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Perceptions of the pastoral care worker role and its effectiveness

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the pastoral care worker role as defined by Schools Outreach. Schools Outreach is a charitable Christian organisation who recruit, train and manage the provision of pastoral support in selected schools. The research aims to explore perceptions of the role in two junior schools and the extent to which the interventions of the pastoral care workers are successful. The research methods chosen include interviews, questionnaires, diary entries and observations. The roles of the two pastoral care workers are researched as are the effectiveness of some of the programmes and activities they are involved with. Findings from the research are considered in the light of proposed national developments in multi-agency work. The author believes that issues encountered during this research are fundamental to the involvement of support services in schools.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Synopsis

This research centres around four schools based in the West Midlands region in the primary phase. All four schools serve areas with a high concentration of social and economic problems. Unemployment, high crime rates, poor health and inadequate housing make meeting the needs of the children in these schools extremely difficult.

I was introduced to Schools Outreach as one of the headteachers of the four schools involved. Schools Outreach are a charitable Christian organisation who are involved in supporting the establishment of pastoral care workers in schools. They advertise, recruit, train and maintain the line management and employment of their workers. Every year the pastoral care workers continue to be involved in Outreach-based training and meetings are held regularly involving school staff and a Schools Outreach representative to monitor the progress of the project.

Initially we were approached by the Local Education Authority's Primary Exclusion Project who had offered to match fund the Schools Outreach contribution for the employment of two pastoral care workers who would be based between the four schools. Initially the project was presented to us as an opportunity to reduce and limit the weight of pastoral work currently being undertaken by school staff. The impressions formed by two of the headteachers involved in the project, are documented as part of this research following interviews. The 'Primary Exclusion Project' had been set up by the LEA to address the issues surrounding exclusions in the primary sector. It supported a number of local projects including support for children during the lunchtime period and the appointment of community link workers, who have a similar brief to the pastoral care worker role.

Subsequently, Schools Outreach advertised for two full-time posts on a temporary three year contract. Interviews took place involving all four headteachers and Schools Outreach representatives. The applicants were taken around the local area and introduced to each school individually. After the

interviews, discussion included not only the selection of two successful candidates but also the matching of candidates with schools. In this thesis the two candidates selected are referred to as Jamal and Val. Jamal was previously a teacher and was intending to maintain his base in a neighbouring city. Val's home was further away from the schools' catchment and she decided to move and live in the local area. Both pastoral care workers or PCWs were practising Christians. Following their selection, a term was taken for the new appointees to receive their induction training. The pastoral care workers then took up their role in the Summer Term and, except for additional bursts of training, have remained based in the schools until July 2003. In July one worker resigned in order to take up a full-time teaching post closer to home following his marriage. One worker has been shared between two schools and the balance of the week is agreed between the parties according to need. On occasions there has been opportunity for the workers to alter their timetables where the need to attend meetings etc. has arisen. Meetings were held with Schools Outreach on a termly basis and involved the production of a report from each PCW to highlight the type of work being undertaken and its level of success.

There have been difficulties with financing the project. After the second year the match funding from the LEA expired and no additional funding to maintain the project was available. As a result of this, Schools Outreach applied for further funding through alternative charities and was able to guarantee the continued life of the project as a result. However, it was acknowledged at this point how important a review and evaluation of the project was. This research would provide the materials for completion of an EdD, as well as providing information and recommendations that would hopefully be of use to Schools Outreach themselves as part of their organisation review and bidding process for further funding.

Schools Outreach

Schools Outreach are a registered charity based in Bromsgrove. Their aim is to help schools recruit, train and develop pastoral care workers. In their prospectus they describe their main aim as being:

"To recruit, train, place and support high-calibre, long-term, school-based pastoral care workers, who will offer pupils unconditional care and compassion, complementing good parenting and teaching."

From the same source the aims of the pastoral care workers include:

"To establish friendships with the children and all who care for them"

To encourage the realization of the full potential of the individual child, physical, psychologically, spiritually and socially

To enhance self-worth in the child and everyone involved with the child

To endow with time the child at risk

To engender wisdom, by all means, so promoting a better future for the child, as well as preventing the onset of serious problems (e.g. involvement in crime, drug abuse, poor relationship building)”

Schools Outreach have supported projects across the country throughout all phases of education. Each project is unique as it aims to support the work of the school and fit into a specific context. As such, although some data are available as to the number of children supported, there has been no formal research into the efficacy of the project against the pastoral care workers' aims.

The organisation is steered by a Board of Management and operates as a charity. A number of patrons support the projects and additional funding is attracted through a cycle of funding bids. They operate their own programme of induction and training and there is a Christian ethos underpinning the organisation. In every school the pastoral care worker has a slightly different role due to the differing management structures and ethos. Schools Outreach has a document 'Schools Introductory Pack' which outlines the role of the workers including a job description (Appendix A).

Pastoral care workers are engaged in a variety of interventions designed to address pastoral needs on a group-wide and individual basis. These include peer mediation programmes, anger management courses, organising friendship groups, supervising and co-ordinating after-school and lunchtime clubs.

Impetus for the research

It was recognised, by Schools Outreach, that there had been little formal evaluation of the project and that this was an omission. As a result, I suggested that my research thesis might be based upon the role of the pastoral care worker and the difference it makes in schools. This dual audience does, in itself, raise issues. It has been made clear that the research is part of an EdD. and acknowledgement must be made

that results may not necessarily be favourable. It is the role of the researcher to approach the subject under study as open-mindedly as possible.

Owing to the small-scale nature of the proposed research, complete anonymity has not been possible. Although the two pastoral care workers and their headteachers have been given pseudonyms, contextual clues will not in fact preserve anonymity to those closely linked to Schools Outreach. Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest the need to consider the costs/ benefits ratio and specifically the social benefits of the research against potential personal costs. Pring (2000), also discusses the difficulties imposed on research by the need to balance principles:

"this history of ethics is the history of philosophers giving preference to certain general principles over others...the principles which seem particularly important to educational research but often irreconcilable, are, first the principle which requires respect for the dignity and confidentiality of those who are the 'objects' of research, and, second, the principle which reflects the purpose of research, namely, the pursuit of truth." p. 143

In summary, this research centres around the Schools Outreach provision of pastoral care workers in two West Midland schools. Schools Outreach is a charitable organisation which seeks to support schools through the provision of pastoral support in addition to their teaching and support staff. These workers are identified by and interviewed by personnel from Schools Outreach in conjunction with school management. They then continue to provide training and support and arrange meetings between Schools Outreach and the school. Schools Outreach themselves have identified the need for evaluation of the success of pastoral support as limited information is currently available.

Previous research into Schools Outreach

Schools Outreach are aware of the need to collect evidence and evaluate their projects. The last formal evaluation was conducted in 1995 by Professor Paul Croll and Diana Moses at the University of Reading for the Department for Education and Employment. The aim of the evaluation was:

"To provide a factual account of the day-to-day activities of the project, an analysis of the aims and methods of Schools Outreach, an account of the perspectives on the project of the different parties involved, an assessment of the achievements of the project and of any

difficulties encountered and to develop guidelines for schools considering becoming involved in such projects.” (Croll and Moses, 1995, p. 6)

The report begins with an overview of the Outreach project, its purpose and structure. The actual research focuses upon work in two schools in Slough, a combined first and middle school and two distinct schools – one first and one middle. It was conducted from December 1994 to February 1995 and comprised interviews with project workers, headteachers, teachers, children and parents in the respective schools. In addition there were interviews with LEA officers, the Executive Director of Schools Outreach and a member of the steering committee. One researcher spent a week shadowing one worker. This was not possible, however, in the combined school owing to the absence of the worker. The detailed records kept by the workers were also examined and observations conducted. From the summary report, however, there is little detail supplied as to the nature of the observations and no transcripts or quotations accompany it.

This omission makes it difficult to interpret the degree of validity of some of the claims made. Croll and Moss acknowledge the difficulties involved in trying to provide measurable outcomes for this kind of project:

“However, it is not necessarily straightforward to provide hard evidence of the value and, in particular, the outcomes of a project of this kind. It is inevitable that much of the work of Schools Outreach is not readily quantifiable. This is partly because of its preventative nature but also because some of the work is aimed at alleviating unhappiness and personal stress which may not obviously manifest itself in behavioural terms.” p.23

This thesis acknowledges the difficulties in finding quantifiable measures for this kind of project. Many funding providers require data in order to approve and monitor applications for assistance. In order to provide these figures it can be tempting to use data of little real validity or reliability. Pring (2000), raises concerns about the tendency to reduce teaching and learning to what is easily measurable. Although the survey does provide some data for analysis and consideration, in this thesis I will suggest that this is the least reliable of the sources of information. The limitations of qualitative research are also recognised by Burgess (1985) who highlights some of the difficulties in relation to its status and acceptability.

Croll and Moss draw some conclusions from their evaluation. They refer to the difficulties experienced by pastoral care workers in knowing where the boundaries of their role lie and associated with this the possible confusions related to line management. They emphasise the need for clear job descriptions and the need for the careful selection of outreach workers. Of particular interest, considering the funding difficulties that this project has had, was the need for greater longevity of projects:

"the outreach projects need to be seen as on-going pastoral work rather than fixed-term projects which can solve problems for a school and then be concluded." p.30

In addition to the Croll and Moss evaluation, Schools Outreach have put a variety of measures into operation for monitoring the progress of projects. Termly meetings are held involving a Schools Outreach representative, the headteachers of participating schools and the pastoral care workers. These review the types and progress of current activities and monitor levels of satisfaction. They provide an opportunity for participants to express their concerns and their successes. From my own participation and observations they largely take the form, however, of mutual congratulations and do not provide a critical environment in which to analyse data.

In addition, the pastoral care workers produce reports which take the form of accounts of projects. The data and information provided in these does provide interesting insight but may not be considered rigorous from an analytical and evaluative point of view. Tallies are kept recording the number of children and adults worked with and the issues raised. These data gives no real indication of the level of success which these individuals have experienced. In fact, success would ultimately remove individuals from these records as would other highly successful preventative activities.

Prior to my undertaking the research, steps had been taken towards commissioning a consultant to complete an official evaluation. A proposal had been drawn up (Appendix B) which suggested a methodology including comparison with similar projects, sampling from a cross-section of schools, interviews with senior management, pastoral care workers, analysis of outcome records presented by pastoral care workers, interviewing of outside agencies. One of the intended outcomes of this would be the use of information for 'good PR' to support applications for funding. This highlights the expectation that the results would be favourable.

This chapter has provided an overview of the background to the research by outlining the nature of the Schools Outreach organisation and how it came to be involved with the two schools featuring in this thesis. It has considered the difficulties in researching such a multi-faceted role as that of the pastoral care workers and the demand that there is for supportive evidence of the benefits they bring.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter summary

The following chapter provides an overview of research in the area surrounding this present study. This research combines a number of related themes linked to the provision of pastoral support for children and young people. Each area incorporates a vast body of knowledge. This chapter aims to provide an overview of some of the main themes in relation to pastoral care and the work of internal support and external agencies. As such it includes a section on interventions, the involvement of parents and the wider community, the pastoral care worker role and that of schools counsellor and learning mentor, and the importance of relationships in working with children with emotional and behavioural special needs. Many of these areas of reading cross-reference and are also reflected in the main body of the text. Particular themes can be traced between them. These themes are drawn out in the concluding section of this chapter.

Why do we need to intervene?

What is intervening? According to Maher and Zins (1987) the particular elements that define intervention include the targeting of one student or group of students by a qualified professional or para-professional over a specific period of time with a particular programme. This intervention is designed to complement classroom practice and:

“is expected to increase the possibility of enhancing the school performance of one or more students in areas of cognitive development, affective functioning, academic achievement, socialisation, physical fitness, vocational development.”

p. 2

Three intervention models are noted. These include, one-to-one, group and consultation. Six domains in which the intervention might happen are referred to comprising cognitive development, affective functioning, socialisation, academic achievements, physical fitness and vocational preparation. In this particular research the main focus is upon affective functioning and socialisation although the others may be touched upon.

What do we mean by affective functioning and socialisation? 'Social skills' is often used loosely as a term to describe how we relate to others. In the reporting of this research there is frequent reference to children needing to develop their social skills. Elliott et.al. (1983) identify seven components of social skills. They suggest that they are gained mostly through learning and that they can be specific and discrete, verbal and nonverbal behaviours and entail both effective and appropriate initiations and responses. In addition, they maximise social reinforcement, are interactive by nature but are influenced by the environment. Both deficits and excesses, they claim, can be specified and targeted for intervention. A difficulty with interventions is that they are often designed to prevent a form of behaviour. We might assume that if that behaviour does not subsequently happen then the intervention has been successful. However, it may be that the behaviour would not have happened anyway and we can only conjecture whether it is the intervention that has been successful or some other factor that has resulted in the outcome. Interventions that seek to establish positive behaviours, by contrast, can more easily be evaluated in terms of increased occurrence.

Inclusion and the educational climate

It might be considered that the current educational climate has increasingly emphasised the importance of academic success. Target-setting, increased accountability, performance management and the collection and analysis of data have enabled judgements to be made about schools and their staff. This, in turn, may have had repercussions for inclusion. In some cases it might be felt that as children have been measured by their academic performance increasing pressure on children who find these areas difficult has had implications for behaviour, resulting in the need to intervene. McGuinness (1982) refers to the importance of self-esteem and the effect on individuals of operating with a narrow range of ways to achieve success:

"an institution which patently gives value only to one type of success (academic), implicitly devalues and undermines those children who are unable to achieve in that area. Those children need to fight back- and do so with displays of aggression, disrupting and consequently devaluing the source of the attack." p. 13

Although this comment would describe the way that many children 'act out' when faced with academic difficulties, in addition to this many children revert to other types of behaviour for example, several children targeted in this research demonstrate withdrawn behaviour and

difficulties with friendships. Some of these reactions may also be as a result of low self-esteem which might have been fed by a narrow curriculum.

McGuinness continues by maintaining that this places teachers in a dilemma of the degree to which they continue to pursue academic standards at the possible expense of the self-esteem of other children who are achieving less success. In the current environment, teachers have little choice about pursuing academic standards. Considering that the quote from McGuinness was published in 1982, we must consider how much more emphasis is placed on traditional academic success in schools today and what effect this is having upon children who consider themselves to be failures in these areas.

These dilemmas are not confined to the local organisation. On the macro level, Sharp (2001) makes reference to the difficulties local authorities are having in resolving the tensions between inclusion and exclusion pressures:

"Most local authorities are trying to make inclusion a reality, but we need a more coherent stance from central government that currently adopts a position that you can promote inclusion while planning to retain segregated special schools. Further confusion has been created by the 'have your cake and eat it' line from central government that says permanent exclusions have to fall, but that some pupils (such as persistent bullies) need to be excluded. " p. 77

These tensions are also reflected in the conflicts between the impetus to target support to children in the 'middle' categories of achievement i.e. who with support would receive an 'average' grading and so benefit school targets. For inclusion to be effective support needs to be channelled at children who are operating well below average and with little chance of reaching the desirable threshold.

According to an article in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) (January 23rd 2004 p. 16 'League tables: the enemy of inclusion?) Charles Clarke himself is concerned at the effect that league tables are having upon the inclusion of children with special needs. As a result attention is being turned to the way in which results are presented in the league tables. A consultation later

this year will suggest that value-added tables might be changed to include information about the progress children are making even when they are performing below the expected level.

A similar change in emphasis from traditional academic targets is reported in SecEd (January 29th 2004 'Long arm of the head'). In this article reference is made to an Audit Commission report which is quoted as recommending that heads take more responsibility for keeping students in school and restrict exclusion. The article discusses the difficulties which this places upon heads in terms of balancing academic success within school and inclusion:

*"heads find themselves in the difficult position of having to balance league table success with the inclusion of disruptive pupils; youth crime prevention with school disturbance prevention; and providing for the minority, but not at the expense of the majority."*p.4

Decker (1999) refers to the importance of curriculum and of building self-esteem for learning to take place. It is the importance of relationships which is emphasised and what he calls a 'therapeutic approach'. This approach, he suggests can be built through counselling:

"The special needs pupil is sometimes struggling with relevance at an individual level. If her culture does not value schooling and education such a pupil may be arriving at school with a view that what is on offer is irrelevant. " p. 17

Gale and Densmore (2000) suggest that what we consider to be good education has no fixed value and that it depends upon cultural expectations. We might consider that the academic curriculum has variable worth depending upon what we consider the goals for schooling to be.

Clough (1998) refers to the responsibility that the curriculum must take where children have learning difficulties. He also reflects the concerns stated by McGuiness, that some students are failing as a result of the emphasis upon the cognitive-intellectual:

"We can say that most curricula elevate the cognitive-intellectual domain above the aesthetic-creative, the physical-motor, the social-interpersonal and so on. Such high-status curricula, valuing and rewarding a particular form of thinking, typically provide the basis for defining the student with learning difficulties; or, put simply, the elevation of particular kinds of knowledge produces students who fail."
p. 7

Clough also refers to the dilemma for teachers operating in a policy of inclusion where they must also consider students' entitlement to a standard curriculum. Similarly Decker (1999) recognises the tension that attention to the content of the curriculum can result in:

“Over the past few years there has been an enormous emphasis upon the curriculum – the content of education has been more and more closely examined and defined, while its delivery has been rigorously inspected. There is a danger that, in the current gloss of highly efficient, precisely defined content and systems, the needs of the individual child, particularly the emotional ones, remain totally in the shade.” p. xvi

The increase in the centrally prescribed curriculum may well be exacerbating this. In addition to the prescribed national curriculum an increasing range of optional but recommended guidance is available. The QCA schemes of work increasingly define what should be taught with the implication that children can 'rise' to this. To some degree this appears to be contradicting advice that suggests we start from where the child is.

Gale and Densmore (2000) discuss the difficulties which the functions and purpose of schools can make when aiming for inclusion. It is claimed that a particular groups of students will be disadvantaged by the use of a narrow range of performance indicators:

“Both the strategy of assimilation and the socializing function of schools take the Anglo-Saxon, protestant, male, middle-class culture as the benchmark, assume we live in a meritocracy, and consider students who do not succeed in school as having special needs, with extra problems, and as forming a subset of the majority of students.” p. 117

Not only, therefore, is this group struggling with the difficulties of home circumstances but school could be considered to be set up to help them fail. Not surprisingly in these circumstances, some children will find alternative methods of achieving success. McKeever (1999) discusses the level of disaffection that young people may have towards learning and how in order to retain self-esteem a rejection of the formal curriculum may be necessary:

“It is my contention that a number of our most disaffected young people, including some who may still attend school- have developed strategies for emotional survival that are based on a denial of the very validity of learning. “ p. 5

The tensions between the prescribed curriculum and student need can place strains upon the teacher/ pupil relationship, especially where a student appears to be placing his or her whole class at a disadvantage. Urquhart (2000), emphasises the importance of the relationship of the teacher with the pupil and how this can be difficult to maintain in the current climate:

"Teaching children with emotional difficulties can create significant but rarely publicly acknowledged dilemmas for teachers as they try to fulfil their obligations towards government and national policies while simultaneously trying to respond effectively to individuals with emotional needs: the sad, the confused, the angry and the humiliated children who sometimes appear in our classrooms." p. 343

Either more time might be allowed to enable teachers to develop the emotional needs of the children or additional people, as in the pastoral care worker, be involved in assimilating that part of the role. One issue is if additional people are brought in, will they have the degree of contact required to form the necessary relationships which Urquhart refers to? Some of the issues relating to the role of pastoral work within the school are discussed later in this chapter.

Not only teachers and the LEA struggle to match the demands of inclusion with the demand for entitlement. School management may also find tension between accepting an interagency role and reaching targets. This point is discussed by Roaf (1998):

"Schools are then faced with a dilemma. If they accept their interagency role, they also accept some responsibility for care as well as education. If they do not (and are not selective in their intake) they risk poor exam results and a rise in truancy and exclusions." p. 141

The same concern is raised by Roaf (2002) in discussion of the effect of the market place in education:

"School budgets came to depend on the number of pupils enrolled and schools therefore had to recruit to survive. Schools tended to take the view that truants, disruptive students, students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those unlikely to succeed in public examinations would tarnish their image in the market place." p. 22

On the other hand, some would argue that by increasing the efficacy of the pastoral curriculum we can raise academic standards. The two are not mutually exclusive. Calvert and Henderson (1998) suggest that we need to make more of the links between them and that success in one

does not prohibit success in the other. Harrison (1998) discusses the development of pastoral care in schools and identifies a trend since the 1990s of trying to link the pastoral with the academic more closely. Similarly, Megahy (1998) outlines the benefits for subject teachers where more information is available through the pastoral curriculum about effective learning techniques:

"The potential impact on 'attentiveness' resulting from the sheer volume of information regarding students' learning which can be fed back to subject areas by the pastoral tutor, is considerable. Where teachers improve their understanding of how students learn and the variety of different learning styles, they are better placed to offer a range of learning activities which raise the level of concentration and attention." p. 39

Types of intervention

The types of intervention we recommend and use rely heavily upon where we believe the unwanted behaviour originates from. Chaplain (1998) suggests that we either tend to place the behaviour as resulting from a problem with the person as a dysfunctional individual or resulting from the situation (either an internal or external cause). He refers to the 'self-serving bias' whereby humans tend to attribute success to ourselves and failure to others. Chaplain divides explanations for behaviours into two groups, those that are within school control and those that aren't. Those that are outside school control he describes as 'within-child factors' such as that the child is sick or disturbed or wilful, the effect of dysfunctional families or local communities or that problems come from society itself. He suggests that explanations that are within school control include lack of resources, poor management, poor teaching and an inappropriate curriculum. The explanation we choose, claims Chaplain, is essential as the source to which it is attributed will completely alter the intervention decision.

In Chaplain (2000) three different types of approach are suggested for dealing with behaviour. The first approach includes specifying the behaviour, determining what precedes it, considering what behaviour would be more acceptable and then changing what preceded the behaviour and reinforcing the required behaviour. The second approach he describes is the 'humanistic' approach. This places emphasis upon the individual person and the caring relationships between adult and pupil. The third approach is the cognitive-behavioural approach which involves the construction of mental models which are used to predict what might or might not happen next. Through discussion and the removal of misconceptions using programmes such as skills training,

role play, modelling, behavioural rehearsal and assertiveness training, irrational beliefs about consequences can be tackled:

"By working with the pupil's distorted thinking the teacher or helper can prevent the pupil from driving himself into deeper difficulty. This involves directing the pupil toward more functional thinking and raising their self-efficacy, that is, their belief in their ability to succeed or achieve mastery at a task or tasks." p. 316

The 'driving.. into deeper difficulty' is reflected by my own experience of dealing with children with behavioural difficulties. An apparently trivial incident can become an area for challenge as a conflict develops between teaching staff and the individual. The initial cause of the conflict can become lost in the quest to win the argument. Different aspects of Chaplain's approaches are adopted by many of the support services. For example, anger management, assertiveness training and raising self-esteem are some of the intervention titles on offer. A difficulty, however, can be the transfer of skills learnt to familiar environments. This also appears as an issue in this research for pastoral care workers.

Barton (1998) suggests that we currently emphasise individual syndromes to be at fault and place emphasis upon something being wrong with the person that needs fixing. He then goes on to explain how this perspective then leads to a culture where it is considered necessary to have professional and expert involvement in order to apply a cure, which also then leads to a culture of dependency. This can be seen particularly clearly in some circumstances where external support is sought as the answer rather than identifying issues within the school ethos and context itself. Sharp (2001) makes a similar point by highlighting the need to adapt environments rather than always looking for the solution being in the child:

"If we adapt the environment to the child and stop pretending that all children can fit the environment, especially when that environment is a narrowly constrained 'one size fits all' curriculum. The successful school of the future is one where flexibility, high expectations, sophisticated pluralism, and tolerance are all in evidence in abundance." p. 57

This may be the case, but it will depend, in turn, upon the effect that political aspirations and targets have upon the school environment. We might consider that it is no longer possible to adapt the environment to the child due to the tight constraints that schools are now working within and the external pressures to conform and perform.

Although where we identify the difficulties may lead to the type of intervention, what we have on offer can also limit the approach taken, irrespective of where the blame might be placed.

Therefore, an intervention such as pastoral care work may be applied at differing levels and for different reasons even where it is considered that the school environment and classteacher approach is significantly to blame. Equally, where there may be concerns about the individual's psychological ability to cope, a change to the environment and amendments to the classroom may still be recommended to deal with this. The resources available to the school must be used initially irrespective to some extent of where the problem is considered to lie.

Where should interventions take place? Curtis et al. (1987) refer to pre-referral intervention whereby the teacher receives assistance in the classroom prior to a formal referral being made:

"Prereferral intervention is characterised by the provision of consultative assistance to the teacher in an attempt to intervene effectively in the regular classroom environment where the problems of students are first noticed." p. 7

Curtis et al. acknowledges that this approach assumes that the classroom environment is one factor which affects the behaviour of students rather than also seeking internal student or home factors for this. We might argue that there are times when an intervention based in the classroom would be inappropriate and when it is more suitable to address the issue through small group work or on a one-to-one basis. Discussed later are the issues related to transfer of skills learnt outside the classroom to an environment shared with peers and the classroom context. Curtis et al. also emphasises the importance of the wider context for interventions to have effect. Ignoring the wider context can lead to an unsuccessful intervention:

"Too often, however, this larger context is ignored or its importance minimized by harried practitioners facing overwhelming demands for direct services, such as teaching, counselling, or assessment of individual students. As a result, many potentially effective programs are unsuccessful because they did not deal with relevant or organizational considerations." p. 17

This can be one of the dangers where external agencies are drawn into a school to deal with a student. The expectation amongst staff can be that the programmes they will administer and the counselling techniques they will use can operate independently and will 'change' the behaviour of

the student. Other potential barriers discussed by Curtis et al. include the previous experience of teachers and the additional time and effort that is expected from teachers.

Interventions and the arts

Green (1999) discusses the importance of the arts, creativity and imagination in enabling children to come to terms with their feelings and events they may have experienced in the context of the secondary school:

"In every secondary school there are children who are disruptive and perform poorly in most areas, yet will take more interest in the creative areas of the curriculum: Art, Drama, Dance, English. I would suggest that they intuitively know they get something they need from such work." p. 29

He advocates an approach using talking and drawing, developing relationships with children and allowing them to express themselves. Storytelling can also help build a language of emotions. Careful preparation and building the environment conducive to this is important. A climate of trust and a language of emotion which children can use to express themselves is necessary. In Greenwood's chapter (1999) she considers the value of story writing as a medium for self-expression. She describes the 'containment effect' that stories can have where individuals within a family are not providing the secure relationships necessary:

"In the context of the story the difficult anxieties can become bearable, so they don't need to remain locked away or worried about so much, leaving the child freer to learn." p. 66

She endorses the importance of familiarising children with fairy tales, not only to help them identify with characters and share difficult emotions but also to allow them to communicate some of their anxieties through story writing. It is important, she concludes, that those interpreting the stories are unconditionally accepting of them. This, in itself would require training and a degree of appreciation of the effect which some stories might have on individual children in the classroom. The importance of creativity and imagination is also stressed by Musgrave (1999). She argues that there are two types of influence – the left and right brain influence with two types of thinking with logic on one side and creativity on the other. We need both in order to problem-solve effectively:

"using creativity and imagination can unlock doors and open up new paths. A guided mediation using imagery, or a role-play using characters from a make-

believe situation or a fairy story, can open blocked channels and facilitate identification with and empathy for people in different situations and with differing needs." pp. 198 – 199

Greenwood (1999) describes the use of the arts as part of educational therapy:

"So educational therapy gives children an opportunity to grow into experiencing a relationship of love and trust which survives the bad times and which does not, after all, fulfil their worst fears. As well as the therapeutic relationship, educational therapy uses play, reading, writing, stories and the expressive arts, both as vehicles to help in understanding and as tools to help in resolving children's conflicts." p. 230

"In educational therapy, indirect communication is the preferred method. That is, metaphor is used rather than direct questions. This makes it easier for children who can't remember, can't articulate, or can't face talking about their preoccupation to communicate them through stories and characters, and have a feeling that such difficulties are understandable." p. 230

This therapy takes time and can be used with both individuals and groups. Once more, the importance of carefully selecting and 'managing' the composition of the group is reinforced.

In Kinder et al. (1999) the research they report suggests that the physical, collaborative and creative are the most popular activities amongst young people aged 11 – 14 at risk of disaffection, whereas, the two core subjects of maths and science were greatly disliked. They also examined the effect of learning styles and concluded that non-attenders were much more enthusiastic about the creative and that boredom and repetition led to further disaffection. The authors suggest that differences in acceptance of the purpose of school and its core aims is at the centre of much disaffection:

"the discourse suggested that at the heart of many disaffected youngsters' school experience was a lack of engagement and it was one which was construed as preferring only monotony and isolation. For this reason, perhaps the strongest message sent out by the youngsters was their dislike and ultimate rejection of the very purpose of school." p. 21

The authors emphasise the importance of the 'alternative curriculum' enabling flexibility and a sense of purpose through a mixture of practical and creative activities. They report that this approach to a custom-built curriculum was less evident than might be expected. In the Pupil

Referral Units an alternative curriculum is provided and the impetus for this is not necessarily just the delivery of the national curriculum. They suggest that the advantage of the PRUs is that they do provide a curriculum that is more acceptable and in a more relaxed atmosphere where they felt they could talk to teachers and were respected. The authors believe that the alternative curriculum in mainstream is an untapped resource. In fact, disaffected pupils might find themselves removed from the very activities that would help them engage. Where pupils were positive about mainstream experiences it often related to special needs groups where there was a more relaxed atmosphere and relationship with teachers:

"They emphasised how they enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and the relationship which they had built with the teachers there, compared with others in the school. It was these teachers whom they would go to for help with other problems and, in this way, this form of provision may also have given pupils access to a means of addressing their emotional needs." pp. 52 – 53

Interestingly this level of recognition of special needs groups was not necessarily reflected in the responses of the teachers themselves. In some cases the perceived benefit to teachers might be the removal of the child from class for a period of time. This can have an alternative benefit to other children in the class but may not help the reintegration of the targeted child long term. Much will depend upon the level of liaison experienced between the support group and the mainstream class and teacher.

The Involvement of parents

Knoff (1987), refers to the importance of the wider context as the 'ecological/ systems perspective'. This might include students' peers, teachers, support staff and administrators, the home and community. Similarly in the DfES publication 'Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings' (2001) the importance of taking a whole school approach is stressed as is the need to involve parents. This is not always promoted in the literature describing the support available in schools. It might be considered as a relatively new perspective that the development of support at home is as relevant, if not more so, as targeted intervention in schools. Increasingly the role of parents alongside intervention strategies is being emphasised. A similar emphasise can be identified in the Government's current green paper 'Every Child Matters' (2003) with a commitment to funding support for parents. They stress the importance of setting up effective engagement with parents:

"especially those parents who are particularly hard to reach and who may be experiencing mental health problems themselves." p. 8

They also acknowledge the influence which parents have:

"Research suggests that parenting appears to be the most important factor associated with educational attainment at age 10." p. 18

A whole chapter of the green paper is dedicated to 'Supporting Parents and Carers' and includes the pledge to provide 'targeted and specialist support to parents of children requiring additional support'. In addition the Government proposes to establish a £25 million Parenting Fund and compulsory action where parents do not comply. Strategies for working with parents include home visiting and parent drop-ins, parenting classes, the teaching of interpersonal problem-solving skills to young children and compensatory nurturing experiences for vulnerable children. This last reference seems to indicate the use of nurture rooms in schools. The nurture room movement has recently become popular once more since its original conception in the 1960s. Based upon the principal that some children have missed out on the necessary early learning experiences, Marion Bennathan and Marjorie Boxall sought methods of addressing this omission in children's lives. They advocated the use of a special area as a 'nurture room' with its own teacher and assistants for groups of about 10 children. In this environment individual needs were to be met through replicating some early learning experiences in a comfortable and reassuring setting. Many schools in the county have taken up the need for this compensatory nurturing not only in the early years but through primary and even secondary classes.

The green paper also recognises the difficulties which can be encountered when trying to work with parents including denial that a problem exists or lack of knowledge of where help may be found. In some cases, it is suggested that families are conscious of a stigma that exists and prefer to avoid approaching professionals. In addition, parents can feel intimidated by the 'professional'. This difficulty is highlighted by Dyson and Robson (1999):

"The literature demonstrates an underlying power imbalance between education professionals and parents. Partnership takes place very much on terms dictated by the former, with the consequent marginalisation of the latter. The issue may be particularly important where parents belong to social groups (such as ethnic minority groups, for instance) that already experiences marginalisation." p. 15

However, where an effective relationship can be developed then there is a greater likelihood of problems being surmounted:

"Many children with behavioural or emotional problems, experience problems at home as well as at school. Evidence is demonstrating that if parents can also be supported to better manage their children's behaviour, alongside work being carried out with the child at school – there is a much greater likelihood of success in reducing the child's problems, and in supporting their academic and emotional development." pp. 17 – 18

One of the issues remains, however, how this support is delivered and which members of staff or departments are responsible for it. The green paper suggests that this responsibility will lie with different professionals depending upon the specific need identified and from professionals' discussions. However, if the resources to accommodate this are not provided it is unlikely that practice will change significantly.

Kinder et al. (1999) emphasise the importance that the disaffected children in their survey gave their parents. The authors suggest that the sample interviewed held parents in higher regard than teachers and gave them greater authority. This level of importance is not always reflected amongst school staff. Hughes et al. (1994) discuss the roles that parents are considered to have in schools by school staff. They describe them as being consumers, partners and problems. The following quotation highlights the issue concerning schools' real views of engagement with parents and its value:

"There has been a long tradition within the British education system that parents – or at least, particular groups of parents – are to be seen primarily as problems. They are considered to possess certain attitudes, or bring up their children in certain ways, which make it difficult, if not impossible, for schools to do their job properly. As a consequence, teachers may come to feel that they are engaged in an uphill struggle against the adverse effects of the home environment." p. 2

Conversations can still be heard in schools suggesting that parents are not considered to be partners as such and would appear to be viewed as antagonistic to the aims of the school rather than supportive. Although traditional practices of totally excluding parents can no longer be upheld as legislation has ensured at least a minimum level of involvement, there can still be token acceptance that parents actually have something of value to offer. In this research there

was found to be vast differences in the extent to which parents were automatically involved in the pastoral care workers' interventions.

It was the Plowden Report (1967) 'Children and their Primary Schools: A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education' (England), HMSO that concluded from its research that parental attitudes were one of the main features resulting in variations in school achievement. As a result of this a five point plan was proposed that included the welcome to the school; regular meetings between parents and teachers; open days for parents to see their children's work; information about their child's progress and general school activities and annual written reports. More recently, parents have increasingly come to be seen as consumers. The idea was intrinsic to the 1988 Education Act. In 1991 the 'Parents Charter' was published of which the major part was 'the right to know'. Five key documents were drawn upon to reflect this: the annual written report, reports on schools by independent inspectors, publicly available league tables, the publication of a prospectus or brochure about individual schools and an annual report from each school's governor. Parents were also allowed to appeal for admission to the school of their choice.

How do parents see this involvement and current legislation? In Hughes et al. (1994) research was conducted into the attitudes of parents to the new reforms over a period of three years. Part of their research included asking parents about how they judge their child's school. The results suggested that of most importance to the parents asked, was the child's happiness at school and the degree to which the school seemed to care about them as individuals:

"In particular, what the parents seem to be emphasizing is the importance of continuity and caring: that there should be links with their children's friends, family and community, and that the school should be a welcoming place where their children are valued." p. 84

They suggest that the perspective of parents may be very different from that of the school and the professionalism working within and alongside them. The research was also interesting in that it demonstrated a difference between parents' opinions of their own child's school and those of others:

"On the subject of their child's school, they could rely on direct observation and experience: they could see their children were happy and making progress, and that the teachers were working hard to maintain standards. But when asked about standards in general they were forced to rely on what they had learnt from the media." p. 123

In addition, many parents appeared to have little knowledge of what was being taught in schools although they were keen to find out. The study also raised questions about the value of the assessment techniques being used and the publication of national tests results. Its conclusions were:

"In summary, our research suggests that many of the assumptions about parents which underlie the current reforms do not match closely with the real views, experiences and behaviour of parents most directly involved." p. 207

Almost ten years on from this report it would be very interesting to discover how much parents' views have changed since.

Not only is the educational context with which parents are faced changing. So are the trends in family life. Bastiani and Wolfendale (1996) suggest that family structure is changing with more families experiencing hardship and associated difficulties. These difficulties are evident in schools and comprise some of the issues which pastoral care workers are asked to address. There are important issues related to the difficulties in accessing the 'hard-to-reach' parents and the great sensitivity needed from any outreach worker:

"Family-school relations, by definition, touch upon the boundaries where professional confidence and parental responsibilities meet, often exposing raw nerves on both sides. Unsurprisingly, home-school liaison calls for enormous sensitivity, special skills and experience." p. 2

Greenwood (1999) emphasises the importance of considering the home environment when implementing any strategies in school. Therapy in school, she suggests, can be of limited value if this is not taken into consideration:

"It can feel mean to deny such a needy child the opportunity of therapy, but the priority for the child must be to develop safe and secure enough external environments both at home and at school. Certainly the two need to go along hand in hand, through liaison with external agencies perhaps..." p. 242

This research suggests that there is still much to be done in relation to ensuring that parents are properly consulted, notified and involved in the therapeutic activities that their children are being involved with in school. The level of sensitivity and expertise described by Greenwood suggests an external professional. This research discusses the balance between the external's professional knowledge and the relationship which often the in-house teacher or support staff can have developed.

How do we decide with whom to intervene?

McGuiness (1982) identifies a range of tests which can be administered to help decide who might require specific help. He emphasises that these are only part of a repertoire enabling schools' staff to identify children in need. The issue is considered in the main body of this research as very little use of tests is made during the referral process for the pastoral care workers.

There can be a tendency for some types of behaviour and emotional need to be referred more immediately than others. From my own experience it would appear that children exhibiting behaviour disorders tend to be referred for help at an earlier stage than those with emotional difficulties but exhibiting less obvious, less-demanding behaviour. This can have a noticeable effect upon the work of support staff in school who may find that they are asked to work with groups of students who could potentially cause difficulties with one another and do not necessarily form the best environment for preventative programmes. It is more likely that external services will use tests to identify and measure the level of need. In most cases, schools tend to use anecdotal information to advise referrals. These may be backed by the school's own series of academic measures and SATs results. In my own experience, psychometric testing, however, tends to be left to the educational psychologist or learning and behaviour support services.

In some cases the process of testing may take up the bulk of the external services' work leaving little time for actual intervention. This can be particularly evident in the statementing and referral service and can lead to monopolising of time for assessment purposes. The results of these tests may provide initial guidance on intervention programmes but does not always help with the implementation or lead to follow-up programme adjustment.

Social skills interventions

As mentioned, many interventions are based upon the development of 'social skills'. Elliott (1983) describes different approaches to social skills interventions. They include manipulation of antecedents so that the social environment is structured in order that positive social exchanges are likely; the manipulation of consequences so that there are reinforcement contingencies both positive and negative; contingent social reinforcement, both individual and as a group and differential reinforcement so that all behaviour other than the target behaviour is reinforced. In addition, it is suggested that modelling and coaching can be used as strategies. Modelling can include live modelling where the child observes the behaviour in the natural state and symbolic modelling e.g. by using video or film. Coaching involves three steps with the child being presented with the rules, the targeted skills being rehearsed behaviourally whilst the coach provides specific feedback during the rehearsal.

Many of the intervention strategies we might operate involve a behaviourist approach with the emphasis upon the use of rewards and sanctions. Deci (1996) warns against relying upon this as a method as reliance upon external motivators can detract from natural internal motivation. He places against this the need for autonomy and argues that children need to understand what is happening and enable them to have a choice so putting them in control of the situation:

"Autonomy, in contrast is about acting volitionally, with a sense of choice, flexibility, and personal freedom. It is about feeling a true willingness to behave responsibly, in accordance with your interests and values. The converse of being autonomous is being controlled. Which means that you are pressured to behave, think or feel some particular way." pp. 134 – 135

In some cases, a behaviourist approach might be used during initial interventions with a child then to be followed by a programme designed to encourage the child to take responsibility themselves. Greenwood (1999) also refers to the dangers of relying on a behaviourist approach with some deeply disturbed children. They can unconsciously repeat problems and be unable to benefit from rewards. Those that do follow a behaviourist approach may not disagree with the need for autonomy and for the intrinsic motivation to behave responsibly. The difficulty is where children have not reached this state, for whatever reason. Although the ultimate goal might be autonomy we might argue that a period of behaviourally managed control is needed in order to

rescue the child from a crisis and enable them to begin to reflect more and evaluate their behaviour.

Deci (1996) concedes that it is pressure to achieve against targets and extrinsic goals that is largely placing pressure on teachers to make their students conform in an increasing context of control:

"Parents, politicians, and school administrators all want students to be creative problem-solvers and to learn materials at a deep, conceptual level. But in their eagerness to achieve these ends, they pressure teachers to produce. The paradox is that the more they do that, the more controlling the teacher becomes, which, as we have seen so many times, undermines intrinsic motivation, creativity and conceptual understanding." p. 158

Many teachers would agree that there is a current culture of pressure and emphasis upon attainment in a small number of subjects. This would appear to influence both the curriculum content and the manner of teaching. For some it seems that there is less opportunity and time to allow children to choose and reflect upon what they do. Whether this has a detrimental effect upon their intrinsic motivation as exam results become increasingly the reason for learning, is a matter for discussion.

In spite of this, teachers are finding time to include PHSE and C (Personal, Health and Social Education and Citizenship) activities. Mosley (1996) emphasises the benefits of circle time which addresses social skills development within the context of the classroom environment. The importance and influence of peers in the circle time model is included later in this chapter. Mosley describes the acquisition of social skills as a teaching and learning opportunity in the same way as the teaching of literacy and numeracy has a planned approach to delivery. By breaking down the skills to be learnt into components, the teacher can help the child to acquire the necessary skills to be able to socialise with peers.

