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DISSERTATION

SCHOOL BASED POLICE OFFICERS. A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF A  
PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO TACKLING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.

Submitted by

Andrew N. Briers

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## DISCLAIMER

For the purposes of anonymity and in order to protect the staff and students at the school in the U.K. I have changed the name to Clearwater School. Consequently I have had to refer to all the newspaper articles, which carried reports of the pilot project as simply local newspaper or national newspaper.

Similarly no names of the staff or pupils have been released or indeed the location of the school albeit that it is situated within the area covered by the Metropolitan Police District.

Such precautions offer full protection to Clearwater School in terms of protecting its identity and the author accepts no responsibility for any of the information contained within which may be subsequently associated with the school.

An independent evaluation of the work carried out by the police officer has been undertaken by the Department for Education and Skills, which sort the opinions of the school and police officer.

The police officer took a full and active part within this evaluation, however, the officer cannot accept any responsibility for any subsequent publication of this independent report and therefore the disclosure of the school's identity should it become apparent.

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### SCHOOL BASED POLICE OFFICERS. AN EVALUATION OF A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO TACKLING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

There has been a great deal of good work in recent years involving police and other agencies in particular that work which has taken place within the context of schools. However, there is no work, which specifically relates to the role of police working full time in an educational setting and consequently no research of an evaluative nature.

This research focuses on the role of one officer in a secondary school and looks at the level of interaction that he has with the whole school and its community and tries to examine whether through his programme of intervention he is able to meet the aims and objectives of the scheme.

#### Aims:

- To develop and implement partnership activities to reduce crime and disorder
- To represent the Metropolitan Police Service
- To develop trust and confidence and enhance relationships between the school, police and the community.

#### Objectives:

- To establish a good working relationship with the staff
- To break down barriers with pupils
- To be a permanent point of contact
- To develop trust and confidence
- To assist with maintaining good order in and around the school

The study is essentially action research and qualitative methods are used for gathering data in the form of questionnaires and interviews from the staff and pupils at the school.

The findings of this work are then compared to a similar study of the role of police in schools in the U.S., which took place over a period of five months in a school setting not dissimilar to the U.K.

The work was based on observational evaluation and the same qualitative tools were used to compile data in the form of questionnaires and interviews.

The data from both studies were then compared and the following major themes, which centered on the differences between the two studies, emerged.

- Communication between heads/principals
- Communication and support from supervisors
- Opposition to the programme

Relationships with:

- Police colleagues
- The Community
- Parents
- Staff
- Pupils

These themes were compiled as the result of keeping a diary of events that recorded the interaction of the officers with various members of the police school partnership and from these themes one can assess the impact of the scheme in terms of achieving its aims and objectives.

Data from both questionnaires and interviews exist to support and strengthen any claims made and provide evidence of exactly what the partnership feel about the whole scheme.

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

1. To adopt the triad approach of law enforcer, educator and counsellor/advisor (and role model).
2. To develop a comprehensive training manual for both police and educators which explains procedures around arrests, school discipline, school safety and the aims and objectives of the scheme.
3. To make the reporting of crimes which occur in school a mandatory requirement for schools.
4. To improve links with the Youth Offender Team and to introduce work around Restorative Justice within the school environment.
5. Expand the use of the Truancy Powers in terms of the frequency it is used and the ability to return truants to school under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
6. Introduce cadet units to each school to educate pupils about the role of the police service and encourage recruitment to the borough cadet units.
7. Introduce a Citizens Academy, which educates the community about the role of the police service and actively encourages voluntary participation in non-confrontational police duties.
8. Raise the profile of the schools officer by specialising their work.
9. Ensure that the school based programmes and the officers involved are well trained and supported.
10. Ensure that the work is fully evaluated in accordance with the four E's: Evaluation; environment; efficiency and effectiveness.



11. Promote Junior Crimestoppers.

12. Develop a National Centre of Excellence.

13. Central Data Base, which will store information on juvenile offenders and  
“Hot Spot Schools” and areas of crime, associated with juveniles.

14. Dedicated Juvenile Detectives.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was originally struck with the idea of pursuing a PhD after enjoying my studies at M.A. level, which centered around working with disaffected youth and the issue of truancy and provided me with the confidence to tackle this research. My research topic came as a result of being asked by the Metropolitan Police Service to work in a school full time as Britain's first police officer and I am grateful for the opportunity, which they afforded me.

My work suddenly took on a new meaning when I was awarded the Fulbright Police Fellowship, which enabled me to travel to the United States (U.S.), for a period of five months. Whilst abroad I was able to conduct a comparative study of my work with similar work being done in schools in the U.S.

The whole experience was quite incredible and something, which I still, spend many hours reflecting upon. The work, which I was able to embark upon, catapulted my studies forward and opened up a whole new era for policing schools in the U.K.

For this opportunity I am indebted to the Fulbright Commission and also to the many police colleagues and friends that I met and spent time with in the U.S. who guided and assisted me with my studies.

In addition I am particularly grateful to my parents who supported me and my family whilst in the U.S. and kept account of my interests back home in the U.K. not least our pet dog "Molly".

Finally, I am most grateful to my team of supervisors at Middlesex University who directed me in my studies and were a constant source of knowledge and inspiration and whose expertise helped me to focus my work and complete this thesis.

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife Michelle and my two boys Charlie and Frazer, who have supported me throughout my research. They have endured endless hours waiting for me to finish my work and to come and play, but have never once complained.

Without their love and encouragement and total belief that I could accomplish this feat I would have given up long ago.

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## **Chapter One**

### **1.0 Introduction to the Study.**

Now more than ever youth violence appears on the news and across the tabloids as an escalating problem, which needs to be addressed. It would appear from the intense media coverage that youth crime is an epidemic that is sweeping across the nation. Everyday there are reports of robberies and burglaries being carried out across the country centered mainly on inner city areas by gangs of juveniles. Many of the victims explain that they have been assaulted, robbed or abused by children as young as ten and often during the school day when the pupils should be engaged at school.

The Metropolitan Police have concluded from analysing their own data taken from a current initiative "Operation Safer Streets", that between half and three quarters of street crimes are committed by juveniles, and that those arrested for street crime nearly three quarters were not previously known to the criminal justice agencies. It seems to be a worrying trend that more young people are coming to notice on the first occasion for street crime as opposed to less serious offences.

It is a fact that in London street crimes such as robbery tend to be concentrated in the more deprived areas of the city and that it is the visible minorities that are concentrated in these same deprived inner city areas and are the fastest growing section of the population.

The Youth Justice Board have taken the lead in this apparent war on juvenile offending and have done much to highlight the true extent and impact of youth offending in light of the youth justice reforms that were set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. One of the Board's main concerns is that due to over zealous reporting by the media industry the public's perception of youth crime is far greater than that which actually exists. In particular the Youth Justice Board highlights the availability of relevant statistics, which include the British Crime Survey, police reported crime figures, Home Office statistics on cautions and convictions as well as a MORI survey of youth crime on behalf of the Youth Justice Board. Although the

information that these surveys provide differ they do all show that youth crime is either declining or constant and not out of control as is the public's perception.

There has been a noticeable rise in the number of violent crimes such as robbery and anti social behaviour, and it may be that crimes such as these are making the headlines due to their shocking nature. The Youth Justice Board's survey conducted by MORI reinforces this belief in which it reveals that self-reported offending levels by school age children have remained fairly constant since 1999. In its defence the survey is open to abuse from pupils who can either fail to report an offence or conversely report one in an attempt to exaggerate or boast about their activities.

However, what is of concern to many teachers, school support workers and police liaison officers is that there are a significant number of crimes that are committed by children on the way to school, at school and again on the way home from school as well as after school hours which either never get dealt with by the relevant authority or reported to the police. First hand accounts and numerous reports from colleagues in the professional arena of working with children confirm this suspicion and our collective inability as a society at large to tackle this is resulting in a culture where children are too scared to travel on buses to school in case they are robbed for their mobile phone or pocket money. Such children who inevitably become the repeat victims of these crimes are not surprisingly too scared to report these incidents for fear of retaliation from the perpetrators. These incidents are real and occur on a regular basis and the suspects and victims are all too aware of the rules, which apply to the street of which school is merely an extension.

What happens in the school is often played out in the community after school hours and conversely what happens within the community at night and at weekends is invariably taken into the confines of the school and teachers are often left to deal with incidents of fighting, robberies and anti social behaviour which have been left unresolved from the night before. There is a need to redress the balance and define clear guidelines for behaviour, which apply to all children whether at school, or in the wider community.

## Youth Issues

There have been a number of reports on current initiatives that are relevant to reducing criminality many of which have been adopted as features of good working practice. (See, for example, Graham and Bowling 1996).

In particular the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) committee on Children Schools and Crime (1998), published a report outlining four key links between schooling and crime:

- Anti-social and criminal behaviour in schools, (Routledge, 1994).
- The area of attachment and achievement in school as highlighted by Farrington (1996).
- The area of absenteeism and the belief that links exist between truancy and the onset of offending. (Graham and Bowling, 1996).
- The issue of exclusion and its relation with pupils offending as highlighted by the Audit Commission's report, "Misspent Youth." (1996).

Studies carried out by Mori for the Youth Justice Board, (2001), found that one in four school pupils across the country states that they have committed a crime and that one in five has armed him/herself. A staggering 23% of excluded pupils state that they have been in possession of a gun and 44% state that they have carried a knife.

There are many agencies that are working both singularly and in partnership to try and stem the numbers of young people who are finding themselves caught up in the criminal justice process and inevitably incarcerated in one of the countries young offender institutions. Some schemes have proved more successful than others at tackling youth crime from both a proactive and reactive role and many of these are highlighted in the Chapter 2.

The Youth Justice Board is the central driving force behind tackling youth crime in the country and recently commissioned Communities that Care to look at the risk and protective factors that lead to youth crime and any effective interventions to prevent

it. The report highlights risk and protective factors for youth crime into four main areas: the family, school, community and those, which are individual, personal and related to peer group experiences. (See Appendix A).

It therefore becomes apparent that to help protect children from these risks parents, teachers and the community in general have a collective responsibility to lead by example and set out clear guidelines of how children should behave. School is naturally one arena, which can significantly influence the lives of children and help shape and develop their lives and act as a means of protection against the associated risk factors.

*Schools have the potential as a locus for crime prevention. They provide regular access to students throughout the developmental years, and perhaps the only consistent access to large numbers of the most crime-prone young children in the early school years; they are staffed with individuals paid to help youth develop as healthy, happy, productive citizens; and the community usually supports schools' efforts to socialize youth. Many of the precursors of delinquent behavior are school-related and therefore likely to be amenable to change through school-based intervention.*

*Denise C. Gottfredson 1998*

There are currently a number of initiatives being adopted by the government to combat children behaving badly at school and funding has been made available to target key areas such as truancy, exclusions and bad behaviour. The strategy is to support teachers by spotting problems early and intervening before truancy and exclusion is established in a school. This will be achieved in a variety of ways including advice from specialists and additional training for teachers as part of their professional development.

Additional support will be available from Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BEST), who bring together specialists such as social workers, health officials to support the needs of the pupils, parents and teachers. After school activities will



enable pupils to engage in additional learning for themselves and their families and forge closer links between the school and community and be a focal point where parents can learn more about the behaviour of their child in school and be a positive influence. Summer activities are offered to children to keep them engaged and active over the holidays and many of the wide ranging activities are targeted at pupils who are excluded or who truant and those identified as being at risk of offending. Other pupils can benefit from key workers who work with them in school helping them to cope with the constant pressures of school life and the demands of homework and punctuality.

A summary of others measures that are currently used to reduce youth crime include: parenting orders, youth inclusion programmes, education training and employment programmes, and intensive supervision and surveillance programmes.

One additional area of support proposed for teachers is the introduction of police officers in schools that will be permanently attached to an identified secondary school with a cluster of primary schools. This is a new initiative, which has only been piloted in a few schools in the U.K. one of which is the subject of this thesis. It differs markedly from other forms of intervention in that it intends to tackle the issue of crime and bad behaviour in schools in a proactive way whilst offering support for the teachers and victims. It will be the emergence of two cultures, the police on one hand and the teaching profession on the other whose cultures, beliefs and values are markedly different.

### **Outline of Study**

What this study attempts to show is how far a police officer permanently based in a school is able to draw together various agencies and good working practices in a partnership approach to tackling the issues surrounding crime and disorder in and around that school.

This is an innovative concept that has to date never been tried in a school in Britain, although there are other police forces who have piloted similar projects whereby

officers have been allocated several schools which they specifically focus on and perform similar roles to those outlined in this study.

This action research based study discusses the relationship between the police and the school and to what extent this partnership approach has managed to work. It outlines what the differences are between both agencies as well as any common ground and explains how different values and beliefs can affect the development of the scheme. It provides examples of where the partnership has been successful in achieving its goals and where further development between the agencies is needed to ensure that good working practices are built upon and those problems highlighted are overcome. This is achieved by examining the roles that the officer performs and through examples that the officer experienced whilst working at the school. These are recorded in a diary, which highlights the relationships between the officer and school, which include the Head, staff, pupils, parents, colleagues and the local community as well as other agencies.

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are conducted with both staff and pupils, which serve to show the impact of the pilot project in terms of achieving its aims.

Further to this a list of solutions and recommendations are made which are necessary for the continual development of the programme and whose implementation serves to highlight the on-going evaluation of the research.

The research then assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the project and uses a comparative study in the U.S. to provide and compare working practices. It looks at examples of these working practices in the U.S. through observational evaluation of several police officers working in a school district of America and includes a number of surveys and interviews which are conducted with staff, pupils, parents, and police colleagues as well as professionals in the field of school violence.

The research reveals ways in which to develop and implement effective strategies learnt in the U.S. around partnership work between police and schools in the U.K. and the extent to which they have an effect on juvenile delinquency.

The study concludes by comparing the roles of both the U.K. and U.S. model of policing in schools and suggests a number of recommendations for the future of school policing which can be incorporated into a training package, and used to train existing school based police officers in the U.K. and the effect that this work has had on informing policy and developing and guiding practice around youth crime.

## **1.1. Comparative Study in London U.K.**

### **Introduction**

This section looks at the origins of placing a police officer in a school in London and the general makeup of the pilot area in terms of its social standing and levels of youth crime. The study then reveals the problem statement and subsequent research outline detailing the suspected outcomes of the project.

### **Background of Problem**

In June 2000 the Chief Executive's Service of XXXX Council submitted a final submission for a Single Regeneration Bid on behalf of The XXXX Partnership. The purpose of this bid was to regenerate the area of XXXX through community involvement and empowerment and its vision is to transform the area into "a thriving community where people want to live, work, study and succeed." (Local Report not referenced to avoid identifying the area and school).

The target area is XXXX, which houses a population of 8,000 people from a culturally and ethnically mixed background. The neighbourhood is characterised by high levels of unemployment a high concentration of child poverty with many children living on income support and high levels of crime.

The programme for the bid which itself is a community-led organisation has four main strands:

Organising the Neighbourhood

Action for Young People

Open Door to Employment

Safer Community Partnership

The fourth strand is concerned with the aspect of crime and safety and the quality of external living in the community, which were identified as major issues of concern by the partnership throughout the consultation process.

Four areas were mapped out in response to meet these problems one of which was entitled Safety Community Liaison. This area of the project involves basing a police officer in a school that shall be referred to as Clearwater School.

“The role will be to provide close liaison between the school and the police to deal sensitively, with crime and disorder issues within the school and surrounding area. A particular aspect of his work will be to develop an effective anti-bullying/harassment strategy.” (Local Report).

The Youth Justice Plan 2000-2001 (Local Report), states that a high number of victims and most offenders in all crime categories were male and aged 15-19 years old within the XXXX borough and that many of the offences committed are carried out by their peers. These alarming statistics around juvenile crime are reflected in measures, which local schools are now taking to ensure that their own pupils are properly protected. In one local school in a neighbouring borough “Youths armed with baseball bats attacked a teenage boy in what police say could have been a prearranged fight”. (local newspaper). Other examples of pupils needing protection has seen the introduction of security guards at another school where “outsiders have harassed or even threatened students, demanding money or valuable possessions.” (local newspaper).

### **Community Police and Consultative Group: Youth Panel**

Examples of what the young people actually think of their police in the borough of XXXX was outlined in a report by the XXXX Community and Police Consultative Group’s Youth Panel.1999.

Their aim was to “provide a forum for young people to meet and discuss how the law, crime and policing of the borough affects them”. The report consisted of a series of workshops, which provide an insight into the opinions of school children living in the borough on policing matters, as well as a questionnaire, which covers a “ broader spectrum of opinion”. Many of the general findings of the report emphasise the attitude of these school children to police and are a good predictor to the sort of

barriers and confrontations that lay in wait for the officer at the school. (See Appendix B). There was a general impression that although there were many negative comments about the police most of the students who took part in the discussion felt that the main problem between police and young people revolved around “a lack of understanding and communication, and negative perceptions based on television, news reports and hearsay.” XXXX Consultative Group. (1999).

In response to the high volume of crime within the project area and the concern about young people being involved in crime whether as victims or perpetrators a decision was made to install a police officer in Clearwater School as Britain’s first full time based police officer.

### **Government Policies**

It is worth noting at this stage that the Government, which has shown an interest in this project through the DfES, has outlined its own criteria for a possible evaluation of the pilot project and therefore I have included those areas of the project, which it wishes to focus on, with the view to producing a formal independent evaluation. (See Appendix C).

### **Problem Statement and Research Outline**

#### **School Based Police Officers. A Comparative Evaluation of a Partnership Approach to Tackling Juvenile Delinquency.**

This pilot project, which is based in a local secondary school in London, is the first of its kind and is radical in that the Metropolitan Police Service in partnership with the school have agreed to allow a police officer to work overtly within the school on a full time basis.

This is an innovative strategy which if successful could radically shape the way in which schools function ultimately resulting in better relationships between the police

and schools and may explain why young people commit such a high number of offences.

### **Research Issue**

Having spent several weeks in the school observing its daily routine and speaking to teachers and pupils as well as some parents the school- based officer has outlined some reforms that he believes will bring about a significant reduction in the amount of crime and disorder in the school and improve relationships between the community and the police. It is this proposition that is to be evaluated.

This will be achieved this through lesson inputs, activities, building relationships as well as discretion to sensibly enforce the law. The effect of this intervention is to bring about a renewed and increased confidence in the police service, and a willingness to trust and to confide in them in an effort to bring regeneration to the area.

It is intended that staff, pupils and the community will experience an increased sense of security and safety and that there will be a return to old-fashioned “hands on” policing, where the public can have personal contact on a daily basis with their own police officer. People will experience a positive “feel good” factor, where matters are resolved quickly, efficiently and professionally and that in addition to this opportunities will exist for them to participate in after school clubs and weekend functions for the whole community. These links will encourage more people to think about the police in a positive light and affiliation to the service through the cadets, special constabulary or regular appointment will become apparent. Initial signs of this will be measured in terms of the increase of unsolicited information that are received from the pupils and the community who will begin to forge relationships with a police officer that they now trust. Indifferent and even at times hostile attitudes will be replaced as people lay aside their own prejudices about the police service and begin to understand their role and function in society.

This innovative study will determine the extent to which police and the education service can work side by side and pave the way for the introduction of police officers

to be based in schools on a regular basis throughout the country. This is a feature of many schools in other countries around the world which wholeheartedly embrace the concept of this dual partnership and who seek to improve their working relationship. There is a need to identify outcomes of the research through specific questions that will provide answers to the future of police in schools. It is these answers that will help shape and develop the future of policing in schools in the U.K.

The content of the questions and surveys to be conducted are explained in Chapter 3 in data collection methods. They will generate information that reveals the effect of the partnership between police and schools and those areas that need to be implemented or developed to provide a successful working partnership. If it becomes apparent that such work is a valuable tool for the government in combating youth crime then measures will have to be taken to incorporate it on a much wider scale using all the information available from this project in terms of partnership work and that which exists abroad and is commented upon in the U.S. section of Chapter 3.

It was now apparent that there was a need to find out to what extent the idea of police working in schools had already been tried in other areas of the country and whether there were any examples of good working practice between police, schools and other agencies, in particular in relation to reducing key government policies such as truancy, exclusion, anti social, behaviour and crime. These findings are outlined in Chapter 2 and are as a result of a detailed literature review and first hand experience of witnessing or engaging in such schemes through the course of the authors working life with young people, as a teacher, police officer, youth offending team officer and home office official.



## **1.2. Comparative Study in Denver Colorado USA.**

### **Introduction**

This section follows a similar pattern to the previous section in that it identifies the formation of police in American schools and their growth within these establishments over recent years. It identifies the basic roles of the School Resource Officer (SRO) and their integration into the school community over an extended period of time.

### **Background of Problem**

Since the early 1950s there has been some form of school resource officer (SRO), working in America's schools. The programme was not always successful and there has been a great deal of criticism aimed at allowing officers to work full time in schools. Some of the criticisms still exist today, but as I hope to show in this study, the work of the school resource officer is having a significant impact on crime and delinquency in school. There are now over a thousand officers based in schools across the U.S.A. who all belong to the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). The growth of this association has been the result of both schools and police departments working in partnership to solve problems of crime within their schools.

The SROs are all certified law enforcement officers who are specifically trained to perform three roles:

- Law enforcement officer
- Law related counsellor
- Law related education teacher

Additional pressures to expand the schemes stem from members of the community who constantly appeal to the schools and police to deal with incidents of crime, which occur around the school and affect their neighbourhood. Further to this many police departments have monitored the number of emergency calls that schools generate and

have found that to have one officer based in a school on a full time basis investigating crimes is significantly more effective than calling upon patrol officers. This frees up patrol officers to deal with other emergency calls and allows the SRO to deal promptly and with a degree of sensitivity in a school, which he or she knows well.

Establishing SROs in schools was made easier by the work accomplished in many schools through the widespread police based intervention scheme entitled Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.). This entailed police officers working in both Elementary and High schools delivering a law related education curriculum aimed at educating children about drugs. There has been much criticism aimed at the program, which according to a recent report by the Surgeon General on Youth Violence (2001) outlines it as an “Ineffective Primary Prevention Program”. However, according to many officers, teachers and parents it was a very popular programme, which has, helped pave the way for SROs many who were previously DARE officers to take up their full time positions in schools. It enabled police officers to build up good relationships with many of the staff and pupils in schools and therefore made the transition of officers from guest speakers to full time members of the school staff that much more successful.

### **Lakewood Schools**

The city of Lakewood, which is situated in Denver Colorado, has a total of six high schools a middle school and a technical school. Each of the schools has its own schools resource officer SRO who is based full time on the campus. In this city both the schools and the police department are significantly impacted by the demands placed upon them to deal with incidents and situations directly or indirectly related to juveniles and the schools. These problems include delinquency, substance abuse, alcohol and other youth related problems which affect the community and which the police department feel can best be addressed in a proactive and preventative manner. It is with this in mind that the Lakewood Police Department and the local education authority jointly developed a programme for the SRO to provide a variety of services including:

- Law enforcement

- Liaison with school and community
- Law related education
- Informal counselling to students, parents and faculty.

### **Purpose of the study**

Having spent a full academic year in a secondary school in London, I came to the conclusion that although the partnership scheme had experienced some major teething problems there was the potential to learn from those mistakes and to further the development of the programme. I became aware of the work that was being achieved by schools officers in the U.S.A. who had been developing a comprehensive intervention programme. This consisted of a basic triad approach, which signifies the philosophy of the schools resource programme, namely liaison to the community, education and law enforcement. The fundamental purpose of the U.S. study was to inform practice in the U.K. and bring about changes in policy at a strategic level.

I was able to travel to the U.S.A. and spend a period of five months as part of a Fulbright Police Fellowship Award studying the work of these officers. This entailed shadowing a select number of SROs in order to understand their roles in school and the extent of their partnership work with the school and local community. This allowed me to see how the various stakeholders in the partnership viewed the project and in particular the role of the SRO. The information from this study was used to formulate ideas and recommendations to be implemented into a new programme of school based intervention work on my return to the U.K, which would assist both the schools and the police to work more effectively as a partnership in order to achieve its shared aims and objectives. Any benefits of the work could be passed directly onto the school and the local community and its success could be translated into other projects around the metropolitan district of London who may be in need of similar partnership activities to improve the safety of their schools and community.

## **Research Outline**

There is a need for research in the U.S. to assess practice and to reflect on how best this practice can be used to develop strategy in the U.K. I believe that by observing the work of the SROs I will be able to gain a better understanding of how they interact in schools and with the various members of the partnership and to see what methods they employ to achieve their goals and whether or not they are successful. Through this research I will be able to assess the practices in the U.S. to see which ones are effective and transferable to the U.K.

After speaking to all the relevant parties that make up the partnership I hope to be better informed about how to develop my own relationships with my new school and what strategies are effective in achieving this as well as those strategies used by the school and SRO to combat juvenile delinquency.

I intend to develop my own training manual, which I can deliver to other school officers who are permanently based within schools and impart the knowledge that I have learned in the U.S. to make our own implementation of officers in schools a successful partnership.

The success of this research could result in police officers being posted in a number of schools in the U.K and this training manual will be the means by which all officers can be trained and learn how to develop their own school programmes.

In order to affect such change this work will have to show the real benefits of this partnership and provide evidence, which is both valid and reliable in terms of applying it to similar settings in the U.K. This will be of paramount importance in convincing the U.K. government that the role of police in schools is an essential one and that by rethinking how they can work with children will have a positive effect on the school community as well as addressing juvenile crime.

What the document fails to clarify is what constitutes a criminal activity and formalised procedures with which to notify the police and record the incident. Also the inclusion of the word “should” as opposed to “must” advise the police of any criminal activity implies that the schools are not compelled to report all matters which is certainly the case in my experience.

What needs to be addressed is the question. Do schools have the right and the law-related knowledge to decide what is or is not a crime?

### **Police in Schools: For and Against.**

There is some concern from educationalists in Britain that the presence of police in schools could bring about the kind of situation that presently exists in a number of schools in the U.S. where according to Steve Doughty of the Daily Mail May 8<sup>th</sup> 2001 “schools operate like armed camps or prisons with armed guards and metal detectors at every door”. The Metropolitan Police, have confirmed that they intend to build upon the pilot project at Clearwater School and extend the scheme to an entire inner city area. This news has been met with a mixed reception amongst the teaching staff although Nigel de Gruchy, the leader of the NAS/UWT, has welcomed the plan. “It’s a good idea and it is about 20 years too late” he said. “We could do with more police officers in schools-there is an enormous amount of crime that is not dealt with in schools that the police do have the power to deal with outside”. Daily Mail (2001).

Not every educationalist shares these sentiments. Nick Seaton a spokesperson for the Campaign for Real Education describes the prospect of police in schools as “tragic”.

The Conservative party have seized the opportunity to criticize the government for letting teenage criminal behaviour spiral out of control. Ann Widdecombe the shadow home secretary has stated, “Saying that we need policemen in schools is not the answer to the problem. It is putting a sticking plaster on it. We need to deal with the disease”. This statement, however, appears to contradict her own initiative to have a police cadet unit in every secondary school, (Sunday Telegraph, June 25<sup>th</sup> 2000). What is encouraging is that the scheme has the support of the teaching union

who are aware of the escalating number of violent acts in schools and understand the potential benefits of placing police in schools to work with children.

In a B.B.C. News programme "Talking Point" broadcast on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2001, listeners were given the opportunity to debate the subject "Police in schools: Is it a Good idea?" The responses came from across the world and a selection of the comments, which reflect the differences of opinions that exist are outlined in Appendix E. A more comprehensive selection can be obtained from the B.B.C. News page "Talking Point".

### **Current Initiatives**

There is also little guidance for officers working within schools, that which exists focuses upon officers who visit schools on an "ad hoc" basis. Current Metropolitan Police publications, which include "Guidelines for police officers on working with education establishments and community groups" (1998) and "Police response to incidents in schools" (2001) do not take into account the problems and issues, which arise as a consequence of having permanent school based officers.

Despite the lack of any real national structure or guidance on the role of police in schools, a number of police forces, including Kent, Thames Valley, Nottinghamshire and Northumbria, have developed their own policies and practices in this area. At this stage it is too early to draw any common aspects from their work, although they all share a common theme of early intervention with young people in an attempt to divert them from crime.

A number of good examples where partnerships are working are highlighted in the DfEE document entitled "Together we can tackle it. A checklist for police and schools working together to tackle truancy, crime and disorder." (2001).

These include:

- Head teachers in Kent working with partners in the local community to help pupils who had been identified as truants and being at risk from exclusion.
- In Thames Valley educational social workers, police and schools have a partnership approach to dealing with truants by organising home visits
- In London police have set up acceptable behaviour contracts with troublesome youngsters in partnership with local housing offices.
- Throughout London police, educational welfare officers and youth workers perform joint truancy sweeps on a regular basis with great success.

Many other projects are outlined in a Home Office research study (No 161, 1996).

This looks at work which attempts to prevent young people from becoming involved in crime. It focuses on five key areas identified by Graham and Bowling (1995).

- Strengthening families - parent training, family centres
  - Strengthening schools - strategies to prevent truancing
  - Protecting young people from the influence of delinquents in their peer group from high risk activities
  - Harnessing the sources of social control within the criminal justice system to the more informal sources of control found among families, schools and neighbours.
  - Preparing young people for fully independent and responsible adulthood.
- (Graham and Bowling, 1995).

What, however, is missing from all of the police based approaches is a co-ordinated and effective evaluation of their processes and outcomes, which would enable police forces to see for themselves how effective such schemes, can be.

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales is currently working in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers to develop a more coherent strategy for

preventing youth crime through closer working of police, schools and Youth Offending Teams. This will be submitted to the Home Secretary under section 41 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Traditionally police interaction with schools has been focused on crime reduction and preventing children from offending by presenting classroom based talks on such issues as crime and consequences, personal safety, drugs education and bullying. It is fair to say that many of the officers engaged in this type of schoolwork were in the twilight of their career and often regarded by operational officers as not performing real police work. As the divide between the work of the school's officers and other departments in the police service grew and many schools officers became isolated in their work, many police authorities stopped supporting their role and subsequently disbanded schools officer provision.

This process was further compounded by work conducted at Roehampton Institute, University of Surrey. Research into the role of police education in schools on behalf of the ACPO Drugs Sub Committee concluded that much of the work of the schools involvement officers around drugs education was questionable (O'Connor, 2001). Much of the research centered on the officer's ability to deliver classroom presentations and the content of the lessons. These officers are not trained teachers and the instruction, which they receive prior to entering schools, is limited and very basic, it is not surprising that the analysis was critical of their work. The role of the schools involvement officer needs to be radically reassessed from being purely an educational role to becoming a more proactive one whereby they are able to engage with not only the pupils but also the staff, parents, community and school as a whole. This will enable officers to build up stronger links with young people and help to understand some of the issues, which they are facing in today's society, and ones, which cause the most conflict with police and inevitably lead to the alienation of the youth culture.

### **Stop and Search**

Top of the agenda for many young people is the issue of "stop and search". In my role as officer in charge of an Attendance Centre for the Home Office, I educate and rehabilitate young offenders through a series of workshops based around their



offending in order to successfully reintegrate them back into society. One of the many topics we discuss is based on the police's use of stop and search amongst young people. This is the most controversial of all the lessons which they take part in and in no other lesson are they so expressive in their thoughts and feelings on the way in which police conduct themselves around young people.

There have been numerous studies, which capture the feelings of young people towards police. One in particular, the Home Office research study "Tell Them So They Listen": Messages from Young People in Custody. (2000), contains interviews with young people already in the criminal justice system. They highlighted their concerns that people in authority need to tackle racism more effectively and ensure fair, respectful and appropriate treatment for young black people and that particular attention needed to be paid towards improving relations between the police and young people.

A further study by the Home Office (Police Stops and Searches: Lessons from a Programme of Research, 2001) reveals the views of people who are stopped and searched. These include the feeling of being victimised by the police because of their ethnic background and the general attitude of the police towards them especially by young officers who are often seen as patronising, arrogant aggressive and intimidating. Further feelings describe a general mistrust of the police and a belief that they will fabricate evidence and display racist behaviour to goad people and inflame situations, which inevitably results in conflict. Because of these experiences, which many young people state are played out in numerous inner city areas, they refuse to cooperate with the police and view them as the enemy. Consequently crimes are rarely reported to police when they occur between young people who will often prefer to deal with the problem themselves. This can lead to escalating forms of violence, which can be seen in many of the nation's school playgrounds.

I have already alluded to the growing concern of the extent of youth crime in the country and these feelings are reflected in the Metropolitan Police Statement of Aims, which states that dealing with youth crime is its number one priority alongside countering terrorism. What is now needed is policy that will clearly demonstrate how police can tackle this growing tide of youth crime. Initial suggestions highlight the

need for closer supervision of children, suitable activities which will engage them both in and out of school, work around raising the attainment of pupils and remedies to the rising number of exclusions and truants who inevitably become victims of crime or who themselves are lured into a life of crime.

One solution is that a new breed of school officers can in partnership, with other agencies such as schools and Youth Offender Teams, tackle many of these issues successfully through a clearly defined programme of intervention. My own experiences as a teacher and police officer led me to develop such a programme, which I could deliver in schools in partnership with other agencies to improve the links between schools and police and to provide the basis for some meaningful work, which will ultimately lead to a reduction in general crime and disorder in and around schools.

It is this work that forms the basis of this research and thesis and generates a model of action- based research that can be used to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of this and other policy initiatives.

## **2.2 Review of Work Involving Police and Other Agencies in Schools in the U.S.**

### **Introduction**

This section defines the role of the SRO and the time spent on each of his roles; law enforcement, education and counselling. It concentrates on the aspects of a successful school/police programme by considering some of the essential challenges that exist and considers the effectiveness of the police role through work conducted by the Centre for the Prevention of School Violence. (C.P.S.V). It highlights some opposing opinions about SROs and provides an example of one school which experienced a turn around in its thinking towards police in schools. The study then looks at a SRO web forum and draws on the experiences of other SROs who experience difficulties with the SRO programme and focuses on the work of N.A.S.R.O. to support its colleagues and highlights some of the feedback and findings from its 2001 national survey. It then examines other crime prevention programmes in schools that aim to interact with young people in the U.S. and mirrors the work of Mathews (1995).

### **History of Relevant Theory and Research**

According to the Centre for the Prevention of School Violence at North Carolina State University, the concept of placing SROs in schools was first seen in the 1950s in Flint Michigan, where the police department had embraced the idea of community policing. During the 1960s and 1970s the programme began to spread across the U.S.A. before languishing in the 1980s. It was not until the 1990s that the programme began to gain momentum and develop into the many SRO programmes that now operate across the country. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Fact Sheet March 2001).

The role of the SRO includes three main roles, 1. problem solver and liaison with the community, 2. educator and law enforcement/safety specialist and 3. law enforcement and safety specialist.

## **Congressional Definition**

*The U.S. Congressional Definition of a School Resource Officer is a career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-orientated policing, assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organisations to:*

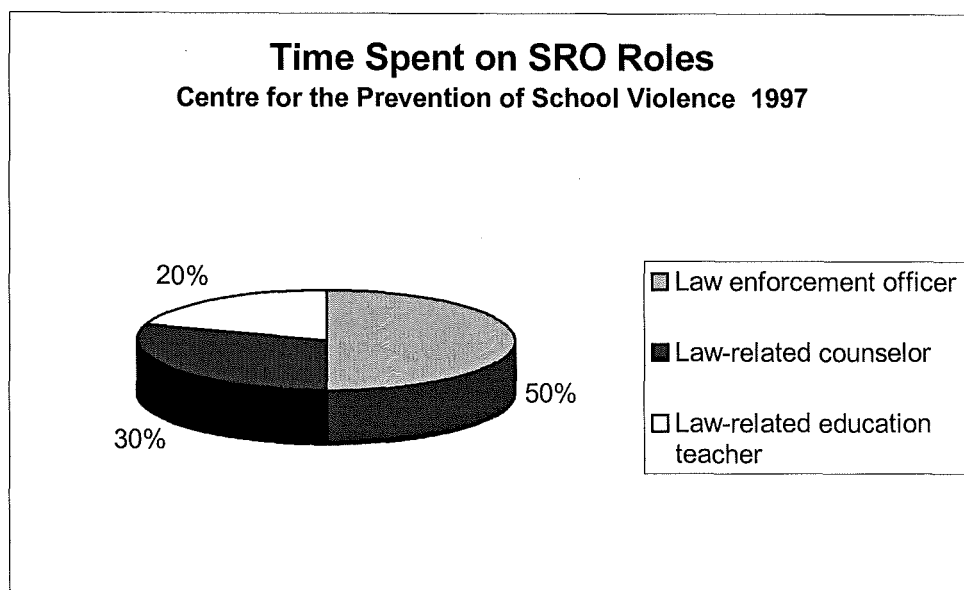
- 1. Address crime and disorder problems, gangs and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around elementary or secondary school;*
- 2. Develop or expand crime prevention effort for students;*
- 3. Educate likely school-age victims in crime prevention and safety;*
- 4. Develop or expand community justice initiatives for students*
- 5. Train students in conflict resolution, restorative justice and crime awareness;*
- 6. Assist in the identification of physical changes in the environment that may reduce crime in or around the school; and*
- 7. Assist in developing school policy that addresses crime and recommend procedural changes.*

Atkinson, A (2000), *The Successful School Resource Officer Programme.*

## **Time Spent on Roles**

Surveys conducted by the Centre for the Prevention of School Violence state that the law enforcement role tends to dominate the role of the SRO in schools. This occupies almost 50% of the officer's time. 30% is spent on counselling and advising and 20% is spent on law related education

(Chart.2.2).



Source: Centre for the Prevention of School Violence, July 1997.

It is important to note that the amount of time devoted to each of these roles differs according to the schools in which SROs operate. SROs in High Schools tend to spend a greater amount of their time dealing with law enforcement and those in Middle School often enjoy the luxury of spending more time in the classroom covering lessons on law and developing relationships with children. (Source; personal observation).

The exact role of the SRO tends to differ between schools and police departments throughout the U.S.A. Attempts to understand these differing roles have been made clearer thanks to the work of the C.P.S.V. who have conducted a number of surveys to discover more about the life of the SRO. Much of this work has been conducted with the cooperation of the National Association of School Resource Officers in conjunction with their annual conferences. What is quite apparent from these surveys is that there is no single agreed definition for the role of an SRO.

Such work has enabled researchers to better understand the fundamental purpose behind SROs and examine where one stands in relation to philosophy and practice. (C.P.S.V, 2001)

## **Programme Challenges**

In contrast to this uncertainty surrounding the role of the SRO, there is a fundamental agreement that a number of challenges exist which are necessary for the successful implementation of an SRO programme. These include communication, expectations, the SRO programme, the officer, and the relationships that the SRO must form. The Community Orientated Policing Services (COPS) training manual (2000) identifies the following issues that must be addressed. (See Appendix F).

### **(i) Effectiveness of SROs**

The question here is whether the deployment of officers in schools as opposed to performing normal police duties is worth the money and time and resources expended. A good example of the type of research to measure SRO effectiveness was conducted by the C.P.S.V. in conjunction with a division of the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency and Duplin County schools. Pre test surveys were conducted on students and teachers/administrators at the schools to provide base line data from which to assess the school "climate" and impact of the SROs. (C.P.S.V, June 2001). Survey questions focus on the school "climate" issues and the measurement of behaviours, perceptions, and feelings of students and teachers/administrators with reference to school safety.

In nearly all examples of such research, post-test surveys reveal that the introduction of SROs is a positive one in terms of knowledge, interaction and perceived impact. (See for example C.P.S.V, June 2001).

However, none of these surveys manages to survey all the relevant parties in the partnership. These include staff, students, pupils, parents, the community and other police officers as well as the SROs themselves. There also appears to be no research, which examines pupils who have been arrested or come to the notice of police, and whose opinions would offer a different perspective on the role of school based officers. All of these perspectives have an important influence on the effectiveness of

the SRO programme and none should be overlooked. In addition such surveys do not explain how SROs are helpful or unhelpful or in what ways they have managed to make a difference or bring about a change in attitude towards the perception of police and the exchanges taking place. They do not explain enough about the relationship or partnership that has been formed because they fail to provide first hand accounts of what may have taken place to bring about such positive results. This is due, in part, to the style of questions that form the survey and also the information that the researcher seeks. In my own research I am not only looking to assess the success of my role, but also to reveal what processes have taken place in the school to bring about any change. Unlike the U.S. studies, I strive to achieve this through, my style and structure of questioning and interviewing which encourages the respondent to provide accounts on which they form their opinions as opposed to just ticking a box in order to indicate a particular preference or opinion. It is this information that will provide me with the necessary data to adapt, change, abandon or adopt differing styles of policing to tackle the issues surrounding partnership approach of police and schools to tackling juvenile delinquency.

#### (ii) Negative Attitudes

Not all schools across the U.S. are in favour of school based police officers, in fact one “school in Brooklyn sent the cops packing”, according to an article by Diane Taylor in the Guardian Education May 15<sup>th</sup> 2000. The State made it mandatory for schools to have security guards. The Principal of El Puente High School in New York, though adverse to the use of security guards, “reluctantly acceded to the request”. The school’s approach to dealing with incidents of pupils carrying knives or perpetrating acts of violence is to talk to pupils and explain that they do not need to protect themselves at this school, because it’s a safe place. The Principal explains that its only because these pupils are used to carrying knives to protect themselves that they bring them to school in the first place. Rather than report the offending pupils to the authorities, which according to the Principal would be to adopt an approach of zero tolerance, he prefers to focus on the pupil’s human rights and deal with these incidents internally.

However, from another perspective he is simply providing these pupils with a “safe haven” where they know they will not be challenged or prosecuted for carrying a knife, in a country where one in eight U.S. teenagers admitted to carrying a weapon to school at least one day a month, and 133,700 violent crimes against teachers were recorded. Whatever policy is implemented it needs to be assessed through research and not just afterwards on the basis of principle.

### (iii) Rich East High School

While not all schools are as radical as the one described above many do not welcome the idea of having a resident police officer with open arms. Rich East High School, in 1987, reluctantly introduced the first police/school liaison programme. The affect that this had on the school is outlined in an article by a former principal, (Barry, 1995). He stated that prior to the project “We reported little of what could be called violent”. Crimes would be dealt with “in house” and added the Principal “For the sake of our good image, if the police had legitimate business at the school, they were expected to park in the back lot out of sight so no one would infer there was trouble in the building.” The teachers wanted to know “Why do we need police in our buildings?” and a cartoon even appeared in the school newspaper depicting “inmates and guards under the school house roof”. However, six years after the scheme had been implemented the author explained that “the front of the school resembled a police station parking lot with the watch commander, the chief of police, the captain, two of our police liaison officers and one of the street officers having lunch with the assistant principal in the faculty lunchroom. By that time our school security program had become entrenched.” What happened between 1987 and 1993 to cause such a turnaround in people’s attitudes? The principal identified three main things that occurred. Firstly, there was a realisation by both a police officer and the Assistant Principal that a “cooperative effort between the school and the police could produce immense benefits for both organisations”. Secondly local police officers convinced the school staff that the security programme was essential to create safe learning environment and enhance learning for all. Lastly, the police worked in a variety of ways to convince the school community that the scheme could be successful. The strategies included using their expertise to teach classes in law and social studies and train pupils how to drive safely. The intention was to prove to the staff that the police



could become an integral part of the school. Also those who were involved in the development of the project spent a large proportion of their time “establishing objectives and subsequently planning for the ultimate cooperative effort between the school and the police department”.

