favour of a booklet specifically to explain aims and organisation. Respondent number twenty-one said: 'We regularly send out letters and notices to parents telling them what we're doing and why we're doing it. It takes a lot of paper and a lot of time. Sometimes a lot of it is just read and dropped in the fire but I think it does good in many cases.'

The majority of the headteacher respondents of this survey were not in favour of this particular proposal. While recognising that parents should be informed about the aims and organisation of the school, they felt that this particular approach was too formal. This majority opinion was described by Respondent number seven:

'I know some secondary schools issue booklets about the school, but this is not my idea of the family atmosphere there should be in a junior or infant school. I don't think it's really necessary.'

5. 'Written reports on children to be made at least once a year; the child's work to be seen by parents.'

This proposal of the Flowden Committee was investigated in Chapter Twelve 'Reporting to Parents' under the heading 'Written Reports'. Of the schools in this survey the majority, twenty-four schools, did not use written reports as a method of reporting to parents about their children's progress. The remaining nineteen schools issued some type of written report to parents. None of the nineteen infant schools in the survey sample used any kind of written report. Of the twenty-four junior schools, five issued no written report on principle, ten used the traditional type of written report issued by the Local Education Authority and nine schools used a report form of their own design.

The schools in this survey used written reports in different ways and as the headteacher respondents described, for different reasons. The majority of the junior schools in the sample used some type of written report although none of the infant schools did so. Of the schools who used written reports, a majority used a traditional type of report form provided by the Local Education Authority described in Chapter Twelve 'Reporting to Parents', under the heading 'Written Reports'.

A number of respondents had designed their own report, as they felt that written reports were necessary but the traditional type of report form was inadequate. Those respondents who had rejected written reports entirely did so as a matter of principle, but their

reasons were not identical. Infant school headteacher respondents tended to emphasise that the rapid development of infant school children made a written report to parents inadequate. Those junior school respondents who had discontinued the use of written reports, stressed the language difficulties of a written report and the advantages of personal talks between teachers and parents as a means of communication about a child's progress in school.

6. 'Special Efforts to be made to make contact with parents who do not visit the school.'

A perennial problem for any school in the area of relations between home and school is the apparently apathetic group of parents, sometimes large, sometimes small, who do not attend any form of contact which the school organises. These parents were frequently referred to by the headteacher respondents of this survey as 'the parents you really need to see, but who never visit the school.' This particular proposal of the Plowden Committee was examined in Chapter Thirteen 'Contacts with Parents', under two headings. These were 'Parents who Never Visit the School' and 'Visits to Homes'.

Any serious attempt to involve parents of this type with their children's school must include some effort to make contact with these parents. A pre-requisite of any such effort is to be able to identify these particular parents. In order to establish how the primary schools in this survey did this, the responses to question seventeen in the survey interview were carefully examined. The majority of primary schools in the survey kept no formal record. Only nine schools in the survey sample had a formal system for identifying parents who did not attend functions organised by the schools. Most headteachers, however, felt that they could identify these parents

without a formal system. The schools which did keep a formal record of non attendance on the part of parents, tended to be those which used private timetabled interviews as part of their programme of school/home contacts. (Table 15 Page 195).

Once a headteacher can identify those parents who never visit the school, the problem of how to persuade them to do so remains. One possible method of doing so was referred to in the Flowden Report - the controversial practice of teachers visiting parents in their own homes. The initial analysis of the responses to question twelve in the interview transcripts in terms of agreement or disagreement with the idea of home visiting by teachers or headteachers, showed that the great majority of the respondents of this survey disagreed with this particular practice. (Table 16 Page 196). This measure of disagreement was constant throughout the sample, regardless of whether the respondent was the headteacher of an infant or junior school.

An attempt was made to investigate the attitudes underlying this disagreement by analysing the verbal responses of the respondents to the interview question. The reasons given by the respondents in this survey for disagreement were varied. Some reasons for disagreement such as 'it's their job to come to the school', could be described as resulting from stereotyped ideas about co-operation between schools and parents and their respective roles in this area.

Other respondents disagreed because of firmly held convictions about the privacy of the home. Some headteachers felt that if a school 'already moved heaven and earth to encourage parents to visit the school', this was their limit and at this point some other agency should come in to deal with the minority of parents who did not visit the school.



A considerable proportion of the respondents felt that the dangers of such a practice outweighed any possible advantages. Others felt that this was the responsibility of the welfare authorities rather than the school. Finally, some headteacher respondents, who were certainly in favour of close co-operation between a school and parents, expressed reasoned and thoughtful arguments that visiting the homes of families who never visited the school, would be better done by persons better qualified by training and experience than teachers or headteachers.

##### 5. Possible Attitudinal Barriers to Closer Relations Between Primary Schools and Parents

How the primary schools in this survey reported to parents about their childrens progress - contact with parents in its most limited form, was described in Chapter Twelve 'Reporting to Parents'. This chapter described the feelings of the respondents about written reports, seeing childrens work, interviews with parents, and the methods used to organise these forms of contact. There were a great variety of methods currently in use in the schools. These methods ranged from on the one hand, carefully designed programmes incorporating specially designed written reports and timetabled interviews for parents, to ad hoc arrangements where a standard written report was the only form of contact organised by the school. While the type of arrangements made by the school could be claimed to be a reflection of an individual headteacher's attitude to parents, the analysis of the survey interviews threw little light on general attitudinal barriers to closer involvement between primary schools and parents.

However, the analysis of the interview transcripts described in the following two chapters 'Reporting to Parents' and 'Parent-Teacher Associations', isolated two particular forms of contact with parents where general attitudinal barriers to closer involvement between parents

and schools, were apparent in the attitudes of the respondents. These two forms of contact were visiting parents in their homes and Parent-Teacher Associations.

The initial analysis of the responses to question twelve in the interview transcript 'Can you see any value in a headteacher or member of staff visiting parents in their own homes?', in terms of agreement or disagreement with the idea of home visiting, showed that the great majority of headteachers in this survey disagreed. (Table 16 Page 196 ). These results were consistent with the evidence of research published by Cohen in 1967, which showed that the majority of headteachers held unfavourable attitudes to home visiting, although there was variation within the sample.

A further investigation of the attitudes underlying these responses was undertaken using the verbal responses of the respondents. It revealed possible attitudinal barriers on the part of the majority of the respondents. These unfavourable attitudes were related to the respondent's view of the headteachers and parents role.

While some respondents who were in favour of closer co-operation between schools and parents were in favour of home visiting and others who were also in favour of close co-operation disagreed with home visiting on reasoned and thoughtful grounds that home visiting would be better done by persons better qualified by training and experience than headteachers or teachers, these two attitudes were held by a minority of the respondents in the survey sample.

The great majority of the headteacher respondents did not agree that home visiting was necessary, or that much good would come of such visits. These respondents unfavourable attitudes to home visiting were a result of their view of the respective roles of parents and teachers.

A number of these headteachers felt that headteachers or teachers had no right to visit any parents home uninvited, as visits of this type were an invasion of privacy. Typical of this attitude was Respondent number nineteen who said:

'I would be against it. I don't think that headteachers should encroach upon childrens or parents' homes. I think home should be a private place.'

A view expressed by Respondent number fourteen was typical of the feelings expressed by the majority of the respondents about the respective roles of teachers and parents with regard to establishing closer relationships between the two parties:

'There might be some value in it but I certainly wouldn't let any of my staff visit the home. It's not our job to visit the homes. It's their job to come here.'

A first analysis of the verbal responses of the headteacher respondents to Parent-Teacher Associations showed that the majority of the respondents held unfavourable attitudes towards this particular institution. There was a striking consistency in attitude between headteachers who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association and those who had not.

The group beliefs of the respondents about Parent-Teacher Associations, typified in the theoretical survey model of Parent-Teacher Association perception, illustrated an attitudinal barrier on the part of this group of headteachers. Formally organised parental groups of this type, were seen as a threat to the professional autonomy of the headteacher. A response typical of this group belief about Parent-Teacher Association's was made by Respondent Number twenty-two when he said: 'I don't want parents running my

school. I don't feel they are qualified to do so.'

Both the attitudinal barriers to closer parental involvement with primary schools, isolated in this small scale survey can be generalised beyond this particular survey, or this particular group of headteachers. It is not difficult to imagine other headteachers echoing the same feelings of unease about these two particular forms of contact between school and home. They could both be said to offer reasonable explanations for the apparent lack of large scale support for either form of contact with parents.

#### 6. The Empirical Validity of the Experimental Attitude Scale

The experimental attitude scale used in the research was specifically designed to measure quantitatively the attitudes of the headteacher respondents to parental involvement with primary schools. This scale was a Thurstone type equal appearing interval scale, constructed from an original item pool of two-hundred and twenty-four attitude statements. These statements had been obtained from a short description of feelings about parents separately written by each of sixty primary school teachers. The attitude statements obtained from this source were themselves supplemented by further attitude statements from the literature of education.

These statements were then judged by a panel of fifty-five teachers using the Seashore and Hevner variation of the Thurstone judging procedure. The data obtained from these judgements was tabulated (Appendix B Table 23 Page 308) and a final scale consisting of twenty statements of opinion was constructed using the criteria of ambiguity (Q value) and scale value (S score). The final experimental attitude scale consisted of twenty statements ranging from a score of 1.37 to 10.84, with interval spacing of .5,

or as near .5 as was possible from the data. (Enclosure 5 Page 98 ).

Because the headteacher respondents had already given generously of their time in completing a lengthy survey interview and an attitude scale proforma, the usual method of testing the reliability of an attitude scale which involves using an equivalent form of the scale on a test-retest basis, was not used. Instead, split half reliability, which enables the consistency of a test to be measured without further demands on the respondents time was used. The attitude scale was divided into odd and even items and a table was drawn up showing the odd and even items with which each respondent had agreed. (Appendix F Table 29 Page 349 ). The degree of correlation between the two sets of scores was calculated to be .62. (Appendix F Table 30 Page 341 ).

This provided a fairly satisfactory degree of internal consistency and degree of correlation between the odd and even items in the attitude scale and added support to the conclusion that the attitude scale used in the research was a reliable measuring instrument.

An attitude scale of the Thurstone type, such as that used in the research, can be claimed to possess a high degree of content validity. The items contained in the test adequately cover the subject matter to be tested because of the involved procedures of collecting attitude statements and having these statements subjected to expert judgements. Merlinger and Kayer<sup>3</sup>, however, point out that the proper validation of an attitude scale requires a further process - 'the subsequent investigation of empirical validity.'