Recently the concept of 'emotional intelligence' has found favour. The concept is credited to Saolvey and Mayer (1990) in Frederickson and Graham (1999). According to them, emotional intelligence includes a degree of self-awareness, the ability to manage emotions, self-motivation,

empathy and relationship skills. According to Goleman (1995) emotional intelligence includes knowing and managing one's emotions, motivating oneself, recognising emotions in others and handling relationships.

Musgrave (1999) also refers to the importance of emotional development. She suggests an approach called 'conflict resolution' through the use of peer mediation which might tackle some of the emotional needs referred to. She expresses her concerns about a climate that might be perceived as ignoring children's need for emotional development:

"Emphasis on academic achievement in schools in recent years has relegated 'emotional literacy' to the sidelines of the curriculum. Not much time is given to developing an awareness of feelings and the ability to be in control of them, and to developing empathy towards others. This is producing lopsided development in young people at a time when the social and emotional skills of resilience, cooperation, creativity and adaptability are being more valued and needed in the world of work." p. 196

The issue of curriculum range and appropriateness has already been touched upon. The quotation above perhaps suggests that greater attention to emotional need has been replaced by a more utilitarian approach. It might be argued, however, that academic achievement as a priority in schools is nothing new. Although perhaps there have been times when schools and educationalists have been able to indulge more in the wider perspective of social skills development, schools historically have largely been involved in the delivery of a curriculum to suite political climates. The current climate might just be viewed as an extension and development, not as a complete change of culture.

Musgrave proposes a workshop approach based upon the principle of developing self-esteem and mutual respect and encouraging children to develop sufficient trust to risk change. She describes encouraging a 'no-blame' climate where we look at our own behaviour first. This also means that the basic needs of the child must be met first if more complex developments are to take place:

"People who have confidence that their basic needs will be met can tolerate actions of others which might threaten this temporarily, but those who over long periods of time do not get their psychological needs met can be easily threatened

by the actions of others, which take away what little they have. They are programmed by past experience to make certain reflex actions in a conflict, even though they know that these responses have not been helpful in the past.” p. 197

The quotation above also has links with the previous discussion on developing a suitable curriculum and the importance of self-esteem. The key elements of Musgrave's workshop approach include building trust, reflecting on previous experiences using role-play, drama and visualisations. They then continue by expressing feelings using a no-blame approach – being able to express their feelings and listen to those of others. Small group exercises involving cooperation are then necessary, working together on problems. Blaming language is not accepted and the importance of listening is encouraged. Priorities include valuing difference and evaluating their own learning. Role-play, seeing everything from someone else's point of view, is important. Once more, Musgrave describes how the whole-school approach is required to extend the workshop approach:

“Conflict resolution workshops and peer mediation schemes are most effective when they are part of a whole school approach to developing open communication and healthy relationships.” p. 205

Frederickson and Graham (1999) refer to the importance of using different approaches “in order to capitalise on the particular effects produced by each.” Their book emphasises the importance of effective assessment in order to identify strategies to use. Three of those strategies include firstly, contingent reinforcement shaping whereby pupils are encouraged to play close to their peers then participate in a cooperative situation and finally engage in cooperative play. Their second approach is through modelling where pupils are provided with a step by step demonstration. Finally, they propose coaching which they distinguish from modelling:

“Whereas in modelling you show the pupil what is required, in coaching you tell them in a step-by-step manner what to do.” p. 9

Another approach described in their book is that of the SPS (Social Problem-Solving) programme. This originates with Thacker (1982) who describes three stages in the form of instructions, where the problem-solving sequence is discussed followed by modelling of the steps and culminating in role-play through which other alternatives can be explored. Problem-solving and role-play feature strongly as part of many intervention strategies.

Therapeutic group work is discussed by Geddes and Green (1999) and Ingall and Lush (1999). Geddes and Green refer to projects based in schools to help children deal with the painful experiences they have encountered. They emphasise the importance of setting up clear procedures and having a clear understanding of school expectations as well as following their own programme. They emphasise the importance of the programme being picked up and extended by school staff back in the classroom. The transferral of learnt skills can be seen to be an essential component of any intervention strategy. McGuinness (1982) refers to the difficulties which counsellors may find in helping their clients to apply their new knowledge and perspectives to the classroom. This can be particularly difficult when peers have not been part of the process:

"A further problem is that the social aspect of behaviour is often very difficult to control. The peer group may continue to reinforce disruptive behaviour, or another teacher may fail to consistently remove pay-off for the bad behaviour." p. 75

He suggests that it is important to involve the peer group in some kind of 'contract' in order to support the attempted change in behaviour. Pellegrin and Ubrain (1985) also refer to the difficulties encountered by children when their peers' reactions towards them might be slow to change.

The importance of the strategy being part of the whole school context is also identified by Ingall and Lush (1999). In order to ensure this happens they refer to teachers being involved in group therapy as part of a Foundation Course. Although the importance of developing relationships is discussed, equally they emphasise the need to keep an element of distance if the child is not to become too dependent. The issues related to developing relationships are discussed later in this chapter. The group they describe met once weekly for 45 minutes and were of differing sizes but generally with three to four children. The process of induction was closely managed and the group were considered to be a tightly knit organism with a beginning, middle and an end. It was seen to provide a safe place with a mixture of clientele in terms of individuals having a tendency to act out or be withdrawn. Ingall and Lush distinguish carefully between the middle period of group development and the ending for the mature group. The authors discuss the fact that it is not only the strategies which are being used in school that are important but changes that are happening at home. However, school is considered the best place for intervention strategies as there is greater likelihood of the clients participating. Appointments made for interventions and

counselling outside of school can result in cancellations and spasmodic attendance. My own experience suggests that those families most in need of support may find it difficult to organise themselves into making and attending appointments.

Urquhart (2000) refers to the process of 'scaffolding' through which adults help young learners:

"Like real scaffolding the tutor gradually removes structures and support as the inexperienced learner's independent capacity develops." p. 64

The task is structured into small steps whereby the teacher and learner work together to achieve success with the task being adapted according to the learner's needs at each stage. Scaffolding is used particularly in the home context as the teacher and learner work together closely adapting the programme in small steps. This can be lost in schools if the steps are predetermined too much and do not allow for flexible adaptation:

"What will have been lost is the collaborative, participatory aspect of learning that we have seen is so influential in the home context, and also the positive drive, within the skilled tutor's use of scaffolding approaches, towards the ever-increasing autonomy of the learner." p. 69

Although elements of this approach might be adopted by the pastoral care workers, the number of children they work with may prevent them from applying it rigorously. Whether the majority of pastoral care workers would have the prerequisite skills would also need to be questioned.

In the present research both Val and Jamal, the pastoral care workers, spent time working with children in groups as well as developing their skills through one-to-one practice. The importance of the peer group and building relationships with those around them in order for children to learn is emphasised by Kutnick and Manson (2000). In the quote below they would seem to support the notion that individual tuition provides limited learning opportunities unless it is reinforced by the opportunity for children to practise their skills and learning through relationships with peers. Kutnick and Manson argue that the opportunity to explore this side to learning may be limited within class and that teachers may not recognise how important it is or be in a position to deliver it:

" The nurturing of social and relational skills (or competencies) is not usually associated with the role of the teacher, especially in Primary schools where the teacher's role is more strongly related to curriculum instruction." p. 88

This is a particular issue for schools with the increase of emphasis upon inclusion and the launch of the green paper 'Every Child Matters'. Irrespective of what the teacher's role has been previously and how they perceive it, increasing emphasis seems to be being placed upon pastoral care. Although the quotation identifies teachers at Primary schools, it could be argued that they are in a stronger position to administer pastoral care than colleagues in secondary schools. As children meet a large number of different specialist teachers, contact with the form tutor may be limited to snatches of time between or before lessons. Ironically, as mentioned before, the emphasis upon the literacy and numeracy strategy has perhaps limited teacher autonomy and opportunity for social skills development. This issue is discussed earlier in this chapter.

Kutnick and Manson (2000) refer to the importance of playtimes as a time when children can develop these skills. In practice, playtime opportunities have been reduced rather than enhanced. In many schools, Key Stage 2 children no longer have an afternoon playtime and for some, particularly secondary schools, there is an increase in the amount of teaching time in the mornings, cutting lunch time and leaving it as late in the day as possible. All these alterations have the effect of maximising teaching and learning time and reducing playtime which may be seen as an obstacle to social skills development.

Developing relationships with children

The importance of relationships is crucial. Urquhart (2000) emphasises their importance for carers in order for children to be able to explore their environment. In some cases children may not have established this in their home environment and may seek the same kind of security from an adult at school. There are examples from this research of children who have developed very strong attachments to the pastoral care workers. In some cases the degree of attachment may cause concern as moving into secondary school becomes imminent. Urquhart refers to the relationships children can form with teachers, but this applies to pastoral care workers too:

"Teachers do spend a great deal of time with children and usually form strong, positive relationships with them that reflect some of the characteristics of secure attachments. The warmth of that trusting relationship with a teacher is at the heart of children's learning and emotional development. We can help children with emotional difficulties, therefore, by getting to know them well enough to empathise with how they are feeling in the classroom and school contexts." p. 337

She also discusses how this has an effect upon the teachers too in terms of their ability to cope with the demands that children can make and how these very demands can trigger teachers' own vulnerable feelings. The issue of the emotional demands which the role of pastoral care worker places on the workers themselves is raised during this research.

Hall (1998) refers to the need for the pastoral tutor to adopt a self-care approach in order to be able to guide pupils to do the same. She claims that pastoral leaders may not take care of themselves sufficiently and that this will have a knock-on effect in terms of their work with clients. Counsellors and pastoral workers will also need to balance the risk of clients becoming over dependent upon them with that of the need to build relationships. McGuiness (1982) refers to the importance of finding this balance through enabling children to make choices and develop decision-making abilities:

"Whether counselling is simply supportive or genuinely growth enhancing, it is important that the pupil should not become dependent... one of the major aims of counselling is that it should help children take full responsibility for themselves: it should prepare them to take decisions." p. 81

Herbert (1998) refers to the difficulties of different agencies working together to support children and how their inherent differences can become impediments to effective support being offered. Herbert suggests that it is enabling and independence that professionals should be seeking:

"Professionals should also recognise that whilst they are there to offer support, their presence may also reinforce 'differences'. It is important that through intervention and support, families are enabled and empowered to make their own decisions and do not become increasingly dependent upon professionals." p. 107

Herbert also refers to the difficulties if a 'velcro' relationship is formed between the support assistant and client. In particular, she suggests this can then interfere with peer group interaction.

In order to work towards a truly inclusive school, Gale and Densmore (2000) suggest that there are three characteristics of the democratic classroom. These consist of active trust, mutuality and negotiated authority. They emphasise that a supportive relationship includes the acknowledgement of cultural experiences and home life:

"Through these kinds of supportive relations with their teachers, students can be encouraged to develop their interests and abilities. In short, students need to feel that their own culture is respected in school and they need to be encouraged and assisted to draw on these cultural experiences in order to succeed academically. For this to occur, teachers must learn to connect the discourses of classrooms and schools to those of their students' home and communities." p. 147

Kinder (1999) emphasises the importance of the relationship which disaffected children had made with particular individuals:

"For pupils across the whole range of disaffection key relationships with adults in the educational environment were highlighted as an important aspect in helping them with their problem." p. 56

This was particularly evident as the NFER research conducted and reported in this quote, conducted interviews in the Pupil Referral Unit. Here it appeared that staff placed a high investment in developing relationships. The research had focussed upon young people aged 11 – 14 at risk of disaffection and underachievement in the three authorities of Knowsley, Liverpool and Sefton and Merseyside TEC.

Background to interventions used by pastoral care workers

Circle time

Mosley (1999) refers to the 'whole class' aspect of circle time. Circle time is based upon empowerment and building relationships with class members. It emphasises the importance of the children being positive with one another and supportive and finding solutions to one another's problems. It is a whole-school approach which should include all school staff as well as dinner time staff:

"The structures used within the Circle Time Model encourage children to think about their own responses and their interpersonal relationships and to feel more confident about their own role in being able to change these situations. Moreover, as the group becomes more cohesive and the group's identity becomes stronger,

this in itself provides a strong support system and an important sense of belonging." p. 177

The different aspects of circle time are intended to form a holistic approach to behaviour management:

"Circle time offers the ideal forum for promoting and enhancing the skills necessary for forming positive relationships. Through circle time, children are able to explore the qualities which make for friendship, and think about their own emotional needs in relationships, like trust, caring, sharing, co-operation, being included, and being listened and talked to." p. 180

The use of circle time has the advantage that it generally takes place within the classroom environment and therefore involves peers at an early stage. Interestingly, the circle times observed in this research took place out of this usual environment and in the 'rainbow room' which is a nurture group within one of the schools. In addition, as Val (PCW) leads the circle time she is also not part of the usual environment and has not generally been in a position to build relationships with the group in a way that might be considered essential to the effective circle time model.

The circle time model begins with the self-esteem of the teacher administering it. In 'Quality Circle Time' (1996) Jenny Mosley emphasises the importance of the teacher as role model and setting the ethos of the classroom. Circle time is considered to be an opportunity for children and teacher to set ground rules for how the class operates for the rest of the week and for dealing with difficulties that individuals may have encountered. This level of discussion and involvement requires a degree of trust. It relies upon the classroom ethos, use of incentives, clear sanctions, peer praise and a generally positive approach to behaviour management. Some of these might be difficult for the 'visitor' to the classroom to administer.

Mosley (1996) dedicates a chapter to dealing with the 'Children beyond' in which the importance of enlisting the support of the rest of the class is emphasised:

"The way forward for everyone is to involve the class in the whole process, ensuring that they benefit from any progress the child may make." p. 55

Circle time is advocated as a support system:

"The secret of success lies in enlisting the support of other children and reinforcing their kindness by ensuring that they also receive an incentive which allows them to have some fun together as a class group." p. 57

We might consider that this is far removed from the intrinsic motivation recommended by Deci (1996) and reflects a behaviourist approach as warned against by Greenwood (1999). Mosley describes how the circle time model is based upon a symbolic interactionist theory as the behaviour of the individual depends upon the social dynamic which can only be interpreted within 'the whole'. During reference to the theoretical basis to circle time, Mosley underlines the importance of the involvement of the class group:

"Circle-time strategies are designed to help individuals understand their behaviour and the response of other people towards it. They offer a model of helping that acknowledges that as the behaviour of an individual child is embedded in the social interactions of her class group, it needs to be the class group that works with her to help her become aware of the range of other responses she could choose from." p. 72

This emphasis upon peers and the classroom environment is supported by Kutnick and Manson (2000) as described earlier in this chapter.

Edward DeBono's 6 Thinking Hats

Edward DeBono's 6 thinking hats approach is based upon the use of six metaphorical hats which the thinker can put on or take off to indicate the type of thinking being used. It enables children and their teachers to discuss different types of thinking through giving material substance to the processes we use. The white hat covers facts, figures, information, needs and gaps; the red hat covers intuition, feelings and emotions; the black hat is the hat of judgement and caution; the yellow represents logical, positive thinking and the green hat is that of creativity. Blue hat thinking is the overview or process control hat. It looks at the 'thinking' about the subject and is concerned with meta-cognition. The Schools Outreach organisation promote the use of the thinking hats as a strategy for children to help them evaluate themselves and their behaviour and address difficulties that they may have. Examples of different activities are provided which pastoral care workers can use with individuals or groups of children.

Counselling

Maher (1987) defines school-based counselling as:

"the direct face-to-face provision of information, advice or guidance by a counsellor to an individual student or group of students." p. 101

Maher goes on to describe the distinguishing features of this counselling:

"School-based counselling provides an opportunity to counsel students in a natural setting.

It is provided over a finite period of time and within circumscribed time parameters.

It is targeted to a clearly defined set of school-related goals.

It can be provided by a range of different school personnel.

It has limited confidentiality.

It involves assisting some involuntary clients." p. 101

These features include both positive and negative aspects of counselling. Maher suggests that counsellors can be students, school personnel or professional counsellors based within school. A main feature of this research is the discussion relating to whether in house provision and external specialist support is of most use in the school context. It is interesting that Maher includes the counselling of involuntary clients in his list. Not all counsellors might subscribe to this view of the reluctant participant being included in their programme.

A difficulty for the counsellor in school can be protecting the interests of the client when the school may also consider itself to be a client. Something similar can be recognised in the role difficulties of the pastoral care worker. Maintaining client priorities for the PCW when the school and the Outreach organisation have their own priorities and expectations can be difficult. Maher finds the issue of the involuntary client of particular concern to the professional counsellor:

"Practitioners of school-based counselling are often asked to assist at least some involuntary clients. In particular, the counsellor may find it difficult to collaborate with the student in defining the student's priority concerns, and to involve the counselee in setting his or her own goals for the counselling intervention." p. 102

Sandoval (1983) identifies two different types of counselling. He distinguishes between ordinary counselling and crisis counselling. Crisis counselling has a main aim of getting the pupil back on track when a crisis has occurred. It tends to be more directive than other forms and would imply the involvement of a professional counsellor. In such crisis situations, Sandoval suggests that a general model can be applied. This includes immediate intervention and listening to the facts of the situation. This is followed by reflecting the individual's feelings and helping the child to accept that the situation has occurred. Allocating blame should be discouraged and no false reassurance should be given. Problem-solving might follow whilst also re-establishing a social support network. Finally, the self-reliance and self-concept of the client may need to be focused on for the future.

There can be difficulties in terms of referral and who the client is referred by and who the school considers that the counsellor is responsible to. McGuinness (1982) refers to some concerns that teachers might have relating to the counsellor role and how that might conflict with the teacher role. He suggests that people may feel it is too ambivalent and may cause the loss of authority within the relationship. He claims that another difficulty with discussing counselling in schools is that it is a multi-dimensional concept which is difficult to describe exactly. He goes on to suggest that counselling has three basic phases:

"an exploratory phase in which the client is helped to view himself and his difficulties less rigidly, by loosening blocks that prevent influential perceptions from being examined; an understanding phase in which the client is helped to structure his new, less rigid, more open perception of reality in a way that gives him greater control over himself and his environment; an action phase in which specific plans to expand his coping repertoire are developed so that functionality is increased." pp. 68 - 69

McGuinness emphasises that these phases are not necessarily sequential and he claims that to send someone for counselling is in itself a contradiction. He considers some of the difficulties involved when counselling takes place outside the classroom but the actions need to be applied in the real-life setting. Once more the transfer of skills learnt is highlighted.

McGuinness refers to the damaging effect which poor counselling can have and suggests that the most important factor is the quality of the relationship which counsellors build with their clients.

Research is quoted from Brammer and Shostrum (1968) that identifies three core dimensions of an effective counselling relationship. These include the ability to empathize, unconditional positive regard and genuineness. The theme of the unconditional relationship is one that is picked up during this research. Schools Outreach include reference to 'unconditional pastoral care' within their job description for a pastoral care worker. From the reading and the research, the concept of the unconditional is one that brings particular difficulties. Although the term does seem appropriate for the roles that individuals are asked to play, in practice such acceptance of behaviour and individual traits is very difficult to administer and can place pressure upon the counsellor.

Lloyd (1999) discusses the importance of the counsellor role and the relationship that the counsellor and client must develop:

"The counsellor's role is to listen to both words and feelings and to reflect back to the child that such feelings do exist and can be expressed... and the child needs to see the counsellor as someone who is reliable, whom she can trust as the relationship develops, and who is secure in maintaining boundaries for the benefit of their relationship." p. 93

The importance of the counsellor relationship is also stressed by Kirby (1999) whilst describing the experience of counselling in a secondary school. McGuinness emphasises that counselling is far more than a 'sympathetic chat' but also suggests that it is within the brief of pastoral care. He suggests that by offering opportunity for a client to talk without fear of being judged, an element of the counsellor can be part of the guidance involved in pastoral care. He suggests that as it is becoming more prevalent in schools, shortened courses for counselling should be made more available for a range of 'paraprofessionals'. To summarise he suggests:

"that counselling has a crucial role to play in school guidance, that it is a highly skilled activity and that teachers can develop those skills." p. 80

A report summarised in The Guardian (January 25th 2002) states that teachers themselves may not be happy to take on the counselling role. The report suggests that they feel that their role as teachers is being compromised by too great an emphasis upon pastoral work and that they would prefer to use mentors in order to deal with the emotional needs of children. The green paper 'Every Child Matters' would appear to have major implications for any teaching staff who do

consider the pastoral role outside of their list of responsibilities. It would seem that rather than moving away from any form of obligation in relation to pastoral care, teachers and their managers will be increasingly expected to take a lead role in providing support that crosses departmental boundaries.

The importance of confidentiality is stressed by Lloyd (1999). This can prove difficult where different services and departments are working together and need to administer their own rules and guidelines. In addition it can be difficult to decide where confidential information needs to be shared or taken further. Lloyd recommends the need to develop 'trust' as a central feature of the relationship. The issues of information-sharing, data protection and different procedures from different departments are all highlighted in 'Every Child Matters' as areas which need attention if a truly coherent plan for child protection is to emerge. Lloyd (1999) discusses the need to make contact with parents and keep up liaison with them. She describes how the counsellor can build up opportunities for children to speak freely through the use of play allowing for flexibility whilst maintaining boundaries. In order to access a counselling service she suggests that schools might cluster together to buy them in and feels that agencies might have a role in recruiting counsellors and making sure they have the necessary qualifications and experience. Increasingly with LMS (Local Management of Schools) schools have 'bought in' services and made their own appointments. In many cases these can be successful arrangements but this needs a sound collegiate approach from the schools concerned, a shared expectation and flexible working arrangements.

Kirby (1999) describes how she discusses with the client where they would like to get to, what they would like things to be like and then works out ways to get there. The school makes the referral and then the client is matched with a therapist. Time is also spent with the parents but it is made clear that they will only get to hear what their son/ daughter wants them to hear.

Although experiencing success, she expresses her frustration at working within the confines of an institution and the need that there can be to see a difference in a relatively short space of time and with a measurable outcome. In some cases this is possible but in others a more extended period of time is needed and the results may not be as evident as quickly:

"In this present economic and political climate one has to continually consider what is cost-effective. Everything, including education and young people's wellbeing, is managed in terms of money and timescales.... The emphasis has been drawn away from a focus upon the person as an individual. " p. 111

Pastoral care provision in schools

Reference has already been made to different ways in which pastoral care might be administered. Should it be part of the formally taught curriculum, assigned to particular individuals in the school or part of the form tutor's role? Should it be administered by external specialists from visiting agencies? How we view pastoral care in terms of its being a discrete body of knowledge with particular teaching strategies is crucial to this debate. McGuinness (1982) argues that all teachers, whatever their subject, are to some degree involved in the delivery of pastoral care. He believes they need to be aware of this and that wherever possible, pastoral care should focus around problem prevention and pupil development. He acknowledges that need for realism in terms of what teachers can be asked to deal with. They may accept pastoral work as part of their role but not physically be able to cope with the implications this has and the extra work it requires. They might find some of the issues raised difficult to address and feel that they are not sufficiently prepared to deal with the emotional implications. Sharp (2001) refers to the difficulty for teachers in addressing emotional needs :

"Strong emotions can be quite frightening, and teachers need high quality training and development programmes in order to help children help themselves to manage their feelings more appropriately in a variety of settings." p. 57

This might be particularly the case where the 'unconditional' is asked for and teachers and pastoral care workers will need to face their emotions when struggling to maintain objectivity in the face of highly emotive circumstances.

As mentioned earlier, the relationship of the teacher and the class is crucial. However, in some cases teachers may not have the relationship with the children in their tutor group to enable effective pastoral care to take place. For example, in their research into the attitudes of 11 – 14 year olds at risk of disaffection and underachievement Kinder (1999) suggests that difficulties with relationships with teachers were partly responsible:

"the high-ranking response of 'teachers' as the most disliked aspect of school, whilst highly predictable, perhaps starkly intimates the breakdown of relations with adults in authority which almost invariably accompanies school disengagement"

p. 10

McGuinness considers the implications of this and suggests it has resulted in more children with difficulties being brought to our attention at an even earlier age. In order to address this he emphasises the importance of any 'guidance' sessions having a clear focus and the teachers having the necessary training to make the most of the opportunities.

It is not only the teachers who may be instrumental in delivering the pastoral care of children in class. Teaching assistants may be responsible for co-ordinating interventions, often working closely with individuals on the special needs register. The number and range of additional adults working in and around children has implications for training and support at a management level.

Workforce remodelling reforms suggest that Higher Level Teaching Assistants and Cover Supervisors might increasingly take the role of classteachers and supply cover in our schools. As attempts are made towards providing teachers with 10% non-contact time, the number of additional adults looks likely to increase.

Harrison (1998) identifies the importance of an integrated approach to pastoral care. He describes the 'Umbrella of Caring' devised by West Beechboro School in Western Australia (1996). This model of pastoral support presents a network rather than a hierarchy of agencies. Harrison suggests that networking rather than hierarchy is the new trend in service provision. This model would appear to be part of the new green paper vision but, Harrison indicates, that the move away from hierarchy will need careful handling:

"As with doctors, so with pastoral care providers: the move to 'multiple goals' (managing co-ordination with other agencies; promoting successful in-school programmes; balancing resources for pastoral care against other demands) is in tension with more traditional professional aims (where the main task is to deliver the curriculum, and managing pastoral care is someone else's concern)." p. 19

According to Harrison, someone still needs to take the lead. It will be whether a model can be found whereby the agencies can exist and cooperate with parallel responsibility. People's perceptions may well be one of the most difficult hurdles to address. Child protection may still be

considered to be the responsibility of social services. Whilst resources are scarce in schools it may be particularly difficult to convince education managers that they should place further resources into the provision of facilities for children in need: particularly difficult in a climate which places greatest recognition and accountability on tables and tests.

Another issue will be the extent to which school staff will wish to see themselves as pastoral workers and the level of confidence they might have in dealing with the issues that they may be asked to handle. Megahy (1998) refers to research by Williamson (1980) that suggests a reluctance and lack of confidence amongst teachers:

"It was evident to Williamson (1980) that most teachers were less happy about their role as tutors than as subject teachers. Many felt themselves to be working in an area which was vague and uncertain and in which the roles they were expected to perform were often ill defined and confusing." p. 28

This has implications both for teacher training and the induction provided by senior management during the induction year. There may also be variations in the perceptions of teachers in different phases of education. Primary and Infant school teachers have traditionally been more closely involved with the pastoral needs of children and their families. Their attitudes may well be different to specialist subject teachers in secondary schools.

Calvert and Henderson (1995) refer to some of the difficulties that secondary schools can have in establishing a system for pastoral care. These include lack of shared understanding about the purpose and nature of pastoral provision, a traditional academic/ pastoral divide with the pastoral curriculum holding an inferior place, lack of confidence and inadequate support for the pastoral curriculum. Perceptions of the weight and importance given to different aspects of the curriculum seem to be central here. As mentioned earlier in this chapter the tensions between the academic and the pastoral can result in a curriculum that does not match the needs of the students it is designed to serve (Megahy 1998). Philosophies such as those linked to nurture groups, support the view that without the basic needs being met, effective learning cannot take place. If we subscribe to this there is a more substantial argument for spending time and resources on a pastoral framework.

The application of interventions and preventions such as nurture groups seem to require an acknowledgement of need not only to focus on teaching and learning to obtain results but early learning skills where they are absent. This pastoral need may vary greatly between schools. It might be argued that at present more emphasis is placed upon minimising the effect of disadvantage than acknowledging its existence. In the TES (November 21st 2003) a front page headline once more highlights the dilemma with reports of David Bell, Chief Inspector for schools, advocating a two tier funding system. According to this, schools would be allocated differentiated budgets dependent upon features of their catchment area. Deciding who should benefit and who should not could be particularly controversial.

If teachers are having difficulty including the pastoral role amongst their range of responsibilities what other options are available to them? For some teachers and managers the answer would seem to be in having specialist pastoral support in schools. This solution is not only confined to secondary schools but also primary schools where, for example, a school nurse might be asked to come in and teach sex education. The idea that there are professionals better suited to delivery of aspects of the pastoral curriculum is still a mainstream belief. It would seem that the 'extended school' model discussed later and the use of a greater variety of unqualified teachers in schools also promotes this approach. Workforce remodelling advocates the employment of Higher Level Teaching Assistants and Cover Supervisors neither necessarily having qualified teacher status but who may have skills in other areas which can be used.

Megahy (1998) states the argument for the use of external support staff with expertise claiming that their greater subject knowledge and training equips them better:

"Their training and expertise enables them to feel confident and comfortable when addressing sensitive issues with young people as they progress through a particularly difficult stage of their lives. Moreover, these staff see the teaching of PSE as their primary role." p. 31

As mentioned previously, what such teachers don't necessarily have is the day-to-day contact with their students and the relationship building opportunities that form tutors and class teachers

may have. Megahy does acknowledge that more schools are moving towards pastoral programmes delivered by form tutors and acknowledges the benefits of this approach:

"The prime argument for such a move is that they are the teachers who know their own students best and are, therefore, most aware of the individual needs and level of development of each young person." pp. 31 – 32

However, we could still question the extent to which the tutor in a secondary school has opportunity to build up the necessary relationship. Would the next stage be the acknowledgement by all subject teachers that within their own discipline there are opportunities for pastoral discussions and input? Or should more time be given to form tutors? In some secondary schools the amount of contact time is minimal. Megahy refers to the dangers of expecting tutors to deliver substantial pastoral programmes where they do not have the skills and where time spent on a prescribed curriculum can take time away from developing relationships with the tutor group. Much will depend upon whether a reactive or proactive form of pastoral care is delivered: pastoral intervention as a response to problems rather than preventing difficulties from emerging.

In order for pastoral care to be managed more effectively Megahy suggests a wider brief for the senior management team – that everyone takes responsibility rather than limiting it to one individual. He is particularly anxious to see teaching and learning as being the focus for debate:

"There remains, in a number of schools, a lack of coherence and consensus regarding the nature of pastoral provision, with too much emphasis continuing to be placed on a body of knowledge to be covered, as opposed to the development of processes designed to improve students' learning potential." pp. 49 – 50

This all pervasive approach to pastoral care is also discussed by Hall (1998). Hall argues that because of the demands this places upon us, there is an institutional responsibility to make sure that teachers are assisted in their efforts through supportive networks. However, there is an argument which warns against the allocation of too much responsibility to the school hierarchy. In some cases there may have been difficulties in the relationship between family and senior management or a family may find school systems and buildings prohibitive. There can be benefits to involving someone not intrinsic to the school who parents might feel more relaxed with. Dyson and Robson (1999) extol the benefits of the non-teacher in the mentoring role.

Discussion about extended schools and the emphasis given to the 'one-stop shop' concept of education and social provision will continue to encourage debate around these topics. Will some families find the location of services in the school building prohibitive and might some form of outreach or satellite service be necessary? Although the notion of linked services and increased communication seems logical there are issues of the real accessibility and approachability of both site and staff.

Pastoral care and support services

The relationship between schools and support services has been constantly evolving. Through the 1980s it developed to include consultancy work with less direct teaching. In many cases now, external support staff are used largely as part of the statutory assessment process and are seen as a necessary intervention in order to access more resources. Duffield et al. (1995) refers to four types of support role. That involving consultation and collaboration with class/ subject teacher; development of a differentiated curriculum; direct teaching or co-ordinating services for individual pupils and contributing to whole school policies on learning support and staff development in relation to learning support. Taking these different roles they then asked support teachers in Scotland to rate them from most to least important. Direct teaching, however, was still seen as the main task.

To what extent should we call upon external services and to what extent should we make provision within school? Shertzer and Stone (1971) refer to the dangers of a 'referral technician' approach by teachers where recourse is taken to referring children on at the earliest opportunity. McGuinness (1982) argues that as referral agencies are already overwhelmed by cases, it is often down to the school and as such provision should be made to enable counselling to take place in-house. He warns against premature referral but also warns against schools becoming too defensive in the face of external support, refusing to acknowledge where students do need help that teachers do not have the specialist knowledge to offer.

McGuinness sums up the main features of referral:

- *1. It should occur when the child's difficulty needs the expertise of people not available in school.*

2. *It should be recommended in a reassuring, realistic way, involving both child and parents whenever possible*
3. *The referral should always be accompanied by excellent communications between school and referral agency – before, during, and after the referral.” p. 98*

One of the difficulties with this summary is the lack of clarity over whether the needs of the child are such that specialist help is required. Differing definitions of special needs and difficulties with diagnosis have been linked to the statement and review services across counties. The individual characteristics of class, teacher and child on the micro and school, LEA and support service on the macro level can result in vastly different support recommendations being made. The varying advice given in very similar circumstances can reflect a variety of factors, none of which might relate to the actual needs of the child. Elliott et al.(1983) suggest that professional help is more likely to be called in at times of crisis intervention:

“Teachers and school administrators are never happier to see pupil personnel workers than when a crisis is developing, whether it concerns a particular child or a group of children. Especially at these times, it is recognised that special services personnel have skills that are different from those of teachers and administrators and that are needed for helping with difficult, sensitive pupil problems. Other forms of counselling or intervention with children are important, school people acknowledge, but it takes a crisis for them to recognise their own limitations and to request help from counsellors, psychologists, social workers and nurses. “ p. 177

It might be suggested that leaving such pleas for help until a crisis has developed is too late and that earlier intervention from trained and specialist support would be more advantageous. As Elliott points out, although we may feel the need to experiment, such experiments in this area would be unethical owing to the severity of the need with which we are dealing.

Referrals to support services can present numerous challenges, particularly where a number of different departments and individuals are concerned. The green paper 'Every Child Matters' (2003) proposes that every council should establish children's trusts by 2006 which will bring together health, education and social services under one system. In addition, organisations will need to consider the needs of the whole child, not only those applying to them. The paper outlines some of the difficulties which agencies have traditionally had that has resulted in fatal mistakes occurring:

"Our existing system for supporting children and young people who are beginning to experience difficulties is often poorly co-ordinated and accountability is unclear. This means that information is not shared between agencies so that warning signs are not recognised and acted upon. Some children are assessed many times by different agencies and despite this may get no services. Children may experience a range of professionals involved in their lives but little continuity and consistency of support. Organisations may disagree over who should pay for meeting a child's needs because their problems cut across organisational boundaries. Fragmentation locally is often driven by conflicting messages and competing priorities from central Government." p. 22

This is an extensive list of impediments which have become entrenched over the years.

Removing these obstacles will represent a significant challenge requiring not only legislative change but a culture change in the departments involved. Amongst the long list of ways which the document suggests this might be accomplished is that of joint training and development for professionals on behaviour issues, the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams, the identification of lead professionals to work with families and a common assessment framework. Many of these aspects are referred to by Roaf (2003) in her examination of the area of inter-agency work. She identifies characteristics of good practice in inter-agency work as including formal commitment from senior management, regular inter-agency meetings, common work practices adopted between agencies, collective ownership of problems, mechanisms for the exchange of confidential information, monitoring and evaluation of services and joint training. Roaf also acknowledges the increasing tension between the specialist and the holistic:

"a necessary tension exists between society's need for increasingly high levels of specialist professional expertise and individual consumers' or clients' need for a holistic, accessible service." p.42

In some respects this dilemma is at the centre of this research. As the pastoral care workers juggle themselves with the need to be multi-skilled whilst also being expected, in some cases, to provide a specialist delivery.

According to an article in the TES (September 19th 2003 p. 31 'All Together Now'):

"Schools can expect to see far more contact with other childcare agencies – health, social services, Connexions and the youth justice system. Agencies should not be able to take decisions in isolation. Social workers changing a foster placement will need to take account of any disruption to the

child's education. Heads looking to exclude a pupil would need to consult with other agencies about what was best for the family."

These are far reaching and important developments that will mean different organisations will have to think through some of their working practices quite carefully to decide how they will dovetail into those of others. Examples are given of the American 'full-service' schools. Based in secondary schools, the 'full-service' model enables families to have access to a full range of facilities and services within one building. Roaf (2002) positively recognises an increase in commitment towards inter-agency work. Her book 'Coordinating Services for Included Children' provides historical perspectives as well as information about different projects and their successes and difficulties. She refers to Huxham and Macdonald's three methods of agencies working together (1992:53) these include collaboration, cooperation or coordination.

As mentioned earlier, there are some possible disadvantages to these developments. For some families, already deterred by the school building, bringing more into school could lead to greater reluctance to participate in other services as well. It might also give the impression of greater centralisation at the expense of local autonomy and the right for the integrity of different services. However, 'Every Child Matters' (2003) does seem to acknowledge the difficulties which some families might have if too much centralisation takes place:

"Services may need to be located in a range of settings, as near as possible to home environments which are perceived as less stigmatising than traditional clinic settings, such as schools, homes and family centres." p. 31

Roaf (1998) lists some of the problems that agencies face in their attempts to work together. She includes difficulties in coordinating provision, establishing boundaries, lack of understanding about other agencies, difficulties in agreeing joint procedures, issues related to data protection, existing legislation and difficulties in agreeing ownership of cases as some of the impediments. She argues, however, that if we take the needs of the child as the starting point then we can see more clearly what is required:

"By locating oneself mentally alongside the child who is experiencing difficulty and his or her family, in the community and at home, it is easier to examine how decisions by teachers and professionals in other agencies impact on family life for young people." p. 134

This can be very difficult for professionals as they may encounter a whole series of alternative values and practices that they will need to acknowledge and support. Roaf emphasises the need for interagency cooperation and discusses how the failure of agencies to cooperate has seriously affected the meeting of children's needs. Schools in particular have a responsibility to help break down the barriers:

"Although progress towards more effective interagency working is, as we have seen, hindered by a lack of common language and local structures to implement legislation collaboratively, schools can help by developing their policies and definitions of 'need' in collaboration with the agencies they work with." p. 140

To some extent the recent legislation will make this recommendation a requirement.

One difficulty that implementing the new green paper 'Every Child Matters' will face is that of the competing demands that schools are experiencing. Where children are severely disruptive and/or are perceived as draining resources, schools may choose to exclude in order to protect themselves and their staff. Parsons (1993) refers to this dilemma and highlights the logical need for inter-agency support:

"Schools tend to rely on disciplinary measures to cope with disruptive behaviour, rather than examining the individual problems of children and offering appropriate support."(www.jrf.org.uk)

The message about services working together and placing the child's needs at the centre is not new. The issue is putting it into effective practice. To this end there is a growing body of research. Lloyd, Stead and Kendrick (2001) researched inter-agency meetings in 3 local authorities. Their conclusions suggest that there is no single answer or blueprint for these meetings, but that individual circumstances should be taken into account. They suggest that meetings should be combined case and strategic and that there were a number of benefits to the approaches they saw. In the best scenarios the interagency meetings supported pupils by providing a joined-up, child-centred perspective; offering a supportive forum for staff to exchange views; widening awareness of other strategies and resources outside school; assessing and planning for individual needs; planning the contribution of a range of professionals; supporting school staff in keeping trying with challenging pupils and encouraging professionals to respond to

the views and experiences of young people. They pointed out that there are sometimes difficulties when parents attend but when they don't there can be issues of confidentiality.

In 'Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings' published by the DfES (2001) a number of individuals belonging to different agencies are cited as offering opportunities for children with mental health difficulties. Importance is placed here upon the relationship that the child builds with the adult rather than the level of specialism:

"Adults who are able to build up trusting, supportive relationships using counselling skills or approaches can enable young people to discuss issues, which may be of concern in confidence. These could comprise a mentor, counsellor, youth worker, school nurse, or a personal adviser." pp. 20 – 21

The report goes on to identify a range of specific support that might be used by schools. Of particular interest is the reference to 'home-school link workers' who we might consider to have a similar role to the pastoral care worker:

"The effectiveness of home-school links in fostering better individual achievement and behaviour in school, particularly for those children who are more at risk than their peers, has been well documented. Many schools have found the appointment of a co-ordinator or specialist workers to set up and run programmes to develop home-school links extremely valuable." p. 37

It is how best to establish those home-school links that needs careful consideration. Much will depend upon the individual and the commitment of the organisation itself to cooperative work. From my own research into home-school links for the LEA, it was noticeable how there still remains a section of people who consider that education is the province of the school except where specific support is requested from home. Although there were many examples of effective practice, open minds and enthusiasm for cooperative ventures between parents and school.

In 'Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings' the role of pastoral staff is referred to whilst keeping it open as to who this actually might be:

"The role of pastoral staff in supporting vulnerable children, children more at risk of developing behaviour problems and other teaching staff remains extremely important. For many children, it is class teachers in the primary school or form

tutors in secondary schools who become aware of children's difficulties and offer initial support to the best of their and their school's ability. In many cases, advice will be sought from SENCOs, pastoral staff such as heads of year and senior staff such as deputy head or head teacher." p. 37

In 'Every Child Matters' (2003), there is implied flexibility as to who the key worker for a child might be:

"Children known to more than one specialist agency should have a single named professional to take the lead on their case and be responsible for ensuring a coherent package of services to meet the individual child's needs." p. 9

The use of pastoral staff is also referred to:

"Frontline professionals such as pastoral staff in schools, who may already have trusting relationships with the child or parent, may be in a better position to discuss initial concerns with a child or parent, and work with over time, than a social worker with whom the family has had no previous contact."p.57

A concern that perhaps should be kept in mind is whether such additional involvement could at times compromise this relationship. Where time has been taken in constructing a fragile dialogue, some aspects of social work could place additional pressure upon this, if not destroy it.

Roaf (2002) refers to the importance of finding a key worker who may not always be the most immediate professional associated with the case:

"The use of 'unusual' key workers was an important element in the panel's successes with young people. The panel's job was to identify, from the independent assessor's report and their own experience, who, if anyone, had a positive relationship with the young person 'through the net'."p.75

The choice of unconventional individuals or those not normally employed in this capacity could have its own difficulties. The project described here is one employed in the 1980s to promote inter-agency cooperation.