Reviews of other school/police partnerships in the U.S. reveal similar stories of success, as well as some problems.

### **School Resource Officers’ Web Forum**

Many of these problems are described on the School Resource Officer Web Forum organised by the Centre for the Prevention of School Violence. The articles on this web site highlight difficulties experienced by SROs in relation to their work and their relations with differing members of the partnership. Where appropriate I have commented upon a number of these entries, which serve as a comparison to my own experiences. (See Appendix G.)

All of the replies offer sound advice for tackling issues, which all the officers seem to have experienced at some stage. It is reassuring to know that problems, which I encountered, are not uncommon and that there are strategies for overcoming them.

### **NASRO Survey**

A survey of officers at the 2001 National Association of School Resource Officers conference (about 10% of its membership) was “designed to provide the first nationally known concrete data on SRO demographics, SRO program design and operations, and SRO program impact and perceptions.” NASRO School Resource Officer Survey (2001)

The survey revealed some of the problems which SROs face across the U.S. when attempting to implement and develop the school/police programme. On the positive side officers feel that their work improves school safety and prevents crime and violence and that they have a positive relationship with students, school administrators, teachers, and support personnel. However, SROs still believe that

school crime is underreported to police, although their presence does impact on the accuracy of school crime reporting. Another area of concern was that aside from school/faculty staff, SROs state that the majority of individuals who influence the school, such as the press, elected officials, police officers, and notably researchers and academics do not understand the roles and functions of the SRO.

I can sympathise with the feelings of these officers and agree with the irony that it is the pupils who understand the role of the SRO better than anyone else, but unlike the officials have no influence in shaping public opinion or determining policy or funding issues about the programme.

A common source of concern for SROs is their relationship, with their Principals and other key players and how this can adversely affect the success of the programme.

The Centre for the Prevention of School Violence has determined that “the relationship between the two parties is of critical importance to the successful implementation of the SRO approach in schools. When built upon communication and cooperation, this relationship can be the cornerstone for secure, safe, and orderly schools”. (Centre for the Prevention of School Violence, 2001). The Centre concludes that the starting point for the Principal-SRO relationship should be the realisation that the Principals and SROs “share a common vision”. Other findings included the clear definition of roles and a framework for the daily operation of the programme. It also highlights that although everybody wants the school to be a safe secure learning environment it is ultimately the school and the principals who can by mutual communication and cooperation help make the “vision a reality”.

### **Solutions To School Based Violence**

Mathews, (1995) states that the key to finding solutions to school based violence are understanding that different forms of violence involve different types of pupils. Therefore any programme, which seeks to address the issue of school-based violence and fails to take account of individual pupil needs by adopting a uniform approach, is subject to failure. Mathews describes partnerships that are making a noticeable difference to their communities across Canada and that despite the fact that very few are evaluated many have been shown to be particularly effective in “reducing the

incidence of violence, eliminating intruder problems, and lowering students' level of fear."

### **School Based Violence Prevention Programmes**

A variety of collaborative programmes between law enforcement agencies and schools have been established within the U.S. and U.K. (e.g. Lakewood Police Department and Jefferson County in the U.S. and Kent Police and local community partners in the U.K). No single one can by itself prevent youth violence. They generally target a specific theme such as:

Conflict resolution

Peacemaking

Anger Management

In summary, the U.S. has a number of established programmes running many of which are evaluated by independent bodies who share their findings with the partnerships. Much of the research concentrates on what roles the SROs actually perform and there is a support network for officers from a national body (N.A.S.R.O) who share good practice amongst its many members at national seminars and via a website. (NASRO.ORG.UK).

It is this work that already exists around schools in the U.S., which will be the focus of my action research and which will produce a model that can be adapted where suitable to enhance both policy and practices in the U.K. The method of action research used in this study is described in detail in Chapter 3, which includes the aims and objectives of both the U.S. and U.K. programmes and the appropriateness of such methods as well as any limitations or concerns.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This section describes the aims and objectives of the U.K. and U.S. models and the concept of action research and its application and significance to this study. It also considers the use of case studies and questionnaires and focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of each one and their suitability to measure the preferred outcomes of this study.

It then outlines the various methods that I used to collect the data, which include the following: observation, focus groups, surveys, and semi-structured interviews. It considers the influence of data collection on practice and includes the themes of the U.K. and U.S. questionnaires that were formulated from the diary of events at the school. There is also a section on the influence of data collection on practice, as well as a section on ethical considerations of the research and issues around anonymity and power dynamics.

#### **Aims of the Investigation for the U.K.**

My role within the school was to develop and implement partnership activities to reduce crime and disorder, to represent the Metropolitan Police Service and to develop trust and confidence and enhance relationships between the school, police and the community. I set out to see how I could achieve this by applying particular strategies, notably:

- To establish a good working relationship with staff
- To break down barriers with pupils
- To be a permanent point of contact
- To develop confidence and trust
- To assist with maintaining good order in and around the school.

This investigation aims to see:

- To what extent I have achieved these goals
- Whether or not my work at the school has had a negative or positive impact on the staff and pupils
- Whether or not there has been an impact on crime and disorder in the area.

### **Aims and Objectives of Investigation for the U.S.**

My research in the U.S. took the form of an observational evaluator, which allowed me to observe the work of school resource offices as they interacted with their schools and communities. This enabled me to attend a number of schools in both the Lakewood district and other surrounding districts to conduct a comparative study in order to identify positive recommendations to implement in the U.K.

### **Objectives**

These included:

- Designing and implementing a questionnaire for all members of the partnership to include: staff, pupils, parents, community, police, support staff and the SRO.
- Interview key personnel who interact on a daily basis with the SRO, including the SROs.
- Interview a number of specialists in the field of SROs and Youth Violence in Schools.
- Form a diary of events based on my observations of SROs in schools and their interaction with the school community.

- Deliver focus groups to pupils, police, staff and the community in conjunction with the surveys.

The following section explains the methods I adopted in keeping with an action research strategy in both the U.S. and U.K. to identify areas of policy and practice.

### **Action Research Strategy**

The framework for my work is action research and to that extent it is important to understand not only how I went about conducting my research but also how my work builds upon the principles of action research.

Lewin (1948) is generally regarded as one of the first exponents of action research. He used the concept behind the technique to engineer social change. Action research can be used in a number of ways and, as Kemmis (1997) suggests, there are different schools of action research. A typical definition of action research is given by Cohen and Manion (1989).

“Essentially an on-the-spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation. This means that the step-by-step process is constantly monitored over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms (questionnaires, diaries, interviews and case studies, for example) so that the ensuing feedback may be translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes, redefinitions, as necessary, so as to bring about lasting benefit to the ongoing process itself”. Cohen and Manion (1989).

I adopted Action Research as my approach to tackling these issues, as it is particularly suited to a form of work, in which the aim is to improve aspects of my own and my colleagues’ practices. This is the most appropriate strategy for this project and the reasons for this are given by Bassey (1995), “Action researchers are intent on describing, interpreting and explaining events while they seek to change them for the better.” Bassey reveals that action research involves asking questions and seeking out the answers in the hope that what you discover will directly affect the way that you do

things because your understanding is now informed and will bring about change to the way things are done.

An essential part of action research however is that the process of evaluating a task is an ongoing process which is continually reviewed and evaluated to improve upon existing practice, and the implementation of such processes are central to this research. This idea that action research operates in these cycles is a central theme. Lewin depicts action research, as a series of spiral steps, each with four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The choice of methodology also reflects something about myself and the way in which I undertake my own work. I am very much a “hands on” person, and enjoy getting “stuck in” and interactive with people, which is normally associated with action research. Denscombe (1998) defines four key areas associated with the key principles of action research, which are essential to my research. Firstly there is the practical aspect of the work, which looks at real world issues in the hope that there lies a solution to the problems that we face. This entails more than simply collating details and findings; it refers specifically to using this information to effect a change in ones own practices in a positive and beneficial way. Secondly, there is the belief that the ability to effect change is good and one should seek to bring it about wherever possible. Thirdly, the idea that the process is cyclical and continuous and leads to enhancement. Fourthly, there is the need for the practitioner to play an active role in the research. “Action research... insists that practitioners must be participants, not just in the sense of taking part in research but in the sense of being a partner in the research.” (Denscombe, 1998).

These themes form the basis for my work. They can be clearly seen at each stage from the initial identification of the problem to the acknowledgement of its existence and the change of emphasis that all partners placed upon it and the cyclical process which helped bring about changes at both the macro and micro level in terms of police school partnerships and policy.

The data that feed into the action- research strategy are obtained from a number of sources. Case studies here have been used throughout, in particular for studies of

pupils with behaviour problems. The focus is on the method of intervention. The strength of using case studies is that the researcher is able to examine particular aspects in detail and understand and identify the processes that may be taking place within that specific context. As Nisbett and Watt (1980) say they look at the relationship between cause and effect and can reveal complex interactions.

I have also tried to capture what the staff and pupils feel about having a police officer on site. What experiences have they had which highlight both the positive and negative effects of my work? This information was obtained through semi structured interviews and questionnaires (See Appendix V, W) as well as small focus groups and includes examples of interactions that I have had with both the staff and pupils. As Oppenheim (1966), suggests to design a really good questionnaire is not as easy as it may at first seem.

“the world is full of well meaning people who believe that anyone who can write plain English and has a modicum of common sense can produce a good questionnaire.” Oppenheim (1966)

He explains that great thought and care must go into the design of the questionnaire, so that the researcher understands what information he seeks and how he will analyse the responses before actually distributing the questionnaires.

It is imperative that the researcher knows what areas he wishes to investigate and that the questions asked are relevant to the objectives that he wishes to achieve that were outlined at the beginning of the research.

With this in mind it is useful to test the questionnaire on sample groups, which allow feedback on the general design of the questionnaire and any ambiguities with its language, style or content. This was applied in both settings in the U.K. and U.S.

In addition I maintained a diary of events that occur throughout my time at the schools, logging my various interactions with the staff and pupils and other members of the partnership including parents and the community as well as other police officers. This enabled me to keep track of all the issues that I faced and the way in



which they are resolved and the lessons learnt. In addition it revealed how various members of the partnership interact with the police and whether over time their attitudes as well as my own changed as a result of the partnership and the effect that any benefits emerging from the project had on the overall picture of police in schools. It also helped me identify how I have managed to achieve those aims set out by the partnership prior to the schemes commencement outlined below.

### **3.1 Methodology for work in the U.K.**

My own planning was based on reflecting my previous experiences of working with pupils, in particular disaffected youth, and their tendency to engage in delinquent behaviour. I developed a strategy or framework for working with these children (Chart 4.1) and delivered this at the pilot school whilst observing the interactions that took place between myself and the other members of the partnership in the form of a diary. I took time to share these experiences with other parties and again after reflecting, I made amendments or changes where I felt necessary and began the process once again.

Action research was the strategy that I employed for my Masters degree, which focused primarily on engaging young people in school and reducing the opportunity for them to truant. It was as a direct result of this work that one of my recommendations was that police officers needed to be involved in schools on a full time basis as one of my concerns was that spending a few hours at a school each week was ineffectual in terms of producing changes in behaviour amongst the pupils. This study is in effect on going action research from my previous work and underpins a great number of my beliefs and values about working with schools.

At Clearwater School I was able to perform some small focus group work which enabled me to gauge the pupils level of understanding of having a police officer in school and the administration of some early questionnaires allowed me the luxury of adapting them where necessary.

The questionnaires were conducted at the end of the pilot project, which was a full academic year from its inception. On reflection these surveys should have been

conducted at the beginning of the project, providing baseline data and again at the end of the year to compile a comparison data set.

Due to the problems outlined in my diary I was only able to conduct questionnaires to pupils and staff at the school. This provided me with limited information about the impact of the pilot project.

In hindsight I should also have performed a greater number of focus groups for both the staff and the pupils to explore their answers and feelings further, however, the breakdown of the partnership between the Head and myself stopped the development of any further evaluation activities.

### **Student Surveys**

The survey consisted of 15 items. The respective form-teachers administered the surveys during class tutorials and no identifiers were included beyond gender age and ethnicity.

### **Staff Surveys**

The staff surveys consisted of 23 items. The questions were made available on e-mail to all staff to ensure anonymity. Many staff expressed concerns that they wished to return their completed questionnaires to me in person as opposed to the school secretary, which had been a condition, enforced by the Head. These members of staff felt that the frankness of their answers, which often openly criticised the Head, would be screened out of the experiment if he were to see them. I am therefore not certain how many questionnaires may have been discarded. (See Appendix X).

### **Semi structured interviews.**

A number of the teachers were interviewed (semi structured) after completion of the questionnaires in order to gain a clearer understanding of what they thought of my role within the school and to offer advice on where it could be improved.

### **3.2 Methodology for work in the U.S.**

I was able to visit a number of schools within the district of Lakewood Colorado U.S. and spend time both interacting and observing the work of the SROs as an observational evaluator. My findings were recorded in a diary, which logged all the interaction that I witnessed between the SRO and other members of the partnership, which was similar to the one I kept at Clearwater school.

During my attachment to the district's police department I conducted interviews with the SROs to fully understand their role and to answer questions concerning the training and support they receive and how they develop and maintain relationships with the different members of the partnership. They were also given a survey to complete which provided me with material with which to conduct the interviews.

I provided a survey for the staff of the school and interviewed a number of key personnel including Assistant Principals and members of staff who regularly interact with the SRO.

The opinions of the pupils are included in another survey and a proportion of these questionnaires were delivered in the form of focus groups. A percentage of the pupils surveyed included pupils who attend an alternative school, which caters for those children who do not conform to traditional methods of schooling. In general 70% of these pupils are on probation and it is therefore hoped that their replies will reflect the opinions of pupils who may already have a negative view of the police.

The survey also takes into account the views of the local communities, which live or work within close proximity to the school and whose homes and businesses are affected by the presence of school children.

In some cases this includes parents of the children who attend the school, however additional surveys were distributed at parents evenings in order to include their opinions of the SRO.

A final, but essential area of research included what other police colleagues think of the SRO programme in terms of its effectiveness and value in assisting the patrol officers with daily police work.

I also visited and interviewed members of other agencies with whom the SROs interact; these included the probation service and their work with restorative justice, and associated members of the school staff such as counsellors, speech therapists, campus security officers and caretakers.

The questionnaires that were delivered to both the staff and pupils comprised of the same questions as those in the U.K. project and were administered in the same manner. (See Appendix W.)

The interviews were tape-recorded and summaries of the conversations were typed up and are available to read although not included in the appendixes.

### **Developing U.K. Practice Through U.S. Observation.**

It will be a combination of what is witnessed and experienced as an observational evaluator and the work conducted with the various subjects that will inform what the main differences and similarities are between the role of police in schools in the U.S. and that conducted in the U.K. In essence the main comparative work covered by the surveys and interviews will be between the staff and pupils in the two countries. However, the additional surveys conducted with the parents, school resource officers police colleagues and members of the community in the U.S will enable me to gain a greater and clearer perspective of the extent that police officers in schools have in influencing and affecting the school communities and the lives of its occupants.

I will also use a diary similar to that used in the U.K. to log significant events that occur and those which highlight the similarities and differences between the two programmes in particular those areas, which are of use in progressing the U.K. study.

Of particular interest will be how school officers are regarded by their colleagues and the degree of support that they receive from their supervisors and in terms of their on

going training. In addition will be the first hand experiences of officers who have been full time school officers for a number of years and the advice that they have to offer and the mistakes that they have made or avoided.

The surveys for the staff and pupils will focus on the same themes as the U.K., however the learning that takes place from such interaction will be the focus for “apprentice learning” in the action research model. What is learnt from this experience will directly shape the way and the extent to which police engage with schools in the U.K. Its influence will extend beyond merely lesson input but rather tackle the thorny issues of information exchange, police involvement in school discipline, restorative justice, and the reporting of crimes. The evidence that this research will generate will show clearly the advantages and pitfalls of such partnership work and lay out a structure for adopting such an approach in the U.K. which will be essential in the fight to curb youth crime and make schools and the community a safer place to live and work.

### **The Influence of Data Collection on Practice**

The use of the various forms of data collection enabled me to gain a clear picture of how the school based officer scheme is perceived by the staff and pupils at the school and provided a better understanding of what works. It is hoped that what is learnt from this research is how to take forward the essential work of police in schools and that it will help develop a protocol for others schools to embrace the scheme with a clear understanding of what is required from both partners to make it work. With this in mind specific questions were asked to enable me to firstly identify good working practices that all police departments and schools could adopt and secondly be influential in its findings to become part of the governments agenda to tackle youth crime by informing and developing policy on both a local and national scale. The focus is on the following themes:

- Officers’ role
- Qualities of an officer
- Officers’ attire

- School safety themes
- Crime reporting
- How officers have helped or hindered the project
- Positive and negative aspects
- Issues of trust
- Future of police in schools

## **Ethics**

The British Psychological Society has produced guidelines for “Ethical principles for research with human subjects”. It looks at issues such as deception, privacy, confidentiality, and the treatment of children for the purposes of research.

Ethical concerns in the world of educational research are a particularly difficult area to negotiate and are an area that has been commented upon by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992), who require the researcher to juggle the demands of his trade in answering the questions of his research and the taking into account the concerns of those that he is researching. They refer to this as the “costs/benefit ratio.” Ethical problems may surface and require action at any point in the research process they can include:

- the nature of the research project itself
- the context for the research
- the procedures to be adopted
- methods of data collection
- nature of the participants
- the types of data collected
- what is to be done with the data

(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

There are a number of potential ethical issues to overcome in this project, which centres on confidentiality between the pupils, the staff and myself. Either party may

wish to disclose confidential information to me or I may be witness to a serious incident, which warrants me affecting an arrest on site, and thus risk altering the perception of my role.

I am also very conscious of my role as a police officer and the extent to which I may have become institutionalised and immersed in the culture of law enforcement and the effect that this may have in my relationship with the educational establishment as well as my own colleagues. Reiner, (1992 ) explains this concept of cop culture in some detail, referring to the six common elements that essentially form its makeup: suspicion, isolation, conservatism, machismo, racial prejudice and pragmatism.

To this extent I rely upon my experience as a teacher and educational ability to take a wider perspective of what this study is truly about and the effect that it may have upon both police and schools. I will also ensure that my action research is informed and that I make a point of checking my own motives and actions against those of the police service and school and treat any of my findings and interpretations with a critical viewpoint whilst accommodating the views of others (police officers, teachers, pupils, parents etc), so that my own biases are kept to a minimum.

### **Anonymity**

“The obligation to protect the anonymity of the research participants and to keep research data confidential is all-inclusive. It should be fulfilled at all costs unless arrangements to the contrary are made with the participants in advance”

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992).

This study has been anonymised to ensure that the identities of those people in the U.K. study cannot be identified along with the school. To this extent a disclaimer has been included at the beginning of the study, which outlines the precautionary steps taken to ensure that the identity of all participants and the school are kept confidential.

This is a precarious field of research and issues of a very sensitive nature have to be considered before embarking upon the methods that I have proposed. In particular, there is the need to obtain permission from the Headteacher. It is essential that both

parties fully understand what this means in terms of its outcomes and the ownership of any such research. There is evidence that this was not always the case.

Denscombe, (1998) writes.

- *The development of work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others.*
- *Permission must be obtained before making observations or examining documents produced for other purposes.*
- *Description of others' work and points of view must be negotiated with those concerned before being published.*
- *The researcher must accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.*

All questionnaires were designed in cooperation with the school and any feedback on their content or structure was included in a revised version that was subsequently used when administrating to staff or pupils.

All the results and subsequent analyses of the questionnaires were made available to the school, although there is a precautionary note to such disclosure of facts as highlighted by Schein (1985). He states that organisations that are subject to such research are not always ready to receive information about their culture and there is often reluctance for such information to be made common knowledge through the release of any publication or journal.

Other considerations that Denscombe outlines and which are relevant to this study include the idea that researchers have "*insider knowledge*", and although this can be an asset it can also be problematic in that one misses subtle processes that an outsider may be better placed to observe taking place or simply views them as irrelevant or meaningless. Such partnership work can open up a whole field of opportunities, which would otherwise have been lost. There is also the concern of increased workload for the researcher, which can prove problematic and at times detrimental to the research. Strategies need to be adopted to manage the extra workload and to juggle the demands of work and systematic research together.



A final consideration is generalisability, which refers the tendency to avoid making claims about action research beyond a focused case. This is because action research is generally controlled and focused on one site as opposed to being spread across a number of sites. To this extent this study is very specific and the extent to which it can be compared to work in the U.S.A. is by its very nature restrictive, although there are genuine comparisons to be made which are worthy of mention.

### **Power Dynamics**

It is worth noting the presence of power dynamics that exist within the nature of this research. I refer in particular to the constant references that arise in Chapter 4 that inform the reader of the underlying problems of authority that exist within the police school partnership.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Focus groups were conducted with several classes at all schools and unstructured interviews were held with a number of teachers and pupils in order to help formulate questionnaires and general themes, which could be applied to help focus the study.

The same questions were given to each group of pupils and administered in the same way. Likewise the staff received a set of questionnaires, which they were able to complete and return either in paper form or via e-mail.

### **Limitations**

I was fortunate to find a school district in the U.S., which was served by a small number of school resource officers from the same office. The schools, which I visited, were larger in size to those back in the U.K. and consisted of a different ethnic mix, however, the types of juvenile delinquency that these schools experienced, were very similar. These delinquent acts included truancy, fighting, smoking drugs, defiance to teachers, assaults against the person and property and petty theft.

Unlike the U.K. education system which accommodates pupils from Years 7 to 13 usually on the same physical site under one secondary school the U.S. typically split their pupils into Middle schools Years 7 and 8 and High schools Years 9 to 13. This meant that I was unable to contrast one U.S. school directly with one in the U.K. As it was important to capture the views of all the age groups in the school system, I therefore had to perform a comparative study with several schools in the district and consider the partnership of several SROs in relation to their schools. The comparison was therefore one of a district wide approach to the school resource officer partnership.

It should also be noted that unlike my work in the U.K. where I am studying the progress of my own role as an SRO in relation to the school partnership, in the U.S. my research is more observational and one in which my own personality and methods of work cannot have any bias over the opinions of those involved the U.S. partnerships.

### **Columbine**

Another influential factor underlying my research in the U.S. is the geographical location of the school district, which incorporates Columbine High School. Appendix D. The school is situated just a few miles from the city of Lakewood and the 13 killings and two suicides, which occurred on that tragic day, still reverberate around America's schools. This will have undoubtedly affected the relationship between schools and the SROs and will have made a great impact on the way schools view the necessity of having a police officer on site. It will also reveal the extent to which the presence of an SRO affects the safety or perceived safety of the school, its staff and pupils. As a result of the massacre, Colorado's schools have had to make changes because of laws, which requires them to develop crisis management and safety plans. Schools and police are now expected to work more closely sharing information about students who break the law and look for constructive ways to reintegrate them back into society.

## **Chapter Four**

### **4.0 Project Activity**

#### **Introduction**

This section begins with a brief history of police involvement with schools in the U.K. and where appropriate describes the structures of the school district, the school itself, the city and the police department. It then offers a brief profile of the officer and a summary of a police officers day in school accompanied by a diagram of the people that he interacts with on a daily basis. It explains how he interacts with the school and local community and how this programme of intervention is used to gauge whether or not the programme has fulfilled its aims and objectives. Other government policies are included which can be used as additional instruments to measure the potential successes of the scheme.

There are also a number of entries taken from a diary of events kept whilst engaged at the school, which are categorised into set areas, or themes. These describe certain aspects of the project that help or hindered it including the officer's relationships with differing members of the partnership.

Section 4.2, which outlines project activity in the U.S., follows a similar format of outlining the history of the SRO partnership and the functions SROs perform. It then outlines the geographical makeup of the school district and the schools themselves and provides an insight into the police department and the profiles of two of its SRO and their relationships with the school and its community.

## **4.1 Project Activity in the U.K**

### **History of Schools Involvement**

Police officers have been building relationships with schools through lesson inputs and informal visits for a number of years. There are now in excess of 150 school involvement officers in the Metropolitan Police Service and in addition a further 200 officers who regularly give presentations. (Source: Metropolitan Police). The role that each officer plays in a school differs greatly from one borough to the next, and in recent years the work of the schools involvement officers has been under scrutiny in order to assess its true impact and effectiveness, (O'Connor, and Hayman, 2001). In the borough in which this study takes place there are only 4 school officers although moves are afoot to expand the numbers, much of which will depend on the outcomes of this pilot project.

At present the borough schools programme focuses on delivering core subjects, which include drugs and the law, personal safety and crime and consequences as well as supporting the borough truancy initiatives, the volunteer cadet corp and diversion activities. This is managed on a local level through line managers usually police inspectors who oversee the running of school units as well as having responsibility for wider community issues. Their guidance in turn comes from the youth policy department at New Scotland Yard.

### **Clearwater School and the Local District.**

I have not included any further description about the school or local district, as it is my intention to keep it as confidential and anonymous as possible. Any description of the school or local area would make the identification of the school possible.

### **Profile of officer**

The police officer (the researcher) is in his mid thirties and has been employed by the Metropolitan Police for 12 years. Previously he was a secondary school teacher in several North London schools.

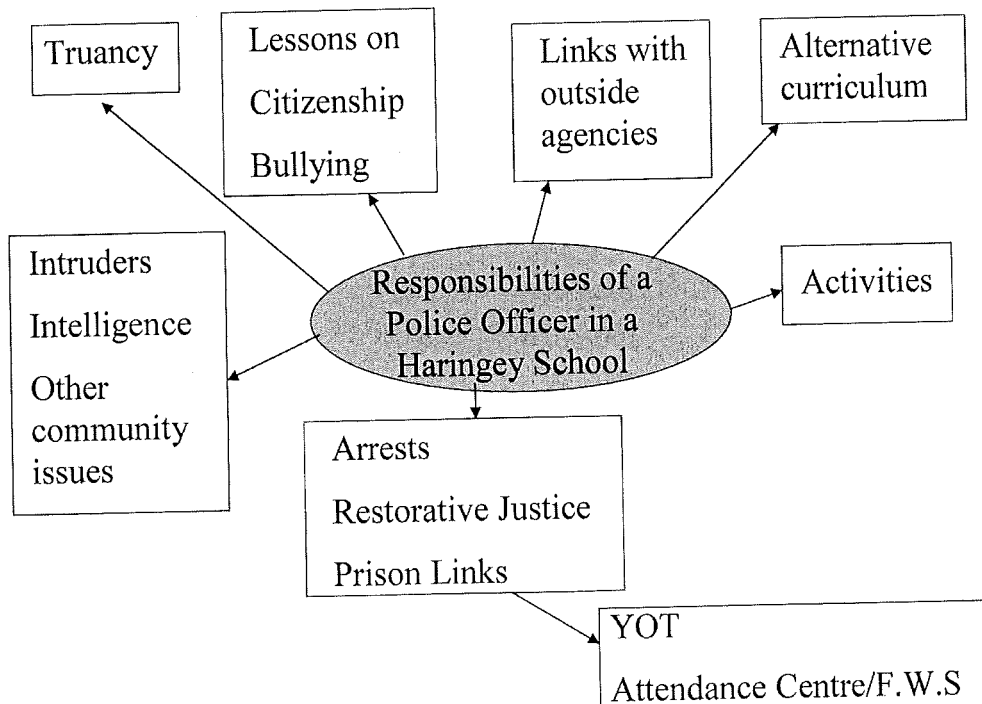
He has been involved in working with youth for the past few years as a member of the police schools team and also as part of the Youth Offending Team, dealing with diverting youth from crime and the administration of the final warning scheme.

He is also responsible for the formulation and running of the local police cadet corp and is employed by the Home Office at weekends to run a Junior Mixed Attendance Centre, which aims to challenge the behaviour of convicted juveniles and reintegrate them back into society.

### Role of the Officer

A diary of events was recorded on a daily basis, which outlined my movements and the various roles I performed. The roles are depicted on Chart 4.1. The diary reveals how I interacted with various members of the partnership on a daily basis whilst attempting to fulfil my roles.

Chart 4.1 Roles of the Police Officer

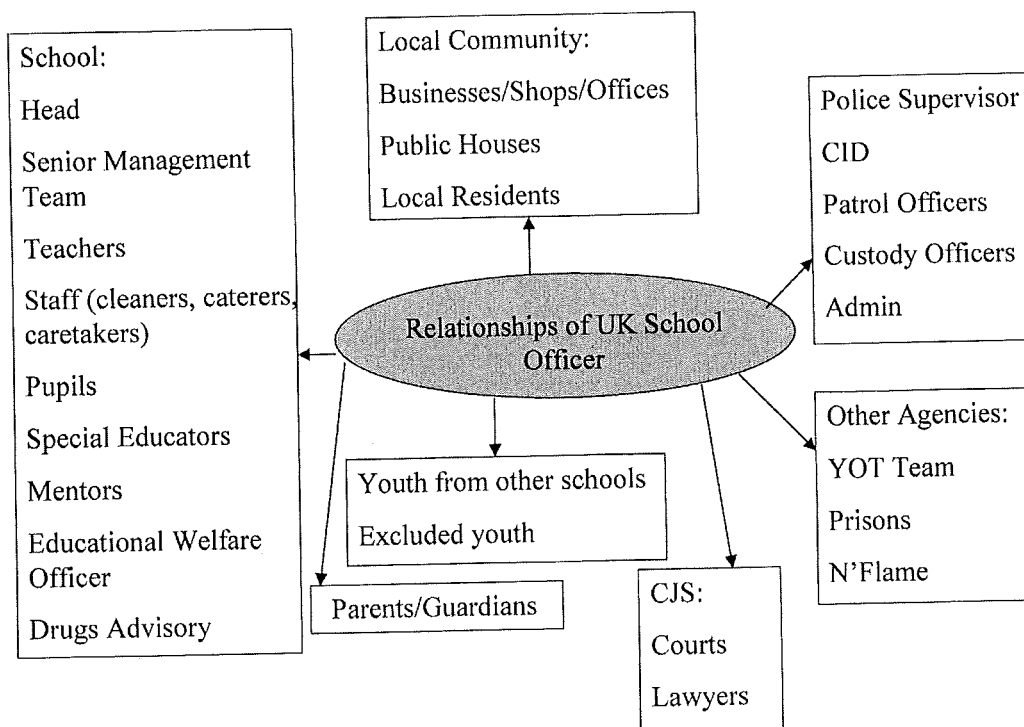


(Source: personal reflection)

Prior to embarking upon the pilot project I devised a programme of intervention, which I could use to assist me to fulfil the objectives of my work at the school. Some of these ideas were formulated through my own experiences of working and interacting with children and others were learnt from researching effective strategies of partnership and intervention through the course of my literature review.

In particular, I refer to my own work with a group of school children in a local secondary school in the borough, the subject of a B.B.C. television documentary (B.B.C. May 2000), which is reviewed in Chapter 4.

**Chart 4.2 Schools Involvement Officer Contacts**



(Source: personal reflection).

This is a list of all those people that I came into contact with on a regular basis whilst undertaking the role of schools involvement officer in Clearwater School.

## **Organisation of Diary**

The diary, which was kept on a daily basis whilst at the school, is organised in such a way that it shows my interactions with the following people who are highlighted in Chart 4.1 and are those contacts that I had the most interaction with:

- Heads
- Police Supervisors
- Police Colleagues
- Community
- Parents
- Staff
- Pupils
- Support Staff

## **Summary of a School Officer's Day**

In Appendix H, I have included an outline of a day spent at Clearwater School, which describes some of the daily issues that an officer has to deal with. This can be compared to the observation of two specific days spent in the U.S. where I recorded the officer's movements. See Appendix Q.

## **Analyses**

What follows is an assessment of key issues drawn from the evidence base.

## **Introduction: Two-Week Attachment**

Initially I spent two weeks in plain clothes in Clearwater School at the end of the Summer Term 2000. My arrival was not announced to either the staff or the pupils, which enabled me to walk around the school and observe their daily routines and interactions with each other. The benefits that such freedom of movement entitled me

to were short lived as both staff and pupils alike became suspicious when they learned of the presence of a police officer.

I became aware that the senior management had not announced my arrival at the school to either the staff or pupils and this led to a number of questions from irate teachers and pupils who wanted to know exactly what my role was in the school. This was clearly an area of concern for many people and one that was not to my knowledge addressed by the senior management. This was an indication to me that communication with all of the parties involved in this venture, which includes the staff, pupils, parents and community, was critical if this pilot project was to succeed. People within the school were already expressing disquiet that they had not been fully debriefed about my role at the school and that this air of secrecy had formed an immediate barrier of distrust.

Despite these initial problems I was able to form several good relationships with staff members who seemed eager to disclose to me that the establishment was a failing school. Several stated that they were disenchanted with the school and its management as well as the lack of support from senior teachers when dealing with unruly pupils. This according to one female teacher was one explanation why 18 members of staff were leaving the school.

### **Exclusions**

My attention was also drawn to the high number of exclusions at this particular school 143 pupils had been excluded for a total of 481 days in just one year group from Autumn term 1999 to Spring term 2000. (Table 4.1)



Table 4.1 Exclusions

	Total No. of Exclusions	Total No. of Days	No. of Girls	No. of Boys	Fixed Term	Permanent Exclusions		Total No. of C4 Exclusions
						Girls	Boys	
Year 7	31	95	3	13	14	0	0	17
Year 8	48	214	2	20	25	0	0	23
Year 9	128	481	8	43	44	0	1	83
Year 10	56	182	6	17	26	1	2	27
Year 11	56	265	3	26	36	0	0	20
Year 12	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0

(Source restricted)

C4 is a term used to describe the severity of an incident, which can result in exclusion. For further reading on the subject of exclusions at Clearwater School see Blair's research (2001).

I was surprised by the frankness and openness of the staff, many of them were keen to reveal a number of incidents which were happening around the school on a daily basis and were not being dealt with effectively. These included incidents of verbal and physical abuse on staff and students, possession of drugs, offensive weapons and sexual assaults, which are reflected in the exclusion figures above. Such events were clearly upsetting a number of teachers who stated that they were becoming demoralised and felt physically at risk from assaults by students. This mood of discontent was commented upon by one head of year who blamed the "teachers who do no more than necessary" at the school and who claim, "It's not my responsibility" when such incidents occur. This teacher was clearly upset with the mood of the school and the behaviour of the children, which he summed up by stating "It's the worst since I've been here".

During my two-week attachment I was able to confirm, from witnessing events in the school, that there were in fact a worrying number of incidents taking place some of which constituted criminal offences and which were rarely challenged or dealt with satisfactorily. These incidents included bullying, swearing, fighting, thefts from staff and pupils as well as a significant amount of truancy. On one occasion during a

morning break I stopped 46 pupils from years 7, 8 and 9 leaving the premises without permission, twelve of whom never returned for the third period of the school day.

### **Communication Between Supervisors, the Head and the Police Officer.**

#### **Press Releases**

In a joint agreement between the police and the Head of the school a press statement was released to the local papers in the borough, which briefly explained my role within the school and local community. I hoped that this would in some way inform all of the community and dispel any fears that they may have about my role.

However, what was more noticeable was the concern expressed by the Head of the school about the content and style of the press release. The Head stated that he had to revise the initial statement compiled by the police and that he was having problems reaching the necessary police personnel to advise them of his intentions. Neither his comments nor attitude were complimentary or positive which immediately made me feel very uncomfortable. This incident confirmed to me that communication between both the police and school was not as it should be and that I was destined to be the man in the middle. This was compounded yet further when the school secretary explained that a police supervisor had been very short with her on the phone and I subsequently became the channel for her discontent. I soon became aware that my working relationship with the school was going to be affected not only by my own actions which I have control over but also that of my direct supervisors whose actions I could not influence in any way.

The initial press report was released by the Metropolitan Police Press Department and a copy sent to the Headteacher at the school with room for his additional comments. The press release was then "re drafted with some additions and some suggested changes" and faxed back to the press office by the Headteacher.

This whole episode reinforced my concerns that both the police and the school had very strong views and beliefs about the whole venture and that at this juncture the

relationship appeared to be more of a strategic battle than a partnership approach to solving crime.

Both press reports have been included to allow the reader to have a clearer understanding of what both parties' expectations of the pilot project were and the potential impact of such a project as well highlighting how insignificant the changes in the press release were. (Appendix I.)

There were several further press releases in national papers, which aimed to promote, inform and enlighten the partnership work between the school and the police. However, these caused further problems and were met with a hostile reaction from the Head and several of the school governors who felt that it portrayed the school as a "problem school" and were concerned that at a time when the school was looking to attract new comers its intake would be severely affected and with it the amount of financial support that it received.

The school undoubtedly has problems, one only has to refer to its exam results to see that it is a failing school. To offer any further information would reveal the identity of the school. (See Chart 4.3).

## **Communication with Police Supervisors**

What was most important was that the project needed the support of the supervisors, in particular from the police management and my immediate supervisor. Numerous examples including a reluctance to attend the school for meetings, turning up late or forgetting all together reinforced the attitude of this supervisor. In addition I was receiving reports from the Head about them being unavailable to talk to and not returning phone calls. One on one meetings were often cancelled or forgotten and when they were remembered the supervisor only stayed for a matter of minutes. This was often on a Friday afternoon around the end of the school day when it was not an ideal time for me to have these brief meetings as the school was preparing to "pack up" and I was engaged in after school activities with the pupils. On one notable occasion the school telephonist, who often witnessed our meetings in the school foyer, commented on me waiting expectantly outside her window by the main entrance. She instinctively knew who I was waiting for and wagered me on the length of the supervisor's visit. Neither of us predicted more than five minutes and as it happened both of us grossly overestimated.

It became quite apparent that the immediate supervisor of such a programme has the ability to engineer the success or bring about the failure of it. There is certainly a need for the right officer to be employed as supervisor for the programme, which would include a good understanding of what is going on in the school and community.

## **Uniform**

Relationships were then further stretched when I wore my uniform for the first time several weeks into the start of the Autumn Term. It was very noticeable from the staff in particular that they were averse to seeing me in uniform. Even those members of staff who I was forming good working relationships with were clearly surprised and several were for the next few days markedly different in the way they spoke to me. Some of the pupils were outright abusive, something that I was use to as a police officer but which could not go unchallenged in school if it persisted.

The issue of the uniform was the first major problem to arise in this new alliance. The school was adamant that they wished to see me in plain clothes, which complimented the idea of a low-key police presence in school. The police authorities however, were determined that I should be in uniform, which had been agreed before the start of the project. The problem was resolved but only after several discussions between both parties on the merits of wearing a uniform versus plain clothes. I say both parties but it was clearly the joint decision of the Head and senior officer present. I was curious as well as concerned as to why I was not asked to be present at the meeting so that I could outline my own views on the subject. To my own disadvantage I did not challenge this and true to my concerns this lack of involvement in future important meetings played an important part in undermining my role in the school.

There were numerous other examples of attrition between both parties, which littered the start of the project. Many seemed to exemplify and reinforce each side's belief that they were the dominant force and were ultimately in control of the project and its outcomes. There appeared to be a battle to control me by a school Headteacher that now felt that he had his own personal police force who was directly answerable to him and a police service that did control me and were keen to keep it that way.

A final but notable example of this attrition was highlighted by the school Head who constantly referred to members of the senior police management by their wrong name and rank. What was noticeable was that despite being gently reminded on several occasions of their correct standing within the police service he never once upgraded their rank, but rather consistently demoted them.

I found this not only childish and unprofessional, but extremely embarrassing and obvious especially when this charade was played out in front of the respective officers who graciously avoided correcting him.

However, these comments did not go undetected and it soon became apparent that meetings between the two parties became shorter and less frequent. I was very much on my own trying to decide for myself how to navigate my way through this melee of organisational politics. The whole time I felt as if both sides were constantly testing

my allegiances to themselves through these “party games” and it was quite clear to me that I was struggling to appease both. I was constantly shifting my opinion of who was right and wrong and was having trouble convincing myself that things would work out.

## **Communication with the Head**

### **Non-reporting of crime**

As time passed more and more reports were filtering through to me of crimes that were being committed at the school. I discovered many of these reports days and even weeks later from trusted members of staff and from reading official exclusion letters, which outlined the reason and length of the pupil’s exclusion. Current Department for Education and Employment guidelines state, “schools should advise police of any criminal activity, but schools are sometimes reluctant to report incidents and/or offences occurring in and around schools. Schools need to address the issue if the partnership working is to be successful.” DfEE (2001).

This statement speaks for itself. Clearly however, this advice was not being adhered to for a variety of reasons and it was at this point I realised that the success of the scheme would be severely limited. If a project such as this does not have the full support of the Head and other stakeholders then it is doomed to fail at the first hurdle.

### **Informants**

Although my primary role in the school was not to cultivate informants I soon became aware of the vast amount of information that was being passed on to me by pupils and staff alike. Some of the information was of a trivial nature, which although not important in itself revealed to me that pupils in particular were keen to tell me about issues which affected them and which they felt strongly about. Some of the information was more general in terms of where certain pupils went to smoke drugs or where they hid when they truanted. Other information was more specific with regard to who was dealing drugs and bringing stolen property to school. Quite often it was certain members of staff who disclosed information to me about pupils who were

driving to school in their friend's car and hanging around in small gangs that they suspected of bullying and stealing from other kids. Numerous incidents of petty theft around the school, graffiti and criminal damage often led teachers to inform me of the likely suspects who had been present at the time of the offence.

Rarely was I able to prove who was involved but it provided me with valuable intelligence about the hard core of pupils who were causing the majority of trouble within the school. What was noticeable was that similar crimes were taking place after school and in the local community and it was no surprise that the same names were being associated with these offences.

The availability of such intelligence is imperative in the "fight against crime", and it was quite apparent that both pupils and staff in the school were well aware of who was committing the crimes in this neighbourhood. My aim was to try to provide a service where-by anyone could be confident that they could approach me and disclose any information in a confidential manner.

A good example of this occurred when a young girl who was passing the school during the lunch break was chased by a number of pupils from the school and assaulted. During the assault she had numerous items stolen from her including rings and necklaces. I was quickly informed by both pupils and staff, some of who had witnessed the event, who the suspects were. We were able to work together to identify the suspects and the following day all of them were interviewed by the Year Head and the property returned to the victim.

Such partnership work is not only successful but also extremely rewarding for all parties who have a vested interest in addressing such crimes and creating a safe working environment for both the staff and pupils.

A second example of this shared information involved a member of the senior management who had searched a pupil after he had been seen smoking outside the school grounds. The search had produced a number of small self-seal clear plastic bags containing herbal cannabis. The school informed me and the pupil admitted that

he was supplying drugs to other pupils and in accordance with policy he was charged for the offence of possessing drugs with the intent to supply.

To his credit and that of the school, he fully admitted the offence and the whole incident was dealt with in an efficient and expedient manner. It was extremely encouraging to be part of such a good partnership that was working hand in hand to tackle such incidents. There was no need to summons assistance from my other colleagues or march the child from school in handcuffs. All parties seemed satisfied at the way in which the matter had been dealt with. It was with some consternation then that I began to suspect that crimes of a similar nature were beginning to be kept from me by the school and in particular the school Head.