As there was no standardised equivalent attitude scale available, it was decided to use the survey interviews as the necessary criteria for an attempt to establish the empirical validity of the experimental attitude scale. In order to obtain quantitative data from the survey

interviews, which could then be correlated with the scores of the subjects on the attitude scale, five questions were selected from the first part of the interview schedule. Criteria was established for rating the verbal responses to each of these questions on a five point scale. (Enclosure 6 Page 109 ).

Twenty-one transcripts of the survey interviews were selected at random and rated by an independent judge using the established criteria. These transcripts were then rated by the researcher using the same criteria. The scores obtained from these two sets of judgements were then correlated, using the formula to calculate the degree of correlation if a linear relationship between the two variables is assumed. The degree of correlation between the two sets of judgements was calculated to be .913, which was considered to be a sufficiently high correlation to assume that the judgements of the researcher were relatively unbiased. (Appendix F Tables 31-2 Pages 342-3).

The remaining twenty-two transcripts were then rated by the researcher and a table was produced showing the rating by the researcher of each of the five question responses on all forty-three interview transcripts. (Appendix F Table 31 Page 342 ). The two measuring instruments used in the research could then be compared by calculating the degree of correlation between the subjects scores on the attitude scale and the survey interviews as rated on the five point scale.

Spearman's formula for calculating the rank correlation coefficient was used for this purpose. (Appendix F Table 33 Page 344 ). It was calculated that the two measurement instruments had an 'r' of .72. This was a fairly satisfactory degree of correlation between the two and added support to the validity of the experimental attitude scale used in the research.

This leads to the conclusion that what was being measured by the experimental attitude scale was in fact headteacher's attitudes to parental involvement with schools and that the attitude scale used in the research had a satisfactory empirical validity.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This research was necessarily a limited one, limited in time and coverage. Nevertheless, because of the nature of the sample, it could be claimed to present a detailed picture of contacts between schools and parents within one Local Education Authority and a view of the headteacher's role in relation to parents as seen by some of the major participants - the headteachers of the primary schools concerned.

Certainly, small scale research of this kind, in spite of its limitations, has a place in the total framework of research in the area of home/school relations. Ann Sharrock<sup>1</sup> commented in the concluding chapter of 'Home/School Relations:

'It is the essential complement of these small scale studies that is vitally necessary if we are to have a sounder basis for judgement about the value of home/school relations. This research will need to identify further not only the parent-teacher relationship, but also the factors which determine the types of contacts formed and their effectiveness in bringing about a closer, more harmonious and fruitful partnership between homes and schools in the education of children.'

Two measuring instruments were used in this research. First, an attitude scale specifically designed for the research and secondly, a structured survey interview. The experimental attitude scale was intended to measure the attitudes of the respondents quantitatively and the survey interview to provide qualitative detail about general attitudes to parents, feelings about the headteacher's role in this

area and information about the type of contacts in current use in the primary schools in the survey sample.

The experimental attitude scale designed to measure the attitudes of the survey respondents to parental involvement with schools, proved to be a reliable and valid measure of these attitudes. The scale had a split half reliability co-efficient of .62 and when correlated with quantitative data obtained from the survey interviews, the degree of correlation was calculated to be .72, giving a satisfactory level of empirical validity. The scale may well achieve better results when used on a sample of teachers rather than headteachers. It should be remembered that the original pool of attitude statements was drawn from the opinions of teachers. As this research has indicated, there may well be differences between the attitudes of teachers and headteachers towards parental involvement with schools.

While the results obtained from the use of the experimental attitude indicated that it is possible to use an attitude scale to reliably measure teachers' or headteachers' attitudes to parental involvement with schools, whether the particular type of attitude scale used in this research is the best type of scale for this purpose is open to doubt. Wandt<sup>2</sup>, has pointed out that the use of attitude scales in a situation when the respondent may attempt to make a favourable impression means that there is reason to suspect that a person can without much effort, conceal his true attitude. This may well be relevant in any attempt to measure the attitudes of headteachers or teachers, who by the nature of their professional training are aware of the type of score allocated to particular attitude statements. Wandt's suggestion of the use of a scale incorporating disguised items may help to overcome this problem.

The analysis of the scores of the headteacher respondents on the

experimental attitude scale showed that the only statistically significant difference in attitudes between subgroups within the five categories examined was between the over fifty age group and the under fifty age group. The headteachers who were <sup>under</sup> fifty years of age had significantly more favourable attitudes to parental involvement with schools than the over fifty age group. This factor of age, which is related to the individual rather than the characteristics of the particular school with which an individual is associated, was related to the attitude of the individual headteacher towards parents. While this result was significant only at the five percent level, it could be reasonably claimed that this level of significance is enough to justify the conclusion reached. The weight of the evidence needed depends upon the nature of the conclusion reached.

In the words of Stephen Wiseman<sup>3</sup> 'If a conclusion is no more than a quantification of a general proposition available to the common sense and experience of those who know something about the matter in hand, comparatively little weight is needed to support the quantification.' This particular result is one which reason and experience could lead us to accept. On average, the proposition that an individual becomes more conservative and less likely to change firmly held opinions with increasing age, seems a reasonable one. Consequently, the level of significance was felt to be sufficiently high to justify the conclusion that it is factors relating to the individual headteacher which determine his or her attitude to parents and that the attitude of the individual may well be related to age.

The evidence of the survey interviews both supported and extended this conclusion. The final decision about the type and

number of contacts which a school provides for parents, was certainly seen by the respondents as largely a matter for the headteacher. In all the different types of contact with parents which a school can provide which were examined in the research - written reports, interviews with parents, open days, welcome to school, helping in school, home visits and Parent-Teacher Associations; there was a relationship between the attitude of the individual headteacher to parental involvement and whether or not a particular type of contact was used by a school.

The combined evidence of the experimental attitude scale and the survey interviews, led to the conclusion that there was a relationship between the attitude of the individual headteacher respondent to parental involvement with primary schools and the type and frequency of contacts with parents provided by a school, although in this survey this attitude appeared to be related to the age of a headteacher.

The verbal responses of the respondents of this survey recorded in the interview transcripts were used in an analysis which investigated these attitudes in greater depth than mere agreement or disagreement with particular types of contact with parents. This further analysis revealed possible attitudinal barriers to the closer involvement of parents with primary schools and offered possible explanations for dislike of particular types of contact between schools and parents.

The great majority of the headteacher respondents held unfavourable attitudes to the practice of home visiting by either teachers or headteachers and certain formal types of contact with parents such as Parent-Teacher Associations. These attitudes were

related to a particular view of the respective roles of parents and teachers in the education of children. This analysis also showed that simple disagreement with either home visiting or a Parent-Teacher Association should not be interpreted as an indication of a generally unfavourable attitude towards parental involvement with schools.

In the case of visiting parents in their homes, the majority of the unfavourable attitudes towards this particular practice were the product of firmly held opinions that the privacy of parents' homes would be violated by this practice and that it is the business of parents to visit their children's school, rather than the role of teachers or headteachers to visit the homes of parents. A number of respondents, however, who disagreed with this particular practice did not do so for these reasons, but because they felt that it would be done better by persons better qualified by training and experience than teachers or headteachers.

The attitudes underlying the disagreement of the great majority of respondents to Parent-Teacher Associations were investigated by the use of a theoretical model of Parent-Teacher Association perception constructed from the opinions of the survey respondents to this particular institution. This survey model was then compared with two other theoretical models of Parent-Teacher Association perception by other groups. This procedure revealed a further attitudinal barrier and offered possible explanations for two common generalisations about this particular form of contact with parents.

Formal organisations such as Parent-Teacher Associations were seen by the majority of the respondents as a potential threat to the autonomy of the headteacher. These feelings offer a possible explanation of why the majority of headteachers are often claimed

to prefer informal contacts with parents. Informal methods of contact place the onus for involvement with the school on individual parents, who may be seen by headteachers as less of a potential threat than a formal association of parents. Again, however, disagreement with a particular form of contact cannot always be interpreted as indicating unfavourable attitudes to parental involvement. Some respondents who firmly believed in the value of involving parents in their children's education and also believed that the majority of parents wished to be involved, felt that they could involve parents more fully by using more informal methods suited to their particular school.

The consensus of opinion found in this survey between those headteachers who had previous experience of a Parent-Teacher Association and those who had not, can be explained in terms of a reference group. The reference group explanation would mean that this particular group of headteachers have over a period of years evolved their own group beliefs about Parent-Teacher Associations which transcend personal experience, and has produced the remarkable consistency of attitude about Parent-Teacher Association characteristic of the group. A common generalisation about Parent-Teacher Associations can also be explained in these terms. It is frequently claimed that the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations in the country as a whole shows a distinct pattern. Certain areas have many Parent-Teacher Associations, other areas very few, or none at all. For example Education Survey Number Five 'Parent/Teacher Relations in Primary Schools'<sup>4</sup>, states that 'Certainly their density varies from district to district; where there is one Parent-Teacher Association there are often many'. This pattern would be consistent with the reference group explanation. If the headteacher reference group in a particular area holds favourable group beliefs about Parent-Teacher Associations, this will result in the formation

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of a considerable number of them. If not, there will be very few, or as in the case of this particular survey, none at all.

A comparison of the wide variety of practices and contacts provided by the primary schools in this survey with the programme designed to bring about closer relations between primary schools and parents recommended by the Flowden Committee, revealed a pattern consistent with the attitudinal barriers described earlier in this chapter. While a great number of what could be described as 'Flowden practices' were widely used among the primary schools in this survey, the conspicuous lack of effort in one particular area is perhaps significant. The proposal that all primary schools should make special efforts to contact those parents who never visit the school could be said to have been virtually ignored, when compared to the effort and variety of practices used to implement most of the other Flowden proposals. Indeed, most of the schools in the survey had no formal system for identifying these parents, although the majority of headteachers claimed that they could do so without a formal system.

The great majority of the headteacher respondents were not in favour of teachers or headteachers visiting parents in their homes as a deliberate policy by the school. They had not done so and did not intend to do so. It is perhaps significant that the lack of action in this area can be related to the attitudinal barrier described earlier in this chapter. This involved a feeling that this practice is in direct opposition to how the great majority of respondents saw the role of the school in relation to parents. The majority of respondents felt that this was in no way part of the teacher's or headteacher's role and expressed grave doubts about the implications of this practice.