Another role receiving current attention and similar to that of the pastoral care worker is the learning mentor. This has become a particular feature of the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative:

"Learning mentors help young people overcome barriers to learning, both inside and outside school. Their key functions include developing a one-to-one mentoring relationship with children who need particular support; to maintain regular contact with families/ carers of children receiving support; and to encourage positive family involvement in the child's learning." p. 37

Although initiated in secondary schools, there are currently moves to pilot similar schemes in primary schools. All secondary learning mentors attend a five day national training programme during which a selection of modules is delivered. The Learning Mentor programme is part of the Excellence in Cities initiative, however, many secondary schools who do not qualify for this programme of support have also adopted the use of mentors to work with children in a pastoral role. These might be employed directly by the school or be financed through other grants via LEA application or local voluntary organisations. According to Michael Shaw in the TES (May 28th 2004 p. 2 'Mentors praised as exclusions fall') some of the credit for this is being attributed by the DfES to the employment of mentors in schools.

Roaf (1998) explains how schools' in-school support teams can co-ordinate resources within school and then organise additional support from outside of school when this proves to be insufficient. The level and type of liaison between school staff and external support is an issue that is considered in this research paper. Roaf suggests that SENCOs might form a link between school and community and participate in interagency liaison groups. Traditionally the SENCO has had a major role in liaising between external agencies, parents and schools' staff. The extent to which an increase in liaison could be born without having a detrimental effect upon other responsibilities would need to be considered. It is noted during this research how two different SENCOs have a completely different relationships with the pastoral care workers in terms of their level of referral and involvement. It is possible that this patchwork of provision is replicated elsewhere.

There are dangers, discussed by Salmon (1999), with the visiting as opposed to the resident specialist:

"the support teacher who goes in to a school in a visiting capacity to work with a small group of children can excite the envy of the other children and also the

jealousy of the teachers, who may feel that the visitor is in a very privileged position because she does not have to cope with the larger numbers and the administrative minutiae of the usual school situation." p. 253

A very candid statement by Salmon that some might feel to be a little extreme but may well have an essential accuracy. The reception of external agencies will also depend to some degree on the means and cause of referral and previous case histories and their successes or failures. The individuals who represent the service have the key responsibility in terms of the welcome that others will receive in future. It is the role of the managers of the service to ensure that there is an effective match made between the individual and the school. An inappropriate match can significantly harm the reputation of the service amongst school staff and present barriers for future representatives. There is the expectation that when external services are called in they are the professionals and have received a high level of specialist training. A 1989 HMI survey (DES 1989) reported in Desforges (1998) indicated that fewer than half the services surveyed had received any training for the new roles. In some cases expectations of the degree of specialism and knowledge on offer may not be totally accurate. Similarly, Curtis (1987) raises the issue of the level of expertise that special education teachers might be expected to have.

Working in the community

Community Education is available across the country, taking a variety of different forms with different emphasise depending upon who the controlling department might be. A number of DfES based initiatives have also added to the concept of the community school. Excellence in Cities and the extended schools vision have encouraged school senior management and LEAs to consider and develop the wider use of the school building as a 'one-stop-shop'. In many cases these facilities incorporate home-school liaison workers and outreach staff. In 'Every Child Matters' (2003) the extended school is endorsed;

'The Government wants to integrate education, health and social care services around the needs of children. To achieve this, we want all schools to become extended schools – acting as the hub for services for children, families and other members of the community.' p. 29

This support for the extended school concept includes a pledge to create at least one extended school in every LEA in England by 2006. It might seem as though the increased involvement of parents and the community is being sought. Dyson and Robson (1999) make reference to this in their internet publication 'School, Family, Community; mapping school inclusion in the UK'.

We might query the degree to which 'driving up standards' is in control of the agenda and to what extent this agenda item is owned by communities themselves. There may be other issues and areas for development of greater importance to local communities than the national standards drive. Dyson and Robson (1999) refer to the dilemma:

"There is potential tension in government policy between the 'crusade for standards', which requires schools to focus on their 'core business' of curriculum delivery, and a broader social exclusion agenda which implies a more extended community role for schools." (internet page)

We might also question whether all parts of the community are set to benefit from this focus or whether some are more involved than others:

"The model of parent- child relations and of family values embedded in the parental involvement movement may well devalue the practices and values of families who may already be somewhat marginalised. The net effect may simply be to alienate those families and disadvantage their children further." (internet page)

Any form of intervention and outreach work must consider its level of accessibility to all groups of parents and adults associated with the school. It can be tempting to pursue and work with those who are most accessible. Departments and link workers may find themselves drawn to particular projects and groups at the expense of others.

Extended schools

"We will create 'extended' schools in the most deprived areas. These schools will be able to provide a range of services for children, their families and the wider community – including childcare, study support, adult and family learning, access to modern technology, health and social care – working closely with local health and other services and voluntary bodies." (DfES, 2002b p.29)

The DfES launched an extended schools initiative which encouraged some pilot authorities to take part in the 'Schools for the Community' project. This was followed in October 2002 by the Extended Schools' Pathfinder Project. The local authority in this research, for example has been selected to trial one of the pilot projects. They received funding of around £200,000 with the nine schools involved being assigned £15,000 each to develop 'extended' provision. Nine themes were chosen for the schools to prioritise: family learning; multi-agency work; youth service

support within a school setting; governance issues; study support; health promoting schools scheme; music and the arts; community learning strategy and the development of guidance. Two terms were allocated for the money to be spent with the ensuing evaluations and project feedback. Each school involved had a short-time to focus on its own priorities guided by the list of themes. Each project was unique and although funding was small and the window for implementation even smaller, it is interesting to see how this taster of extended provision has been effective and what might follow in its wake.

Julian Piper writes about the extended school project in Gelsthorpe and West-Burnham et al. (2003). He queries whether they are the 'dream of the future?' He refers to the need to address some of the complex community issues that schools find themselves faced with and points out that simply opening your doors does not constitute community involvement. It can often be the unequal power base that causes some of the tension between different services. Piper claims that the Government's enthusiasm to extend services comes from their recognition of the pivotal point that schools and their staff hold and that some kind of extended school provision is needed to bridge the gap that exists at present to meet the increasing needs of local communities. All this, recognises Piper, will have implications for the role of the headteacher:

"Heads will in future be the managers of a range of different complementary functions and partnerships as schools build learning communities around themselves." p. 197

This quote reflects some of the points already made in relation to the Government's commitment to extended schools and the full-service American model.

Wendy Wallace writes in the TES (January 17 2003 p. 16 'All you need on one site') about the community school vision. She describes how in several parts of the country this 'all you need on one site' has already taken off. This is particularly the case in Scotland where schools have been and are being equipped with health and social workers, renaming them new community schools. Wallace refers to the Penn Green Centre for under-fives in Corby Northamptonshire. She sees the expansion in this approach generally but warns of the demands it will make on buildings and people:

"Now the trend is spreading. With the Government's focus on raising literacy and numeracy levels, especially in poor areas, and given that pre-schooling and parental literacy levels have a direct impact on children's achievement, the idea of meeting everyone's needs on the primary school site makes even more sense. But the 'full service' school demands investment in buildings and people. Inter-agency working is still a new area and those engaged in it are drawing up their own blueprints."

Community schools

Extended schools have much in common with the concept of community schools. The need to acknowledge the importance of the local community and ways in which it can be used to enhance both education and other local services is not new to education authorities. Henry Morris in the 1920s developed 'village colleges' in Cambridgeshire as a way of regenerating areas of rural deprivation. He saw the fast rate at which society was changing and how individuals and families were finding it difficult to adapt. The village colleges were designed to serve social, cultural, educational and economic ends whilst breaking down the barriers between these different parts of people's lives.

Since Henry Morris there have been intermittent drives to develop the school within its community. In 1949 Stewart Mason proposed that community colleges be developed in Leicestershire. An early exponent of consultation, he believed that local people should decide what these colleges should offer. The proposals were implemented by Andrew Fairbairn and taken a stage further by Geoff Cooksey, Director of Stantonbury Campus in Milton Keynes. This campus was open 20 hours a day every day of the week and offered a whole range of facilities including a leisure centre, a youth centre, church, shops and theatre. Staff moved flexibly between the different sectors and staff from different sections collaborated closely. The issue of 'territory' is particularly important as is reflected in the DfES green paper 'Every Child Matters'. This document emphasises the importance of sharing information and minimising the local effect of professional boundaries. Where data cannot be shared and procedures clash and contradict and staff jostle for supremacy, a true working collaboration is difficult to achieve.

The Education Act 2002 allows governing bodies to provide a range of extended activities in and around school. Many schools have already been providing the kinds of facilities under the 'extended' heading. However, what community education understands by involving the community and what schools do, can be very different. It is far more than letting the school building. The following quote highlights the pressures schools are faced with that can result in the marginalising of community work:

"Often, and especially since the advent of local management of schools and the increased drive to improve standards policed by the DfES, league tables and OFSTED, difficulties have been caused by a domination of the needs of school pupils so that community needs have been pushed into second place. Shortage of cash and increased compartmentalisation of funding have also played their part." (Gelsthorpe and West-Burnham et al. 2003 p. 191)

Tony Gelsthorpe (2003) warns us against 'bolt on' community solutions:

"Even the terminology is suspect with vocabulary such as 'plus', 'extra', 'additional' and 'extended'. Such words are a poor reflection of the scale, extent and degree of transformation required and possible." p. 26

Excellence in Cities

"Excellence in Cities (EiC) tackles the particular problems facing children in our cities. Through a combination of initiatives, it aims to raise the aspirations and achievements of pupils and to tackle disaffection, social exclusion, truancy and improve parents' confidence in cities." (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk)

The EiC areas have been selected in three phases and stretch across the country. The London boroughs were particularly predominant in the early stages along with authorities that have come to be associated with deprivation targeting of this kind. There are key strands to Excellence in Cities including: provision of learning mentors; funding of learning support units; establishment of city learning centres; additional beacon and specialist schools; EiC Action Zones; and extended opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. The Learning Mentor strand has been referred to previously as a key development towards schools reaching out to parents and the community. The examples given on the DfES web site indicate a wide range of provision and collaborative ventures with differing foci ranging from partnerships with Jaguar to investment in wireless technology. A practical example of this is to be found at Crown Hills Community School in Leicester. Following a bid by their LEA, they received additional resources that enabled them to

fund learning mentors, a learning support unit and the development of facilities for the gifted and talented. Valuable resources which the Principal, Gary Coleby, is aware has added value to what the college can offer.

The 'Learning Enhancement Centre' at Crown Hills is funded through EiC and is a multi-faceted resource. It enables customised provision for students needing particular types of support. The centre houses the gifted and talented team, the SEN team and a range of out-of-hours provision including a breakfast club. An alternative curriculum is available for students who need it and for however long they need it. The benefits in Leicester are not confined to a cluster of schools. A City Learning Centre provides state of the art facilities in ICT on a city-wide basis. This is available to all, across the phases and into the community. Similarly, the gifted and talented strand is available beyond the selected secondary schools. Everyone can benefit.

This is not necessarily the case if you are a school in a deprived area of a less deprived LEA. The EiC initiative is limited to certain key cities. However, the Excellence Clusters programme acknowledges that not all needy schools are grouped together within cities. 'Smaller pockets of deprivation' are accommodated using a similar model to the Excellence in Cities example. The first eleven clusters began in September 2001 with an additional twelve more in 2002. In October, 13 more were announced taking the total to 37. An additional issue which is by no means unique to the EiC programme, is the continued policy of funding over set periods of time. This can cause instability, temporary contracts and long-term planning difficulties.

The concept of the 'full-service' school

As the DfES explores the idea of the 'full service' school in the English education system, the USA already has developed a number of similar models. In the late 1800s settlement housing was developed offering a number of different opportunities for families. From the 1900s onwards ways of extending the school role were explored. In Flint, Michigan a formal community education movement began to spread in the 1930s. This continued to grow and now manifests itself in the form of a variety of community school principles which are variously called 'community', 'full-service' and 'schools of the 21st Century'.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, Joy Dryfoos became instrumental in the development of school-based health programmes. She recognised, along with others, that education for many could not succeed without there being a range of welfare and health services in place. School was increasingly recognised as a 'one-stop shop' opportunity where young people could be reached and necessary services made available in a more cohesive format with less fragmentation. A number of states have now adopted the notion of the 'full-service' school and provide a range of extended services to meet the needs of the local community. Dryfoos (1994) suggests that there are two strands necessary for successful intervention. Some originate from within the school and others are provided by community agencies.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined issues relating to the provision of pastoral support for children in school. It recognises that there is currently a vast range of approaches to providing additional support and that there is some tension between the benefits and disadvantages of using external support as opposed to internal. It identifies that the pastoral care worker programme provided by Schools Outreach retains some features of external support whilst also offering opportunities for close in-house liaison between school staff and workers and the opportunity to develop relationships with children.

The current trend evident in the green paper 'Every Child Matters' is one of bringing services closer together. The vision of departments working together, recognising the holistic needs of children is reflected in the pastoral care worker role as defined by Schools Outreach. Equally some of the difficulties in such a role are illustrated in the case studies described in this research. Whatever approach is taken, it must allow the people concerned to deal with the vastly different needs of their clients. I have attempted to describe some of the interventions currently available and some of the strategies used by the pastoral care workers. A key point is how diagnosis of difficulty may attract differing types of intervention. However, the provision of one form of support based within schools, such as the Schools Outreach programme can also mean that strategies applied are prescribed due to their availability rather than the direct link between need and specialist knowledge.

Alongside trends of increased community involvement and inter-department liaison, remains that of the standards agenda. The tensions this places upon schools and the programmes made available is a theme running throughout this research. The effect that the current curriculum has had upon students and upon the priorities defined by schools and LEAs should not be underestimated. However, whatever the motives, parents, the community and the pastoral needs of the child are currently of concern to the full range of professionals and as such, the climate is right for new models of care and education combined.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Aims and objectives

In conjunction with Schools Outreach and the host schools, it was agreed that the project would benefit from the collection of information and evaluation. From this stimulus I decided to base the research around two aims rather than beginning with a hypothesis for testing. I believed it to be important that issues were allowed to emerge and that there should be opportunity for further exploration of relevant and interesting insights. This is very much developmental research rather than experimental.

In qualitative research Burgess (1985) refers to the need to take data and form theory from it.

Saran (1985) also emphasises the need for an emerging hypothesis:

"Gradually, as knowledge and understanding is built up, questions become more specific, the search more selective, the process more refined." p.229

Davies, Corbishley, Evans and Kenrick's chapter in Burgess (1984) refers to 'hypothesis seeking rather than testing'. But some focus is still needed. In order to provide this it was decided to concentrate on two aims initially. Firstly, to determine how the pastoral care worker is perceived by the community in the host schools. Perceptions of the role provide some insight into the working of pastoral care in each school. Whilst acknowledging that some groups will have limited contact with the pastoral care worker, collecting perceptions is considered central in terms of assessing the impact that each care worker has had. The second aim of the research is to evaluate the success of the project in terms of its impact upon the school community as a whole and on specific, targeted individuals.

The research sample

Although four schools have been involved in this particular Outreach project, I decided that two should be focused upon for the research. I felt that my own school would not be an appropriate source of data owing to the difficulties associated with my role as headteacher. Although such local research is possible it does make the maintenance of validity difficult and advantages in terms of convenience can quickly be counteracted by those of over-familiarity. Using my own

school would have enabled me to access children and staff easily, in terms of interviewing, this might have had some advantages. However, any advantage gained would have been eroded by the unequal power base from which the target sample would have been taken. Children, in particular, might have found it problematic to share their views with the headteacher of their own school. I did feel, however, that the piloting of the questionnaires could be carried out at my own school.

As it was, although selecting other schools, the fact that they were neighbouring meant that there were times when I was recognised in my role as headteacher by children who had moved schools. This presented its own unique difficulties which are discussed during the reporting of the research. Begley (2000), reflects upon the powerful influence that the desire to please can have upon children's responses:

"...when asking children about their views, especially concerning how competent or accepted they are, there is a risk of them presenting themselves in a socially desirable and positive way. The validity of their results will be affected if the children's responses reflect how they want to appear to others, rather than how they really perceive themselves." pp. 108 – 109

This danger can only be exacerbated through being questioned by the headteacher. The use of an additional or alternative adult to administer the interviews was considered but no particular individuals, other than the pastoral care workers themselves, were available. Jones and Tannock (2000) suggest the involvement of an additional adult. Researching the particularly sensitive issue of children's understanding and experience of death and bereavement, the relationship between teacher-researcher and pupils was particularly important. However, they concluded that any 'adult' researcher would have had a similarly limiting effect and would not have eradicated the difficulties involved in forming a productive relationship. Rather, the skills of the individual researcher were paramount.

Having eliminated my own school from the research, to retain all three remaining schools would have given one pastoral care worker a greater influence upon the results. Therefore, it was decided to remove a second school from the sample with two schools, involving each pastoral care worker, as the object of focus. As a result the only primary school in the cohort was not researched leaving the two junior schools, each accommodating between them the two pastoral

care workers. This does have the disadvantage of limiting the age range of children observed by not including Key Stage 1 children.

In addition to determining the schools to sample from, it was also necessary to decide the scope of the survey within the host schools. Time and personnel had to be taken into consideration and balanced along side the need for validity and reliability. It was decided important that each year group should be sampled as perceptions may vary depending upon age and also the level of targeted intervention in each year group. So, for example, some year groups had been targeted for peer mediation whereas others, such as friendship groups, provided a service for all year groups as the need arose. In the end, year 3 returns from the survey for one school were considered to be so unreliable due to differences in survey administration that they could not be included in the survey analysis. Because of this, especially where comparison was being made between the activities available in the two schools, year 3 from both schools were withdrawn. However, year 3s were still included in some of the observations although in most cases the interventions tended to focus around the two older year groups. In addition consideration needed to be given to other variables such as gender, ethnicity and ability.

Both schools have a relatively small number of children from ethnic groups other than white European. In one group at one school a child of Indian origin was included but this was an exception. Due to the nature of the survey and the context of the research, this can only be noted as a different selection of children was not available. The children targeted had already been selected according to need and therefore the selection of individuals was limited in scope. In the research overall there was a mixture of girls and boys receiving support. However, there did tend to be gender bias in some of the groups. For example, the Super 7 group was exclusively girls whereas the circle time groups were largely boys. The friendship groups have also tended to involve girls rather than boys. Where selection has been possible, both genders have been sampled. For example, two children were focused upon for the one-to-one work of both Jamal and Val. In these cases one girl and one boy was chosen.

Overall, the ability of children surveyed and selected for observation has been varied. It has not been a specific criterion against which selection has taken place, but rather those receiving pastoral care worker support have shared need but represent different abilities. This is reflected

in the quality and responses received during interviews. For example, Andy was able to reflect in some depth about his experiences whereas some of the interviews following circle time resulted in the children interacting more with their peers but responding less thoughtfully to the questions. This different depth of response, however, is also as a result of the conditions in which the interview took place as group dynamics figured highly and provided insight of a different nature.

The parents interviewed were selected largely due to their availability and willingness to take part in the research. In fact, only two parents were interviewed altogether as Jamal did not feel that he had any parents who could fulfil this role. He perceived himself as having little direct involvement with parents and did not feel that they would have a clear view of his work. Val, however, did nominate two parents whose children she had worked closely with who were willing to participate and whose views are reported in the research.

Selecting a method

Lewis and Lindsay (2000) suggest that the choice of methods will be influenced by preference, practicality, view of research or ideology, ethical considerations and the research questions. It is not easy to determine how the research questions can be measured in order to evaluate the success of the project. Part of the difficulty lies in the number of interventions and actions operating in schools at the same time. Many of the targeted children will have additional types of support directed towards them. We might consider it is impossible to isolate the strategy most responsible for making any change in their behaviour. This is only one of many factors that cannot be controlled and make precise conclusions difficult to draw. It seemed most appropriate, given the small number of projects selected and the limitations of time and personnel, to adopt a qualitative study selecting from different methods and assuming a more descriptive approach.

An additional difficulty was the degree to which the 'pastoral care worker' role depended upon the individual worker and the unique context in which they were working. According to the pastoral care worker job description produced by Schools Outreach, flexibility is an expectation of the role:

"the work undertaken by our school-based workers is not prescribed in specific detail; for every school is unique and many situations within which the worker will be found are one-off in character. We expect the worker, together with a school's teaching staff, to

learn by discovery how best to match the gifts, skills and abilities of the worker to the needs present within the school.” (Schools Outreach, Introductory Pack, p.20)

Therefore, predictably, the pastoral care worker's role in each school is very different as I noted during my attendance at the termly meetings . They operate different groups, use different intervention strategies and have a varying degree of involvement with parents and school staff.

Confidentiality

The environment in which the pastoral care worker is operating is a sensitive one. The worker may have become the confidant of children and, in some cases, parents. The sharing of this information is restricted by Schools Outreach's own confidentiality guidelines:

“Schools Outreach school-based Pastoral Care Workers seek to establish relationships with pupils which are characterised by unconditional love and acceptance: relationships within which mutual trust and respect will provide a framework for the building of secure confidentiality. When confidences are shared these would normally remain confidential. Though the Pastoral Care Worker (PCW) may encourage a pupil to seek help from other appropriate adults in circumstances where specific help could alleviate difficulties.”

(Schools Outreach, Introductory Pack, p.35 Appendix A)

The pack emphasises that PCWs are under no statutory duty to disclose in the same way as members of the teaching profession are. This does not mean that they won't disclose but that the point at which disclosure is made is very much up to individual workers in conjunction, where necessary, with other School's Outreach staff. This placing of the client above the organisation is an issue for those working in schools in a supportive capacity. There can be the expectation from school management that issues of interest to the school should be shared. In some situations this will not be the case if it breaks the confidentiality agreement that the PCW shares with the child.

The confidentiality expectations as outlined above also have implications for the conducting of this research. Firstly, an important method used as part of the research are the diary entries from the two pastoral care workers. The PCWs might have found in making some of these entries that they would have been breaking the confidentiality agreement and would need to decide on an individual basis the priorities in terms of the validity of the diary as an element of the research or their responsibilities to the children. This decision was, by necessity, left to the PCWs themselves and they may have applied priorities differently. Similarly they may also have perceived

confidentiality issues and concerns during the interviews. However, from the open nature of the discussions and the overall content of the interviews it seemed unlikely that much information was withheld. It might have been possible to have asked the PCWs at the end of the interview whether they had withheld any information that in other circumstances might have been useful to disclose. However, there were differences in the degree to which the PCWs appeared to talk freely. Jamal responded to questions but was less expansive than Val. This does not mean, however, that information was withheld. As with all types of interview the degree of information yielded is based upon the personality and cooperation of the interviewee and the interviewer's skill.

A second issue to consider is that of participant and non-participant observation. I was aware of being present and reporting observations that perhaps the PCW would have chosen to keep confidential. In writing the report I have also been conscious of there being two audiences for the work in terms of it being part a thesis for submission and as an evaluation for Schools Outreach. There are issues that have been reported to me during interview and reflections during observations that may be of concern specifically to the Schools Outreach organisation and that may appear critical of some aspects of the PCW role. Reporting of these needs care in terms of the continuing working relationship necessary between the PCWs and their line managers. Although one of the PCWs is no longer in post, Val is and inconsiderate reporting could be detrimental to her role and relationships.

As mentioned previously, the small nature of the research means that although individuals may not be referred to by name, it is relatively easy to identify them from the transcripts and from the quotations and references. However, Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest that what can be protected is confidentiality in terms of the outside world when it comes to publication:

"This means that although researchers know who has provided the information or are able to identify any participants from the information given, they will in no way make the connection between them publicly; the boundaries surrounding the shared secret will be protected." p.367

Seeking Permission

The seeking of permission is also a difficult area when working with children. The parents of the pilot study children were sent a letter asking for their permission. In the actual research a letter was sent home informing parents about the survey and permission was asked of parents via the pastoral care workers when children were to be interviewed. Permission was less easily gained where observations took place of different activities as in the case of playground games, for example. Prior to the observation there was no certainty about who would or wouldn't be taking part.

There is an argument for asking for permission from the children themselves. Epstein (1998) in researching gender and sexuality in a primary school reflects on her attempts to obtain informed consent from the children. Later in her research she became aware that the children did not really understand her role and therefore had not really given their consent to their involvement:

"the realisation that my explanation of my role to the children did not, in fact enable them to give their informed consent to the research since they had no experience by which to make sense of my role." p.37

Although children were asked prior to being interviewed for their permission and permission to use the tape recorder, in practice it is very difficult for children to refuse consent. The power relationship between adult and child makes the balance uneven. Even if the child does understand the repercussions and the issues involved in giving consent, they may not feel in a position to refuse:

"Much educational research involves children who cannot be regarded as being on equal terms with the researcher, and it is important to keep this in mind at all stages in the research process including the point where informed consent is sought." (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.352)

Taylor (2000) refers to concerns about the power relationships and the degree to which the current educational climate is militating against the empowering of children. Begley (2000) suggests that if children were asked for their views more frequently, the task of the researcher would not be such a difficult one.

Lindsay (2000) discusses the ethical issues relating to collecting children's perspective. He points out that not only do we need to consider respect for a person's dignity, competence, responsibility and integrity as with adults but issues specific to the involvement of children:

"There are also concerns specific to children and to young people. Primarily these are focused upon informed, valid consent, and ways of ensuring that this is attained, but the child is also included meaningfully in the decision making process. Furthermore there is a duty to ensure that research is not carried out on children unnecessarily, and the degree of intrusion is minimal." pp. 19-20

There are no simple answers to these dilemmas. The best that can be achieved is that consideration is given at each stage to the impact which the research process has upon both the adults and children involved and that sensitivity should be applied to all interactions. During this research the views and concerns of the children were taken into account at each stage and children were asked for their involvement and thanked for it. Some children, in particular, seemed to be delighted to have opportunity to talk about their experiences. Andy was so keen to be interviewed that he had asked on several occasions when the interview would take place. No child appeared to be distressed in any way and they all appeared at ease during the interviews and enjoyed the attention that the interviews gave them.

In some cases, during observations, the children were evidently aware of my presence and I was aware of them performing to their audience. For example, whilst observing the playground games one child who had previously attended my own school, appeared to be very conscious of my presence and wanted me to join in with the activity. During the first observation of the super 7 group, one girl kept turning round to watch me and appeared very conscious of having another observing adult in the room. Interestingly, on my second observation of the super 7 group, she was far more relaxed and appeared not to be overly conscious of my presence.

Questionnaires (Appendix C)

Questionnaires are a useful method of collecting a large number of opinions. It was decided that in order to collect a wider view of the pastoral care worker role a questionnaire would be issued to children in both schools. The intention was to collect views not only from those people working

directly with Val and Jamal but from the wider school community. In practice this was difficult to administer.

After piloting, questionnaires for children were handed to the pastoral care worker in one case and headteacher in another. They were asked to select one class in each year group for distribution of the questionnaire. No precise instructions were given other than the expectation that it would be the classteacher rather than the pastoral care worker themselves who would present it. During the course of this I became very aware of the pressures on both schools in terms of current events and was conscious of placing an additional burden upon them. For those teachers and children who were not directly involved with Val and Jamal, the purpose of the evaluation and its importance to those participating in the project may not have been as evident. It was decided therefore not to add further burden by issuing classteacher questionnaires. On reflection this has been an omission. Although one classteacher directly involved with one of the targeted children was interviewed this was hardly a representative sample. Further views from a wider group of teachers would have been beneficial, particularly in terms of substantiating or challenging some of the impressions given by the children, PCWs and headteachers.

One school returned the questionnaires given to the children very promptly. The returns looked to have been completed comprehensively and I felt reasonably satisfied that, although far from perfect, they could give a general idea of how the children felt. However, the second school received the news during the research that they were to have an OFSTED inspection.

Understandably, the survey was no longer a priority for them and it became very difficult to insist upon the immediate return of the questionnaires. After waiting some weeks a follow-up call revealed that the original questionnaire had been misplaced and a further copy would be needed. This was supplied and eventually, following the intervention of the SENCO and pastoral care worker, the responses were returned. However, it was evident that there had not been a consistent approach taken to their administration. Although one year 5 class had each completed a response, the years 3, 4 and 6 had had their views collected by the classteacher through a hand showing exercise. This had not been the intention of the survey and, although of some interest, makes the validity of the results questionable. In particular, it was evident from the year 3 class that a very hasty completion of one questionnaire had taken place from which it was difficult to even ascertain the numbers selecting different options. It was decided, therefore, that

this return could not be used in the analysis and that to enable some comparison to take place between schools, the year 3 cohort in the other school should also be removed.

There are also additional concerns with the questionnaire itself. Two groups of children completed it, those who had had some direct intervention and those with little to no experience of the pastoral care worker role. On reflection, a different method of canvassing opinion for these two groups might have been beneficial as from the questionnaire I feel some uncertainty as to whether all of the children evaluating the success of different interventions had actually participated in them. The large number of 'don't know' returns suggests that this was largely the case, but without knowing the classes and individuals there was no means of following this up. Questionnaires are relatively easy to administer but do not yield opportunities to explore and probe. They are inflexible and can be open to misinterpretation. Difficulties with language, both reading and writing skills, can restrict children's responses, especially to open-ended questions. As a result a multiple-choice approach had been taken with opportunity for a 'don't know' answer to be selected (see Appendix C). Although a more open-ended pilot had been administered, it was found that many of the children were unable to write with fluency in such an unstructured way. As pointed out in Dockrell (2000):

"The child may not be able to recall the necessary information or the child may not have sufficient linguistic skills to understand the meaning of the question or may lack the written skills to produce a decipherable response." p.56

It had been decided to use classteachers to administer the questionnaires. They were to read through the questions with the children prior to completion in order to minimise the need for literacy skills. It was acknowledged that this approach would have the disadvantage of the teacher knowing the children's responses even though the children did not include their names on the paper. The children were likely to be aware of this and may well have been conscious of the audience when making their responses. However, not all the questionnaire returns were positive and although the responses were generally favourable, some children did choose to select the 'poor' option. For some, at any rate, if there was pressure to select a positive response, this did not deter them. It would have been beneficial to have been able to follow up some of the individual questionnaires, particularly where children had chosen responses that did not conform to the others. However, the anonymity of the questionnaires and timetabling difficulties made this impractical in the course of this research.

Interviews

Interviews are another approach used to collect information and allow for the researcher to probe answers and follow-up leads. Interviewing is a central part of this research programme.

Interviewees included the chief executive of Schools Outreach, Gordon Bailey, the two pastoral care workers, Jamal and Val and the two headteachers, Helen and Joan. In addition four children, two from each schools, were targeted for interview and in two cases parents were also interviewed. Group interviews took place with children observed during circle time, super 7 group and 6 thinking hats workshop. One teacher, directly involved with one of the targeted children, was also interviewed. The interviews were all taped once permission had been sought from the interviewee. The tapes were then transcribed and are quoted from throughout the research. Names have been changed to preserve anonymity, with the reservations about the efficacy of this already mentioned.

An important aspect of the interviews with the children was finding out about the impact of the individual intervention programmes used. A core part of these interviews were the reasons why children had been referred from both the PCW, children's and in some cases parent's point of view. As interviewer I was most interested in the degree to which the interviewees felt that their reasons for referral had been addressed by the programme administered by the PCW.

A schedule was constructed for the interviews, which were semi-structured. (Appendix D).

The questions were focussed around the two main aims of the research which are to probe for perceptions of the pastoral care worker role and to assess the interviewees' perceptions relating to the success of the project. Although having an initial framework for questions, this was adapted flexibly during the course of each interview. This was particularly the case with the children as their responses required further clarification or led to more specific questions being asked. For example in the interview with Daniel several questions were targeted at finding out more about Daniel's previous behaviour and the reasons for it. However, in the interview with Chelsea time was spent exploring the difficulties she has had with friends. Similarly with the group interviews of children, although some core questions relating to the pastoral care worker and their attitudes to school were retained, there was opportunity to allow the children to lead

much of the discussion. The danger here is that the purpose of the interview is lost as group dynamics engross the children and they become more involved with their peers than the interviewer. This was particularly evident in the interviews following circle time. For example interviewing Michael and Kieron together:

“Interviewer If you could change one thing about school what would you change?”

Michael I'd change going.

Interviewer What would you change Kieron?

Kieron To let every kid play with toys not do any work.

Interviewer What would you keep the same?

Michael Keep the same... toys.

Interviewer What would you keep the same Kieron?

Kieron Playing with toys, everybody.

Michael I play on the play station. It's at home.

Both boys start calling out”

On reflection it might have been better to have interviewed these children on their own rather than in twos. However, difficulties with the amount of time available and the preference for interviewing close to the circle time session led to the choice of interviewing in groups. It may have been better to have interviewed a sample rather than all the children involved.

The group interview can have advantages, especially with children. Dockrell, (2000) discusses its benefits and disadvantages. On the one hand, it can result in a more informal and relaxed exchange of ideas:

“Group interviews allow the possibility that the discussion between individuals will spark off new ideas, criticisms or developments. Other potential strengths of group interviews include the probing of consensus beliefs, the provision of social support in the context of risky topics and a natural style of interaction.” p.52

Davies (1982) used group interviews in her research relating to children in classrooms and playgrounds. She reports that the interviews resulted in a high level of interaction but with the children still censoring parts of their conversations. It is hard to tell whether the children interviewed in the group interview were censoring their conversation. However, they were certainly aware of one another as part of the audience and the dynamics of the children

responding together turned the dialogue in ways in which it may not have developed if the children had been interviewed on their own.

There may have been some degree of inhibition as well as 'performance' for the audience during the group interview. Once one view has been expressed it can be difficult for children (and adults!) to contradict or put forward an alternative suggestion:

"A serious problem with group interviews is that some participants may dominate by either restricting the topics for discussion or dominating the discussion themselves. Some members of the group may be hesitant to offer a different or alternative perspective. Other potential disadvantages include difficulties for the interviewer following through an individual's line of argument, inadvertently 'tidying up' of talk in the transcription process and group order effects." (Dockrell, 2000, p.52)

Although it had been decided not to include my own school as an official part of the research, there were disadvantages to conducting it in other schools. For example, it would have been easier to have administered the questionnaires both to children and teachers in my own school. I could have also had more influence on the exact nature of its administration and would have felt more confident in the validity of the responses. In addition, although the power-base that would have existed between myself and children would have been difficult during interviews, my additional insight and relationship with the children might have been of some benefit. Measor (1985) refers to the importance of building relationships with the interviewee. She recognises the importance of image generally and the need to pay attention to appearance whilst also allocating time prior to the interview to chat informally before beginning the schedule of questions. I was unable to spend the amount of time in each school that would have been necessary for this kind of relationship and 'ease' to have developed. Working full-time has meant that although both schools were neighbouring, time taken interviewing and observing was snatched and there was little settling in time available prior to interviews. It was difficult to find times when children could be freed from lessons which also fitted in with my own timetable. On occasions interviews had to be cancelled or observations altered. Trying to accommodate all participants as well as leading my own school has been a difficult balance to maintain. However, the real cooperation and supportive nature of staff at the respective schools was very much appreciated.

No matter how much time we have and how carefully the scene is set, the interview situation remains artificial:

"No matter how hard an interviewer may try to be systematic and objective, the constraints of everyday life will be a part of whatever interpersonal transactions she initiates." (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.275)

There is always the likelihood that children will be anxious to please, or shock, and be reluctant to admit if they do not fully understand a question. However, the interview does allow for children with limited literacy skills to express an opinion. Some children struggle to express themselves in written form and so the interview provides a welcome opportunity to explore issues without the confines of written literacy.

Even with this greater opportunity to probe question responses, there can be no guarantee that the same frame of reference is being shared. There is always the danger that the interviewer will seek answers to support his/ her own biases and make his own meaning from what's said in a ways that is not representative of the interviewees intention. Lloyd-Smith and Tarr (2000) note:

"the meanings that they attach to their experiences are not necessarily the meaning that their teachers or parents would ascribe; the subcultures that children inhabit in classrooms and at schools are not always visible or accessible to adults." p. 61

It should also be acknowledged that the meanings which the researcher draws from the children's answers may not be what they intended to convey. Children may wish to please and seek to provide the answers that the researcher is looking for. How the children perceive the researcher will affect the responses they provide.

Diaries

In addition to interviewing the pastoral care workers and observing them work with groups, they were also asked to keep a diary for the period of a week. A written account does raise issues of disclosure as already referred to. There will have been some items that the PCWs chose not to include due to their sensitive nature. It was decided that rather than giving specific guidance as to how they should complete the diaries they would be allowed to construct their own versions. It was felt that this would allow more opportunity for the PCWs to relax and express themselves and may also mean that they were happier completing the diaries than if it had been given carefully prescribed limits. It would have been difficult anyway to have found the balance in the

amount of guidelines to be given. Organising and selecting for themselves provides additional insight into their own priorities and perceptions.

Once the diaries were submitted sections of the diary were then categorised under different headings and comparisons were made between the weeks of Val and Jamal. Numbers and types of referrals were noted as were the different types of interactions with different people in the school community. It is very difficult to categorise in this way and there may have been liaison and discussion that was omitted from the records either intentionally or by error. It was felt, however, that the diary entries would help to illustrate the interviews and give a broader understanding of what the week actually looks like for a PCW. For example, it was interesting to note the lack of breaks and number of referrals taken during the course of the week. It was felt that the diaries would help provide a more 3D image of how the PCWs perceive themselves and what their job entails and enable a cross-referencing to take place between the interviews, observations and diaries.

Observations

The questionnaire responses, diaries and interviews still only gave a limited view of the PCWs' work. These methods were most useful from the point of view of the first research aim, i.e. investigating perceptions of the pastoral care worker role. To some degree these approaches also provided information as to how successful people considered the interventions to have been. However, they only provided anecdotal evidence of the difference made to groups of children and/ or individuals.

It was decided that in order to build a more detailed picture observations would take place. It was decided to observe two interventions in each school. The selection of these was in discussion with the individual PCW. It was necessary to select a range of interventions that the PCWs considered representative of the work they did in the two schools. In the first school it was decided to observe Jamal's Super 7 group which was a group selected for a course of sessions on the basis of needing to develop different social skills. These children, it was felt, would benefit from the additional attention such a group might give. Two observations of the group were undertaken: one during the first session and one at the end. The second of Jamal's groups to be observed was the '6 thinking hats' group. Once more, targeted children attend. They had been

referred for a variety of reasons which included difficulties with their behaviour as well as emotional and friendship difficulties. The '6 thinking hats' group is based upon de Bono's theory which highlights the different types of thinking we engage in and encourages children to be able to visualise these types of thought through the use of different coloured hats.

In order to conduct the observations a time was agreed and I was introduced to the group to be observed. I did not participate in the group activity but tried to maintain as low a profile as possible avoiding eye contact with the children and sitting as far away from the group as possible without my view and auditory access being hindered. A tape recorder was used to record the dialogue and I made notes at the same time about my perceptions of the group dynamics, children's reactions and body language. At the conclusion to the observation the group were thanked. During the observation of the playground games the tape recorder could not be used and my note-taking remained the sole way of recording the conversations and actions of the group.

In the second school, observations of Val's circle time were conducted. Two observations took place of two different groups. The sessions were taped and transcripts made. The circle time was actually part of the school's nurture group provision and took part in what is called the 'rainbow room'. These children participated because of their attendance in the rainbow room and this was only one of many different types of interventions and support they receive. Once more children were referred for different reasons, including being withdrawn, difficulties with social skills as well as behaviour. The second activity observed was Val's playground games session. This was observed once and it is acknowledged that the session would be very different each time as although there are a core of children who attend on a relatively regular basis, the client group generally changes quite frequently and in most cases there is an element of choice in who attends. Follow-up interviews accompanied all of these activities with the exception of the playground games, timetabling difficulties made it difficult to catch the children after the session and any subsequent interview at a later date would be difficult to organise and less valid owing to the delay.

There are a number of research issues surrounding the use of field work and observation. For example, one concern is the level of involvement of the researcher. Ball (1985) identifies four

levels of participation by the researcher in observation. It can either be as complete participant, participant observer, observer as participant or complete observer. These are based upon Gold's (1958) range of categories. It could be argued that an observer can never be anything but a participant to some degree as their presence, in itself, will alter the balance of the interaction being observed. The difficulties with limited participation were made evident during the observation of the playground games. One child participating knew me from my previous school and was keen for me to become involved in the game. Although it was explained that this was not possible I did feel that his concentration upon the game itself and his subsequent behaviour was influenced by my presence. This particular child was also a member of the circle time group I observed and once more I felt he was very conscious of the observation taking place. The other children seemed to be less affected and in fact, at both times when I observed circle time, there were other adults present in the room; on one occasion an educational psychologist who was also conducting some observations. This group are used to a number of adults being around them and apart from the additional novelty of having a neighbouring headteacher, it is unlikely that there would be anything particularly unusual about my presence. However, this could be sufficient to make differences to the group dynamics

Pring (2000) also discusses issues related to the effect of the research activity upon the object of research. Although there will be some effect, there should be a core of unaffected behaviour and even a stranger's presence will not totally change the types of interaction taking place. The main point seems to be the acknowledgement of the effect that the intrusion into the research environment may have.

On recording the observations it was decided, with the participants' permission, to take a recording of the activities as well as writing down my impressions during the session. The observations recorded are very subjective and it must be acknowledged that there will have been actions, body language and messages evident from the groups that I, as researcher, did not pick up. Another researcher observing in the same situation would probably note other items and aspects of interest. There were also difficulties with the tapes. In some cases it was difficult to position the tape recorder in such a way that it could pick up everything that was said without limiting the movements of the children or drawing unnecessary attention to the tape recorder's presence. Therefore, some of the dialogue on the tapes was indistinct. Another difficulty was that

of surrounding classroom noise. Both pastoral care workers had some difficulty locating classrooms and areas in which to work. When they did, the open plan nature of the schools meant that the areas were sometimes noisy and the lessons of other classes could be distinctly heard. In some cases not only did this interfere with the taping but had a negative effect on the group themselves, for example; the 6 thinking hats group who had to move base during the activity and the Super 7 group who were being encouraged to relax and enjoy themselves whilst a teacher in a neighbouring area was shouting at the class.