### **Withholding Information**

As one of the main stakeholders it was clear by the end of the pilot project that the Head had no commitment to it. This was made quite clear to me when the number of serious incidents that were occurring on the school site were not being brought to my attention. I was finding them out through a third party who would keep me updated of all the disciplinary proceedings in the school by releasing copies of the exclusion letters for me to refer to. Offences included several thefts, from a member of staff's bag and mobile phone, and complaints of sexual harassment. All serious offences of an arrestable nature but ones, which the Head felt, it best to keep to himself. Once again the pupils in question were all known to me and each was in desperate need of some form of intervention.

Attempts to address these issues at weekly meetings were constantly blocked or ignored. No explanation was given to me why pupils were committing offences at the school and that they were being exclusively dealt with internally without any disclosure to the police.

As I noted earlier, the school is only encouraged and not forced to involve the police in the majority of incidents which take place regardless of their criminal content. This is certainly an area, which needs to be addressed it raises an issue of liability. If, as the result of a school's inability to act professionally and to take the necessary steps



to inform the police, a person is thereby further victimised or suffers as a result of the crime not being investigated properly then the school and ultimately the head could be held responsible. Copies of two exclusion letters are included in Appendix J. It is left to the reader to decide if the police should be informed and involved in such incidents.

My own experience is that together schools and police can share intelligence in an open forum, with the knowledge and understanding that all matters will be dealt with sensitively and in the best interest of all parties. The examples that I outlined earlier are testament to the success of such an approach and highlight the need for school-based police officers.

### **Inter school fights.**

Another example of the need to share information is highlighted in an incident, which occurred one afternoon outside the main school entrance. The Head informed me that there were a number of pupils from another school outside the school gate. They had travelled from a neighbouring school on a public transport bus with the intention of starting a fight. Apparently the day before several of our students had attended their school and assaulted and robbed some of their pupils. This information had been relayed from the Headteacher of the other school. This was a revenge attack and on walking out of the school gates I was confronted by approximately 30 students many of whom were carrying weapons, which included broken bottles, chair legs and metal clamps. On seeing me the group quickly dispersed and I made my way back into the school to find out more about the events surrounding the incident which was written up by the Head. (See Appendix K.)

What is quite noticeable from the description of the incident is the number of pupils who were out of class from Clearwater School the day before (which the school was unaware of) and the nature of the crimes that were committed on both days. None of the crimes committed on the first day were reported to police and despite attending a meeting with both the respective Heads, I was not allowed access to the names of the pupils who had turned up to the school armed with sticks and bottles. The Head of this school stated that he did not feel that police intervention at this stage would be necessary and that he would deal with the suspects accordingly within the confines of

the school discipline system. The Head of my own school became aware of the incident the following morning. However, I was not informed about it until the event, which unfolded that afternoon.

What was apparent from my own observations as well as the Head's was the number of older boys involved in the incident and the need to identify who the ringleaders were. Unfortunately such information was not forthcoming and is a reflection of the work that is needed to ensure that we break down these barriers of misplaced trust and improve our communication skills for the benefit of our communities.

It was no surprise that a few weeks later an incident of a similar nature occurred involving members of this group and a young boy was stabbed in a nearby shopping centre.

### **Opposition to the programme**

There were many other incidents, which also revealed the perceptions and attitudes that many of the staff have about the police service. During one weekly meeting, which I attended with other teachers, a senior black teacher entered the room and on seeing my hat and police radio situated on the desk near to her looked at me with an air of disapproval and gave the objects a dismissive wave. I obliged trying hard not to read too much into this encounter, but to my annoyance I was as equally submissive when moments later the conversation turned to events surrounding police arrests and the teacher in question stated that they would be "concerned that if any member of my family was arrested, I doubt whether or not they would come out the police station alive".

Such statements, which I perceived as inflammatory and ignorant, revolve around isolated incidents, which have occurred in the Metropolitan district over a number of years and which this study does not wish to explore or justify. What this did reveal to me was the true picture of how some prominent members of society view the police and exactly what I was up against in terms of convincing people in particular a senior teacher to trust the police and to promote and develop the pilot scheme.

## **Political Influences**

It soon became clear that there were a small number of teachers who were completely against the idea of having police in schools and who had expressed opinions to the Head that they felt that police should not be present in the school. The Head informed me that these members of staff were affiliated to the Socialist Working Party (SWP), and held strong opinions about the role of police in society.

My first encounter with one of these activists occurred during a routine patrol of the school playground moments before the end of the school day. I noticed that a young boy who did not attend the school was on site and had approached one of our 6<sup>th</sup> form pupils and was threatening him with what appeared to me was a knife. At this very moment a female teacher who is an active member of the S.W.P. walked within a few feet of the scuffle that was now unfolding. Despite several audible cries of help from the schoolboy she continued to walk on without rendering any assistance. She did not appear to be aware of my presence and on seeing me run across the playground she averted her eyes and kept on walking. I later checked with the Head to see if she had reported the incident but no record had been made. The victim of the crime also asked me why the teacher had failed to help him when he had asked her for assistance.

This highlighted the concerns of the Head of Year earlier in this chapter, who revealed that some teachers do not get involved in this sort of incident and fail to take responsibility for ensuring the safety of the children for which they have "locus parentis".

This apparent lack of concern for the pupil's welfare reached a climax when I became aware that a pupil at the school had been involved in a robbery on a British Rail train on his way to school that morning and that the event had been witnessed by one of the support workers at the school. It transpired that the victim, who attended another school, had been subject to a number of robberies by this pupil. The member of staff who had witnessed the offence had not reported it to the police or the Head and it was only by good fortune that I learnt of the incident from another teacher who appraised

me of the situation. The suspect was arrested the very next day attempting to rob the same pupil at the same location.

I did not speak to the individual member of staff involved, which in hindsight was a mistake. However, I did consult the supervisor who explained to me that they had been made aware of the incident but that they saw no reason why they should report it to me and that it was their decision whether to involve the police.

It was quite clear to me that these members of staff had their own deep rooted opinions of the police service and that they were playing out these prejudices in their daily lives often to the detriment of others around them, while at the same time claiming to be protecting the rights of our young people and encouraging good citizenship when in fact they are failing in their duty to perform this basic principle.

This reluctance to report incidents to the police is well documented and includes a fear or distrust of the police, a belief that the police can or will not do anything about the crime, and reprisals from offenders.

Comments expressed by youths at a Community and Police Consultative Group Youth Panel (2000) in the borough appear to confirm these beliefs:

- “I got mugged and I got head butted. I told the police where he lived and it took three months for them to tell him to leave me alone.”
- “I know people who have said something to the police and they get killed the next day”
- “When police say information is confidential can you really trust them”

I was surprised however, when the Head disclosed to me another incident of robbery that had occurred on a train, where another two of the schools pupils had been involved. On this occasion the victim had recognised the school uniform and informed his mother, who in turn had telephoned the school. The Head dealt with this on his own and despite my requests to speak with the victim’s mother he explained that he was dealing with it and at one point stated that he had lost the victim’s

telephone number. This reluctance to inform me of criminal activities that were taking place on a regular basis was becoming extremely frustrating for me. I had formed my own opinions of why this was but sought to confide in several teachers whom I could trust. They confirmed my suspicions by explaining to me that matters of this nature were rarely dealt with. Teachers were constantly reporting incidents to the senior management who often took no action over the matter. The teachers explained that the senior management had neither the time nor the skills to address these matters and that the reputation of the school was more important than the potential exposure that awaited the revelation of such disturbing events. My own experience was that crimes were not being passed on to me and my presence in the school was merely a token gesture. I was being used as a security guard who the Head was keen to have on show at the strategic times of the day. The Head appeared to be more concerned with maintaining a façade that the school was a safe place for the pupils and staff and that any incidents that occurred did not merit the attention or unwanted publicity of the police.

### **The Arrest**

My own relationship with the Head was tenuous and I felt that a confrontation over issues surrounding pupil behaviour was imminent. However, I was not prepared for the reaction, which greeted me when I arrested a Year 11 pupil who had been continually robbing another pupil in his year. The victimisation had been carried out over a number of months and the victim had finally gathered the courage to report the incident to me with the assistance of his Year Head. Due to the serious nature of the offence and the understanding that another incident was about to take place that break time I arrested the suspect on the school premises and escorted him to the police station.

This resulted in a forthright discussion with the Head who took it upon himself to withdraw the offer of hosting a police officer in the school. The news was met with mixed reaction. I received overwhelming support from a large number of teachers and members of the public via phone calls and letters, as depicted below:

*Dear Mr Briers,*

*I saw the enclosed article in a friend's paper and thought what a brilliant idea it is to have you stationed at a school! I do hope you find your work there enjoyable and fulfilling! I'm sure the children will benefit greatly from the whole package! (Friendly policeman right by their side to defend and support the goodies, eh.)*

*Anyway all the best and very kind regards.*

*Dear Andy*

There are times when  
We just don't understand,  
But I pray God will work  
Out his loving plan

*Welcome back just heard the good news. I prayed hard for you and thank God this incident is behind you. Start afresh and know that the staff supports your work.*

*Best Wishes*

However, a small section of the teaching staff whose political bias led them to the distribution of inflammatory propaganda outside the school gates. (See Appendix L.)

The arrest itself was, in the words of the local education authority, "lawful", it was agreed in hindsight by all parties that the matter could have been handled more sensitively. I was not in agreement with these sentiments. This was disappointing on two counts. Firstly that the school failed to see the significance of this arrest in terms of making the school a safer place and secondly that the police authority agreed that it was not sensitively dealt with.

Once again I felt isolated and confused about my role in the school and to a lesser extent let down by both parties. My primary role was to represent the police service in the school and to reduce crime and disorder in the area and I had fulfilled this role by responding professionally and sensitively to the needs of the victim. It appears that certain representatives were more concerned about the suspect's feelings and the political fallout that this might cause than the effect the crime was having on the pupil. The end result was that I was absent from the school for six weeks and was asked to make a formal apology for my actions to both the head and the borough Education Service. Sometimes you have to "loose the fight to win the battle!"

There was some consolation, however, which was noted by both the suspect's Year Head and form teacher. Both expressed a remarkable change in his behaviour since the arrest. He was now on time to lessons, courteous to teachers, studious in lesson and up to date with his course work. Both teachers asked him about his new approach to school life to which he explained that he had learnt his lesson and had not enjoyed the experience of being arrested.

The victim has not been troubled since the event and it is hoped that without the constant fear of being robbed he can now attend school on a more regular basis and attempt to make up for lost time before his GCSE exams.

### **Governing Body**

The event was fully reported in the local press and local councillor XXXX who is a school governor at Clearwater school and who chairs the XXXX police and consultative community group stated that it was "inappropriate" to have a policeman working in the school. "The school is not the place for a policeman". (Local Newspaper.)

This reinforces the sorts of attitudes and obstacles that the project faced. It is people like this that the project seeks to influence by showing how together we can tackle crime in and around schools. The key as ever is how we go about achieving this aim to the agreement of both parties and is a central theme of this study. As a result of this incident the protocol of the pilot project was reviewed at a Governing Body

meeting and a statement was issued as a consequence of the meeting. (See Appendix M.) Once again despite part of my protocol being to work with the school governors I was not consulted in any way about the events other than by my police line managers. I spent the best part of six weeks waiting outside offices to hear the result of other people's consultation.

It should be noted that despite the efforts of the school to strengthen the protocol several of the points were not adhered to despite my constant prompting. These included the need to address the press over positive coverage of the work being undertaken in the school as a result of this project and the need for some form of independent evaluation to be conducted. The former point referred to the picture of me at the front of this thesis, which depicts me wielding a police baton in a classroom with the headlines "The Newest Recruit. Do we really want police officers stationed in our schools?" (Guardian, 2001). This picture was taken several years earlier and formed an in depth interview as part of a new Police Cadet Corp which had started in XXXX. The pupils shown are all police cadet recruits and are taking part in a lesson on offensive weapons.

Despite the disclosure of this information to the Head and the obvious absence of any connection of myself or the school with the article written, I was still interrogated over the matter by the school and regardless of a full explanation I was told that the image of the school was at issue. The school were concerned that such a picture would portray my work in the school as aggressive and oppressive. I was made to feel responsible for allowing release of the picture and asked what others were in existence. I shared the concerns of the school and explained that the release of such pictures did not help me with my own work with the pupils and community. The school was not sympathetic and it was explained to me by the Head that any connection that could be made between myself and the school through recognition of my face in the Education supplement of the Guardian would be damaging for the school within the world of education.



## **Evaluation**

The scheme itself was actually extended for one term just so that it could be properly evaluated whilst I was still in place at the school. The absence of any such work again highlights the problems that exist within this partnership framework.

Representations were made by myself to both the stakeholders to take minutes at our weekly meetings to ensure that the scheme was evaluated. However, each week I was given the same explanation that they were awaiting a reply from the Cabinet Office. Earlier offers by XXXX University a local educational establishment situated barely a kilometre away from the school, to evaluate the scheme were declined. In hindsight such a offer would have resulted in some information about the development of the scheme, however the inability to bring about such a needed survey, aroused suspicions in my heart whether the school actually wanted the scheme to be evaluated.

These suspicions were confirmed when, as part of my own work, I offered to evaluate the pilot project. I formulated questions for both the staff and pupils, which were offered to the school management for alteration and approval. True to form the questionnaires were “sat upon” without comment for several weeks and then minor alterations were constantly made on a weekly basis with regard to the organisation of the questionnaire.

Arrangements were made with the Year Head to administer the survey, but at the last minute I was informed that the Head was not happy with the questionnaire, and I was told not to deliver it. However, no alterations were made and after consulting several sources I was aware that there was reluctance from senior management for me to undertake such a study within the school.

Sadly I was unable to canvas the views of any Year 11 students, who are those pupils who seemed to hold the strongest opinions about the role of police within society and the school.

This resistance was only the beginning of several attempts to delay and obstruct my evaluation of the project. The second and most notable example transpired when I was informed by the school management that the Head required all completed staff

questionnaires to be returned to his school secretary and not to me. I questioned the requirement and stated that although I had welcomed the input of the school in the questionnaire as a stakeholder in the partnership, the evaluation had been produced by me in conjunction with my personal studies and was as a direct result of this it was my own property in conjunction with the university. This was a point of controversy for the Head, who, I was now beginning to see, was looking for an excuse to block the evaluation all together. I was not about to allow this to happen and complied with his wishes.

Members of staff who were aware of this requirement set out by the Head were immediately suspicious of his intentions and explained to me that they felt that many of their replies would be screened out if they implied any direct criticism towards the Head or the school. Questionnaires were returned directly to the school secretary.

After a period of about two weeks a total of 27 papers were returned and leaving the last one in the box, which was numerically marked, I took the others and began to analyse some of the data. The following day I was met with a fierce reception from the school secretary who shouted at me in a busy office in front of several members of staff, accusing me of stealing property belonging to the school. This was followed up by a request from the Head to speak to him in his room, which resulted in a request by the head for me to withdraw from the school for a week.

A further example of the relationship that I shared with the Governing body is depicted in a letter (See Appendix N), which certain Governors circulated in an attempt to reduce the presence and influence of the police in schools. So intense is their passion to end the programme that they used political propaganda to further their claim. This letter outlines how the school needs to end its close working links with the police because of the polices inability to deal with issues surrounding racism within the Macpherson Report. They feel that the school are publicly supporting the racist attitudes of the police by working alongside them. This statement is in response to the arrest of a black political activist XXXX in the local area and yet again shows how the politics and racial tension, which are all too present in the borough, can influence significant members in the partnership.

A consideration to bear in mind when trying to form future partnerships between schools and police is to ask who the stakeholders are and what is their commitment to the project and also what is the potential for them for them to disrupt the project for their own political gains.

### **Safe Haven**

Many of the adverse comments about my work in the school and in particular the arrest that had taken place highlight the need for a school to be a “safe haven” for pupils. There appears to be two quite different interpretations of what this term means. I understand this to be a place where pupils and staff alike can work and play in a safe environment without fear of crime or persecution. It is one of my primary objectives to ensure that this “safe haven” exists and is maintained.

Sewell (1997) offers a different interpretation. He implies that in his experience many young black boys see the school as a “safe haven” from outside issues such as police racism. Sewell states that although boys do not view the school as perfect they clearly felt that it was an “environment, which protects them from a hostile world.” He feels that these pupils view school as “a safe meeting ground on which to conduct their social activities without police harassment”. This may explain why so many of the pupils in the school, in particular young black males who were regularly in trouble with the school authorities, were so hostile towards me.

### **Intruders**

A good example of this happened when I challenged an intruder on the school site who had come to see several of his friends. Despite my best efforts to persuade him to leave the site he became aggressive and my response was met with a show of force from a dozen or so troublesome pupils who surrounded me and began pushing and abusing me.

This incident is commented upon by a teacher at the school in a letter to the Head. The teacher also manages to reflect the attitude of some of the pupils towards the

police and captures some of the difficulties that not only the project but also the police are experiencing in terms of building up community relations. (See Appendix O.)

Sewell states that pupils such as these want the school to provide a “secure space in which to conduct their own social relations, which most of the time ended up in exclusions”. Several of the teachers and governors of the school who feel that police have no place in the school environment support this “secure space or safe haven”. What they fail to understand is that it becomes a safe haven for those pupils who wish to commit crime and go unchallenged and invariably undetected. My work in the school exposed the just how extensive is the amount of crime that takes place especially amongst a small hard core of pupils. What this school needs to ensure is that these pupils do not view it as a place where they can continue to conduct their anti social and criminal activities.

It has long been my opinion that police have in certain cases the right to apply discretion to a particular incident. For example not to arrest a pupil for drawing on a school desk when it is clearly a case of criminal damage. Such common sense and practical policing is often the best course of action. However I believe that a crime out of school should be viewed as a crime in school and not merely dismissed because it occurred in school and can be regarded as harmless or a school prank.

Many people disagree with this premise and feel that the school should decide whether a crime has taken place and deal with it internally and only then if it is deemed appropriate should the police be informed. Such a view is both helpful and practical in cases of minor infringements, but there should be some form of clear guidelines for both the school and the police to refer to and discuss on an individual basis. Clearly effective practice requires that issues like this are negotiated between stakeholders.

### **Police Colleagues**

There were in excess of 40 arrests as a result of the pilot project. Not all of those arrested were students at the school and not every arrest was made by me. Despite

this, each one was as the direct result of having a police officer stationed in the school.

One incident concerned a young girl from a neighbouring junior school who was robbed of her mobile phone. She had recognised the school uniform of the suspect and had told her father who, aware of the pilot project, had contacted me at the school. This was my first indication that the community were aware of the pilot project. As a result of her description I was able to identify the suspect, immediately recover the phone and inform the local robbery squad. Due to school protocol I was unable to arrest the suspect on the school site. On recovery of the property the father was extremely pleased and despite having reported the crime he was not concerned about the arrest of the pupil. The robbery squad who are inundated with such crimes were equally not concerned with arresting the pupil when the property had been returned and the victim was unwilling to substantiate the allegation.

What was so disappointing about the incident was that the suspect who had stolen the phone put his own £10 chip inside and on finding out that he was not being arrested he demanded his chip back. This pupil had committed a crime got away with it and was now turning the tables on me. The school were not interested in taking any punitive action and this particular pupil who was part of a gang of boys who were known to be committing robberies on a regular basis had “got away with it”.

This was a boy who was desperately in need of some intervention. I was frustrated because had I been allowed to arrest the boy at the time the suspect would have entered the criminal justice system and would have stood a greater chance of being charged with the offence as well as receiving some much needed help and guidance.

Not only do the rules surrounding arresting on school site by officers need to be addressed but also the help available to me when an arrest is necessary needs to be determined.

Assistance from police colleagues would have been useful on a number of other occasions when I was confronted with potentially violent situations and times when I needed assistance to arrest suspects. All too often help was slow to arrive and on

occasions it never arrived at all. This is not a criticism of the officers on team who work hard, but more a reflection of their workload and their being unaware of the pilot project and my existence at the school. In hindsight, more time should have been spent informing the sector team officers about the work taking place in the school during regular training days, which would have helped to develop a relationship between the regular officers and myself. Such personal links make the communication of information much easier especially in an organisation like the police service. An example of this was borne out when I was contacted by several colleagues in the Criminal Investigation Department C.I.D. They were investigating a rape, which had taken place outside the school in a nearby stairwell on a Saturday evening and that several of the suspects were believed to attend the school. I was able to identify the main suspect from his street name as well as several of the other boys and provide names addresses and descriptions as well as their current whereabouts.

It occurred to me that there needs to be a central area of information about youth crimes and school related crimes which can be accessed by police colleagues, as opposed to one central index that covers all areas.

### **Specific Police Culture**

I have already referred to the general structure of the police earlier in this chapter. However, it is my intention to show how the culture of the police at a street level can affect the relationship with fellow officers and ultimately the ability to police effectively.

As an initial recruit a police officer attends training school for six months and is then posted to a division where s(he) undergoes an 18-month probationary period. During this time s(he) is at the mercy of all and sundry. The concept is that probationers or “probies” as they are affectionately known, know nothing and it is in their best interests to get involved by taking every call that comes out. This includes attending all the sudden deaths, dealing with the drunks, shoplifters and standing around in the cold when premises are left insecure. These officers are the “general dogs body” and during this period of time many probationers make up their mind whether the police

service is the career for them. It is also a chance for them to show their commitment and character to fellow officers and ultimately to be accepted on the team.

The influence that team colleagues have on the acceptance and survival of the probationers has been watered down in recent years, since the concept of reliefs were abandoned in favour of smaller more effective teams of officers. These teams traditionally police a small area of a division in an attempt to gain a better understanding and insight into its community life and associated problems.

Reliefs were in essence much larger and instead of 10 personnel there would be in addition of 30 officers parading for duty at anyone time. The reliefs were very structured and had a clear pecking order based primarily on the length of service of an officer coupled with personality and the ability to police. Probationers, and new members to the team from other divisions were regarded with scepticism at first. All newcomers had to prove themselves regardless of who they were and often stories about their personality would precede them and opinions would be formed before they even reported for duty.

It was at this point that the newcomer would have to settle into the social structure of the team and affirm his position on the ladder. My own experience of this was traumatic enough the first time around but my arrival at a new division in a new role as Britain's first school based policeman brought about a real feeling of isolation. I was working on a project, which very few people had been informed about and even fewer people knew of my existence.

The effect of this was that whenever I called on the radio for a car check I was often left waiting or at times forgotten because I was not known to the controllers on the team and assumed to be a probationer. On several occasions I called up for checks on vehicles, which I suspected were stolen, and received a muted response. The first occasion the controller put me in a queue despite my explanation that the car was probably stolen. It did in fact turn out to be stolen, and the suspects fled the vehicle and decamped into a nearby estate.

A further incident, which confirmed my need to advertise my role and impress upon fellow officers that I was worth coming to aid, was in the form of an arrest. Similar to the two previous incidents I was out on patrol around the school and attempted to stop a car, which I was suspicious of. As I did so the car drove off at speed in reverse down a cul de sac. I gave chase on foot and informed the control room. The suspects decamped from the vehicle after crashing it into a safety barrier and ran off through an industrial area.

I managed to catch up with the suspects just as they disappeared down an alley towards a housing estate. I was aware that no one had responded to my call for assistance, but kept chasing after the suspects in the hope that the car was stolen. After a short chase I caught up with one of the suspects and detained him whilst the other climbed over a nearby fence. I waited for about 5 minutes and assistance eventually arrived in the form of one officer. I left him with the first suspect and went to look for the second. I then searched some nearby garages and soon discovered the second suspect hiding in the undergrowth. On reaching the station and confirming that the vehicle was stolen I was left with the two prisoners, with no help from the team that was on duty and with no assistance forthcoming from any other officers in the station. I was subsequently still at the station at ten o'clock that night dealing with both prisoners. Fortunately I found an ally in an old friend and colleague who assisted me.

These lessons taught me the value of publicising my work and the need to form good working relationships with my police colleagues who can drastically affect the outcome of my work. They form a valuable part of the partnership and are a strand of my work, which I had initially overlooked. The above examples are in no way meant to criticise my fellow officers. I am only too well aware of the constraints and pressures that they work under. What I need to ensure is that through educating them of my work I become someone that they trust and will respond to with the knowledge that my pleas for assistance are a matter of priority.



## Community

The links forged with the local community were few and far between mainly due to the workload that was placed upon me as a newly enrolled schools officer. However, those contacts that I made were extremely fruitful, none more so than those at the local sports recreation centre.

On the last week of the summer term the school staged its annual sports day at a nearby athletics track. Half way through the day a member of staff came to me and explained that he had just been approached by three young boys who did not belong to the school who had threatened to shoot him. Although I was not in uniform a member of the recreation staff at the sports centre knew that I was an officer from previous meetings and stated that he also had been threatened in a similar manner. He even managed to write down the index of the vehicle in which they had arrived.

A phone call to the local police control room revealed that the car in question had been stolen earlier that morning at gunpoint and that the suspects in question were all wanted for burglary. This information was met with a quick response by the police and the vehicle and its occupants were chased around a nearby estate. The vehicle was crashed and left abandoned and the suspects all decamped on foot only to be caught later hiding in the back gardens of a local housing estate. A handgun was found in the glove compartment of the abandoned vehicle. A valuable example of partnership work between the police the school and the local community.

I also received a number of calls from local residents, in particular elderly residents who were being terrorised by pupils from the school at lunchtime. Most of the pupils harassing these people would get into the communal entrance of the flats via the tradesman's entrance and spend the lunchtime smoking cigarettes and cannabis. On a number of occasions the residents had come out to speak to the pupils and had been threatened and even assaulted. One resident had found one of the pupils in her flat and had realised later that day that her purse was missing.

Not all residents were helpful towards the police. One incident involved detaining a pupil who had ran out of school after throwing fireworks and pushing past a senior

teacher in the school office. After a short chase I detained him in a nearby street opposite the local public house. On returning him to the school I was verbally abused by a member of the public who accused me of being racist and unnecessarily picking on the boy. The patron of the public house was fortunately more partisan and on a number of occasions she would call me to inform me of unusual goings on outside the pub. Many of the local customers were pleased to see the police presence, which was long overdue in their opinion and often chatted to me about the local problems that were ever present in their neighbourhood.

Other good community contacts included some of the local shopkeepers who were keen to express their views about the trouble that the school pupils were causing throughout the day when they came to the shop to buy sweets and drinks. What they weren't so keen to reveal was the number of cigarette sales that they were making to the pupils, in particular single cigarettes at a huge "mark up".

The business section of the community, which forms a significant part of the local area, includes a local professional football team and a large manufacturing plant, which has been established in the area for many years. The football club was particularly helpful in liaising with the school and providing me with useful information, which it had captured on its C.C.T.V. Several of these videos included fights between pupils and on one occasion depicted a pupil attempting to slash another pupil with a knife. The football club also made huge steps in forging links with the school in terms of providing coaching lessons for the school and providing team shirts and footballs as prizes for the pupils as well as encouraging its professionals to attend school functions.

Opposite the football ground is a manufacturing site, which opens on to the back of the school. The site was subject to a number of incidents caused by the pupils at the school who would recklessly throw stones over the fence along with lumps of concrete picked up from the school car park. Many windows were smashed along with extensive damage to a number of the firm's cars. After visiting the site and working in conjunction with the manager I was able to identify the suspects and arrest them with the stones in their pockets.

## Parents

The majority of parents I met attended the school as a result of their children running into trouble for a variety of reasons. However, several parents came to the school specifically to seek advice from me regarding incidents where their children had become victims of crime.

On one occasion the mother of a robbery victim stated that she wished to tell me directly of an incident because of the time that I had spent with her son over the summer running activities for the children of the borough. The victim in question did not actually attend the school, but his mother still felt confident to approach me directly. The other victim of the crime, a friend of the first boy, did not wish to report the crime to police and instead took it upon himself to seek retribution on the perpetrators and was found in possession of a knife by a member of staff at a neighbouring school. We were able to identify both suspects of the robbery who were consequently arrested.

Another victim of a robbery was confronted at lunchtime by a group of young girls who had been excluded from school. They had stolen jewellery from her and the girl had informed her mother who had come directly to the school to explain to me what had happened. I was able to comb the local streets and within a few minutes a young girl had been arrested for the offence. The mother was extremely grateful and without the presence of a police officer in the school the chances of the perpetrator being caught so quickly with only a brief description to work with would have been extremely slim.

Not all my dealings with parents were as productive as these encounters. One particular parent took exception to my speaking to her son about an incident that I had witnessed. The incident in question had taken place at lunchtime when I had seen a young boy being pushed and intimidated by a group of older boys. After several unsuccessful attempts to push past the group the boy reluctantly took something from his pocket and handed it to one of the boys, who then left. I witnessed the event from my office window and managed to catch up with the apparent victim moments later during the afternoon registration period. I inquired about the incident, which he

aggressively denied and became quite agitated to the point of being abusive. I commented on the number of mobile phones which he had in his pocket and on doing so the teacher in the class confiscated one of them without any prompting from myself and in accordance with the school policy on bringing mobile phones to school. The boy became more abusive and left the classroom. Later that day I was confronted by the parent of the boy who was furious that I had picked on her son and searched and harassed him in the classroom in front of his peers. Her anger was vented in front of several support staff who later endorsed the irate parents feelings and demanded that I explain my actions. Neither party was happy with my explanation of events and both insisted that I had illegally searched the boy in question and that any inference that the boy had been subject to a robbery was ludicrous and quite unacceptable. The mother decided that she would take the matter further and outlined her feelings in a letter and e-mailed it to New Scotland Yard at approximately 0100 the following morning. (See Appendix P.)

The letter clearly depicts this particular mother's view of the police as racist and outlines the uphill struggle, which police face in convincing parents as well as some staff that police are there to help not harass. To emphasise this point, it later transpired that this boy had for some months been subject to numerous encounters with the initial group of boys, who had on every occasion taken money off him in the form of menaces. This makes the reading of the letter even more ironic and reinforces how important developing relationships with all people involved in the partnership needs to be.

## **Staff**

Many members of staff approached me during the pilot project and described incidents that they had experienced, which ranged from theft of their belongings, to physical, verbal and sexual assault towards them. Many of the teachers were confused about my role within the school and whether I was actually able to intervene in any of these matters.

In many cases these members of staff had reported the offences through the appropriate channels to the senior management. This chain of events had often

resulted in no action being taken against the pupils. I witnessed such events of verbal abuse and defiance by pupils on a number of occasions and was bemused to find that the perpetrators were often not even spoken to by the senior management. In cases of rudeness and defiance many of the teachers did not feel that police intervention was right or necessary, but that the escalation and frequency of such events was as a result of these matters not being addressed at a senior level and consequently such behaviour was spiraling out of control on a daily basis.

The teachers now felt that the school was unsafe and were approaching me for advice, although many of them were still not keen to officially report the crime partly because they felt it was the responsibility of the school to address such problems in the first place. This was coupled with the inconvenience and associated worry of being available to attend court and any possible retribution from the perpetrators.

Apathy had now set in and teachers had begun to accept that such anti-social behaviour was part of teaching in a London school in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such beliefs were reinforced by a less than sympathetic management team who I heard criticize new members of staff or supply teachers for leaving their belongings on the teacher's desk unguarded whilst they moved around the class teaching their pupils.

Threats by pupils to smash car windows belonging to staff were met with explanations from the Head as "these are just idle threats, nothing to be concerned about."

Such comments were supposed to pacify staff and reassure them that there was nothing to worry about. These were apparently threats and outbursts of aggression by young students, which teachers needed to find effective ways to deal with. It was quite a different story when the Head himself was confronted by a former pupil who had trespassed on site one morning and had made a hand gesture to him in the form of a gun as if he was playing out a contract killing. The Head who was visibly shaken and furious demanded immediate action by me to apprehend the young male. He felt that such an incident, which was a personal affront to him, required immediate police intervention. This was in stark contrast to his unwillingness to involve me in more serious events, which had been committed on his teaching staff.

## **Mini Cab**

These incidents just served to extend the divide between the rank and file staff and senior management. Another good example of this inflexible attitude was displayed in front of me when a member of staff was waiting in the school foyer for a mini-cab to take her home during the middle of the day after an unruly pupil had knocked her in the stomach accidentally. The teacher was heavily pregnant and extremely worried and upset by the incident.

What transpired next was a true reflection of just how the management values their members of staff. A senior teacher who was aware of the incident entered the foyer and asked for confirmation from the teacher that she had been injured. The teacher explained that she had been hurt and was then told that under such circumstances she would have to wait outside of the school grounds in the street in accordance with school policy and health and safety regulations.

This lack of confidence in reporting incidents to the management inevitably led to resentment by many of the teaching staff and confusion for me about my own role when staff became victims of crime.

In particular I was concerned about the abstract reporting procedures that existed. Teachers were asked to write up the incident, which apart from being extremely time consuming varied in its style and content. To my knowledge these teachers had been given no training in how to write up such events so as to include all the necessary facts and no guide or official form on which to write it. In reality, short and incomplete descriptions of events were handed to the management on a variety of scraps of paper and no official record or logging system was made of the original note. Teachers expressed concern that they were never asked how they were feeling as a result of the incident even in cases of assault and often had to chase up management to find out what if anything was going to happen to the pupil in question. Teachers stated that in many cases where they had been assaulted or abused by pupils that when reporting the matter there was always a counter allegation by the pupils that they themselves had assaulted the pupil or had been equally abusive. They felt that

the management would often criticize the staff for their apparent actions, which led the staff to feel that they were being undermined and not fully supported. Even in cases of restraint where teachers had taken it upon themselves to break up fights or control aggressive pupils they were accused on being heavy handed. What was noticeable, however, was that in all the cases where fights had occurred there were only a handful of teachers who were prepared to get involved and deal with the perpetrators.

These few stated that there was a time when they would always deal with such incidents, which they saw as part of their duty to ensure a safe working environment, however their experiences of late had left them feeling less inclined to get involved. These teachers in keeping with my own experiences of teaching, tended to be male and the more athletic and physically imposing of the staff. In general they were P.E. teachers.

The same was true of this school. However, what was noticeable was that incidents, which involved these teachers, were met with criticism and skepticism. The pupils in question were not dealt with and on one notable occasion I witnessed a boy who was being escorted off the school premises by his mother suddenly run across the playground and threaten a member of the P.E staff. The pupil was not spoken to despite concerns raised over his behaviour and later that term he physically assaulted another teacher, whose nose was broken and is off work considering his future career options.

Another member of the P.E staff was punched in the face when he tried to restrain a young boy who was violently out of control in class. I was subsequently approached by a member of the senior management team and asked if in my professional opinion the teacher in question had assaulted the pupil.

This issue of using suitable or minimum force to restrain pupils differs greatly when comparing those powers bestowed upon a teacher and a police officer. However, I soon found that not everyone felt that such differences should be witnessed in school.

One such occasion occurred when a young boy went berserk after a playground fight I assisted two teachers restraining the pupil and I escorted him to his Year Head in the main foyer of the school. On reaching the room I released my grip only to find myself ducking for cover as a flower pot and contents whistled over my head. A series of follow up kicks and punches missed their target and I managed to take hold of the boy and bundle him into the near-by office and hold him down on an armchair until he eventually calmed down. My actions were noted by some less than sympathetic staff who viewed my restraining techniques as violent and oppressive. The boy made a personal apology to me the next day, which I accepted.

I was beginning to understand how some of the staff were feeling when dealing with this small element of violent and aggressive pupils. The boy in this example was only 13 years old.

The majority of teachers were more understanding of the difficulties, which anyone is faced with when dealing with confrontations such as these. One such teacher who actually witnessed the incident felt comfortable enough to disclose to me a series of events which had left her intimidated, upset and frightened. She had on a number of occasions been racially abused and threatened by a former pupil of the school whilst she had been walking in her local neighborhood. I was able to assist her and soon after reporting the offence the suspect was arrested for harassment and summonsed to court.

I tried to forge relationships with as many staff as I could as it was clear to me that a great number of the staff were not opposed to my presence in the school they were just unsure about my role and how to approach me. I tried to break down the barriers by talking to as many as I could whenever I could. The majority of my contacts were made in the staff room. However, I was aware from the propaganda being posted on the notice board and the feedback from several members of the staff who I could trust that certain factions of the staff were not happy with my presence. They felt that I had invaded their privacy and was spying on them to the extent that they could now no longer enjoy the staff room.



I also tried to visit as many classrooms as I could throughout the day, often just passing by the door and checking that all was well. Frequently the teachers invited me into their classroom and introduced me to the class. On occasions I was invited to help teach lessons although these were unfortunately few and far between. Teachers also called upon me to help deal with disruptive pupils in the classroom although they were often criticized by the senior management for calling me and not themselves. Directions were made clear to the school office staff by the Head that any such request for me to assist should be directed to the senior management in the first instance. However, this was not the case when a senior member of staff was unable to detain an unruly pupil for a lunchtime detention and who was attempting to climb out of the classroom window.

The Head expressed the same views about my attending classrooms to assist the teacher searching pupils who had stolen property belonging to the teachers or other pupils.

Some teachers were proactive in their quest to involve me in such incidents and on one notable occasion I was informed by one year head of a robbery on a pupil. The incident had taken place at lunchtime and after investigating the matter he managed to trace the suspects, six in all and recover all the property, which he passed on to me.

Unfortunately such commitment to the partnership by members of the teaching staff was not always as obvious or forthcoming as this example.

## **Pupils**

There are approximately 1100 pupils in the school aged between 12 and 18 years. I was unable to get to know them all but tried hard to introduce myself to them through assemblies and classroom presentations.

I managed to form some of my best relationships with pupils after coming in contact with them after they had been in trouble at school. Some pupils were very responsive to my intervention others less so.

One pupil to whom I had spoken to on a number of occasions about his persistent truancy approached me one lunchtime and explained to me that he had just been followed by several boys whom he did not know but recognized from a previous encounter. On both occasions the pupil had been the subject of an attempted robbery by the two unknown boys. Although the pupil in question had been reported by me on a number of occasions for his truancy he stated that because he knew me and had had numerous contacts with me he felt comfortable reporting the incident. Unfortunately I was unable to identify the boys, but was able to forge a good relationship with the pupil who felt able to talk to and confide in me about numerous issues often of a personal nature.

The first arrest at the school was as the result of a teacher knocking on my door at the end of the school day and informing me that a year 11 student had just been robbed of his mobile phone. I was on scene moments after the event had occurred and the victim was able to point out the suspects who were arrested and the property was immediately recovered.

I strongly believe that where the police are easily accessible and able to respond quickly to an incident victims are more likely to report the crime and the police stand a greater chance of catching the suspects.

However in my experience the victim's primary concern is having their property recovered and returned to them intact. The arrest of the suspect is often a secondary issue. This is because students often place great value on material possessions such as mobile phones and the suspects are sometimes known to the victim through school or the local neighbourhood. The victims can therefore become the subject of intimidation and reprisal attacks for "snitching" to the police.

The victim in this incident found himself being ambushed the very next day as he left school. He was confronted by a group of youths who did not attend the school. He was aware of one of the suspects from the previous day who was in his school year hiding behind a bush and pointing him out as the target victim. Inevitably the victim wished to withdraw the allegation of the robbery due to intimidation and explained that he wanted to forget about the whole incident. He was however, persuaded to

attend court and I was able to give him support whilst he was at the school. Despite both suspects being found guilty at court, the victim's main concern was that he received the mobile phone back intact. Unfortunately the phone had been damaged beyond repair and the victim received no compensation. Both he and his father explained that their attendance at court and the worry that had accompanied this ordeal had been a waste of time. All they wanted was compensation for the phone. It was my fear that they may in future fail to report similar incidences based on their unsatisfactory experience of this one.

Better relationships were forged with a number of other pupils who had become victims of crime. One included an older boy who had been followed to school by two unknown boys who had attempted to steal his phone. The boy in question was able to fend off the other boys and on entering the school he came straight to my room and explained the incident to me. I was unable to find the suspects despite being able to look for them minutes after he had told me. What was encouraging was that he felt comfortable coming to me and telling me about the incident.

On another occasion local patrol officers arrested a pupil at lunchtime whilst off the school premises for riding a stolen moped. I was made aware of the arrest by the boy's Year Head who himself had found out from the parents of the boy and not by the police. It transpired that the police officers were unaware of the pilot project and raises issues of providing a central vortex of information which all concerned parties have access to.

The suspect admitted to the offence and on his return to school I spoke to him about the incident during which he disclosed the names of the two other boys who were involved in the initial theft of the moped.

### **Restorative Justice**

Both of the boys attended the school and admitted the offence and as a consequence I referred them onto the restorative justice office at the local Youth Offending Team. However, the respective people who visited the boys in question did not require the boys to pursue any form of reparation such as a letter of apology, and also failed to

inform me of their actions. This led me to consider conducting my own form of reparation work within the school as opposed to referring it onto an outside agency

Again the problem of communication between different agencies is the issue at hand, and, the introduction of such a restorative justice scheme may have brought a more satisfactory conclusion to the arrest of the two robbery suspects depicted above. The victim may have received some form of compensation, a suitable apology and would not have had to spend time attending court when he could have been studying for his forthcoming exams. It is also realistic to say that he may not have been subject to a number of intimidatory tactics by the suspects to withdraw the allegation.

It is sometimes the reluctance of the victims to participate in a restorative justice programme that fails to get this process in motion. I have witnessed this on a number of occasions.

A young female who was robbed of her mobile phone by a pupil whilst leaving her office after work reported the crime to the local police station. I was informed by the local robbery squad and after making general enquiries with a number of students I was given the name of the suspect, who was arrested the following day and found in possession of the victims mobile phone.

The victim was unwilling to participate in any confrontation with the accused stating that he may return and attack her as a result of it. This fear of repeat victimisation is very real to many victims of crime.

### **Other agencies**

Other agencies, which I tried to build partnerships with, included the Educational Welfare Office, which deals with pupils who fail to attend school on a regular basis. However, problems at the local borough office meant that there was a shortage of E.W.Os and I was unable to build a relationship within a very important area of delinquency amongst pupils.

I was, however, able to liaise with the local drugs counsellor who attended the school on a regular basis to offer advice to pupils about their smoking habits. I was able to refer several pupils to her and sit in on the subsequent meetings with them.

### **Prison visit**

Although I was unable to deliver many lessons to the pupils I was able to draw upon the services of other organisations. In particular I was able to invite the local prison service to attend the school along with a serving prisoner. The pupils found the lesson extremely enjoyable and spent a good proportion of the lesson asking the inmate about prison life.

The lesson was very informative and gave the pupils a real insight to prison life and the consequences of crime. The presentation included a life size model of a cell and a display of the food and clothing that the prisoners wore. It was a valuable lesson for the pupils and also for me as it enabled me to observe and interact with the pupils without actually having to take the lesson.

A reporter from the Times Educational Supplement followed a group of young offenders around HMP Coldingly for the day in an attempt to see at first hand what the prisoners incarcerated in a world of their own can teach young people who are at risk from falling into a life of crime. The message seems to be “prison’s not the place for you”. T.E.S. July 2001. The inmate’s presentation consists of dramas, songs and personal testimonies and its organisers boldly claim that it’s “the best crime diversion scheme in the country”. The prisoners appear to benefit from their presentations and many of them are using the pilot scheme to work towards accreditation for basic youth work skills.

One of the inmates explains “Someone could have got to me when I was their age, with a different approach. All we had in South London was the local Bobby”. The inmates are graphic in their description of the harsh reality of prison life “It’s fucking shit in here man and YOI’s (Young Offenders Institute) are worse. Every one of us wishes we were your age again. We’re not here to fucking patronise any of you. All

we're saying to you is that you've got choices." (Times Educational Supplement, July 2000).