To what extent is it possible to state which of the contacts and methods of organising the contacts reported in this survey, are more effective than others? It must be remembered that a headteacher needs to use a programme of contacts suited to the needs of his or her particular school and that this programme must incorporate a variety of methods suited to a particular group of parents. No doubt the specially designed report forms used by some of the respondents are a superior means of communicating with parents about children's progress than the traditional type of report. The private interviews reported by some respondents, would appear to have many advantages over the more casual arrangements used elsewhere. A carefully timetabled private interview, however, would appear to have a much greater potential in terms of involving parents in the life of the school, than the obvious advantage of privacy for parent and teacher.

The schools in this survey who reported private timetabled interviews with parents as part of their total programme, were the only schools who had a ready made formal system for identifying those parents who never visit the school. The organisation demanded in the use of this particular method of reporting to parents ensured this. Once a school has a system for identifying these parents, how can they then be persuaded to do so? The feelings described by the great majority of respondents about home visiting illustrates that this is an area of great difficulty. One respondent was undoubtedly describing the frustrations of many headteachers in the area of school-home relations when he said: 'I feel that in our school we move heaven and earth to get co-operation from parents. There's always written word going home and every encouragement given to come up. Everything possible is done and if they still won't come up - well there's a limit!'

If all primary schools, however, used private timetabled interviews with parents, then a school has some means of identifying those parents whose reluctance to participate in the life of the school is the greatest unresolved problem in home/school relations. Based on this information, some effort to involve these parents in their childrens education can then be made. This effort need not necessarily involve either the headteacher or teachers if they have serious doubts about visiting these particular homes. Other agencies can well be used for this purpose. The Plowden Report<sup>5</sup> described such a method:

'If teachers do not go, someone should. Every parent who does not visit the school should be visited once a year by an education welfare officer. If only to see that any groundless fears about the school can easily be removed.'

In this survey, the problems and processes involved in instituting changes in a school's contacts with parents have been analysed in detail. It is hoped that the insights derived from such an analysis, although based on a restricted sample, can cast some light on innovation in the particular context of relations between primary schools and parents. Some mention has been made of present problems and antagonisms and the attitudinal barriers which impede parental involvement in the life of the school. While there were some fears expressed by the headteachers concerning possible parental interference in school policy and administration, there was also wide-spread recognition of the importance of parental support and the involvement of parents in the life of the school.

This survey has indicated the importance of the headteacher in the relationship between a primary school and parents. His or her attitude to parents will play a large part in deciding the type and

frequency of the contacts with parents which the school provides, and the success or otherwise of these contacts.

The comparison of the contacts used in the survey schools with the proposals of the Plowden Committee and the reported opinions about some particular types of contact, leads to certain conclusions. Any serious attempt to introduce change in educational organisations must be based on knowledge of teacher reaction and in particular headteacher reaction. Much current development in education, including relations between schools and parents, is concerned with effective ways of organising change. This organisation needs to be based on a rational knowledge of the feelings and fears of all the participants. Consensus of opinion should not be assumed, otherwise intended organisational change, no matter how desirable, will be based on assumption rather than fact.

William Taylor<sup>6</sup>, described the dangers of such assumptions in any change intended to promote closer relations between schools and parents:

'I think we should be very cautious in assuming that freeing the channels of communication will of necessity make it easier for parents and teachers to work together, especially if by more intimate contacts the discrepancies in the value orientations and aspirations of the two roles are exposed more clearly than at present. It is possible of course that what we are after is not just better communication and understanding but some degree of redefinition of the rights and duties of the role incumbents; and this brings us back to the problem of discovering criteria by means of which these rights and duties can be defined and rendered operationally viable.'

The headteachers in this survey described in detail their efforts to involve parents in the life of the school. They were also anxious to know what was being done in other schools, whether or not they agreed with a particular type of contact. The great variety of methods reported illustrated the wide variety of opinion among the survey respondents about how parents should be involved in the life of the school and how far this involvement should go.

The evidence of this survey suggests that it is the attitude of the headteacher to parental involvement which is a vital factor in determining the quality of relationship between a primary school and parents. Efforts to improve these relationships could well be directed towards headteachers, who may need advice and information on a more organised basis than is at present customary. Certainly it would appear on the evidence of this survey that any lasting and effective improvement in relations between primary schools and parents, such as the Plowden Committee hoped for, could well be based upon a recommendation of the less well known Gittens Report 'Primary Education in Wales'<sup>7</sup>:-

'The headteacher is the first link between parent and school. We are aware of the difficulties which can arise between parent and school ---- Headteachers themselves feel the need for training to deal with this aspect, and should receive more positive guidance and practical assistance from education authorities in creating good parent-school relations than they sometimes do.'

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**APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A.

Booklet supplied to judges containing 130 attitude statements concerning relations between primary schools and parents.

## APPENDIX A.

1. This booklet contains 130 statements regarding the value of parents co-operating with schools in the education of their children. As the first step in the making of a scale that may be used in a test of opinion relating to parent-teacher relationships a number of persons are being asked to sort these statements into 11 categories.
2. Each statement in the booklet is followed by a row of figures from 1 to 11. For those statements which you think express the highest appreciation of the value of parent-teacher relationships place a ring around figure 1. For those statements expressing a neutral position ring No.6. For those statements which express the strongest depreciation of the value of parent-teacher co-operation ring No.11. The other numbers should be ringed according to the degree of appreciation or depreciation you feel they express.
3. This means that when you have finished you will have ringed a number for each statement in order of value estimate from 1 the highest to 11 the lowest.
4. Do not try to allocate an equal number of statements to each number. They are not evenly distributed.

1. I regard teachers as trained professional who should be allowed to get on with their job without interference from parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
2. I feel that teachers must increase their efforts to enlist the help of parents in their childrens education.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
3. Parents and teachers are natural enemies predestined each for the discomfort of the other.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
4. I believe that close links between parents and teachers are essential to the full development of a childs ability.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
5. I do not regard teaching as any kind of social work. Teachers should not become involved with the parents of their pupils.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
6. I think the role of the teacher needs to be extended to a combination of teacher and social worker.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
7. I believe that the type of parent who joins a Parent-Teacher Association is one who expects preferential treatment for their children.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
8. I think that an active Parent-Teacher Association is an essential part of a modern school.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
9. The proper concern of a teacher is the education of the children in her class not the opinions of their parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
10. I believe that closer school-home co-operation would help the teacher to better understand the child.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
11. I feel that teachers have enough to do without wasting time with parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12. I believe that involving parents in their childrens education to a greater degree than at present would make teaching more efficient.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
13. I believe that Parent-Teacher Associations are a waste of time for everyone concerned.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

14. I think that a teachers interest in a childs home background is stimulated by the school having a Parent-Teacher Association.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
15. I believe that the parents of problem children never visit the school. Trying to encourage them to do so is a waste of time.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
16. I think that if parents are unable to visit the school the headteacher should visit them at home.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
17. I think that parents become too interfering if encouraged by the school to participate in their childrens education.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
18. I think that parents should be given booklets prepared by the school telling them how their children are being educated.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
19. I think that no teacher can be really truthful when discussing a child with its parents.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
20. Parents should be given every opportunity to discuss their childs report with the class teacher.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
21. I feel that frequent contacts with parents presents a danger of parents becoming too familiar and not showing a teacher proper respect.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
22. I believe that schools should have a system which allows parents to have formal talks about their children at least twice a year.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
23. I believe that teachers dislike having to attend meetings held outside normal school hours.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
24. I think it is essential for schools to have open days held at times convenient for parents to attend.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
25. I feel that frequent visits by parents can lead to a waste of valuable teaching time.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
26. I believe that most teachers would welcome more contacts with the parents of the children they teach.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

27. Every parent wants to talk endlessly about my child. Schools simply do not have enough time available for this.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
28. I feel that the knowledge gained by the teacher about individual children by close co-operation with parents would be of great value.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
29. I do not believe that teachers have received the necessary training to be able to cope with nervous or aggressive parents face to face.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
30. I believe that teachers nowadays are better trained to deal with and co-operate with parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
31. I believe that close contacts between school and home would make a child feel he was always being discussed.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
32. I believe that closer links between school and home would free the child from divided loyalties.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
33. I think that close contacts between home and school could set up a barrier between a child and his parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
34. I feel that closer links between home and school would improve relations between a child and its parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
35. I believe that parent involvement in schools may result in criticism of a teacher in the hearing of a pupil.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
36. I feel that parents should be allowed to see their children at work in the classroom.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
37. I think that the hostile attitudes of some parents who have been encouraged to visit the school may influence the attitude of the teacher towards their child.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
38. I believe that schools should organise activities in which interested parents could take part.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
39. I see a danger of disloyalty to other members of the staff if parents become too friendly with individual teachers.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

40. Parents should be free to visit classrooms and see their children at work.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
41. I think that most parents do not know enough about education to be of any help in their childrens education.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
42. I believe that closer co-operation between school and home would give parents a better understanding of the quality of their childrens work.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
43. I think that many parents promise to support the teacher and go home to do the opposite.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
44. I believe that good relations between school and home makes both parents and teachers realize that they have the same aims.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
45. I believe that the close involvement of parents in schools would be disasterous.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
46. I feel that close co-operation between teachers and parents is essential to a proper understanding of the potential of the individual child.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
47. I think that the only possible advice to aheadteacher considering starting a scheme for increased parent-teacher co-operation is 'dont'  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
48. There is a need for close co-operation between school and home particularly at the primary stage of a childs education.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
49. I believe that teachers and parents view children from such different points of view that close contacts can only cause unpleasantness.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
50. I think that parents would better understand the difficulties facing teachers if links between parents and teachers were closer.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
51. I think that the friction and jealousy caused among parents outweigh any of the advantages of a Parent-Teacher Association.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11



52. I feel that with encouragement from the school some parents can influence other parents for the better.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
53. I believe that parents may take advantage of a public meeting between parents and teachers to air personal grievances.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
54. I think that schools should have a regular system for the headteacher and classteacher to meet parents before a child enters school.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
55. I believe that organised school-home co-operation can lead to the neglected child resenting the more fortunate child who has the support of his parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
56. I feel that special efforts should be made by schools to contact the parents of neglected children.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
57. I believe that parents who are members of a Parent-Teacher Association may feel that by passing resolutions they have the power to alter school policy.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
58. I think that a Parent-Teacher Association makes a school part of the communal life of a neighbourhood.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
59. I believe that few parents will accept constructive criticism of their children by teachers.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
60. I think that if teachers and parents met more often parents would be given a more realistic idea of their childrens ability.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
61. I believe that parents should be allowed to visit schools by appointment only, except in an emergency.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
62. I think that any parent who wishes to attend should be welcome at morning assemblies.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
63. I feel that only if there is clear and sustained evidence of support by parents should a headteacher consider involving parents in the affairs of a school.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