Triangulation

The complexity of the research aims, the variety of tasks with which the pastoral care workers are involved and the wide range of individuals and groups they work with would have made it very difficult to find any one research method that singularly could provide a basis for evaluation. I believe that a broad range of strategies for evidence collection was needed considering the restraints of time, the limited personnel available and potential overload for the schools involved. This mixture of methods was considered as leading to a valuable opportunity to cross-reference evidence and compare results. This was particularly important as some of the methods used and the small nature of the enquiry meant uncertainty over reliability. Difficulties with the survey have already been described and results could not have been used in isolation with any form of confidence. However, the more intense case study work would not have provided a sufficiently wide view on its own.

This may appear as something of a jigsaw of sampling, aiming at a coherent picture of what is on offer, how successful it is and how the PCW is viewed. Cohen and Manion (1994) describe this as the concept of triangulation which involves the mixing of methods and the collation of materials of different perspectives:

“Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour...Triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data.” p. 233

It was intended that the choice of a more varied number of methods would help to provide a more holistic view of what was happening in the schools in relation to the pastoral care worker. A

potential difficulty could well be inconsistencies and differences in perception which rather than leading to an answer would raise further questions.

In order to build up the picture of the role of the pastoral care worker and people's perceptions it was believed necessary to provide opportunities for different groups of people to express their views. A broad brush was necessary whilst also needing more detailed analysis of specific projects from those closely involved with them. A difficulty overall was the number and range of activities that the pastoral care workers were involved with. It was not possible to sample from them all and therefore some form of selection was needed.

Analysis of results

One difficulty in using a variety of different methods, especially within the qualitative spectrum, is that of analysis. Open-ended questions, interviews, observations and diary entries all raise issues related to how the information is analysed and interpreted. For the multiple-choice responses on the questionnaires data were collated and presented in tabular form in the text. Each interview and recording made during the observations was transcribed. Quotations from these transcripts were included in the text and for ease of analysis were categorised and grouped together under headings. A similar approach was taken to the diary analysis. Each entry was placed in a category e.g. 'referrals', 'liaison with teachers', 'building relationships'. These then became sections of text with supporting quotations. The majority of the research findings are reported in thematically organised sections in the chapter 'Research Findings'. These include 'Schools Outreach the Organisation', 'The Pastoral Care Worker Role', 'Relationships Between the Pastoral Care Worker and Other Staff in School', 'Parents' Perceptions', 'Children and the Pastoral Care Worker Role' and 'Interventions'.

Summary

In this chapter I have described the research design and implementation into the nature and success of the pastoral care worker and have considered the rationale for the overall design of the study. The actual programme of research incorporates a programme of questionnaires, interviews, accounts through diary keeping and observations as well as some informal observations. It samples from a wide community of users including school staff, members of Schools Outreach, the children and some selected parents.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The following chapter presents the main findings of the research. It includes extracts from interviews, references to the survey results, comments based on observations and extracts from the pastoral care workers' diaries. The chapter aims to link together issues raised during the reading with issues from the research itself. The names of individuals referred to in the text have been changed and school names have also been altered. The exceptions are that of the chief executive of Schools Outreach, Gordon Bailey and David Knight as project development officer. Owing to their unique role and the fact that the research would also be used by Schools Outreach themselves, non-disclosure seemed inappropriate.

The interviews quoted from include Gordon Bailey, chief executive of Schools Outreach, two headteachers of participating schools, two pastoral care workers, two parents and one teacher. In addition children taking part in circle time were interviewed after the sessions observed and four children were interviewed as part of a more in-depth case study of some of the interventions being used. A more detailed discussion of the interview process and methodological concerns is included in the 'Methodology' chapter.

This chapter begins by considering 'Schools Outreach' as an organisation from the perspectives of those interviewed. It includes references to an initial interview with Gordon Bailey during which the origins of Schools Outreach was discussed. In addition, comments from the interviewed headteachers and pastoral care workers are also included in terms of presenting alternative perspectives. The Christian nature of the organisation is considered as well as how the two schools in the research became recipients of Schools Outreach support. It also considers the issue of line management and responsibility, communication, meetings, training and funding.

The next section 'The pastoral care worker role' looks at the historical context of the role, how the PCWs were appointed and how the role has been interpreted in different schools. Issues relating to the previous experience of the pastoral care workers and the ways in which they organise their timetables are considered. In the section 'Relationships between the pastoral care worker and other staff in school' the views of the headteachers, teaching staff and support staff are described and in 'Parents' perceptions' comments from parents about the success of the project and their view of the role are discussed. The relationships between children and the pastoral care workers form the section 'Children and the pastoral care worker role'. In particular, consideration is given to issues of dependency, transfer to secondary school, confidentiality and the 'unconditional care' approach expected of outreach staff. The final section, 'Interventions', looks in detail at the interventions used by the pastoral care workers. It includes reference to the friendship groups, peer mediation, one-to-one sessions, the 'open door' ethos, circle time, playground games, De Bono's six thinking hats group, the Super 7 group and drama.

Schools Outreach – the organisation

What is School's Outreach?

Gordon Bailey is the chief executive of Schools Outreach and was also largely responsible for its conception. He began in late 1957 spending one day a week in a Lancashire secondary school in a role he developed as that of pastoral care. Increasingly he became aware of the need for this kind of support in other schools too. After speaking out at a conference he found himself inundated with requests. During the interview with Gordon, time was spent discussing the origins of the organisation:

"I had 80 phone calls in a fortnight from various headteachers across the country who were all wanting one day a week for nothing and that was in the autumn of 1961 and I visited other schools and found that there are needs wherever you go and I decided to pack up my job and start doing this full time which I eventually did start in 62."

He sought a means by which the pastoral care worker role could be delivered in schools and made application to Schools Outreach, an existing charity based in Birmingham. Gordon has never been impressed with the title itself:

"Outreach tends to mean ... if I was reaching out from here ... I don't know... I didn't like the word outreach because it was common in social services, the youth service already...so I just thought it was confusing."

Now, as chief executive of Schools Outreach, he is supported by a council of management, administrative staff as well as David Knight, project development officer.

In 2002 there were 16 workers altogether across the country based in schools in disadvantaged areas. They are funded by a mixture of grant resources from the public sector and charitable trusts. Schools Outreach helps provide 'one-to-one unconditional pastoral care' and see their role as recruiting, training and placing the staff to do this. It is expected that school staff will refer children to the pastoral care workers as well as children referring themselves. Close partnership with school staff, the local church, youth workers and social services is encouraged. It is also anticipated that there may be some work with families too.

Recruitment of pastoral care workers is an important part of the organisation's role. Gordon Bailey explains that they will try to accommodate the requests of schools as much as is possible:

"Schools can get quite specific about what we can help them with alongside pastoral care. Our speciality, if you like, is providing pastoral care if the school says, can you do this as well... if it doesn't impinge and the worker has the gift then why not. As long as it doesn't take them off their focus."

In terms of qualifications, there are no fixed requirements. Gordon Bailey places personal characteristics as paramount and the ability to cope with the training which he believes to be quite exacting. The difference in background of the two pastoral care workers examined here and the implications for their emergent role is identified as a major issue for schools, their staff and Schools Outreach.

In most cases schools themselves will approach Schools Outreach to seek support:

"The school will contact us, and schools are constantly contacting us, we have had some publicity recently and the phone will ring for a fortnight none stop. When a school enquires, one of us will go to the school and talk to the head and say this is what we provide and how we provide it and we go from there."

The four schools featured here became involved through a third party. A Local Education Authority project called the Primary Exclusion Project (PEP) identified the possible advantages of working with Schools Outreach and sought support for the schools. PEP then acted as broker between the schools and Schools Outreach, supporting with match funding for the first two years until the PEP folded. From the interviews with headteachers, the way in which the schools were approached meant that neither of them was familiar with the exact nature of the group, how it worked or its primary function. The relationship between the schools and the organisation unfolded with time.

A Christian Organisation

Schools Outreach is a Christian Organisation. The staff are recruited through adverts placed in Christian publications and establishments. However, Gordon describes how they do not intend to 'convert' but use the Christian ethos in their work:

"Christ is there as the model. We don't want them to end up religious, we want them to end up as caring individuals. There are certain things about his approach to people and the way he related to people that I used as my model. Just as an example, he let in a woman who was of a different race and faith to himself and we look at his approach to her. He asked for something from her. He put himself in her debt."

The headteachers were asked about the Christian nature of Schools Outreach and the effect that this has had upon the activities in school. Both headteachers felt that there had been very little impact from this aspect of the service. The first headteacher, Helen explains:

"I'm aware that Jamal is a converted Asian to Christianity. I don't think it has a direct bearing. That was one thing we thrashed out at the beginning. He wasn't going to do any Christian type clubs. Because of the mix of children. But fair-minded that's part of the role rather than anything else."

Although there had been some concern, from Joan, the second headteacher about whether it would have an effect:

"At that point I thought they were more evangelical. I understood that they were a Christian organisation, overtly Christian. That was all I knew really.....Val, she's overtly Christian but not evangelical."

According to David Knight, project development officer, the understating of the Christian nature of the organisation is deliberate. During an informal discussion he explained that they are aware that some schools may be reluctant to take on a more missionary venture. This has caused some difficulties and debate for Schools Outreach who have been criticised on occasions by those who believe there should be a more evident proselytizing within their work. David considers that to take such a stance would discourage many schools from accepting Outreach support.

David does make reference to the fact that there is mention in the annual report of the Christian roots of the organisation, but that this is unusual for the organisation and was considered carefully before its insertion. The quote in the Annual report 2001 – 2002 states:

“The founding principle of the work of this charity is the unconditional care for the individual as seen in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.” (Schools Outreach Annual Report, 2001 – 2002, p. 6)

Within the context of the school, Jamal's faith is recognised and on occasions becomes a focal part of a lesson:

“Year 4 RE. The teacher asked if her class could ask me questions about my Christian faith as part of their RE work. They wanted to know what it was like to be a practising Christian. The children came up with some interesting questions. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. The children seemed to be captivated and wanted more.” Extract from Jamal's diary.

Schools' Involvement With Schools Outreach

According to Joan, the number of exclusions and possible exclusions which did not fit her inclusive approach to education was a main reason for the school's involvement:

“It got started because, not just me, not just this school, but there were a number of schools that had expressed concerns about excluded children and the reasons they were excluded from school. A small group of headteachers didn't want to exclude children but were powerless to stop that downward spiral.”

A number of times in the interview, Joan referred to the commonality of the difficulties her school encounters. Her account of the start of the project implies that the project was sought rather than it seeking them.

Another factor referred to is time. Both headteachers refer to the amount of time that is taken in addressing the pastoral needs of children. According to Joan:

"I was spending and so were other teachers, a lot of time trying to help children get their heads straight and the problems that were impeding them. It was taking up lesson time and my time when we're supposed to be doing everything else."

This quote seems to indicate that the time taken by pastoral needs conflicts with the school's main purpose. It would be interesting to compare the weight which different schools give to the importance of pastoral care provision.

What did the schools know about the organisation? Helen, headteacher at one of the junior schools explains:

"I had little notion of them at all. I can only remember hearing about them, I think through one of our workers who came in from ISIS and they mentioned it and they have a publication and I'm trying to think of the actor who fronts it. That was the only thing that meant I knew it was a charitable trust."

This lack of clarity was also evident in the school's understanding of the organisation's Christian foundation. The pastoral care workers who applied knew little more as Jamal points out:

"Before hand I knew nothing about it apart from a friend of mine had been to a course before. A distant friend so I'd just heard a little bit about it. It was just from the literature. I was impressed"

Similarly, Val had received background information which she felt was sufficient to encourage her to continue the process leading to the interviews for appointment with schools:

"I just saw them advertised in the paper and though that looks quite interesting and applied for it and carried on from there."

The interviews for pastoral care workers were conducted with a mixture of school personnel and Outreach personnel present. It was not clear during these where any casting decision should lie although there was an emphasis throughout the whole process upon schools and prospective pastoral care workers getting to know each other. There were tours of the local areas followed by tours around the school and plenty of opportunity for questions. Schools were paired together

and asked to agree between them their preferred choice from the candidates. Luckily, in this case, the schools were all in agreement with their named partner. Had this not been the case, the process could have become quite problematic.

When introducing the Outreach project to her staff, Joan describes making reference to the amount of time that was being spent on these issues as a justification for taking part:

"I did an analysis of the amount of time that was spent doing these things. My staff were receptive to the whole idea of getting children's heads on straight if they were to be educated, the prime function. We were having to spend time... wouldn't it be good if someone was qualified and had the time to do that. To try and help the children rather than the teacher who is too highly paid and too highly skilled in their own field to do that work."

The 'time' issue is used as the catalyst for the introduction of the project. There seems to be an implication from this quote that they were seeking someone more qualified to take on that particular role. Teachers are described as having their own, very specific area of skill not necessarily pastoral work. There might be a significant variation between the degree to which teachers and heads in different schools see pastoral care as part of their role. The issue of where responsibility lies for pastoral care has already been discussed in the review of the literature and forms part of the discussion chapter. What does expertise in this area include? The new pastoral care workers receive 16 weeks of basic training followed by termly 3-day in-service training. Although intensive work, does this qualify them as experts in their field in the way that Joan hopes?

Unlike Joan, Helen considered her school to be more of a selected recipient than deliberately seeking out the support:

"I responded to the opportunity that existed. I'm very conscious of the children not having a lot of pastoral care. We needed to do more pastoral work and needed somebody to aid that."

It is not clear from this quote whether pastoral care isn't available because of time, inclination and ability or both. The pastoral care worker appears to be seen as 'helping' with this rather than

taking it off teachers' hands. However, there is still the notion that things are getting worse and that the deterioration is progressive.

For Joan's school, the opportunity for additional pastoral support was not met with unanimous support. For some teachers the difficulties experienced by others were part of a classroom management issue:

"Probably the most resistance has come from my management team. Really skilled teachers who can't really empathise with the teachers who aren't as good as them. So they find that children who presented to colleagues as a problem aren't a problem to them."

This is an interesting issue that deserves further consideration. Joan herself accepts that some teachers' management of class behaviour is not as good as others. For them these children do not need additional pastoral care. Is that because classroom management is the only factor causing the concern? Do these children, who are outwardly conforming to their classroom routines, still have pastoral needs? If not does this place the pastoral care worker as an additional member of staff shoring up the ineffectiveness of a group of teachers?

Gordon Bailey would like to see Schools Outreach developing more as a means of recruitment and training, handing over inducted workers to schools:

"I would love to see Schools Outreach as a channel with control over recruitment, training, management and care of workers and then for the workers to be taken on by the local community, by the schools.....My heart's with the kids who are benefiting. I hate it when we have to terminate a project. We fight like fury to continue a project."

Gordon describes how most secondary schools end up employing their pastoral care workers. So to some degree this is already what happens. Whether it is the most effective form of induction is a matter for debate, particularly considering some of the communication difficulties described later in this chapter.

The Line Supervisor

In the Schools Outreach information pack, part of the school's commitment includes the appointment of a line supervisor who will meet regularly with the worker:

"It is the practice of Schools Outreach to ask each school to appoint someone from the senior staff to act as a local point of reference for the worker; someone to whom the worker can turn when a crisis situation occurs, or when information is urgently needed about a pupil; someone to oversee the PCW's work day-by-day."

Gordon Bailey refers several times to schools and headteachers as being the line supervisors for the pastoral care workers. The use of the term 'supervisor' rather than manager originated because of the need to distance the pastoral care worker from the school structure for fund raising purposes. If potential sponsors consider that the worker is part of the mainstream school entitlement they will not look favourably on providing support. Helen describes how the pastoral care worker functions independently:

"He's independent. We used to be really good at having regular meetings every Tuesday. If he needs to talk to anyone he does. He's always got that direct line. I suppose it's me."

The two schools vary in the degree to which the pastoral care worker is based within the special needs department. In some cases the Special Needs Co-ordinator becomes almost line supervisor as opposed to the headteacher. Jamal, in his diary describes referrals from both the headteacher and SENCO. We might conjecture that variations in the supervisory role can lead to a difference in the number and types of cases supported by the pastoral care worker. For example Val describes how she works closely with the SENCO who helps her to identify the children she needs to work with. The SENCO's contact with children with learning difficulties may mean that some of these children are referred with emotional needs too. Jamal also liaises with the SENCO and one specific teacher who he is supporting:

"Loosely I link with the SENCO. The support teacher from LABSS whenever she comes in I try to make sure that I see her. The head and the deputy together and the year 5 teacher because that's the class that needed help."

To what degree do these kinds of referrals limit access for others to the PCWs? Both PCWs spend time with the SENCO and specialist support staff for children with special needs, many of the children they work with are referred from these sources. Part of the inclusion agenda requires

us to consider whether it is necessary or useful to delineate between children with special needs and those who've not. In a similar way both PCWs are also involved in work which targets all children in the school rather than just those specifically identified and referred to them.

To some degree, the fact that all children can self-refer if they wish provides access for all.

Jamal, in particular, makes himself accessible by attending breakfast club and being outside in the playground during breaktimes. At these times the children feel free to approach him and he will also follow up any issues encountered elsewhere. However, as multi-agency and 'joined up' work is increasingly being advocated, both PCWs represent examples of school-based staff who are actively engaging regularly with other agencies. In my own school part of Val's work includes forming part of a multi-agency meeting which meets termly to discuss particular families and ways of supporting them. This group includes the school nurse and nurture group representative. In addition Val has increasingly attended social services' meetings to represent the school and to keep informed about particular families she is working with. One entry in Val's diary refers to attending a core group meeting. Jamal does not appear to have taken on this role.

So who do the pastoral care workers go to when there is a problem? Both Joan and Val refer to some difficulties there have been when the Schools Outreach organisation has intervened on their behalf. In one case this did result in the wrong message being given from the one intended by Val:

"If you have a problem and you go to them I feel they go at it like a bull in a china shop. They don't tend to listen to us."

In some respects it would be expected that the pastoral care workers would address any difficulties to their line managers at Schools Outreach. However, this can make the school feel marginalised and at times when the issue needs to be addressed within school. For example, in my own school a clash with a member of staff was referred to Schools Outreach. This led to a letter arriving expressing concerns about relationships. The member of staff had already been seen and the situation discussed. This appeared to have calmed the situation but the subsequent letter, arriving after the fact, drew attention again to the confrontation. From the point of view of school management such indirect intervention with such a time lapse and without both sides of

the story can cause difficulties in the relationship. As Schools Outreach have little direct involvement with the schools and their community there can be difficulties finding effective ways to solve problems raised with them.

Val and Jamal appear to have different views and approaches to dealing with problems they encounter, both reflecting their feelings about Schools Outreach. Val's comments reflect some of the confusion there is about who to address any issues to:

"They obviously care about you and they know what you're doing through your reports and you go to them if you've got a problem. But at the end of the day I still come to the school because I still feel that even though I'm employed by Schools Outreach, you're still answerable to the school."

Val expresses here a mixture of confidence in the organisation – if she has a problem – whilst also seeing distance between her work and the organisation. Further into the interview and Val expresses even more concern about the tensions in being accountable to more than one organisation:

"Schools take you on as a member of their staff. You're not but you are in some respects but then you get from Schools Outreach, you're not a member of staff. You've got all different rules and guidelines to follow. I've got to admit there's lots of things I don't tell Schools Outreach if it can get sorted out at school. Purely because they can upset the apple cart and make it a lot worse. Like coming back and not totally taking on board what you're saying. I know at the end of the day they're doing it for your benefit. But you've got to tread carefully. I know you're not there for the staff, you're there for the children but you've still got to follow guidelines for the staff. You can't just go in your own world because you're not only upsetting yourself, you're upsetting the staff as well. They're not a bad organisation to work for."

There are many issues in this quote that reflect some of Val's difficulties in finding her role within the organisation she is working with. Val acknowledges the need to follow school procedures as these will affect her immediate working environment and the teachers she is working with. There seems to be an implication that Schools Outreach do not understand this and there is an implied reference perhaps to an incident where Schools Outreach intervened in a way Val had not wanted them to. As Val describes, Schools Outreach are looking after the welfare of the pastoral care workers. However, it appears not always to be seen as effective in that way. If Val is

keeping things from them, this must place pressure on Val in terms of her meetings and training in Bromsgrove. Jamal on the other hand is much more confident about approaching them:

“You can just offload safely, off the hook. Then get back to the work. There might be particular cases I do need help with and the school can't really help.”

From the discussions with both pastoral care workers, Jamal presents a more positive view of the role of the organisation. Interestingly, he has now resigned from his post due to becoming a classteacher again but has still elected to remain on the Council of Management. Overall, from the interviews and observations he has found the issues of liaison and working between school management and Outreach management as less of an issue than Val. We might consider that the background of the individual and his/ her own level of interpretation and experience results in a different approach and perspective.

An alternative source of support can be the school staff themselves. Both pastoral care workers work closely with a number of staff in the school but in some cases have developed close links with one individual. For example, Val has benefited from the support and advice given by a teacher employed locally between a cluster of schools to work with children suffering from emotional and behavioural difficulties. As Val's two schools are also shared by Sarah, the teacher supporting children with behavioural difficulties, the two have found themselves with many cases in common and have been in a position to support one another. There are other advantages to this relationship. Whereas Val was new to the area, Sarah had worked for many years in the local secondary school and was familiar with many of the local families. This has been a real bonus for Val who has been able to find out quickly about the background to many cases which she would not have known otherwise.

Val acknowledges Sarah's contribution in her interview and refers to her as someone she has worked closely with. The advantage of having details of family history in this kind of capacity can not be underestimated. Local knowledge is crucial, and was not available initially to either Val or Jamal as they were both recruited nationally. Schools Outreach do encourage pastoral care workers to move into and live in the area where they are working. Val took up this opportunity but Jamal continued to commute. However, even living locally will not automatically provide some of

the necessary details about local families. Sarah's longer local record enabled Val to access this. Interestingly, Val worked far more closely with families than Sarah. In addition, this area of her work has been identified in my own school as an area for further development next year, partly as a result of Sarah's redeployment.

Communication

During the headteacher interviews comments were made about the links with Schools Outreach as an organisation. The impression given by Helen, as headteacher of one school, seemed to be that they generally kept in the background. Finance and being clear about the organisation's aims and practices did emerge, however, as issues:

"They don't have a lot to do with school. They're unobtrusive. I think the finance thing was most difficult. Not being quite clear as to that. I think we needed to have more things in black and white early. So that we were very clear. I really don't have very much to do with them only when we have the meetings."

This comment has recently been emphasised by schools being invoiced for retrospective training costs. In recent discussions with participating headteachers, this has caused a degree of resentment as school budget planning does not allow for such oversights. The schools believe the fault lies with the Schools Outreach organisation whereas Schools Outreach feel that schools were aware of the charge and although the delay in billing is an oversight this should have been planned into school budgets. At present this situation is unresolved but could lead to further difficulties between the schools and Outreach management.

From Joan there is concern about the level of supportiveness of the Outreach organisation towards the PCW:

"I don't think they're as supportive of her as they might be and they liaise directly with her and not with me. So when she did something for them we actually had to support her when they told her off for not doing something. I thought it was dreadful. She'd let them down. I find that quite.... That was her interpretation anyway and I would have preferred more direct involvement."

It is interesting that Joan appears to feel sidelined in communications between Val and Outreach reflecting Val's own concerns. Whatever their complaint about Val was, she has only received

information through Val herself. Should schools be more directly involved in professional development and equally should Outreach management spend more time in schools and observing the pastoral care workers in their role? Once more, these difficulties seem to be linked to Val more so than Jamal. This might be due to Jamal appearing to take more direct control himself of his relationship with the school and seeking less intervention and support from the Schools Outreach organisation. This could be attributed to his more extensive involvement with schools previously and his greater familiarity with the structures and routines that are characteristic of them.

At present, awareness of the effectiveness of the workers and issues in relation to their environment come only through the meetings and through the workers' reports. Unless headteachers contact them directly, there is no regular approach from Schools Outreach on an individual basis unless a problem has arisen. Although the termly meetings involve all participants they do not provide the opportunity for more open discussion about individual situations. The agenda is set by Schools Outreach and the reports from the pastoral care workers form the bulk of the content. A more one-to-one discussion with schools might reveal issues that they do not wish to share in the more open forum.

From her interview, Val appeared to feel that there was a lack of awareness on the part of Schools Outreach and a need for them to keep up to date with changing contexts. This raises issues to do with the amount of time they spend in school and the benefits and disadvantages if there was more involvement at this level. More direct involvement might enhance the credibility of the Schools Outreach personnel but equally may bring to light tensions between perceptions of the PCW role. The schools' view point on this level of involvement, monitoring and support would need careful consideration. Such a shadowing exercise might bring to light uses of PCWs not intended by the organisation, thus putting them in a difficult situation in relation to the school and the pastoral care worker themselves. Jamal, in particular has etched out a role with which he and the school are comfortable but which does not necessarily reflect all of Schools Outreach's aims and objectives.

There is an issue of credibility for Outreach staff. From the interview with Val, there is the implication that they are no longer as well-informed or aware of issues for current staff as perhaps they need to be. How do Schools Outreach personnel try to keep up-to-date themselves? In theory they should also be involved in a round of professional development. For such an organisation, accessing training outside of the group appropriate to the group's rationale, would not be easy.

How do Schools Outreach keep informed about the progress of their pastoral care workers? As mentioned already, the regular meetings provide opportunity for discussion around the content of the termly reports produced. It is interesting that although Gordon Bailey expresses the wish that the schools see the worker's report, there appears to be no monitoring to ensure that this is the case. This, however, remains the core method of feedback and appears to be viewed by Val, at least, as something of a chore rather than a productive opportunity for reflective practice.

Certainly, Schools Outreach also perceive some difficulties with communication. Gordon Bailey makes references to some misunderstandings there have been between schools and the Outreach organisation. These seem to have centred around arrangements for training dates and perceptions of the role itself. Gordon feels that lack of clarity in the documentation provided by Schools Outreach might be to blame. This comes to light in reference to one particular case:

"As the line supervisor he thought he had total control over how many hours the worker worked, what time she arrived in school, what time she left. So, yeah, occasionally we do find... and we're reviewing all our documentation."

When asked specifically what were the main areas needing clarification Gordon stated:

"The relationship between the workers and the school. This guy actually thought that the worker was a member of the teaching staff and I don't know how he came to that conclusion and he thought we'd pinched off the school."

Certainly the schools involved in the research did not appear to have a clear understanding of Schools Outreach, its purposes, history and line management. Although information was available that could have clarified some of these points, it had not been drawn to the headteachers' attention and the headteachers had not taken responsibility for seeking it out.

Given the pressures they experience of time and paper work, Schools Outreach need to consider

not only the review of the documents but how it is presented to them and what points are highlighted.

The Meetings

Schools Outreach have requested that regular meetings take place on a termly basis to discuss the progress of the pastoral care workers in school. Helen, headteacher at one school, was asked for her views on these:

"I used to attend and wonder what we would be doing. But now I think it's a good chance for the four schools to get together and to think that's a good idea, I could use that. I find them very good."

As the year has progressed, however, there have been follow up comments from Helen that indicate less than satisfaction with the number of meetings. Perhaps as the pressures of the school year have impacted and the content of the meetings has not changed, the readiness to spend this amount of time has gradually dwindled.

The content of the meetings is largely based around reports from the pastoral care workers. The discussions are usually supportive of the pastoral care workers and provide opportunity for headteachers to express their appreciation. However, whether the frequency and duration justifies this is debatable. Sensitive issues, specific to individual schools, tend not to be raised at the meetings and would have to be discussed in one-to-one conversations over the telephone. We might feel that this creates a superficial tone which does not reflect the quality and complexity of the work being covered.

Training

Schools Outreach organise their own training. This begins with a term's preparation for the role before the pastoral care workers take their place in school. This is followed by intermittent training days, the details of which are included in the Schools Introductory Pack. Schools Outreach place an emphasis in their literature on the importance of their training programme:

"the PCW's presence at termly in-service training events is expected and is a matter taken very seriously by Schools Outreach. Dates of such events will be

made available to the school well in advance. Such events provide the worker with regular peer encounters, where experiences and expertise can be shared."

Schools Outreach also suggest that line supervisors from the school should visit the training centre during the worker's initial training in order to meet the senior staff at Schools Outreach and become more familiar with the work of the charity. This expectation was not fulfilled by either school involved in the research here.

How do the headteachers view the training received by the pastoral care workers? Overall there seemed to be very little knowledge about what the training actually consists of. This is in spite of the fact that there is a very detailed description of the training programme included in Schools Outreach's Introductory Pack. Joan expresses it as 'on trust' and only sees the lack of information about it as a problem if she were being billed for it. Following more recent developments, this has come to be the case and would therefore be an even more pertinent issue. When asked if she had noticed any impact of the training:

"During the first year, yes. But not this year. This year she's done it herself. I'm not aware of courses in practice."

However, the overall impression seemed to be positive:

"I think they've done a good job on the training. I think he feels reasonably comfortable with it."

This is also reflected in the interview with Jamal himself:

"They're doing a fantastic job (Schools Outreach). Their training is fantastic. They're a credit to us. They care for their workers. Cathy comes in once every six weeks."

Although this contact is reported by Jamal, the presence of Schools Outreach in schools other than at meetings does not appear to be as regular as suggested.

At Helen's school Jamal has delivered some training to staff himself and also takes part in some school INSET sessions. However, there still seems to be little communication about the content of the training although Helen reports that Jamal does feel it to be of value:

"He keeps coming up with ideas, I have to say I don't have details of his training so I haven't been able to say, oh he's doing that and this is the impact of it but he seems to come back saying that was good, I enjoyed that. Sometimes I don't have time to ask and to a degree I think in some ways it's not really my concern. It might be intrusive. He seems to be comfortable with it. He comes in and does training with us. He does teacher days with us. He's taken advantage of that."

It is interesting that Helen considers that it might be intrusive to enquire. There is a distinct distance between training and schools whereby even the schools do not consider it to be their business to find out more. This barrier does not appear to be intentional and there is no evidence from Schools Outreach that there is any intention of disguising what the training might be. In view of other training that schools receive, far greater clarity and feedback is expected not only to senior management but the rest of the staff. By not sharing the content of the courses, staff in schools may be losing out on a possible source of useful and relevant knowledge. In terms of addressing the school climate and being mindful of the importance of ethos generally, this is a significant omission. Gordon Bailey makes reference to confusions where school staff feel they have not been made aware about training commitments:

"While the in-service was on this very angry man came on the phone, our worker had left them in the lurch by going off on this in-service."

This seems to be an example of how the lack of communication and awareness of training commitments goes beyond the actual content but also includes the timing. Irrespective of the amount of and quality of the communication between the two, there are likely to be times when school business coincides with training commitments. Presumably the school quoted did not feel that they had been given sufficient notice of training times rather than disagreeing with the principle itself.

What of the content of the training? Gordon describes how he is heavily involved himself:

"I do a lot of the basic training programme. Then I bring in the other long standing – Phillip. April is the end of his seventh year. People who have got that kind of experience have a lot to share."

Although true, having up-to-date, relevant experience is perhaps just as vital. During Val's interview the question of keeping up-to-date is raised:

"I know Gordon spent years in school but that's years and years ago. Schools have moved on. There's far worse problems out there than he thought about in the seventies. I think it would be nice if they could just come and shadow you. Just for a day or half a day just to see what we do."

This raises the issue of the relevance of training provided in the eyes of the pastoral care workers as well as reinforcing the need for Schools Outreach to have a greater working knowledge of what the job entails in schools.

Some of the training is conducted by pastoral care workers themselves, and Gordon is keen to emphasise the importance of them sharing their experiences and discussing issues:

"In the training there is a special session and open session for sharing concerns. They ask questions of me or they can ask other workers questions. Sharing encouragement and frustration. Obviously there are times especially between sessions and evenings when they can let their feelings out."

A mutual trading of knowledge and advice:

"There is an internal letter and they can share their problems. Jamal wrote in when it looked like the funding was going to dry up. They've got that facility. They have chance during the residentials, sometimes they're up till the early hours sharing things."

This view is reiterated by the pastoral care workers themselves. Jamal states the importance of having the opportunity to get together with other PCWs and share experiences:

"It gives us a break because it's all the pastoral care workers together, sharing their experiences. Sharing their grievances or whatever. Like that last session, I actually shared with them about 'hats' thinking. I did the training."

Gordon sees himself as being central to this process of sharing and advising:

"..and all the workers have my telephone number and they know they can ring me at any time."

It is acknowledged by both pastoral care workers during the interviews that the organisation does care about them and their needs on an individual and personal level. The issue is whether this transfers into effective practice. The pastoral care workers themselves are positive about the training. When asked about the initial induction Val indicates areas that she has found particularly useful:

"I found the counselling side very useful. We spent a significant amount of time on that. That's been very useful. The bullying side. We spent quite a lot of time on that and we had group work sessions."

Jamal refers to bereavement counselling and 'solution-based therapy' as being particularly useful. When asked about solution-based therapy he describes it as:

"The miracle question. You ask them on a scale of 0 – 10 where they are and they have to firm up why they're at that point and write down their statements. Then the miracle question is, if you had one wish how could you make it move up to 10 – what would the perfect day be like for you?"

The pastoral care workers indicate that they have used these aspects of the training in their work, although not always immediately. Jamal explains:

"It was an intensive fifteen week course. I thought I'm never going to use all this but I keep thinking, Oh I can use that, I remember that or I go back to my study notes, for example on bereavement counselling."

This appears to be one of the difficulties with training for pastoral care. There are such a large number of potential areas of expertise that the workers may need to call on that it is not possible to equip them with everything they may need to practise. In some cases areas of training may not be used for years. It is then arguable that training received will either have been forgotten or will have become outdated. Perhaps the most important facility is one where advice can be sought as and when necessary from a bank of contacts.

Although the initial training does largely seem to have been a success, Val did have some reservations about the target group:

"We had difficulty as a group, there was nine of us in this group and the most were going to secondary schools. I think there was more for the secondary workers than the junior workers. I felt at the time we had to differentiate between them ourselves. But that's getting better because there's more junior schools. At that time there wasn't. There's more now."

This is part of the difficulty of any broad brush training. During the induction stage, training will have to be general and sufficiently extensive to cover some of the range the PCWs are likely to meet. However, the pastoral care workers will find themselves in very different settings in very

different communities and with various age groups. Not easy to cater for from a training point of view.

What then of the interim training that the pastoral care workers receive on a termly basis? This has taken a variety of forms. Val refers to team building and the visit of a social worker to discuss stress:

"They're OK. We went on one last week. The one in the summer term is more like a team building exercise. Training as such didn't really exist last week. The one back in March was a good one. It was by a social worker in little Hampton and he did a lot about how to cope with the stresses of the job. He's part of the support team workers. He's well up on what life as a pastoral care worker is really like. He just knew where we were coming from. It was him and two other guys, they were really really good."

This training was perceived by Val as being both up-to-date and relevant. A practitioner who she felt she could relate to and who was able to offer practical advice.

Jamal has shown himself willing not only in school to lead training sessions but also for Schools Outreach. In this way, the Schools Outreach training programme has had something of a cascade effect into schools' training sessions. This involvement in schools' training has been less evident with Val. Although Val does not mention it in the interview, I am also aware that she has acted as leader in some sessions based at Schools Outreach's headquarters. Using a large amount of in-house training, although having its place, may be seen as an inward looking approach. If schools are to contribute to the cost of training they may also expect to see an increase in the involvement of external training providers.

In terms of any improvements that could be made to the training, Jamal indicates satisfaction with the amount of and current training available:

"The training though is very comprehensive – most of what you would ask for is covered anyway. It's OK as it is, any more and I'd find it a bit much."

Val does have ideas about what she would like covered in addition to the set programme. These include ideas for drama and restraint training:

"I would like more on the drama side because I think children can express themselves this way. One thing that didn't come on the training course that I think is very useful but that I've done previously in my other job is restraint training. I do think you need that. Fortunately I had that in my other job, because you can get yourself into trouble now. You do need it because children do fly off the handle and you do need to restrain them sometimes."

From the number of roles and activities that the two pastoral care workers have employed, different training might be necessary as these roles mature. For example, in Jamal's diary he makes reference to the need to find out about the support available for Looked After Children:

"Did a bit of research on the Internet for Looked After Children and the support that was available to them. This was as a general interest to me as I had only recently been aware of the topic." Extract from Jamal's diary.

Jamal had taken it on himself to find out information. Both pastoral care workers seem to take this approach where they feel there is a gap in their knowledge. They would now benefit from having opportunities to explore these specific areas of interest in more depth through their Schools Outreach training.

Funding

Finance has been particularly difficult for the four schools taking part in this Schools Outreach project. The initial contributions from the LEA were withdrawn during the three-year contract time. This resulted in some conflict between the LEA and Schools Outreach and uncertainty about the future of the project. These are evidently issues for Schools Outreach provision which does rely upon its charitable status and a series of match funding opportunities.

Gordon Bailey explains how in the majority of cases schools employ the pastoral care workers themselves after the initial supported period:

"Quite a few times we recruit and train and manage it for a short period and then other people take over. ... workers have just been taken on as staff at the school... secondary schools tend to do it more than primary schools. All the ones taken over so far by the schools have been by secondary schools."

Uncertainty about the future of projects leads to temporary contracts which can cause insecurity amongst staff. Following the issuing of invoices to pay retrospectively for training received, contact with the LEA legal department has revealed that this is not the only Outreach project locally that has suffered from misunderstandings relating to finance. This seems to be an area which needs greater clarity as schools and the Outreach organisation are entering into new project development. The legal basis of the partnership needs defining as do the respective responsibilities and contributions.

Documentation provided by Schools Outreach does include reference to funding implications and the expectation that there is some commitment from schools. That the schools involved in this project were not aware of this initially is probably as a result of them being approached by the Primary Exclusion Project. As some of the initial contact was organised through PEP, schools were quickly enlisted without being totally familiar with the nature of the Schools Outreach organisation and possible implications in future years.

Evaluating the success of Schools Outreach projects is also problematic. Much of the funding sought by them requires detailed project evaluation and data collection. In the following quote Gordon Bailey explains how previous evaluative reports have been commissioned as a result of these requirements:

"We were struggling at the time. (Another LEA) were funding 50% of the cost of two workers. We were just about paying the salaries, so I shared this report from the headteacher with this guy at the department and he was obviously very impressed but he wanted an independent evaluation, so they gave us £50,000 and on top of that paid for the evaluation."

In the Annual Report and Schools Outreach newsletters, there is an attempt to catalogue the number and type of interventions that pastoral care workers are involved with. This kind of information, although providing no detail, does give an idea of the balance of need and activity. An example is included in Appendix E.

The pastoral care worker role

The following section discusses in more detail the PCW role following interviews with the PCWs themselves. It takes the views of headteachers, children and parents into account and draws from the PCWs' diaries and observations.

Applying for the post

Both pastoral care workers were asked why they had applied for the post. Their replies suggested that they were both looking for something different. Val explained:

"It was really a total change of career for me. I'd always been interested in working with children. It's just been a long time coming really and with my church background as well. The thing that tipped the scales was when I went to Tunisia and worked with physically and mentally handicapped children. This job was advertised."

Jamal was particularly positive about the change of career he chose. However, recent events have led to him deciding to go back into teaching. At the time of the interview, however, he had no regrets:

"I applied firstly because I knew I could change my jobs. I enjoyed teaching but it wasn't me. I needed something with less paperwork."

On subsequent occasions, Jamal has also referred to the paperwork demands of teaching. He seems particularly to have enjoyed the less structured and informal nature of the pastoral role, which this chapter explores. The pastoral care workers had gathered most of their information from the literature provided by Schools Outreach. Val describes in interview how she found out about the job and the process of application:

"I just saw the job advertised in the paper and thought that looks quite interesting and applied for it and carried on from there..... They sent the background information and then sent an application form which was like a mini booklet about 20 pages long. I started to fill that out and sent it back. Had my first interview and then had interviews with the schools where they thought you'd be most appropriately placed."

Jamal describes how little he knew initially:

“ Before hand I knew nothing about it apart from a friend of mine had been to a course before. A distant friend so I'd just heard a little bit about it. It was just from the literature. I was impressed.”

Although the literature produced by Schools Outreach may not have been sufficiently clear in terms of describing the role according to the headteachers, it did deliver a positive message for those considering applying themselves.

Interpretations of the pastoral care worker role

“The work undertaken by our school-based workers is not prescribed in specific detail; for every school is unique, every child is unique, and many situations within which the worker will be found are one-off in character. We expect the worker, together with a school's teaching staff, to learn by discovery how best to match the gifts, skills and abilities of the worker to the needs present within the school. After a few months a 'contract' may be drawn up by worker and school detailing what the school expects from the worker, together with the resources the school will provide for the worker.”('Schools Introductory Pack' p. 20)

This description of the way in which the pastoral care worker's role is gradually defined comes from the Schools Outreach Introductory Pack. Alongside it are seven 'ingredients' which they claim are likely to be common to the Pastoral Care Worker role. Gordon Bailey, Chief Executive of Schools Outreach, was quite clear about the open brief which is given to the pastoral care worker and his/ her school:

“We expect the worker, together with a school's teaching staff, to learn by discovery how best to match the gifts, skills, and abilities of the worker to the needs present within the school.”

The process of negotiation and the importance of communication between different groups within the school would need to be emphasised for this to take place effectively. It relies upon the readiness of school and staff to establish through a gradual process, a sophisticated relationship. The pastoral care worker job description supplied by Schools Outreach suggests that a 'more earthed-in-practice' job description might be drawn up after the worker's first full-term in school.

The ethos of the school and the concept of the 'team' could be seen as an important requisite for role negotiation. Both headteachers referred to this in their respective interviews. Joan, headteacher of one school, described how the role evolved with discussion amongst the different groups concerned:

"She doesn't have a problem with going into any classroom. Even our supply teachers. They are receptive. I'm not taking credit for that but it is what I want. It's the team. It's the way I want to work. We are all in the same team, we just have different roles in it. I'm not saying it should be compartmentalised but there isn't a teacher who would do Val's role and there isn't an LSA who could do a teacher's role. But we respect..... we try to get people to respect themselves in their role."