To highlight the reporter's concerns of how effective such intervention strategies are is difficult to measure but research suggests that programmes where brief encounters with inmates describing the brutality of prison life or short-term incarceration in prisons or jails, which is intended to shock, does not work. Studies, which observed the work of "Scared Straight", a youth violence prevention strategy widely used in the U.S. revealed that the programme does not deter future criminal activities and that rearrest rates were similar between controls and youths who participated in the same Scared Straight. In others, youths exposed to Scared Straight actually had higher rates of rearrest than youths not involved in this intervention. (Surgeon General, 2001)

There is conflicting evidence about the use of using presentations by serving prisoners to "Scare straight or educate" children as examined in a research document by the Home Office 1996. The research focused on three case studies at three prisons with presentations tending to focus on the "depressing and brutal nature of prison life."

One of the key points is that although there appears to be no hard evidence that similar projects in the U.S. have had any real impact on the reoffending of juveniles, there does appear to be considerable potential for developing day visit projects that aim to educate rather than scare.

### **Alternative Curriculum**

The school like many others in the borough has its fair share of pupils who find it difficult to integrate themselves fully into school life. Many of these pupils have emotional or behavioural difficulties coping with school and often become disruptive or display signs of aggression or merely detach themselves from school and play truant.

In an effort to engage some of these youngsters I started an alternative curriculum for Year 9 pupils. The scheme was run on a Friday and consisted of classroom lessons, which aimed to address and challenge their behaviour and was followed up with

practical lessons at a local activity centre. The pupils were very enthusiastic about the scheme and the first few weeks were very rewarding in terms of the work, which was completed. The pupils displayed very positive attitudes and allowed me to discuss issues about the school and home life, which concerned them. Unfortunately by the third week nearly all of the pupils had been excluded from school for breaches of school discipline many of which had occurred before the scheme had started. A break down in communication between the senior management and me meant that I had no pupils to work with and the impetus of the scheme was lost. Similar attempts to run such schemes at other schools had been more successful and have enabled me to gauge the success of such intervention with pupils.

I refer in particular to my work with a similar group of pupils at a nearby secondary school in the same borough, which was subject to a B.B.C. documentary entitled "Classrooms at War". This programme outlined my work with a small group of Year 10 pupils over a period of two school terms and showed how participation in the scheme had helped the pupils with their behaviour participation and attendance in school. Other work which I conducted with pupils who had either been in trouble with the authorities or had difficulty socialising in school were equally successful in enabling pupils to address their associated behaviours. A review of which is outlined in the Times Educational Supplement. (March 31 2000).

Similar attempts to engage pupils in an alternative curriculum vary greatly in their style and delivery and potentials successes. Below are examples of such schemes designed for disaffected children or those who are perceived to be at risk.

The first example is a scheme run by several army officers who work with the pupils towards basic key skills, which are incorporated, into the bronze and silver Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Networks. (Asdan) syllabus, together with the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's award, the St John's lifesaver awards and some outdoor environmental experience. (The Guardian Education, March 13 2001). After six months on the scheme the pupils as well as the school state that the participants behaviour "has improved beyond all recognition". Additional benefits have seen marked improvements in the pupils GCSE curricular work.

A second scheme is run by police officers in Durham who engage “young tearaways” in the art of fishing. It aims to “influence attitudes and try to persuade youngsters to move from negative peer groups into positive groups.” The scheme is supported by the senior police management who are trying to provide the youngsters with a scheme, which is not just run on an occasional basis but is something more substantial and beneficial to the youngsters. “Angling can give a lad a chance. I know from my own experience that it helps. Youngsters from a bad peer group meet lads of their own age behaving in a positive way. That’s good for them, it’s good for the sport and society has to benefit”. (Clarke, 2000).

## **Truancy**

Like many other schools in the country, this school experienced its fair share of truants who regularly missed lessons and sometimes days and even weeks at a time. Having written my M.A. thesis on the reasons why children truant and innovative strategies to re-integrate them back into school I was well aware of the problems and reasons associated with truancy.

The problem of truancy is not a new one and recent surveys suggest that things are getting worse with at least 400,000 pupils absent from school on any one day. At least 50,000 of these pupils are off school without permission. (DfEE, 1999).

This study found that “young people who tranted were less likely to be in full time education, less likely to have a full time job offering training, and more likely to be unemployed or inactive, than those who had not tranted.” Additional research by Graham and Bowling (1995) highlights the link between pupils who truant from school and its inevitable link with crime. I have personal experience of this and witnessed a number of pupils who “skipped” lessons and passed their time smoking cannabis and causing criminal damage and public order offences. Many of the pupils would link up with other young people excluded from schools around the borough and hang around local housing estates causing trouble to while away the hours.

The pilot school appeared unable to cope with the vast number of truants that were leaving the school premises in their droves. I attempted to comb the streets on my



bicycle and round up as many as I could, but often they would split up if in groups or run off into nearby blocks of flats. Many of the teachers did not follow up on their classroom registers and consequently these pupils would continue to truant on a regular basis undetected. The fault also lies with the current legislation available to deal with truants. Police have the power to round up truants under the new Crime and Disorder Act (1998). However, this power is only effective during designated periods as authorised by the borough police commander which come into effect for only three days a term. The borough itself was also lacking a sufficient number of educational welfare officers, which it was seeking to address. In addition to my truancy patrols I also rewarded pupils in the school who had achieved a 100% attendance record by taking them on an outward bounds course on a Friday morning which gave me the opportunity to spend time interacting with the pupils in an environment away from the school.

### **Other Activities**

Police officers bring many skills to their job, many of which have been learned before joining the Service and practiced outside of their normal working day. These skills are wide and varied and include coaching qualifications in sport and recreation, mechanical skills and artistic skills to name but a few.

In conjunction with several members of staff I managed to set up a swimming programme, at the school, which was funded by the local council recreation department and The XXXX Grammar Foundation, a charitable trust. All children in the borough who were unable to swim were invited to attend the programme, which ran for three nights a week in order to learn to swim and gain basic skills in water safety. The initiative was in response to the several recent drownings in the local river, which runs through the heart of the borough. The scheme was well attended with over 187 children successfully passing the course.

What was equally successful was the number of parents from the community who commented upon the partnership approach by the police and the school and suggested that it be extended to other after school activities such as football schools. A number of thank you letters were received at the school and provided a good starting base

upon which to forge and build good relationships with the community who represented a rich diversity of cultures.

It is schemes such as these, which enable police to become part of the community and develop friendship and trust in ways that normal response policing does not allow. In particular is the need to communicate with groups of the community who police have difficulty working with. The Home Office defines these groups in recent research (2001), as having a number of defining characteristics, some of which are listed below and many of which apply to a large number of the participants in the swim scheme.

Suspicious of police

Acute socio-economic deprivation

Cultural or ideological barriers

Language barriers.

The total number of children on the scheme whose parents received income support was in excess of 60%. Positive community links such as these are excellent ways of showing the community that we as a service care, however there is some scepticism as to just how effective these schemes are. The much-popularised Midnight basketball programmes in the U.S.A. for example are not likely to reduce crime, according to research by Gottfredson, (1998). The argument to continue such schemes is that they may be able to provide adult supervision when otherwise it would be lacking. It should be noted that such activities, which intend to provide activity for unsupervised youth in the after-school hours, might actually increase the risk for delinquency.

### **Religious Beliefs**

As a committed Christian I felt that it would be essential to try and introduce some form of teaching within the school curriculum that addressed pupil's behaviour and helped them to reflect on their actions in light of their religious beliefs.

I managed to achieve this in the form of a bullying workshop, which was produced and developed by a local church organisation who came to the school each week and

ran the workshops mainly with Year 7 pupils. The members of this team were also able to start up a lunchtime study/discussion group which focused on topical issues during which the team shared their perspectives of the issues based on their beliefs. In addition to this they were able to take assemblies and establish themselves in the school. This was very encouraging and helped me to talk to a number of pupils on a different level about issues that really mattered to them. Often these pupils would confide in me about incidents of bullying that they had been subject to or incidents of violence that were occurring around the school that worried them. Many of the pupils that attended these lessons attend church in the local community and it was inspiring to see them on several occasions when I was invited by the local community churches to speak to the congregation about my role in the school during the Sunday morning services. This served as a great opportunity to socialise with not only the pupils but also the parents and members of the local community away from the school environment and develop a relationship based on trust and a common faith.

The awareness by many of the pupils and teachers that I was a Christian resulted in a number of teachers in particular spending time with me and talking about their own faith and beliefs and their desire to have a staff study group at lunchtime. The school appeared quite happy to allow the lessons to take place, however a recent campaign to place religious postcards in schools telling pupils that "God loves them, whatever their exam results", was met with fierce opposition from the National Association of Head teachers whose general secretary David Hart said "Its' highly undesirable that such cards should be sent to school". (T.E.S, June 2001).

### **Cadets**

As a result of starting a police cadet unit for the local borough, which is open to all students between 14 and 19 years of age, I thought that a good way of getting to know the younger pupils in the school would be to start a unit on the school site. This would be for Clearwater School pupils in Years 7 and 8.

Our first meeting, which was held after school, boasted over 40 pupils, mainly Year 7 and included several boys who had notable behaviour problems. The meetings were an hour long and revolved around what the pupils wanted from a cadet unit and what I

expected from them in terms of commitment and discipline. The meetings were informal and fun and the pupils seemed to enjoy themselves, which was reflected in a high number of them returning each week. I arranged an outward-bound course for 14 of the group who attended regularly and who showed a positive commitment to the unit and took them to a nearby activity centre. The three days were designed around communication skills, teambuilding and problem solving and included activities such as mountain biking, raft building, orienteering and canoeing/kayaking. The course was extremely enjoyable and enabled me to spend time with pupils away from the school where I was able to talk to them and develop a relationship with them

The unit consisted of a wide ethnic mix, reflective of the school and local community, with a mixture of Turkish, and Kurdish, pupils both male and female and a number of young black and white pupils. The Metropolitan Police Service is actively recruiting “minority ethnics” to join its ranks in an effort to meet the requirements of the Macpherson Report (1998), and to show that its officers reflect more fairly the “Capital” that it serves. Similar units run in other secondary schools which reflect the ethnic make-up of the school are a good source of recruitment and citizenship for the police service.

This concept of secondary schools having a police cadet force was commented upon by Anne Widdecombe, the shadow home secretary, who stated “A police cadet force would be educational and fun for pupils at school and encourage recruitment.” It is a belief of Miss Widdecombe that “police cadet forces could play a key role in boosting police recruitment from the ethnic minorities “ Her beliefs are echoed by the Tory party who feel “that of the reasons why the Metropolitan Police have failed to attract ethnic officer is that few black, Asian or Chinese people have friends and family in the force.” These comments written in an article for “The Sunday Telegraph” explain “If these youngsters were able to join a cadet group and know officers they would be more likely to treat it as a serious career option.” (Bamber, 2000).

## **Law Related Education**

The vast majority of police interaction with schools to date has been through law related education. In general police will attend a school usually once a week and teach a class of pupils about a specific area of law such as Stop and Search or more general areas of safety, which may include “stranger danger” or how to react in an emergency.

There has been much criticism about the effectiveness of police delivering lessons as part of the curriculum in the U.S.A. This was highlighted in a report to the Surgeon General, (2001), which looked at the largest universal prevention programme Drug Abuse Resistance Education or D.A.R.E. This is the most widely implemented youth drug prevention programme in the U.S.

The research showed that those children who participated in the scheme are as likely to use drugs as those who did not. What is noticeable however is that positive effects have been demonstrated regarding attitudes towards police.

The need to continue contacts with pupils in schools through lesson inputs is essential in terms of providing the pupils with accurate information, which can assist them with their own difficult choices in life. The value of such interaction in schools is highlighted in letter to the Head, (Appendix O) where the teacher explains that her own relationship with police, which is a “healthy one, is due, I’m sure to my positive encounter with my School’s Police Officer (P.C. Barber, 424D!!).

The mere fact that she remembered his name and number nearly 30 years later is testament to the impact of the police-school involvement.

Unfortunately I was unable to deliver as many lessons as I would have liked whilst engaged on the project, but this was partly due to the heavy number of commitments that I had to perform in and around the school. It is a difficult act to balance the need to interact with pupils in the classroom and to fulfil all the other duties required as a school based officer.

## **Support Staff**

I had not initially considered the support staff within the schools as being a link with which I would have much contact. However, it soon became apparent that these employees were mostly local residents who were part of the community and shared a vested interest in the school.

One of them was an active member of the school governing body and others had a unique insight into the daily running of the school. Many of these people were keen supporters of my work within the school and expressed a great relief that there was some form of authority on the school site. Several support staff vividly portrayed examples of the violence that they had seen in recent months at the school.

One incident had involved a group of young girls who had trespassed on to the school site and on being challenged one of them had produced a knife and threatened several members of the support staff. The police had to be called and the girls were arrested but only after some agonising moments experienced by the members of staff present.

The support staff were often regarded by many of the pupils as not having the same authority as the teachers, which is explained by the behaviours that they openly displayed in front of them. On many occasions I witnessed them being abused by the pupils or complaining about incidents around the school where the pupils had ignored their requests to behave or comply with a directive.

Consequently I found that these members of staff would often confide in me about things that they had seen around the school and in the local community regarding the behaviour of a student and soon became a good source of information for me and a point of contact that I could trust. This information extended beyond just the pupils to members of staff, in particular to several of the staff who had been caught stealing contents from the schools deep freezer supplies. I was also able to help one of these support staff with advice for her and her son who attended the school and was experiencing some acts of bullying from other pupils in his class.

It was support from people such as these that helped keep me informed of what was happening in and around the school at a time when the school's Head was withholding such information from me.

Such instances included burglaries, which had occurred overnight at the school and the exclusion of students for a variety of offences. On several occasions members of the support staff had directed me to assist teachers who were stranded in their classrooms with violent students but who had explained afterwards that they had been reprimanded by senior management for involving me. They further explained that in future they had been told not to call me and that such matters were to be resolved internally without my knowledge or assistance. They were extremely forthright in their views about the effect that this was having on my role and the damage that such measures were having upon the partnership and many of these points are highlighted in the questionnaire returns from the staff. (See Chapter 5).

## **4.2 U.S Project Activity.**

I was able to spend five months in Colorado in the U.S. where I devoted my time to following and observing the work of the school resource officers in Lakewood police department. This involved spending time with them at work in their respective schools and at the police station or whilst on patrol and also socially in an attempt to learn more about them as people as opposed to their functions as an officer.

### **History of SRO Partnership**

The SRO programme has been running for four years in the Lakewood district. The first school to receive a full time officer was XXXX with the others following shortly afterwards. There are six High schools a Middle school and an Alternative school, which are served by a total of six SROs. Due to manpower shortages officers have periodically been taken away from the schools they serve and redeployed as patrol officers to assist with answering emergency calls.

There are currently discussions underway to expand the SRO programme with the inclusion of another officer to cover an additional two middle schools in accordance with the Lakewood Police Department School Resource Officer Mission Statement outlined below.

The position of the School Resource Officer has been established to provide for the assignment of police officers within the city's middle and high schools. These officers provide a variety of services including: law enforcement, liaison with school and community, law-related education, and informal counselling to students, parents, and faculty. The objective of the SRO program is to enhance the safety and educational opportunities for the school community.

### **SRO Functions**

- Act as a visible law enforcement figure on campus and affected areas with a marked patrol unit.

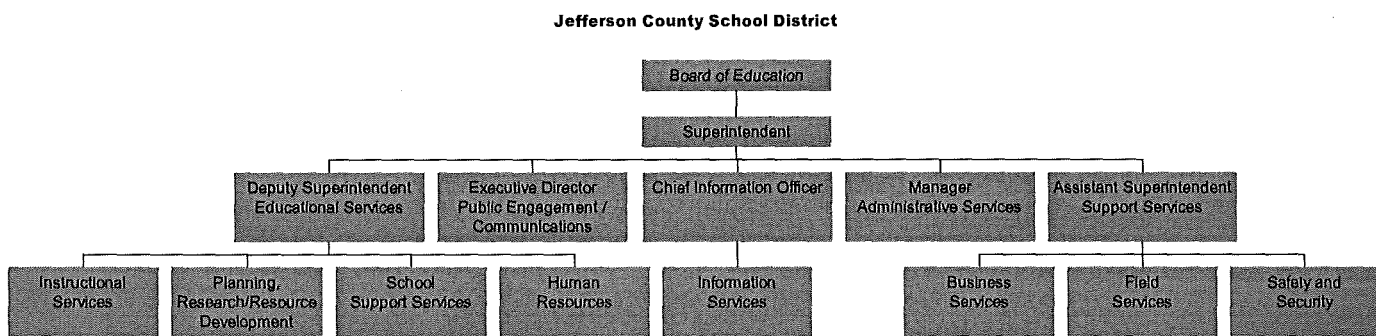


- Work during the hours school is in session and coordinate schedule with school activities when possible.
- Investigate criminal activity and enforce appropriate laws.
- Assist with solving problems, which involve the school community (which may include surrounding neighbourhoods and area businesses).
- Will be familiar with school's code of conduct and assist faculty in enforcement of this code. Disciplining of students is a school responsibility.
- Work with school staff and other entities to anticipate and plan for emergencies.
- Utilize and present available curriculum on Law- related Education (L.R.E.) topics.
- Locate other appropriate resources for school presentations
- Serve as a counselling resource for teachers, parents and students.

### School District

The County of Lakewood has the largest school district in Colorado serving over 86,000 students. It is one of Colorado's fastest growing and most respected school systems; the Jefferson County School District serves Lakewood students.

Chart 4.4



### Jefferson County School District (2001)

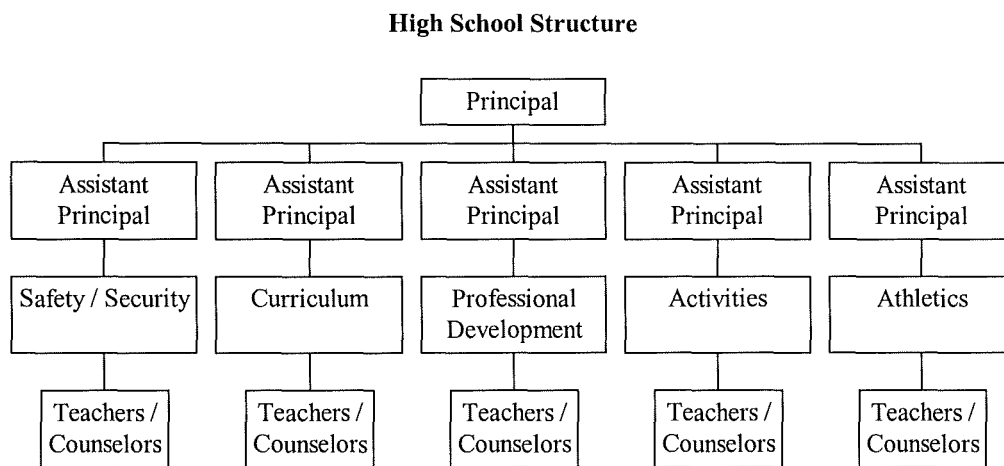
Within Lakewood there are 25 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 6 senior schools, and 3 schools for students with special needs.

Jefferson Counties commitment is to value the full development of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical potential of each individual. The strength of commitment to their vision is reflected in their exam scores being well above the national average.

**Observation of Two High Schools.**

Both schools have a similar structure with the Principal in charge of the daily running of the school who is assisted by five assistants who are all experienced teachers and who take direct responsibility for certain areas of the school.

Chart 4.5



Lakewood Police Department (2001)

**School One**

School One is located in the west of the city in a socio-economic area described as largely middle class. The student enrolment is 2010 from grades 9-12. The school has a student teacher ratio of 24.5 to 1 with 72% of its graduates attending college, 18% out of state.

The faculty comprises of 6 administrators and 87 teachers with an additional 6 counsellors. Each of the principals is directly responsible for a portion of the school

staff such as safety and security, curriculum, professional development, activities and athletics with an overall responsibility for staff and counsellors.

The school offers a wide range of subjects including Fine Arts and Forensics and a Student Enrichment Programme for both academically and creatively, gifted and talented students.

In addition to its strong athletic programme it runs a variety of activities many of which are run after school and a variety of vocational programmes, which prepare students for entry-level job skills and provide on the job training.

The school also has extensive Honours and Advanced Placement courses and the opportunity for top academic students scholars to excel. The overall academic performance of the school was rated average and has a student daily average attendance of 95% with a student dropout rate of 3.2%. The safety and discipline number of incidents reported were 324 and were broken down as follows.

Table 4.2 Safety and Discipline Record for the 2000-2001 school year:

Type of Incident	Number of Incidents Reported	Action Taken				
		In School Suspension	Out of School Suspension	Expulsion	Referred to Law Enforce.	Other
Drug & Alcohol Abuse	45		45		26	
Tobacco Abuse	15		15		1	
Assaults/Fights	20		20		9	
Habitually Disruptive Students						
Dangerous Weapons	7		4	3	3	
Other Felonies as Defined by C.R.S					9	
Other Violations of Code of Conduct	237	2	232	4	68	

Lakewood Police Department (2001)

## School Two

School Two is situated in the centre of Lakewood and has 1060 pupils on its roll from grades 9-12. The structure of the school is similar to that of School One, however the academic achievement of the school is described as low and is reflected in the number of students attending college after leaving school which totals 47.9%. The school has been troubled in recent years with four principals in four years, but appears to be turning the corner with a new principal who is bringing stability to the school.

The school has become one of Colorado's leading schools in the National Renaissance movement, the goal of which is to improve student performance at all levels and recognise everyone in the school setting. The Renaissance rewards improvement, effort, individual responsibility and develops an attitude of pride in achievement. The overall academic performance of the school was rated as low and has a student daily average attendance of 95% with a student dropout rate of 5.4%. The safety and discipline number of incidents reported were 324 and were broken down as follows in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Safety and Discipline Record for the 2000-2001 school year:

Type of Incident	Number of Incidents Reported	Action Taken				
		In School Suspension	Out of School Suspension	Expulsion	Referred to Law Enforce.	Other
Drug & Alcohol Abuse	41		37	4	17	
Tobacco Abuse						
Assaults/Fights	10		10		18	
Habitually Disruptive Students						
Dangerous Weapons	3		1	2	2	
Other Felonies as Defined by C.R.S	1		1		2	
Other Violations of Code of Conduct	90		90		21	

Lakewood Police Department (2001)

## The City

The city of Lakewood is often referred to as the “gateway to the Rockies”. It is Colorado’s fourth largest city and is ideally situated between downtown Denver and the foothills of the Rockies. It forms part of Jefferson County, which has the largest population in Colorado.

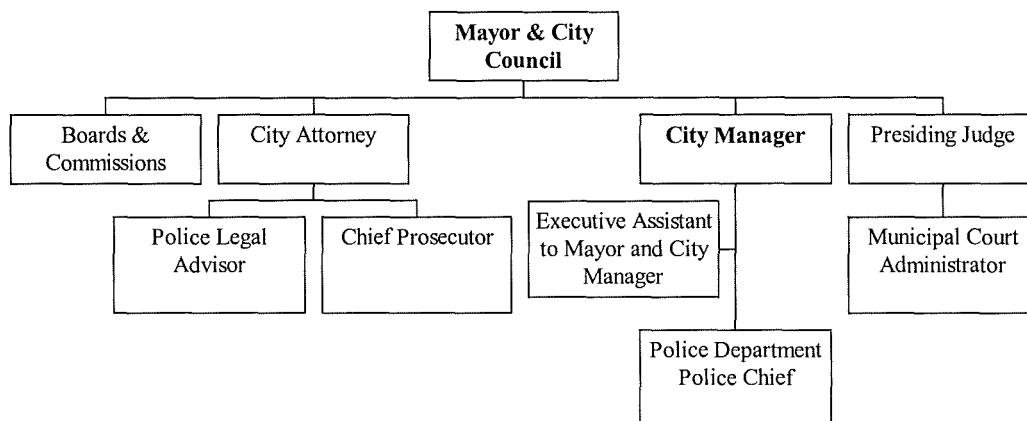
The city was incorporated in 1969 and has grown in size both economically and in its population expansion. Its attraction is its quality of life, with a fabulous climate, which boasts over 300 days of sunshine a year and over 7000 acres of parkland to explore.

Its population comprises White 85%, Hispanic origin 11%, Asian 2.5%, African American 1.0% and American Indian 0.5%.

The growth of the population has been as a direct result of people moving to the area from other states looking for work in this highly motivated city, where its residents enjoy a thriving economy and an unemployment rate of around 3%.

The Mayor is at the head of the city assisted by the elected council. Lakewood has a newly appointed Police Chief who as depicted by the chart below runs the police department. He is answerable to the City Manager and in turn to the Mayor and the city council. (See Chart 4.6)

City of Lakewood



City of Lakewood (2001)

## **Police Agency**

Motto: Integrity, intelligence and Initiative.

Initially known as Lakewood Police Department of Public Safety, the agency was the first to require its officers to hold four-year degrees as a condition of employment. The patrol officers were called agents as opposed to officers and were unique in that all of them wore blue blazers and undertook all police duties in the absence of an investigation division.

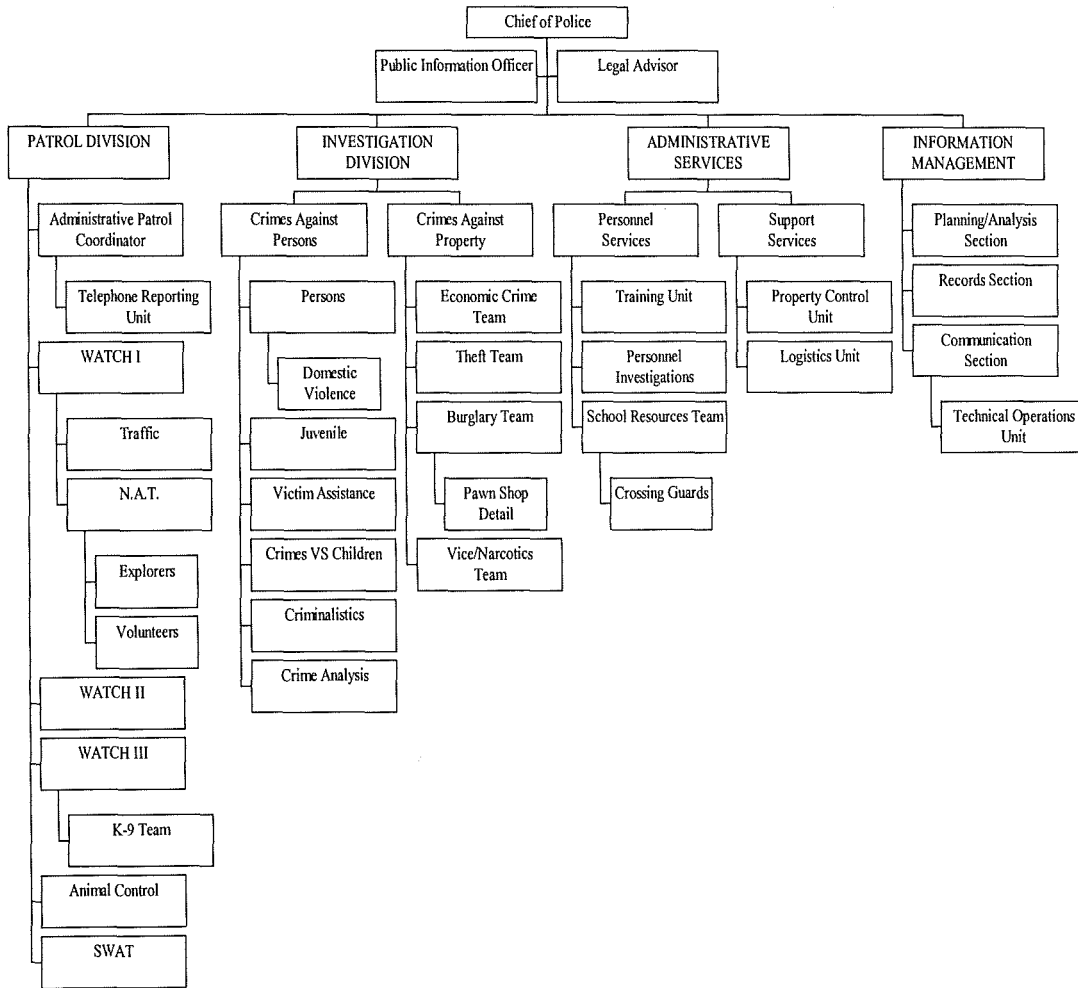
The present Lakewood Police Department is now more in keeping with other agencies around the country, however, it has the prestige of being the 24<sup>th</sup> agency to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement and according to Good Housekeeping magazine is “one of the eight best suburban police departments in the country.” (Police, 1998)

Since the early 1970s, when the Lakewood Police Department as we now know it was formed, they are regarded as one of most innovative of law enforcement agencies. It has developed a Citizen’s Police Academy, which was recognised by the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (F.B.I), for its achievement in improving relations between members of the community and the police and subsequently adopted by them as a national model. It is also widely known for producing a total of 50 agents who have been promoted through the ranks to positions of authority as chiefs of police, sheriffs, and chief executives at other law enforcement agencies.

Chart 4.7 depicts the organisational structure of the police department and lists the school resource officer team as part of the administrative services. There are moves afoot to place them under the wing of the patrol division, which is more in keeping with their role and where they will become the organisational responsibility of the patrol division.

Chart 4.7

Lakewood Police Department - 2001 Organizational Chart



Lakewood Police Department (2001)

**Profile of Officers**

All six SROs were observed for this study, however the vast majority of my time was spent in two high schools and below I have included a short descriptive profile of the two officers who are allocated to those schools.

**Profile of John.**

John is in his mid forties and is a police veteran of 22 years, having served the last ten years as a D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officer and School Resource Officer at the local schools within the Lakewood area.

John has a very friendly and warm character, which, students in particular seem to appreciate. He is very genuine in his approach and a number of pupils comment on his interest in them and their lifestyles and his ability to learn everyone's name.

He states that showing an interest in pupils and learning their names has a great impact when interacting with them. John holds a degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Washington. He is married with two teenage sons who attend school locally.

### **Profile of Dave**

Dave is also in his mid forties and has been a police officer for 20 years and like John his entire career has been served at Lakewood Police Department. Dave has 5 years experience as a trained D.A.R.E. officer and as a G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) officer.

Dave is quite unique in that he displays a true love for children, which I have not seen, displayed before by a police officer. He goes out of his way to assist people often to the point where this takes him outside his own working hours and remit.

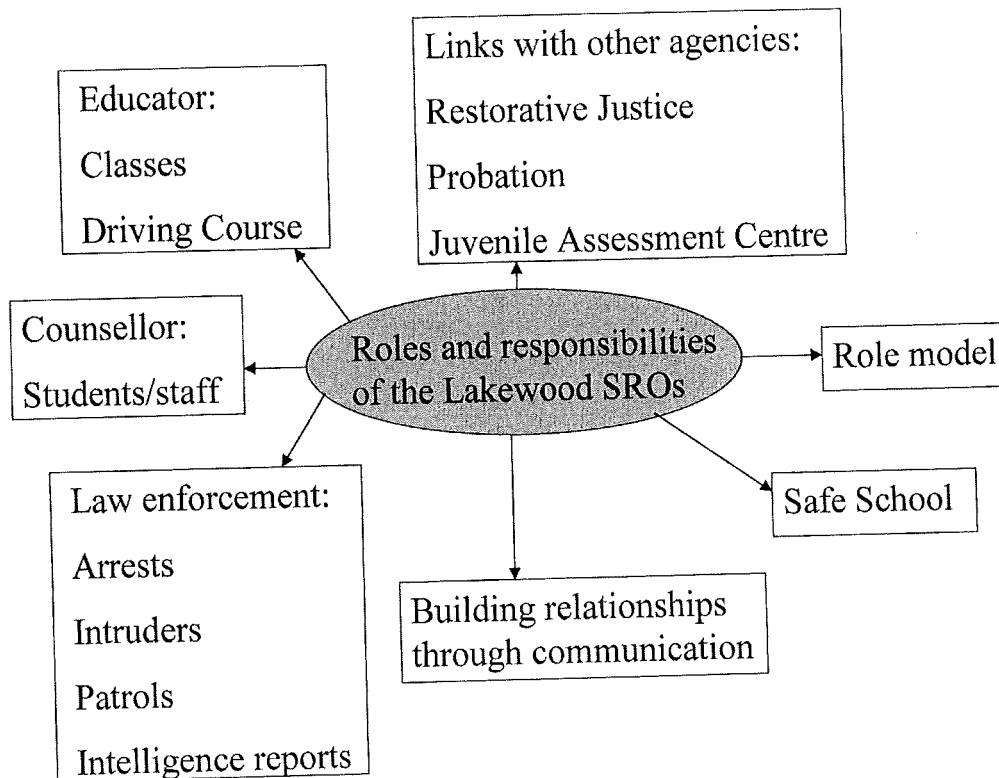
Dave holds a degree in a police related subject from the University of Illinois. He is married with three sons one which has graduated from school and the other two who attend local schools.

### **Roles of the SRO**

I have included a diagram of the roles, which they perform to fulfil their duties Chart 4.8 and the people who they have regular contact with as part of their duties Chart 4.9.



**Chart 4.8** Diagram of their Roles:



(Source: personal reflection)

The diagram shows how the schools resource officer splits his roles into that of law enforcer, counsellor and educator. Arguably the role of safe schools could be included in that of law enforcement as it deals with issues pertaining to the general safety of the school and includes environmental design and emergency planning and procedures.

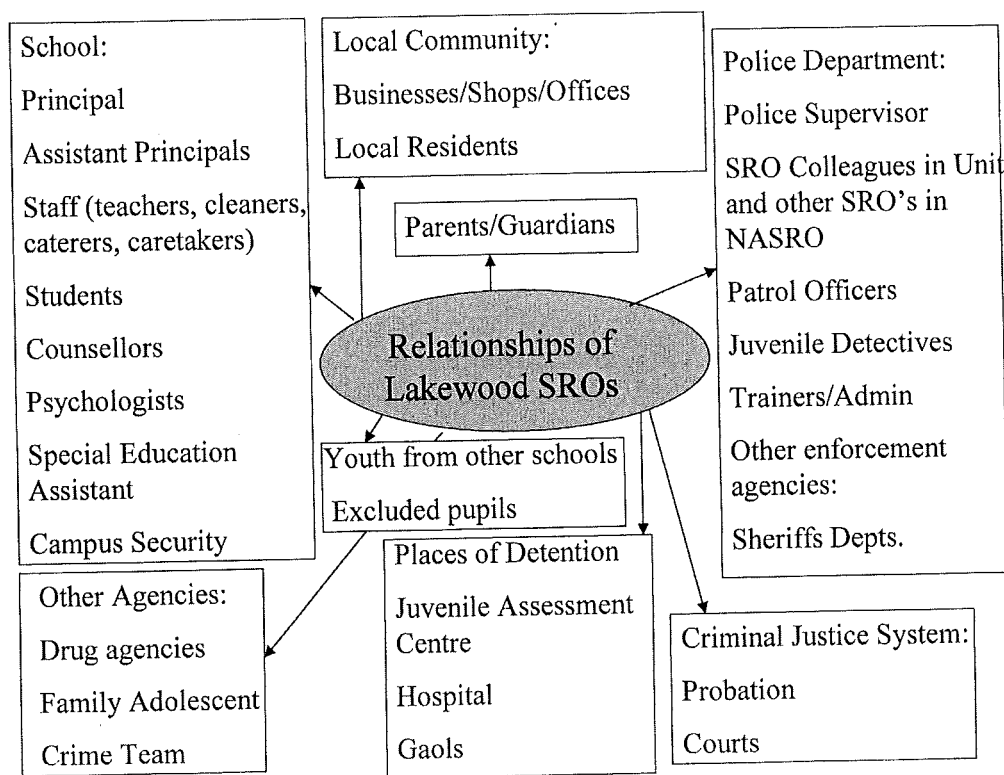
The box indicating links with other agencies reveals the work of the SRO in conjunction with other partnerships who assist them with their work with young people.

There are some fundamental differences between the roles of the U.S. officers depicted in Chart 4.8 and those of the U.K officer in Chart 4.1. These are compared and commented upon more fully in Chapter 6.

Building relationships through communications is an area, which is essential to the development of police, school partnerships and is a theme, which is central to this study.

The concept of the police officer being a role model is an additional role which has been included, although it is something which is often viewed as a by product of the officers work in schools.

Chart 4.9 SRO Contacts:



(Source: personal reflection)

I have listed in the diagram above all the people that the SRO comes into contact with throughout the course of his duty. It is not an extensive list but does outline those contacts, which they spend the majority of their time interacting with.

## **Organisation of Diary**

The diary, which was kept on a daily basis whilst at the school, is organised in such a way that it shows my interactions with the following people who are highlighted in Chart 4.9 and are those contacts that I had the most interaction with:

- Heads
- Police Supervisors
- Police Colleagues
- Community
- Parents
- Staff
- Pupils
- Support Staff

## **Observation of a SROs Day**

In Appendix Q, I have recorded the observations of two days spent with SROs, which outline their movements and the daily activities and interactions that they had with the various members of the partnership. These can be compared to the officer's work at Clearwater School. (See Appendix H.)

## **Introduction**

I was able to spend the first two weeks travelling around schools in a number of districts in the U.S. until I was able to identify a school, which was similar to the pilot school in the U.K.

The similarities included the size, gender and ethnic make-up of the school and the comparisons between the two districts in terms of social issues. My arrival at the various schools was always friendly and in the two schools in which I centered most of my study I was immediately asked to appear on the local school television network and produce an article for the school newspaper and magazine in order to announce

my arrival and work in conjunction with the local SRO. Teachers and school officials were keen to meet me and I took the opportunity to learn as much as I could about the school and its local community. A number of staff revealed that the schools had their fair share of problems in terms of violence and drugs, although they felt safe that the school was in good hands, which was due to the work of the SRO and the support of the Principal and all the staff.

During this introductory period I witnessed a number of incidents involving pupils, usually for unruly behaviour and on each occasion I observed teachers and support staff as well as the SRO intervene and challenge the pupils.

### **Communication between Supervisors the Principal and the S.R.O.**

#### **Press releases**

I was curious to see to what extent the SROs publicised their roles and how this was received by the various members of the partnership. It was therefore interesting to be asked if I would be part of a television interview at both local schools along with the respective SROs to compare and contrast my experiences of policing schools in Britain to that of policing schools in America. These interviews were followed up with an editorial piece in one of the school's magazines, which was written, by one of the students. The television interview was shown to all students and staff as an item on their daily news bulletins which air to the whole school mid way through the morning. Despite wearing a uniform to school whenever I visited, very few pupils made reference to my presence and my interaction with the SROs appeared to go unnoticed by staff and pupils alike.

Occasionally people passed comment on my "Australian accent", but most of these exchanges were brief and insignificant. However, the day following the transmission of the interview I was approached by numerous students and staff alike who exclaimed that they had seen me on "XXXX" Television Network and instinctively conversations around my role in school and my perceptions of school violence and safety in both countries became the topics of discussion for the day.

The school ethos was that they wanted to inform everybody about the role of the SRO and how he could assist them and that he was an integral part of the school and viewed as a valuable asset.

John's own view of the press was that it was a valuable tool for promoting his work and informing people of his various roles as well as presenting him as a person pupils could approach and interact with.

He also used the press to good effect by appealing to the pupils about various crimes, which had been committed around the school, in particular where school property had been damaged. The school were supporters of this innovative medium of police work and on several occasions had offered a reward for information on these crimes.

Similar support from other schools in the district had enabled the SROs to set up an anonymous tip line for school children to call and leave information about various crimes that they had knowledge of. John explained that his first appeal which sought to find who was responsible for setting fire to a park bench yielded a suspect who pleaded guilty within five minutes of the broadcast. Interestingly the reward was never claimed.

It should be noted that this press coverage was internal and specific only to the school as opposed to national circulation and to this extent its content and likely impact was both measured and controlled. However, it still revealed a degree of trust within the partnership and an ability and willingness to work together and use the press as a positive tool to accomplish its goals.

### **Communication with Police Supervisors**

The presence of a supervisor who is on call throughout the working day is a further vital link in supporting the SROs and one, which the SROs appreciate especially when dealing with any confrontational issues with the school's senior management.

All of the officers feel that they are extremely well supported by their supervisors from "line level to the Chief of Police", although this has not always been the case

and past supervisors have often left the officers on their own to sort out problems that often required intervention at a management level.

The officers are also very appreciative of the supervisors understanding of their role and the need to provide them with continuity and stability. To this extent the supervisor will often have to “stick up” for the officers and justify the importance of their work to the overall aims and objectives of the police department. This often occurs when the SROs are called upon to assist the patrol officers in the form of “manning up”, because of staff shortages.

Such requests are often met with fierce criticism from the school management who are left without an officer and causes unnecessary friction for the SRO. It is therefore essential that the supervisor keeps in close communication with the SROs and that the flow of information is a two way process which keeps the supervisor informed of school issues and the SRO aware of events within the police department and local district.

I attended a number of the team’s weekly meetings and witnessed at first hand the support and cooperation that exists between the SROs and school’s supervisor. The meetings were very informal and directed over breakfast brought in by the officers. Officers would discuss things they had encountered during the week and often ask each other if they could assist with up coming school events. At one meeting, officers rallied around another colleague who had dealt with the suicide of two of his pupils that week and were able to attend his school and offer him both moral and physical support.

The support of the supervisor was always a dominant factor at these meetings and without being overbearing or stifling she always showed an interest in the officer’s work and was a constant source of support for the officers especially when listening to their ideas and suggestions about enhancing their role or status within the school.

“Line officers are not alone in the need for training. Supervisors and managers need training on how to be a coach. In the author’s experience many police managers have been effective in maintaining organizational control but have had little experience in being leaders. There is a clear need for police managers to motivate line officers, provide positive reinforcement, and constantly coach their officers to be effective problem-solvers. For community policing to be successful there must be support from supervisors and managers – without their active support, the initiative will fail.”

David L Carter, PhD, Regional Community Policing Institute at Wichita State University. (2000).

## **Communication with Principal**

### **Reporting of Crime**

There were very few occasions when I was actually present with both the Principal and the SRO. The majority of times were whilst engaged in formal meetings and initial introductions, however I was immediately aware that there was a deep sense of respect by both parties for each other and a mutual interest to work together and accomplish the task at hand.

At my first meeting with Dave’s Principal he explained to me that he valued having a police officer on site and that he wanted to make sure that the pupils did not view the school as a safe haven for crime. He reinforced this point by explaining to Dave that he wished to permanently exclude a troublesome pupil from the school after seeing him on the premises last night despite being already subject to an exclusion.

### **Intruders**

He requested that Dave find the pupil and issue him with a ticket for trespassing and he would provide the statement to accompany the ticket. This action on Dave’s behalf would enable him to take the necessary action to exclude the pupil permanently. Dave was happy to comply and between them they discussed issues

surrounding the attachment of permanent "No Trespassing" signs at strategic points around the school.

The Principals clearly have different roles to perform in the school. However, both of the Principals at the two schools seemed to work in partnership with the SRO and both were only too aware of the SROs importance and potential authority.

One Principal outlined the need to have ultimate authority and control within the school in order for the pupils to understand who ran the school but at the same time they conceded that if they were to interfere with the work of the SRO unnecessarily then they knew only too clearly that they could be subject to arrest.