64. I believe that teachers can be of great help to parents by showing them how best to help their children.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
65. I see no value in a school having a Parent-Teacher Association.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
66. I believe that having parents on the governing bodies of a school would help relations between parents and teachers.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
67. Parent-Teacher Associations may do good and useful work for schools but they do not interest me.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
68. When I go to a parent-teacher meeting I enjoy the social atmosphere and interesting conversation.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
69. I do not believe in close contacts between teachers and parents but I have never given the subject serious thought.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
70. I believe in school-home co-operation but with mental reservations.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
71. I do not receive any benefit from parent-teacher meetings but I think some teachers do.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
72. I believe in good relationships between teachers and parents but I have been accustomed to them ever since I started teaching.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
73. Sometimes I think that close contacts between school and home are necessary and sometimes I doubt it.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
74. I think that schools should provide parents with information about homework.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
75. I believe that only middle-class parents have any real interest in education.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
76. I think that parents have a right to see their childrens schoolwork.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
77. I believe that school-home functions tend to be dominated by a small vocal minority of parents.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

78. I believe that close school-home relations makes parents take a greater interest in the school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

79. I think that unless a Parent-teacher Association is very carefully controlled it can lead to interference in the running of the school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

80. I believe that efforts to increase parents contact with a school can help by pressure for better facilities.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

81. I do not believe that parents should be able to see their child's teacher unless such a meeting has been agreed by both parties.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

82. I feel that knowledge of a child's home background helps a teacher to understand what motivates a child's behaviour at school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

83. I feel that teachers can be irritated by the irrational behaviour of some parents. Frequent contacts between teachers and parents could rebound on the most innocent child.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

84. I feel that parents are made aware of modern teaching methods and understand them better as a result of co-operation between teachers and parents.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

85. I believe that close contacts between teachers and parents may make a child feel that there is no one to turn to if one or the other fails him.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

86. I feel that close co-operation means that minor problems with children can be overcome before they become serious.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

87. I feel that a child may begin to resent criticism if school-home contacts are too close.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

88. I believe that good relations between teachers and parents helps a child's moral development.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

89. I believe that when parents and teachers meet frequently the children of those parents who are liked by the teacher may be unduly favoured in class.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
90. I believe that parents nowadays are more readily to co-operate with teachers as modern codes of school discipline are more acceptable to them.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
91. I think that close co-operation between teachers and parents is almost essential to education at its best.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
92. I feel that much of the talk about the importance of parents being involved in education is just pious platitudes.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
93. I believe that parents are as essential as teachers in the education of their children.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
94. To me the whole idea of parent-teacher co-operation is a bore.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
95. I feel that a child can be well educated without his parents having to be involved with the school.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
96. I believe that a school which has not encouraged parents to become involved in its activities is hopelessly out of date.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
97. I believe that standards at home and school may be very different and drawing attention to this by school-home links may be bad for the child.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
98. I think that schools should give written reports on their pupils at least twice a year.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
99. I think that if parents are always visiting the school it may be difficult to maintain discipline.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
100. I believe that good parent-teacher relations extends a child's education beyond normal school hours.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
101. I think that organised attempts at parent-teacher co-operation presents a danger of the usurpation of the teachers free time.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

102. I believe that the greatest benefit of teacher-parent co-operation is the increase in mutual understanding of each others point of view.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
103. I believe that a Parent-Teacher Association is simply a 'gossip shop' with little educational value.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
104. I feel that the more parents are welcomed to visit a school the more likely they are to approve of it.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
105. I think that closer links between parents and teachers helps to widen the experience of unmarried or childless teachers.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
106. I believe that efforts to involve parents in their childrens education fail because of the difficulty of involving fathers.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
107. I feel that the more contact parents have with a teacher the more likely they are to approve of his methods.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
108. No teacher can satisfy all the parents of his pupils no matter how close their contacts.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
109. I believe that closer contacts between parents and teachers are essential to a proper understanding of a childs environment.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
110. I believe that efforts to increase teacher-parent co-operation fail because of the attitude of those parents who regard a school simply as a child minding service.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
111. I believe that parents would be more willing to help children with their schoolwork if links between school and home were closer.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
112. I feel that young children of ten give exaggerated reports of their school life to parents who may use these reports to undly harras a teacher if given ready access to school.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
113. I believe that regular consultation between teachers and parents should be encouraged.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
114. I believe that every Parent-Teacher Association should have

this clause inserted in the constitution 'Un der no circumstances will the association countenance adverse criticism or listen to personal grievances against the teachers.'

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

115. I believe that from time to time parents could be consulted on certain aspects of their childrens education.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

116. I believe that the greatest failing of the British educational system is its lack of parent involvement in its schools.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

117. I feel that with selected parents consultation with the school on matters of policy might be constructive.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

118. I think that the only parents who attend parent-teacher meetings are those who do not need to.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

119. I believe that parents should be welcome to attend school clubs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

120. I believe that a Parent-Teacher Association is a useful way of raising school funds.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

121. I think that few parents will attend meetings organised by th school which are of an educational nature.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

122. I feel that if parents were allowed into classrooms they could help with non-teaching activities.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

123. I feel that the teacher is the expert and in educational matters parents must recognise that his is the last word.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

124. I think that real parent involvement in schools would be a great stride forward for the educational service.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

125. I believe that pressure for parent involvement in schools is more political than educational.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

126. I believe that closer contacts between school and home helps parents to realize the changes that have taken place in schools since they were at school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

127. I would attend parent-teacher meetings only because I feel that I must.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

128. I feel that teachers can become aware of small anxieties which cause a child unnecessary worry if parent-teacher co-operation is good.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

129. I believe that the idea of parent involvement in schools is fundamentally sound but some of its more enthusiastic practitioners have given it a bad name.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

130. I believe that school reports should take the form of a personal letter to parents containing information both about the child's progress and social maturity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

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**APPENDIX B (Table No.23)**

**Table to show the distribution of judgements  
of 130 attitude statements.**





		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value		
7.	f	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	13	10	8	8	8.6	2.32		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.14	0.26	0.20	0.16	0.16				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.22	0.48	0.68	0.84	1.00				
8.	f	20	12	3	4	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	1.92	3.0		
	p	0.40	0.24	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.40	0.64	0.70	0.78	0.88	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00				
9.	f	0	0	1	1	1	0	5	5	16	9	12	9.25	2.04		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.32	0.18	0.24				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.16	0.26	0.58	0.76	1.00				
10.	f	20	11	11	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.96	1.97		
	p	0.40	0.22	0.22	0.06	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.40	0.62	0.84	0.90	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
11.	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	6	9	30	10.68	1.92		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.18	0.60				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.10	0.22	0.40	1.00				
12.	f	7	8	22	8	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	2.96	1.38		
	p	0.14	0.16	0.44	0.16	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.14	0.30	0.74	0.90	0.98	0.98	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00				
13.	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	8	34	10.76	1.07		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.12	0.16	0.68				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.16	0.32	1.00				
14.	f	4	11	14	10	3	7	0	1	0	0	0	3.22	2.08		
	p	0.08	0.22	0.28	0.20	0.06	0.14	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.08	0.30	0.58	0.78	0.84	0.98	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00				

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value
15.	f	0	0	0	0	0	6	11	9	7	7	10	8.39	3.05
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.22	0.18	0.14	0.14	0.20		
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.34	0.52	0.66	0.80	1.00		
16.	f	11	6	8	6	6	4	3	2	3	1	0	3.5	3.88
	p	0.22	0.12	0.16	0.12	0.12	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.02	0.00		
	cp	0.22	0.34	0.50	0.62	0.74	0.82	0.88	0.92	0.98	1.00	1.00		
17.	f	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	7	9	17	14	9.85	1.83
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.14	0.18	0.34	0.28		
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.20	0.38	0.72	1.00		
18.	f	5	6	12	6	11	8	2	0	0	0	0	3.83	2.65
	p	0.10	0.12	0.24	0.12	0.22	0.16	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	cp	0.10	0.22	0.46	0.58	0.80	0.96	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		
19.	f	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	9	8	16	10	8.56	2.23
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.12	0.18	0.16	0.32	0.20		
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.14	0.32	0.48	0.80	1.00		
20.	f	19	13	7	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1.96	2.13
	p	0.38	0.26	0.14	0.14	0.06	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	cp	0.38	0.64	0.78	0.92	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		
21.	f	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	10	11	13	9	9.23	2.18
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.12	0.20	0.22	0.26	0.18		
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.14	0.34	0.56	0.82	1.00		
22.	f	7	6	11	11	9	6	0	0	0	0	0	3.59	2.36
	p	0.14	0.12	0.22	0.22	0.18	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	cp	0.14	0.26	0.48	0.70	0.88	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		





		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value		
39.	f	0	0	0	0	0	4	13	12	10	5	6	8.17	2.20		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.26	0.24	0.20	0.10	0.12				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.34	0.58	0.78	0.88	1.00				
40.	f	14	10	8	9	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	2.62	2.72		
	p	0.28	0.20	0.16	0.18	0.12	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.28	0.48	0.64	0.82	0.94	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
41.	f	0	0	0	0	1	2	7	8	14	2	16	9.00	2.90		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.14	0.16	0.28	0.04	0.32				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.20	0.36	0.64	0.68	1.00				
42.	f	12	13	12	7	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	2.68		
	p	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.14	0.10	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.24	0.50	0.74	0.88	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
43.	f	0	0	0	2	2	6	8	7	8	11	6	8.5	2.73		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.12	0.16	0.14	0.16	0.22	0.12				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.20	0.36	0.50	0.66	0.88	1.00				
44.	f	16	14	10	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2.14	1.97		
	p	0.32	0.28	0.20	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.32	0.60	0.80	0.90	0.96	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
45.	f	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	8	2	7	29	10.57	2.32		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.16	0.04	0.14	0.58				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.08	0.24	0.28	0.42	1.00				
46.	f	20	13	7	5	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1.88	2.02		
	p	0.40	0.26	0.14	0.10	0.08	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.40	0.66	0.80	0.90	0.98	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				