Once more, although there is an emphasis on team work and role adjustment in this quote there is also the sense of the headteacher's individual expectations, not only for Val but the rest of the staff too. During Val's interview, there was a different perspective on how the teachers perceived her:

"They found out about my role as we went along. They weren't as clear as I thought they would be. I started in May, which is a difficult time to start in school. I'd say by about the first half term, Christmas. By then staff more or less knew what I was in school for."

There are issues indicated here to do with adopting a PCW mid-year. According to this testimony, for almost two terms Val felt that the staff were unclear about her role. This must have meant some confusion and frustration if expectations weren't being met. This view is different from that of her headteacher who did not refer to any confusion amongst the staff during those initial terms.

Val also indicated during the interview the issue of familiarising new staff with the PCW role. Involving the PCW in the induction process of new staff is something that schools might need to consider in more depth. As staff turnover in many schools has increased, attention to the roles of support staff can be neglected. Where existing staff induct new staff into the PCW role, there is the chance that they will be sharing a view that is not entirely in line with that of the PCW and school. It perhaps should not be left to chance.

The role in different schools

The two schools researched had each developed a different role for the pastoral care worker. Depending upon the skills available, the ethos of the school and the preferences of senior management, the jobs had evolved in very different ways. The driving force for this appears to be a series of contextual circumstances rather than actually resulting from the children themselves.

In the case referred to below, Val had become involved in sign language classes which proved very beneficial for many children. Sign language was not an activity developed by Val in her other school because the personnel were not the same and the opportunity did not arise. The sign language club was instigated by a parent and was unique to one school. Its benefits might have been equally great in other contexts but availability of the activity led to implementation. Val reinforced this at interview:

“Each school – your role develops differently. It’s amazing what you can get from children. I keep going on about the sign language but that’s just brought out so much, much more than I ever imagined that it would. It’s developed my role quite a lot.”

The activity developed the role, rather than the role and the demands of the role determining the activity. Gordon Bailey did recognise that there have been difficulties with the interpretation of the job description which has resulted in major misunderstandings on occasion. He made reference in the interview to a difficulty encountered with a school as part of another Schools Outreach project:

“They were using our workers as an extra pair of hands. As a result of that I asked our worker to produce a list of what she should be doing in the school and she identified six or seven aspects of the job she thought were absolutely essential and every one was child centred. The head’s list which had fifteen or sixteen, there were one or two that were actually focussed on the children, the rest were sort of this is what she can do to help me, this is what she can do to help the staff, she can run the coffee morning for parents. Well fine if she feels she needs to build relationships with the parents but these were priorities for the head rather than the children. “

It might seem reasonable that as the line supervisor the headteacher will have some idea of what priorities might be. Is Schools Outreach being realistic about the openness with which they are expecting their workers to function? Is it in the nature of schools to leave such a blank canvas? Further discussion about the open timetable is included later in this chapter.

Although the role seemed to be partly formed from what was available, there were also examples of how the needs of the children led to its development. Jamal referred to the variety of cases he is asked to tackle and the demands this places on his knowledge:

“Although the variety of cases is fantastic and I might have to read up on things to address it.”

From the interviews, the diversity of need and the complex behaviours exhibited by the children was evident. This then appeared to contribute to the development of a very varied role. For example, David's mum described her concerns about David's behaviour on transferring schools and with changing home circumstances:

“It all happened at the same time. David changed schools and the new baby was on its way. He was harming himself. We didn't know what to do. He used to fly back at people. He had to be held down sometimes. Self-harming at home as well as school. It was heart breaking.”

From this description David was exhibiting very disturbing behaviour that suggests the need for quite significant psychological assessment and support. In fact, Val was asked to intervene and provide support with limited knowledge of some of the complex behaviours involved. We might express concern that in some cases children with needs may be accessing PCW support but have limited access to other specialist services. In some of these cases, as already mentioned, training prior to the issue arising may not have been possible and an opportunity for targeted training perhaps should have been provided. This has implications for the location and accessibility of training opportunities. In Jamal's case, close liaison with the SENCO enabled resources to be pooled and assistance sought when tackling difficult emotional and behavioural problems. We might conclude that this kind of support network should be built into the PCW role as a necessity. In these cases training may well be best accessed through the school.

It can be difficult for pastoral care workers who have been used to working in a more dependent culture to adapt to the demands of organising their own time, as Val described:

"You're totally new to the job and this job allows you to be open and available and flexible and I found that hard because I was used to coming from a background where you went to work and you knew exactly what I was doing for the day. How the day panned out."

It perhaps also should be considered how isolating this might feel where everyone else in school is school staff as such and where your own employers are based well away from the work site. Jamal's regular meeting with the headteacher appeared to provide the opportunity to discuss concerns and responsibilities in a way that was invigorating for him:

"Had a support meeting with the head teacher. It went very well. I felt encouraged and empowered to continue doing what I was doing. It feels great when you can just off load everything. It gave me such an impetus to get everything off my chest. It allows me to take on more things." Extract from Jamal's diary

Both Jamal and Val make reference to supportive relationships they have developed within their schools which help them to deal with day-to-day issues and tensions. Whether this is the head, the SENCO or an other individual seemed to be immaterial as long as they had someone with whom they could discuss matters.

During the research both Val and Jamal kept a diary for a week in which they described the breadth of tasks, activities and meetings they were involved with. Table 1 in the following section identifies the range and records the number and type of interventions listed. The range of activities is diverse and what is evident is how each PCW has developed within their context in a very different way. What is important to consider is the degree to which this difference is led by the individual personalities of the PCWs or the specific contexts and children with which they are working.

The effect of background and previous experience

Gordon Bailey emphasises the fact that there is no specified level of qualification for the role. Experience as a teacher is not necessary. However, Jamal in our research was initially a teacher

and the effect of this is noted through his interactions with others in school. One of the emerging themes is the degree to which his background in education influences the role he takes as well as the perceptions of members of staff towards him. When asked to consider the effect that Jamal's background has, Helen said:

"I think it must have helped him establish his relationships with the teaching staff because he knows what is expected of them and having been in the staff room as a teacher probably recognises the difficulties."

Jamal himself acknowledged that his previous experience had helped:

"You don't need to be a teacher to be a pastoral care worker but it helps because you know how the school works, how children work. School staff rooms can be very political and I know how staffrooms work. I think it's helped me."

In the job description it clearly specifies that pastoral care workers should not take on a teacher's role except in emergencies. They warn of the difficulties that standing in for an absent teacher might have in terms of the relationships the PCW has with the children.

It seemed from the interviews and observations that Val struggled more with establishing boundaries than Jamal. For example, in an interview following observations of playground games the children remarked on what happens if the boundaries are breached:

"Liam If you're naughty she sends you back. Cos she doesn't like naughty children. She don't like getting yelled at by children and stuff.

Tom I've yelled at her."

Interview with children following observation of playground games

From Val's diary many references were made to the behaviour of the children. This was particularly the case in circle time when observations had shown that children could be awkward during participation:

"Behaviour not too bad. DA had to be told to listen and concentrate. Had problems settling down for the relaxation session, eventually did so and all seemed to relax, all seemed to have enjoyed the session." Extract from Val's diary

There are currently many additional support staff working within schools who support both within and outside the classroom. The way in which these staff are integrated and included themselves is an issue for many schools. As new legislation resulting from the teachers' workload agreement encourages the use of support staff in a wider context, the relationship between support and the core teaching group will need careful consideration. Schools will increasingly need to reconsider their organisational structure and communication framework particularly in relation to expectations of children's learning and behaviour.

The diaries from Val and Jamal show the breadth of the role they have taken on. Table 1 categorises these tasks into type.

Table 1 - Tasks identified according to Val's and Jamal's diaries

Type of activity	Val	Jamal
Paper work and preparation	6 entries	9 entries
One-to-one	11 entries	12 entries
Liaison and meetings with staff	3 entries	14 entries
Group interventions	10 entries	13 entries
Involvement in lessons	0	5

The numbers represent the number of incidents of that particular activity occurring during the course of the week recorded. From this rough categorisation several major differences can be seen in the PCWs' weeks. From the diaries, Jamal liaises more frequently with members of staff including the headteacher. On a daily basis referrals are made from the headteacher and there is constant contact and discussion with staff about the children in their classes. At one point Jamal even takes time to discuss personal problems with a member of staff. This particular meeting represents one of the fourteen encounters recorded by Jamal.

Although Val does liaise this does not seem to happen as frequently as for Jamal. Similarly Jamal was involved in several lessons during the week and even took an assembly. Although he was unhappy at the short notice he was given to prepare for this, from his diary he didn't seem particularly surprised. His other classroom interventions were aimed both at classes as a whole (in discussing his religious beliefs) and focusing on individuals within class. This type of intervention was not evident in Val's account. The differences in Jamal's and Val's backgrounds are likely to be partly responsible for the heightened level of involvement of Jamal in the working of the school generally. Also noticeable from the diaries is how little time the PCWs spend on their own breaks. Working as they do it must be very difficult for them to make time and find places where they are able to relax.

In order to fit the 'open' role the pastoral care worker needs to be sufficiently 'general' in his/ her background and may not have specialist expertise. A 'jack of all trades' as Jamal describes it. How best to develop specialisms as they emerge, is a challenge for Schools Outreach. In many cases we may feel that this generalist rather than specialist role is part of their flexibility. However, in terms of altering children's behaviour, neither pastoral care worker has the in-depth knowledge to allow them to follow a particular approach such as 'scaffolding' referred to in Chapter 3. In their training there has been insufficient time to pursue the variety of theoretical approaches to teaching and learning to give them a range of models from which to select.

The open time table

Both headteachers, during their interview, referred to the uncertainty about what the role might entail. Helen described how Jamal was introduced:

"We introduced him to the staff right at the beginning of the project. I was quite open, I hadn't got a clear vision what his role would be and everyone lived with it."

They emphasised the need for the pastoral care worker to get to know the children and the school community before committing themselves to a full timetable. This approach is endorsed by Schools Outreach. Joan explained:

"She needed to get to know the school and the children and she had to be comfortable with the way she did that. She started small with a small number of children."

In both cases, the timetable remained flexible and 'open'. Although some activities were timetabled, space was still made available to 'react' to events. This lack of structure was described by Helen:

"It is very unstructured we don't timetable anyway. He picks things up from staff, myself and sometimes the children. He's worked with an autistic boy who he has been very very good with. That's been wonderful."

From this, schools did seem to be maintaining the spirit of an open agenda leaving room for children to influence the pastoral care worker's activities. So, for example, children are able to approach Val or Jamal and request time to meet and discuss issues themselves. However, in most cases it is other members of school staff who make referrals rather than the children self-referring. Val explains during her interview that although many children are referred by the SENCO and teachers, there is still opportunity for the children to self-refer. Jamal, feels this opportunity is less evident with reference made to the constraints of the timetable:

"Mostly it's teacher referral. The teachers come up to me and say can you have a chat with this person or they'll tell me about a situation. Ninety per cent is teacher referral. Then the odd time I might pick something up as I'm doing my rounds. I'd say a very small per cent was 'Mr J can I come and talk to you? In a primary school you're not allowed out of class. It's just lessons, lessons."

In this quote the 'open timetable' seems less child-centred than indicated on other occasions. As the opportunities for child self-referral seem to be more limited in one environment than the other, is school ethos responsible for this or the background and experience of the pastoral care worker? From the diary account provided by Jamal and Val, Jamal was making himself available on a daily basis for child referrals. Through attending the breakfast club and spending time in the playground he made himself accessible on a wide scale. In fact, from the diary accounts, there was less opportunity for children to refer themselves to Val than Jamal. This could be as a result of the more informal referrals that took place on a day-to-day basis between Jamal and the children. The chats that might follow from him being in accessible places could be described as self-referrals but would not appear in his records as such.

Val and Jamal explained how their timetables have been formed:

“What I did right at the beginning was go round the classes, get to know the children, get to know the teachers. No really set times for anything. Whereas now there are children being referred to you it’s more structured now.”

In the above quote, Val described a flexibility which is at the heart of the Outreach aims for PCWs. There seems to be a feeling from this that it is preferable for the teachers to do more of the referring than children themselves. To some degree this increase in referrals by class teachers may be as a result of increasing confidence in the PCW role. In which case the associated optimism is justified. Table 2 below shows categorisation of the number of referrals recorded in Val and Jamal’s diary over the period of a week.

Table 2 - Number of referrals made in one week

Source of referral	Val	Jamal
Child self-referring	1	0
Teacher referral	1	5
Headteacher referral	1	5

During this particular week, Val had far fewer referrals but did have a self-referral. The high number of teacher and headteacher referrals for Jamal is also evidence of the number of meetings and liaison opportunities he has with staff generally. Referrals for Jamal also come through the diary which he checks every day for new cases to follow up.

For Val and Jamal ‘letting them know that you’re there for them’ was a vital part of the role. Both PCWs mentioned this when asked what they considered to be their main responsibilities:

“Getting alongside the children, letting them know that you’re there for them but also letting them know that you’ve got boundaries. Just really, just allowing yourself to be available for listening to them.” Val

“Letting them know that I’m there for them even if they mess up. That I’m their friend.” Jamal

It is interesting that although they both mentioned first the 'letting them know you're there for them' they then revealed quite distinct second priorities. For Jamal, the ex-teacher, the development of friendship was referred to, for Val, it was the drawing of boundaries. As a headteacher involved in the Outreach meetings, I have been aware of occasions when Val was finding herself inundated with children taking up the 'open' nature of the role, seeking her out at every opportunity. This total accessibility appeared to be causing some difficulty with her completing other activities. In conjunction with her school, Val set about redefining the parameters. Perhaps her comment reflects her own experiences of the need for boundaries. Equally for Jamal, establishing a non-authoritarian role might have been the priority. It might be speculated that the respective genders of Val and Jamal may also have necessitated a slightly different approach to boundary setting.

There are times when the unstructured nature of activities and their flexibility has resulted in double-booking or times of inactivity as Helen described:

“ We were trying to get a reading club off the ground and it did get off the ground but it became almost too popular. He was overwhelmed. So we pulled the plug on that. I wouldn’t say it was not successful it was defeated by its success. Also he couldn’t be in two places at once. Peer mediation also was at lunchtime. He couldn’t do both.”

“ Sometimes I think it’s a bit too loose and then I think, no it’s not because if you start timetabling events flare up, they don’t come evenly there’s four or five and sometimes there’s very little.”

Jamal also suggested that there were times when he was too much in demand:

“I have to be sensible myself because I’m only one person the children are really good as long as I explain to them that I can’t see them today but that I’ll see them the following day or at the following time. And then they do hold on and they do come to talk to me.”

Although this level of request for his time was similar to that experienced by Val, Jamal seemed to have found a way of constructing the boundaries for himself and it appeared to have been less of a dilemma for him. He was also clear about how to prioritise:

"I prioritise with whoever is in the diary first. Unless it's an emergency and then I'll talk to the person in the diary."

This was reinforced by Jamal's diary account. According to this he had established a clear routine which included his walk around the playground at break time and checking of the diary in the morning.

Overall, however, the headteachers did not perceive there to be confusion about the role, believing that there was no conflict between the expectations of the different groups of beneficiaries. Jamal suggested that the staff were able to adapt to this flexibility:

"They are clear about the role. They know I should not be timetabled to begin with. We had to drum it into them but they've got the hang of it and it's great. They all know..... because I'm a jack of all trades. Do you do this? Yeah. Do you do that? OK. Even if it's not my role, I don't mind. If someone needs photocopying, don't worry I'll just do it."

This statement does seem to suggest that there was some difficulty in establishing the role as it had to be 'drummed into' the staff. It is noteworthy that Jamal has taken on tasks in the school which may not officially be in his role. For example, according to his diary, he took assembly at short notice. A PCW without teaching experience (and even one with) might find this very difficult to take on. Would Val be asked to complete the same tasks? Jamal's diary account suggests far more opportunity to take part in lessons than Val experiences.

Although causing some difficulties, the flexibility is a unique part of the role and one that headteachers, as Helen expressed below, are grateful to be able to offer:

"Because he has more time and because he's around and he can motivate the children."

In the current educational climate it is very difficult to preserve and justify such an unstructured role and open timetable, Perhaps this is what makes the pastoral care worker such a valuable resource.

"The day-to-day support has been phenomenal." Helen

Establishing boundaries

There has been some discussion already about the difficulties that presenting an 'open timetable' can have. If the role remains open and flexible to the demands of the context, there can be the temptation to try to extend too far to meet the vast needs of the children and their families.

Knowing where to draw the line was an issue identified by Gordon Bailey during his interview:

"We try to make sure we put certain boundaries on them. You can become a workaholic, in practical terms you have to know when to stop."

This is not always easy, especially when pastoral care workers are relatively inexperienced and perhaps in a new environment with high expectations of what they wish to achieve. Jamal had created some of his own boundaries. He recognised that to take on an activity that is too time-consuming is inappropriate:

"I'm pretty much happy to do anything that comes up. I do have to back away from projects that take a lot of time so for example the nurture group is coming up soon and it was an hour a day for four days and I just could not give that amount of time .Because that would just be 6 – 8 children, so I don't mind going visiting into that group and doing things for them and circle time activity but I wouldn't do it permanently."

However, from his diary it was evident that he was finding difficulty building in the necessary break times which must have an impact long term upon effectiveness. In spite of this, his diary does indicate a clear routine which he appeared to be in control of for most of the time. However, as mentioned earlier, Val had not found the establishing of boundaries quite as easy to do. She identified the need to 'learn to switch off':

"I think stress is the right word because you're taking in basically people's problems. It's like when you get home learning to switch off from it. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. I try to .You've got to, otherwise you'd end up in a mess."

We might question whether it is necessary to provide for pastoral care workers the security of having set limits to their role. We might conjecture that a PCW who is struggling to cope with the pressures of dealing with difficult cases needs a clearly defined framework in which to operate if they are to continue successfully supporting others.

A base to work from

One difficulty identified was the search for premises for the pastoral care worker. In schools where every spare space is accounted for, finding a base can be awkward. This can have its advantages and disadvantages. Helen pointed out two ways in which not having a home had been of benefit at her school:

"He's very much part of the staffroom and everyone seems to know where he is. They have a wonderful knack of finding him because he doesn't hide. He's always available. He has a base for his personal belongings. He doesn't have a base to withdraw children. That's part of being male. Perhaps if he was female we would have given him a base. We're very conscious that he can't be alone with the children. He has to be fairly careful. He has to be aware as a male. So we don't give him a room with a door and he's never wanted that. He can always use a classroom he can always use the library. He's free to use anyone else' it's not territorial... if he's got a need everyone will accommodate him."

There are issues here that would be interesting to follow up with staff. Do they perceive the sharing of territory in the same way? Is there that level of availability? Such accessibility must also make it difficult for pastoral care workers to ensure their break times are preserved. Without a room or a space of their own it will be very difficult for them to find any peace and quiet for themselves.

In addition, issues are raised here to do with the male/ female pastoral care worker role. Gordan Bailey explained how the opportunity to employ male members of staff was of benefit perceived by schools:

"Loads of schools have said there's no father figure in the house so we would like a good, dependable male person."

The nature of the pastoral care worker, however, must mean that there are issues related to the level of involvement that the worker has with the child and how this might be perceived by others. At the end of the interview with Gordon Bailey, similar concerns were touched upon in relation to the very tactile nature that some relationships might involve. In this extract Gordon was discussing a video that included a film of a pastoral care worker engaged with children:

“One of the things on the video, right at the end where the worker is walking on the playground and the children are running to hold his hand, they’re wanting to hold his hand you see. Some people would say you shouldn’t touch children but it’s the children touching him. They want to hold his hand.”

It might be argued that whether the children are touching him or he touches the children, this could place a male PCW in a vulnerable position. On the one hand there seems to be an endorsement and encouragement for men to become increasingly involved in early years education and schools generally. At the same time, there is an increasing awareness of individuals’ personal vulnerability in terms of child protection allegations.

The importance of the role of masculinity within a pastoral programme is discussed by Skelton (1998). She emphasises the importance of students seeing the values they endorse reflected in the school ethos and staff around them. Having Jamal available should help dispel, as Skelton calls it, the ‘monolithic masculinity’ view that there is one way in which men behave rather than exploring differences between them. As Jamal is in a position where he will discuss feelings and issues he must surely represent a good opportunity to challenge some images that pupils may have of what ‘manly’ entails.

According to the diary entries, both pastoral care workers had a significant amount of administrative work to do. This required access to facilities and appropriate hardware and software which may have been difficult to obtain in school. Where this was not readily available, time might have been taken from direct contact with the children. According to the pastoral care worker job description there is an expectation that PCWs will have a room for ‘caring in confidence’ as well as the provision of basic resources such as stationery, photocopying facilities, telephone and a secure filing cabinet.

One observation of Jamal at work included his 6 thinking hats group. This group of four children had been working with Jamal for several weeks on different types of thinking. During the observation it was noted how Jamal had to move his group as a teacher needed to use the ICT suite where he had planned to run his activity. Although unavoidable, this can have a negative effect upon the perceived status of the group and the mood in which the session begins. A similar situation was described in Jamal's diary.

During another observation a group of very quiet girls involved in the Super 7 group were disturbed by sounds from next door. Although there was a dividing wall this did not block the sound of a teacher shouting from the classroom which had an adverse effect upon the climate that Jamal was trying to build. This highlights the importance of the macro environment supporting the micro. A positive, supportive group might quickly be undermined by a culture of negative comment, even where this might be linked only to one teacher.

The outsider inside

An issue highlighted by Joan, was the 'outsider on the inside' role of the pastoral care worker:

"She's also got a different perspective to the children who have had a bad experience of school either themselves or their parents. She makes a very good bridge. She's an outsider in the school but not of the school. So she's at pains to point out that she isn't a staff member."

How advantageous is it to have someone who isn't a member of staff, as such, working with children in the school? What effect does having a teaching background have upon this? For example, in some circumstances it might be more difficult to keep the distance from authority and maintain the pastoral care worker's role when staff shortages result in a desperate need for cover. Might the role be compromised? The special role of the 'outsider inside' was mentioned by Joan as being a factor in the children's perception of Val:

"The children have that extra dimension that there is someone they can turn to. She gives them unequivocal ears. She does not make any judgement about them or what they're saying. I think they feel protected by her."

Cathy's mum, during her interview, was quite explicit about the importance of Val's status as removed from school hierarchy and the way this gives her a special role:

"She's not a teacher. She's not authority. She can interact between the Head etc."

David's mum also recognised the benefits of Vicky's status within the school:

"He used to see her quite regularly to find out how he was going on. She was really good if there was anything bothering him at home. Being an outsider helped."

It is particularly noteworthy that of the two parents interviewed both referred to the importance of Val being an 'outsider'. From both Jamal's and Val's diaries it was evident that they worked quite independently from the staff as a whole. Although Jamal did liaise on a frequent basis, their timetable was quite independent and the PCWs controlled the type and kind of intervention used.

The importance of trust is an important issue in relation to the children but it was also raised by Cathy's mum. In this extract from interview she referred to trust, having time, relationships and the 'not authority' part of Val's role:

"She's a person in between the children and the teachers. You can speak to her privately. She sorts things out. She can be trusted – a bit like a big sister. She's always got time for you. She made a card with Cathy for Louise when she was born.

She's a safety net. Cathy hangs on to her a bit. She's always had Val since she's been here. She's not a teacher. She's not authority. She can interact between the headteacher etc. She's a lovely person, makes everything positive."

This level of trust even extends, in Jamal's case, to the teaching staff. In his diary, Jamal describes how a member of staff needs someone to confide in:

"Break time. Went to see a teacher to see if certain children could be released for the next lesson. Spent rest of the break listening to the teacher and being a sounding board for her. It was obvious the teacher needed a sympathetic ear for personal reasons. I was happy to be there for her and help her." Extract from Jamal's diary

It is not only pupils and their parents who need someone to talk to, but teaching staff benefit too.

Conclusions

In this section I have considered the pastoral care worker role from the perspective of some members of school staff, children, parents, Schools Outreach and the PCWs themselves. I have discussed how the openness of the role and job description enables beneficial flexibility according to context but can also create difficulties for schools and PCWs. The range of roles established within each context is described as being led both by the needs of the school but also the skills, knowledge and previous experience of the PCW. Although this can be beneficial it also limits the range of options available to each individual school and leads the range of strategies used.

The teaching background of the PCWs has had a level of impact on the way in which roles have developed and has also created some difficulties where experience in teaching has been limited. However, the 'external internal' role is seen to be beneficial and teaching background should not interfere with this important element of the role. It is suggested that one way in which Schools Outreach might help PCWs to adjust, depending on their varied background, is by providing differentiated training that enables aspects of experience and gender to be addressed.

Although the importance of self-referral is stressed, this section explains how this can be difficult to implement in a junior school environment and how teacher and headteacher referral has become the most frequently used route.

The relationship between the pastoral care worker and other staff in school

Some mention has already been made of how the pastoral care workers were introduced to staff and initial reactions to their role. This section further considers how that role has developed particularly in relation to the way that school staff and PCWs interact. It focuses separately on the response of teachers, support staff and the headteachers using interviews and children's questionnaire responses.

Joan commented on the enthusiasm demonstrated by teachers towards Val:

"They don't know what they'd do without her. They do feel the relief of not having to deal with these perpetual fall outs between children. They have a script they've adopted already. Is this serious? Can it wait until you see Val? Can it wait till tomorrow morning? They will make referrals to Val."

As only one interview was conducted with a teacher, most of the views of teachers were reported by other interviewees. For example, Val referred to a conversation held in the staffroom:

"They were talking about my role – I wasn't there. It was when there was talk about the money and one staff said, you can't pull her out she's just needed, we can't manage without her."

In the one teacher interview with David's classteacher, he explained how the sessions with Val were also used as an incentive for good behaviour at other times:

"Val had sessions with him at least once per week. He really looked forward to these. His expressions showed this and the continuous asking about it. It was used as an incentive to get him to conform."

The issue here is what happens when the child doesn't conform and the support is removed. Should behaviour in class be so tightly linked to the receipt of pastoral care worker support? It could be argued that the involvement of the PCW is as a result of the child's difficulties within the classroom and removal of this privilege will disadvantage the child further.

The importance of whole school ethos in the efficacy of the pastoral care worker role has already been mentioned. Green (1999) emphasises the importance of the relationship between support and school staff:

“ Children, with their ultra-sensitive emotional antennae, will be aware of any conflict, resentment or rivalry between the teacher/ counsellor running the group and school staff, and the resulting conflict of loyalties can destroy a group’s potential.” p. 40

In some cases there might be hostility between pastoral care workers and teachers which needs to be carefully managed:

There may be all sorts of reasons why some staff might find it difficult to cope with selected children receiving such personal, individual and confidential support – support which they or members of their family were never able to have, or which brings to mind perhaps the sort of anxieties we can all have under our cool, coping exteriors.” p. 245

This alludes to issues which individual staff may hold as part of their experience and background. Issues related to classroom management and support from pastoral care workers were referred to in the previous section. Some staff may believe that to accept help from the pastoral care worker indicates a sign of weakness or that they, or colleagues, are not coping with the class. The therapist might become a container for staff as well as pupil anxieties. David’s classteacher, however, did not seem to feel any threat or challenge but was complimentary about the benefits of the ‘one-to-one’ attention that David had received:

“He liked the one-to-one attention. On occasions he would bang his head on the desk but by the end of the year this was very rare indeed. He could become extreme in his behaviour if he couldn’t exit from the class. He wanted attention but it was also an expression of his negative feelings towards himself.”

During this interview it also became clear that although Mum had become very involved with Val and there had been lots of contact with her, this was not the case with the classteacher. The classteacher also had very little knowledge of David’s home background. It might well be that Val had not shared information with him deliberately owing to issues of confidentiality, but there may well have been information that could beneficially have been communicated. It raises the question of where the line is drawn between maintaining confidentiality and sharing necessary

information. This is an issue pertinent to the green paper 'Every Child Matters', DfES (2003). The confidentiality of data held within different departments and agencies can result in important information not being shared. On occasions this has been of serious detriment to individuals in high profile cases. It is a positive reflection of the pastoral care worker role, however, that contact had been made with home and parents in a way which might not have been possible otherwise.

In the survey, children were more likely to indicate that Jamal helped teachers than Val.

Table 3 - Type of response given by children when asked if Val and Jamal help teachers

Type of response given by children in years 4, 5 and 6	VAL	JAMAL
YES	33 responses	66 responses
NO	6 responses	5 responses
DON'T KNOW	42 responses	12 responses

Although the number of children surveyed was not identical in the two schools (school 1 = 81, school 2 = 83) this result does give the impression that children perceived Jamal as having a greater involvement in the support of teachers. The large discrepancy between children selecting 'don't know' in the two schools should also be noted. This could be as a result of how the survey was presented and/ or connected to the higher profile and degree of contact evident from Jamal.

The diary accounts also seemed to confirm that there was a stronger climate of liaison between Jamal and teachers than Val. It has already been speculated that this might be due to Jamal's teaching background and awareness of staffroom etiquette.

The reported views of support staff

It is not only teaching staff who need to develop working relationships with the pastoral care workers. Many of the PCWs' interventions operated at lunchtime and involved the mid-day

supervisors. Although no interviews were conducted with the mid-day supervisors themselves, Helen commented upon her observations:

“They are coming round to it. They still see it as a bit of a threat especially the longer serving members of staff. They’ve been here perhaps 10 or 15 years. One of the lead personnel continues to say we’ve tried it and it doesn’t work etc. But there are some who can see the benefit of it and are beginning... so there’s a mixture really.”

The idea of seeing it as a threat is an interesting one. We might hypothesise that for many teachers and support staff there is still an underlying ethos of managing without intervention. This returns to the same question of how receptive staff are to the concept of intervention and perhaps the perceived implication that intervention is only necessary when the classteacher or lunchtime supervisor has failed.

The Success of the Pastoral Care Workers as seen by the Headteachers

During both interviews with headteachers the outlook was predominantly positive. According to Joan, there had been a drop in the number of exclusions:

“I could find out the statistics but it was a progression of behaviour that certain children had gone through and some others in there would be fixed term exclusions and they would rise from one day to three, seven days to fifteen. After fifteen the child is permanently excluded. Now I find I’m down to two fixed-term exclusions.”

Joan had not collated any statistical evidence, as such, but felt this to be the case. The difficulty here is that a number of actors and interventions can be responsible for a drop in exclusions. Similarly, different cohorts will experience different levels of behavioural concerns which make it difficult to compare one year with another. For example, David received support in nurture as well as receiving clinical psychology input. All these interventions may have added to his progress.

Schools Outreach has received statistical evidence from other schools which claim to demonstrate the effectiveness of the pastoral care worker intervention. Gordon Bailey made

reference in his interview to benefits reported by headteachers. In the following quote he explained the before and after effect noted by one headteacher:

"This headteacher she issued two sides of A4 after the worker had been in post for two years and compared some of the problems they'd had in two years previously with the effect in the school that she could see."

Gordon himself recognised the difficulties in finding the right kind of evidence to demonstrate the success of the Schools Outreach project. He acknowledged how other events may have produced changes in the overall pattern of children's behaviour without being directly attributable to Schools Outreach:

"What evidence can you come up with that just this in school has added. One of the things that the headmistress said was that there had been a 90% turn over of staff before that two years and that she had had a zero turn-over of staff since. She said that therefore staff morale must have been improved by the presence of this worker. Now, I think, don't be daft, you've got a massive turn over of staff in that period so after that you've got nearly new teachers. So they're probably not going to leave within two years. I wouldn't have credited that to our workers."

No matter how carefully data has been collected over a period of Outreach intervention time, we cannot be certain that it is the input of the pastoral care worker that has caused that change to take place. Many of the children that PCWs are working with will also be receiving other forms of intervention and support. There is no guarantee of which works most effectively for which child.

Helen refers to the anecdotal way in which she collected evidence about Jamal's effectiveness.

There was no formal approach to measuring the project as such:

"I get feedback on the hoof really rather than specific. He's enormously popular and there are no territorial boundaries, they respect what he does. I think they're really delighted to have him on board and respect each other's rights. He's just great, he really is a member of staff. There doesn't seem to be any demarcation. I do have to say, they don't expect him to teach. Ground rules."

Very much the views of the headteacher. On several occasions the same reference was made to his level of acceptance as a 'member of teaching staff'. There were examples in his diary of him

taking on a teaching role, albeit in a pastoral context. Once more the issue of the background of the pastoral care worker is significant.

Conclusions

This section focused specifically on the views of the staff in the two schools with some reference to the views of children. It has a limited evidence base, consisting of the interviews of the headteachers, references from the PCW interviews, one teacher interview and the children's questionnaire. However, it does draw attention to some of the difficulties inherent in trying to assess the effectiveness of intervention programmes. The headteachers' comments are positive and demonstrate the value they ascribe to their respective PCWs.

It should be noted that reactions of teachers in the schools, from reported comments, do seem to have varied widely depending on where they perceive the responsibility to lie for behaviour management. This difference in perception is not only reported of teaching staff but of support staff too. It can be relatively easy to forget the important role which ancillary staff in schools have and the difference which their reactions to teaching and non-teaching staff can make.

Children and the pastoral care worker role

From the interviews, surveys and observations there were many positive comments and experiences shared between the pastoral care workers and the children. Although there were difficulties with the survey, as described in the research methodology section, it did provide an overview of children's perceptions. The following chapter outlines some of the main points noted from analysis of the responses as well as comments provided by children during interview, reflections from the interviews of others and records of observations.

Children's perceptions of the PCW role

All the children surveyed, with the exception of one, claimed to have seen both Val and Jamal in school. The majority had friends who met with them. Most children had talked to them and seemed to be familiar with who they were. From this point of view the pastoral care workers seemed to be reaching out to the whole school community and were perceived as accessible. The majority of children indicated that they would like to have more contact with Val and Jamal, seeming to be positive about the impact such an experience might have. Interestingly, fewer children claimed to have spoken with Jamal than Val. This is interesting given that in Jamal's diary there seemed to be an emphasis upon making himself available in the playground at lunchtime, breaktimes and at the breakfast club before school.

What did the children consider that Val does in school? Table 4 sets out the type of response given by children in years 6 and 5 when asked what they thought Val did. Children were allowed to indicate as many responses as they liked. As can be seen, there was a marked difference between the two year groups in terms of the number of responses the children volunteered. Year 6 were more likely to feel that all the statements were part of her role other than 'she is a teacher without a classroom'. Year 4 gave no responses to the suggestion that Val works with the headteacher whereas year 6 were much more likely to indicate that this happened. Differences in the ways the questionnaires were administered makes these responses less reliable

Table 4 - Responses given by children in years 6 and 5 when asked what Val does in school

Type of response given by children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)
she listens to children talk	32	19
she helps the children who need help	32	23
she helps children make friends	32	24
she is a teacher without a classroom	2	4
she works with the headteacher	15	0
she helps the teachers	28	3

Table 5 shows further responses chosen by years 6 and 5 to the question about what Val does in school. The table shows how strongly children in both year groups associated Val with 'making friends with children'. Out of the total of 148 responses, 55 selected this option. The next most popular selection was that Val 'organises clubs' with 53 children selecting this. Children in year 5 were more likely to link Val with working with 'naughty children' either generally or by taking them out of class (8 and 2 respectively). No children in year 6 associated Val with these options.

Table 6 compares some responses for both Val and Jamal. How differently did the children perceive their work in schools? From the table, more children linked Jamal with the role of classteacher with 49 indicating that he is a 'teacher without a classroom' in comparison to 17 for Val. In addition 59 children chose the response that Jamal 'helps the teachers' in contrast to 33 for Val. The children also seem to perceive him in a more teacher-like way. The amount of liaison between the pastoral care workers and the teachers was also surveyed. Once more, closer links were identified by the children between Jamal and the teachers than Val and the teachers.

Table 5 - Responses given by children in years 6 and 5 when asked what Val does in school

Type of response given by children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no of responses)
she takes naughty children out of class	0	2
she works with naughty children	0	8
she helps children behave themselves	12	17
she makes friends with children	32	23
she visits parents at home	1	0
she organises clubs	32	21

Table 6- Responses given by children when asked what Jamal and Val do in school

Type of response given by children	VAL (no. of responses)	JAMAL (no. of responses)
s/he listens to children talk	67	60
s/he helps the children who need help	77	78
s/he helps children make friends	77	62
s/he is a teacher without a classroom	17	49
s/he works with the headteacher	16	11
s/he helps the teachers	33	59

Cathy, in her interview, referred to the classroom role which Val takes whilst also acknowledging that it is more than that:

“Like listens to you. Plays with you. Like a helper really but the helpers here just help in class. Does help in lessons – Maths and that – well she used to, I don’t know if she still does.”

For Cathy the main distinguishing feature between helpers and the pastoral care worker, seemed to relate to activities outside of class that provide opportunities to talk and play. For the majority of the children interviewed (with the possible exception of David) Val’s role was almost exclusively linked to the input she had with them. In group discussion with the children who had been involved in circle time, she was variously described as a helper as well as for her particular interventions:

*“Liam You play games and stuff. We played queeny
Interviewer Why do you do that?
Liam She tries to make everything fun.”*

In this interview the children referred to the opportunity to self-refer as well as drawing attention to the need for boundaries:

*“Liam Sometimes out there you ain’t got anyone to play with. You go to
Val, she doesn’t even need to invite you. If you’re naughty she
sends you back. Cos she doesn’t like naughty children. She don’t
like getting yelled at by children and stuff.
Tom I’ve yelled at her.
Interviewer Why was that?
Tom Because Lee got me in a very bad mood.
Interviewer What does Val do when that happens?
Tom She says if we’re in a very bad mood to come to the playground
and calm us down.
Interviewer What does calm you down?
Liam Coming in here.
Interviewer What is Val?
Liam A helper.”*

Some of the children were aware of the pastoral care worker title although still a little confused about what the role entailed:

*“Liam She helps people if you get hurt”
“Tom She tries to make circle time exciting”*

“David Val’s a pastoral care worker. She helps children out who are a bit down and stressed and got things in the family.”

David has had most targeted intervention and was given an individual interview. Not surprisingly, he gave a more precise answer. Cathy, on the other hand, had less of an overview of Val’s work but did refer to her listening and playing with children alongside her work in the classroom. The role of the pastoral care worker as someone who listens to children talk, helps those who need it and helps children make friends came out strongly from both the surveys. This appears to be how the pastoral care workers were viewed, which is in line with Schools Outreach aims.

Although the survey did show that children also linked them with ‘naughty’ children this was a less strong response with many children preferring to select a ‘don’t know’ response in answer to this question. From Table 7 it can be seen that proportionally Jamal was identified as working with naughty children by more children than Val. According to the survey responses more associated Val with making friends than working with naughty children or taking them out of class. Although 72 children still linked Jamal with making friends, proportionally this appeared to be not as strongly linked with his work.

Table 7 - Responses given by children when asked what Val and Jamal do in school

Type of response given by children	VAL (no. of responses)	JAMAL (no. of responses)
s/he takes naughty children out of class	2	25
s/he works with naughty children	10	37
s/he helps children behave themselves	35	66
s/he makes friends with children	78	72
s/he visits parents at home	2	0
s/he organises clubs	75	66

Organising clubs was seen as part of the pastoral care worker role but the majority of children did not consider working with parents to be part of Val's or Jamal's roles. Only two children thought Val visited parents at home and no children indicated this role for Jamal.

Dependence/ Independence

For some children, support from the pastoral care worker was given on a regular basis. This can result in the PCW and child developing a close relationship. The concern was expressed during interviews that children might have become too dependent upon an individual who they ultimately would lose contact with during transition. Joan referred to this during interview :

"We've been concerned with a couple of them who may have relied upon her too greatly so there have been active programmes of reduction and transferring the child back to the classteacher. Still having the ability to come out should the need arise."

Limiting dependency is mentioned by Ingall and Lush (1999).

"It was important to be careful not to involve the children in a dependent relationship of the kind that would expose them to unnecessarily painful and disturbing feelings when we were seen with other children or staff around the school." p. 154

Val spoke with real concern about the prospects for a year 5 child she was seeing almost daily as he reached transfer time:

"He's got to take control of himself. He can't rely on staff. Not only does he totally rely on me but he relies on a lot of his teachers, dinner ladies. He wants constant staff input with him. Adult intervention. At his next school he's not going to get that, he's got to learn to stand on his own two feet as well."

An area for development for PCWs is the transition from dependency to independency. Val described the dependent relationship formed:

"At the end of the day, I'm not saying they don't respect you, they do respect you but they've got to know that they haven't got control over you. I felt at first I was jumping at every tear. Now I don't. You learn that the children turn it on for attention. The other day I'd got one who, because I couldn't see him then and there, he could see I was busy with other children but he wanted me there and then. Because I couldn't see him he cried buckets. I just said to him, I'm sorry I

can't see you, you'll have to go back to class. I will see you as soon as I can. But tears weren't because he was upset but out of frustration. Getting himself angry."

Difficulties of accessing the attention of a carer, may not have been anything new to this child. Given the circumstances, the pastoral care worker may have no alternative but to delay the meeting time and frustrate the child in their search for attention. What effect might this have on children who are encouraged to approach and share, who take this opportunity but then find themselves frustrated in their attempts at a later date? Cathy's mum referred to the level of dependency that Cathy had upon Val:

"She's a safety net. Cathy hangs on to her a bit. She's always had Val since she's been here."

One issue that was raised by Joan was the single-minded determination she exhibited when wishing to see Val. This happened partly as a result of the way in which her school allowed children to leave lessons and seek her out:

"When the children say 'I've got to go and see Val' and you try to delay them...at times that can be amusing and at other times very irritating."

It would be interesting to know how classteachers perceived this assertiveness. However, it did appear to fulfil Schools Outreach's aims in terms of placing children at the centre of any activities and allowing them to self-refer. It is the effect that such an approach can have upon the rest of the school organisation that would benefit from further study. Val herself referred to the intense demand she sometimes felt when entering the school:

"The welcome you get from the children when you come to the school... I often sit and I sometimes say to the teachers, I'm going to come in with a bag on my head. Obviously, I am having an effect. Walking into both schools. That hit me more these last few days from being out of school. We had half-term and that having time for training, walking back in to school. The overwhelming response from the children was unbelievable."