The SROs who joked that they would arrest the Principal openly discussed this point on a number of occasions with the Principal who did not appear threatened or perturbed by the SROs authority.

It was quite clear to me that there was not an issue with power dynamics between the two parties and that each respected the role and authority of the other, which had been agreed and built upon from the start of the partnership approach.

### **Exchange of Information**

There was always a good exchange of information between the two parties and a mutual agreement that although the SROs could and would arrest when they deemed fit, they would where possible inform the Principal and if appropriate allow them to deal with school issues first such as excluding the pupils or disciplining them for their actions.

I did however witness one occasion when a Principal required copies of police reports, which had been taken for some of her pupils in order that she could review them for a disciplinary meeting. John was unfortunately unable to retrieve them in time due to the standard time elapse needed to process these reports. The Principal appeared disgruntled and John appeared unable to speed up the administrative process to pacify her. It somehow seemed comforting that there were in fact a few problems,



which occurred from time to time, and that despite its appearances not all ran as smoothly as it so often appeared.

### **Opposition to the programme**

I did not come across formal opposition to the presence of police in schools within the school district. Both SROs confirmed to me that there were a small number of teachers who were sceptical of the police in general for a number of reasons although their feelings had never been voiced.

It was more a case of that officer's intuition and feedback from other teachers that certain individuals had reservations about SROs in schools.

### **The Arrest**

Not for the first time that day Dave had attempted to get into his car and drive around the local neighbourhood. On each occasion he had been called back to the school to assist with an incident and with the school day over and it being the end of the week he was keen to make it out of the school to the sanctuary of his car.

Typically Dave was called back to deal with an incident of theft which had just occurred within the school. A young student had been working in the school's newly opened "candy store" alongside a member of staff who attends the school on a voluntary basis to help run the store. On leaving the counter for a few moments the staff member left her handbag unsupervised and the student in question had removed the purse and on looking inside stole \$47 and then swiftly returned the handbag. The victim was initially unaware but on looking in her purse she noticed the money was missing and had contacted the school security who had quickly identified the suspect and recovered the money.

Dave arrived on scene only moments later and was informed by the Assistant Principal that the pupil who had admitted the offence would be suspended from school for the week and that her father had been summoned to the school. The Assistant Principal then spoke to the father who arrived shortly afterwards and with

no further ado passed the matter on to Dave explaining to the father the actions of the school and the subsequent actions that the police may impose. The Assistant Principal then left the room and handed the whole affair over to Dave who formally cautioned the girl and summonsed her to court for the offence of theft. The whole procedure took less than an hour.

I was amazed by the incident from start to finish. Here was a partnership in action, working together to solve a problem. There was no rivalry between the school and the police or competitiveness as to who was in charge. There was no question that the girl was to be arrested and no suggestion that it should take place elsewhere at a more convenient time or location.

### **Evaluation**

Both the officer and the school record all of these arrests and incidents. The officer is then able to fill out a weekly log sheet, which outlines all the work, which he has undertaken, which is then collated by the school and the police department.

The figures are used to form a chart, which is published on the school prospectus and serves as a good indicator of the amount of work that the SRO is generating.

The Table 4.4 shows the School Resource Officer activity at Lakewood SRO service locations for the school year August 2000 to May 2001. It includes all incidents reported to full-time schools police officers for 4 traditional and 3 alternative high schools.

Table 4.4 School Resource Officer Activity

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	YTD	Prev. YTD
<b>Misdemeanor Arrests</b>	14	44	33	28	13	22	17	16	21	17	225	209
<b>Misdemeanor Reports</b>	10	23	26	24	18	26	18	31	20	32	228	242
<b>Felony Arrests</b>	1	4	0	4	0	8	4	2	2	2	27	11
<b>Felony Reports</b>	7	8	6	7	4	4	7	9	7	9	68	47
<b>Non-Crime Reports</b>	24	25	25	15	17	24	28	26	25	18	227	326
<b>Student Counseling</b>	87	94	87	110	68	100	97	105	134	140	1022	973
<b>Parking/Traffic Summons</b>	4	10	10	2	6	4	4	7	5	3	55	N/A

Lakewood Police Department (2001)

Schools are then able to use these interactions as a guide to the quality of service that the police are providing and they also help to formulate a school administrator's evaluation for their individual SRO.

This evaluation form rates the officer in a number of categories, which include:

- Professionalism
- Judgement
- Communication skills
- Relationship with students
- Relationship with parents
- Teamwork/relationship with faculty/administration
- Community contacts to assist school
- Goes the extra mile

## **Police Colleagues**

Throughout my time spent following the SROs I was witness to a number of occasions where other police officers, mainly patrol officers came to the assistance of the SRO or interacted with them in some way.

On one occasion whilst on patrol in the car with John, part of the car's computer system known as a "low jack", which detects and tracks stolen cars was activated. After several frantic minutes trying to find the whereabouts of the stolen vehicle, John was informed that it was a training vehicle that was out and about and had triggered the computer to go off. This was a relief to John, as neither of us knew how to work the tracking system with its array of beeps and flashing arrows. Moments later, however one of John's uniformed colleagues turned up in her patrol car and spent the next 20 minutes explaining how the "low jack" system operated.

The two officers discussed several problems that they were experiencing at lunchtimes with the pupils and spoke of an impending meeting. They appeared to have a very good relationship and I was impressed at the speed at which John's colleague had responded to the situation.

Rendering help was not restricted to other patrol officers, as John was about to experience. Late one afternoon John was confronted with a male drunk wandering around the school grounds. John called for some assistance but due to the volume of calls in the district he got no response. Fortunately a patrol car did arrive not long after and the assisting officer helped John arrest the drunk and take him into custody. John was grateful for the help if not a little surprised that it was the Chief of Police who happened to be passing and had come to his aid. On numerous other occasions I witnessed the patrol officers drive past the school checking up on the welfare of the SROs and assist them with a variety of calls, however insignificant they may have seemed.

I was intrigued at the good relations that all of the school resource officers seemed to have with the patrol officers and the advantages that such a coalition afforded the SROs in terms of support and advice. I spoke briefly to several of the patrol officers to gauge their opinion of the SROs and whether they viewed their work within the schools as worthwhile and a good use of resources. The initial feedback from the officers was very positive who regarded the SROs, all of whom they knew, as performing essential work within the schools and local community. With this in mind I devised a questionnaire for the patrol officers, which I delivered at roll call in the form of a focus group. (See Appendix W.) My aim was to compare the responses of these officers to my own experiences with other colleagues whilst engaged on the pilot project at Clearwater School.

The results of this survey were very revealing and go some way to explaining why the SRO programme is so successful and well supported. (See Chapter 6).

### **Other Law enforcement agencies**

The officers of Lakewood regularly interact with a number of police officers from a variety of neighbouring law enforcement agencies. The need for these independent agencies to work closely was highlighted in the aftermath of the Columbine incident. There dozens of agencies arrived at the scene of America's worst high school shooting only to realise that none of them were able to communicate with the other due to different radio frequencies and operating procedures.

Several of the school officers emphasized that there was now a real emphasis within their department to get to know officers from other agencies and become familiar with their practices. The extent to which this has been achieved and the consequent advantages of developing inter-agency relationships were highlighted by one example in John's school. During one frenzied afternoon John received a call from a local sheriff who whilst on patrol had come across two pupils who attended the school "making out" in the back of a car, which was parked up in a local park.

John was able to call both parents and alert them of the situation. The officer stayed with the pupils until the arrival of both distraught parents at the park where the

incident had happened. John thanked the sheriff and the two of them spent some time chatting on the phone about a number of issues interspersed with small talk and a joke about the female student in the car who was 17 years old, considerably older than the boy.

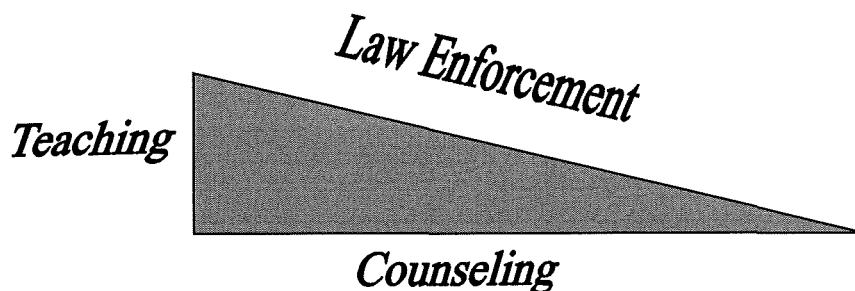
## **Community**

During my observation period of both John and Dave, I recorded numerous incidents where they interacted with members of the community in a variety of ways. Both officers explained that they enjoyed getting away from the confines of the school and being able to patrol the local streets. One of their concerns was that they became so involved with incidents and referrals within the school; they felt unable to devote enough time to promoting good relations within the community.

The problem of balancing the three roles of law enforcer, counsellor and educator is a difficult one and the time devoted to each tends to differ from one SRO to the next depending upon work load and the officers own skills.

“The Resourcer”, the N.A.S.R.O magazine highlights this dilemma in an article entitled “What is the shape of my triangle”. It explains the need for officers to reflect upon the shape of their own triangle of teaching, law enforcement and counseling and to concentrate on achieving a balance of the three. (N.A.S.R.O, 2001).

Fig 4.1



Both Dave and John still managed to patrol the streets on every occasion that I was with them and I was impressed with the reaction of those members of the community they spoke to.

This was often a time when a significant amount of information was exchanged between both parties and friendships were formed or further enhanced. A good example of this is illustrated by the entry in an outline of Dave's day when he speaks to the owner of the tattoo parlour. (See Appendix Q).

John made a point of organising a local neighbourhood watch group at one of the local houses, which backed on to the school, which was well attended by the local community who shared their concerns about the school. John also regularly spoke to the local businesses and emphasised the importance of them being an integral part of the community and the school. He would involve them wherever possible in addressing local problems such as pupils smoking or causing a nuisance in the area or staging fights. John often took it upon himself to drive around the community and look for anything unusual or out of place such as graffiti or abandoned vehicles. He was very keen to keep abreast of what was going on in his community and whenever anything was out of place, however small he acted upon it. His attention to detail was so that on one occasion he noticed some graffiti daubed on the wall of a petrol station which he was certain had not been there the day before. He did not treat it as too insignificant but rather he made enquiries at the petrol station and after some considerable time getting to know the staff he created a crime report and took some digital pictures of the writings on the wall. He then asked the manager whether he would allow one of the pupils from the school's television network to interview both himself and the manager in order to explain the effect that this form of vandalism had on the general area and to appeal to other students to identify the artist who had left his "tag" on the wall. The manager was more than willing to participate and his positive attitude towards assisting the police was one, which I had experienced previously whilst attending a meeting of local business partners connected with the community around Dave's school.

I was able to address members at the meeting who represented a variety of shops, offices and businesses and was able to discuss in detail with a number of them their thoughts about the SRO programme.

All of their comments were very positive and in addition to these I distributed a number of questionnaires. I only received five returns, but all of these reinforced the comments spoken at the meeting.

### **Example of Working with the Community**

#### **Lakewood Citizens Police Academy**

The Lakewood Police Department has for some time believed that education is the most effective way in gaining the support of the community. It is widely accepted that it was the first police department to offer the highly popular Citizens Academy, which was established to “teach citizens such as neighbourhood leaders, active retired persons, young people and business owners how the police department operates and how its citizens can cooperate to reduce incidents of crime and gang activity.” Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994).

The Citizen Police Academy is a ten-week programme where citizens from the community are nominated to attend a three-hour class one night each week. Classes are taught by various police personnel and cover a variety of topics including basic law, patrol procedures, narcotics, vice, SWAT, K-9 and officer survival.

Each participant receives hands on training in firearms, arrest control, and building searches as well as taking part in role-plays.

The police department believes that this programme has been a great success in closing the gap between the community and the police department. Many of the graduates go on to become respected and valued volunteers at the police department, serving in a number of ways such as Neighbourhood Watch, volunteer surveillance, taking reports over the phone and various other useful duties which contribute to the quality of life in Lakewood.



I was able to attend one of these meetings and speak to members of the class about the content of the programme and their reasons for attending. They all found it extremely enjoyable and the “depth and detail of the topics is excellent” commented one attendee.

A wide range of ethnicities and age as well as members of both sexes represented the class and many of them stated that they wished to become involved in the police department in some form or another.

### **Parents**

Both officers state that they know many of the pupil’s parents through attending parent’s evenings and as a result of teaching many of the pupils over a number of years. During my observations of the officers the majority of their contacts with parents was as a result of informing them about incidents that their sons or daughters had been involved in.

Invariably parents would turn up at the school to collect their children as a result of exclusion and it would often be the officer’s responsibility to explain to them whether criminal charges would be exercised. The parents always appeared to appreciate the officer’s concern for their child and I never witnessed an aggressive parent who took their frustrations out on the officer. In fact in nearly all the instances the parents knew the officer by name and although the meetings were often subdued due to the parents concern for their child they still warmly greeted the officer. Once again it was apparent that the trust that had been built up between the officers and members of their community had been developed over a number of years and that these relationships were clearly helpful in navigating their way around difficult issues.

In many cases the officers knew the families so well that they were able to provide a detailed family history of what the father and mother did, where they lived and what the circumstances at home were which may have contributed to the pupils behaviour. It is clear to me that such information is extremely useful in developing relations with people and reveals the extent of the officer’s professionalism and commitment to their

job. Their dedication and attention to detail is something, which has been honed over a number of years and the benefits are clearly apparent when dealing with parents.

This confirms my own feelings that it takes time to develop relationships with members of the partnership and that this can only be achieved through allowing consistency and stability in SROs appointments.

This line of thought is reinforced in a recent N.A.S.R.O. publication entitled "Best Practice/2001-3-001". The article outlines the following points, which underline the rationale for maintaining consistency in SRO assignments.

- 1. Consistency in SRO assignments can lead to improved relationships between the officer and students. Improved relationships between the officer and students. Improved relationships lead to enhance violence and crime prevention.
- 2. Consistency in SRO assignments can lead to improved relationships between the officer and school staff.
- 3. Consistency in SRO assignments can lead to improved relationships between the officer, his/her department, and members of the broader school community.
- 4. Consistency in SRO assignments can lead to improved skill development by the officer. NASRO (2001). Best Practice

On one occasion I became aware of a parent who phoned the school and spoke to John about his daughter who was involved in a fight. The girl in question had not been injured but the other party involved had still been excluded from school for three days. John had chosen not to take a police report based on the circumstances, but his decision had been met with annoyance by the victim's father who demanded that it was firstly reported and the assailant arrested and secondly that that the girl should be excluded for five days as opposed to three.

I listened to John pacify the parent and explain his course of action to the man and by the conclusion of the discussion he was satisfied that John was going to report the incident and that he would investigate the matter further.

John explained that he knew the parent well and that at times he wished that he was not as well known as he is as it sometimes worked against him. The officer's familiarity with so many people in particular the pupils also made it embarrassing for them when they came to the notice of the officer for something they had done wrong.

On one occasion John intervened in a fight between a boy and girl in the school corridor. The girl had apparently attacked the boy because he had been showing pornographic pictures of two girls, one of which appeared to be the young girl to other students in the school. It transpired that the photos, which depicted two girls semi-naked posing in a bedroom, had been downloaded from the Internet and were in fact the girl in question and her friend. John had the embarrassing task of presenting this issue to the young girl who vehemently denied the allegations that it was her and then had to inform the parents of his concerns.

A similar incident, which occurred on the same day, was equally embarrassing for John to handle. Another female student decided to give a friend of hers who was dropping out of school a good bye present by lifting up her top and exposing her breasts. Unfortunately for her the Principal had witnessed the whole event and notified John who gave her a summons for indecency and spent some time talking to the girl about her behaviour in front of her older sister who had turned up at the school in place of her parents to collect the girl. Naturally, John knew the sister, whom he had taught when she had been a student at the school.

On my last day on patrol with Dave and John I managed to persuade them to stop for a drink of tea at a local restaurant where we reflected over the past five months that we had spent working together. Both officers commented on how nice it was to sit around drinking tea for the afternoon, which was only afforded them because the schools had broken up for the Christmas break.

However, shortly after leaving them at the end of the day I learned that both officers had taken a call on their way back to the station, which involved a domestic dispute where a man was threatening to shoot his wife. The officers turned up first on scene and the suspect appeared at the front door very agitated and upset. His anger soon subsided when he saw the two officers in front of him. His reaction was one of surprise when he instantly recognised Dave and sparked up a conversation with him explaining that Dave had taught his two sons at the local school.

This was a common occurrence for Dave and John and their ability to communicate effectively with parents and to take the time to interact with them had once again become apparent. In this scenario the situation was diffused and the suspect taken into custody without any further incident.

### **Staff**

Neither Dave nor John spent a great deal of time in the staff room, however they often took the opportunity to have lunch with several of the teachers, often off site at a nearby café.

The vast majority of teachers appeared warm and friendly towards them and greeted the officers whenever they came across them. Like most working environments the officers shared closer friendships with some teachers who they tended to converse with on a daily occurrence. Many of these teachers were often senior teachers and it was as a result of the close working relationship, which they had developed over a period of time dealing with the pupils.

I noticed that many of the teachers regularly came to the officer's room for informal chats about last night's football game and the conversation generally included discussing some issue around the school or a troublesome pupil.

This was an informal but essential way of keeping the officers informed of what was happening around the school and the number of teachers offering such information was impressive.

Many of the teachers also spoke to the officers regarding advice about legal matters that were specific to themselves or their families. These ranged from advice about motor vehicles and relevant documents to concerns about drug abuse amongst their friends.

It was remarkable just how often members of the staff sought advice and comfort from the SROs on a variety of matters. This revealed to me the level of trust that the staff have in the SRO and the availability of them as a resource for all to depend upon.

This level of respect for the SROs was clearly evident and highlighted by an incident when Dave spoke to one of the Assistant Principal's son about his driving. On leaving the school one afternoon both Dave and I passed the Assistant Principal and his son. Dave beckoned them both over and explained to the father that he needed to speak to his son. It transpired that earlier that day Dave had seen the boy driving recklessly around the neighbourhood and spent the next 10 minutes advising him of the consequences of what would happen if he witnessed driving in such a manner again. The father who was within earshot commended Dave and admonished his son whilst expressing his own concerns about his son's driving. I was pleased to see that despite his own son being addressed by the police, the Assistant Principal was fully supportive of Dave's actions.

## **Pupils**

Both Dave and John have excellent relations with the pupils at the school. John appears to know just about everybody's name and all the pupils know his. Both officers state that they have known most of the pupils for a number of years as a result of teaching them on the D.A.R.E. curriculum. This has enabled them to watch the pupils grow up and to forge good relationships with them.

Even pupils who the officers have arrested are polite if not a little cheeky to them. They still say "Hi" as they pass in the corridors and there appears to be little animosity directed towards the SROs.

The same is not true of other police officers whom the pupils state are aggressive and hassle them when they are “hanging out”. John and Dave are regarded as “safe” or “solid”, they are officers who the kids know and trust.

### **Break dancing**

Dave spends a great deal of time trying to work with the more challenging pupils in school who often have behavioural problems and have come to the notice of the police for a variety of reasons.

Unlike in the U.K. there are a number of gangs which operate within the school system which are well organised and whose membership extends into the local community. Dave is well aware of the problems, which these gangs pose, in particular their use of weapons and violence, which they openly display, to other gangs, which exist and flourish in the area.

In recent months there has been a new street craze revolving around “break dancing” a gymnastic style of dancing which is very flamboyant and is performed on street corners as a form of expression.

Dave has found that groups of gang members have been break dancing in the corridors at school and attracting the attention of passing pupils who have crowded around the spectacle. Other gangs of kids have begun to compete with each other and this has led to some confrontations on the school site and a ban on any unsupervised dancing in the school. In an effort to solve this problem Dave has formed a “break dance” club, which he runs several mornings a week for the kids. The club is sponsored and its membership is growing. After observing the group it was quite apparent that the kids enjoyed the club and were grateful to Dave for his interest and support.

Dave also tries to get down to the gym on a regular basis after school so that he can work out with some of the kids. He states that this is a great way to get to know them and a chance for them to see him in a different environment.

John explains that he has in the past run after school activities for the pupils, often in his own time but that in recent months he has not had the time to continue to commit to such activities. It is quite obvious that both he and John enjoy this work and that they have a real love for interacting with children. Dave has even spent his own money providing a suitable safe dancing mat for his team of break-dancers.

### **A love for children**

Having studied the “notes for guidance” for the employment of SROs I am aware of the desired skills that an SRO should possess to become effective in his work. However, it is quite apparent that although not a prerequisite for performing the role of an SRO the most successful officers have like Dave and John, a real love and concern for children.

The following two examples describe just how far their concern for the pupils stretches and their obvious love for their vocation.

### **The Trip to California**

At the start of the school day Dave is approached by the campus security who explains that one of the pupils is extremely upset and is wandering around the school. It transpires that the pupil who is 17 years old has received a letter from his mother who has recently been released from prison.

She resides in California some two thousand miles away and has asked her son to come and live with her. The boy currently resides with his papa and grandma in a small house with several other extended family members. The pupil does not get on with his grandparents and accuses them of picking on him and making his life a misery. The pupil has learning difficulties, which have been identified in a recent psychological profile by the school psychologist. The boy who has received some money and a one-way bus ticket from his mother is eager to leave the State and live with her but is concerned that his grandparents will not allow it as they have custody of him and will not release him to the care of his mother.

Dave has the unenviable task of sorting this problem out although this could be viewed as a school welfare issue and not one that Dave should necessarily be concerned with. He explains that he has known the boy for a number of years and although he fears the worst for him if he returns to live with his mother, he wants to make sure that he is okay. He goes on to say that if the boy really wants to go to California then he is able to without any more worry and upset.

After a number of phone calls and a long conversation with the grandparents, Dave drives the boy home and it is agreed by all parties that the following day he will return to his mother.

Dave is deeply concerned about the welfare of the boy as depicted in the diary example Appendix Q. Dave ensures that the boy has enough money for the trip and offers him advice about travelling alone. Dave is very genuine and tells the boy that he will miss him and worries about him going back to California. He tells the boy to ring him and gives him his card.

The pupil states *"It's good to know someone cares for me"*. He then reveals that he has a one-year-old daughter back in California whom he hasn't seen since birth.

### **The BB Gun episode**

John had been alerted to a young student of the school who had been seen by a member of staff in possession of a handgun in his car in the school parking lot. John had called for assistance and a controlled stop and search had revealed that the pupil in question was in fact in possession of a handgun, which was capable of firing pellets.

The pupil was arrested and taken to the police station and subsequently permanently excluded from the school. Unfortunately the girlfriend of the accused depended on him to drive her to and from school each day from her home address.

The young girls' father was adamant that he would not drive her to school and his solution to the pending problem was for her to go to the local school close to where



she lived. She was not allowed to catch the local bus and was too young to drive herself. She had however recently transferred from this school, as she was extremely unhappy there. The young girl had experienced a disjointed childhood and life at home was far from settled. She explained her unhappiness to John, stating that life at home was barely tolerable and the reluctance of her father to help her get to school was becoming too upsetting for her.

John arranged a meeting with a counsellor at the school and between them they looked at the various alternatives which could alleviate this problem which the young girl faced. Solutions included car pooling with other students or attending another college as well as the school on a split timetable, which would enable her to travel with friends on the school bus and ultimately speaking to the father to explain the circumstances to him.

John also recommended the girl for financial help through the Police Athletic League Scholarship, which aims to assist academically bright, well-motivated students who struggle financially and in other ways to reach their maximum potential.

I was amazed at the concern that John showed for the girl and the depth of knowledge that he had about her background and home circumstances. He genuinely cared for the girl and was strongly opposed to her having to attend another school to fulfil her education. He empathised with the girl's predicament and was determined to find a solution to the problem despite it not being an issue, which he needed to be involved with. He had done his "job" and arrested a pupil who had threatened the safety of the school and all its occupants by bringing a loaded handgun on to the premises. John however is not the sort of officer to walk away from a problem once it is brought to his attention and his commitment and professionalism was noted by myself and deeply appreciated by the young girl who thanked him repeatedly for his help. John explained that pupils who he has helped at the school over the last four years have often returned to the school to let him know how they were getting on with their lives. The girls would bring their babies in to show him and on several occasions he says that he has been invited to birthday parties and even weddings.

## **Teaching Lessons**

Both Dave and John teach formal lessons to pupils in class, however both state that they do not find the time to teach as much as they would like. Their lessons are mainly law related and their aim is to teach the pupils about the law and strategies for staying out of trouble.

## **Stop and Search Lesson**

I observed a lesson that John taught to a class of pupils who receive an alternative curriculum because of a combination of their learning difficulties and behaviour problems. The class were extremely attentive and interested in the lesson and not once did John have to comment on any of the pupil's behaviour.

The class answered all the questions and were happy to participate in role-plays and in response asked a number of pertinent questions about being stopped and searched by the police. They were surprisingly knowledgeable about the law and were able to recall previous information that John had given them in other classes.

## **Doing a Columbine**

The events surrounding the tragic day at Columbine High School in April 1999 are still fresh in the memory of many officers in the Lakewood Police District. The school is situated only a few miles from the Lakewood police station and although it is not covered by their district every officer who was on duty that day attended the scene from dozens of different law enforcement agencies.

The scenes that officers were confronted with that day will be forever imbedded in their memories and will have affected them in a variety of ways. Of equal concern are the lasting and far-reaching implications of such an incident that now influence the way schools and police officers alike carry out their daily tasks. (Nicoletti, 2001.)

In the wake of Columbine numerous hoax calls were made to local police departments and schools threatening "to do another Columbine". Such was the outcry that an

incident could have taken place in “middle America”, in an affluent neighbourhood such as Littleton that every call was taken seriously and the merest threat or suggestion that a pupil may be in possession of a gun was investigated thoroughly.

With this in mind it was late afternoon when both John and myself were just leaving the school office to make a final walk around the school when the Assistant Principal called for assistance. As John entered the office a hysterical boy ran towards him screaming and shouting and attempted to push past John. John stood his ground and after a feeble attempt to pass John the boy went and sat down in his chair next to the teacher still crying and now displaying real signs of aggression. It was quite clear that he had been thwarted in his attempt to escape by John’s intervention and that his sheer presence had exposed the futility of his actions and had left him even more frustrated. There was a police officer present and there was no conceivable way that the pupil was going to “take him on”, however angry he was, there was too much respect for the police and realisation of the consequences for this individual. The pupil resorted to punching himself in the face and put his finger to his head and pulled an imaginary trigger. The Assistant Principal who interpreted it as showing her “the finger” misread this action. John immediately challenged the pupil who stated, “You teachers piss me off. This is exactly what happened at Columbine the teachers pissed the kids off”.

As with most pupils in the school John has known most of them for a number of years and this individual was no exception. John managed to calm him down and asked him to explain his actions and comments. Only after a lengthy discussion, which involved the boy’s stepfather, was John prepared to release the pupil into the father’s care. Alternative solutions to this delicate situation would have seen the boy being taken to an assessment centre to determine his mental state of mind.

John had managed to alleviate a violent situation which the Assistant Principal was not able to do and had been called upon in the knowledge that he would be able to assist and solve the matter in a professional and satisfactory manner. The teacher in question actually left John in charge of the situation whilst she attended another meeting, confident that John was on top of the problem and returning at the conclusion of the affair to thank John for his assistance. John’s other concern was

that the pupil might commit suicide and having dealt with one earlier that week which I had witnessed I shared his concern. The girl in question had attempted to strangle herself but had luckily been found unconscious by a passing teacher and revived.

Three other incidents in the same week at a neighbouring school had resulted in three students taking their lives in separate incidents. One had hung himself and another had shot himself shortly after being given a ticket for smoking cannabis at school by the school resource officer. A further suicide in a Middle school occurred where a pupil had tied a plastic bag over his head and died of asphyxiation. Another note was found on another school's computer just days after these events although it appeared that the threats had not been carried through. (See Appendix R.)

All of these incidents have culminated in the SROs being very cautious about claims that pupils make and to a certain extent have provided the opportunity for a number of pupils to fuel the situation and seek attention by alluding to threats of suicide.

One other incident that also highlights the after effects of the Columbine tragedy occurred when an Assistant Principal notified John that a young boy had been identified as being responsible for writing on a school desk. The inscription on the desk read, "I hate Jocks. I'm going to do another Columbine". "Jocks" is a common term used to describe pupils who participate in school sports and who are particularly athletic and popular within a school.

In many of the writings discovered in the aftermath of Columbine at the homes of the two gunmen Klebold and Harris their hatred of "Jocks" and their intention to kill them were well documented. Incidents at other schools in the U.S. have revealed that these popular athletes who are often despised by other students for their perceived arrogance have been the targets of similar attacks. After speaking to the pupil concerned, John was satisfied with his explanation and the pupil's apparent understanding of his actions and their impact. Nevertheless, John still attended the pupil's house where he found numerous drawings and writings in his bedroom, which were disturbingly graphic in their depiction of humans being tortured and killed and often satanic in their nature and content. Although the pupil was not charged with any offences it is a timely reminder of the worrying trend that seems to be emerging in

schools right across the U.S. The very day that this incident happened national tabloids reported on the trial of a seventeen year old girl who had agreed to take part in a school massacre with three other friends at their high school in New Bedford Massachusetts. The girl, however, had warned her favourite teacher for fear that this teacher may get hurt in the events that were about to follow. The pupils had allegedly modelled their plans on the Columbine High School Massacre, where they had hoped to videotape their killings before taking their own lives.

### **Restorative Justice**

Recently, many school communities have begun to explore the use of restorative justice processes as part of a more comprehensive approach to school discipline. To this end SROs are attempting to work with pupils in the hope that they can stop them from offending.

The goals of these school-based efforts are to:

- Reduce reliance on punitive discipline (suspension, expulsion, police charges)
- Enable offenders to make amends directly to their victims and the wider school community
- Develop discipline protocols where victims, offenders, parents and staff are all active participants
- Reintegrate offending students successfully back into the school community

Colorado School Mediation Project (2001).

The process is entirely voluntary for both offender and victim and attempts to include all those who have been impacted by the incident. Perpetrators of the crime are offered this process as an alternative to “traditional retributive discipline protocol” or as a re-entry tool on their return. Several of the Lakewood schools use this model to address crimes that have occurred at school and I was able to participate in several of them. In every case the parties who are involved in the incident are referred by the SRO to the district probation officer. The probation officer then interviews both the victim/s and the offender/s and explains the restorative programme in more depth. All

parties are asked to tell their story and answer some basic questions. (See Appendix S).

The first conference that I attended involved two teenage boys who had been stopped by the SRO fighting in the school playground and the officer had given them the option of a “ticket” for fighting which would involve a court appearance and a fine or restorative justice. Both boys had opted for the restorative justice conference and had arrived on time accompanied by their mothers. Also present were two probation officers and the relevant SRO and myself as a member of the community. It transpired that the boys had allowed themselves to be coerced into a fight with each other after being taunted by a number of other boys who they claimed were their friends. It was quite apparent that both boys were embarrassed about being involved in the fight, which was complicated by the fact that both their families were close friends and socialised together at weekends. Although it was obvious from their standard replies that the boys had thought carefully about what they were to say to each other in terms of apologising the meeting was not without emotion. One of the mothers was very upset by the incident and on a number of occasions other issues surrounding the families’ background were mentioned and added a wider perspective to the issues at hand. The conference was very successful in allowing the boy’s to explain how they came involved in the fight and the processes by which they had realised the futility and impact of the incident. The parents and the SRO were able to explain how it had impacted on them in terms of the worry and inconvenience it had caused them and the problems that such incidents had caused the school and its staff. The boys clearly understood how far reaching were the impact of their actions and between the group we were able to suggest and agree on a number of issues that were needed to make amends.

These included:

- Volunteer for a “teen court” jury and to participate on a group conference similar to this one assuming the role of an effective community member.
- Talk to friends so they know that the problem between them has been resolved and will not continue.

- Sit down and talk to each other (both offenders)
- Provide explanation to the SRO
- Verbal apology to teachers to be noted on progress report
- Thank you and apology letter to Assistant Principal
- Sit and talk with siblings about the effects of fighting
- Weekly progress report indicating verbal apologies to teachers and SRO.

It was evident by the end of the meeting that the healing process had already begun to take place with both boys sharing a donut and disappearing into a nearby room to chat to each other about their feelings.

I was very impressed by the whole episode, which had concluded successfully without referring both boys through the criminal justice system. A decision such as this would have resulted in clogging up an already congested court system and would not have resolved many of the issues, which were discussed at the conference.

The meeting certainly fulfilled its goals and addressed a number of other issues which will hopefully benefit others, in particular the agreement for the boys to talk to their friends and to educate their younger brothers and sisters about the effects of fighting. This was without a doubt a very useful tool for dealing with offences of this nature in a very effective and appropriate manner.

### **Relationship with Support Staff**

#### **Eric the Cleaner**

On returning to Dave's room one morning there was middle aged man sitting in his office. The man was clearly distraught and it was quite apparent that he was to a degree both emotionally and behaviourally disturbed. Dave explained that Eric was employed by the school to clean the hallways and classrooms at night and that he had known him for a number of years.

Eric's speech was quite hard to understand but after a long conversation during which Dave listened intently it was apparent that Eric was depressed and upset about his mother who had been calling him on the phone on a regular basis to check up on him.

Eric lives alone and explained that he was having trouble paying the rent and finding enough money to feed himself. Dave offered him some words of comfort and gave him a ride home via the police station where he stopped momentarily to get an envelope from his office. The envelope was given to Eric and on opening it there was \$50 of food vouchers for a local supermarket.

Eric was extremely grateful and enjoyed the rest of the ride home, which was interspersed with repeated expressions of thanks. What was so astonishing about the whole episode was not only the kindness, which Dave showed, but also the fact that Eric had approached Dave in the first place. He had come into see Dave hours before he was due to start work at the school with the expectation that Dave was the person who was going to help him with this dilemma that was troubling him.

Dave, as I had now come to expect did not let him down, but rather went out of his way to reinforce the strong relationship, which already exists between him and one of the school support staff.

### **Campus Security**

Other support staff include counsellors and campus security at the school all of which the SROs interact with on a daily basis. The campus security in particular are viewed as "the eyes and ears of the school", according to one SRO and are extremely good at gathering intelligence to pass onto the officer. Another SRO refers to them as "my right arm" who save me time, another states "without their help I could not do my job".

The importance of the camp security role is clear to see from the officer's replies to a survey about their relationship with these support staff. (See Appendix W.) They emphasise the need to work as a partnership trusting their judgement and avoiding



supervising them or giving orders, but rather treating them as equals. "We talked a lot shared information.... When they needed help I was there to help them".

These comments were certainly borne out in the events that I witnessed where officers and security interacted. The security appeared very respectful of the SROs and on many occasions sought their advice on matters of security. They constantly kept the officer updated of any incidents that had or were occurring around the school and backed up the officer whenever he dealt with such incidents.

Several fights occurred while I was at the schools and on every occasion the campus security were there to back up the SRO both physically and verbally which gave the effect of there being a handful of officers dealing with an incident. This helped the SRO contain the situation and concentrate on the offending pupils without having to deal with on lookers and hecklers.

### **Counsellors and other support staff**

All of the schools, which I visited, have counsellors as members of their staff who are there to look after the needs of the children attending the school. The counsellors meet regularly with the SROs to discuss individual pupils who are having difficulties at school or with home life.

Often the counsellors invite the officers to sit in on meetings with the pupil's parents, relevant teachers and other key workers such as psychologists, speech therapists and special education teachers. The counsellors appear to depend on the officers for their advice and guidance and on one occasion highlighted in the observation of John's day (See Appendix Q), John had to spend time counselling the counsellor who was extremely upset after witnessing an attempted suicide in one of her rooms.

In particular this counselor depended on the SROs for legal advice especially in cases of assault and sexual abuse and on a number of occasions I was present when either officer was called upon to offer their advice and guidance about a certain situation.

## **Chapter Five**

### **5.0 Project Analyses**

#### **Introduction**

This section analyses the work of the pilot project through the interactions of the police officer with other members of the partnership using the diary as a guide to events that occurred and how they were perceived and dealt with.

It backs these findings up with examples from the staff and pupil questionnaires and a limited number of semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires were constructed in such a way that they encouraged the respondent to offer full explanations and examples, which would provide a clear and informative picture of their feelings about the scheme.

It then aims to show how the work can be measured in terms of its success against current government policies on youth crime and the extent to which the aims and objectives of the scheme, which are outlined below, were fulfilled.

## 5.1 U.K Project Analyses.

My role within the school was to

- To develop and implement partnership activities to reduce crime and disorder,
- To represent the Metropolitan Police Service
- To develop trust and confidence and enhance relationships between the school, police and the community.

With this in mind I set out to see how I could achieve this by applying particular strategies, notably:

- To establish a good working relationship with staff
- To break down barriers with pupils
- To be a permanent point of contact
- To develop confidence and trust
- To assist with maintaining good order in and around the school.

This investigation aimed to see:

- To what extent I have achieved these goals
- Whether or not my work at the school has had a negative or positive impact on the staff and pupils
- Whether or not there has been an impact on crime and disorder in the area.

In addition government strategies, which include the following, can be used to gauge the progress of the officers work. (See Appendix C.)

- School Community Links-helping schools raise pupil's motivation, expectation and achievement.
- Truancy

- Bullying
- Personal and Social Health Education
- Citizenship
- Public Reassurance
- Fear of Crime
- Reducing Youth Crime

## Staff Questionnaires

### The officer's role in school.

Approximately half of the returns indicated that the role of the officer was as a *“visible deterrent to discourage and deal with intruders, drug dealing, bullying, vandalism, potential troublemakers, petty crime, misbehaviour and theft.”*

32% of the replies also stated that the role entailed dealing with difficult, dangerous, and aggressive students with a view to reducing the number of incidents of violence towards pupils and staff. Other comments included maintaining site safety and the safety of staff and students.

It is clear that the staff saw the role as mainly one of law enforcement as opposed to any other. They felt that a police officer was present to deal with incidents of crime and to use their power or mere presence to deter such occurrences. A smaller number of teachers thought that the officer dealt with truancy and general absenteeism whilst the same number felt that the police officer spent their time as a positive role model promoting respect and good relations between the police and inner city youth. Other secondary roles included being approachable and a confidential point of contact, dispelling fears that some pupils may have about the police and to support staff and pupils with disciplinary matters.

Only 14% people commented on the fact that they understood the role of the officer as one of an educator, teaching the pupils about drugs, citizenship and bullying. This was particularly surprising as up until this point in time the only contact that the school and many of the teachers had had with the police was as a result of a schools officer attending the school periodically to teach lessons.

What was clearly apparent was that the staff understood that a police officer was on site to help make the school a safer learning environment through their ability to apply the law where appropriate.

There was, however, criticism from the staff that the role of the officer had not been clearly explained despite requests through the teaching union to do so. Many respondents claimed that they had to find out for themselves often as a result of asking the officer directly which they felt was an oversight on behalf of the school management.

18% indicated that the officer should spend more time in the classroom teaching the pupils and educating them in assemblies and spending time going on class trips.

14% of the comments reinforced the need for the officer to assert himself as a law enforcer:

- *Allowed to be more active within the work of the school yet still maintaining powers of police and arrest.*
- *I feel that you should have a more 'seen' role, where you are more 'in-charge' and are able to act as any police officer on duty and not always have to negotiate arrests with the head in such detail.*
- *Power to take into custody any perpetrators of offences – drug pushing, bullying, threatening behaviour, stealing and fighting.*
- *The police should be dealing with criminal activities in accordance with the law and not what the school deems.*

These comments highlight how strongly some teachers feel about the need to for police action in schools to deal effectively with the incidents of crime, which occur and contrast sharply with two comments which state that “*police should not be involved in schools*” and “*have no role to play.*”

## **Qualities required for police officers working in schools.**

These were extremely varied and are not placed in any specific order, however the majority of them echoed the need for the officer to have a genuine interest and love for children and to be able to understand and relate to them and the problems they face.

There was also a strong emphasis on having an understanding of educational issues the general running of a school and its functions in particular with regards to school behaviour policies and school rules.

Other qualities mentioned that were desirable for the officer to have included the ability to work in a team and to be *assertive, calm, caring, concerned, consistent, co-operative, empathetic, intelligent, polite, professional, respectful, sensitive, strict, supportive and tactful.*

There were other qualities listed which serve to highlight the high degree of skills that teachers feel police officers need to possess in order to succeed in the role of school based officer.

## **What should the police officer wear?**

This issue surrounding what the officer should wear around the school in order to perform his duties was a topic of much debate. Clearly the police wished to see the officer in uniform, which was in keeping with the one of the original aims to represent the Metropolitan Police Service in the local area.

The Head however preferred to see the officer in plain clothes in order to blend in with the school. 61% of the comments disagreed with these sentiments:

*“A uniform imparts a degree of authority so they are not seen as just another adult. The uniform also helps to reinforce the ‘face’ of the police and foster police-community relations.”*

*“Police uniform has a negative image for young people, (wearing one on site) could help make this image more positive.”*

However, there was also 21% of the staff, which outlined the need for the dress of the officer to be flexible depending on his role or whether they were attending a social function.

Only 7% stated the need for the officer to wear plain clothes and they were due to the perception of the teachers who felt that since changing from plain clothes in the first few weeks to uniform the officer was viewed negatively and that whilst in plain clothes the officer would avoid creating a hostile and threatening atmosphere within the school.

A solitary comment made the point that police in schools should be in uniform and identifiable as police officers and that it would be unacceptable for them to be presented as teachers or mentors to pupils as this would be dishonest and gives a misrepresentation of police in the community. *“He should not be in our school in whatever uniform.”*

### **School safety-themes**

79% stated that the presence of a police officer on site was a real deterrent to outsiders and that it had noticeably reduced the number of unwanted people wandering around the school. One reply explained, *“I do feel safer seeing police around, despite having very mixed feelings about the police in general.”*

Other comments concentrated on the general lack of security within the school and the worry that the school was a dangerous place, which was *“fast getting out of control with no management control.”*

There was also a general insight into the behaviour of some of the students who are aggressive and violent towards members of staff and make the school feel unsafe. The presence of a police officer gave many teachers reassurance and a general feeling of safety, *“Absolutely, can't imagine life here without the presence of an officer.”*



Several other comments concluded that the school had in fact got worse as a result of more aggression and conflict due to the officers presence and that it had caused more tension between staff and pupils.

### **Reporting Crime**

Exactly half of the teachers stated that they had reported something to the officer which had ranged from persons acting suspiciously, pupils carrying pellet guns, forged bus passes, and pupils dealing drugs and after a theft had occurred.

The remainder of the replies said that they had not had any reason to report anything, but many of them would if the occasion arose, whilst one reply felt that the police could not offer anything more than the schools own system of discipline.

### **Themes about how the officer has helped or hindered the project.**

71.5% of the replies focused on how helpful the officer had been and reveals the diversity of the officer's role within the school through the teacher's examples. These include calming aggressive students, who had assaulted members of staff, taking lessons and assemblies, talking to students about matters of theft, talking about police procedures on events outside school, removing disruptive students, helping with "sports day", teaching and setting up a swim project, searching for stolen property, day to day calling into classrooms, "being an asset to my curriculum area" and acting in a consultative role.