		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value
f	f	0	0	2	1	3	1	7	10	16	5	5		
55.	p	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.14	0.20	0.32	0.10	0.10	8.56	2.06
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.06	0.12	0.14	0.28	0.48	0.80	0.90	1.00		
	f	7	13	6	11	7	3	0	2	1	0	0		
56.	p	0.14	0.26	0.12	0.22	0.14	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.00	3.33	2.65
	cp	0.14	0.40	0.52	0.74	0.88	0.94	0.94	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00		
	f	0	1	1	1	0	2	9	11	12	7	6		
57.	p	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.18	0.22	0.24	0.14	0.12	8.5	2.24
	cp	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.28	0.50	0.74	0.88	1.00		
	f	9	10	16	3	6	3	2	0	1	0	0		
58	p	0.18	0.20	0.32	0.06	0.12	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	2.88	2.48
	cp	0.18	0.38	0.70	0.76	0.88	0.94	0.98	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00		
	f	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	13	19	8	1		
59.	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.16	0.26	0.38	0.16	0.02	7.66	1.55
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.18	0.44	0.82	0.98	1.00		
	f	7	8	16	8	7	4	0	0	0	0	0		
60.	p	0.14	0.16	0.32	0.16	0.14	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.12	2.12
	cp	0.14	0.30	0.62	0.78	0.92	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	f	2	2	4	2	3	6	9	6	4	5	7		
61.	p	0.04	0.04	0.08	0.04	0.06	0.12	0.18	0.12	0.08	0.10	0.14	7.17	4.04
	cp	0.04	0.08	0.16	0.20	0.26	0.38	0.56	0.68	0.76	0.86	1.00		
	f	5	7	13	5	7	9	1	1	0	1	1		
62.	p	0.10	0.14	0.26	0.10	0.14	0.18	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.02	3.5	3.02
	cp	0.10	0.24	0.50	0.60	0.74	0.92	0.94	0.96	0.96	0.98	1.00		



		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value
63.	f	0	3	0	2	1	10	12	2	12	3	5		
	p	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.20	0.24	0.04	0.24	0.06	0.10	7.25	2.98
	cp	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.02	0.32	0.56	0.60	0.84	0.90	1.00		
64.	f	14	14	11	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	p	0.28	0.28	0.22	0.16	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.29	1.97
	cp	0.28	0.56	0.78	0.94	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
65.	f	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	4	7	35		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.14	0.70	10.89	0.86
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.08	0.16	0.30	1.00		
66.	f	8	5	11	9	6	10	0	1	0	0	0		
	p	0.16	0.10	0.22	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.61	2.85
	cp	0.16	0.26	0.48	0.66	0.78	0.98	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
67.	f	0	1	0	4	14	6	3	4	8	10	0		
	p	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.08	0.28	0.12	0.06	0.08	0.16	0.20	0.00	6.5	4.25
	cp	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.10	0.38	0.50	0.56	0.64	0.80	1.00	0.00		
68.	f	4	4	5	7	13	15	2	0	0	0	0		
	p	0.08	0.08	0.10	0.14	0.26	0.30	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.88	2.4
	cp	0.08	0.16	0.26	0.40	0.66	0.96	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
69.	f	0	0	0	1	3	11	9	4	5	8	9		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.22	0.18	0.08	0.10	0.16	0.18	7.75	3.79
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.08	0.30	0.48	0.56	0.66	0.82	1.00		
70.	f	2	1	6	11	6	9	9	3	3	0	0		
	p	0.04	0.02	0.12	0.22	0.12	0.18	0.18	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.00	5.33	3.06
	cp	0.04	0.06	0.18	0.40	0.52	0.70	0.88	0.94	1.00	0.00	0.00		





		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q.
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value
87.	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	11	15	7	14	9.23	2.24
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.22	0.30	0.14	0.28		
	op	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.28	0.58	0.72	1.00		
88.	f	9	5	14	8	11	3	0	0	0	0	0	3.29	2.44
	p	0.18	0.10	0.28	0.16	0.22	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	op	0.18	0.28	0.56	0.72	0.94	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
89.	f	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	12	13	4	9	8.58	2.08
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.18	0.24	0.26	0.08	0.18		
	op	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.24	0.48	0.74	0.82	1.00		
90.	f	6	7	7	13	9	7	1	0	0	0	0	3.88	2.57
	p	0.12	0.14	0.14	0.26	0.18	0.14	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	cp	0.12	0.26	0.40	0.66	0.84	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
91.	f	18	20	6	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.85	1.28
	p	0.36	0.40	0.12	0.02	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	cp	0.36	0.76	0.88	0.90	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
92.	f	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	5	12	12	17	9.33	1.97
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.10	0.24	0.24	0.34		
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.18	0.42	0.66	1.00		
93.	f	25	9	6	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	2.08
	p	0.50	0.18	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
	cp	0.50	0.68	0.80	0.90	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
94.	f	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	3	4	33	10.74	1.79
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.66		
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.14	0.20	0.26	0.34	1.00		



		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value		
103.	f	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	4	9	12	20	10.08	1.84		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.08	0.18	0.24	0.40				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.18	0.36	0.60	1.00				
104.	f	11	10	10	7	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	2.90	2.78		
	p	0.22	0.20	0.20	0.14	0.16	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.22	0.42	0.62	0.76	0.92	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
105.	f	3	2	9	8	14	8	3	0	2	1	0	4.71	2.35		
	p	0.06	0.04	0.18	0.16	0.28	0.16	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.00				
	cp	0.06	0.10	0.28	0.44	0.72	0.88	0.94	0.94	0.98	1.00	0.00				
106.	f	0	2	1	0	2	13	8	9	6	6	3	7.38	2.84		
	p	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.26	0.16	0.18	0.12	0.12	0.06				
	cp	0.00	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.36	0.52	0.70	0.82	0.94	1.00				
107.	f	4	9	8	17	8	2	0	2	0	0	0	3.74	2.03		
	p	0.08	0.18	0.16	0.34	0.16	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.08	0.26	0.42	0.76	0.92	0.96	0.96	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
108.	f	0	0	1	3	2	8	11	7	5	8	5	7.5	3.25		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.16	0.22	0.14	0.10	0.16	0.10				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.08	0.12	0.28	0.60	0.64	0.74	0.90	1.00				
109.	f	18	14	6	4	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	2.00	2.22		
	p	0.36	0.28	0.12	0.08	0.12	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.36	0.64	0.76	0.84	0.96	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
110.	f	0	0	0	0	0	7	8	8	14	10	3	8.64	2.49		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.16	0.16	0.28	0.20	0.06				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.30	0.46	0.74	0.94	1.00				

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value		
111.	f	8	16	13	7	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	2.57	1.78		
	p	0.16	0.32	0.26	0.14	0.10	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.16	0.48	0.74	0.88	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
112.	f	0	0	2	2	1	1	6	6	14	13	5	9.00	2.34		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.12	0.12	0.28	0.26	0.10				
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.24	0.36	0.64	0.90	1.00				
113.	f	15	11	12	5	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	2.41	2.12		
	p	0.30	0.22	0.24	0.10	0.08	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.30	0.52	0.76	0.86	0.94	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
114.	f	4	1	2	5	1	8	8	6	3	2	10	7.00	4.33		
	p	0.08	0.02	0.04	0.10	0.02	0.16	0.16	0.12	0.06	0.04	0.20				
	cp	0.08	0.10	0.14	0.24	0.26	0.42	0.58	0.70	0.76	0.80	1.00				
115.	f	4	6	7	8	12	3	2	4	3	1	0	4.5	2.81		
	p	0.08	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.24	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.06	0.02	0.00				
	cp	0.08	0.20	0.34	0.50	0.74	0.80	0.84	0.92	0.98	1.00	0.00				
116.	f	15	7	8	9	7	2	0	2	0	0	0	2.88	3.00		
	p	0.30	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.14	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00				
	cp	0.30	0.44	0.60	0.78	0.92	0.96	0.96	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
117.	f	1	3	7	8	17	5	2	3	1	3	0	4.85	2.11		
	p	0.02	0.06	0.14	0.16	0.34	0.10	0.04	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.00				
	cp	0.02	0.08	0.22	0.38	0.72	0.82	0.86	0.92	0.94	1.00	0.00				
118.	f	0	1	1	1	2	6	10	3	10	11	5	8.60	3.17		
	p	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.12	0.20	0.06	0.20	0.22	0.10				
	cp	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.10	0.22	0.42	0.48	0.68	0.90	1.00				





		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Scale	Q
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Value	Value
127.	f	0	0	0	0	1	8	6	6	9	9	11		
	p	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.16	0.12	0.12	0.18	0.18	0.22	8.94	3.25
	cp	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.18	0.30	0.42	0.60	0.78	1.00		
128.	f	9	9	19	7	4	1	1	0	0	0	0		
	p	0.18	0.18	0.38	0.14	0.08	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.87	1.68
	cp	0.18	0.36	0.74	0.88	0.96	0.98	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
129.	f	6	4	7	6	6	9	4	5	1	1	1		
	p	0.12	0.08	0.14	0.12	0.12	0.18	0.08	0.10	0.02	0.02	0.02	4.83	3.59
	cp	0.12	0.20	0.34	0.46	0.58	0.76	0.84	0.94	0.96	0.98	1.00		
130.	f	6	6	8	4	13	6	7	0	0	0	0		
	p	0.12	0.12	0.16	0.08	0.26	0.12	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.58	3.02
	cp	0.12	0.24	0.40	0.48	0.74	0.86	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		

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APPENDIX C

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**Attitude Scale Proforma.**

Appendix C.

Attitude Scale Proforma

This is an experimental study of the distribution of teachers attitudes towards the increased involvement of parents in their childrens education.

The following list contains twenty statements of opinion concerning the involvement of parents with schools in their childrens education.

Please endorse (✓) those statements that you feel express your own feelings on this issue.

Let your own experience with parents determine your endorsements.