This statement suggests that Val was partly judging effectiveness by the welcome she received. It might be speculated that independence from Val was more a test of the success of intervention. However, from some of the interviews there was evidence that a gradual process of withdrawal from intense support can work. David's mum accepted that she no longer saw Val on a regular basis :

*“Interviewer Do you still see much of Val?
Mum Not as much now. But I know she’s there if she’s needed.”*

As with much of the support we may offer, the fact that it is available if necessary has its own function without it necessarily being called upon. In some cases there was still some contact but on a much less regular basis. For example David’s level of support had dropped as his behaviour had improved. Some contact was still maintained:

*“Interviewer Do you still see much of Val?
David I see her once a week for half an hour
Interviewer What do you do?
David We work
Interviewer Do you talk?
David Yes.
Interviewer What sort of questions does she ask you?
David What I’ve been doing in the lesson I’ve just been in. How I’m getting on in class.”*

I suggest, to withdraw completely a facility that children have enjoyed and benefited from because of behavioural improvements, can encourage them to regress to previous behaviour in order to access the support once more.

Both McGuinness (1982) and Herbert (1998) refer to the dangers of clients becoming too dependent upon their support. McGuinness emphasises how important it is that children are taught to problem-solve and Herbert refers to the need to empower. In addition Herbert claims that too close a relationship can interfere with peer group interaction:

“The support needs to be given in such a way that an inseparable ‘velcro’ relationship does not develop between child and support assistant which would interfere with peer group interactions.” p. 109

This is a delicate balance that we might suggest requires great skill on the part of the support worker. Not only in order to prevent separation anxieties from the child but to enable them to transfer any new behaviour into the classroom environment alongside their peers.

Transfer to secondary school

Both pastoral care workers were involved in supporting students during their transfer to secondary schools. There was some general support for selected children and also support aimed at those children the PCWs had already been working with. From Val's interview, transfer was seen to be a major concern for a one-to-one contact child:

"I've seen him one-to-one every week. He's going to need a lot of help when he goes to secondary school because he's just going to flip. So next term, next year there's going to be a lot of emphasis on his move to his next school, because there's no way he can carry on at his next school like here and get away with it. He'll be out in his first week."

This quotation from Val raises issues of the perception of level of tolerance between primary and secondary schools.

Transition from one phase to another is both a local and national concern. The transition of children with specific emotional and behavioural needs is of particular concern. Locally, county behaviour panels with pupil referral unit support are assisting children in the transfer where they are already known to be at risk. The support given in year 6 does not immediately stop on arrival at secondary, instead there is a 'honeymoon' period of introductory support. However, it is not just these behaviourally challenging students who would benefit from this level of handover care. The same kind of investment in supporting and tracking children with a variety of emotional as well as behavioural difficulties could be beneficial. The children who reach the agenda of the county behaviour panel meetings are a very small number in comparison to those being supported on a formal and informal basis in schools.

The first year of Val running a transition group did seem to have some hiccups, largely of an administrative nature. In the following quotation, Val explained how she and another member of support staff, Sarah, tried to support children during the transition period:

"We did the big school with them last year. Not quite as fully as we're hoping to do it this time. Sarah and I didn't get together enough times to sort it out.....Basically what we did last year – we didn't follow any structure we just took books in to

them.....We've got a pack called 'big school'. It's basic information about school – how you get there, what your timetable will be like, what you wear, lunchtimes, the hierarchy."

Not all the year 6s were to receive this transitional support. Val described the process for identifying who would:

"I've been to the year 6 teachers. Sarah and I identified a group ourselves and then we talked to the year 6 co-ordinator and chatted it through and came up with about 16 children, split into two groups so the groups aren't too big and the same at my other school. So it's really the teachers who've identified them."

The referrals came from the teachers and not from the children. We might conjecture that in order to fulfil Schools Outreach's aims it would be more appropriate for children to request this transitional support for themselves. Throughout the interview the support of Sarah, particularly in relation to transition, was evident. Sarah worked not only as support in the two surveyed schools but also in the local secondary school. The benefits of this were commented on by Val:

"We've got prospectuses and just the fact that we've got the added advantage of Sarah and that's worked out well for this school."

Not every PCW has the advantage of having a teacher available to work in both the secondary and junior/ primary school. It might be argued that this particular luxury would be of benefit to all schools in making transition arrangements and easing anxieties. Both parents interviewed did refer to their concerns about transfer of schools. David's mum, in particular, was anxious owing to previous experiences and the impact that changing schools had had on him.

*Interviewer How do you feel about the move to secondary school?
Mum Frightening."*

Building relationships

The importance of getting the relationship right is central to the pastoral care worker role. One of the principles involved in this is explained by Gordon Bailey during his interview:

"When I'm working with a child I don't want this child just to think this guy has got a lot to teach me – we can ask the child – I wonder if you'd do something for me? I almost think of something I can ask the child to do for me. It kind of disarms the child and they feel they can do something for you that you can't do for yourself."

Peer mediation is an example of a project where the 'helpers' might be identified as benefiting as much as those they are helping. Paired reading is another way in which the self-esteem of children can be increased through their being targeted to support others. In my own school Val has been involved in co-ordinating paired reading between years 3 and 5. For a period of one term the children are paired together on the basis of developing self-esteem as well as a love for reading.

Many of the children the pastoral care workers were targeting carried histories of neglect and abuse. Decker (1999), refers to the need to develop respect in young people:

"All this takes persistence and time. Workers have to 'discover' each child, have relentlessly to find a way through the abuse, the accusations, the projections and the violence. " p. 12

Both pastoral care workers recognised the importance of getting to know the children. Jamal described the ways in which he had attempted to do this in the early stages:

"First thing was just getting to know the children so I'd bring some board games or card games with me so it was simple enough to play. We talked as well and that's how I got to know the children that I deal with."

He placed emphasis upon the notion of 'fun' whilst also recognising the degree to which the children enjoyed the time given to them on a more individual basis:

"I get the 'you're so cool' or 'are we having our group today?' Or they get really upset if the group is cancelled. I even get the 'I hate you'. But they love it. 'Can I come and do it everyday?', they're asking. They like the attention. The undivided attention that I give them and the fun. I have a rule. To have fun. If they're not we'll stop."

From the interview with David's Mum, it appeared that Val had successfully managed to build relationships with him:

"David has always liked her. Said he would talk to Val when he wouldn't talk to me."

This can put pressure upon the PCWs from the point of view of sharing information and confidentiality, David's mum felt that Val had 'listened' to David, her follow-on comments suggested that it was not only David who needed someone to listen:

"Val has listened to him. He's always wanted to talk to her. She talked to me as well. When we were struggling at home she had ideas that might help. Like ignoring his attention seeking and diverting attention on to something else."

The close link between dealing with issues at home and in school was evident from this quotation. David, himself endorsed his mother's perception of his trust in Val:

*"Interviewer What would you like to keep the same about school?
David Val. She's someone I trust the most and I come to"*

During the interview with Andy he explained how Jamal had given him confidence:

*"Andy Yesterday we had to do a presentation
Interviewer Who was that to?
Andy All of year 4
Interviewer How did you feel beforehand?
Ales I was very nervous. Before I met Jamal I wouldn't have done it.
Interviewer Why was that? What had changed?
Andy He'd built up my confidence
Interviewer So what did he do that helped your confidence?
Andy Well you know, funny things, like the creative hat – like the green,
it can be anything. All the people with heads, I could imagine they
were all footballs so I don't need to look at them I'm just talking to
a load of footballs."*

In this quotation Andy refers to the '6 thinking hats work that Jamal had involved him in. An observation of this group whilst Andy was participating showed it to be a harmonious group of children who had grasped the explanations of the different types of thinking used. Further details about the strategy are referred to as part of a description of the intervention activities. Andy also went on to explain how Jamal had helped him after his exclusion:

*"Andy When I was excluded he came to me and talked about how I
could calm down
Interviewer What did he say during those times?
Andy He gave me pieces of paper so I could write down things that
make me feel better."*

Gemma was also interviewed for her opinions about Jamal's input. Interventions seemed to have made less of a long lasting impact upon her, i.e. she still felt she was being victimised and presented a very negative attitude towards school. She was, however, positive about Jamal's input and wished to keep in contact with him after the Super 7 group had finished.

Interviewer Do you think you'll carry on seeing Mr J when Super 7 finishes?

Gemma Yes

Interviewer When?

Gemma On the playground. He's always standing at the top of the playground drinking his hot chocolate.

Interviewer What will you do?

Gemma Go up to him – I do everyday”

This quotation highlights how useful it had been for Jamal to develop a routine of places where he could be found at predictable times. This was reflected in his diary entries. He had a clear routine that made him accessible in an informal way. Like Gemma, children took advantage of this to maintain a point of contact .

One way in which Jamal appeared to have established friendships and trust with his clients was through making sure he followed up any promises he made. On occasions this seemed to take children by surprise. The following diary entry is an example of this attention to follow-up:

“Year 3 child's target was met. He found behaving appropriately in class difficult. He had chosen to play on the computer for 30 minutes. We talked about raising the target higher for next week. He was genuinely surprised that I had come for him to play on the computer. I think I have won a little bit of his trust. Hopefully I'll be able to influence him positively when this level of trust has been consolidated.”

The pastoral care workers can be asked at any time to pick up and work with a child with whom they might have had no previous relationship or contact. In these cases they are sometimes being asked to build relationships in times of crises. The child has a clear idea of the purpose of their discussion which is focused upon the particular issue triggering the referral. At these times they are in the role of listener but do not have a basis of trust or respect upon which to build.

The role of listener was considered an important one by the children in the survey. There were also several comments that referred to the cheerful nature of the pastoral care workers as seen by the children. The following are comments written by children on the questionnaire about Val:

"Val cheers children up when they are upset."

"She is kind and cheers you up."

"Val looks after everyone and that's really good of her."

"She helps anybody who needs help."

"She helps us sort things out."

"I think Val is good at friendship groups. I also think she is very kind."

These reflect the very positive way in which the children appeared to see the pastoral care worker role. This was endorsed by the survey results. A large number of children linked Val with making friends with children. They identified her as working in this capacity rather than as someone withdrawing and working with naughty children. This suggests that the Schools Outreach aims are being met in terms of supplying children with positive interventions and providing 'unconditional care'.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important issue for PCWs. As they support children in the role of friend, there should be an understanding that at times information may have to be shared. To some of the children interviewed, trusting someone and 'spilling the beans' are linked:

"Interviewer Do you trust Val?"

David Yeah.

Cathy I trust anyone.

David Sometimes people spill the beans.

Interviewer Sometimes there are things we have to tell people.

David Val doesn't tell people."

In this interview, David seemed clear that Val would not 'tell people'. How would their relationship be affected if a situation arose in which she had to? Would David continue to trust Val? Cathy's comment would have been interesting to explore further. Her statement about trusting 'anyone' does not reflect the difficulties she has had in developing friendships in school.

Val, in particular, identified the potential difficulties there are in gaining the trust of children, maintaining confidentiality but also the requirements of a child protection policy:

"It's hard to deal with a disclosure. You go through the emotion of...Because when they've disclosed they don't want anyone to know about it. I've got to pass it on. Sometimes you do. On one occasion I've actually gone to the head and talked about it to her knowing that this child did not want me to pass it on. But I had to. Because it was beyond what I could deal with. Fortunately it worked out OK in the end. You worry about whether that's going to ruin your relationship with that child because then they think she doesn't listen to me. She broke my trust."

From this quotation, it seemed that Val sometimes felt that she was out of her depth. She clearly felt disturbed herself by the need to seek support. The tension Val felt about the conflicting roles is experienced by the majority of professionals working with children in challenging circumstances. On occasions a pastoral care worker might find that the number of roles they are playing within the school results in clashing priorities, as pointed out by Val:

"There was a confidence building group in year 3 that I started and I found that working with the children on a double issue thing. They were in quite a lot of my clubs and this and that and the other so that stopped."

Although details were unclear from this, it did suggest that Val was finding meeting with the same group in too many different circumstances problematic.

Unconditional pastoral care

The use of the term 'unconditional' is evident in the Schools Outreach paper work. For example, their annual report has as its title 'offering pupils unconditional pastoral care'. The job description for pastoral care workers begins with the expectation that that the PCW will:

"Offer individual pupils unconditional acceptance, respect and trust"

Val referred during the interview to her own difficulties with the issue of providing 'unconditional love'. This essential element of the Outreach brief would seem to make significant demands upon its workers. Certainly Val believed so:

"When children want to come to you for help but they choose not to listen to you. That gets a bit frustrating. You find out how difficult it is at first with the unconditional love bit. You're supposed to give out the unconditional love. I had

major difficulties with that at the beginning. In fact I had to go back to Cathy and say look, if you're wanting me to give it unconditional, because the more I give the more they're taking. They're just draining me. She summed it up, she said, unconditional still means there's got to be boundaries. That was really helpful."

Val expressed her frustration when some of the children she worked with did not respond in the way she would have hoped. At the beginning of her placement she was finding it particularly difficult to draw boundaries and seemed to have picked up that 'unconditional love' was expected from her rather than 'unconditional acceptance'. This, combined with her open and flexible timetable, might have caused difficulty in finding her role within school as well as putting pressure on her emotionally.

In terms of the psychological basis of the type of intervention encouraged from the pastoral care workers, we might consider that they fit into the humanistic role. This places emphasis upon the caring relationship between adult and pupil and how the pupils perceive themselves. According to how it is described by Chaplain (2000), the humanistic approach has four core conditions; empathy, warmth, unconditional positive regard, congruence. He describes unconditional positive regard as:

"a genuine regard without strings attached. It represents an expression of sincere trust irrespective of what the individual has done (which doesn't mean that you approve of their behaviour)" p. 314

This very much reflects the approach encouraged by Schools Outreach. As can be heard from Val, such unconditional acceptance can in reality be very difficult to extend.

Urquhart (2000) refers to the importance of the relationship with a significant individual in schools and the importance of the 'unconditional' nature of this relationship:

"By 'staying with' the child – i.e. not rejecting or giving up on a child, but sustaining an attitude of unconditional regard, in which we continue to value the individual, even when we are quite clear we do not accept the behaviour – we communicate a sense of belief in the child's worth." p. 338

In some cases such unconditional acceptance might be easier for an external person to administer than the teacher themselves. Urquhart also warns about the possible effect upon teachers of having pupils who make such demands upon them. She suggests that they need to be aware of the feelings that the children's behaviour can engender in themselves and that they may find that their own vulnerability is highlighted as a result of some of the relationships they develop. Certainly, Val appears to have found the resulting circumstances uncomfortable on occasions.

McGuiness (1982) refers to research conducted by Brammer and Shostrom (1968) which identifies 'unconditional positive regard' as one of the three most crucial core dimensions of the relationship between counsellor and client. This dimension is defined as:

"an ability to communicate to the client a level of human warmth, commitment to help, willingness to try to understand, which indicates a clear statement that the client is highly valued by the counsellor." pp. 77 – 78

The quotation suggests that through their willingness to engage they are conveying an acceptance that may be denied to the client in other circumstances.

Conclusions

In this section I have considered how the children view the role of the pastoral care worker. This has included discussions based upon interviews, diary entries, observations and comments and returns from the pupil survey. I suggest that the children regard building friendships between themselves and between the PCWs as central to the role. The link between the PCW and teachers seems more dependent upon the particular relationship which individual PCWs have established in their respective contexts. The effect of PCW background on this link seems central to its development. Jamal's experience as a teacher has been instrumental in the closer level of liaison between himself and the staff within his school. The children's responses indicate that they are also aware of this.

The children's perception of the role largely appears to depend upon their personal experiences of working with the PCW. Those interviewed recognised a distance between the PCW and school

staff, reflected also in the interviews with parents and headteachers. This distance appeared to have been advantageous for all as it allowed the PCW to build the 'unconditional care' aspect of their role. For Val, however, this has caused some difficulties in determining boundaries and she would have benefitted from further support in establishing her own emotional limits and the expectations of Schools Outreach.

A major feature from the interviews appeared to be the search for independence for the PCWs' clients. Concerns were raised that individuals became too dependent, especially where one-to-one work was a central part of the relationship. The PCWs themselves were aware that part of their role included supporting children in becoming more independent, particularly as they moved towards secondary school. The opportunity for the PCWs to develop a positive relationship with the children in school is a benefit of their role. Based in the school, but not part of the hierarchy, they have been in a position to offer 'unconditional care' and establish a close working relationship. This can be more difficult, however, where children are referred in a crisis. In these cases they may be provided with less information than external support services, at least initially. A highly professional approach is required of the PCWs in terms of ensuring that promises are kept and that children understand the boundaries of confidentiality. There are times, as with any professional, where this could appear to compromise an established friendship and would need a high level of sensitivity.

Interventions

This section examines the range of activities that the pastoral care workers were involved with. It makes reference to interviews, diary entries, observations and the results of the survey. It provides an overview of activities whilst then focusing on two interventions established by each PCW. Observations and follow-up interviews provide more detailed analysis but still enable only a snapshot view to be provided.

The two PCWs operate very differently in the two schools with both PCWs having selected and become involved in different activities and interventions. In fact, there was little overlap in what the two schools were offering. The following quotation was Joan's view of the activities that Val was involved with:

"She does anything. She does circle time with the rainbow group children. She does after school club. She raised her own money and supported the British Heart Foundation with jump for heart. She's included children without problems as well as those that have. She works with individuals, she works with groups, she works with teachers. She supports in the classroom. She's busy. She has worked with about 130 children."

The second headteacher, Helen, described Jamal's involvement:

"He is continuing to do after school clubs, drama, he's still doing peer mediation and we've given him really a lead role in that. We wanted to do peer mediation anyway and we started it eighteen months ago. He's been very very involved and now takes the lead."

From the interviews the headteachers stated that the timetable was flexible and there was no constraint on the role. However, they did in fact have some clear ideas about what they would like the pastoral care worker to do. For example, Jamal had worked closely with a year 5 teacher whose class were perceived as being 'tricky'. This type of targeted intervention would seem to be a school-based issue and it could be argued that Jamal was supporting the school as much as individuals. This again calls into question the scope and range of the PCW activities. Jamal describes how he came to be involved:

"We always knew that they were going to be a tricky class. I started to liaise with the year 5 teacher and we got on really well. She's doing a brilliant job with that class. I'm trying to help as much as I can."

The quality of the relationship between the classteacher and the PCW must also be partly responsible for the effectiveness of any interventions that there are. Jamal continued by describing some of the interventions he had been involved with in that particular class:

"We did the peer mediation training together. I take the Super 7 group out for social skills and there's a child in there who is on the autistic spectrum. I try to help him out. In the initial stages when it was all discovered I was there for him just to control him with his anger. And now I'm just overseeing."

Jamal was sufficiently flexible to enable intervention to begin immediately whereas calling in additional support services from the LEA takes time. Although this might just be a holding exercise, it provides exactly the kind of support necessary for both school and individual. Of course, there can be times when because a school has been able to put something in place, they make take a lower priority rating externally than those that have no additional support to offer.

Val described, her range of activities, which she linked quite specifically with boosting confidence:

"I do after-school clubs, working with children who need their confidence boosting and need to learn to work together as a team and in groups. I split them between year groups so I have 3 and 4 one term and then 5 and 6. I do drama across the whole school three to six. They work towards plays at the end of the year. It's confidence boosting."

Similar interventions include buddy readers. This is curriculum intervention and support but with the additional aim of engaging with the children and developing support networks.

How did the pastoral care workers decide which interventions and clubs to take up? In some cases, referrals and suggested strategies came from the school. However, Jamal described how he assessed the needs of the individual and targets support accordingly:

"Within about half an hour of the first meeting I knew exactly what each child needed and whether it was their self-confidence or just friendship. I just picked it up from their language and their body language as well."

Jamal appeared very confident in his assessments and this was also reflected in his diary entries. However, should a more in-depth assessment be provided? Certainly when support services are called in to work with a child, they use a range of psychometric tests, discussion with classteachers and parents. Are PCWs in a position to diagnose as easily? It might be that a prolonged period of assessment would lead to the same diagnosis but should some children be entitled to this and others not? Using in-house support might be more immediate and responsive but less well-researched.

Only one school indicated any reservations about any of the activities proposed by the pastoral care worker. Joan described her concerns;

"The one I worried about was the drama club because I don't think she's a skilled dramatist, reading from a play and so it could easily have led to ridicule, the performance part of it. Thing is she's working with such vulnerable children who in the normal classroom situation would not stand up and do anything. To be ridiculed by their peers would be very destructive so I'm always on tenterhooks."

This does return to the issue of the level of training of the pastoral care workers. Although they have a term's preparation, they do not receive the same level of targeted training for the multitude of roles they perform. If we consider they act as counsellors, deliver aspects of the curriculum, take after-school clubs, even sign-language, they may have some knowledge of each of these areas but are not necessarily specialist in any. Joan herself referred to this multitude of roles and implied some of the difficulties that this can bring on Val:

"If there's one with the sticky edges it's probably Val because she'll turn her hand to anything that benefits the welfare of the children."

During her interview, Val described how the drama group developed:

"The thing is I took it on as drama. I named it drama really. It started as a little group doing role play and getting over points but it's just got bigger and bigger and bigger but the plays I do are mostly based around the reason why I'm in this school. The children don't necessarily know that. It's not really drama as in stage production – the big time."

Perhaps loosely termed as drama, but Val has her own agenda for the work they do. Some of the children involved would not normally have opportunity to perform in this way. Although

vulnerable, as described by Joan, the results did seem to have been promising. More details are given later in this section.

A main theme that occurred during the interviews with the pastoral care workers and through their diaries was that of the transfer of new skills from the groups and interventions to the classroom. In the new environments skills will be learnt and behaviour changed but once the features and patterns of the usual environment are reverted to, the behaviour reverts as well. In Jamal's diary he made reference to a child who he had been working with at lunchtime, where the issue of transfer of skills was paramount:

"I have worked with the child before with only a little bit of success. He is unable to transfer the skills that he knows or has learnt into appropriate behaviour in the classroom or on the playground."

This theme was continued as Jamal reflected on the 6 thinking hats group described in more detail later in this chapter. He recognised the good work that had occurred during the session but queried whether it would be transferred:

"As a group we came up with a poem with the structure: I like the feeling of.... The group came up with some excellent lines. They then made up their own poems. We also tried to devise a questionnaire for likes and dislikes that may have to be carried on to next week. The group are really coming along and have really got to grips with the hat. I just hope that they can transfer the knowledge into lessons and on to the playground."

Val referred to one specific case which highlighted the difficulties of putting theory into practice:

"I've been working with a group of year 6 girls. The other day one of them said to me. I know what I've got to do, I totally go along with what you advise me but I still have difficulty with this girl. But it's going round in my head how I have to do it. So it shows that she's taking it in but she's still having that little bit of difficulty putting it into practice."

Friendship groups

Val ran a friendship group workshop in Joan's school as a response to the number of issues relating to friendships that arose. Joan highlighted during the interview how Val's intervention in friendship difficulties had been particularly successful:

"Friendships break down between groups of girls and groups of boys. Particularly with the girls which is often the most difficult to handle because it has a deeper base. She has been particularly good at unscrambling and getting children to adopt strategies whereby they may not interact with those children in a close way but they tolerate each other. What we were finding was that these fallouts at lunchtimes, break times and after school were coming back into school and going into lessons and the children were disrupting their lessons and those of others."

Val also referred in some detail to this aspect of her work. She did acknowledge, however, that not all of these interventions had been successful:

"Friendship groups as well, parents have been distraught because their child is coming home upset. Some have been more successful than others. The main point I get across to them is that I can't make them be friends. I'm not here to do that. I'm here to offer advice."

Val did seem concerned about the dilemmas involved in trying to intervene and support strategies for developing relationships. She was, however, quite realistic about the extent to which she could be expected to work miracles:

"It's basically when they fall out that problems occur. It's just setting up strategies and advice showing them how to deal with the fall outs. Not getting themselves into arguments. A lot of it is how they listen to it. If they do really want to be friends and they don't want to keep falling out they'll listen and they'll take on the advice."

There is an implication here that in some cases the children do not actually want to make friends. The fall outs and arguments perhaps serve a purpose. There may be something satisfying in the dispute itself. This might have been a factor in Cathy's case. Cathy had enjoyed the benefits of contact with Val and continued to seek this out as she explained during her interview:

"Interviewer When you were doing your flower picture what did Val talk to you about?"

Cathy She asked why we kept falling out and did we want to make friends again.

Interviewer What did you say?

Cathy We're always falling out because one wants to do this and one wants to do the other. We all start arguing. We were always making friends and then we went back to class we were falling out again.

Interviewer So did it work in the end?

Cathy *Yes, because we are all friends now.*
Interviewer *How did it help? What made the difference?*
Cathy *Talking really”*

There is a suggestion from this quotation that the intervention lasted as long as the children were with Val and receiving the special attention, but once back in the classroom context they reverted to their normal patterns of behaviour. One group, however, proved too much, to the point where Val closed the activity:

“Well, I just said to them, I’m not prepared to carry on. There are children wanting this time that would be of benefit and then we’ll start where we left off. They were just wasting my time and their time and the teacher’s time.”

In the survey, the friendship group proved to be one of the most popular of Val’s activities with the majority indicating that they thought it was very good:

Table 8-Children’s rating of the friendship group

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)	YEAR 4 (no. of responses)
Very good	10	3	8
good	0	2	0
OK	0	2	0
poor	0	0	0
don’t know	22	19	0

The survey results demonstrate a positive response to the friendship group with 21 children rating it as ‘very good’. This positive response is particularly important given the number of children recorded in Table 4 who perceive this as part of her role.

Peer mediation

Peer mediation is a programme of intervention and support co-ordinated by Jamal at one of his schools. When asked about the most successful projects each school had run, both

headteachers found it difficult to isolate any particular intervention. Perhaps it is the complexity of the role, as well as the other interventions children are involved with, that make such a question difficult to answer. However, Helen did mention peer mediation as having been particularly successful. This is an LEA instigated scheme which many schools have adopted but which requires staff with the time and inclination to support the children involved in it. When asked why it was successful, the response from Helen was:

“What I see is greater responsibility of these children particularly year 6 they take it quite seriously and their self-esteem has gone up knowing that they are problem-solvers, they can do it and they can be supportive to each other.”

In this case it was the children who were involved in supporting others who perhaps experienced the greatest benefit from the scheme. The placing of responsibility on children and the associated effect on their self-esteem is important and is part of the attraction of schemes such as paired reading referred to earlier.

Although there are positive responses from school staff, from the survey peer mediation was not always rated as highly as can be seen in Table 11. Nine children rated it as OK, quite a low indicator in comparison with the other interventions. Potential differences between the views of the headteacher and the children would have benefited from further research. For example, it would have been interesting to determine how Helen had come to her conclusions about its success.

In Jamal's diary peer mediation was only mentioned once when Jamal referred to checking up to see if they were on duty. There was no further reference, unlike breakfast club which received a mention on a daily basis.

Table 9 -Children's rating of peer mediation

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of options)	YEAR 5 (no. of options)	YEAR 4 (no. of options)
Very good	5	5	9
good	5	0	5
OK	3	3	3
poor	0	1	0
don't know	12	5	8

One-to-ones

Both Jamal and Val included one-to-one opportunities as a major part of their role. These are times when children who are having difficulties are referred for counselling and support and may then have time allocated to them as part of the pastoral care worker's week. Children can also self-refer as and when necessary. Joan made reference to a specific case where Val's intervention has a very positive impact::

"We're talking about somebody accessing the curriculum for long periods of time rather than just panic struck, angry and excluded. Excluded themselves because they were frustrated. Val counselled them so they came out of lessons and then she negotiated deals. Do this for this long and I'll do this with you so gradually they've been reintegrated back."

The one-to-one interventions can take a variety of forms which may not always mean that the pastoral care worker sits down with the child for a set period of time. Jamal described how he had a list of children who he monitored, without necessarily speaking to them every day:

"Sometimes I say, I'll speak to you at this date and at this time. Most of the others it's as and when. I always go round and check up on everyone who's on my list. From a distance. I don't need to interact with them. I'll judge from their response whether I need to see them. Every day is different."

Referrals of individual children might initially lead to 'one-to-ones' and subsequently have group activities prescribed to them as the intervention. For example, Val described a referral, where once more, group activities and the development of social skills were applied:

"I had one child referred to me the other day because he has been getting into such a lot of trouble at playtime and I do playtime games on the front playground. For the children who have difficulty mixing and things like that. So I started doing the good old traditional playground games and the teacher referred him on to me. To try and keep him out of trouble on the back playground."

In Jamal's diary he received a number of referrals from the staff for one-to-one intervention. In some cases he chose to meet these on a one-to-one basis, but often preferred to address the issues as part of a group intervention:

"The headteacher caught me to give me some information for a year 4 child. Her parent had been in and was upset about how this girl was behaving at school. The head wanted to know if I could address the situation. Luckily the girl in question was in one of my Super 7 groups. I'll tackle the subject through that group."

In another case, similarly following a headteacher referral, Jamal described in his diary why he chose the group option:

"Headteacher filled me in about a child who did not want to come to school. Wanted to see if I could help her in any way. Her stepbrother had been tragically killed a few weeks ago. Mum was worried about her. I did some background work on this child through teachers that have taught her. I conducted a brief observation in class. My investigation showed that the child needed to have normality restored to her life. She had had a lot of limelight shone upon her previously, and now was trying to get it back again. I decided not to work with 1 to 1 where this aspect might be given some kudos, but in one of the Super 7 groups."

Jutnick and Manson (2000) discuss the importance of the development of peer relationships and the extent to which it assists learning:

"Ownership of this knowledge can only be obtained via peer interaction and validation. While there are benefits accruing to instruction, the effect of instruction without the opportunity of interaction is limited." p. 83

So Jamal is providing not only the opportunity to work with focus children but allowing them to practise and develop new skills through interaction within the group. This may help with some of the difficulties of transferring skills discussed earlier in this chapter. There are times, as described in Jamal's diary, when the group appeared to be less successful in its therapeutic role:

"One of my focus children was proving to be hard work in the group. I had to give her a yellow card (1st and only warning)."

It is interesting to note how Jamal began by gathering further information about the children referred. This then led him to make a decision about his method of intervention. From Val's diary, her intervention on referral was more immediate and was more likely to result in a one-to-one than reverting to a group approach. An outside agency called to deal with a referral would automatically collect information from a variety of sources. Does being based 'in-house' increase or reduce this opportunity? We might consider that it would be easier to collect the information needed. However, some teachers may expect that a referral is acted upon immediately without the necessity of information gathering. This more spontaneous approach would not be expected from an external agency.

External agencies might also administer tests to confirm and clarify the area of need and the appropriateness of intervention. McGuiness (1982) suggests that it is important to use both impressions and intuition but along side testing:

"Educational response must be based on sound data, not impression, if problems are to be tackled. We do have the means of collecting such data and owe it to children to 'know' them as well as we possibly can." p. 44

Although there were two examples from Jamal's diary of adopting a group approach rather than one-to-one, there were also examples of where he had spent time with an individual on a one-to-one basis with success:

"Headteacher came along with a year 6 child that had been crying. The child had just lost his grandfather. I took him to the library and allowed him to cry, then talked about the situation. I reassured him that it was ok to cry, it was a way of getting the hurt and pain out of your system. He was confused about whether or not to go to the funeral as he was getting mixed messages from the extended family. After a while I started to take his mind off the subject by chatting about

other stuff and doing some puzzles. He left me much happier. He said that he liked coming to me as I made him laugh and made him feel good. I was really touched. I've made a note to follow him up on Monday, after the funeral."

Once more a headteacher referral but here there was no indication of additional trawling for information. Jamal was quite happy to deal with the situation with the information provided.

Tables 10 and 11 illustrate the rating that children gave one-to-one interventions. There were more responses received from children in year 4 than any other year group with 27 children responding in total between Val and Jamal. The highest ratings came from Jamal's year 6 (11 'very good') and year 4 (12 'very good') and Val's year 4 (15 'very good'). For those targeted, this form of intervention would appear to have been successful in the majority of cases. Each case, however, will be unique not only in terms of its content and delivery but also in the child's reaction to it. Success or not is difficult to judge particularly if the long-term is considered.

Table 10-Children's rating of Jamal's one-to-one discussions

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)	YEAR 4 (no. of responses)
Very good	11	3	12
good	1	4	10
OK	6	6	0
poor	1	0	0
don't know	7	7	3

Table 11-Children’s rating of Val’s one-to-one discussions

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)	YEAR 4 (no. of responses)
Very good	9	5	15
good	0	2	0
OK	0	0	2
poor	0	0	0
don’t know	23	19	4

In their diaries both pastoral care workers combined one-to-one discussion with some kind of focus activity to engage the child. This could then allow discussion to occur in a more natural environment. For example Jamal used topical discussion and art work as a stimulus:

“TREE AND COLLAGE. Spoke about the weekend – had enjoyed himself at dad’s. Spoke about what he’s getting for Christmas – CD player which plays 4 CDs at a time.” Extract from Jamal’s diary

Open door

At Joan’s school, children had an option of leaving lessons to seek out Val, if they felt they needed to. Although this follows Schools Outreach’s recommendations, it can cause some concern amongst staff as Joan described in her interview:

“The school would operate an open door policy. That’s what I’ve asked them to operate. My staff are sufficiently... they were suspicious of it to start with but when they could see from colleagues that it did work, they were all on board. So there was less resistance.”

Although Joan described the success of this approach and staff’s acceptance of it, it also presented some practical problems:

“They were hitting the same time each week. But that was something that Val could talk to the teacher about. Had they noticed that David was always missing Science? Val would then go in with the child and see them through. Often a very small intervention, an active intervention has put things back on track. It’s made potential big problems small.”

Children being withdrawn from lessons is a common feature of classroom life. With the requirement of schools to provide booster and support group opportunities and with the advent of nurture groups and counselling and mentoring, some children can find themselves out of lessons on a regular basis. The effect this has upon individuals and access to the curriculum may need to be carefully monitored.

One example of a withdrawal group is 'nurture'. Children are withdrawn in the afternoons for this small group intervention which is coordinated by teaching assistants and the SENCO. Children are referred to the group for reasons related to their emotional and behavioural needs and are supported in developing early learning and social skills. Val participated in the nurture group on a weekly basis organising a circle time. Two circle times were observed and interviews took place afterwards. During the interviews with the nurture group children, they were asked about attendance at the 'rainbow room' the school's name for nurture provision:

<i>“Interviewer</i>	<i>How often do you go to the rainbow room?</i>
<i>Craig</i>	<i>Every afternoon</i>
<i>David</i>	<i>Mondays and Thursdays</i>
<i>Interviewer</i>	<i>Do you enjoy going?</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>Yeah</i>
<i>Interviewer</i>	<i>Why?</i>
<i>David</i>	<i>Because it’s a nice place to be really</i>
<i>Interviewer</i>	<i>In what way?</i>
<i>Craig</i>	<i>Like we play games and we have biscuits”</i>

The perspective of the children in terms of their withdrawal is of interest. We might wonder how parents and other adults would receive this kind of description of what children had been doing at school.

There are issues concerned with curriculum entitlement versus the needs of the individual. In support of withdrawal of children to the nurture group on a regular basis, in my own school we have always claimed that these children are not accessing the content of lessons and need social skills teaching as a priority to enable them to do so. There does seem to be an increasing acknowledgement that the development of readiness to learn is valid curriculum content. An example of this is the increase in the recognition of the importance of teaching 'emotional literacy' and the foundation of social skills as prerequisite to cognitive learning.

Val explained that sometimes children were not released from lessons to see her when she would have liked:

"Interviewer: Anything you find frustrating?"

Val I think sometimes when you want to see children and they're busy doing other things. You've set a specific time"

Where it is the teacher who does not release them this could be an indication of teachers placing most emphasis on entitlement rather than need. This may also vary between year groups as year 6 teachers struggle with the pressures of accountability and testing arrangements. However, as schools remain pressurised to perform against specific measures, this affects all teachers.

From the diaries, Jamal had regular contact with Helen and some of his weekly timetable was defined by her referrals. He did decide how his intervention would take place and retained a high level of independence in how and when he intercepted children. The exception to this seemed to be the lunchtime referral where he was asked to supervise a boy under threat of exclusion. Jamal described this in his diary:

"Headteacher came to see me. A year 6 child is under threat from being excluded at lunchtime. We discussed some problem areas. We agreed that I would help him at lunchtimes the days that I'm at school. I would keep him off the playground by doing some work, whether anger management or school work that he has not finished. Then have 10 minutes computer time. Then on Thursday, if he cannot cope on the playground, that is, he cannot stay out of trouble, he will be sent home at lunchtimes."

The 'open door' policy could only work for half the week as both PCWs were shared between two schools. Therefore, children did not have an option of accessing the support during the remainder of the week. What did they do when they would normally seek out Jamal or Val? Was there a noticeable difference, or was the support given when they were present sufficient to enable them to manage for the rest of the week? Part-time basis of support can make continuity difficult for the pastoral care workers themselves as Jamal described in his interview:

"I think I find spending...it's the two schools scenario. I know it's a good thing because it gives me a break from one school to another but also it sometimes.. you just can't carry on with something and sometimes if they are having trouble and you're not with the kids much."

All the schools operated a flexible system of sharing the PCWs, so if there was an emergency they could be withdrawn from one site to another. However, as Jamal seemed to indicate, the needs of the children cannot be compartmentalised into half-day slots. In addition, having two 'centres' meant increased liaison, paper work and meeting time.

One of the children, Cathy, referred to the difficulty of accessing Val at times, indicating the impossibility of keeping a completely open door:

"It's complicated for her as well because year 3 and 4 have their break time at a different time to us. So if we want to come at break and there's someone else she's in with in the lesson. It's a bit...."

From Jamal's diary and interview with Gina, he appeared to have managed to make himself accessible to the children even when the intervention programme had ended. During her interview, Gina described how she intended to still keep contact with Jamal through approaching him at playtime. The children seemed to be familiar with his routine and able to make use of it.

From Jamal's diary the breakfast club appeared to be a good platform for the day. During these sessions, Jamal was involved in sorting out difficulties happening at the time and catching up on how children were getting on generally:

"Breakfast Club. There was a verbal disagreement between some boys. A group of year 4 boys who were teasing another boy for sitting on the girls table for

breakfast. I sternly reminded them that there was no segregation at breakfast club, and made them apologise to the boy."

"Breakfast Club – caught up with brother and sister who were having problems at home. Things seemed to be quietening down at home." Extracts from Jamal's diary

On occasions, chats in the playground were used to follow up incidents and activities as Jamal described in his diary:

"Break time. Went out onto the playground. Helped a child undo her coat which was stuck. Had a good chat with a member of one of my Super 7 group about how the previous session went."

Although Val provided fewer formal opportunities for children to approach her, there was evidence from her diary that children could self-refer:

"MB and BL – came to see me to make an appointment re friendship – agreed for Tuesday at 1.30 pm."

Circle time

Circle time is a strategy used in schools to involve children in discussion and speaking and listening activities. Children have opportunity to voice opinions and solve problems together in a cooperative way using a variety of activities and games. Two sessions of circle time were observed. The first involved a mixed group of junior children – three girls and seven boys. The circle time took place in the 'rainbow room' which was a nurture group run in the school attended by some of the children with whom Val works. Although Val knew many of the children, she had not worked with all of them and only saw them as a group for this particular session.

The first session observed involved Val discussing food with the children following up some activities introduced by other members of staff. The beginning of the session included Val reviewing the different types of fruit they had been tasting and talking about. This led on to a discussion about the differences between the fruits. Finally a game was played where each child named a fruit and the children had to remember the order and type of food listed. Children were

encouraged to listen to one another and to take their turn in speaking. Nurture assistants remained in the room during the session and encouraged and reprimanded the children as necessary. The session appeared to emphasise the importance of turn taking and listening skills with there being little opportunity to discuss issues on an individual level or open dialogue with an individual. Consequently, it was difficult to see how the session was furthering any of the pastoral care worker aims other than increasing children's awareness of Val and providing opportunity for them to work with her.

The second circle time observed included ten children, two of whom were girls. A boy joined them towards the end of the session and once more there were additional adults sat around the edge of the circle helping to prompt and check behaviour. During this session there were particular issues to do with the behaviour of the children and difficulties with children talking at the same time:

<i>Val</i>	<i>Do you think it would be a boring place if we all looked the same. How am I different to you?</i>
<i>Girl</i>	<i>We've got school clothes and you haven't</i>
<i>Boy</i>	<i>You're an adult and we're not. We're children</i>
<i>Val</i>	<i>Yes, Connor?</i>
<i>Connor</i>	<i>We've got light hair and you've got dark hair</i>
<i>Val</i>	<i>Leave the mat alone and just sit and listen. In one way we are all the same and in other ways we are different. In some ways like in the circle alone there are 8 boys. Can you listen please...</i>
<i>Adult</i>	<i>Michael, Michael...</i>
<i>Val</i>	<i>Tamrin and Emily are both girls. Some of you may be the same age...</i>
<i>Adult</i>	<i>Michael...</i>
<i>Val</i>	<i>It's nice to know that you're keen to keep answering the questions."</i>

Throughout the circle time there were similar interruptions and difficulties maintaining the discussion in the intended way. Although not evident from the transcript, some children did not join in. For example, Lewis had very little involvement but spent most time playing with some cellophane that he refused to give to anyone. When Michael is spoken to it is in order to try and stop him annoying Connor whose head he was trying to stroke. Lewis and Michael had

constructed their own game of creeping along the sofa during the session trying to see how far they could get.

The discussion in this circle time focused around similarities and differences and how we have to accept one another and treat each other as we would want to be treated. Val tried to ensure that the children had got the message:

“Val We are all different as well. We are all different because we need to learn from each other. By being different. Phillip may be good at some things that Kieren isn’t. Kieren may want to be good at what Philip is good at. That means that Kieren can learn from Philip. Do you understand that? What I’m trying to say? Who doesn’t understand?”

Children (mixture of replies) I do, I don’t

Val Who understands? Would you like to explain then?

Indistinct part of the transcript

Val It means we have to accept each other. Because we’re all different we have to get on with one another.”