A further 89% stated that they could not describe an occasion where the officer had been unhelpful. Only three replies in total had negative comments about the officers role and these all concentrated on the arrest of a pupil which the respondents felt was "outrageous" as it had not had a positive effect on the students who were outraged about the whole incident and felt that the young boy who had been arrested was publicly humiliated.

## **Themes around the positive and negative aspects of having a police officer.**

Three quarters of the staff said that they had noticed positive changes in particular in relation to safety. They felt that there were fewer incidents of intruders on the school site and a much calmer atmosphere throughout the school.

Many of these teachers had experienced an improvement in the punctuality of the pupils to lessons and a definite reduction in truancy. It was felt that bullying had been reduced and the officer had challenged a number of unsatisfactory behaviours displayed by the students, which included “*spliffing*”. (Smoking a joint of cannabis).

Staff also stated that many of their students who were worried about issues of bullying and violence were able to speak to the officer who is not only familiar with the law but also able to offer them some assistance and protection.

A by-product of this was that students were more wary of what they did in school although it was felt that this did not necessarily affect how they behaved out of school. In general it was the belief that the officer was able to challenge criminality and that his presence acted as a reminder to students that they needed to conduct themselves correctly.

With regards to negative qualities that had taken place in the school half of the returns stated that they had not noticed any but added that they had been aware that some of the more cynical members of staff had begun to mellow. Whilst a small number felt they were unable to comment. Those that did outlined initial scepticism at the scheme, which brought about an uneasy tension that took time to ease. An issue around the ability to dispel deep-seated resentment against the police was questioned and the concern about disruptive students becoming the subject of police intelligence reports that would follow them for the rest of their lives.

Staff also expressed disquiet about press reports that the school was “*one of XXXX worst*”. Other issues voiced addressed the fact that some staff were not adhering to school protocol when dealing with discipline issues and instead approaching the police, which had caused further concerns about confidentiality.

One comment described some of the pupils as being more aggressive because of the presence of an officer as they felt “*policed*”. However, other comments from the staff about what they had picked up from the children revealed that not all of them felt so negative towards the scheme. In fact many of the sixth formers said that the officer was someone to talk to and one stated,

*“The immature and unruly students don’t like having a police officer around as he is proactive and picks up on their unruly behaviour. Vulnerable students and staff welcome our own officer.”*

A similar comment was made that is equally as powerful “*Students who need to feel safe do. Students who are worried about his presence need to be.*” There were also comments picked up from the pupils that they were not sure why they had a police officer in their school and the feeling that it must be a bad school to need one. One teacher claimed that she had spoken to two Year 9 girls who felt worried by police presence firstly because of a lack of confidence in the police and secondly, because there was a concern that she may get arrested.

### **Issues of Trust**

It was encouraging to see that 75% of the staff stated that they trusted the police service albeit to varying degrees. Some of these expressed reservations and realism that nobody is perfect as well as an understanding of why other staff may not trust the police although this was not explained. 21.5% clearly did not trust the police and one exclaimed that such an issue was easily explained after the death in custody of a local resident.

It was also encouraging to note that nearly all of the staff trusted the schools officer, again to varying degrees. Many of the replies focused on the qualities displayed by the officer that had brought this about, with one person stating that they trusted him more than some senior managers.

Other issues around trust focused on the access and use of confidential information. A little more than half expressed no concern at all and felt that when the occasion arose the issue would be dealt with professionally. 28.5% were decidedly more concerned about this issue, which focused mainly on the officer being able to access computer records of the pupils and using it to criminalise them. One member of staff said that this would be less of a problem if his role were made clearer.

A final question on the theme of trust centered on the whether the project had changed the staff's opinion of the police service and in what way. 36% of the returns said that it had not changed their opinion, but that they had always had a good opinion of the work that police officers do. One respondent stated that the presence of a permanent member of the police service was a very positive one and another felt that it further enhanced their understanding of the police service and how it works. A further 25% said that it had changed their perception but for positive reasons. Some of the replies were extremely encouraging and a few are outlined below.

*"Students are now familiar with the police service and the police are now seen in a more positive light as a result of this project."*

*"Yes-it's the first time that I have worked with the police. I've been impressed with his common sense approach and his use of discretion".*

*"Yes. It has given me the chance to work alongside and that has been an enriching process. I have enjoyed working and talking on a professional basis as well as a social basis".*

Other members of staff said that their opinions had not necessarily changed and offered advice as to how the officer could be used more productively. Several comments were again quite negative and centered on the lack of consultation, which was afforded them about the scheme before it started.

Within the questionnaire I included the three aims and asked the respondents to explain how the project had achieved or failed in attempting to fulfil them.

The first aim was to develop trust and confidence and enhance relationships between the police and the community.

One reply states, *“my tutor group do not feel apprehensive about the police. A number of them want to join the police force, which is very encouraging.”*

Other replies highlighted positive aspects and described the scheme as step in the right direction, but that it needed further development. In particular the staff felt that the pupils had showed a difference in the way that they now responded to police and that these positive changes should where possible be extended to the parents.

There was a general feeling that the staff and pupils had learnt a great deal more about the police service through daily contact with the officer and that this had broken down any misconceptions or prejudices that may have existed.

Many of the staff were not able to comment on the effect of the scheme on the community as a whole but one or two did criticise the school management for not embracing the scheme fully.

*“I don’t think that the police have failed in any way. I think the school has failed the police service. I think the Head is frightened by it.”*

Naturally there were one or two comments, which focused on the arrest of one boy in the school for robbery, which were used to highlight the reason that some teachers had no confidence in the police and even referred to incidents totally unconnected with the scheme.

The second aim was based on how the officer had represented the police service in the local community of the pilot project. It was pleasing to note all the positive remarks, which focused on the good impression that had been portrayed of the police service by the officer. A number of examples were given that achieved this and included working hard with the pupils to foster good relationships. There were however, a number of staff who thought that even more could be done in this area to improve the profile of the police in the community and that more activities were

needed so that kids could see the police in a different light. It was also pointed out that the officer should do more work with the teachers themselves on a one to one basis. One comment summed it up for me

*“Failed: Insufficient use of P.C. Andy Briers”*

The final aim was to develop and implement partnership activities with the school to reduce crime and disorder in the local area. Again comments were made about the good work that was achieved but that there was still room for improvement. More schemes are required and again there were criticisms of the school for failing to build upon those schemes that were put in place.

The success of many of these partnership activities according to the staff were as a result of the officer being able to break down the communication barriers between himself and the young people which are in existence in many of the schools. Again there is one reply that captures the essence of the work that was achieved in this particular area and fulfils the aim of partnership activities.

*“The officer’s participation in local out of school activities with young people in this area has further enhanced the police image among young people. This example of leadership and involvement must influence young people and help them experience a very positive relationship with the police force. This in turn will reduce crime in this area in the future.”*

### **Themes around the future of police in schools**

The final few questions of the survey concentrate on the future of police in schools and the community and the staff’s opinion of what they would like to see or recommend that the police should be involved in.

The main theme around what more could the police do in the community was strongly in favour of activities and after school clubs organised for the youth of the borough. It was expressed that this is one of the main functions of the police to build good community relationships and that through sports activities; this was one of the best

ways to achieve it. Some teachers also stated that officers should be involved at a much younger level with nursery and primary school children and that work also needed to be done with some parents in addition to their children. 79% of the replies said that they thought that police in schools was a good idea as the police were able to deal with the vast number of criminal activities that were taking place at the school which the school itself are unable to deal with. Some said that it was sad although inevitable that police were needed at all in school, but that in hindsight the school was now a much safer place for both staff and pupils. Other areas that were mentioned included the promotion of respect between the police and the pupils and the on site advice and experience of the officer to deal with matters that arose of a criminal nature.

Equally 79% of the replies said that they would like the present officer to continue to work in the school and reinforced the good work that had already been undertaken in the school. Again many teachers outlined room for improvement but felt that this was just the start of things to come and that more could be achieved given time.

*“Definitely! I think we could really develop his role and “use” him much more effectively by integrating him further in the life of the school.”*

A further question asked whether the staff would prefer to see a new officer and to this extent only 7% of the replies said, *“Yes, for his own sake”* because of recent tensions between the Head and the officer, whilst others said that as long as it was someone of a similar character or better still a second officer. Not surprisingly there were only 7% of the staff who felt that other schools would not benefit from a similar scheme, although it was pointed out that the most challenging schools would probably benefit the most, especially in inner-city areas. Some staff said that caution should be taken; as not every school is the same and that they all have their own unique problems.

A final question gave the staff the opportunity to make any other comments about the officer or the pilot project. I have once again highlighted a few, as they stand alone in what they say about the scheme.

*“An excellent idea and only positive things come of this project if all are willing the officer to do his job”.*

*“I think the police service is on the right track in crime prevention. More involvement with young people is necessary to gain their trust and confidence. School is the ideal place to start.”*

*“ I think people should see the real benefits of having a police resource in school. He should not be seen as a security guard and should not be controlled by the Head. He needs to have a clearly defined role and then trusted to develop this as any other senior staff member. There is great scope for such development and the police is a massive resource students and staff should have and want access to.”*



## Pupil Questionnaires

The pupils were initially asked if they liked having a police officer in their school. 78 % said that they did and the reasons that they stated centered on their concerns with safety issues around the school.

These issues included the officer being able to stop fights and cases of bullying and deal with everyday problems, which makes the school safer for everyone. One pupil said that they liked being able to talk to the officer at any time instead of having to rely on calling the police.

Other pupils were less enamoured by the work of the officer and explained

*“The police officer picks on people, black mostly, and he is racist.”*

One said that he could not be trusted and was never where the action was, while another said that he did not want the police to know what he was doing.

68% of the pupils said that they understood why a police officer was in their school, however very few of the pupils were able to explain why this was. They assumed that it was because of all the fights that took place. In general they felt that the role was merely to keep an eye on them and deal with any behaviour problems that may occur whether from pupils at the school or from other schools. None of the pupils actually stated any positive roles such as breaking down barriers and providing schemes and activities for them. Similarly, to the staff the pupils were asked about the officer wearing school uniform. Again the vast majority said that they preferred to see the officer in uniform so that he was easily recognisable. Other pupils said that this would help to discourage bad behaviour and would scare away troublemakers from other schools.

*“It also gives the officer an air of authority and respectability that makes him look in charge and allows pupils to find him when they need him.”*

Some pupils saw the officer's presence as a threat and for this very reason thought that the officers should be in uniform and clearly distinguishable. *" He should be in uniform ...in case we are in a fight and we don't see him coming."*

Similar thoughts were expressed by other students who said that the uniform made them feel uneasy, although some said that the use of plain clothes would allow the police officer to catch people out when they were messing around.

When asked whether the school was a safer place since having a police officer just over half of the pupils said, "Yes". I was surprised that not more of the pupils thought that the school was a safer place. Many of them had said that there were fewer fights and people were less willing to mess around in case they were caught.

Those that said it was no safer did not provide any reasons for this other than they still witnessed fights on the school site.

It did not appear that my work had had as much influence on the pupils as it had with the staff which was emphasised by only 27% of them revealing that the pilot project had changed their opinion of the police service in a positive manner.

Although some of these replies were very positive indeed:

*"It is a lot more hard work than I thought."*

*"I don't think they are so bad they are here to guide us in the right direction."*

*"My view has changed a big amount. I now want to join the police service."*

Those replies that said their views had not changed did not give any reasons other than they did not like the police and still don't.

The pupils were also asked whether they viewed a school-based officer the same as one out on patrol in the street. 34% thought that the two were the same *"because you can still get into trouble."*

Interestingly though 43% said “No”, they saw clear distinctions between the two roles. Their reasons were based on their observations of the officer’s interaction with them. The general opinion was that the school-based officer was not as strict as patrol officers and did not arrest as many people. They described some of these patrol officers as “bad”, and who carry body armour unlike the school officer who dresses differently and who “*is much kinder than the other officers*”.

A concern for many senior officers is that school based officers are seen as “friendly uncle” type officers who don’t arrest and enforce the law when required. It is important that the pupils view all officers as having the power to arrest but that some are specifically employed to work with the community in particular school children.

It is through their interactions with children that they are perceived as friendlier and more approachable, but certainly not to the point where they ignore crimes that have occurred. It appears from most of these replies that a balance has been struck between the two roles.

On the issue of trust 69% said that they trusted the police and stated that the police were there to help us fight against crime and assist you whenever they could. Only 26% said that they didn’t because they said that they didn’t know the police and as far as they were concerned they were strangers. This speaks volumes about the need to get into schools and interact with the children.

When asked the same question about their own school officer a smaller number 54% said that they trusted him and a larger number 36% said that they did not.

Those that did trust the officer made some very encouraging comments, which highlight the impact that the officer had whilst at the school.

*“I totally trust him because he is always around to help.”*

*“He knows most of us probably aren’t bad.”*

*“He is very helpful and kind.”*

*“He’s on his own and he does a lot for our school XXXX”.*

*“If I have a problem I could tell him in complete confidence”.*

Those who felt that they did not trust the officer expressed the same reasons of not knowing the officer as they did for the patrol officers.

The next few questions centered on the theme of children being victims of crime. Approximately a quarter of all the pupils said that they had been a victim of crime either on way to from school or whilst actually at the school.

Amongst the replies half of them did not specify the crime and of those remaining the crimes committed included *“stalking, theft, bullying, intruders, sexual harassment and mugging.”*

The pupils were then asked which crimes they feared the most and a comprehensive list was given with room to include any others. Not surprisingly 41 of the pupils stated mugging as the crime they most feared. However, 55 replies stated bullying, 51 violence and 41 sexual harassment. Others included 35 for theft and 31 racial harassment. When asked if any of them would report these crimes to the school officer 59% said, “Yes”. This was extremely encouraging although not something, which I felt, had actually happened in reality. This may have been because they were aware of the issues surrounding my arrest on the school site. Those that said they would report crimes to police base their reasons for turning to the officer on trust, although one said, *“Only because a teacher would tell me too.”* Those who said that they would not turn to the officer said that they would tell their parents first then a teacher. Interestingly some of replies feared that by telling the officer they would make things worse and could expect more trouble from the bullies. This reveals an underlying problem in that pupils who report incidents are often subject to retaliation from the perpetrators who are rarely brought to account for their actions.

This is particularly true for persons on bail and on a number of occasions pupils who had reported crimes to me withdrew the allegation because of intimidatory tactics from the suspects or their extended family or friends who would turn up at the school and follow the victim home.

The next set of questions revolved around the officer and his interaction with the pupils in particular whether or not the officer had helped them in anyway or conversely upset them. 20% said that they had been helped by the officer in one way or another and 15% stated that the officer had actually upset them and cited the following reasons.

*“He framed me and tried to pulling me across the neck”*

*“He started shouting at me because I was late to my lesson, he didn’t ask why I was late.”*

*“I was two minutes late and he started giving me a lecture.”*

Despite these allegations 69% of the pupils said that actually wanted the police officer to stay in the school and said that since his arrival the school had become much safer and there was less crime occurring, which had resulted in the school being a better place.

A final question asked the pupils if they would consider joining the police cadets to which 18% of them said they would. This was reflected in the popularity of cadet corp, which ran after school and was well attended.

### **Interaction with Members of the Partnership**

#### **Communication with the Head**

I was extremely frustrated at the relationship, which I had with the Head of the school. My instincts coupled with my experience of working in schools had told me that it would be imperative for me to forge a good working relationship with him from

the outset. Despite my best attempts to achieve this it was without question one of the major stumbling blocks of the pilot project and one, which on reflection I felt I could do little to avoid. As I outlined in my diary there were numerous occasions when the Head failed to inform me of criminal activity that was occurring within the confines of the school. There is of course no requirement for him to do so, but is an issue which clearly undermines the purpose of having a police officer in school. It was his belief (and quite rightfully according to law) that he could deal with matters of a criminal nature, as he felt necessary. On occasions it is fair to say that information was passed to me with the expectation that I would deal with the matter. In particular I refer to the discovery of drugs on one boy by a member of the senior management team. However, it appeared that the school has clear guidelines on how it will deal with issues around drugs, but when it came to issues of bullying, assaults on teachers, robberies and intimidation, the guidelines appear more blurred and less distinguishable.

Crimes were on occasions reported to the Head, but rarely was I informed and on the notable occasions that I was, the information was often very scarce and any investigative matters around contacting the parents and speaking to the pupils concerned had usually taken place and the matter consequently resolved.

This form of practice is highly undesirable and immediately builds up barriers of mistrust between the school and the police. The role of the police is clearly defined and this includes representing the Metropolitan Police Service, whose role is essentially to serve the community. This incorporates the role of law enforcement and should include the officer investigating and where necessary arresting pupils when there is no other form of intervention deemed suitable. Why this practice took place is as a result of several contributing factors that became apparent from speaking to a number of the staff and from my own experiences at the school.

The Head was certainly concerned with allowing police the right to arrest pupils on site despite the nature of their crimes. Having discussed the matter with him he felt that it is his school and he retains the right to run it as he sees fit. However it is true to say that a small element of the teaching staff, which include the deputy head and

several school governors are actively anti-police as portrayed through some of the examples and letters outlined in the diary.

These political influences had great impact upon the Head's actions along with his own beliefs that he was in charge and to a degree felt threatened by the presence of any police officer that he did not have the power to control. This was a view that was expressed by a number of other teachers when I spoke to them and is a theme, which is highlighted in some of the survey responses.

The Head was in general fairly supportive of other initiatives such as the swim programme, the cadets, and partnership work with the prisons and local church groups, although his interest stemmed no further than supporting it in principle.

Other than the issues over reporting crime to me and allowing me to investigate such matters with the expectation that arrests could be made, the relationship with the Head did not appear to cause any other major concerns. Although it could be argued that with such fundamental problems at the heart of the project there was precious little room for anything else to go wrong.

The inevitable arrest of one boy for robbery at the school, however irrevocably changed the relationship between the Head and myself. The requirement of me to execute my duties in a manner, which I deemed both necessary and appropriate despite claims from the Head that this was not the case, resulted in a stalemate position for our relationship.

After being suspended from the school for a period of six weeks I returned to find that steps were in place to ensure that I checked in with the Head every morning for a meeting. Although in itself this was a good idea, it was in reality just an opportunity for him to ensure that nothing had gone wrong or indeed was about to. The opportunity to exchange ideas and information and to include me in the daily workings of the school were overlooked and instead a rigid chart of my movements were put in place to monitor me. The climax to our relationship was encapsulated by the Head's reluctance to permit the distribution of surveys to the pupils and staff. Despite repeated attempts to survey all the year groups this was denied me and

disputes over the ownership of the questionnaires and the method of their collection and storage was farcical. It all resulted in a familiar fashion with me being asked to leave the school for a week until the issue could be resolved.

### **Communication with Police Supervisors**

I am unable to disclose all those points of which I became aware that significantly influenced my relationship with my police supervisors as I am still currently employed by the Metropolitan Police and it would not be within my best interest to do so at this stage of my career nor indeed at any other.

However, this does not detract from the fact that they occurred and that I am unable to make reference to them for fear of any disciplinary action from the Service whether formal or otherwise. The main issue at hand was the total lack of supervision or support from the line management. This was displayed in several ways. Firstly, I did not receive any visits to the school by the supervisors for the first term and then only after I had put a report in writing about the problems that I was experiencing on a daily basis. Despite the report very few of the requests that I had made were met and any subsequent meetings were so brief as to be insignificant and a waste of time. They were in fact just a tick box exercise, which confirmed that a supervisory visit had taken place. Secondly, suggestions around forming after school activities such as swimming clubs and cadet programmes were not supported and I was left to find my own finances to run them. Thirdly, after the much-publicised arrest at the school many of my police supervisors felt that I had not acted appropriately by arresting the boy at school, and subsequently I was made to feel as if I had acted incorrectly.

Even since that occasion some senior officers have been fiercely critical of my actions surrounding the arrest and any defence or explanation appears to fall on deaf ears.

I was at the time required to make a formal apology to the Head, governor representative and Director of Education for the borough. This summed up my own feelings towards the matter in so far as I was apologising for acting within the law for something I felt was necessary and appropriate at the time. I was, however, prepared to go along with offering a formal apology in order for the pilot project to continue.



## **Communication with Police Colleagues**

I have outlined on several occasions the need for the scheme to be more widely advertised both at its inception and with regular updates of its progress. This would have been particularly beneficial to me in terms of the number of police colleagues who would have known about the scheme and the assistance we could have given to each other.

Unfortunately, very few officers knew of my existence and the pilot project and there was little opportunity to expand upon it, as the role was mostly self-contained within the school and to a degree isolated. Some good working relationships were formed through the identification of a number of robbery suspects who attended the school or who frequented the gates at break time. However, much more could have been achieved through knowledge and understanding of the scheme and some guidelines and training on how best to work in partnership with the school.

## **Communication with the Community**

Similar to the work with fellow officers not enough was achieved in this area of my work. I often found that I was unable to get out into the community enough due to the workload in the school. Those people I did manage to speak to on a fairly regular basis were those who were having particular difficulties with the school children especially at lunchtime. This was usually in the form of the kids sitting and smoking on their front garden walls, dropping litter, having fights, or general causing a nuisance.

Local shops and businesses were in general very keen to see the police outside their shops as the pupils caused a number of problems when entering the shops and this was a good opportunity outside of the school to deal with some of the troublesome pupils. Much more needed to be achieved with the community to enhance this relationship and is an area, which needs to be looked at in detail and worked upon.

## **Communication with Parents**

I was able to meet a number of parents at scheduled "parent evenings", however these meetings were brief and the majority of my contact with them was because their child had been in trouble at the school.

In my experience parents are very protective of their own children and are not always aware of their child's behaviour at school until they are summoned before the Head. Many of those that I spoke to were very aggressive towards the police in general and it was very difficult to build any relationships with them. The problem was often quite simple in that the first occasion I met them it was usually because of a problem that had become apparent. It was extremely promising that some parents came to the school to seek my help and assistance and on a number of occasions I was able to help them. Many expressed satisfaction at being able to speak directly with a police officer and receive personal attention without having to wait hours for one to turn up at their house. They also stated that the officer was usually able to assist them and that they weren't passed on to someone else who had little knowledge or understanding of the issue at hand. Similar to the work with the community I would like to have been more involved with the parents in the form of monthly meetings about issues within the school and after school that concerned them. In particular I would like to have been able to offer them more in the way of activities or projects for their children, with which they could have assisted.

Several parents were very grateful for the swim programme that was free to all of the children that attended and many of the parents wrote letters to the school to express their thanks and enquired whether something similar could be done for them.

## **Communication with Staff**

This was undoubtedly the area that the project had the most impact upon. There were a few notable members of staff who were very against the idea of having a police officer in school, which was based solely on their opinion of the police service that was essentially driven by their own political bias.

I was aware of the existence of such prejudices but not the influence that they were able to exert in particular towards the Head who appeared very cautious of their power. They did not interfere with the project directly, however on one occasion that I noted in my diary their lack of action resulted in a pupil being assaulted and nearly robbed in the playground by an intruder. It was apparent that these members of staff were not willing to acknowledge the scheme even when it was quite obvious that it afforded not only them but also the whole school with substantial benefits.

The vast majority of the staff, who I consulted with about these individuals reaction to the scheme, criticised their shortsightedness and highlighted the fact that their political beliefs were often at the forefront of their agenda, often to the detriment of the pupil's welfare. I had no direct contact with these teachers and it was quite apparent that they did not wish to socialise with me, in fact several of them made comments to both the Head and on the questionnaires that they felt uneasy in the staffroom when I was present.

As reflected by the surveys nearly all the staff that completed the questionnaires were very positive about the scheme. They highlighted areas where they felt the scheme had achieved its objectives and were also keen to point out areas for improvement.

I spent a great deal of my time trying to forge good links with these teachers as I felt that ultimately it would be them who would be the best gauge of whether the scheme had succeeded. They were in a position to determine whether there was less crime and disorder in the school and would be able to sense what the pupils felt about the scheme as well as the general effect it was having on school life.

I found that the teachers, although a little sceptical at first, were very welcoming and eager to point out areas of school life that needed improvement. They were particularly concerned about the rise in violent behaviour by a small number of the pupils and the lack of effective action that was being taken to deal with these issues.

Many of them wanted to see the officer take a more active role in the daily running of the school and to be more influential when dealing with matters of crime that arose. The opportunity for many of the staff to sit and chat about issues, which affected them

and to work out how to resolve them with the aid of the school police officer, helped strengthen our relationships. I shared many of their concerns and was pleased that they in turn were in agreement that the police should be able to intervene and offer advice in partnership with the school over a number of issues including the arrest of pupils.

This was shown in the number of staff who actually reported incidents to me that had occurred in the school and sometimes out of school at the weekend. Such incidents were rarely brought to my attention by the proper authority and often I was unable to act upon them, but at least they kept me abreast of what was happening in the school. I was also pleased to be able to offer them support and guidance in a number of other issues which arose from time to time that were not always connected to the school. These included writing references or giving advice about driving licences or other legal matters which all helped to break down any barriers of mistrust or reluctance that there may have initially been.

My only regret when considering my work with the staff is that I could not have done more to support them when dealing with some of the pupils who displayed aggressive and violent acts of behaviour towards them. This was a less than satisfactory situation, which the staff understood and sympathised with, although this was little consolation to those teachers who were consistently being abused by some of the pupils.

### **Communication with the Pupils**

I felt that my relationship with the pupils was extremely positive and I was surprised by the way in which many of them reacted towards me. The vast majority did not seem at all interested in having a police officer and it did not seem to affect their normal activities around the school, which gave no cause for concern.

I made a point of trying to talk to the pupils whenever I could on an informal basis which worked best at school activities like football, lunchtime table tennis clubs, the swimming club and most notably the cadets. The police cadet club, which ran after school, attracted a vast number of pupils who seemed genuinely keen to learn about

the police service. It boasted over 40 pupils on a regular basis and was a great opportunity to talk to the kids and tell them a little about my role at the school. The forming of such relationships made it easier to deal with some of the pupils when they were “messaging” around at school as they did not view my intervention as confrontational and were also keen to stay part of the cadets. On the other side there were a few pupils in all of the years that were intent on causing trouble and who were clearly out of control. They were roaming around the school out of lesson and treating the teachers with contempt and disdain. I often had confrontations with them over their behaviour or because they were truanting.

These pupils were extremely forthright in their views towards police and authority in general and were the root cause of many of the problems that exist within the school.

The school’s philosophy was to ignore their behaviour up to the point until they eventually had no choice but to exclude them. Many of these pupils had already come into contact with the police and had formed their opinions of the Service, which were expressed in their attitude and language towards me. Some of these pupils were more hostile than others and I was aware that there was little that I was going to be able to do to win them over. It was therefore inevitable that several of them were arrested for robberies in the local area and I had been able to provide the local robbery squad with information about the suspects. Several of the boys arrested were then a great deal less prominent in the school subsequent to their arrest and on speaking to them they admitted that their behaviour had been stupid and they did not wish to be reminded of the incident as they had now changed their ways. Others were not so remorseful and continued to cause havoc around the school. They continually turned up whenever there was trouble either during school time or outside the gates at lunchtime or near the bus stops after school.

It is my own opinion that I failed these particular boys as I was unable to divert them from their anti social activities. Had I been allowed to challenge these boys and had received the support from the Head in the way of disclosure of the incidents and the ability to affect potential arrests, then I would have significantly helped them.

Several of the boys involved in incidents around the school appeared in court and in the national papers recently after receiving long sentences for their part in a number of robberies carried out by a notorious young gang that dubbed themselves the “young mafia”. Two more of them now attend the Attendance Centre that I run for the Home Office and I have at last the opportunity to do some constructive work with them around their offending. This should have been achieved long before they received convictions for robbery and their behaviour is something, which both the school and myself were aware but the former seemed unwilling to tackle.

### **Communication with Support Staff**

The support staff included the caretakers the kitchen staff, cleaners as well as the educational welfare officer and mentors at the school. All of these workers were extremely supportive of my role with the notable exception of the school mentors.

They had arrived at the school at the same time as myself and their role was to provide in-house support for the pupils who were having varying degrees of difficulty at school. One of the team members was highlighted in the diary as witnessing a robbery on one pupil on a train as he made his way to school but refused to report it to police. Other members of the team supported his action and on another occasion were critical of the way in which I dealt with an incident that involved searching a pupil under the guidance of a teacher who had asked for my assistance.

The rest of the support staff in particular the caretakers were very supportive and expressed their concern over the behaviour of many of the pupils at the school and the need for a police officer to be present. Their support was also appreciated when they assisted me on a number of occasions ejecting intruders off of the school site. They expressed concerns that the pupils viewed them in a different light, as they were not teachers and therefore felt that they were powerless to deal with them should the occasion arise. Unfortunately, it did time after time and one caretaker recalled an incident where he had been confronted by three girls who were “high” on drugs and brandishing a kitchen knife. The police did attend and arrest the girls but he stated that an officer on site would have prevented such an occurrence and any such incident would have been met with a much quicker response.

The caretakers also stated that in their role as security for the school they had noticed a real decline in the number of “undesirable kids” turning up at the school gate and causing trouble. It was benefits such as these that the caretakers thought were so advantageous when having their own officer and went a long way to building good relations. One of the caretakers even overheard a child stating that his friends from an opposing school would not come to the school anymore because a police officer was always there.

## **5.2 U.S. Project Analyses.**

### **Introduction**

This section looks at the work conducted in several schools in Lakewood, which included an observational evaluation of the work of several SROs in their respective schools as well as seeking the opinions of a number of other people involved in the partnership.

The analyses will reveal the extent of the partnership work, which exists between the school and police through the use of questionnaires and interviews as well a diary of events, which captured the daily interactions between the officer and the school.

### **Staff Questionnaire**

#### **School A**

##### **The Officer's Role in the School**

53% of the returns indicated that the role of the officer was to be proactive in maintaining a safe school environment and ensuring the safety of staff and students. A further 30% of staff thought that the officer was there to take care of legal issues with students when their behaviour was criminal. In many cases this would involve arresting the pupils where it was beyond the control of the school. Approximately a quarter of the staff believed that the officer's role was also to educate both the staff and students about problems in the school and local community and to conduct special classes for the pupils to "ward off any potential problems". An equal number 18% felt that the officer was a good role model for the children and in doing so deterred the students from making bad choices in their lives. 12% described the role as keeping order and maintaining a crime free environment within the school setting and promoting good relationships between the police and the pupils by representing the department as non-threatening. This in turn would lead to better liaisons between the school and police department which allowed them the opportunity to go to the



officer for advice information and friendship. One comment interestingly remarked, *"His role is that of a police officer"*.

An overwhelming number of staff 71% said that the role of the officer was fully explained to them at either staff meetings or by the officer himself with a further 11.5% saying that it was to varying degrees. 65% of the staff said that they were happy with the present role being performed and backed this up with a number of reasons:

*"I think the role is well defined."*

*"He fits in perfectly as a deterrent, and educator and a positive presence."*

*"He does well with his role. We like having him here. He makes us feel safer."*

*"I believe the role he told us about is the correct role."*

### **Qualities Required for Police Officers Working in Schools.**

35% indicated that the main qualities revolved around being able to work with young people and relate to them, other words such as *"rapport"* and *"connect"* were used to emphasise the point. 23.5% highlighted the need for the officer to be knowledgeable in a number of key areas. These included knowledge on current issues of law specific to children, a general knowledge of "kids", and a knowledge of the education system. 18% outlined the need for good communication skills and a *"genuine liking for kids"*. Other comments listed numerous interactive skills such as being *"approachable, flexible, consistent, compassionate, good natured, kind, but tough, understandable, and fair as well as having the capacity to listen."*

There were many others on the list alongside a number of quotes included below that are in themselves quite revealing.

*"Interpersonal skills – ability to be outgoing and communicative while at the same time having and using police authority (our officer blends these very well)."*

*“Perspective – some behaviours, though illegal, call for school intervention, rather than police action.”*

*“They need to be more open and honest, not as quick to judge as an officer in the street might be.”*

*“A visual presence i.e. out of his office walking around.”*

*“There are lots of little infractions that we can deal with. Yet we want him to deal with the big things.”*

### **What Should the Police Officer Wear?**

100% of the staff agreed that the officer should wear uniform with 20% of them agreeing that there is some room to wear a modified uniform from time to time.

The reasons given were that it promotes respect from the students and sets a good example for all to see. It is *“symbolic of authority”* and is a *“powerful communication tool”* which therefore leaves no ambiguity of their role at the school. Some staff expressed that there were times when plain clothes may be more appropriate and that the officer did not always need to carry all the paraphernalia on his belt, which at times proved intimidating.

### **School Safety Themes**

53% said that the presence of a school officer made them feel safer for a variety of reasons. They felt that the officer provided ready access to the law and was there to assist if there was a problem and was in general looking out for the well being and welfare of the staff and students.

The other responses were a mixture of those who felt that they are safe in the school anyway but that the presence of an officer was an added bonus, whilst some clearly felt that security and safety were in fact just illusions and that if an attack like the one

experienced at Columbine were to happen then there would not be a great deal that the officer could do to stop it.

### **Reporting Crime**

59% of the teachers said that they had reported things to the officer. The majority of these reports were connected with issues of theft or problems that arose with the behaviour of the students in the classroom or local neighbourhood. Others were less specific but could recall passing reports on to the officer whilst one recalled having to meet with them over an incident of a 15-year-old student being forced into having sex. One reply was very clear that reporting crime to the police was "*not the appropriate place to start (short of outright violence)*", but rather the school administrator who would involve the police if deemed necessary. Another reply stated that they had passed information onto the officer about student legal issues and possible student gang involvement.

### **Has the Officer Helped or Hindered You in Anyway?**

82% said they were able to give examples of where the officer had helped them in a variety of ways. These included dealing with cases of "*neglect, drugs, child abuse and sexual abuse.*" Advise on security issues and helped the school with writing an emergency plan for the building.

*"He talked to several students about truancy and has given a number of classes on law enforcement and careers in the police. He has given advice on a restraining order and on issues around gang activity in the school and drug taking."*

*"He also helped with school clubs, compiling year books and public service projects and even came to one class where he boosted the kid's self esteem by being complimentary about their work".*

Remarkably none of the respondents could provide a single example of the officer being unhelpful or inflaming a situation.

*“No, again, the personality and perspective shown by XXXX would keep this from happening. I have met a few officers who could easily create more problems than they solve in a school setting.”*

When asked if the students had made any comments about the officer the majority of teachers said that the pupils were on the whole very positive towards him. They said that the students felt safer and had a great deal of respect for him and showed this by the ease and comfort with which they approached him and spoke with him.

One teacher said, *“It is because he lives in the community and the students trust and respect him”*.

Only one reply noted that negative comments had been made about the officer being a *“Nazi”*, but this was weighed off with the fact that this was more reflective of the pupils attitude towards authority in general.

### **Themes Around the Positive and Negative Aspects of Having a Police Officer.**

Nearly half of the replies said that they had noticed positive changes ranging from a healthier respect for the police, and an understanding by the students of what is acceptable behaviour. *“A school climate that is much friendlier and calmer with fewer fights and the opportunity for students to get to know the officer.”*

Because the programme of police being in schools has been running for several years a number of staff who were new to the school felt unable to comment.

When asked whether they had noticed any negative changes 59% said *“No”* and only one comment felt that the presence of an officer at the school had had a negative impact for them personally.

*“Loss of innocence for me personally. Having grown up in a small town in the 50’s and 60’s, it is sad to me that we have to have a policeman in a public school that I once considered a haven.”*

## Issues Of Trust

82% said that they did trust the police service to varying degrees with only two comments stating that they had reservations although not with the officer in general. They had from experience developed a general mistrust of “cops” over time from personal dealings with them.

One teacher was more philosophical in his distrust of police.

*“I don’t trust anybody that carries a gun. It’s his job, and this officer is levelheaded. But as a class I avoid contact with police because of the potential for the abuse of power. Our constitutionally protected rights have been eroded to the point of absurdity, so trust in the individual officer is all that’s left.”*

*However 100%, said that they trusted their school officer with accompanying comments such as*

*“Yup!”*

*“Absolutely”*

*“Yes-he’s a good guy”*

*“Yes, no explanation necessary”*

*“He seems like a good guy”*

Other issues around trust focused on the access and use of confidential information. 82% said that they had no concerns and felt that the officer had kept information confidential and who better was there to determine confidentiality than a police officer. Again there were one or two comments from the staff that issues can rarely be kept confidential including by a police officer and that even when the officer tries to apply discretion this is sometimes overridden by other authorities.

One teacher was concerned that issues around confidentiality often got in the way of being able to have a complete approach to helping a child and cited instances where it would be beneficial for all the agencies such as teachers, police and families to be better informed without having to *“inform the whole world.”*

A final question on this theme considered whether the school officer project had changed the staff’s opinion of the police service in general. 47% said that it was still positive whilst 23% said that they thought of the police in a much more positive light because they understood the role of the officer much clearer and how the system worked. They also thought that the role had *“humanised”* the police force and that by having an officer in the school it showed that both the community and the police care about the school.

One comment stated that although the officer was not your typical cop there were many others that deserved to be called *“pigs”*.

### **Themes Around the Future of Police in Schools**

The first question highlighted where the staff would like to see the police more involved in the community. 41% said that they would like to see more involvement as it contributed to the police having positive contact with the youth and that this would mean fewer problems. Others said that to be involved more in the community would also help build relationships with law-abiding folk and break down barriers. Others were not so keen to see the police extend their role and expressed a number of concerns

*“This is not necessary. Perhaps, visits and speakers. If prevention of crime is the purpose – certain organisations would be more effective than others but a feel good campaign is not worthwhile.”*

*“I would not like to see them more involved.”*

*“Why should the police be present in everyday life? As law-enforcement officers, that should be their job – not being around to be a buddy in those settings.”*

*“Not really – this might “blur the line” and that would be a difficult bridge for XXXX to cross.”*

When asked if they felt that it was a good idea to have police officers stationed in the school the response was a 100% favourable. All of the staff made comments, which covered issues of promoting respect for the police and building barriers between the police and the community through education and their mere presence. This helped to dispel stereotypical views of the police some of which are based on prior experiences. The ability to draw on the officer as a resource and to depend on him in times of need to deal with threatening situations was seen as a bonus by most of the staff in addition to the degree of safety and stability that the officer brought to the school. The staff were given the opportunity to add any further comments, which in common with many of the survey replies were very positive.

*“Great idea – I believe it is effective and is good to continue.”*

*“Officer XXXX has become an integral part of our faculty, a trusted friend, and a fine example to all of us.”*

*“I hope he never leaves; XXXX is very good at what he does.”*

*“I like having him here. He helps our school be a better place. Thanks XXXX!!”*

*“He is a resource officer and can direct troubled teens to the right sources for help in our community.”*

*“He has been an invaluable asset to XXXX”*

## **Staff Questionnaire**

### **School B**

#### **The Officer's Role in the School**

53% of the staff thought that the role of the officer was to make the school a safe and secure environment. A further 29% said that the officer was also there to aid the administration with any situations that arose to do with the school whether it concerned the staff, students or parents. 29% envisaged the role as working with the students to educate them about the law and provide them with choices about life and the consequences of their actions. An equal number of staff 23.5% felt that the officer should be visible and be able to develop relationships with the students as well as just being there for the pupils to talk to and interact with. They were also viewed as an essential link between the police department and the school as well as the home and general community. Other comments included offering advice and assisting with legal queries and helping the school deal with issues of discipline and truancy. 65% of the staff said that the role of the officer was fully explained to them in varying degrees and the rest were unsure with one stating, "*No it wasn't.*" Approximately half felt that the role should stay the same and expressed sentiments that the role was as exactly what the school needed. The remainder offered no answer with one calling for more direct classroom involvement by the officer.

#### **Qualities Required for Police Officer Working in Schools**

65% underlined the need for the officer to work well with "kids", and to have an understanding of the characteristics of children as well as a firm foundation in child development and the problems that children encounter at this age.

A quarter of the staff cited having a sense of humour as essential, while others said that they needed to have a good understanding of the law and to possess good interpersonal skills and to be approachable to staff, students and parents.

Other skills and qualities highlighted included:



*“Communication skills”*  
*“Conscientious”*  
*“Credibility”*  
*“Knowledge of school policies”*  
*“Good negotiating skills.”*  
*“Organized”*  
*“Positive attitude”*  
*“Good public relations”*  
*“Reliability”*  
*“A true, respectful service person”*  
*“Stern”*  
*“Be tough when necessary”*  
*“Understanding the neighbourhood”*  
*“Willing to work closely with school personnel”*

### **What Should the Police Officer Wear?**

82% of the replies stated quite clearly that they thought that the officer should wear uniform, whilst the remainder either did not express an opinion or felt that there were occasions when either uniform or plain clothes may be appropriate. The reasons given were that the uniform creates an official presence and lets everyone know who the person is which may in turn provide a positive image of police officers to students. It also promotes the idea that the people in uniform like the police are generally those people who you can go to for help when you need it and shows the students that a police officer in uniform can be your friend. This thought was echoed by one teacher who stressed that plain clothes were appropriate at certain times to show the students that the police are in fact people.

### **School Safety Themes**

When asked if the police presence made them feel safer 88% of the staff replied “Yes”. Many gave examples of the officer intervening when help was needed and that this help was immediately at hand and the school did not have to wait for patrol officers to respond which often meant a longer response time.

There was general agreement that the school officer gave a sense of real security and although one reply stated that they had never felt unsafe they did recognise that the officer made the school feel like they were more in control and better able to cope with any subsequent problems should they arise.

### **Reporting Crime**

Approximately half of the staff said they had reported crime and the other half had not, although one stated that she would usually report any crime to the counsellors or administrators who would then feed it on to the schools officer if appropriate. This was an issue that several of the teachers had with reporting crime in that they felt it was the responsibility of the Principal to decide whether it was a police matter and that to approach the school first was the most appropriate method of reporting incidents. Those that did report crimes to the officer were for issues that included abuse, neglect, fights, disturbances, thefts and information on drugs and gang associations.

### **Themes About How the Officer Has Helped or Hindered the Project.**

76% provided examples of how the officer had helped out with a variety of situations ranging from lending support with unruly students, diffuses fights, finding pupils who were truanting and calming angry parents to offering advice about training programmes concerning safety and security and delivering specific lessons to the students. None of the staff could offer a single occasion where the officer had been unhelpful or inflamed a situation in any way. Included in this area is the question of whether the staff had picked up on any comments that the pupils had made about having a police officer stationed at the school. All of those that were able to respond said that the pupils made positive comments about having an officer in their school. Again a list of the responses sums up the staffs interpretation of what the pupils think of their officer.

*“They have all been positive comments – the students really enjoy having her here.”*

*“They see her as someone they can go to, just like the counsellors and administrators.”*

*“They like having officers around. They often approach the officer and have formed a good relationship. I have heard them tell their parents about the SRO.”*

*“They feel safer and like that they can see her conveniently instead of having to go to Lakewood PD.”*

*“I think they feel safer. I know they go to her for help.”*

*“They like having another resource for help.”*

*“Many of our kids talk to our officer on a regular basis. It helps their self-esteem and leads to a law-abiding citizen. Kids who are already on the wrong side of the law know that they have to behave at school.”*

### **Themes Around the Positive and Negative Aspects of Having a Police Officer**

82% noted that they had seen positive changes whilst the other replies stated that they were unable to comment. The positive replies revealed that there was amongst other things less fighting at the school and fewer incidents taking place on a daily basis, which involved student behaviour and discipline problems. Because there was more help with discipline and fewer problems the teachers expressed the feeling that they were able to spend more time teaching and less time dealing with *“infractions of the law.”* The staff also said that the students were more respectful of the police and displayed more positive attitudes towards them which to a degree was reinforced through their understanding that the officer could *“issue tickets”* to them. The students were also more aware of the repercussions of their actions and some staff said that this had extended to after school and in particular to the nearby youth club where there were now fewer incidents with the students concerning fights and general misconduct. The staff said that apart from the school being much calmer they appreciated the support that the officer gave to the school administration and the general benefits that their presence afforded the school in terms of safety, security and

peace of mind. None of the staff were able to provide examples of the officer bringing about any negative changes since being stationed at the school.