1. I feel that special efforts should be made by schools to contact the parents of neglected children.
2. Sometimes I think that close contacts between school and home are necessary and sometimes I doubt it.
3. I think that few parents will attend meetings organised by the school which are of an educational nature.
4. I think that real parent involvement in schools would be a great stride forward for the education service.
5. I believe in school-home co-operation but with mental reservations.
6. I do not receive any benefit from parent-teacher meetings but I think some teachers do.
7. I do not regard teaching as any kind of social work. Teachers should not become involved with the parents of their pupils.
8. I feel that teachers can become aware of small anxieties which cause a child unnecessary worry, if parent-teacher co-operation is good.
9. I think that parents should be given a booklet prepared by the school telling them how their children are being educated.
10. I feel that with selected parents consultations with the school on matters of policy might be constructive.
11. I feel that much of the talk about the importance of parents being involved in education is just pious platitudes.
12. I believe that few parents will accept constructive criticism of their children by teachers.
13. I believe that efforts to involve parents in their childrens education fail because of the difficulty of involving fathers.
14. I believe that from time to time parents could be consulted on certain aspects of their childrens education.
15. I think that parents would better understand the difficulties facing teachers if links between parents and teachers were closer.
16. I think that parents become too interfering if encouraged by the school to participate in their childrens education.
17. I think that close co-operation between teachers and parents is almost essential to education at its best.
18. I think that organised attempts at parent-teacher co-operation presents a danger of the usurpation of the teachers free time.
19. I think that the only possible advice to a headteacher considering starting a scheme for increased parent-teacher co-operation is 'dont'.
20. I feel that the teacher is the expert and in educational matters parents must recognize that his is the last word.

A P P E N D I X D

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Coding Frames (Contacts with Parents and  
Parent-Teacher Associations).

CODING FRAME - CONTACTS WITH PARENTS

A.	Occasion	Ap.	Dis.	Freq.	Open Day Describe
	Open Day				
	Open Evening				
	Harvest Festival				
	Parent Meetings				
	Specify				
	Carol Service				
	Easter Service				
	Sports Day				
	Any Other				

B. Any Other Informal Contacts Describe and Specify

C.	Parents in Classrooms	Approve	Disapprove	Reasons

D.	Home Visiting	Approve	Disapprove	Reasons

CODING FRAME - PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

A.

Approve		Reasons for Approval or Disapproval
Disapprove		
Undecided		
Experience		
As a Head		
As a Teacher		
School had one		
Heard about		
Quoted Others		

B. Experience likely to produce favourable or unfavourable attitudes

C. Stated Reasons for Disapproval

Social events well attended educational events badly	
Expressed fear that parents will interfere with running of school	
Only attended by those parents you don't need to see	
The parents you really need to see don't attend	
P.T.A's are dominated by a small clique	
Working class parents cannot sustain interest	
Too formal a means of contact - informal methods better	
Attracts the wrong kind of parent	
Too difficult to ensure continuity with officials of P.T.A.	
Good for raising money only	
Teachers cannot be expected to give out of hours time	
Any other (Specify)	

## APPENDIX E

Tables to show calculation of the significance  
of differences in attitude scale mean scores  
by use of the 'students' 't' test.



Table to show calculation of the significance of differences in attitude mean scores by 't' test between Infant and Junior Subgroups

Junior Mean				Infant Mean			
No.	score	(x- $\bar{x}$ )	(x- $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>2</sup>	No.	Score	(x- $\bar{x}$ )	(x- $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>2</sup>
1	7.38	2.56	6.554	25	2.33	1.95	3.802
2	2.87	1.95	3.802	26	2.33	1.95	3.802
3	3.33	1.49	2.220	27	4.5	0.22	0.048
4	5.69	0.87	0.757	28	3.33	0.95	0.902
5	4.1	0.72	0.518	29	3.1	1.18	1.392
6	4.85	0.03	0.001	30	3.33	0.95	0.902
7	7.52	2.7	7.290	31	3.33	0.95	0.902
8	5.33	0.51	0.260	32	5.33	1.05	1.102
9	5.89	1.07	1.145	33	7.27	2.99	8.940
10	4.85	0.03	0.001	34	2.33	1.95	3.802
11	7.64	2.82	7.952	35	3.69	0.59	0.348
12	2.87	1.95	3.802	36	4.5	0.22	0.048
13	4.5	0.32	0.102	37	4.5	0.22	0.048
14	4.5	0.32	0.102	38	6.11	1.83	3.349
15	5.09	0.27	0.73	39	5.33	1.05	1.102
16	6.88	2.06	4.244	40	2.36	1.98	3.920
17	2.87	1.95	3.802	41	3.83	0.45	0.202
18	6.38	1.56	2.434	42	9.4	5.12	26.214
19	8.39	3.57	12.745	43	4.5	0.22	0.048
20	2.87	1.95	3.802		81.40		60.873
21	3.69	1.13	1.277				
22	2.87	1.95	3.802				
23	2.87	1.95	3.802				
24	2.6	2.22	4.928				
	115.83		75.415				

Junior mean:

$$115.83 \div 24 = 4.82$$

$$\text{Variance } 75.415 \div 24 = 3.142$$

Infant mean:

$$81.40 \div 19 = 4.28$$

$$\text{Variance } 60.873 \div 19 = 3.204$$

$$\hat{S}_J^2 = \frac{24 \times 3.142}{23} = 3.28$$

$$\hat{S}_I^2 = \frac{19 \times 3.204}{18} = 3.38$$

$$F(23,18) = 3.28/3.38 = 1.05 \quad 5\% \text{ value of } F(23,19) \text{ is } 2.07 \quad 1.05 \text{ N.S.}$$

$$\hat{S}^2 = \frac{N_J \sigma_J^2 + N_I \sigma_I^2}{41} \quad \text{where } \sigma_J^2 = S_J^2 \quad (\text{unbiased estimate of } \sigma^2)$$

$$= \frac{24 \times 3.142 + 19 \times 3.204}{41} = 3.32$$

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_J - \bar{x}_I}{s \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_J} + \frac{1}{N_I}}}$$

$$t(41) = \frac{.542}{1.82 \sqrt{0.0416 + 0.0526}} = \frac{0.542}{1.82 \times 0.30}$$

$$= 0.970$$

$$5\% \text{ value of } t(41) = 2.02 \quad 0.970 \text{ is N.S.}$$

Table 25

Table to show calculation of significance of differences in attitude by 't' test between Male and Female subgroups

MALE (19)				FEMALE (24)			
No.	Score	(x- $\bar{x}$ )	(x- $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>2</sup>	No.	Score	(x- $\bar{x}$ )	(x- $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>2</sup>
1	7.38	2.79	7.78	1	7.52	2.94	8.64
2	2.87	1.72	2.96	11	7.64	3.06	9.36
3	3.33	1.26	1.59	16	6.88	2.30	5.29
4	5.69	1.10	1.21	21	3.69	0.89	0.79
5	4.1	0.49	0.24	23	2.87	1.71	2.92
6	4.85	0.26	0.68	25	2.33	2.25	5.06
8	5.33	0.74	0.55	26	2.33	2.25	5.06
9	5.89	1.30	1.69	27	4.5	0.08	0.01
10	4.85	0.26	0.68	28	3.33	1.25	1.56
12	2.87	1.72	2.96	29	3.1	1.48	2.19
13	4.5	0.09	0.01	30	3.33	1.25	1.56
14	4.5	0.09	0.01	31	3.33	1.25	1.56
15	5.09	0.5	0.25	32	5.33	0.75	0.58
17	2.87	1.72	2.96	33	7.27	2.69	7.24
18	6.38	1.79	3.20	34	2.33	2.25	5.06
19	8.39	3.8	14.44	35	3.69	0.89	0.79
20	2.87	1.72	2.96	36	4.5	0.08	0.01
22	2.87	1.72	2.96	37	4.5	0.08	0.01
24	2.6	1.99	3.96	38	6.11	1.53	2.34
				39	5.33	0.75	0.58
				40	2.36	2.22	4.93
				41	3.83	0.75	0.58
				42	9.4	4.82	23.23
				43	4.5	0.08	0.01
	87.23		51.09		110.00		89.33

$$\text{Male Mean} = 87.23 \div 19 = 4.59 \quad \text{Variance} = 51.09 \div 19 = 2.68$$

$$\text{Female Mean} = 110.00 \div 24 = 4.58 \quad \text{Variance} = 89.33 \div 24 = 3.72$$

$$\hat{s}_M^2 = \frac{19 \times 2.68}{18} = 2.94 \quad \hat{s}_F^2 = \frac{24 \times 3.72}{23} = 3.88$$

$$F(23,18) = 3.88/2.94 = 1.32 \quad 5\% \text{ value of } F(23,18) \text{ is } 2.07 \quad 1.32 \text{ N.S.}$$

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_M - \bar{X}_F}{s \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_M} + \frac{1}{N_F}}}$$

$$s \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_M} + \frac{1}{N_F}}$$

$$\hat{s}^2 = \frac{N_M \sigma_M^2 + N_F \sigma_F^2}{41} \quad \text{where } \sigma_1^2 = \hat{s}^2$$

$$= \frac{19 \times 2.68 + 24 \times 3.72}{41}$$

$$t(41) = \frac{4.59 - 4.58}{1.84 \sqrt{0.0526 + 0.0416}}$$

$$= \frac{139.4}{41} = 3.4$$

$$= \frac{0.01}{0.565} = 0.177$$

5% value of t(41) is 2.02

0.177 N.S.

Table 26.

Table to show calculation of the significance of differences in attitudes mean scores by 't' test between headteachers of 'Large school' and 'small school' subgroups

Large School				Small School			
No.	Score	$(x-\bar{x})$	$(x-\bar{x})^2$	No.	Score	$(x-\bar{x})$	$(x-\bar{x})^2$
2	2.87	1.47	2.161	1	7.32	2.66	7.076
3	3.33	1.01	1.02	4	5.69	1.03	1.061
13	4.5	0.16	0.026	5	4.1	0.56	0.314
15	5.09	0.75	0.562	6	4.85	0.19	0.036
16	6.88	2.54	6.452	7	7.52	2.86	8.180
17	2.87	1.47	2.161	8	5.33	0.67	0.449
19	8.39	4.05	16.402	9	5.89	1.23	1.513
20	2.87	1.47	2.161	10	4.85	0.19	0.036
21	3.69	0.05	0.002	11	7.64	2.98	8.880
23	2.87	1.47	2.161	12	2.87	1.79	3.204
				14	4.5	0.16	0.026
				18	6.38	1.72	2.958
				22	2.87	1.79	3.204
				24	2.6	2.06	4.244
				25	2.33	2.33	5.429
				26	2.33	2.33	5.429
				27	4.5	0.16	0.026
				28	3.33	1.33	1.769
				29	3.1	1.56	2.434
				30	3.33	1.33	1.769
				31	3.33	1.33	1.769
				32	5.33	0.67	0.449
				33	7.27	2.61	6.812
				34	2.33	2.33	5.429
				35	3.69	0.97	0.941
				36	4.5	0.16	0.026
				37	4.5	0.16	0.026
				38	6.11	1.45	2.102
				39	5.33	0.67	0.449
				40	2.36	2.3	5.29
				41	3.83	0.83	0.689
				42	9.4	4.74	22.468
				43	4.5	0.16	0.026
	43.36		33.108		153.87		104.513

Large school:

$$\text{mean} = 43.36 \div 10 = 4.336 \quad \text{variance} = 33.108 \div 10 = 3.31$$

Small school:

$$\text{mean} = 153.87 \div 33 = 4.66 \quad \text{variance} = 104.513 \div 33 = 3.167$$

$$\bar{x}_1 = 4.826 \quad \bar{x}_2 = 4.284 \quad \hat{s}_1^2 = \frac{10 \times 3.31}{9} = 3.68 \quad \hat{s}_2^2 = \frac{33 \times 3.17}{32} = 3.27$$

$F(9,32) = 3.68/3.27 = 1.125$ . 5% value of  $F(9,32)$  is 2.86.