Some of the children did engage in the discussion but for many the alternative agenda of the session was of more interest. During observation it was evident that the children were not listening to one another. Some of them were trying to touch each other and provoke one another. This section of the transcript from the circle time observation demonstrated some of the difficulties Val was having with the group:

“Phillip Gavin... he went like that!

Val What’s one of the rules in school? Sh...I’m asking Gavin

Child Keep your hands to yourself

Val Keep hands, feet and unhelpful comments to yourself. That is really what I’ve been talking about during this circle time. “

A third session was described by Val in her diary. This included a discussion about what the children were good at.

“All came up with something and were happy to write on the group paper what they’re good at. Few arguments occurred while writing, had to be spoken to. Patience wasn’t very visible, had to be told to come back to the circle several times. All said what they’re good at – and the majority of them remembered what each other had said.”

Val felt that they did all participate. What did the children themselves think of circle time?

Following the observation, interviews with the children were conducted:

*“Interviewer What do you learn in circle time?
David Loads of things really – learning how to solve problems and
 things
Interviewer Do people try to solve your problems?
David Yeah
Interviewer Have they?
David Yeah. Through talking about it.”*

Not all of the children were as positive:

*“Interviewer Do you like circle time?
Kieron shakes his head
Interviewer Why not?
Kieron Because I’ve been doing it since I was in my old class and that.
Interviewer What do you think you’ve learnt from doing it a lot?
Kieron I’ve forgotten now”*

This raises issues of repetition of strategies used with children. How long should a particular intervention be applied before it is changed or abandoned? Although, in theory, circle time is an approach to developing social skills and part of the Personal, Health, Social Education and Citizenship curriculum that can be used every year. From the interview we don't know if Kieran's lack of interest comes from repetition of content, method of delivery or simply a dislike of the types of activities which circle time suggests.

From the responses below, the children in this group saw circle time as fun and enjoyed the games played:

*“Interviewer What do you like about circle time?
Michael You get to say something... about fruit
Interviewer Did you enjoy that?
Michael It was good. Was it good?
Keran Yeah it was.
Interviewer Do you like circle time? If you gave it a mark out of 10?
Tom 10 excellent
Liam I think it's excellent too. I try to be good because last time I got
 five sweets.”*

Much of the conversation about circle time revolved around the issues of enjoyment, games and rewards:

- “Interviewer She gives you sweets at the end?
Liam Sometimes she gives you it in the middle of the story if you’re like this and everyone else is chatting and stuff.
David Circle time is fun.
Interviewer What’s fun about it?
David You get to do loads of things and she tells you stories some times and plays games with you.
Interviewer What sort of games?
David Like fruit salad
Interviewer Any other games?
Craig Cars”*

The children appeared to enjoy the chance to play games. Did this have any purpose in their view?

- “Interviewer Why do you play games like that do you think?
David So we’re on our best behaviour. If we’re good we get to do different things.”*

From the survey, Table 12 shows that very few children acknowledged having been involved with only four responding. Of those four, three were very positive indicating that they thought it was ‘very good’.

Table 12-Children’s rating of Val’s circle time

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)	YEAR 4 (no. of responses)
Very good	2	1	0
good	0	0	0
OK	0	1	0
poor	0	0	0
don’t know	30	24	0

Other issues raised by circle time observation and follow-up interviews were the difficulties which relationships within the group can have upon the sessions. During the observations it was evident that some of the group were not getting on well. This failure to 'gel' as a group made it very difficult for Val to address the issues she was intending to as they were not ready in terms of their own relationships. It might have been more appropriate to have dealt with the relationships between them prior to tackling any other subjects.

An article in the TES by Helen Ward (January 9th 2004 p.11 'Teachers go round in circles') draws attention to the dangers of using circle time techniques without training. An NFER research project 'Going Round in Circles: implementing and learning from Circle Time' highlights how dealing with the sensitive topics raised in circle time requires skills and experience. Comments made by children at these times can require careful handling or might cause stressful situations to develop.

During some of the interviews the difficulties the children had in relating to one another were evident. In the following quotation, the two children asked about the importance of learning to play together go on to demonstrate some of the issues that pastoral care workers are trying to address:

Interviewer *Do you think it is important to learn to play together?*
Kieran *I don't think it is.*
Michael *I do.*
Interviewer *Well perhaps if Kieron explains why he doesn't think it is and Michael explains why he does.*
Michael *Because we hide from them and try to catch them.*
Kieran *I don't. I'm on their team.*
Interviewer *Kieron, why don't you think it's important learning to play together?*
Michael *I was..... I was....*
Interviewer *It's Kieron's turn*
Michael *I was...*
Interviewer *Kieron*
Kieran *Michael won't stop doing anything*
Michael *Shhhhh."*

In another interview with other children involved in circle time, Michael's name was raised again for creating difficulties:

*“Interviewer What about circle time?
Tom Michael made me in a bad mood.
Interviewer Why did he make you in a funny mood?
Tom Because he called me dumbo so I called him..
Interviewer Did this happen just now?
Tom Yes”*

Although the difficulties with friendships were ideal material for circle time, they did not appear to have been the focus for the sessions but remained unresolved whilst other issues were being dealt with.

These comments also drew attention to the fact that it was not only building relationships with the pastoral care worker that was important but also with other children in the group. The way in which the children related to one another had as much impact as the relationships between the adult and child. Inappropriate and disruptive grouping may well undermine the success of any programme. In some cases the PCWs will have control over the grouping of the children, in other cases they may have less say in who they are asked to work with simultaneously.

During interviews most of the children were positive about being at school and appeared happy to discuss their likes and dislikes. However, for some of them, they had clearly labelled themselves:

*“Liam Me and Tom need some help with our work. We’re really bad
behaviour boys, we’re all naughty
Interviewer Who’s said that to you?
Liam No one. Just know it
Interviewer What do you think you need help with?
David Loads of things really, my work, my reading... my problems –
when you tell someone you can trust”*

There is no specific indication where the children have obtained this view of themselves from. We might speculate that the number of interventions and the ways in which they can make the

children 'special' may have contributed, but equally parents and peers may well have contributed to the build up of the self-image that gives them a very clear role within the school.

Playground games

Val had been teaching children a selection of traditional games in the front playground at one of her schools. Children did not normally use this part of the playground and so it provided opportunity for her to work with selected and self-selecting children without interference from others. The sessions, held at break time, had the objectives of both keeping some of the targeted children occupied and teaching them new skills and cooperative games.

During observation of this session there were nine girls and two boys initially with another boy joining later. The first game they played was 'Queenie. Queenie'. This was a ball game where the 'Queen' was turned with her back towards the others. She threw the ball over her shoulder and someone caught it. The Queen then had to guess who had got the ball which they hid behind their backs. From observation, the children seemed to enjoy the game although there were some difficulties with children arriving at different times. The session was also short due to the constraints of play time.

The actual observation itself was hindered by the fact that I knew one of the children participating and he appeared to be drawing attention to himself as a result. An argument began between David B and another child in the group and Val had to change the game to 'Soldier Soldier'. This involved the children throwing a ball to one another and then dropping on to one knee if they didn't catch it. They could then stand up again if it was thrown to them and they caught it. David B wanted to throw it to me and it had to be explained that I wasn't actually taking part in the game. Of course in some research it would have been possible to take part. Would this have made the observation more effective in this case? My previous relationship with David B would have made the research difficult with or without my participation in the activity. Once more, difficulties with

relationships between the group members perhaps needed addressing at other opportunities.

The role and position of the PCW made it difficult for them to operate in that way.

Val mentioned the playground games in her diary, describing some other games she was involved with and how in the first session there did not seem to be any problems. The second session did not seem to go quite as smoothly:

“Played ‘soldier, soldier’, ‘duck, duck, goose’ and ‘scarecrow tig’. Behaviour not too bad – all joined in, played well together. TJ was a little loud at times, kept screaming.”

6 thinking hats

This intervention strategy was being used by Jamal. Six hats is an approach to working with children that encourages them to be aware of the different ways in which we think. Each hat represents a different type of thought and the children are encouraged to apply the different ways of thinking to different problems. One session was observed involving four children, two girls and two boys. There was initial disruption at the start of the session as a class needed to use the computer suite which Jamal had chosen as his base. Once settled in another classroom, further disruption took place when another class entered. However, agreement on the base was reached and the session continued.

Jamal had used different coloured hats to represent the six ways of thinking and began the session by checking that children remembered what the different ways were. The sessions continued by inviting the children to use the six hats to think about coming to school. This provided opportunities for the children to discuss some important issues in relation to their feelings about school. The children behaved well and talked openly about their likes and dislikes.

In the second part of the session the children had to give one another instructions for moving about the room blindfolded. The session went well, however, difficulties with the lack of necessary vocabulary and confusions about left and right made it very difficult for some children

who perhaps slightly lost the point of the exercise. Jamal tried to help by providing additional vocabulary as it was needed. His teaching background was evident during the observation. Noticeable from the session was the positive relationship Jamal had built up with the children and the high level of planning, preparation and structure. Jamal was competent in intervening and altering direction where necessary and picking up on the individual needs of the children. Following the session two children were asked what they thought:

*“Interviewer Do you enjoy it?
Children Yes.
Interviewer Why?
Andy Because it helps us to get our brains working. Say like you’ve got the war – that could be a gigantic bomb. It gets our brain thinking of what things might be.
Interviewer Didn’t you think before then?
Andy We did think a bit we didn’t like realise how important it could actually be.”*

Andy (year 6) was a particularly eloquent student who, from other interviews, was able to discuss and reflect upon his own and others' actions, motives and thoughts. He went on to explain how he considered learning about 6 hats had helped him to address his behaviour difficulties:

*“Interviewer Do you mind telling me why you were excluded?
Andy I kicked a boy
Interviewer Would you do that now?
Andy No.
Interviewer Why not?
Andy Because Mr J. has taught me how if someone hurts me really bad how I can stop and walk away.
Interviewer Which of the hats would you use in making that decision.
Andy I’d be using the feelings hat, because I don’t want to get into trouble.
Interviewer Have you talked about that before about using the feelings hat to keep you out of trouble?
Andy I think so.”*

Jessica (year 6) also talked at length about using the hats and was evidently familiar with the different types of thought involved. She had a very positive attitude to both 6 hats and school generally:

- “Interviewer How do you feel you’re different now from when you didn’t know anything about the hats?”***
- Jessica I just feel happy because I’ve got to do something new.***
- Interviewer Putting on the red hat, how does that make you feel?***
- Jessica Happy.***
- Interviewer Why?***
- Jessica Because when you do it you get to share it with other people and you can’t tell anyone else.”***

There was a certain amount of secrecy around the interventions that Jamal ran. He preferred the children to keep some aspects of the group confidential and the children seemed to enjoy the ‘special’ nature this conveyed. One reason why 6 hats was kept secret was because the children were planning a presentation for the rest of the school.

Both Jessica and Andy were quite clear about which hats they would need in different situations:

- “Interviewer If there was a problem at break time with one of your friends which two hats would be most useful?”***
- Andy The red and the facts because I’d like to ask them what’s wrong and why they did it.***
- Interviewer Anything else you’d like to tell me about?***
- Andy I’ve learnt that using the hats helps me with my work and helps me keep out of trouble and so if someone kicks me I’ll just tell them to stop it and don’t get involved. I would have done before I went.”***

It appears from this that 6 hats thinking had given Andy a useful strategy to apply in different circumstances. In Jamal’s diary, he discussed a 6 hats group and from his extract we can see how he continued consistently to incorporate his work with groups into classroom life:

“A group of year 4 learning about Edward De Bono’s six hat thinking. They are at the stage where they need to prepare a presentation for their class. I did some brain gym work with them. Then concentrated on white hat thinking – facts! They got the hang of brain gym and produced a power point presentation on the White Hat!

Super 7 group

This group changed on a termly basis and consisted of a group of children selected or referred for reasons such as difficulty with developing friendships, being withdrawn or having low self-esteem. Jamal used this group to address the individual needs of targeted children. He then incorporated others who had an inclination to join but perhaps didn't have the same degree of need. From Jamal's diary, two children referred to him were involved in this way. In the following extract Jamal encountered difficulties with the skills that the group had:

Year 5 Super 7 group. Showed them a new game played with their hands. They enjoyed that. Played Uno so that we could chat about what has happened in the week. Then I asked them two questions. A) what is the best thing that has ever happened to them? (My focus child said that coming to this group was the best thing, made me feel all warm and fuzzy). B) using your imagination, what crime would you have committed that the police would put up a WANTED! poster for you? All except the focus child struggled with this question. They found using their imagination a problem, in particular one child who seriously could not grasp the concept of using their imagination. Next week I might introduce the green hat from 6 hats thinking program. We then started to design a WANTED! poster. They will finish it at home so that we can talk about it next week and then later display them. The children enjoyed coming to the group, they said so as they left."

These difficulties then impeded the success of the group against Jamal's objectives for it. There was an issue for Jamal about the effect which group dynamics might have had upon his target child(ren). Although there are benefits to incorporating a child with specific social or emotional needs into a group, on occasions their needs can become less of a priority.

Difficulties with group dynamics were evident from some of the Super 7 observations conducted. Two observations were completed, one at the beginning of the programme and one at the end. The group consisted of five girls, one of whom was absent during the first observation. There were two targeted girls, Chelsea who had been referred because she believed other children were picking on her and Gina who had had difficulty making friends. During the first session the group were very quiet and withdrawn and needed a great deal of questioning in order for them to

contribute. When asked open-ended questions they tended to use one word answers and weren't prepared to volunteer information.

During the observation Jamal emphasised the importance of the group having fun and he began by explaining the rules for the session. They then played a card game which did begin to break the ice and provided opportunity for some discussion to take place. Jamal explained to me after the session that one of the purposes of playing the games was to enable conversation about issues to happen naturally and within a context. Jamal did attempt to open up further discussion about the events of the week during the session and they also spent time naming something obvious about one another. Chelsea explained that she was embarrassed by her freckles when Jamal made reference to them. In discussion afterwards, Jamal had specifically mentioned these as they were often the reason why she felt others were picking on her. He used the opportunity of the larger group to address her particular concern.

In order to see what progress the Super 7 group had made, the group was observed at the end of the programme and one girl was interviewed after the observation. Once more the session began with a reminder of the rules and a card game was played. This time the girls were much more familiar with the activity and appeared to be much more relaxed. There was a noticeable improvement in the way that the group worked together. The children contributed much more and Kaleigh had brought in a poster to show the others. The children concentrated hard and talked as a group in a relaxed way whilst playing cards. Jamal opened up topics of conversation and the subject continued from there. One girl remained quiet but was drawn out by Jamal at every opportunity. Background noise was still an issue for this group but most concentrated well with Gina appearing to be the most distracted. During the discussion about their feelings Gina appeared to be very negative although her love for her pets was referred to on a number of occasions. She also continued to speak out of turn.

Some of the answers to the questions were very frank. They were quite prepared to talk about problems at home and could answer 'have you every been hurt?' with ease. The session had to

be cut short because of Music but there was time at the end for the children to contribute ideas for the next session. From the two observations, significant ground had been made by Jamal and the children had found opportunity to discuss issues and worries in a receptive environment in which they had grown in confidence. In the interview with Gina following the observation her esteem for Jamal was evident:

*“Interviewer What do you think of the Super 7 group?
Gina Mr J likes children. He’s really nice to them and everything.
Interviewer Is he nice to you?
Gina Yes.*

*“Interviewer Do you think you’ll carry on seeing Mr J when Super 7 finishes?
Gina Yes
Interviewer When?
Gina On the playground. He’s always standing at the top of the
 playground drinking his hot chocolate.
Interviewer What will you do then?
Gina Go up to him – I do everyday
Interviewer Why do you do that?
Gina Because he’s really nice to people”*

Although there may be issues here to do with the degree of dependency that Gina is showing, she did demonstrate that she considered Jamal to be approachable and that he was making himself accessible through being in the playground. The interview with Gina suggested that there remained a great deal of need for support. Although she appeared to have benefited from the Super 7 group, her answers still demonstrated low self-esteem and a negative attitude to school:

*“Interviewer What do you think you’ve learnt being part of Super 7?
Gina Don’t know.
Interviewer Do you feel different in any way?
Gina Yes. Happier.
Interviewer Why?
Gina Because I get out of lessons.”
“Interviewer What would you change if you could change something about the
 school?
Gina Me
Interviewer Why?
Gina Don’t know*

Interviewer *What would you change about yourself?*
Gina *Stop being a wimp*
Interviewer *Why do you think you're a wimp?*
Gina *Because everyone keeps picking on me*

Gina then went on to explain that she hadn't told anyone except her mum about being picked on. She said, however, that she might tell Jamal at some point:

Interviewer *Have you talked to Mr J about it?*
Gina *No.*
Interviewer *Has he said anything?*
Gina *No*
Interviewer *Do you think you might talk about it to him in the future?*
Gina *Probably.*
Interviewer *When?*
Gina *Don't know, probably when I'm in year 5 or something."*

No matter how accessible Jamal made himself it was still dependent on the child being prepared to confide in him. Difficulties such as those experienced by Gina may need additional support. She did have opportunity to talk but appeared resistant to the help she was offered.

Jamal mentioned the Super 7 group many times in his diary. The following extract highlighted the difficulties of trying to incorporate focus children into a group where the dynamics and needs of other children might intervene:

"Year 4 Super 7 group. We did brain gym, we played Kings in the Corner and then asked a few questions to start discussion. One of my focus children was proving to be hard work in the group. I had to give her a yellow card (1st and only warning). The other focus child was trying to bring her dead stepbrother into the conversation as much as possible. The group as a whole treated it in a matter of fact way, not commenting on it at all, but just carried on with the discussion."

Jamal reflected in depth in his diary entry on the successes and difficulties of his groups and considered how to take them one step further:

"Year 5 Super 7 group. I based the whole session on communication. There were 18 colour co-ordinated building bricks. The group had to split in to 2. One group had to build something with blocks. The other group, without seeing the creation were to build exactly the same with their building blocks. I had showed them how to be specific with their language. They really enjoyed the session. The first group

to have a go was a disaster. They were not communicating properly. They were assuming too much, and they were giving too much information at once. The second group had got it spot on. This was due to the fact that we had sat down and come up with a way to convey exactly what we meant and even using body language. I might try that again in a few weeks time with a complex construction."

From the survey, 22 children with experience of the group selected the 'very good' option and eight the 'good' option. It should be noted that one child indicated that the group was 'poor'. It would have been interesting to have been able to follow this up and discover why.

Table 13-Children's rating of Jamal's Super 7 group

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)	YEAR 4 (no. of responses)
Very good	6	5	11
good	0	0	8
OK	0	0	3
poor	0	1	0
don't know	19	5	3

Drama

From the survey responses, children were very positive about Val's drama group. All children with experience of drama rated it as very good except for one who thought it was good. Jamal's drama club was rated particularly highly by year 5 and year 4 with 9 in year 5 selecting the 'very good' option and 11 in year 4. This is interesting, particularly in Val's case, where there had been concern about her ability to run the drama group given perhaps lack of experience and/ or training.

Table 14-Children's rating of Jamal's Drama group

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)	YEAR 4 (no. of responses)
Very good	6	9	11
good	5	2	6
OK	0	2	3
poor	0	1	1
don't know	13	6	4

Table 15- Children's rating of Val's Drama group

Rating given by the children	YEAR 6 (no. of responses)	YEAR 5 (no. of responses)	YEAR 4 (no. of responses)
Very good	4	4	3
good	0	1	0
OK	0	0	0
poor	0	0	0
don't know	28	21	0

Conclusion

The final section of this chapter has discussed the range of activities that the pastoral care workers are involved in. In order to judge the efficacy of the activities, interviews, observations, diary entries and the survey have been used. Both specific programmes and groups are examined and other aspects of the day-to-day role of the PCWs. It is acknowledged that the

evidence base is limited and that different groups, cohorts and individuals will have a marked effect on the success of each activity and interaction. Four activities are examined in more detail through the use of observations and follow-up interviews.

There were a wide range of strategies being used by the PCWs with an apparently varying degree of success. The PCWs had little specialist knowledge in the activities they were running but applied their general training to the use of techniques and intervention strategies. In some cases, the lack of experience in delivering the activity was evident from the observations and questions could be raised about their effectiveness as a result. In other cases, such as the 'Super 7' group, there was a noticeable improvement in the level of interaction within the group and their general ability to benefit from the discussion opportunities.

Both pastoral care workers operated a policy of having an 'open door'. Although this flexibility was important to the role it caused difficulties for the PCWs in terms of limiting the number of children attempting to access at any one time. It was on occasions a problem for teachers as children were exiting the class to meet with the PCWs. Where children were not released this gave a negative message about the perceived importance of the PCW's work. Other issues raised in this section included difficulties with behaviour management in some of the groups and the need for careful attention to group dynamics during their formation. Observations demonstrated the need for social skills training and work on relationships if the groups were to work together effectively.

Some of the strategies used were very difficult to assess in terms of their success. Playtime games and attendance at the breakfast club were two examples where encounters might be so random and transitory that any effect they had is almost impossible to monitor. In addition, it was emphasised that the presence of other interventions in addition to the work of Val and Jamal must throw caution to any causal links drawn between improvement in behaviour and specific activities.

Parents' perceptions

In this section, the views of two parents from interview are reported. The parents both had children who had worked closely with Val and had met her themselves on a number of occasions. Val nominated both parents as candidates for interview. No parents were nominated by Jamal. In addition, reference is made to the PCW diaries and headteacher, PCW and child interviews.

There was a notable difference in the amount to which the two pastoral care workers were involved with parents. In Joan's school, liaison with parents was a significant part of the role, whereas, according to Helen, it had not been identified as such in her school:

"He doesn't have a huge role with parents. It hasn't seemed to be necessary. But equally if we have children... but I'm thinking of one family he has been involved with and that's been very successful. Mum found it very useful to talk to him but I wouldn't say that was the main thrust. It just evolved that way. I haven't got a problem, in fact, I would quite like to be able to use home more successfully, more frequently shall we say. There hasn't seemed to be a need here."

The evolving nature of the role had resulted in two schools offering very different services. However, implied in this comment is the issue of planning for intervention rather than responding to need. Perhaps with a more detailed brief and job description a service might have been offered that would have been of benefit to parents but that did not automatically offer itself because of interpretation. Two families with similar needs linked to two different schools could expect a very different level of service. However, Helen was able to give an example of an intervention involving Jamal and a parent and referred to the benefits which 'outsider in' has:

"It clarified a lot of information because she was more relaxed with Jamal – he wasn't authority."

Again, although Jamal did not consider work with parents to be a major part of his role, this was not the case according to his diary. He described his involvement in a meeting with a parent of a new student:

"Along with the headteacher met a parent of a perspective Year 3 child. I knew the child from another school. The parent had been up previously, but the child was proving to be difficult. When I was asked about him I said that he was

extremely shy and lacked confidence and would not communicate to strangers. So mum was called up again to see if we could help. I was horrified with the background information that mum conveyed and understood and wanted to help the child even more. The meeting was very successful. Both mum and headteacher were happy with the outcome and the support that will be put into place. The child will be admitted after half term. I came out of the meeting very positive. I enjoy having productive meetings and making difficult situations easier.” Extract from Jamal’s diary.

This highlights the importance of effective liaison between school and home and the productive role which a PCW can have in this. Jamal also felt very positive about the success of the intervention. It is worth considering the degree to which parental perceptions of behaviour and need can vary greatly from that of teachers in relation to the same child. Not only is this the case where children manifest different types of behaviour in different environments but also through applying different levels of expectation.

In another extract Jamal referred to the need to contact a parent to substantiate some comments that a child had made in school:

“Took out a year 3 child who had achieved his target and played some games on the computer. His face lit up when I came to get him. While we were on the computer we chatted about home life. He seems to be ruling the roost at home. Must make an appointment with parents to establish the truth of what he is saying. If true, possibly offer strategies to help parents.” Extract from Jamal’s diary.

This would appear to be a clear example of Jamal including parental liaison in his role. The offer of support for parents is an important issue in relation to home-school work generally. As many parents appear to be struggling with child care issues and behaviour management, so school staff may be asked to intervene and provide advice and support. The Government’s extended school initiatives are increasingly making counsellors and other agency advice available for parents having difficulties.

Other comments from Jamal in interview suggested a greater involvement with parents:

"Parents have come up and said they're making progress. It's that kind of feedback. I don't have much to do with parents to be honest. They normally deal with the teachers. It's just how it works."

From this quotation, there had been involvement with parents but on an informal basis. Jamal had not done home visits but suggested that that was only because it hasn't been called for.

At Joan's school two parents were interviewed to find out their views about the pastoral care worker role. Both parents had children who had received a significant amount of support from Val and who had worked closely with her themselves. Interviews were not conducted with parents at Helen's school as Jamal felt there was no one he had worked sufficiently closely with who would be available. There is evidence in his diary extracts of the importance of parental involvement:

"Had a meeting with the SENCO and support teacher to work out an evaluation from a Boxall Profile on a year 4 child. Wanted to know the steps forward to help this child. Without parental help and support we cannot move forward. We were getting frustrated."

As mentioned, in Joan's school there had been a much greater degree of parental involvement. However, this had not always been without its difficulties. Joan explained that when Val's involvement was suggested there was some confusion amongst parents as to her role:

"I have referred them to Val with what they've seen as insurmountable problems and I've said we could use Val in this. At first they were unwilling because they didn't realise what her role was. Once it had been explained to them it was OK."

However, the parents I interviewed seemed to be clear about her role and very supportive of it. For example, Cathy's mum, as quoted previously, was particularly appreciative of the non-authority role that Val has. This appeared to have enabled her and Cathy to develop a productive relationship in order to tackle the difficulties which Cathy had. However, there were still issues to do with dependency that Cathy's mum recognised.

During the interview, David's mum also acknowledged the extent to which David would talk to Val when he wouldn't talk to her. This could have also put strain upon Val's relationships with parents where they become uneasy about what the child might be saying or even hurt by the closeness

of the relationship their child has established with the PCW and the confidences they will not share with them. Similar tensions might appear in relationships with parents where there is pastoral care worker involvement in social services meetings. Information might need to be shared that has been gained through discussion, perhaps in informal circumstances. This could break down relationships built on trust.

Val had also involved parents through providing opportunities for them to watch performances by the clubs she has run. For example, the drama group and sign language clubs had all provided opportunities for children who might not be the normal selection for schools plays etc. Parents had often responded very positively to the opportunity to see their children on stage and the resulting increase in self-esteem of the children participating is noted in interview by Val:

"She wouldn't normally say boo to a goose but she asked to take on this role and she did it very well and her mother and father, it was taking them all their time to keep their tears back. They were saying, I cannot believe she's done what she's done."

And in another case Val described how a boy was currently being 'tolerated' by the drama group:

"At first they wouldn't but now they're allowing him to take on a far more bigger part. Sometimes he takes it on and it's not how you want the part to go but you hope for the best. To see his mum and dad watch him do that, little things like that mean so much to me even if the play is a complete disaster at the end of it."

David's mum described how Val had even gone as far as suggesting strategies for coping with him at home:

"When we were struggling at home she had ideas that might help. Like ignoring his attention seeking and diverting attention on to something else."

Cathy's mum, although positive about the benefit of the interventions in school and the improvement in Cathy's friendship patterns, was less positive about the benefits at home:

"There haven't been any changes in Cathy at home. The friendship difficulties seem to be sorted out though."

This comment seemed to imply that Mum was expecting there to be some changes at home as well. However, it was unclear the degree to which Val had been working with Cathy's mum to effect this. Cathy herself felt that there has been an improvement in her relationship with mum:

*“Interviewer Do you talk to people at home about Val?
Cathy Yes. It helped when I fell out with my step mum
Interviewer Do you still argue?
Cathy Sometimes, but we're getting on now.”*

In both Jamal's and Val's diaries there were several examples of discussion between the pastoral care worker and the children relating to events and relationships at home. The impossibility of separating home and school was evident throughout the interviews and in the diaries. For example, Val found her one-to-one with Cathy made particularly difficult due to an incident at home:

“CR – had seen her Nan again this morning, C didn't know – surprised her. C was upset, Nan was also and didn't come up to the playground. Said she's going to try and see C play netball next week.” Extract from Val's diary.

From the interviews with children, there did seem to be support from parents, in one form or another for tackling some of the issues in school. For example, during discussion with the circle time children two boys referred to ways in which parents were reinforcing the need for good behaviour in school:

*“Tom I haven't had any warnings for 5 days because the other week..
Liam If I get a detention I won't be able to get stuff for my birthday
Tom My dad said if I get another detention I've got to live out on the streets
Liam You could live at my house”
Interview with circle time children*

Although we might not agree with the suggested sanctions for inappropriate behaviour referred to here, parents were evidently aware that there were issues and were trying to find ways of tackling them. The fact that in both cases such extremes of sanction were suggested may be an indicator of the difficulties parents are having in finding the right method to support. It might be felt that here, as much as anywhere, there is need for advice for parents to help them establish ways of reinforcing the school message without resorting to such extreme threats. Of course, this is dependent upon the accuracy of the accounts from the boys and accepts the fact that 'living out

on the streets' is probably not considered as a serious alternative by Tom's dad. Other parts of the interviews provided evidence of some of the difficulties which children and their parents were experiencing. In Cathy's case these were linked to family breakdown:

"Cathy Well my mum and dad split up when I was about five. I lived with my mum first and then I went to live with my dad because my mum's training to be a nurse.

Interviewer How often do you see her?

Cathy Well I only see her weekends but sometimes I can't because she's on placement. She's not coming back for a few weeks and she took me to see Harry Potter."

Here there was not only the issue to do with the break up of the family and the introduction of the step mother but also the move between natural mum and dad. During the interview with Cathy's mum, although very supportive of Val, she did explain that she would have liked to have known when Cathy started to work with her again. Methods of communicating to parents where and how children are being supported may need examining. It would appear that Val has had an open and friendly relationship with Cathy's mum but that perhaps the procedures are missing that ensure parents are kept involved as a matter of course. There was no evidence to support or refute the possibility that communication with parents was omitted in Jamal's referrals.

McGuinness (1982) emphasises the importance of involving parents during the referral process:

"When a referral is being discussed, it is crucial that parents be involved, unless the issue is one of child battering. Research suggests that parental attitudes are a prime influence on a child's progress at school and for that practical reason alone – aside from the ethical consideration – they ought to be involved intimately in the education of their children. When referral becomes part of that education, consultation with parents must be an essential ingredient if it is to be successful. The honesty that should characterize the teacher's relationship with the child must clearly be equally present in the contact with the parent." p. 97

Gale and Densmore (2000) emphasise the importance of understanding background factors if a sound relationship is to develop as they maintain that only through drawing on this can academic success and true understanding be attained. Sharp (2001) emphasises the need for children's emotional literacy to be supported from home as well as in school and the need to foster good relationships in order to be able to do this. This is considered to be particularly important in

relation to parents who are less often present in school. The value of the home visit is accentuated by this:

“The appropriate advice to teachers here is to have high expectations of what can be achieved in the promotion of emotional literacy at school, but to work smarter at fostering home-school partnerships even or especially with the hard-to-reach or challenging parents.” p. 55

The small number of parents interviewed and reported about were unanimously positive about pastoral care intervention. Val reported some of the positive comments received from parents and stated:

“Parents are always thanking you, they can’t thank you enough for what you’re doing with their children.”

David’s Mum was explicit about the help she believed Val had given him. For example she described how a difficult sibling relationship had improved:

“Now he loves Ben to bits. But to start with he hated him. David wanted to be the centre of attention all the time. It had to be now. He couldn’t understand if Ben needed his nappy changing or something – why he had to wait.”

According to Mum, the intervention of the pastoral care worker had led to the change in David’s behaviour at home. This wasn’t the only example of changes experienced at home as well as at school. Of course, more than one intervention might have been responsible for some of the improvements which parents referred to. During the interview, David’s mum continued to emphasise that David ‘is a lot happier now.’

“He’s a lot happier now. He’s going to secondary school next year. He used to be sad inside.”

Conclusion

In the two schools researched, the involvement of the PCWs with parents appeared to be very different. This difference had evolved as a result of school ethos and perception of the PCW role. Interestingly the interviews provided more assured evidence that this was the case than the diaries. Examining the actual tasks completed from their own accounts suggested that both PCWs did have a relatively high level of involvement with parents. The parents interviewed were very supportive of the PCW role and felt that Val had made an impact on their children. One

issue raised was that of ensuring that parents are kept informed of the level of involvement of the PCW with their child. In one case, this appeared to have lapsed.

Val has become involved with liaising directly with parents to help support them at home. There is acknowledgement here that experiences at home can not be separated from behaviour exhibited in school. The two parents interviewed were both positive about the benefits of Val.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to bring together some of the key issues identified during this research. It includes reference to the aims of testing perceptions of the pastoral care worker role and researching the effectiveness of the project as a whole. In some cases recommendations are made on the basis of the context investigated. It should be noted that this discussion centres around only a very small sample of Schools Outreach work and cannot necessarily be generalised to other contexts. However, as with case study material, the snap shot it presents does illustrate issues that might be replicated elsewhere, raises questions for further investigation and provides insight at a local level.

At the outset:-Schools Outreach and Schools

Schools Outreach pride themselves on the provision they offer and the way in which this can be tailored to the needs of schools and individuals. Whilst providing a job description that lays the basis for the pastoral care worker role in schools, they like to keep the role as open as possible in order to let the PCW define it in more detail as needs emerge. This can cause difficulties as schools and Schools Outreach have sometimes had different perceptions of how the PCW might function. This was evident from the research interviews. Whilst Gordon Bailey referred to cases of confusion, the interviews with the headteachers confirmed a general lack of clarity in the initial stages of the project's implementation. The unique way in which the researched project was entered into means that the difficulties cannot necessarily be generalised to other projects. However, the potential for confusion is likely to extend beyond the project researched here. Increased clarity during initial contact and through documentation is necessary. Gordon Bailey acknowledged the need to review documentation and literature. This need would seem to be confirmed through the interviews with headteachers and PCWs. Lack of knowledge about the organisation was evident from schools and pastoral care workers themselves. As much of the initial contact was via documentation, the presentation of this and its content might usefully be reviewed.

From this research, the Christian nature of the Schools Outreach organisation did not seem to have had any controversial impact upon the work of the PCWs in schools. Although the Christian ethos pervades the organisation and the workers are recruited through Christian groups and circulars, this had not caused difficulties in the host schools. However, the background of Schools Outreach and its links to Christianity would benefit from discussion early in the relationship between schools and themselves. Although no tension seemed evident during this research, it could potentially cause friction depending upon the professionalism of the PCW and their emerging relationship with the host school.

There were issues relating to the relationships between the PCWs and school staff. Staff vary enormously in terms of their commitment and level of skill when working with external agencies and support services. Differences in the way members of staff had received the PCWs were noted by headteachers. These differences in reception might well alter the efficacy of the PCW in school. The external nature of their employment could add to these barriers as schools see them as internal but external. It could be suggested that more attention is paid and preparation given to the staff in schools whilst the PCWs are receiving their initial training. A similar programme of induction such as that given to peer mediation in the county where the research took place, might be beneficial. For peer mediation, all members of staff in schools are required to attend two in-service sessions during which the aims of the project are discussed and consideration given to whole school ethos. This is delivered to all irrespective of their involvement in the actual project on the basis that getting whole school ethos right is essential to the success of peer mediation generally. The importance of school ethos and the wider context is also evident in this thesis. As Green (1999) advocates, the importance of careful preparation is essential and the need to form alliances within the school:

"Children, with their ultra-sensitive emotional antennae, will be aware of any conflict, resentment or rivalry between the teacher/ counsellor running the group and school staff, and the resulting conflict of loyalties can destroy a group's potential." p.40

Another priority area at the outset is clarity about sources of funding. From my own involvement with the project I am aware of increasing tensions between the organisation and schools owing to uncertainty about basic funding and support for training. These administrative difficulties can

hinder the effective working relationships between all three parties; schools, Schools Outreach and the PCWs .

Management

Line management for the PCWs is not straight forward. They have their Schools Outreach line manager and one within school. Although Schools Outreach do not describe the support the PCWs receive as line management the named individual does have responsibility for overseeing their work, meeting with them regularly and checking on the production of reports. Alongside this, schools are expected to elect an individual to act in this capacity. In several instances, issues relating to line management were raised during interviews and some tension was evident around who the pastoral care workers are ultimately responsible to. Although in theory, Schools Outreach hold the contract and pay the salaries of the PCWs, working directly in schools means that school can tend to assume the greater line management function. Providing this regular contact and support can be difficult for schools. Some attempts have been made to hold regular meetings between the headteachers and the PCWs, but this has not always been possible. In some cases the schools' SENCOs have been involved in liaison and direct teacher referrals were also evident.

Schools Outreach might benefit from asking how far they should continue to intervene and represent the PCW once they are in post. The regularity of the meetings might be questioned and their purpose. There are few circumstances in which support services meet with school management on such a frequent basis to review the progress of their workers. As Roaf (1998) highlights, the relationship between in-school support and external resources is very important. The ways in which each school had managed the relationship between Schools Outreach and the PCW varied considerably and had different levels of success.

Some of the tensions experienced between Schools Outreach and schools may also be encountered In the light of the green paper 'Every Child Matters' (2003). How to manage multi-agency work will be an interesting dilemma. Decisions will need to be made about who takes responsibility for the additional documentation, meeting structure and liaison requirements.

Schools may have to consider developing new roles in order to ensure the availability of a school-based professional. Currently, the person with responsibility for child protection is frequently the headteacher and there is limited opportunity for them to increase the proportion of their week dedicated to multi-agency issues. Piper (2003) suggests that it is the headteacher who will be responsible for the increasing range of functions allocated to schools. Other services and departments may not always be comfortable with this as discussed in the conclusion.

This research notes several examples of communication difficulties between Schools Outreach and the PCWs. During both PCW and headteacher interviews, reference was made to inappropriate or inadequately managed intervention. With the best of intentions, the distance between Schools Outreach and the schools themselves made effective and continued liaison difficult. Distance both in terms of location and outlook could be interpreted as an issue. The meetings provided opportunity for feedback and discussion of general items but difficulties encountered in the meantime were less easily dealt with other than through letters and phone calls. Issues relating to communication did vary between the two PCWs. Jamal appearing to find this much less of a problem than Val. However, from the researcher's perspective, potential misunderstandings hovered in both contexts.

Reference to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's guidelines for counselling (2002) would help address some of the issues identified in this research. They recommend that counsellors and schools should establish the following for an effective working relationship:

- *a clear understanding of the purpose of the counselling service, its codes of practice and its function in the school*
- *a clear procedure for referring pupils*
- *a respect for inter-professional boundaries*
- *the need for provision of suitable facilities for the counsellor*
- *the need for on-going communication and evaluation through regular meetings with pastoral staff/ year heads and special needs co-ordinators*
- *the need for explicit agreement as to what, if anything, will be fed back to the school by the counsellor, if clients present as a risk to themselves or others" p. 5*

Attention to such published guidelines might be recommended to Schools Outreach.

The professional development of pastoral care workers

This research suggested that there was limited sharing of training information between Schools Outreach and the schools. Information about what happened at the training centre was infrequently supplied by Schools Outreach and tended not to be sought by the schools. It might be considered that opportunities to share knowledge are missed and could be disseminated much more widely. This would support the development of whole school ethos and the professional development of teachers. In order to support the development of the PCWs it seems important that Schools Outreach maintain their own contact with schools, awareness of school-based issues and constantly update their training programme with maximum use of external trainers and current practitioners.

The number of different roles the PCWs take on makes training provision very difficult. Training must be sufficiently general across age groups, types of experience of the PCWs and the possible roles they will be asked to play. There was concern from one headteacher about the amount of training and level of specialism of Val in respect of teaching drama. Observations also suggested that she would have benefited from more support in using circle time as a technique. It was evident from the observations that the PCWs were generalist rather than specialist and this might cause concern if placed against the level of independence and autonomy they were given within the schools. Whereas teaching staff would experience observation and feedback from their peer group, this was not part of the PCW professional development cycle. We might consider that such support would be useful for them and enable them to become more specialist in their selected areas.

As an internal external agency

A theme during this research is that of where the responsibility for pastoral care should be located. Those who advocate the use of external support staff such as Megahy (1998) place greater emphasis upon the importance of expertise, whereas those advocating the use of schools' staff emphasise the opportunity to develop relationships. Of course, neither is mutually

exclusive. The headteachers interviewed here appeared not to see pastoral care as a priority for their staff. They supported the idea of having a pastoral care worker in school to help take some of the responsibility from teachers and free them to do what they were most skilled in.

In some respects the employment of dedicated pastoral care workers in school can represent a balance between the two. This research has demonstrated that there is opportunity for the PCW to establish a relationship between themselves and their clients whilst also being in a position to access training. The quality and level of specialism and generalism within this training remains a separate issue and would need to be addressed for maximum benefit to be accrued. An additional benefit is the avoidance of too close a link between the academic needs of the individual and their pastoral needs where one might clash with the other, a view held by Dyson and Robson (1999).

The importance of the PCWs' external role was highlighted by parents, headteachers and children. They valued the relative objectivity of the PCWs as individuals who they could talk to but who would not necessarily react to them in a punitive way or disclose directly to school staff. This does raise issues to do with confidentiality and can cause tensions in schools where staff feel they are being marginalised in the discussion between the PCWs and their clients. This is not unlike the tensions experienced by counsellors as described by Maher (1987). Similarly, as agencies begin to consider the implications of 'Every Child Matters', the issue of sharing information remains a major hurdle. This is outlined in an article in the TES (April 2, 2004, p. 4 'Social workers wary of sharing information') by Michael Shaw reporting on a pilot scheme report commissioned by the DfES:

"Researchers from the University of London found that a major problem was that teachers and social workers were not sure what information they were allowed to share."

In the DfES' 'Every Child Matters: Next Steps' (2004), the follow-up document to 'Every Child Matters' (2003), particular emphasis is placed upon the importance of information sharing between agencies. The forthcoming Children Bill will provide a framework for the establishment of information sharing systems. Databases are to be established:

"The purpose of the databases would be to facilitate the sharing of information between providers of children's services about the children they are working with, in order to safeguard their welfare and promote their well-being." pp. 20-21

The document explains how the detail of regulations and guidance about these databases will be issued.