### **Issue of Trust**

Only one person stated that they do not trust the police although they emphasised that this should not be taken personally. The remainder of the staff stated quite unequivocally that they did trust the police service with examples of the support that the police provide for the school.

Similarly, all but one said that they trusted the school officer:

*“Without question”*

*“Yes immensely”*

*“Absolutely”*

With regards to the issue of how confidential information was handled and subsequently used, none of the staff had any concerns about this question. The staff explained that they thought the information that was passed on was handled appropriately and this was based on their judgement and dealings with the officer who they viewed as trustworthy and above all professional at their job. The staff were also asked if having their own police officer had in any way changed their opinion of the police service. Nearly half said that it was still positive and in some cases it had strengthened their feelings towards the police. Others agreed with this adding that they had always thought highly of the police and had been respectful of the law.

*“Having our own officer has only heightened my opinion of our police service.”*

Others said that they had been even more influenced by the police officer and once again their comments stand testament to the strength of their feelings.

*“Yes, I was not of the opinion that police know and take into consideration the “normal” behaviours of kids at a given age when they enforce the laws, but I have seen first hand they do.”*

*“Positive, I have seen them being proactive instead of reactive.”*

*“Yes, I better understand some of their procedures and operations of the police.”*

*“Probably made it more positive.”*

*“Yes, I see the police as even more accessible.”*

*“Yes. I’ve always thought that the police should be more involved in crime prevention, and their participation in schools is the best place to start. Actually, I should say criminal prevention.”*

### **Themes Around the Future of Police in Schools**

When asked whether they would like to see the police more involved in the community there were a mixture of responses. Several replies thought that it would be a good idea if they could attend more school functions such as concerts and dances as well as field trips and work with “latch key kids” after school with clubs and athletic events. The rest however, stressed that the officer covered many of these roles in what was already considered a busy and demanding job. There was also a concern that too much use of the officer with other activities would detract from the important work that they were already involved with during school time.

The staff were also asked to comment on whether they thought having a police officer stationed in their school was a good idea.

All of them replied, “Yes”.

Amongst the replies were those staff that said that having a police officer had meant that the school was now much safer because the officer reinforced those rules already in place and enabled the students to understand what was expected of them in terms of

their behaviours and conduct. It was felt that their mere presence deterred unlawful activity and in addition they were a useful discipline tool. The staff echoed the belief that having an officer on site meant that they didn't have to wait for the arrival of police and that their presence was now an accepted daily part of life at school.

Two comments made by separate teachers are worthy of inclusion:

*"Yes. When students don't have support from home, our disciplinary interventions have little effect. Suspensions are a vacation. The police officer supports us with the possibility of legal intervention, and that means something to problem students."*

*"Yes. Teachers feel more confident that they are safe. Kids feel safer and have an opportunity to get to know an officer of law. Kids know they will be held accountable for their actions in a timely manner. And the police presence allows normal operations even when something happens."*

As with all the questionnaires the staff were given the opportunity to add any further comments about the police officer. These were all positive and very thought provoking. In particular were the comments, which stated that the school was "admired" for having a police officer and that at times in the past when the officer had been withdrawn for operational reasons dictated by the police department the school had really noticed a difference. This was borne out by the number of incidents that were occurring now the officer was no longer on site.

## Pupil Questionnaire

### High School Years 9 and 10

77% of the replies said that they liked having a police officer in their school. They gave reasons of feeling safer and that there is less violence. One child stated that it had helped his relationship with the “cops”, whilst another said that it encouraged him and others to think about many safety issues.

There were some negative comments, 13% in total that felt the police in school was not a good idea. The comments ranged from not liking police at all to feeling that they were being judged by the officers and constantly watched because of the way in which they dressed. 92% of the pupils understood why the police were in the school and replies included making sure the school was a safe place so that kids could get a good education and the ability to deal with incidents arising in the school like fights or drug dealing. 81% of the pupil’s thought that the officer should be in uniform because it gave a sense of authority and identity and it was clear who they were. Some said that the sight of a uniform was very reassuring but also a deterrent to those thinking about causing trouble in the school. A few replies thought that the officer should wear plain clothes so that pupils would see him and not the uniform. It was also felt that an officer in uniform stands out in a school and is therefore an easy target for attack. 57% of the pupils thought that the school was a safer place since having the police officer. Their reasons were based on the officer being about when needed and willing to help out with anything asked. There was an understanding that the officer was not only a deterrent but that he could stop crimes happening before they got out of control. Their ability to do this was seen as much greater than that of a teacher especially when dealing with incidents of violence. 25% of the pupils thought otherwise and expressed concerns that things still happened despite the officer’s presence. One pupil felt that the officer was “*clueless*” as to what was really happening in schools.

It was interesting to note that several replies stated that they could not comment because they had always had an officer at the school and had not experienced school life without one.

The extent to which having an officer at school had changed the pupil's opinion of the police service was as follows. 73% said that it had not swayed them; in fact having their own officer had reinforced many of their positive feelings towards the police.

Those that said it had made a positive effect expressed their fondness of the officer and the differences between him and other officers on patrol, in particular the way in which he spoke to them and treated them with more respect.

The pupils were also asked whether they viewed the school officer in the same way as one out on patrol. A majority of 60% said "No". These replies tried to explain that the school officer exhibited different qualities than those experienced by the pupils from patrol officers. The differences highlighted were being friendlier more approachable and not judging the pupils.

One pupil exclaimed that she merely respected him more whilst another said, "*he is not out to get you*".

Those that did view the officer as the same as a patrol officer totaled 36% and explained that they saw the two sets of officers in the same light because of their equal powers and authority and ability to arrest the pupils.

On a question of trust 38% of the pupils said that they did trust the police service and offered some understanding of their difficult role, whilst 40 % said that they did not and cited personal experiences of dealings with police that had left them unhappy or dissatisfied at the way they had been treated. Several mentioned that this had been due to their nationality. A far higher percentage of the pupils 82%, said that they trusted the school officer and this was purely down to them knowing him, in some cases for most of their school life. This experience had resulted in him gaining their trust and often friendship over a number of years. The pupils were then asked if they had ever been victims of crime to or from school. Approximately a third of them 33% said that they had either been assaulted although this had transpired from being involved in fights with other pupils, or as the victims of a robbery or theft.



The pupils were also asked what three crimes they feared the most and from a list they highlighted violence 71% as the highest, followed by sexual harassment 48%, theft 42% and racial harassment 38% with mugging accounting for 31%. In cases where the pupils may have been victims of crime they were asked whether they would report the crime to the school officer. 57 % of the pupils said that they would explaining that they had a duty to and that because they knew and trusted the officer he would help them out. 33% stated that they would deal with it in a variety of ways by either telling a teacher or parent first, dealing with it themselves or just accepting it as part of life. The question of whether the officer had helped the pupils in anyway resulted in 29% stating that he had and described a number of situations including one reply who said that he arrested his friend for drugs but that this was okay as this sort of behaviour wasn't needed in the school. Another reply centered on the information and education that the officer had given to the pupil in the form of drug awareness.

25% replied "No", but gave no reason.

When asked if the officer had annoyed or upset them in anyway 86% of them said "No". Only 8% replied, "Yes", however these were complaints about being dealt with by the officer for a criminal offence.

77% of the pupils thought that the officer should stay permanently in their school again citing issues of safety surrounding the presence of a police officer while 13% thought that he should go again because of their interaction with him around disciplinary and criminal matters.

As a final question the pupils were asked if they would join the police cadets with only 17% showing an interest whilst 77% said "No".

### **Middle School Years 7 and 8**

89% said that they liked having a police officer in their school. Nearly all of these replies said that it made them feel safe and protected whilst in school and they enjoyed being able to talk to the officer whenever they wanted.

Two of the replies were indifferent. 87% said that they understood why there was a police officer at the school and some of their replies revealed a good level of knowledge about his role. They thought that the officer was there to stop violent incidents and look after the school in case of an emergency. Some named specific incidents of crime and the appearance of strangers at the school. Others said that the officer was there to offer advice and education. With regard to whether the officer should wear uniform 71% of the pupils liked to see the officer in uniform mainly because of the sense of identity and authority, which the uniform provides. Those that replied otherwise said that they would like to see the officers in plain clothes so that they would not be spotted by the bad guys and would have more chance of capturing them. 89% of the pupils thought the school was now a safer place mainly due to the noticeable absence of fights between pupils and a general feeling that the school was calmer. Some pupils said that kids were reluctant to bring drugs or knives to school because they were aware of the consequences of getting caught with them by the officer. 50% now thought of the police service in a different light since having the school officer. All of these comments were positive and highlighted how the police were much kinder and nicer than they had first thought and how they had helped the pupils in a number of ways.

45% said that they did not see the police differently but were still positive in their opinion of them. Only two replies were negative which focused on the pupil's feelings that the police officer picked on them unfairly.

When asked if they viewed school officers in the same way as patrol officers the replies were equally split with 50% saying, "Yes" and 50% "No". There was a general understanding that their roles differed but that school officers were a great deal friendlier and more polite and were more approachable. Some replies stated that they dressed the same and carried guns and therefore had the same powers of arrest. However some pupils felt that the role was not as demanding and dangerous as those experienced by officers on the street.

On the issue of trust, 84% said that they trusted the police in general because their role entailed helping people and saving lives. Only two replies said "No", but did not give a reason. 97% said that they trusted the school officer and gave a list of personal

experiences where they had assisted them with a variety of incidents. Only one person made a negative response. A further 84% said that they had never been a victim of crime to or from school whilst only two made reference to having property stolen whilst at school. In terms of the crimes that the pupils feared the most the highest was theft at 63%, followed by violence 60%, bullying and sexual harassment at 55%, mugging 34% and racial harassment 23%. Following on from this the pupils were asked if they were a victim of crime whether they would report it to the police officer. 74% said that they would with many replies stating that they trusted the officer and believed that they would help them. Others thought that it was necessary to stop the incident such as bullying happening again while others felt that it was important to tell in order for the perpetrators to get into trouble.

Several replies stated that they would only report it if it was serious or continued to happen.

The pupils were then asked if the school officer had helped them in anyway. 34% stated that the officer had helped them in a variety of ways including offering advice, acting as a friend, keeping them out of trouble, giving lesson inputs and doing something for them about incidents of bullying.

They were then asked if he had annoyed them in anyway and 100% of the pupils replied "No".

81% of the pupils reflected that they thought the police officer should be in school permanently as it helped with keeping the school safe, whilst those that said no felt that the officer should spend time dealing with other duties in addition to those at the school.

A final question asked the pupils if they would consider joining the police cadets to which only 26 % replies "Yes". The majority felt that the role of the police officer was too dangerous and risky and cited other careers with more promise.

## **Interaction with Members of the Partnership**

### **Communication with the Principal**

I spent time with a number of Principals in the school district and paid special attention when observing them interacting with the SRO. I was quite amazed at the good rapport that all of the Principals had with their officers and took advantage of being able to speak to all of them briefly on my initial introduction to them and several of them by way of in-depth interviews.

My observations of the two parties interacting revealed that both had developed a good working relationship and there did not appear to be any feeling of tension or power dynamics, which were affecting the partnership. What was apparent from watching the two interact was that they both had a good understanding of each other's role and a well-worked formula for combining the differing roles that they played. This mutual understanding seemed to permeate down to the Assistant Principals who were the senior teachers of the school whom the officers had the most dealings with.

The Principals displayed a great deal of respect for the officers and were always eager to involve them and seek their advice in all aspects of the school. This created the effect that the SRO was highly valued and that his opinion was well respected. This involvement included disclosing information to the officers about offences that had been committed both in and outside of the school and information that could have a bearing on future events such as inter school rivalry. Such information often resulted in the arrest of students at the school and it was clear from my initial conversations with the Principals that they did not have an issue with students from the school being arrested on campus. In fact on several occasions the SROs would reinforce this point by jovially reminding the Principal of what would happen if they interfered with them whilst they were trying to affect an arrest. It was clear from the Principal's reaction that they had no intention to interfere with proceedings and this was an issue that had been discussed and agreed on at the start of the project.

Even when the SRO and the Principal and Assistants weren't engaged in work related matters they were extremely friendly and warm to the officers. This was played out when a Principal threw a surprise birthday party for one of the officers complete with cake and candles.

The interviews that I conducted with them reinforced all that I had observed at first hand and through these interviews I was able to gain a clear understanding of why the partnerships appeared to work so well.

### **Interview with Principal**

#### **ANB/12**

The principal explained that he understood the role of the officer was to provide the school with security, which to a degree was justified with the recent history of shootings in schools.

Apart from reducing the risk of violent acts occurring he thought the role was much more of a proactive one where the students could see the police as authoritative but also cooperative. He stated that so many of the kids were at risk and had either issues at home or school and in general had a real distrust of authority which included teachers and administrators.

It was this air of distrust that the administrator felt that the SRO should be helping to dispel through their work at the school, in particular his own school, which was an alternative school for pupils who could not cope with, mainstream education for one reason or another.

The Principal was also very keen to use the SRO wherever he could to interact with the pupils especially in an instructional environment, but also to help out when required. He describes a situation where he "*used*" the SRO to deal with a violent young man who kept losing his temper and punching doors. He asked the SRO if he would take the boy on a "*ride along*" with another officer to see how police deal with different situations especially confrontational ones. The Principal explained that making good use of the SRO was the key to interacting with the pupils. He suggested

that a lot of the kids need a father figure to talk to or someone with whom they can “*buddy up*” with and spend time with so that this role model becomes part of their everyday life. He also reveals that the SRO is in effect the police force as far as the school is concerned and “*everything that we do is filtered through him*”. He further explains that he has no concerns about the officer effectively using some of the confidential information that they have at the school and that he now looks upon the police force much more as a “*service industry*” and views them “*on a greater level*” than just law enforcement.

### **Interview with Assistant Principal**

**ANB/10**

The Assistant Principal begins by explaining that she relies on the SRO for legal advice and that this is her first point of call whenever there are issues in the school.

Again there is an expectation or wish to use the officer more to interact with the kids, particularly through outside clubs and interests and there is a clear understanding of what the officer does well. The Assistant Principal appears to know all about the officer and what qualities he possesses which they have seen in action and are aware of the way in which he works and interacts with the pupils. It is the officer’s ability to handle volatile situations and the way he speaks to kids and parents that the Assistant Principal most admires and concedes, “*I learned to deal with certain situations from watching him especially confrontational situations.*” She also supports the officer and “*sticks up*” for him especially when other teachers have criticisms, which arise because they don’t understand his role as well as she does.

### **Interview with Assistant Principal**

**ANB/11**

The Assistant Principal describes the officer as part of the team and explains that when the officer had to leave the school “*I did not realise how much I would miss her. I did not realise how much she did for us.*”

She values the officer for her skills when dealing with kids and her information and connections. She knows what is going on and can give us a “heads up”. She also likes the fact that the officer is armed and is realistic in her understanding of what the officer is ultimately capable of doing in her role as law enforcer. This Assistant Principal is very clear that she is the authority in the school and that everything goes through her and that it is her who makes the choices, however it is her clarity on the subject that makes the relationship between her and the SRO a “wonderful partnership”. She further explains this point by emphasising that the “officer has all the power in the world”, and that she doesn’t need to wield it in here, “she understands the power basis which has to stay in this office in this school.”

The Assistant Principal then confirms her own relationship with the officer and says, “I certainly feel personally that I have a friendship with the police department.”

The relationships that I discovered certainly differed from one school to another but the regardless of any differences they all had a clearly defined policy which had been worked out and tested over time and which both parties understood. There was a keenness to work together and mutual understanding that the relationship benefited both parties. There was an openness and honesty, which allowed the officer and the school to meet regularly and share information on a variety of topics and exchange ideas. This was exemplified by the schools publishing their own figures on the crimes and incidents that had occurred within its campus, which were included in the school prospectus.

### **Police Supervisors**

The SRO team at Lakewood were supervised by a uniformed sergeant who met regularly with the officers to discuss any general issues or more specific ones as the need arose.

She appeared very supportive of them and I was told of a number of occasions when she had been asked to act as spokesperson for the officers when problems had arisen at school. She had a very good understanding of how the school system worked and

in addition to the patrol officers was only too aware of how demanding the role of the SROs was.

This understanding had been as the result of undergoing some training herself around school work and spending a lot of her time actually in schools talking to the teachers and administrators. In fact the vast majority of police supervisors who oversaw the running of SRO teams had attended a weeks training course and were trained to deliver such a programme.

### **Police Colleagues**

The relationship that the SROs shared with their colleagues was quite unique and provided me with a real insight into how other people in the police department view their school based colleagues.

As I described earlier in Chapter 2 the role of the SRO was traditionally one of educating children and being their friend. Consequently many people viewed their work as secondary to “real” police work, where roles were distinctly more “macho” and “hands on.”

I delivered a questionnaire to forty patrol officers in total at several “roll calls”, before embarking upon their day’s tour of duty in order to gain a better understanding of their relationship with the SROs. (See Appendix W.)

### **Patrol Officer Questionnaire**

All of the officers were aware of the SRO partnership with the schools in the local area although they admitted that it was to varying degrees. To confirm this all but one of the officers was able to name their SRO as well as the majority of others in the department.

All but one was able to describe the role of the SRO and they all revealed that they had a very good understanding of what the SRO did on a daily basis. The patrol officers stated that the SROs worked full time in school and handled both civil and



criminal issues as well as being trained to deal with problems specifically involving children. Immediately they recognised the SROs as being specialists in their jobs and gave them recognition for dealing with caseloads that not only built up good relationships with the school but that their work greatly assisted the patrol officers by reducing their workload. The patrol officers also identified them as a vital link between the police, school and the community and an important source of intelligence. It was also understood by these officers that the SROs in addition to handling criminal matters also spent a great deal of their time interacting with the pupils in an effort to prevent crime and to build up police/school relations.

The following quote from one officer sums up this understanding of the SROs role:

*“A front line officer that works with the staff and students at making a more positive impact at detecting crimes and making the schools a safe environment to learn. They are a great resource for patrol officers when working juvenile crimes”.*

It is this recognition that the SROs are front line officers and not “kiddie cops” that is so important and is a product of all the hard work, which the SROs achieve on a daily basis.

*“I think their statistics for calls handled, reports taken, and arrests made by SROs speak for themselves. They have their hands full.”*

The SROs would regularly spend time with the patrol officers both out on the street and also by attending role calls to exchange information with each other. This would provide the opportunity for the officers to highlight certain problems or “hotspots” for crime in and around the school and students who may be causing the trouble.

The SROs were always well received by the other officers and there did not appear to be any distinction between the two. There was often a relief expressed by the patrol officers that they did not have to deal with the juveniles and their parents as well as the school administration. In fact 81 % of them said that they would not want to be SROs and many of them cited their reasons as not enjoying working with teenagers.

*“No, don't want to work with juveniles and don't want another group of supervisors, i.e. staff from school.”*

The patrol officers were all very complimentary about the way in which the SROs assisted them and from the examples they gave of them dealing together with crime investigations, missing children and traffic reports and cases of child abuse it was clear how well they worked as one unit.

I followed up these questionnaires with an interview with one of the patrol officers (ANB/7), who reinforced what the others had said and in addition stated that the relationship with patrol officers is so good because of the hard work and dedication of the SROs.

### **Community**

Having spent time with the SROs driving around the local community adjacent to their schools I was only too aware of how many people knew about the presence of police in schools.

A number of them that I spoke at a neighbourhood meeting liked having a local resource and stated that the most beneficial aspect was being able to get hold of an officer immediately to deal with incidents that arose that were mainly to do with school children.

I did not come across any opposition from the community at large, they all seemed very positive and it was apparent that they were a huge resource in terms of the information that they could provide the officer with. What was the real issue was whether the officers had the time to spend with the community members, as it was obvious that activities within the school occupied most of the SROs time and energies.

## **Communication with Parents**

I was able to attend several parents' evenings with the officers and was introduced to a number of parents. Every parent that I spoke to was aware of the officer and could personally name him regardless of whether they had ever interacted with them.

I spoke to 150 sets of parents over a period of several evenings about the SROs in their schools and handed out questionnaires for them to complete. I only received 13 returns, however the short semi-structured interviews that I was able to have during these exchanges were invaluable in terms of the information that I was able to gather about the parents thoughts of police officers in their children's school.

The parents were asked about their understanding of the officer's role in the school. The answers were varied and included the work of the officer in educating the pupils about their consequences of their behaviour and the action that would be taken by police as an authority figure if they broke the law. Also mentioned was the belief that the role included building relationships with both the pupils and the extended family and acting as a role model for the pupils through daily consistent interaction with them.

There was also the understanding that the officer brought a real sense of security and safety to the school and that many parents felt happier that there was an officer on hand to deal with any potential situations, which could not be addressed by the school.

When asked if the role had been explained to them many of the parents including those I spoke to said that it had not. Several mentioned hearing about the scheme on a back to school night, but many of the parents said that they knew the officer and much of the work which he did because he had taught their children right through elementary school on the D.A.R.E. programme and consequently there was not an issue with a police officer being in the school.

In addition the parents were asked what they thought the role of the officer should be if different from their understanding of it now. A large number of parents I spoke to

felt that the officers should become much more involved with the kids out of school and in youth clubs and sport activities. It was their opinion that after school was the time when their children became bored and more likely to get into trouble because they had nothing constructive to occupy their time. The parents were also asked to outline what qualities they felt that a schools officer should possess to work in a school. All of the answers highlighted the need to enjoy working with kids and to have a level of understanding and compassion for them. One comment urged officers to remember *"they were kids once."*

On the issue of uniform every parent that was asked thought that the officer should be in uniform. They stated their reasons, as being the officer being perceived as more professional and the air of authority that it created which the kids would be able to respect.

Whether having a police officer in the school made the parents feel that their child was safer was a further question, which heralded a number of responses. All of the parents stated that potentially it did but some felt that with only one officer present there was a great deal that could still happen that the officer would be unable to detect or deal with.

Only a couple of the parents actually stated that they had reported things to the officer that had happened either at school or in the community, although a number of them said that they had gone to the officer for advice and assistance around a variety of issues that concerned their children or wider family. They enlarged on this point by giving a number of examples, which included the officers returning a runaway child to her parents and giving advice to individuals about buying a car and maintaining it. There were numerous other examples, which revealed the confidence and support that the parents have for the police.

Such overwhelming support was backed up by the fact that not one parent made a single comment in answer to the whether the officer had been unhelpful in any way. Equally impressive was the fact that many parents had stated that some of their own children had made what they regarded as positive comments about the police and their role within the school.

When asked to outline the positive and negative aspects that had taken place in the school since the arrival of the officer the parents said that the school had in general become a safer place with fewer incidents taking place and those that did occur were challenged and dealt with. It was also a time where the pupils could really get to know the police and form good relationships with them to take into adult life.

Not surprisingly there were no negative changes that had been experienced since having an officer at the school. Parents also expressed a general trust of the police and this was extended to the school officer who they felt they had grown to respect over time. None of them had any concerns over what happened to confidential information with a general understanding highlighted in the previous question that the officer was trustworthy and in conjunction with the school administration would deal with such matters sensitively.

Many of the parents also stated that having a police officer in their school had significantly impacted on their opinion of the police service. They explained that they understood more about the role of the police and were impressed at the efforts to undertake community style policing in and around the schools. Even those who said that it had not altered their viewpoint, many admitted that they were pleased that police were in schools and were taking the chance to build relationships with the pupils.

Many of the parents felt that the best way to achieve this would be through more involvement of the police officer in after school activities and through workshops and clubs that fostered and built upon the good relationships already established.

The scheme was viewed by all the parents as extremely worthwhile in terms of the time, money and resources that were expended and that with careful planning by both the police and the school the presence of a police officer in school would continue to bring enormous benefits for the whole community.

## **Communication with Staff**

The results from the questionnaires that I delivered to the staffs, which are outlined earlier in this chapter, were extremely positive in their opinion of the SROs role. Their general acceptance, understanding and willingness to have police in their school were equally noticeable in the relationships, which I observed over the course of my stay. The way in which the staff interacted with the SROs and the comments, which they made about them, reflected the comments made in the questionnaires.

The staff were so responsive to the officers, they were always interacting with them and sharing a joke or just chatting about every day issues. The impression that these interactions gave me was that the officer was the centre of the school in terms of popularity and that the teachers enjoyed coming to them and sharing things with them, however small or insignificant they may seem.

It was not just the fact that the staff confided in them but the manner in which they did it. They were very open about their thoughts and feelings towards the police officers in their schools and viewed them as an integral part of school life.

## **Communication with Pupils**

The officers all shared one unique quality, which was a genuine love for working with children, which was borne out in the way in which they interacted with them.

Amongst the many other qualities that the officers displayed this was by far the most effective at building relationships with the pupils. The pupils in turn seemed to appreciate the concern and interest that the officers showed and their reaction to having a full time officer was very positive.

There were very few negative comments made about the officers and this included comments from a number of students at an alternative school who had been subject to criminal proceedings. Tape ANB/1.

The pupils were all well informed about the role of the officer and the opportunity for them to visit them in their room which was invariably situated next to the school office or to mix with them during class or at after school activities made communication much easier.

### **Communication with Support Staff**

The U.S. school system incorporates a large number of support staff to assist in the daily running of the school life. Most notable are the presence of campus supervisors/security and on site counsellors and other support advisors such as educational psychologists.

The campus supervisors play a pivotal role in the work of the SRO and my observations of them working side by side with the officers revealed how both parties rely heavily on one another for support, guidance and reassurance.

I interviewed several of these campus supervisors ANB/9 and they confirmed my understanding of how they interacted and communicated with their SRO and the importance of their relationship for ensuring the safety of the school.

Like most of the other school staff they were extremely respectful of the SRO and aware of their experience at dealing with children and violent situations. They stated that the relationship worked well and that this was as a result of being well informed of the officers role and working together to achieve common goals.

They outlined major benefits of having a police officer on hand to deal with problems that arose which eliminated the problem of waiting around for a patrol car to respond and they also found that they began to understand more about the role of police officer in general and facts of law.

The school counsellor in an interview ANB/8 also echoed these benefits. She stated that she confided in him on a number of issues in particular relating to matters of child abuse but also on general issues because she felt it was important to keep him updated and informed of what was going on in the school.

All of the support staff mentioned thus far relies on the SRO as a resource, which they communicate with on a daily basis and is a relationship, which mutually benefits both parties.

In general the U.S. experience revealed that the partnership was much better structured and organised. There was a clear understanding by both the police and teachers about each other's roles and any expectations. The officers were valued more by the staff and generally respected better by the pupils who accepted why police were necessary on the school premises. The officers had much greater autonomy and freedom to make decisions within a broad framework defined by their mutually agreed roles and structured support where they needed guidance. Their freedom and encouragement to think for themselves is afforded to them by their clear roles but may also be in part to their education. All officers employed at Lakewood Police Department are graduate entries and this may explain why they are given such respect and authority.



## **Chapter Six**

### **6.0 Discussions**

#### **Introduction**

This section endeavours to compare the role of the school's involvement officer in the U.K. to the role of the school resource officer in the U.S. It will highlight the experiences of the officer in the pilot school in the U.K., which are outlined in Chapter 4.1 and compares these with the officer's experience in the U.S. performing the role of observational evaluator with SROs in Lakewood police Department.

In particular it will focus on how their roles are perceived by various members of the partnership and how this affects the relationships they have with them, which are played out on a daily basis. It will also look at the various support structures, which are available to each police department in terms of developing the role and includes issues relating to training finance and status and future development of the concepts. In addition it compares the responses to both the staff and pupil questionnaires conducted in the U.K. and U.S. as well as outlining the questionnaire responses of the Lakewood SROs and comparing them to the experiences of the officer in Clearwater School.

## **6.1 Discussion of U.K and U.S Project Activity**

### **Roles of the U.K/U.S Police Officers**

The roles of the U.S./U.K. school officers can at first be compared by analysing charts 4.1 and 4.8.

The U.K. role was one, which was devised as a result of the officer's personal experiences of working with children through the schools and the youth offending team. It was based on an understanding of existing good practices that existed around tackling crime and examples of working in partnership with schools although this was to a degree very limited and a personal interpretation of what was needed to tackle crime in schools. As highlighted in Chapter Two the main thrust of partnership work between police and schools has been in the form of providing educational inputs in the classroom and through joint initiatives with other agencies including the youth offending team. There has never been any previous work conducted around police being based full time in one school and therefore the role was one which although defined by the job description, did in essence evolve as the project progressed.

It was not clear what areas of the project would work and those that clearly would not be compatible to the officer's role. The result was that the officer had to experiment with many of the roles depicted in chart 4.1 and over a period of time it became apparent what the officer was capable of achieving and what was having the biggest impact upon the aims of the project.

The roles of the U.S. officers is far more structured and is founded upon a well-worked formula that had been developed at a national level and delivered through the National Association of School Resource Officers in the form of a training manual for all prospective SROs. They are based on a triad approach (figure 4.1), namely law enforcer, law educator and law related counsellor. Through this clearly defined framework of roles the SRO is able to function in schools in an agreed manner, which everyone understands and can refer to in the "memorandum of understanding". All of the SROs roles are born out of the "triad approach", and can trace their roots back

to one of the three roles. The simplicity of such a model makes it so much easier to outline the work of the officer and to justify or evaluate the project.

In terms of the actual work that is undertaken by both sets of officers, they are very similar as can be seen from the school officer's daily logs in Chapter Four. They both deal with a variety of situations and events and a number of observations captured in the diaries record that the work of a police officer in school is very similar whatever side of the "Atlantic", you should choose to work. What is quite evident from the diaries and the daily log is that both sets of officers are extremely busy and deal with a variety of incidents and problems, which occur, in and around the school. What is clearly different is not the situations that the officers face but the framework which is in place for dealing with them, the way in which they are tackled and the support which the officers receive from other members of the partnership.

The differences in terms of support, which is in place for both projects, can be seen in the charts 4.2 and 4.9. They reveal the contacts, which the officers have with other people in the partnership and by comparing the two it is apparent that the U.S. officers have a great deal more contact with other people. This in effect emphasises the differences in the support structure for both projects and the extent of the relationships that the SRO has with a variety of people who become involved with this scheme.

These contacts or relationships were recorded through the compilation of a diary for both the U.S and the U.K. and highlight the main areas of interaction that the officers had with other people, the effects of which are captured in both the interviews and questionnaires conducted.

## **Comparison of U.K./U.S. Questionnaires for Staff and Pupils.**

### **Staff Questionnaire**

#### **The Officer's Role in the School**

With regard to the officer's role in the school there was a noticeable difference in what the staff regarded as being fundamentally at the heart of their work. Over half of

both the U.S. schools surveyed stated that the main role was to make the school a safe and secure environment. A similarly equal percentage for both U.S. schools also rated the need for the officers to work with the students and staff to educate them about the law and the consequences of their actions. The U.K. school mentions some of these issues as isolated comments. In fact only four people commented on the importance of educating the pupils alone and over half the replies indicate that the role of the officer is to deal with specific incidents of criminal behaviour displayed by the pupils or potential troublemakers. Such incidents were to include drug dealing, petty crime bullying and vandalism.

There appears to be a different ethos between the two countries as to why a police officer is in schools. In the U.K. it is seen as a knee jerk reaction to dealing with the unaccountable and alarming rise in juvenile crime both in and around schools. Many of the staff reveal their own fears of teaching in schools, which centres on the fear of assaults and the difficulty of teaching in classrooms, which are becoming increasingly hostile.

They express concerns about a small number of pupils and the need to enforce the law to curb their criminal activities. It is the resolution of issues such as these that the teacher's feel will make the school a better place to work.

In the U.S. however, the emphasis is much more on developing relationships with the officer and working with him to create a safe and secure environment. It was believed that through building and developing relationships the pupils will see the police as less threatening and more available to turn to for advice and guidance. The U.S. schools also see the need for the SROs to be involved in arresting students who break the law but interestingly they phrase it as "assisting the administration" or taking care of "legal issues", which again reinforces the partnership approach to tackling crime in schools.

This contrasts sharply with the U.K. staff's interpretation of the police acting as a separate entity whose main role is to react to incidents of crime, which often the senior management are opposed or reluctant to involve the police. Ironically the

SROs have the authority to arrest on school site without the blessing of the Principal and frequently do, however it is rare for the Principals to upset by these actions.

What is largely responsible for these responses is the understanding in the first instance of what the schools officer role incorporates. For the vast majority of U.S. staff the role of the officer was fully explained to them. By contrast very few of their U.K. counterparts had been told about the arrival of an officer and his role and function within the school. Many of them stated that they found out for themselves by asking the officer, which again highlights the differences in approach by the two partnerships to promoting the role of police in schools.

It appears on the surface that the reason for this lack of publicity or information in the U.K. was merely an oversight. However, on reflection it seems to be rather more than that and one can only assume that neither agency was completely sure what the role of the officer would be.

On the whole the vast majority of staff in the U.S. were quite happy with the role of the officer and only one comment around more involvement in the classroom was offered. The U.K. staff, however, took the opportunity to express their dismay that the officer was not given more authority in the school and emphasised the need for him to be able to be more "*in charge*" and deal with criminal activities as the law views it and "*not what the school deems.*"

Once again the U.K. staff were revealing how they viewed the role of the officer in their school and how he could deal with the problems, which they were facing. The absence of such direct comments from the U.S. staff suggest that they are far happier with the role of their officer and that the partnership has sufficiently developed to encompass issues of school safety, arrests and power dynamics to the satisfaction of all staff.

## **Qualities Required for Police Officers Working in Schools**

When asked about the qualities that police officers should have to work successfully in schools there was an overwhelming consensus from all the staff that returned the questionnaires.

Both the U.K. and U.S. staff stated that the most important quality that officers must possess was to have a genuine love and interest for working with children along with a good understanding of how children develop. In addition to this there was general agreement across the board that police officers should also have a good grasp of educational issues particularly in relation to school policies on behaviour and exclusion.

It appears that teachers have high expectations for their police officers in terms of the qualities that they should possess and the list that they returned was considerable. This serves to highlight that the role of a police officer in school is extremely high profile and one, which needs to be carefully scrutinised in order to ensure that the officers who undertake these role are able to live up to the expectations of both the teachers and the police supervisors.

### **What Should the Police Officer Wear?**

There was similar agreement by the majority of staff when considering the option of wearing uniform in school. Again most of the staff wished to see the officer in uniform as it imparted an air of authority and helped to create a safe school environment.

There were a few teachers from each of the surveys who felt that the policy on uniform should be flexible and that there were times when there was a need for the officers to be more informally dressed.

However, in the U.K. school the main objection to the officer wearing uniform came from the Head and senior management and not from the staff in general. This was an issue which they felt strongly about and thought that a police officer in uniform

created tension within the school amongst the young people. The contrast is that the U.K. officer did not carry his handcuffs and C.S. Spray and his truncheon was concealed, whereas in the U.S. the officers are visibly different in their uniformed dress. They carried batons, handcuffs, a holstered handgun with accompanying rounds of ammunition and an array of radios, pagers and the mandatory pair of "shades". Occasionally they wore T-shirts with the police departments logo embroidered on the chest but they were always dressed with their firearm. The U.S. teachers viewed this as quite acceptable and some commented that without the presence of a firearm their authority and effectiveness would be highly diminished.

### **School Safety Themes**

When asked about how safe the school had become since the inception of a police officer, again nearly all the staff from the schools stated that the schools had become a much safer place. The U.K. justified this by commenting on the reduction in the number of intruders and unwanted people wandering around the school. The U.S. schools stated that the presence of an officer had made the school safer because they were close on hand to deal with any incidents and were a good source of advice and support.

### **Reporting Crime**

The staff were also asked whether they had reported anything to the police officer at the school. The replies were very similar in that a large number of staff had passed information on and many others explained that they had not needed to but would if the occasion presented itself. The sort of issues that the teachers were reporting were of a very similar nature and usually revolved around bullying, theft and information on drugs.

What was noticeable was that several teachers from all the three schools stated that it was not appropriate to report incidents to the police officer and that the correct procedure was to inform the school Head or Principal who would then decide if it was necessary to involve the police. It was expressed that to go to the police directly would be to undermine the administration of the school and create a dual system of

reporting. However, several teachers in the U.K. commented that despite reporting a number of serious incidents to the school authority nothing had been done to address the problem. The issue in the U.S. was not “would anything be done” but rather how was the crime going to be reported and subsequently allocated, whereas in the U.K. the issue was clearly who can we turn to in order for something to be done about this problem.

### **Has the Officer Helped or Hindered You in Anyway?**

The staff were also asked about ways in which the officer had helped or hindered the projects in anyway. The response from the U.S. was one of adulation for the officers who were seen as being there for the school in a variety of roles and guises.

The U.K. staff were equally as generous in their examples of how the officer had helped the school. However, there were several teachers who were throughout the project extremely negative towards the police presence. They were as I have outlined in Chapter Four, members of the Socialist Alliance and their disdain for the police is captured in one of their inflammatory leaflets depicted in Appendix L. To dwell upon their actions and comments serves to highlight the opposition that exists in this country towards placing police officers in schools and the tact that is required to work in partnership with them. They voiced their opinions about the police being racist and not welcome in the school and that their presence caused more harm than good. I was aware that there were teachers in the U.S. who were equally not that keen on the police service but were able to see that there were in fact benefits to be had from allowing police into their schools. This was reflected in the fact that none of the U.S. staff felt that the officer had done anything to hinder the project in anyway.

### **Themes Around the Positive and Negative Aspects of Having a Police Officer**

The staff were also asked to reflect on the positive and negative things that had taken place since having a police officer in their school. Three quarters of the U.K. staff said that they had noticed positive changes in relation to safety issues around the school. They listed the absence of intruders and a sense of calmness about the school, which prior to the arrival of the officer was not apparent.



A high number of U.S. staff made similar comments about the school having a much friendlier climate with fewer fights and incidents in general. Some U.K. staff stated that the punctuality of students had improved and that there were less pupils truanting because the officer was challenging pupils who were out of class and following up on their excuses.

All of these positive comments are very encouraging, however, what was even more beneficial in terms of breaking the cycle of criminal behaviour was that a number of teachers from all three schools said that one of the key affects of the officer being present was that many of the pupils displayed more positive attitudes towards the police and a greater degree of respect. Many of the pupils would confide in the officer about problems, which they were experiencing both at home and at school and in turn the officer was able to offer them advice and assistance. This is one of the fundamental key elements of policing in schools, the ability to be approachable for the staff and students with the prospect of breaking down barriers gaining their trust and respect and enabling the officer to become a real resource.

Another important issue that emerged from all the schools was that many of the pupils who were at high risk of getting into trouble were a great deal more careful how they behaved in school and the presence of the officer made many of them think about their general behaviour and conduct.

There were very few negative comments about changes that had occurred, although several U.K. staff expressed concern about how police could gather intelligence to target and criminalise pupils and the negative effect that some press report were having on the reputation of the school. The U.S. replies offered only one example, which was not directed at the officer himself, but rather a philosophical reflection on how sad it was to now have to employ police officers in schools.

### **Issues of Trust**

When questioned about their level of trust of police in general only one person from each of the two U.S. schools stated that they did not trust the police, which was based solely on personal experiences. However, all of the staff in School A and all but one

in School B said that they trusted their school officer. By comparison there were six replies, which revealed that the U.K. staff did not trust the police and was the basis for many of their reservations about the scheme in the first place.

Similar to the U.S. however, there was a greater number of staff that trusted their schools officer, which was based partly on the ability to befriend the officer and gain his trust over time. Again the issue of allowing the officer to break down barriers and forge links with the staff through commitment to the school is a key factor in ensuring the success of the scheme.

The issue of trust was also examined in a question about the use of confidential information by the police regarding pupils at the school. The vast majority of the U.S. staff were more than happy with procedures concerning this issue and those that passed comment were aware that confidentiality is a very difficult area to tackle correctly. The U.K. staff were a great deal more opinionated about the subject and eight replies focused on what the police were doing with such information and whether or not it was being used appropriately. One staff member stated that if they were clearer about the role of the officer then this would not have been an issue. This comment underlines the need for the staff to be well informed about the project and with time it would become clear that any information that was shared with the police by the school authorities would be used correctly.

Many of these issues surrounding trust of the police in general are based on the respondent's experiences of the police and the same is true of their experience with the school-based officer. It is encouraging that they view the school officer as being more trustworthy, and the differences in the level of trust between the U.S. and U.K. are in effect greatly influenced by the fact that the U.S. school officers have been stationed in their schools over a longer period of time.

A final question that was linked into the theme of trust was whether the project had changed the staff's opinion of the police service in anyway. Both of the U.S. schools responses revealed that nearly all the staff still had very positive views of the police and that in some cases these views had been strengthened. This was based on the

work of the officer in school and the ability to gain a better understanding of their role in particular towards working with children.

The U.K. staff replies were also very positive and echoed many of the U.S. comments about the scheme providing staff with the opportunity to work and engage with police for the first time and to become familiar and conversant with their style and method of work.

### **Themes Around the Future of Police in Schools**

The last theme centered on the future of policing in and around schools. The U.K. staff were very much in favour of the officer becoming much more involved in after school activities in the form of youth clubs and they centered this on the belief that one of the main responsibilities of the police should be to develop this area of building good relations with the police through community projects.

Surprisingly the U.S. staff were much more reserved and cautious about the use of the police. There were a number of comments that reinforced the idea that the more contact that the police had with the young people then fewer problems would occur, however, several staff felt that to involve the officer more would cause problems.

In particular, the staff thought that it was not always a good idea to become too friendly with the kids as it may detract from the officers primary role as a law enforcement officer and "*blur the line*" for the children.

Other staff that understood the role of the officer well expressed concerns that they already had a demanding and time consuming vocation and that any further responsibilities would only detract from the effectiveness of their current role.

One other interesting point was raised by several of the U.K. staff who indicated that much of this work should in fact be aimed at much younger children in primary and feeder schools and that this would also include work with the parents. This is very much in keeping with current research that suggests that police and other agencies should devote time and resources to shaping the lives of younger children especially

at their time of transition from one school to another. Included in this is the need for work to undertaken with parents who need support help and guidance bringing up their children.

All of the U.S. staff agreed that having police in schools was a good idea and that the benefits of providing a safe environment far outweighed the sentimental feelings expressed about how sad it was to have a police officer stationed in schools. The U.K. staff were of the same opinion and believed that given time the role of the officer could really develop and benefit the school. These feelings were echoed in the last question, which gave the staff the opportunity to add any further comments about the scheme.

These were all very positive and really underline not only the major advantages of having a police officer on site but also just how enthusiastic the staff are to welcome police in their schools and how well the partnership between the two agencies is developing and benefiting those around them.