1.125 N.S.

$$t(41) = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{s \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}}$$

$$\hat{s}^2 = \frac{N_1 \sigma_1^2 + N_2 \sigma_2^2}{41} = \frac{10 \times 3.31 + 33 \times 3.17}{41} = 3.365$$

$$t(41) = \frac{4.66 - 4.336}{1.83 \sqrt{0.11 + 0.031}}$$

= 0.465      5% value of  $t(41) = 2.02$ . 0.465 N.S.

Table to show calculation of the significance of difference in attitude mean scores by 't' test between Over 50yrs of age and Under 50yrs of age subgroups

UNDER 50			OVER 50		
Score	(x- $\bar{x}$ )	(x- $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>2</sup>	Score	(x- $\bar{x}$ )	(x- $\bar{x}$ ) <sup>2</sup>
4.1	0.4	0.16	7.38	2.45	6.002
2.87	0.83	0.689	3.33	1.6	2.56
3.69	0.01	0.000	2.87	2.06	4.244
2.6	1.10	1.21	5.69	0.76	0.577
2.33	1.37	1.877	4.85	0.08	0.006
3.33	0.37	0.197	7.52	2.59	6.708
3.33	0.37	0.137	5.33	0.4	0.16
4.5	0.8	0.64	5.89	0.96	0.922
6.11	2.41	5.808	4.85	0.08	0.006
5.33	1.63	2.657	7.64	2.71	7.344
2.36	1.34	1.796	2.87	2.06	4.244
3.83	0.13	0.017	4.5	0.43	0.185
			4.5	0.43	0.185
			5.09	0.16	0.026
			6.88	1.95	3.802
			2.87	2.06	4.244
			6.38	1.45	2.102
			8.39	3.46	11.972
			2.87	2.06	4.244
			2.87	2.06	4.244
			2.33	2.6	6.76
			4.5	0.43	0.185
			3.1	1.83	3.349
			3.33	1.6	2.56
			5.33	0.4	0.16
			7.27	2.34	5.476
			2.33	2.6	6.76
			3.69	1.24	1.538
			4.5	0.43	0.185
			9.4	4.47	19.981
			4.5	0.43	0.185
44.38		15.128	152.85		110.916

Under 50 mean:

$$= 44.38 \div 12$$

$$= 3.698$$

variance =

$$15.128 \div 12 = 1.26$$

Over 50 mean:

$$= 152.85 \div 31 =$$

$$4.93$$

variance =

$$110.916 \div 31 = 3.578$$

$$\hat{S}_1^2 = \frac{12 \times 1.26}{11} = 1.375$$

$$\hat{S}_2^2 = \frac{31 \times 3.578}{30}$$

$$= 3.695$$

$F(30,11) = 3.695/1.375 = 2.68$  5% value of  $F(30,11)$  is 2.12. 2.68 S at 5%.

$$t(41) = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\frac{S^2}{\sigma} \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}}$$

$$= \frac{4.93 - 3.70}{1.76 \times \sqrt{0.083 + 0.032}}$$

$$= \frac{1.23}{0.599} = 2.06$$

5% value of  $t(41) = 2.02$

2.06 Significant at 5%.

$$\hat{S}^2 = \frac{N_1 \sigma_1^2 + N_2 \sigma_2^2}{41} \text{ where } \sigma_1^2 = \hat{S}_1^2$$

$$= \frac{12 \times 1.26 + 31 \times 3.578}{41}$$

$$= 3.08$$

Table 28.

Table to show calculation of the significance of differences in attitude mean scores by 't' test between headteachers of 'Low social class schools' and 'High social class schools' subgroups

Low Social Class (21)				High Social Class (22)			
No.	Score	$ x-\bar{x} $	$(x-\bar{x})^2$	No.	Score	$ x-\bar{x} $	$(x-\bar{x})^2$
1	7.38	3.17	10.049	2	2.87	2.08	4.326
3	3.33	0.88	0.774	4	5.69	0.74	0.548
5	4.1	0.11	0.012	6	4.85	0.10	0.010
12	2.87	1.34	1.796	7	7.52	2.57	6.605
13	4.5	0.29	0.084	8	5.33	0.38	0.144
14	4.5	0.29	0.084	9	5.89	0.94	0.884
15	5.09	0.88	0.774	10	4.85	0.10	0.010
17	2.87	1.34	1.796	11	7.64	2.69	7.236
25	2.33	1.88	3.534	16	6.88	1.93	3.725
26	2.33	1.88	3.534	18	6.38	1.43	2.045
27	4.5	0.29	0.084	19	8.39	3.44	11.834
28	3.33	0.88	0.774	20	2.87	2.08	4.326
30	3.33	0.88	0.774	21	3.69	1.26	1.588
31	3.33	0.88	0.774	22	2.87	2.08	4.326
32	5.33	1.12	1.254	23	2.87	2.08	4.326
33	7.27	3.06	9.364	24	2.60	2.35	5.523
34	2.33	1.88	3.534	29	3.10	1.85	3.423
35	3.69	0.52	0.270	36	4.50	0.45	0.202
37	4.5	0.29	0.084	40	2.36	2.59	6.708
38	6.11	1.9	3.610	41	3.83	1.12	1.254
39	5.33	1.12	1.254	42	9.40	4.45	19.802
				43	4.50	0.45	0.202
	88.35		44.223		108.88		89.047

Low Social Class:

$$\text{Mean} = 88.35 \div 21 = 4.21 \quad \text{variance} = 44.223 \div 21 = 2.106$$

High Social Class:

$$\text{Mean} = 108.88 \div 22 = 4.95 \quad \text{variance} = 89.047 \div 22 = 4.048$$

$$\bar{x}_1 = 4.21 \quad \bar{x}_2 = 4.95 \quad \hat{S}_1^2 = \frac{21 \times 2.106}{20} = 2.21 \quad \hat{S}_2^2 = \frac{22 \times 4.048}{21} = 4.23$$

$$F(21,20) = 4.23/2.21 = 1.916. \quad 5\% \text{ value of } F(21,20) \text{ is } 2.09 - 1.916 \text{ N.S.}$$

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{S \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}} \quad \hat{S}^2 = \frac{N_1 \sigma_1^2 + N_2 \sigma_2^2}{41} = \frac{21 \times 2.106 + 22 \times 4.048}{41} = 3.155$$

$$t(41) = \frac{4.95 - 4.21}{1.77 \times \sqrt{0.05 + 0.475}} = \frac{0.74}{0.552} = 1.38$$

$$5\% \text{ value of } t(41) = 2.02$$

1.38 N.S.

APPENDIX F

The reliability and validity of the  
experimental attitude scale. Tables Nos. 29 - 33.

Table No. 29.

Table to show odd and even items agreed with on attitude  
scale for split half correlation

\* 3 subjects agreed with odd or even items only

SCORE	ODD ITEMS CHECKED	SUBJECT	EVEN ITEMS CHECKED	SCORE
8.36	13,17	1	10,12,14	6.88
3.42	3,7	2	2,4,6	2.87
3.33	5	3	4,12	4.88
6.45	3,7,15,17	4	4,12	4.88
3.83	3,9	5	4,12	4.88
6.45	3,7,15,17	6	4,8,12	4.85
6.36	3,9,13,15	7	12,14,16,18	8.26
5.94	3,7,9,15	8	4,14,16	7.66
5.94	3,7,9,11	9	10,12,16	6.88
3.92	3,5,7,15	10	6,8,12,14,16	6.88
6.45	7,15	11	12,16	7.87
2.33	1,3,5	12	2,4,8,12	3.86
*	3,5,7,9,15	13		
3.92	5,7	14	12	6.88
4.50	3,5,7,9,15	15	8,12,16	6.88
6.45	5,7,15,17	16	12	6.88
3.33	3,5,7	17	2,4	2.36
5.33	7,9,15	18	10,12,18	6.88
9.40	15,19	19	8,12,18	6.88
2.33	1,3,5	20	4,6	3.35
4.50	7	21	4	2.87
3.33	3,5,7	22	2,4	2.36
3.42	3,7	23	2,4,8	2.87
2.33	1,3,5	24	2,4,6	2.87
2.33	1,3,7	25	2,4	2.36
2.33	1,3,5	26	2,4	2.36
4.50	7	27	4,8	3.86
3.92	3,5,7,9	28	2,4,12	2.87
3.92	5,7	29	2,4	2.36
5.33	5,9,15	30	2,4	2.36
4.50	5,7,9	31	2,4	2.36
5.94	5,7,9,15	32	18	9.85
5.33	5,9,15	33	12,14,18	7.66
4.50	3,7,9	34	4,16	5.87
2.33	3	35	12	6.88
4.50	3,7,9	36	4	2.87
5.94	5,7,9,17	37	4	2.87
5.94	3,5,7,9,15,17	38	8,12,14,16	7.27
5.94	7,9	39	12	6.88
*		40	2,4	
4.50	3,7,9	41	4,6	3.35
8.39	5,15,19	42	20	10.84
*	3,5,7,9,17	43		



Table No. 30.