In some cases it might be expected that external services and their 'specialists' have received a higher level of training than they have. I feel that through my own experiences of Val in school, staff consider her to have a greater level of expertise than she does. This can place pressure upon the PCW who is expected to react with knowledgeable solutions to a whole range of problems that can present themselves in schools. The openness of the role increases the broad base of knowledge required to deal with the varied number and type of referrals. If there is something that the classteacher is unable to deal with or finds problematic then the child might be referred as a 'catch all' solution. Preventative work, with which Schools Outreach would prefer to be associated, is less welcome owing to the removal of children from class and less perceived need. Elliott et al. (1983) also identify crisis intervention as the usual catalyst for calling in support with Sandoval (1987) describing this as crisis counselling.

The difficulties outlined by Roaf (1998) in multi-agency collaboration reflect those associated with the pastoral care worker role as employed by Schools Outreach. For example, the co-ordination of provision, the establishing of boundaries between the Schools Outreach organisation and the school, lack of understanding between agencies as evident in some of the communication difficulties related here. Perhaps Roaf also has the solution to the continued working relationships between schools and Schools Outreach 'by locating oneself mentally alongside the child who is experiencing difficulty and his or her family'.

The potential difficulties of the green paper implementation are highlighted by Margaret Lochrie in the TES (October 31st 2003 p. 24. 'Re-drawing boundaries') She emphasises the degree of changed thinking that needs to be applied if the intentions of the document are to be realised:

"As the promises of the Green Paper are translated into practice, successful co-working will depend not just on commitment and goodwill among the various childcare professionals but will require all concerned to develop sufficient understanding of other disciplines and working practices, and a common language and knowledge."

Anderson (2003) argues for a level of honesty and openness between parties that will be difficult to achieve. Whilst organisations feel defensive and under threat they are unlikely to provide the 'warts and all' approach that she endorses:

"As a platform, the quality of the relationship, at an intra- or inter- professional, or organisational level, is the key to successfully transforming traditionally held professional concepts and practices. This requires professionals to 'loosen up' to be prepared to show their vulnerability when it comes to building and sustaining partnerships. We need to be honest about our successes and failures." p. 173

In a target-driven context such genuine and collaborative relationships are particularly difficult to maintain.

There can be an expectation that teachers are able to liaise effectively with external services and have the skills to work in partnership. Student teachers may not have had sufficient opportunity as part of college courses to develop the complex skills required. In addition, Salmon (1999) points out the difficulties that can develop in the relationship between the external support service and the classteacher. This is also indicted in the interview with one headteacher when the reaction of more experienced members of staff suggested a belief that to ask for support is in itself a weakness.

In the document 'Schools Beyond the Classroom' (2004), Liz Allen describes how some LEAs are attempting to establish more effective methods of collaboration. For example, she describes how Suffolk County Council have instigated a 'Young People's Strategic Partnership Board' in order to encourage better coordination between agencies:

"Building on pilots across seven localities it has established pilot multi-agency integrated teams in 11 areas of the county. The multi-agency teams put the child back at the centre, aiming to provide a responsive, joined-up service designed around the needs of the user." p. 20

This sounds similar to the 'Local Safeguarding Children Board' which will be required to replace 'Area Child Protection Committees' as part of the Children's Bill.

Referrals

Referrals of children come from many different sources and in some cases could require differing levels of intervention depending upon the referral structure in that particular school. This could result in inconsistency not only across schools but within schools. In some of the cases discussed in this research, referral was made with little opportunity for preparation on the behalf of the PCW. In some cases they were spontaneous to an incident occurring rather than resulting from a carefully considered intervention procedure. This can result in specific types of behaviour being more likely to be referred than others. There can also be difficulties in addressing the number and variety of 'spontaneous' referrals in a productive way i.e. the group formed may produce relationship difficulties which undermine the aims of the activity. This lack of attention, in some cases, to group dynamics was noted particularly during the circle time sessions.

The aim of self-referral has been difficult for the PCWs to implement. Although both PCWs provided opportunities for children to approach them, they have struggled with limiting this, resulting sometimes in a level of unmanageability. In the end, the tendency has been for referral to come via school staff and particularly the headteacher. Perhaps in secondary schools this might be different. In junior schools it might be suggested that we need to look at other kinds of screening in order to pick up children who are hesitant about self-referring and do not present some of the difficulties which would lead to staff referrals taking place.

The pastoral care worker role

One of the two main aims of this research was to investigate perceptions of the pastoral care worker role. A main issue that has emerged during its course is the importance of background and previous experience of the individual PCWs. Gordon Bailey emphasised that background and previous experience did not place constraints upon the appointment of PCWs. This seemed to be a justifiable point in the context of having an additional professional working within schools that is external but internal to the school. However, varied backgrounds did seem to make a

significant difference to the role adopted by the PCWs in school. Jamal had a role far more class-based than Val and appeared to be a more integrated member of school staff as a result. According to his diary entries he was involved more in lesson delivery, in-class support and even assemblies. Although some of this was down to the school context, the background and preferences of individual PCWs also seemed to play a very significant role.

As the role has emerged differently in each school does this disadvantage some children who would benefit from what is being made available elsewhere? Just because an intervention strategy has not evolved in one context does not necessarily mean that it would not be beneficial if it did. Perhaps there should be a core of activities that the PCW sets up irrespective of their background, personal preferences and the requests of the school. One area in which the two PCWs have adopted different approaches is in relation to parents. Although both acknowledging the importance of the home and the impact it has, Jamal's role incorporated relatively little work with the home. Reference to home circumstances was not immediate in some cases and the level of involvement of the PCW with parents varied according to the inclination of the PCW and the school. This may hinder the ultimate effectiveness of strategies used in school.

Managing children's behaviour was an issue for Val but not for Jamal. This difficulty could be seen as impeding the success of some aspects of the project. For example, the circle time sessions and drama groups run by Val suffered from the effects of occasional behavioural difficulties. Perhaps more emphasis needs to be placed on providing PCWs with the support and training to help them address issues of working with groups of children where behaviour might be challenging. Equally, those members of staff with teaching backgrounds might need some support and training to enable them to distance themselves from the teaching role and develop the 'external/ internal role' which is an essential element of being a PCW.

Both PCWs were involved in activities which enabled children across the school to participate. This extended support across the school community was considered by Schools Outreach to be an important part of the role. It is the most difficult, perhaps, to analyse in terms of its effect. We can only speculate how many more children would have been referred to them and might have

exhibited challenging behaviour if the PCW had not provided these opportunities. Jamal, in particular, seemed to have taken a holistic approach to the school with his profile including contributions to assemblies and work with whole classes. This was less evident from Val's accounts and interviews although clubs that she was involved with did provide similar opportunities. We might speculate on the degree to which PCWs can be expected to carry out such a generalist role given their lack of involvement in senior management teams and their part-time basis.

The flexibility and availability of the pastoral care workers is particularly important. Both Val and Jamal maintained some untimetabled sessions when children could be referred and when they were approached without being 'booked'. This unallocated time was more extensive at the beginning of the project when it did seem to cause some difficulties for Val who was inundated on occasions. What was evident from the interviews was that the open timetable could be difficult to structure. Depending upon background, confidence and experience were necessary to be able to develop the job description in the way that Schools Outreach intends. This came with familiarity and experience over a significant period of time. Given the contractual limitations of the role, pressure can be placed upon PCWs and schools to come up with the more sharply defined role too soon. Perhaps with more guidance and expectations in the initial stages, the adjustments to local context could still take place but in a more gentle manner and with time.

Urquhart (2000) refers to the pressures which teachers can feel in dealing with the emotional needs of children. This was evident from interviews with Val. The use of the open timetable and the level of accessibility provided, particularly at the beginning of the project, can be seen as issues both for the PCWs themselves and Schools Outreach. Some children, provided with the opportunity, were accessing Val on a frequent basis and absenting themselves from class. The level of demands they were making upon Val were too great for her to cope with, particularly during the initial period. As a result, the school began to limit these approaches and redefined the rules for children leaving class to seek her support.

This research suggests that there were difficulties drawing boundaries and establishing the role of the PCW. However, a strength of this open job description is when everyone else is tightly timetabled and there is limited opportunity to be flexible, the PCWs can still be available. This accessibility of individuals who can be directed towards new cases was referred to as being particularly valuable by headteachers. Careful consideration needs to be given to the degree of flexibility built into the role to enable this valuable asset to be retained whilst also not allowing the PCWs to be swamped by an unmanageable number of referrals and self-referrals.

Relationships

One difficulty with the use of external agencies is that they usually have had little opportunity to develop any kind of a relationship with the children assigned to them. The importance of the relationship between children and those with responsibility for them is emphasised in a number of texts for example Urquhart (2000) and Kinder (1999). The pastoral care workers in this study attempted to build positive relationships with their clients and emphasis was placed upon this. Much of the effectiveness of the work seen seemed to relate to the level of trust that the child had developed with them. It might be speculated that this was of more significance than the specific pastoral skills that they held. The importance of trust and relationships as emphasised by Lloyd (1999) is particularly noted in this research:

“And so the development of trust becomes a central feature in the relationships in which the child received respect, consideration and concern.” p. 93

Not only did the PCWs place a high degree of emphasis on their relationships with children, but they were also involved in developing the relationships the children held with one another. Responses from the survey and during interviews with children were clear evidence that they did perceive the PCWs as involved in addressing friendship difficulties and helping children to socialise. The survey indicated that they believed the PCW role to include listening and helping children. This supported the main aims of the PCWs who were anxious not to be associated with ‘naughty’ children but more proactive and working in a positive way. This part of the role does seem to be achieved.

There were times, however, when the PCW had not had time to establish a relationship themselves with the child concerned but were asked to intervene. In some cases this may have been as a result of a crisis and they may have had less background information than a specialist from an external service who had been invited in to the school. In these cases the external service can expect to have a higher degree of preparation for meeting their client as usually they will require a set of standard data. It might be argued that the same level of preparation and collation of information should be made available to the PCWs as would be given to external support staff. It might be that this will be addressed to some degree by the new 'common assessment framework' to be introduced as part of the Children Bill.

One factor that will help where emergency referrals are made is the overall view the children in school have of the PCW. From the survey, the PCWs were seen in a positive light by the children generally. The surveys were supportive of their role and even those who had had little contact appeared to know who the PCWs were and had a favourable view of them. This level of familiarity must help the PCWs where a child is referred to them in school, there is at least some basis upon which to begin the relationship.

The importance of trust was referred to during interviews. From the interviews with the children and parents a high level of trust does seem to have been developed. In some respects the external line management of the PCWs had enabled them to present as non-hierarchical within the school context. Parents and children recognised that the PCWs were not there in an authoritarian role and that issues could be shared with them without necessarily being discussed with school staff or resulting in punishment. Confidentiality difficulties seemed to have been limited and there was a relatively small number of times when the PCWs found tension between client wishes and child protection requirements. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy draw similar conclusions in their 'Guidelines for Counselling in Schools' (2002):

"problems in working levels of confidentiality are very rare where mutual good will, trust and respect exist between the counsellor and the school staff, and where pastoral care makes the interests of the child or young person paramount in the school system." p. 8

Schools Outreach stress the importance of 'unconditional care' in their documentation. The concept of the 'unconditional' is one that recurs throughout the literature, for example Whitebread's description of the humanistic approach to teaching and learning and Urquhart's description of the need to 'stay with the child' (2000). Val has had difficulties with the 'unconditional' aspect of her role as she has interpreted this as 'unconditional love'. Her interpretation had meant that she felt that she was expected to invest emotionally in the well-being of her clients. This is a difficult area for any care worker dealing with children in challenging circumstances as described by Urquhart, (2000). PCWs, as with anyone working in a pastoral context, need the support and training to enable them to deal with the emotional demands this can make upon them. To some degree this has been covered in the Schools Outreach training. However, it could benefit from further investment on an ongoing basis. Val has referred to training delivered by another professional in a caring service who discussed with them some of the difficulties associated with responding to children in trouble. Val found this beneficial and a greater degree of enabling this multi-agency support to take place could be beneficial.

As the new Children Bill is implemented following the green paper consultation, it is how the legislation is translated through individual key workers that is crucial. Roaf (2002) comments on the importance of individual workers:

"it has also been clear from this and other studies that very small positive steps, recorded by many front-line workers – perhaps taken by an 'unusual' key worker with a young person 'through the net' – can also have disproportionately positive effects." p. 151

It will be finding these 'unusual' key workers who can develop the requisite relationships which will be crucial to the success of the Bill.

Independency

On several occasions there were tensions between the level of support provided by the PCW and the need for independence. McGuinness (1982), Ingall and Lush (1999) and Herbert (1998) refer to the need for balance in respect of dependency. This was reflected in the interviews and discussions with children, parents and the headteachers. Although PCWs are aware of it and try to make preparation for transfer and support withdrawal, it can be difficult to administer.

Continuity on transfer is a priority for many LEAs particularly where children have specific emotional and behavioural needs. It might be advantageous for the PCWs to have more links themselves with the local secondary schools to enable them to spend some time with particularly dependent children during the transfer period. Of course, this would have repercussions on the amount of time available for primary colleagues and children but might be justified over a short period of time.

Ingall and Lush (1999) refer to the dangers of dependency in discussion of their own therapeutic group work:

"It was important to be careful not to involve the children in a dependent relationship of the kind that would expose them to unnecessarily painful and disturbing feelings." p. 154

Level of effectiveness

The second main aim of this research was to investigate the level of effectiveness of the work of the pastoral care workers. Throughout the research as a whole, the response from those interviewed, questioned and observed was positive. The overall perception by headteachers, children and parents suggested that they considered the PCWs to be valuable assets to the schools in which they work. They had time to spend with the children and acted in the capacity of a friend where children were having difficulties. This would support the intention of Schools Outreach.

From the interviews, the headteachers were clear about the benefits of having PCWs. They shared anecdotal comments and referred to reduced numbers of exclusions. No data were available to substantiate these claims directly and it was difficult to determine the exact level of causality owing to the other range of interventions which children might have been experiencing at the same time. Although we might speculate about the role which the PCW takes, we cannot be too ready to ascribe improvements solely to their interventions. This difficulty was acknowledged by Gordon Bailey, himself.

Interviews with parents were also positive and indicated that they felt supported by Val. They did have concerns, however, about the level of dependence that their children had developed and also about contact between themselves and the PCW. The sensitive nature of many of the issues they are dealing with requires reminders to parents that their children are in contact with the PCW. In one example at least, the parent did not feel that they had been kept adequately informed and it might be suggested that more frequent bulletins are issued as well as the initial contact for permission.

An element that did seem to help the perceived effectiveness of Jamal, is that he is male. The need for male role models in schools might be partially addressed through the PCW role. What might also need to be acknowledged are the extra tensions this can place upon male members of staff and the possible need for additional targeted training to deal with this. This is also referred to in the literature: Skelton (1998) refers to the importance and value of men in school.

Evidence from the case studies of targeted children suggested that in three out of the four parents and teacher perceived improvements. In the fourth case there was less evidence to make this claim. Although the child was positive about Jamal's role, her interview showed continued difficulties and she was less effusive about the benefits of Jamal's interventions. This could have been because of individual personality and further investigation might have demonstrated evidence of change for the better. The effectiveness of each strategy discussed depended upon the individuals concerned. There were examples of activities which had worked with one group and not another. This could have been because of group dynamics or relationships between the PCWs and their clients. Once more, it made the overall success of the PCWs very difficult to judge. Each PCW had his/ her own catalogue of more effective strategies. For Val, the friendship groups had generally worked well and there was notable evidence of success as a result of one-to-ones. Although there had been some concerns raised about drama, this did appear to have been a successful intervention overall.

For Jamal, the 6 hats work seemed to have enabled children to develop a repertoire through which they could discuss their difficulties and the Super 7 group was noteworthy owing to the differences before and after in the cooperation and cohesion of the group. In order to really ascertain the benefits of each activity, specific targeted measures would be needed aimed at the kind of programme being administered. As the limitations of this research did not enable this approach to be taken, it would be unwise to ascribe any particular success to any individual programme. It is the overall effectiveness of the PCW in the school context which was being evaluated. In some cases there was insufficient evidence to draw any views about the level of efficacy of the strategy used. For example, peer mediation was not observed and received little reference in diaries and interviews. Although survey results were generally positive as was the headteacher's comment, this would have needed a more substantial evidence base. Although reference was made to Val's friendship groups and drama club, they were not directly observed.

Some of the PCWs' methods of working were almost impossible to evaluate in terms of effectiveness. For example, Jamal's attendance at breakfast club. From his diary, we might consider that these opportunities to chat to children informally would be beneficial, but there is no evidence to substantiate this. Val's playground games were also difficult to assess given the transitory nature of the children participating and the fact that some of the main benefits may be the removal of the children from the main playground and their peers rather than any therapeutic effect of the games themselves. There were other cases where there might have been additional benefits to the activities which were difficult to ascertain. For example a major benefit to the school may have been when children were withdrawn from class for a period of time, allowing the classteacher and their peers to have a break from the targeted child.

We can also question whether all expected changes will be immediate: intervention in behaviour will not necessarily take immediate effect. Ideally a longitudinal study might provide insight into the programme's effectiveness in the long-term.

The whole school ethos and peer group

From this research there were questions raised about the isolated way in which pastoral care workers operated in schools. Although in theory having a school-based line manager, they did work in a relatively independent manner and were largely self-reliant on a day to day basis.

Although this can be beneficial it can also result in a sense of isolation. They had no immediate colleagues to consult with. This was evident in the extent to which Val built up a close working relationship with Sarah, who also supported children with emotional and behaviour difficulties.

The isolation of the PCWs can also prohibit the spread of good practice and pastoral training.

Although generalist, they are still given training in a wide variety of strategies and activities which might be of benefit to the host school. Strategies being implemented in isolation also undermines their effectiveness. Geddes and Green (1999), Ingall and Lush (1999), McGuinness (1982) emphasise the importance of any programme being picked up by school staff as a whole. In the two schools examined in this research there were differences between the level of integration and amount of liaison between school staff and pastoral care workers. There would seem to be potential for greater sharing of training and techniques between both school and Schools Outreach. It could be argued, that without a higher level of awareness generally and sharing of practice and information on a regular basis, the advantages to having the PCWs is confined and the real need for application into other contexts less likely to happen.

It was evident from the circle time observation that peer group interaction is a major issue for the effectiveness of any intervention strategy. The sessions struggled because of the difficulties within the relationships of the children in the group. The influence that the peer group have should not be underestimated. Its importance is highlighted by McGuinness (1982) and Pellegrin and Ubrain (1985) and Jutnick and Manson (2000). Unless account is taken of this it will be difficult to enable the children that the PCWs are trying to help transfer the skills provided following behavioural programmes. Kinder et al. (1999) question whether schools have sufficient capacity to challenge the enormous influence which the peer group has.

The difficulty of transferring skills learnt in small group work to the class environment was referred to by the PCWs and school staff. This is an issue for all intervention strategies and multi-disciplinary teams. Children can appear to have responded to strategies applied outside of the classroom, but do not transfer them when returned to working with their peers. Perhaps, working more frequently within class as well as externally might help with this transition. Without this transfer taking place, whatever changes appear to have been effected are only partially successful. It might be that at a later stage strategies are transferred owing to maturation and other changes in the environment. However, ways of transferring new behavioural models outside of class should be a priority.

Knoff (1987) advocates school-based interventions which contain an 'ecological systems perspective'. In this approach programmes of intervention would not only be delivered to the targeted child but also to his/ her peers, teachers, support staff, administrators, school district, home and community.

The educational climate

A continuing concern raised during this research was the current climate of emphasis upon measurable outcomes. There seems to be increasing acknowledgement that a focus purely on standards will not necessarily raise them further. For example a recently issued document 'Schools Beyond the Classroom' Allen (1994) gives examples of six LEAs which have introduced strategies to integrate social inclusion and education. Liz Allen acknowledges in this document:

"Despite a steady improvement in academic achievement overall, Britain still has one of the greatest class divides in education in the industrialised world. More than in any other country, it is social class that determines the educational success of a child growing up today." p. 7

Although the PCWs were not directly concerned with setting academic targets or curriculum planning, they did appear to suffer from some of its implications. For example, withdrawal of children from key lessons was sometimes difficult. This not only made arrangements problematic but gave messages to both PCWs and children about the level of importance of pastoral work. All

staff need to be wary of the tensions that potentially exist and how children can pick up on these, as described by Green (1999).

This hierarchy of importance can be seen in allocation of rooms, the struggle of the PCW to find personal and group space and the number or omission of referrals. Decker (1999), Clough (1998), Sharp (2001), Roaf (1998) and Gale and Densmore (2000) highlight the difficulties which teachers and LEAs have experienced in relation to external pressures to produce results. As we move towards the promise of services working together, the challenge of the compatibility of accountability measures increases. Anderson (2003) draws particular attention to this in relation to education and health working together:

"As the boundaries at the interface blur, differences in outcome measures of systems are highlighted....These differences work against the development of collaborative partnerships because, from the outset, measures of achievement are not shared." p. 171

School staff may recognise the importance and need for pastoral care but feel limited by the amount of time available. Ironically, research does indicate the importance of pastoral care in terms of academic achievement as cited by Megahy (1998). However, where there are drives to improve and extend pastoral work within the school and community, this may not be for its own value (Wallace 2003). School standards agendas may result in some sections of the community being targeted as the only remaining way left untried of reaching targets. This may also leave other sections of the community perceived as being beyond reach. An increasing divide. We might cynically suggest that the extended schools vision may contribute to rather than alleviate this divide. Liz Allen (2004) acknowledges that the divide still exists and school improvement on its own is not sufficient to bridge it:

"Exhaustive collection of data on individual pupils, new floor targets and the inspection regime now make it impossible to ignore these differentials." p. 7

To conclude

Overall, the Schools Outreach project in both schools was seen in a positive way by those participating. All those interviewed were supportive and enthusiastic about its value. As far as

those interviewed were concerned, the PCWs were effective within their schools and provided the support needed.

The discussion has focussed around issues in the role itself. There are areas which would benefit from clarification and elements of demarcation of roles and responsibilities. Timetabling issues are referred to and the pressures that the PCWs can find themselves under. The benefits, however, of having this externally managed support based within school are equally evident. An area that needs further attention is that of the operations of Schools Outreach itself and its management and communication systems. Effective though the PCWs are, confusions in relation to the respective roles of schools and Schools Outreach as well as funding issues could be responsible for interfering with the success of the project.

In the end, both schools researched appreciated the opportunity to call on someone to address the pastoral needs of the children, who were available, accessible and flexible and who could make their main intention to be the children's friend. However, it is also important to consider the educational climate in which this pastoral support is taking place and the pressures this can have upon the individual. Expectations that change can be affected quickly within the time frames of available funding and can place pressure upon schools and those most in need of their support:

"Cost-effectiveness and through-put reign supreme, and the numbers game is the only one that counts. The majority culture demands conclusions and is suspicious of reflection and experience. We behave as if we have forgotten that healing can be tortuous and can take an awfully long time." (McKeever, 1999, p.11)

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The green paper 'Every Child Matters' (2003) was issued during the writing up of this research. It seems to have many implications for the future of multi-agency work and the ways in which outreach staff such as the pastoral care workers will function. Many of the issues that schools will face in trying to implement the recommendations may be similar to those outlined in this research. For example the inter-face between agencies, line management and the clash between different cultures with different sets of targets. There will also be differing expectations in terms of the amount of time and importance schools place upon inter-agency work. As the changes are legislated for, it will be interesting to see how traditional organisations come to implement them. Whether outreach workers such as the PCWs will have a role or whether school staff will take on the responsibilities, will remain to be seen.

Departmental differences and the culture of professionalism within different organisations will similarly provide difficulties not unlike those referred to here. It will be interesting to note, as the legislation is finalised and embedded, the degree to which there are echoes from the discussion and interviews quoted in this research. The attitude of professionals to one another and the home environment are identified here as areas of potential difficulty and could be major obstacles in the efficacy of 'Every Child Matters' implementation. Another obstacle to inter-agency work is identified by Phil Revell in the TES (March 19th 2004 p. 27 'Fancy being a service industry?'). He quotes from Alan Dyson, professor of education at Manchester University:

"In a target-driven system, different agencies have different targets. If we remain with a system in education where the targets are the headline attainment figures, we shouldn't be surprised if schools and teachers see those as the priorities and pursue them relentlessly"

Where emphasis remains upon targets it will be difficult to shift focus. In 'Every Child Matters: Next Steps' DfES (2004) reference is made to the fact that targets will remain a feature of the Children Bill although reference is made to the need for a more coherent system with the rationalisation of targets and agreement on what outcomes should look like for children.

The green paper and the subsequent Children Bill have the potential to be transformational in terms of how we work in schools. Throughout this research there are indicators of the degree to which this vision will be difficult to achieve. It demands that organisations are both open, honest and prepared to surrender some of their traditions, procedures and territory. Already, there is evidence from column writers such as Michael Shaw in the TES (April 23rd 2004 p.13 'Fears over children's services merger) that such boundaries will not easily be lowered. He reports on a survey of 95 social services directors in which 55% indicated scepticism at the proposed changes with 90 % indicating that they would resign if education directors rather than social service directors were given the post of director of children's services. Not a promising start for a Bill which requires understanding and support between departments as its foundation.

The DfES document 'Every Child Matters: next steps' (2004) provides information about the consultation as well as an outline of the new Children Bill. According to this summary document, the Children Bill will create:

"robust partnership arrangements to ensure public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations work together to improve these outcomes." p.13

Part 2 of the Bill requires LEAs to make partnership arrangements in order to improve the well-being of children. It refrains from stipulating which organisations this might include to enable local arrangements to continue. However, the arrangements should include the effective sharing of information and the overseeing of arrangements in terms of commissioning of different agencies to deliver services. This could have implications for organisations such as Schools Outreach particularly as the Bill emphasises the involvement of voluntary and community agencies. A new 'Local Safeguarding Children Board' will be required to be established which will take on the role of overseeing the different departments and groups providing services to children and young

people. In addition, 'Children's Trusts' will continue to be developed using pooled money from different services. Their main aim will be to support the development of integrated service delivery. These groups will be responsible for overseeing the development of local arrangements – the emphasis being on developing services for local circumstances. The importance of really listening to community need in the development of services has been referred to in this thesis. However, so has the need to provide sufficient guidance during the development of support services. It is a fine line between too didactic and centralised an approach to service development and a service that is allowed to grow according to local circumstances. Many of the difficulties involved in allowing an 'open' brief to develop, where a project is allowed to evolve, have been discussed in this thesis. The intention in the new bill is to allow a degree of flexibility in the way in which authorities establish the role and the structures to support it.

How will the effectiveness of implementation be monitored and recorded? With each department having its own inspection and monitoring arrangements, this could cause difficulties. How will OFSTED inspections be influenced? In 'Every Child Matters: the next steps' (2004) it suggests:

"The purpose of the Framework is to ensure that inspections, reviews or investigations that relate to children's services properly evaluate and report on the extent to which children's services improve the well-being of children and young people." p. 19

How will this alter the ways in which schools operate and inspectors report? Will there be greater emphasis upon schools delivering an inclusive education with greater incentives to do so? In this thesis, reference has been made to the negative effect which a target-setting climate might be considered to have on the inclusion agenda. Will the two be able to co-exist and how is this to be managed? Only through the development of the services and inspections described in the bill will we gain some idea of answers to these questions.

The role of parents and their feelings about educational reform and changes has made many references but has not, perhaps, been sufficiently researched. Hughes et al. (1994) researched this in detail over a three-year period. A similar longitudinal study would be particularly useful to support or challenge some of the assumptions which current legislation would appear to make.

As with all professions, there can be an assumption that we know what is best for our clients. Without denying that this may be the case, it would certainly be worthwhile finding out what our clients do think of the number of changes there have been during the interim years. We need to be particularly aware of the different value systems which community members may hold. Bender and Hestek (2003) in discussing community involvement in South Africa place particular emphasis on the conflicts that can occur due to these differences:

"Many problems experienced by learners and teachers, and by parents and families, are related to a conflict between the values of the school and the values of the students as reflected in their particular cultural, family and peer group backgrounds." p. 148

No matter what the catchment of the school, there will be variations in community perceptions of the place and delivery of education that should be acknowledged if pastoral support for children is to be effective. The need to consult and be aware of the real community needs rather than just assuming that we know best, is essential if the extended school vision and interagency work is to be successful.

The new Children Bill will emphasise the importance of acknowledging the role that parents have and the need for support in some cases. A £25 million Parenting Fund is to be created which enables support for parents to be provided. The need for this in a range of ways is acknowledged in 'Every Child Matters: next steps':

"We will work towards a mix of universal and targeted parenting classes. Support should be accessible from a range of locations and include a focus on key transition points in a child's, young person's or parent's life." p. 26

Great care will be needed to ensure that the 'hard-to-reach' parents referred to in this thesis have access to this much-needed support and that it is provided in a way which they find acceptable.

Although every service and all adults working with children will be targeted for change, schools are considered to have a central role in this with responsibility for delivering 'personalised learning'. Schools have been running to some degree on a 'deficit model' whereby some children

are targeted for support whilst others who have not been identified specifically might qualify for nothing additional and may slip through the net.

Certainly the Children Bill will have major implications for a number of services and departments and will require a whole new structure of cooperation and collaboration if the proposals are to be effective. These developments are being timetabled from March 2004 through to 2008. From the point of view of the provision of pastoral care and support within schools, there seems to be a strong indication that such provision will feature as part of the 'extended schools' initiative. The 'Every Child Matters: next steps' report refers to the intention that all schools should develop extended services. In addition reference is made to the workforce remodelling which is encouraging schools to use a range of support staff in more creative and flexible capacities:

"The school workforce reforms show what can be achieved when teachers work as part of a wider team and can call on a range of support in responding to the needs of individual children." p.39

An example of this is described on TeacherNet – Case Studies (www.teachernet.gov.uk). Glyn Technology School is running a project which involves a range of support staff including teaching assistants, reprographic staff, administration staff and technical/ ICT staff in mentoring specific individuals. The pupils themselves are allowed to have a say in who their mentor might be. Describing the outcomes of the project, the headteacher identifies improvements in attendance as well as changes in the attitudes of the participating staff. However, the greatest benefit identified is that of releasing teachers from the workload. The benefits and disadvantages of the distancing of pastoral work from the classteacher has been discussed in detail in this thesis. It will be interesting to see how pastoral care develops with the increasing use of support staff.

With funding coming from so many different sources there are innumerable projects, like the one discussed above, aimed at supporting individuals using support staff. As discussed in this thesis, issues remain around the maintenance and sustainability of such projects as funding runs out.

The Children Bill does include the continuation of Children's Fund money and refers to the need to sustain successful projects. Exact details are absent at present but perhaps there will be a

move towards allowing projects an indefinite life span according to the satisfactory completion of outcomes.

An example of the difficulties of fixed-term provision is a lottery-funded project running in Northern Ireland and reported by Sheila Mcavoy in SecEd (Issue 34, March 18th 2004 'Tackling social disadvantage'). Youth workers are encouraged to work with disaffected pupils on projects which interest them and build up their relationships. Many aspects discussed in the article echo issues found during the research for this thesis. The need for mainstream funding is one of them. Sheila McAvooy who takes part in the project as a youth tutor states:

"continuous funding for a programme such as this is important for three reasons. Firstly work like this depends on a stable and continued relationship between teachers, or youth worker, and young person....secondly, effective work must be seen to receive support. This sends out a clear message that such work is valued and important.."p.9

The final point she makes is that the communities where this is most needed may not be in a position to fund it for themselves.

The implementation of the Children Bill is a momentous period for inter-agency collaboration. It will take more than legislation to enable effective practice to develop in such a complex area. The number of separate organisations involved, the number of discrete procedures and policies that they hold and the tensions that exist between consultation, collaboration and data protection will continue to present dilemmas to all those involved. Roaf (2002) underlines the longevity of these dilemmas:

"The problem of how to organize services for children is likely to be a matter for continued debate, and will especially focus on the relationship between primary care agencies and the many small- and large-scale private and public sector initiatives for children and young people coexisting with them." p. 148

We can only hope that inter-departmental rivalries will not stand in the way of enabling the development of a service for children that perhaps places 'unconditional care' as its core concern.

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GLOSSARY

HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
LABSS	Learning and Behaviour Support Service
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
Nurture groups	Small group provision for children missing out on early learning experiences
PCW	Pastoral care Worker
PEP	Primary Exclusions Project
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SENCO	Special Needs Co-ordinator
TES	Times Educational Supplement
Workforce remodelling	DfES agenda for addressing concerns about work/life balance. Includes the use of HLTAs and requires a number of changes to the conditions of service

Schools Outreach Pastoral Care Worker Job Description

Though the role of a Schools Outreach Pastoral Care Worker (P.C.W.) is not specified in great detail there are a number of 'ingredients' likely to be common to the work in schools of our P.C.W.s:

Each worker is expected to:

1. Offer individual pupils unconditional acceptance, respect, and trust.
2. Establish good relationships with pupils; especially those identified as being in need of pastoral care.
3. Complement and co-operate with the staff of the school, as well as with others involved in the care of the same pupils.
4. Give time to pupils and, where appropriate and welcome, their parents, when the pupils' circumstances, attitudes, or behaviour suggest that they are at risk of experiencing the onset or further development of serious problems.
5. Encourage the realization of the full potential of the pupils - physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.
6. Seek to enhance the self-worth of the pupils.
7. Discover means by which the wisdom of the pupils may be stimulated - wiser pupils make better decisions in life.

In advance of the selection of a P.C.W. we work together with a school towards the putting together of a 'worker profile', which is intended to help Schools Outreach recruit a person whose character, experience, qualities, and gifting would function best in the school and be better able to provide for the pupils' needs.

P.C.W.s are recruited with great care and, having been appointed, receive appropriate training (both initial and in-service), training which carries accreditation from The O.C.R. (Oxford, Cambridge, & RSA examination board) in the form of a 'Diploma in Pupil Pastoral Care' - Dip.PPC.

SCHOOLS OUTREACH PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH TO EVALUATE THE VALUE AND IMPACT OF SCHOOLS BASED PASTORAL CARE WORK

Introduction

Schools Outreach has been providing pastoral care for children and young people based in schools since 1986. An evaluation project for its work was carried out in 1995 by the University of Reading that demonstrated the value and effectiveness of the approach of providing non judgemental and independent pupil pastoral care in achieving such outcomes as the elimination of exclusions, higher teacher performance, wider skill achievement of children and the quick and effective resolution of children's personal and social difficulties that lead to better academic and social achievement.

Since 1993, the environment of education has changed considerably, the social and economic context is changing fast and the organisation has undertaken twice the number of projects than it had done at that time. . Not least, the organisation is currently half way through a major Lottery funded programme with 7 workers and has 9 others.

The demands by partners, funders and stakeholder in general to demonstrate effective outcomes and out puts has never been greater and there is a need for independent research to evaluate the impact of this type of work. The organisation has already put in place a firm system that monitors workers outputs and to some extent outcomes. This is already available to Project steering groups, funders and the organisations Board of management and is summarised in the Annual Report. However, some objective over view appraisal is highly desirable. It is also heavily weighted on outputs not outcomes.

Research is needed that will

- Set the work of the agency in the context of similar work elsewhere
- Explore the state of the host schools prior to the project
- Track the activity done by the workers
- Assess the change achieved
- Profile the end state of the host school on the completion of the project
- Assess the relationship with outside bodies-Churches, statutory, voluntary bodies etc
- Assess the impact of the workers against the other changes taking place in the school.
- Recommend changes to project design and management

Methodology

1. The consultant will review available material from other similar organisations and those with the same objectives. For example, the provision evolving of the governments. Connexions service for young people—which impinges on work at secondary level.
2. A precise specification of the project will be prepared in terms of the issues to be explored, agreement of schools targeted. questions to be asked of schools, collection of relevant data (This will include schools annual reports, Ofsted Inspection reports, etc) pastoral care worker data and questions to be asked.
3. A cross section of schools will be required to include those in different parts of the country. mix of primary and secondary. Some stability of staff will be essential to gauge the 'before and after' effect.
4. A profile of the local community will be drawn up as context with facts on population, social deprivation, any key changes taking place e.g. regeneration programme, new housing developments, major factory closure, recent history of its social and economic changes
5. School head teachers or a senior manager will be interviewed to:
6. Gain a profile of the school pre the project in terms of
 - Educational achievement
 - Behavioural problems of children
 - Exclusions
 - Teacher turnover
 - Other projects to help school performance between the schools outreach project start and the end
 - Other changes taking place e.g. staff loss, reorganisation, major new investment in facilities etc
 - Current state of the school in terms of staffing, exclusions, educational performance
7. Pastoral care workers to be interviewed to assess
 - Numbers of children helped—about what— one to one
 - Performance of group work—numbers benefiting—type of activity
 - Other activities organised —clubs, peer mediation etc
 - The perception they have of their performance
 - Any personal/organisational constraints that hindered achievement
8. Full analysis to be undertaken of the particular care workers data on outputs and their case-by-case outcome records

9. Outside agencies knowing the project to be interviewed to ascertain opinions of the impact of the project e.g. LEA, social services, health, voluntary body of relevance.

10. The Report to be written will analyse the above research and draw out conclusions specifically that relate to:

- Schools Outreach
- Schools
- Government
- Funding bodies

Outcomes

- All agencies will have an up to date and objective view of the impact of schools outreach methodology
- Schools Outreach will learn about how it might perform better
- Prospective schools and funders will be able to see what the value of the approach and organisation before they commit.
- Schools Outreach will be able to use the results for good PR in its training courses and funding applications

Outreach project

Questionnaire for children

Vicky is our pastoral care worker. Some of you may have worked a lot with Vicky, some of you may not have worked with her at all. We would like to find out some of your views about having a person like Vicky in school.

Below are some sentences. Please tick the most fitting box to tell us what you think.

We very much appreciate your ideas.

Vicky does many different things in school. Please tick how you feel about those you have been involved with.

	Very good	good	OK	poor	Don't know
One-to-one discussions					
Circle time					
Friendship group					
Drama club					
After-school club					

Please tick a box

	yes	no	Don't know
I have talked with Vicky several times			
Vicky has asked me questions			
Vicky has met my parents			
I have seen Vicky in school			
Some of my friends go to see Vicky			
I would like to go and see Vicky sometimes			
I think Vicky should be in school more often			

What do you think Vicky's job is?

	Yes	No	Don't know
She takes naughty children out of class.			
She works with the naughty children			
She helps children behave themselves			
She makes friends with children			
She visits parents at home			
She organises clubs			
She listens to children talk			
She helps the children who need help			
She helps children make friends			
She is a teacher without a classroom			
She works with the headteacher			
She helps the teachers			

Please use this space to add anything else that Vicky does in school

How much does she help these different people?

	Often	Sometimes	Never	Don't know
Children who get into trouble				
Children who aren't happy at home				
Children who find their lessons difficult				
Children who don't have friends				
Children who fall out a lot with each other				
Children generally in the school				
Parents				
Teachers				
Mid-day supervisors				
The Headteacher				

Please use this box to tell us anything else you would like to about Vicky and her work in school. It might be what you know or what your friends have told you.

Thank you for your help with this

Interview outline for the pastoral care worker

1. Why did you apply to be a pastoral care worker?
2. How did you hear about Schools Outreach?
3. What kind of organisation did you understand Schools Outreach to be?
4. What do you consider to be the main features of the pastoral care worker role?
5. What kinds of activities are you involved with at present?
6. Which of these would you say had been the most successful and why?
7. Are there any projects you have started and not completed? Why?
8. What feedback have you had from school staff about your work?
9. What feedback have you had from parents?
10. What feedback have you had from children?
11. Is there anything you find difficult about your role?
12. What differences have you noted with the children you have worked with?
13. What are your feelings about Schools Outreach as an organisation?
14. What are your thoughts about the training you have received?
15. Who do you work most closely with? How are these roles defined?
16. Who do you believe has benefited most from your work?
17. Are there any other comments you would like to make about working as a pastoral care worker?

Interview outline for Headteachers

1. Why did you apply for a pastoral care worker?
2. How did you hear about Schools Outreach?
3. What kind of organisation did you understand Schools Outreach to be?
4. What kinds of activities is Val involved with?
5. Which of these would you say has been the most successful and why?
6. Are there any projects that have been started and not completed? Why?
7. What feedback have you had from school staff about the pastoral care worker role?
8. What feedback have you had from parents?
9. What feedback have you had from children?
10. Is there anything you would have done differently in terms of setting up the role in school, if you started with another worker?
11. Have you noticed any measurable differences to children that could possibly be attributed to Val's involvement?
12. What are your views about the role of the Schools Outreach organisation since Val has been with you?
13. Are there any issues you would like to draw to their attention?
14. Do you feel the training Val has received has been of benefit in terms of her role? Have you seen any evidence of this?
15. Who does Val work most closely with? How are these roles defined?
16. Who do you believe has benefited most from Val's work here?

Spring Term 2003 Statistics**One to One Analysis**

Percentage breakdown of issues covered during one-to-one-sessions. Information provided by 12 PCWs in Primary & Secondary Schools from a total of 1,690 one to one sessions during the Spring Term

Behaviour	22.8	Friendship	16.0
Family	13.5	Bullying	7.1
Education	6.2	Self Confidence	5.0
Low Self Esteem	4.9	Anger Management	4.0
Anxiety / Stress	3.0	Personal Interests	2.4
Attendance	2.0	Bereavement	1.7
Thinking Hats (thinking skills)	1.6	Child Protection	1.4
Boy/Girl-friend / Relationships	1.3	Absent Parent	1.2
Health / Injury / Serious Illness	0.9	Self Harm	0.8
Moving School	0.7	Racism	0.6
Career Options	0.5	Depression	0.5
Criminal Activity	0.3	Drugs	0.3
Eating Disorder	0.2	Parental Illness	0.2
Smoking	0.2	Suicidal	0.2
Teachers	0.2	Exclusion	0.1
Pregnancy	0.1	Work Placement	0.1