Table to show calculation of split half coefficient of correlation  
for the odd and even items on the experimental attitude scale

ODD	EVEN	do	do <sup>2</sup>	de	de <sup>2</sup>	dode
8.36	6.88	3.57	12.74	1.76	3.10	6.28
3.42	2.87	-1.37	1.90	-2.25	5.06	3.08
3.33	4.88	-1.46	2.13	-0.24	0.06	0.35
6.45	4.88	1.66	2.76	-0.24	0.06	-0.40
3.83	4.88	-0.96	0.92	-0.24	-0.06	-0.23
6.45	4.85	1.66	2.76	-0.27	-0.07	-0.45
6.36	8.26	1.57	2.46	3.14	9.86	4.93
5.94	7.66	1.15	1.32	2.54	6.45	2.92
5.94	6.88	1.15	1.32	1.76	3.10	2.02
3.92	6.88	-0.87	0.76	1.76	3.10	-1.53
6.45	7.87	1.66	2.76	2.75	7.56	4.57
2.33	3.86	-2.46	6.05	-1.26	1.59	3.10
3.92	6.88	-0.87	0.76	1.76	3.10	-1.53
4.50	6.88	-0.29	0.08	1.76	3.10	-0.51
6.45	6.88	1.66	2.76	1.76	3.10	2.92
3.33	2.36	-1.46	2.13	-2.76	7.62	4.03
5.33	6.88	0.54	0.29	1.76	3.10	0.95
9.40	6.88	4.61	21.25	1.76	3.10	8.11
2.33	3.35	-2.46	6.05	-1.77	3.13	4.35
4.50	2.87	-0.29	0.08	-2.25	5.06	0.65
3.33	2.36	-1.46	2.13	-2.76	7.62	4.03
3.42	2.87	-1.34	1.90	-2.25	5.06	3.08
2.33	2.87	-2.46	6.05	-2.25	5.06	5.54
2.33	2.36	-2.46	6.05	-2.76	7.62	6.80
2.33	2.36	-2.46	6.05	-2.76	7.62	6.80
4.50	3.86	-0.29	0.08	-1.26	1.59	0.37
3.92	2.87	-0.87	0.76	-2.25	5.06	1.96
3.92	2.36	-0.87	0.76	-2.76	7.62	2.40
5.33	2.36	0.54	0.29	-2.76	7.62	-1.49
4.50	2.36	-0.29	0.08	-2.76	7.62	0.80
5.94	9.85	1.15	1.32	4.73	22.37	5.44
5.33	7.66	0.54	0.29	2.54	6.45	1.37
4.50	5.87	-0.29	0.08	0.75	0.56	-0.22
2.33	6.88	-2.46	6.05	1.76	3.10	4.33
4.50	2.87	-0.29	0.08	-2.25	5.06	0.65
5.94	2.87	1.15	1.32	-2.25	5.06	-2.59
5.94	7.27	1.15	1.32	2.15	4.62	2.47
5.94	6.88	1.15	1.32	1.76	3.10	2.02
4.50	3.35	-0.29	0.08	-1.77	3.13	0.51
8.39	10.84	3.60	12.96	5.72	32.72	20.59
191.76	204.68		120.25	220.04		100.27

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= \frac{\sum dode}{\sqrt{\sum do^2 \sum de^2}} \\
 &= \frac{100.27}{\sqrt{120.25 \times 220.04}} \\
 &= 0.616
 \end{aligned}$$

Table No. 31.

Table to Show scores on 5 point scale given to 21 randomly selected transcripts by independent judge and researcher

x = independent judge

y = researcher

	x	y		x	y		x	y		x	y		x	y		x	y
1 (38)	5 5 2 5 3	5 4 2 4 3	5 (43)	1 2 3 3 3	1 3 3 3 2	9 (29)	5 5 4 4 2	5 5 5 4 3	13 (21)	4 4 4 5 2	5 4 4 5 3	17 (14)	4 5 4 5 5	5 5 5 5 5	21 (24)	1 1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1 1
2 (36)	2 4 5 3 3	2 4 4 4 3	6 (3)	1 1 3 4 1	1 1 2 4 1	10 (21)	3 5 5 2 1	4 5 5 1 5	14 (2)	2 3 3 3 2	2 3 3 4 3	18 (18)	4 5 4 3 3	4 5 5 4 3			
3 (20)	2 1 1 2 2	1 1 1 2 1	7 (41)	2 4 4 4 3	1 3 5 4 3	11 (26)	2 1 1 3 1	1 1 1 4 1	15 (9)	2 4 4 4 4	1 5 4 4 5	19 (22)	3 2 3 4 2	2 2 2 4 2			
4 (16)	3 3 4 4 4	3 4 4 5 4	8 (30)	3 1 4 4 4	3 2 4 4 4	12 (25)	1 1 1 2 1	1 1 1 1 1	16 (13)	4 3 2 5 4	3 2 2 5 4	20 (11)	4 5 4 4 3	5 5 5 4 4			

Table to show calculation of coefficient of correlation between 2 sets of judgements

f	x	y	fx	fy	$x - \bar{X}$	$y - \bar{Y}$	$x^2$	$fx^2$	$y^2$	$fy^2$	fxy
13	5	5	65	65	1.94	1.89	3.764	60.22	3.572	46.44	47.7
3	5	4	15	12		.89			.792	2.37	5.18
11	4	5	44	55	.94	1.89	.884	26.52	3.572	39.29	19.55
17	4	4	68	68		.89			.792	13.46	14.21
2	4	3	8	6		-.11			.012	.02	-.21
7	3	4	21	28		.89			.792	5.54	-.37
10	3	3	30	30	-.06	-.11	.004	.09	.012	.12	.07
5	3	2	15	10		-1.11			1.232	6.16	.33
4	2	3	8	12		-.11			.012	.05	.47
7	2	2	14	14	-1.06	-1.11	1.124	20.23	1.232	8.62	8.24
7	2	1	14	7		-2.11			4.452	31.16	15.64
1	1	2	1	2	-2.06	-1.11	4.244	80.64	1.232	1.23	2.29
18	1	1	18	18		-2.11			4.452	80.14	78.4
105			321	327				187.70		234.60	192.08
											-.58
											191.5

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f} = \frac{321}{105} = 3.06$$

$$\bar{Y} = \frac{\sum fy}{\sum f} = \frac{327}{105} = 3.11$$

$$\sum fx^2 = 187.7 \quad \sum fy^2 = 234.6 \quad \sum fxy = 191.5$$

$$= \frac{\sum fxy}{\sqrt{\sum fx^2 \sum fy^2}} = \frac{191.5}{\sqrt{187.7 \times 234.6}}$$

$$= .9126$$

Table to show calculation of coefficient of rank correlation between  
the experimental attitude scale and the survey interviews

D	D2	Attitude Scale		Interview Judgements				A.S.R.N.	RA	RII
		Score	Pos. No.	No.	Pos.	Score				
-2.5	6.25	2.33	1	26	24	1	<u>1.0</u>	4	2	4.5
-0.5	0.25	2.33	2	25	25	2	1.2	2	2	2.5
-7.0	49.00	<u>2.33</u>	3	34	40	3	<u>1.2</u>	8	2	9
1.5	2.25	2.36	4	40	26	4	1.6	3	4	2.5
4.0	16.00	<u>2.6</u>	5	24	20	5	<u>1.6</u>	1	5	1
4.0	16.00	2.87	6	20	23	6	1.8	5	8.5	4.5
-12.5	156.25	2.87	7	22	12	7	<u>1.8</u>	19	8.5	21
2.0	4.00	2.87	8	12	34	8	2.0	7	8.5	6.5
2.0	4.00	2.87	9	23	3	9	2.0	6	8.5	6.5
-15.5	240.25	2.87	10	17	31	10	<u>2.0</u>	24	8.5	24
-9.0	81.00	<u>2.87</u>	11	2	35	11	2.4	17	8.5	17.5
-25.0	625.00	<u>3.1</u>	12	29	43	12	2.4	38	12	37
5.5	30.25	3.33	13	3	5	13	2.4	9	14.5	9
5.5	30.25	3.33	14	31	6	14	2.4	10	14.5	9
-11.0	121.00	3.33	15	30	37	15	<u>2.4</u>	25	14.5	25.5
-1.5	2.25	<u>3.33</u>	16	28	28	16	<u>2.5</u>	16	14.5	16
4.0	16.00	3.69	17	35	2	17	2.6	11	17.5	13
-16.5	272.25	<u>3.69</u>	18	21	10	18	<u>2.6</u>	34	17.5	34
-9.0	81.00	<u>3.83</u>	19	41	22	19	2.8	28	19	28
7.0	49.00	4.1	20	5	15	20	2.8	13	20	13
10.5	110.25	4.5	21	43	39	21	2.8	12	23.5	13
-18.0	324.00	4.5	22	14	32	22	2.8	41	23.5	41.5
13.5	182.25	4.5	23	27	4	23	<u>2.8</u>	39	23.5	37
10.5	110.25	4.5	24	37	17	24	<u>3.0</u>	15	23.5	13
-4.5	20.25	4.5	25	36	30	25	3.2	27	23.5	28
-8.0	64.00	<u>4.5</u>	26	13	8	26	<u>3.2</u>	31	23.5	31.5
14.5	210.25	<u>4.85</u>	27	6	36	27	3.4	14	27.5	13
10.0	100.00	<u>4.85</u>	28	10	41	28	3.4	18	27.5	17.5
8.0	64.00	<u>5.09</u>	29	15	33	29	<u>3.4</u>	20	29	21
5.5	30.25	<u>5.33</u>	30	8	7	30	3.6	26	31	25.5
10.0	100.00	5.33	31	32	13	31	3.6	22	31	21
10.0	100.00	<u>5.33</u>	32	39	16	32	3.6	21	31	21
12.0	144.00	<u>5.69</u>	33	4	9	33	<u>3.6</u>	23	33	21
2.5	6.25	5.89	34	9	21	34	<u>3.8</u>	33	34	31.5
-2.0	4.00	6.11	35	38	38	35	4.0	35	35	37
-1.0	1.00	6.38	36	18	11	36	4.0	37	36	37
5.5	30.25	6.88	37	16	18	37	4.0	32	37	31.5
10.0	100.00	7.27	38	33	29	38	4.0	29	38	28
-1.0	1.00	7.38	39	1	27	39	<u>4.0</u>	40	39	40
8.5	72.25	7.52	40	7	1	40	<u>4.2</u>	30	40	31.5
4.0	16.00	7.64	41	11	14	41	4.6	36	41	37
-1.0	1.00	8.39	42	19	42	42	4.6	48	42	43
1.5	2.25	9.4	43	42	19	43	4.8	42	43	41.5

3595.75

$$R = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} = \frac{6 \times 3595.75}{43 \times 1849 - 1}$$

$$= \frac{21574.50}{79464} = 1 - 0.2715 \quad R = 0.7285$$