What was evident from the comparison of the three sets of questionnaires was that many of the thoughts and feelings expressed by the staff were the same in terms of how they viewed the scheme and the officer as being a positive contribution to school life. There were notable exceptions from some U.K. staff that were resistant to any influence by the police because of their own political viewpoint. But this aside the overwhelming majority thought that the concept of schools was a great and worthwhile idea. The U.S. were slightly more positive in their approach but much of this was based on their understanding of the officer's role which was fully explained at the early stages of the scheme and one which they have been able to experiment with and test in order to become familiar and comfortable with over time.

What the questionnaires reveals conclusively is that teachers who are instrumental in shaping the lives of our children through their daily interaction with them, regard the influence of a school based police officer as an integral part of the process. They are in a unique and privileged position to guide and direct children through the early years of their lives and are in themselves experts in the needs and requirements for the children. It can be drawn from these questionnaire responses that teachers value the

partnership work of the police and that there are great steps to be made with such work if the two partners can take account of some of the ideas and suggestions outlined in this survey that point towards a safer and secure community within our school system.

### **Pupils Questionnaire**

The number of pupils who responded positively towards having a police officer in school was fairly even across the three schools. A common theme was that those who liked having an officer claimed that it made the school a safer place to be. They felt that the officer was able to stop fights and that their mere presence was a great deterrent to those thinking of committing crime.

There was also a general understanding that the pupils could talk to the officer whenever they wanted whether it was formally or just for a chat during the course of the day.

There were a few replies in each of the schools that clearly resented having the police inside their buildings and they appeared to center on a general dislike of police.

When asked about their understanding of the officer's role in the school it was immediately apparent that the U.K. pupils had very little knowledge of the role. Although 68% of the pupils said that they understood this they could not offer any explanation why, other than the officer was there to stop fights. By contrast a much higher percentage of the U.S. pupils 92% and 87% were able to give good description of the officers role and as well as commenting on the obvious safety issues they highlighted specific incidents of crime and crucially the role of the officer in providing education and advice. This is due partly to the length of time the officer has been in the U.S. schools but also the level of interaction and involvement that he has with the pupils over a wider range of duties.

On the issue of uniform the U.S. schools were more in favour of the officers wearing uniform whilst in the school. The majority agreed that the wearing of uniform was a sign of authority and identity which was a good thing for the school, although some of

the U.S. replies felt that plain clothes were appropriate at times as an alternative which would assist the officers catching the "*bad guys*", who often saw them coming. There were also one or two concerns raised about the safety of the officer and the prospect of him being a target himself from intruders as his uniform clearly identified him as a threat. Some of the U.K. replies, however, approved of officers wearing uniforms so that they were aware of their presence if they were about to misbehave, others outlined instances where they felt the presence of a uniformed officer made them feel uneasy.

When asked if the school was a safer place since having the officer just over half of the U.K. replies said that it was stating that there were fewer fights and that it was their perception that some pupils were reluctant to misbehave because of the police presence. There were a higher number of U.S. replies that felt the school was safer and the reasons were more varied and based on the officers willingness, ability and availability to deal with incidents as they arose. Often this included dealing with incidents before they escalated and became problematic which it was felt that teachers were not always able to achieve. There was also a feeling similar to the U.K. that pupils were fearful of getting caught and therefore more reluctant to cause trouble. In addition there was a number of pupils from all the schools that thought the school was no safer and explained that incidents still occurred despite the officer's presence.

The pupils were then asked to explain whether their opinion of the police service had changed since having a police officer in the school. 27% of the U.K. school claimed that it had and several of the replies said that they had a better understanding of what the police now did and how their role was quite challenging. 50% of the Middle School said that they looked upon the police in a different light because of getting to know the school officer and experiencing their kindness and friendship. With the exception of two replies the rest were all positive comments although they said that it had not changed their view. The High School pupils were influenced even less with 73% stating that it had no effect, however the remainder were very descriptive in their view of the police thanks in part to the work of the officer. They stated that the officer had shown them a great deal of respect and had treated them fairly.

34% of the U.K. replies stated that they viewed the police officer the same as those on patrol because of the trouble that the officer could still cause the pupils. 43% clearly saw the roles as different and many of them said that the officer was not as strict and took time to talk to them. He also didn't walk around in body armour, which many of the pupils found intimidating. The Middle School replies identified that despite the school officers dressing in the same manner as the patrol officers with their guns and batons 50% saw clear distinctions between the roles in particular the fact that the role in schools was not as dangerous and demanding to work on the streets. 60% of the High School students also saw clear distinctions and based these primarily on how the officers in school came across as being a friendlier and more approachable set of people who were quick to listen and slow to judge.

On the issue of trust 69% in the U.K. trusted the police and only 26% said that they didn't because they did not know them personally. In both the U.S. schools the pupils had a great deal more trust in the police service particularly in the Middle School, which is partly due to the lack of interaction that they would have had with the police at this stage of their lives. The High School was not as enthusiastic and all of those pupils across the three schools who had issues with the police stated that they had arisen as a result of being badly treated by the police. When asked about their own officer, the U.K. school said that they trusted him less than the police in general which was in stark contrast to the U.S. pupil's view of their school officer.

Nearly every respondent said that they trusted their school officer who they had known for most of their lives and could recall numerous incidents where they had been helped by him and could therefore base their decisions on personal experiences.

This issue of investing time and energy in these schools certainly appears to pay off and in something, which will hopefully be reflected in schools across Britain in years to come if police remain in schools.

The pupils were then asked if they had ever been victims of crime on journeys to or from school. 25% of the U.K. pupils said that they had been victims of crime, which was slightly less than those in the U.S. High School but significantly more than the Middle School. The range of crimes were very similar and included theft, harassment

and violence. The pupils expanded upon these crimes in the following question which asked them to choose three crimes from a list, which they feared the most.

In all of the schools violence and bullying topped the polls. Pupils appear to fear these forms of crimes more than any others and reinforces the aim of the police school partnership, which is to make the school a safe and secure environment. When asked if they would report any of these crimes to the school officer. The Middle School pupils were most keen to report the crime particularly, those incidents where they were bullied. The U.K. school included several comments from pupils that they feared reprisals from the suspects for reporting crime to the police and that this had on occasions stopped them. Despite this, all the schools said that they would report offences to the officer where they had dealt with the officer before and they now trusted him.

The next two questions aimed to find out whether the officer had either annoyed or helped the pupils in anyway.

In the U.K. school 20% said that the officer had helped them compared to 34% and 29% in the U.S. Again these decisions were based upon the pupils interacting with the officer and benefiting from his advice or his actions. It was encouraging to note that very few of the pupils could actually record instances of the officer actually annoying or upsetting them. In fact the Middle School children could not recall a single occasion when this had happened.

There were a high proportion of the pupils in all of the schools that wanted the police officer to remain in the school and there was a general consensus that the officer made the school a much safer place to be. Interestingly those few that did not want the officer to remain all revealed that they had been in trouble with the officer whilst at the school.

A final question tried to gauge the pupil's interest in joining the police cadets whilst at the school. 18 % in the U.K. said that they would with only slightly less in the U.S. High School 17%. The Middle School was much more enthusiastic with 26 % and reinforces the belief that to interact and encourage young people one has to attempt to



do this at an early age before they form their own opinions based on one off encounters.

## **SRO Questionnaire**

I conducted a survey of the six school resource officers in Lakewood the findings of which I have outlined below and where appropriate I have compared them to my own experiences in the U.K. whilst working as the first full time based officer in Clearwater School.

The officers had all been SROs for between two and a half and four years. During that time they had all received a weeks training on the nationally accredited school resource officer training course and since regular updates by way of additional courses and conferences. The officers also belonged to a state organisation of school resource officers and had regular training days on issues such as school violence, school safety, emergency planning, counselling techniques and restorative justice. One of the officers commented that there was not always time to attend these courses and that in reality the demands of the job prevented them from taking full advantage of the opportunities to update their training on top of all the in service training that was required around officer safety, driving skills and officer safety techniques. Some said that the course was adequate, but that those who had been school officers in their role on the D.A.R.E. programme found that they were already well equipped to take on this role and had covered some of the training contained in the week long course.

By way of contrast I had not received any formal training to take on the role other than my previous experience as a teacher and there was no on going or formalised training to assist me with developing my role other than similar in house training concerning officer safety.

The officers were asked whether they felt supported by their police supervisors and in response the replies indicated that they did without exception. The officers stated that the support ranged from their colleagues and immediate line manager all the way through to the Chief of Police and at times beyond to city officials and the elected city

council. It was emphasised that this was not always the case and in the past the support required was not always to hand. It has slowly evolved and supervisors have taken time to understand the role of police in schools and how to best develop the partnership. The officers rated this support as extremely important in terms of the effectiveness of their role and explained that although they did not require constant supervision, they did need the supervisor to be on hand to assist them and advise them where necessary. Such support extended to ensuring that the officers were not extracted from their roles at the school to perform other duties such as “manning up” core shifts that were below minimum strength.

The officers explained that they achieved this relationship with their supervisor through good communications by updating her of good and bad incidents and inviting her to the school to join in and witness the running of the programme. All the officers stated that the supervisor was very proactive, willing and eager to assist and that this made it easier to develop their relationship.

On a personal level I did not feel at all supported by my immediate police supervisor, who showed little interest or enthusiasm for the scheme. I was also partly to blame because I was aware that if I were to draw attention to many of the problems, which I was encountering on a daily basis a decision may have been made to withdraw me from the school. As it was I managed to resolve a great many of the problems myself and as time passed I became more reluctant to involve my supervisor who had made it plain that he did not wish to become involved with issues involving the Head. On reflection a strong and knowledgeable supervisor would have been of immeasurable support for me whilst at the school and would have enabled me to perform my role without being subject to continual confrontations with the Head which he could have resolved in his capacity as supervisor.

The officers then described their own relationship with their police colleagues on patrol. They all stated that they felt extremely well supported by them and rated their assistance as being essential to effectiveness of their own role. They felt that the key to developing and maintaining relationships with the rest of the police department was to ensure that they continued to communicate with them regularly and keep them updated of their work by what ever means they could. This included attending role

calls, inviting the patrol officers to the school and discussing incidents that had occurred and asking for feedback. My own observations revealed that the officers shared excellent relationships with each other and there did not appear to be any resentment or ridicule about the school officers role and its importance to the overall work of the police department.

I have mentioned numerous examples in Chapter 4 where I illustrated the need to have formed better working relationships with my police colleagues and I would confirm that without such support the role can become very isolated and to an extent dangerous.

Just like the need for a supervisor there is also a need for police colleagues to support you and provide a sense of camaraderie and belonging, which is important, when you are contained within an establishment alien to your own.

In terms of police work a great deal of information and intelligence was gathered but not acted upon because of this lack of communication between myself and my colleagues which could have assisted the scheme in achieving its aims. The SROs explained that this relationship was on the whole beneficial to both parties in so much as the school officers received support whenever they required it from the patrol officers. They in turn did not have to keep attending the school to deal with numerous calls that prior to the inception of the SROs caused a great deal of frustration for the patrol officers who would spend countless hours reporting school related crime and dealing with misdemeanour offences.

The officers were then asked to describe their relationship with the Principal of the school. My own relationship with the Head of Clearwater School is well documented and was one of the main stumbling blocks of the scheme. It was therefore interesting to compare my experiences with that of the SROs. The replies highlighted how the officers had formed professional working relationships with the Principals and had concentrated their efforts on working as a team with an emphasis on trying to understand each other's role. The officers rated this relationship as the most important in terms of being able to perform their role effectively. They stated that without the support of the Principal the whole experience would be very negative and

stressful. One officer explained that it would mean that the two organisations worked independently of each other and neither would have the information to perform the job needed. *"It would be uncoordinated and inefficient."* Another officer exclaimed that without this support and cooperation the police department would withdraw from the school and seek to work with a school that was willing to adhere to the concept of partnership working.

These relationships described by the officers were established and maintained by a combination of time, experience and communication. Firstly the programme had taken time to establish, and much of what occurred in the school had to be tackled using the combined efforts, knowledge and experience of the Principal and the police. It was an open relationship based on trust and a mutual understanding that both were working for the common good of the school.

Officers explained that a lot of the time it was a case of conflict resolution when dealing with difficult circumstances and the ability to show discretion and flexibility without compromising standards, which was appreciated by the Principal. One SRO said that it was imperative that the two work together and although independent of each other in their own right they are also dependent on each other's role within the school.

*"It's a tightrope relationship. You need to work together or you fall."*

The SROs also described their relationship with the campus security. In the U.K. school there was no formal security other than the assistance of the caretakers who were very supportive of the police presence and any additional help from youth workers whose role was not to be security officers but rather to support and to be role models for the pupils. In the U.S. on site security is viewed as an essential part of the ensuring the school is safe and their importance in terms of assisting the SROs is clear to see from the comments below. The SROs explained that they relied heavily on the support of the campus supervisors/security. They revealed that they had formed very good relationships with them, which were echoed by the campus security when they were interviewed. ANB/9. The Officers described them as being the *"eyes and ears of the school"* who are great at gathering information and making it available to both

the police and school. They said that the key to this partnership was much like any other in that they shared their information and were very honest and open with each other.

The officers were keen to point out that their role was not that of supervision but rather of cooperation and several made cautionary notes about not directing the supervisors to do things or perform tasks. Along with the administrators the campus supervisors were regarded as some of the most valuable assets in the school and whom the officers had the most contact with and consequently depended on the most.

The survey then attempted to find out to what degree the school structure and its policies and procedures supported the officer. All of them said that it did, however there were some concerns that on occasions school protocol such as the interviewing of pupils without their parents sometimes got in the way of the officer performing his duties. My own experience was that the Head was mostly responsible for the policies within the school and this included the disclosure of information to myself of any issues within the school, particularly those of a criminal nature. The SROs pointed out that information of this kind was rarely kept from them, and often it was only very minor incidents that were withheld. One school's policy was to report every incident to the officer regardless of how small or insignificant it was. On the rare occasion that information had been withheld the officers expressed feelings of anger and frustration and the realisation that such practices can be very counter productive and damaging to the school partnership. These feelings I could associate with as well as the disclosure by one of the SROs that he occasionally found out through "*leaks*" from members of staff.

The SROs were also quite adept to tackling these situations if they arose. Often they would confront the Principal themselves in the understanding that they shared a strong enough relationship to sort the problem out or they would rely on the intervention of their supervisors. In both cases this form of action was very rare indeed.

Unfortunately, similar confrontations with the Head at Clearwater School resulted in me being asked to leave the school and it was very difficult to know whether to pursue an issue or simply let it go to avoid any controversy and bad feeling. On many occasions I simply let it go but this was not tackling the issue at hand and in doing this

the school failed to disclose incidents that were happening and the my role became virtually ineffectual with regards to tackling crime within the school.

As well as the overwhelming support for the schools programme the officers also benefited from having their own patrol cars and a lap top computer to report their crimes. They did however, state that they needed more money to fund some of their projects and would be able to perform their duties more efficiently if they had other SROs to assist them and computers in the school. None of these requests were available at Clearwater School and some of the many disadvantages of the role included the absence of a computer, suitable transport, a battery charger or limited overtime, which were indicators of the lack of support the role, was receiving from the partnership.

The SROs were asked about their feelings on wearing uniform and all agreed that it was primarily a uniformed role but that there were occasions when there was a need for a more informal dress code, although there were guarded warnings about non uniformed officers and the confusion that this can cause around identification of their authority. I initially started the role at Clearwater School in plain clothes and found this to be very problematic in terms of identifying myself and also misleading for the students and staff who felt that they were being spied upon.

As an alternative there could be a balance in that the officer should at all times have some form of identification other than his warrant card to identify himself. This could be incorporated in an embroidered T-shirt or sweat- shirt and cap to be worn where appropriate.

The SROs were also asked to comment on any concerns that they may have about personal safety in the school and also the extend to which the events of Columbine had affected them. Whilst embarking on my own role at Clearwater School I did not have any initial fears about my own personal safety and was confident in my own approach and ability to deal with any potentially confrontational situations. However, after being surrounded and jostled on several occasions by a large group of boys and threatened I soon came to realise that I was not as safe as I had first imagined and certainly not capable of protecting myself had the situation escalated any further. The

SROs were equally as concerned and despite carrying firearms they were aware of the threat of large numbers of students forming groups and the possibility of having their guns forcibly removed from their possession. They viewed the risk elements as the same as on patrol and were particularly cautious of people from outside venturing on to the school site whether they were from another school, a parent or a rival gang of kids. The caution, which they exercised, is something that I had taken for granted and one which many school officers and teachers alike assume would not happen in their schools. However violent attacks on teachers are on the increase and schools across America have learnt valuable lessons on school safety after a number of violent incidents resulting in the death of staff and pupils. Similar incidents could well occur in Britain's own schools and efforts should be made to ensure that such a situation does not present itself. The SROs are working to ensure that this doesn't happen by recording any information about pupils and their behaviour however slight and developing procedures and emergency plans as well as threat assessments for dealing with potentially violent incidents.

The SROs were also asked under what circumstances they could arrest on the school site. A major issue at Clearwater School revolved around me not being able to arrest pupils on the school premises and that any arrest would have to have the approval of the Head. This was clearly impractical and proved to be one of the main obstacles in developing the partnership. It created a "safe haven" for the pupils and allowed them time to think of alibis and discard incriminating evidence such as mobile phones before the police could investigate the matter properly. Such measures for the pupils led many of them to believe that they were "untouchable" and were almost immune to prosecution by the law. This gave rise to a display of aggressive behaviour by a small number of pupils who fiercely defended their territory within the school and looked for opportunities to attack the police both verbally and physically. The SROs revealed that they could all arrest on site at any time that they deemed necessary, however they were all aware of the need to be sensitive and discrete when the occasion warranted it. In certain circumstances they would look to deal with the incident less formally through school discipline or via restorative justice, however, where clear evidence existed of felony crimes then the officer arrested without question. The SROs stated that the Principals understood this procedure and were on the whole happy with the officer's actions. On occasions there had been some

negotiating with minor offences but on certain issues the Principals knew that the officer would carry out his duty regardless.

To intervene in the SROs duty would have placed the Principals in a position where they themselves could be arrested for interfering with the investigation of a crime. The Principals were all too aware of this although such an occasion would be unlikely to arise in this school district due to the good partnerships formed. However, should such an occasion present itself the SROs stated quite clearly that they would withdraw from the school as such actions by the Principals would severely undermine their authority and effect as a police officer.

This situation was exactly how I was left at Clearwater School and the reluctance of the Head to report crimes to me and the refusal to permit the arrest of pupils on site seriously undermined the whole project to such a degree that it was unworkable. This absence of communication with the Principal is one of the key points that undermines the role of the SRO and in addition they listed several others that could hinder the effectiveness of the partnership. They indicated, "*rogue cops*" coming onto the school site could jeopardise the good work that had been established by the SROs and that the presence of both teachers and administrators with an "*anti-police*" stance could be equally as damaging to the partnership with their blinkered views and divisive ways.

The officers clearly enjoyed their role as SROs and as a final comment on the surveys they described their jobs as being the most challenging yet rewarding that they had undertaken in the police service. This is something that I can agree with wholeheartedly despite the problems that I endured at the pilot school. Within the role of a schools officer there exists the opportunity to make an impression upon the children and the chance to direct them away from temptations of anti social and criminal behaviour and to go some way to shaping their lives for the future in partnership with the schools.



## **Comparison of U.K./U.S. Interaction with Members of the Partnership.**

### **Communication with Head/Principal**

There was a stark contrast in the communication and relationship that I shared with the Head in the U.K. and that shared by all the officers that I met in the U.S. with their Principals. There were two main reasons for these obvious differences, which in effect had the biggest influences on the scheme. Firstly the Head was not committed to the concept of placing a police officer in his school. He had been offered the opportunity of having an officer to assist him and work in partnership with him but clearly from his reactions he chose to direct the officer and was too heavily influenced by teachers and governors around him who objected to the presence of a police officer in school from the outset. Secondly, the Head was not prepared to disclose information of crimes that were being committed in or around the school to the officer and subsequently not allowing the police officer to arrest suspects where appropriate. In effect he was creating a "safe haven", for the pupils inside the school. Any subsequent challenges to these issues were met with fierce resistance and naturally the effect of the officer to perform his duties and the relationship with the Head diminished considerably.

Principals in the U.S. were extremely forthright in their views about protecting pupils and creating "safe havens". They were not prepared to allow such a thing to happen which could jeopardise the safety of the school and its occupants. The Principals were all very positive about the role of the officers in their schools and were very supportive. That is not to say that they approved of the police totally but that they saw the enormous benefits of having a police officer to assist them with the daily running of the school.

Any doubt or indecision about the role of the officer had been thought through, agreed and finalised before the commencement of the project and there was a system in place, which allowed regular meetings and discussions to review new issues that arose.

The key to the U.S. success was that the Principal and the officer worked in partnership and there was very little that the two did not discuss or involve each other in, whether it was as a result of needing to clarify an issue or merely keeping the other informed of what was happening around the school. There was an air of openness and trust and even my arrival at the U.S. schools was greeted with enthusiasm and the request to deliver some surveys and interview a number of staff was immediately granted with an assurance that the school would assist me in any way that they could. The reverse was true of Clearwater School where the Head blocked the administration of my questionnaires on a number of occasions and tried to take ownership and control of my findings.

There appeared to be a total absence of negative power dynamics in the U.S. schools; it was not a competition or a demonstration of who was the most authoritative but simply a partnership that existed for the benefit of all concerned. Many of these partnerships had blossomed into good friendships. Any issues that did arise that were particularly difficult or sensitive to deal with and required additional support then the police supervisors were always on hand to offer assistance and act as mediators. This occasion rarely arose as the officers, supervisors and often several of the senior management team had received training around the roles and development of partnership work. This concept of training is a recurring theme and it should be noted that the existence of a training manual, which is available for all members of the partnership, is one of the underlying factors of the success of the U.S. programme and as such will be reflected on throughout this section.

### **Communication with Police Supervisors**

I spent a number of days with the U.S. supervisor who was responsible for the whole team of officers in Lakewood schools. Although not her sole responsibility she spent a great deal of time interacting with officers whether in person or on the radio or at weekly meetings over an informal breakfast. By way of sharp contrast the U.K. supervisor showed little or no interest in the project. He rarely came to the school and only when directed by his own line managers to do so. He appeared to have little if any understanding of the complex nature of the role and little inclination to extend his knowledge.

The support, which the officers received in the U.S. schools from their supervisors, helped strengthen their position within the school and reinforced the ideals of the scheme. Officers did not have to rely on their own abilities on every occasion to tackle an issue and when one did arise it was viewed as an incident that needed to be worked through. In the U.K. I was entirely on my own and could not rely on any such support from his supervisor. Despite, submitting several reports outlining potential conflicts and areas of concern, very little was done to assist me and the general comment from the supervisor was that the answer would be to withdraw from the project.

### **Communication with Police Colleagues**

As can be seen from the surveys and interviews conducted with the local patrol officers in the U.S. they were all well aware of the role of the SRO. The SROs were regarded as one of the team and the vast majority of comments were extremely positive with regards to their role in the community.

In the U.K. it was quite a different story, with only a selected handful of officers being aware of the scheme and even fewer understanding what the role entailed. This made communicating with my colleagues extremely difficult and often troublesome.

I was unable to build partnerships with many of the police officers in the district and it took time to establish the few that I made. This resulted in a vast amount of information, intelligence and good work being wasted because together we were unable to act upon it at the time. The lack of understanding about my role led many to become sceptical about police officers being based in schools when there is an obvious shortage of officers on the street dealing with response incidents. This in turn led to my being less willing to involve other officers for fear of ridicule or confrontation. On occasions where I did call for assistance there was often confusion and delay in responding to incidents and sometimes a confrontation as to who should be dealing with the subsequent report or incident that transpired. Once again the U.S. officers explained that they had been fully briefed about the role of the SROs and had received training on how to interact with them on a daily basis.

## Communication with the Community

In contrast to my own experiences in London the local community in the U.S. are a great deal friendlier and everybody the SROs pass on their patrols appeared to acknowledge them and engage in conversation.

As a Service we spend a vast amount of time being trained and educated about the correct way to treat other people and having regard for their cultural, ethical and religious views, which is critical to gaining a better understanding of the community we serve. However, time should also be set aside to educate the public how “we” as police officers operate and function and the daily pressures and requirements that are placed upon us to fulfil our jobs in a professional and satisfactory manner.

The U.S. Citizen’s Academy would be one way of achieving this aim and a quote from a previous participant, which adorns the police academy’s introductory leaflet, captures this idea of informing the community of our work. It reads

*“As I speak to parents and teens in churches, schools and assorted community groups, I am invariably asked, “Why don’t...and why do...”the police operate in one way or another. Not only am I well prepared to answer, but I am proud to tell about the Academy and the obvious interest it occurs.”*

It is not just a cultural phenomena that the police appear to be well liked by the local community, it boils down to the work of the officer spending time visiting neighbours and local shopkeepers near the school and seeking ways to assist them with issues which derive from the school. The police department are extremely keen to have their officers out and involved in the community, which would include going into the local restaurants and convenience stores to have their meals and converse with the community at large. On the several occasions that I did this with the U.S. officers, they spent most of their mealtime talking to other customers about a variety of issues some pertaining to the school. In the U.K. it is still considered unacceptable for uniformed officers to be seen eating in public or taking any form of refreshment. Such conduct would be dealt with by way of discipline.

## **Communication with the Parents**

The U.K. project offered me little scope to interact with the parents other than when I needed to confront them with issues around their child's behaviour. This was often met with resentment, which is reflective of some of the attitudes of residents towards police in the borough.

Many of them said that they did not know there was an officer at the school and naturally many of them were alarmed at the fact that a police officer was roaming around their child's school. What I did find was that where I was able to engage with parents out of school with activities and events such as the swimming club, the parents were far more responsive and positive towards me.

The same was not true of parents in the U.S. All of the 150 interviews that I conducted at two parents' evenings were very positive towards the presence of the officer in their school and a surprising number not only knew the officer's role, but also knew him personally. This was experienced at first hand when I walked around the neighbourhood with the officer and was introduced to a number of the parents who were passing by and stopped to talk to the officer. This was partly because of the officer's ability to communicate with the parents but was also due to the police and the school informing the parents about the officer's role in the school and the opportunities afforded to the officers to provide after school activities and attend school functions with the parents.

## **Communication with the Staff**

The questionnaires that were delivered to the staff and outlined earlier in this section are good indicators of the type of communication that both the U.S. and the U.K. officers share with the staff at the schools. Notwithstanding those comments from a few politically minded members of staff from the U.K. school the rest of the feedback from the surveys was very positive and reflective of the good work that had been achieved throughout the year.

Although the feedback from the U.S. questionnaires highlighted differences in what the U.S. staff and the U.K. staff saw as being the fundamental role of the schools officer, the level of commitment to the scheme and acknowledgement that it was a good idea were shared by the both parties.

It soon became apparent to me that building good relationships with the staff was going to be an important aspect of my work and to this extent I felt that I achieved this goal. However from my observations in the U.S. schools I was clearly not as conversant with the U.K. staff as the U.S. officers were with their own. It is important to bear in mind that the U.S. programmes have been running for several years and subsequently the officers have been able to forge much better links over an extended period of time. I was still enthusiastic that most of the staff in the U.K. viewed this as a worthwhile and profitable venture after only a few terms, a number of weeks of which were subject to me being away from the school after the arrest of a pupil for robbery and the subsequent breakdown in relationships that this caused with the Head. It was in fact during these times of absence that I received the best examples of support from members of staff who would phone or write letters offering support and inspiration for me.

On reflection this was undoubtedly the best collection of people that I interacted with and which gave me the most support and desire to pursue the scheme. In particular, it was those members of staff who I got to know on a personal basis and spent time with away from the school environment.

The same would be true of the SROs and their relationship with the school staff especially the ones they went for drinks with and played cards with.

It was clear that the staff of the school are an essential element of the partnership and whose suggestions need to be taken into consideration when developing such a scheme. It was therefore frustrating to have overwhelming support from the staff of the school but not to have it from the Head.

## **Communication with Pupils**

I was well aware that not all of the pupils who attended Clearwater School had a high estimation of the police service. However, once I was established in the school there were only a handful of pupils in every school year that appeared to be resentful or difficult with me.

Having discussed the issue with several of the SROs the same was true of many of the U.S. children, although there was a significant difference in that the U.S. pupils would rarely if ever be outspoken and aggressive towards the SROs unlike several of the pupils at Clearwater. The SROs offered a number of reasons why this was. Firstly, pupils confronting the officers would be liable to arrest if they “overstepped the mark” and the pupils were only too well aware of this. I witnessed such events on a number of occasions where pupils began to cause a scene only to beat a hasty retreat on the arrival of the SRO. And secondly, because the pupils had invariably known the officers for a number of years as a result of being taught by them on police orientated programmes such as D.A.R.E since elementary school. This meant that the pupils had grown up with the officer and he knew their name and their parents and had come to know the family background and social circumstances surrounding that particular child.

I was not in a position to know all the pupils at Clearwater School and many of them who were happy to “take on” the school authority and myself did, safe in the knowledge that I would not be allowed to arrest them on the school site and that judging on previous incidents the school would often be reluctant to challenge such behaviour.

## **Communication with Support Staff**

The caretakers of the school were great supporters of the scheme and I was able to develop good relationships with them similar to those developed between the SROs and the campus supervisors. Unfortunately, the caretakers were not employed to tackle unruly behaviour in the school like the U.S. campus supervisors, but despite this it was invariably them that were called to deal with intruders or incidents that had

occurred. In both circumstances the officers forged good links with these members of the support staff and although the roles of the caretaker and campus supervisor differed they both proved to be worthwhile and essential contacts.

One of the reasons that both of these partnerships worked so well was that the support staff had great respect for the work of the officer and where possible sought to assist them in any way they could, whilst the officer was mindful not to exercise his authority indiscriminately and exert control over the staff. Such support was very encouraging and would be extremely beneficial in schools in the U.K. The appointment of full time campus security is something, which I would have benefited from in the pilot school, although as with all these matters money would undoubtedly be a major concern.

This approach contrasted sharply with my own experience of security, which came in the form of a youth worker who would monitor the school gates at lunchtime and deal with intruders and conflicts amongst school children. On a number of occasions I discovered fights in progress and well-known problem pupils from opposing schools in the playground or outside the gates with the youth worker in attendance. Despite inquiring about the origin of the fights and the persons involved I was never given a comprehensive reply and I became aware that the youth worker was not keen to disclose any information to me. He preferred to sort the matter out himself and use his influence as an impartial advisor with the pupils. I did not approve of this policy and one afternoon after a fight had occurred between two pupils I noticed from his dishevelled clothing and reddened face that he had become entangled in the fight.

Since returning from my work in the U.S. I have been informed that the youth worker is at present recovering after being shot in the foot by a young boy after he tried to break up a fight at an after school function.

Trying to work with people who have their own agenda and ideas to combat youth violence does not work unless they are accountable and work in partnership with the police. My own experience is that any assistance rendered to police at schools in the form of security should be on a full time basis and clear guidelines need to be



developed to ensure that there is appropriate training offered for these security guards to work in conjunction with the police.

In summary, there was a clear contrast in the way in which the two projects were set up initially, and implemented. The U.K. project had no clear structure or goals and was organised hastily without any consultation with the school and community. No forethought had been given to the potential problems that may occur or how they would be dealt with. By contrast the U.S. project, which had been running for a number of years, had clearly defined aims, which had been agreed after extensive consultation of all parties concerned. There was no support structure within the U.K. model and consequently no guidance for the officer when difficulties arose. The U.S. officers relied heavily on each other and their line managers to address any issues that arose and from personal reflection it was apparent that both teachers and patrol officers were not only aware of the role of the officer they were also very supportive. There was certainly a greater level of trust between the U.S. police and the teachers in particular when dealing with Principals. There appeared to be no power dynamics present in the relationship and both parties had a clear understanding of each other's role and a mutual respect of their powers. In the U.K. model the relationship between the officer and the Head, which is crucial to the success of any such project, was the main stumbling block.

In addition, there was a noticeable difference in the support that the U.S. officers received from the pupils, parents and wider community, which was attributed to having known the officer for an extended period of time, in some cases years. All of these positive encounters acted as confirmation and encouragement for the officer that s/he was performing a worthwhile role. By comparison, negative correspondence from agitated parents, and staff and governors expressing political biases combined with police supervisors reluctant to challenge events as they unfolded led to feelings of isolation and desperation.

There were some parallels, in particular from comments expressed by some of the U.S. and U.K. staff in their questionnaires around their views of how the scheme had been successful and the benefits they had experienced. These comments are blocks on which to build.

## **Chapter Seven**

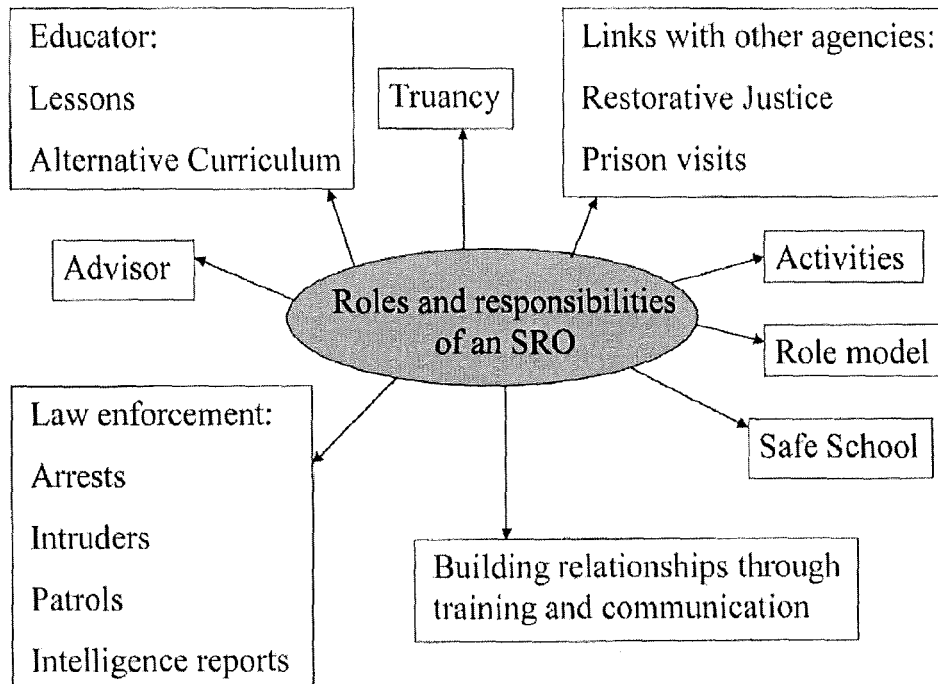
### **7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Introduction**

Since returning from the U.S. I have spent the past year looking at the list of recommendations that I have outlined below in order to implement them into the practices used in police/school partnerships. The relevance of these recommendations becomes apparent when one considers how many of them have been included in the Metropolitan Police Youth Strategy (2003). (See Appendix U). However it should be noted that some of these recommendations were already being considered prior to my proposals. This only serves to highlight the concern that potentially important ideas and proposals that would initially have assisted me in my work as a schools officer were not widely publicised or made known to me when they would have been most beneficial. I am now compiling all of these issues and areas of best practice and am visiting school officers and teachers in order to share these findings and develop the partnerships.

The rest of this section reviews the implication for policy and practice of U.K. and U.S. experience, which form the recommended roles for a programme of intervention outlined in Chart 4.10.

Chart 4.10 Roles and Responsibilities of an SRO



(Source: personal reflection)

The Chart builds upon Chart 4.1 Roles of School Involvement Officer and Chart 4.8 Roles of the School Resource Officer. Although not a definitive model in police school partnerships it does provide a framework for building relationships between police and schools.

The extent to which this model can be applied in order to bring about a “partnership approach to tackling juvenile delinquency” is highly dependent on a number of factors, which are commented upon in the recommendations that follow. However, the success of the work at Clearwater School in achieving its aims outlined in Chapter 3 can be hailed as encouraging judging by the comments from the staff and pupils and the ability to bring about positive change to a number of the Government initiatives shown in Appendix C.

Likewise the work conducted as an observational evaluator in the U.S. clearly shows the benefits of police school partnership, which is a theme that runs through all of the interviews and surveys conducted.

There are no hard quantitative measurements available in terms of reductions in truancy or exclusions or base line data that records the apparent feel good factor experienced by many of the members of the school community as a result of fewer crimes being reported, increased public reassurance and reduced fear of crime that reinforce these findings. However, future research to be conducted by the Youth Justice Board in additional pilot sites will allow a more quantitative evaluative approach as opposed to the mainly qualitative one applied to this study. What does provide interesting comparisons to my own findings are the comments made by numerous teachers parents and children on a the BBC News Website "Talking Point", under the title of "Should police be sent into schools?". In excess of 60 entries are voiced on the site and the range of comments which are extremely varied reflect many of the concerns which arose throughout my research and which came to surface in the questionnaires and focus groups and are recorded in my reflective learning log.

## **7.1 Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been included in a report from myself to the Youth Justice Board and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. In addition they have been presented at a Metropolitan Police Authority seminar attended by school heads, senior police officers, home office officials and members of various partnership agencies.

They form the future for policing in schools and more importantly are the foundations for partnership work in dealing with Youth Crime in this country. At present the concepts of this work are being implemented into the Metropolitan Policing Model and its links with the various components, in particular the diversion aspect. (See Appendix U).

These recommendations will assist the partnership approach of the school-based police officer in tackling juvenile delinquency. These proposals are based upon my observations as an action researcher in a school in the U.K. over a period of an academic year combined with my work as an observer evaluator in several U.S. schools.

## **7.1 Recommendations for Operational Practice**

1. To adopt the triad approach of law enforcer, educator and counsellor/advisor (and role model). This is a proposed move, away from the traditional role of the school involvement officer who deals primarily with education.

School officers in the U.S. perform a much more comprehensive role in schools than in the U.K. They seek to enforce the law and make the school a safe place for staff and students and offer support and guidance where necessary for victims or children at risk. In addition they provide the schools with a balanced educational input, which compliments key areas of the schools' curriculum.

In the U.K. officers attached to schools only offer the above services in a limited capacity if at all and skills over and above educational inputs are until now not recognised as part of the officers role in line with the strategy on youth crime.

2. To develop a comprehensive training manual for both police and educators which explains procedures around arrests, school discipline, school safety and the aims and objectives of the scheme.

One of the key areas to the success of the school-based officer is highlighted by the need for training. This is an area of concern that becomes apparent time after time when speaking to the school officers in the U.S. They emphasise the importance of undergoing training, which not only equips them and their supervisors to work in schools but also engages teachers in the process. Issues which are discussed include partnership work, understanding police and school procedure, youth crime and trends, crime prevention, school law and so on. Incorporated in this is the need for partners to draw up protocols for agreement, which will clearly define issues including the officer's role, what hours they work, their form of dress, and their line of command. It is partnership training such as this that is essential to the success of any future

schemes in the U.K because it not only changes behaviours, which are displayed, by both the police and teachers towards each other but also brings about a major shift in culture. It enables partnerships to work together to resolve problems which were once dealt with in isolation by each partner and often less effectively and which now see partners rely on each other for support and guidance to resolve the issues.

3. To make the reporting of crimes which occur in school a mandatory requirement for schools.

Another important area is to create a climate whereby victims are willing and able to report crimes to police and that the school are as equally willing to disclose information to police. In the U.S. there is a mutual and free exchange of information between the police and the school and officers reveal that the schools are only too willing to report crime to the police in order to keep the school safe. Experiences in the U.K are quite the opposite and one of the major stumbling blocks of the pilot project was the unwillingness of the school to report crimes to police. Some clear guidelines from the Department of Education and Employment that crime "must" be reported to police would help to make this clear.

4. To improve links with the Youth Offender Team and to introduce work around Restorative Justice within the school environment.

Having taken part in a number of restorative justice conferences in the U.S. I would strongly advocate the use of them in schools to deal with a wide-ranging number of incidents and offences. In certain areas of the U.K. most notably the Thames Valley area this has been working well for some years. Such work would involve greater links with the local YOT in order to assist with the diversion of children through such schemes. It could also allow officers to work more closely with teachers to resolve everyday disputes and anti-social behaviour displayed by pupils at school allowing both parties to have a greater understanding of what affects pupils and their behaviour and how best to resolve these matters. This would further support the notion that

police and teachers working together will bring about a real shift in culture between the two organisations from one of tolerance to partnership work.

5. Expand the use of the Truancy Powers in terms of the frequency it is used and the ability to return truants to school under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The links between crime and truancy are well documented (Graham and Bowling, 1996) and there is a real need to engage pupils in school for fear that low attainment and attachment to school will inevitably lead them to crime. At present the U.K. schools and police services need to take the issue of truancy more seriously by enforcing the laws surrounding truancy more vigorously and taking advantage of all day truancy sweeps during term time.

6. Introduce cadet units to each school to educate pupils about the role of the police service and encourage recruitment to the borough cadet units.

Cadet units are an excellent way in which to socialise, engage and educate young people who can be shaped into good citizens for the future. They provide opportunities for education, fun, leadership and voluntary experience and are an excellent pool of recruitment for the police service. The creation of units at schools will help bridge the gaps between many young people and the police and will act as feeder units into the more established police cadets which are in existence on nearly all London boroughs. They are a good example of engaging young people in good citizenship and help focus the community's attitude towards after school activities and its many benefits in terms of community work and involvement. For many cadets this is a life changing experience, which often leads to employment in one of the uniformed services.

7. Introduce a Citizen's Academy, which educates the community about the role of the police service and actively encourages voluntary participation in non-confrontational police duties.

There is a need for more information to be made available about the police service in general and a greater understanding by the general public of what the role entails. In the U.S. weekly classes enable ordinary members of the public some of whom are teachers to undergo basic police training in a number of police related topics with a view to providing some voluntary work at the end of the course. This form of partnership work builds trust and changes attitudes amongst police and the community. It is something that needs to be built upon so that it becomes a common thread running through our community. The public need a better understanding of the work of police and in turn the police need the support of the public to assist them in their daily work.

8. Raise the profile of the schools officer by specialising their work.

Much of the success surrounding the schools programme will depend on the motivation and skills of the officers involved. Most of the surveys indicated that this was indeed a specialist role that required a great deal of skill and diplomacy. In order to attract the right officers to the role there needs to be a big shift in the way in which schools work is viewed. At present its culture and remit is one of ridicule in that the role is viewed as the softer side of policing and therefore “not real police work” worthy of time and investment. The future of schools policing is anything but soft and vacancies will need to be filled by dynamic officers who are adept at displaying a wide range of skills such as those highlighted by the staff questionnaire in Chapter 5. “Qualities required for police officers working in schools.”

It is therefore essential that the police invest time and money in their school officers by ensuring that they receive the appropriate training, support and recognition that they deserve. This will be a cultural shift for the police who need to ensure that they build this new role into existing police structures to demonstrate its value. This change of priorities will take time and will inevitably be based upon the effectiveness of these schemes as viewed by police management. However, basic steps could be taken by the police management to highlight the importance of the school officer's



work by advertising the good work of the officers and ring fencing them from other duties, which draw them away from their schools. In some U.S. states it is not uncommon for these officers to receive pay rises in recognition of their unique roles and the value placed upon them by senior officers.

9. Ensure that both the school based programmes and the officers involved are well trained and supported.

This is an extension of the previous recommendation in that the opportunity is given to the officers to undertake training and that they are given the support and supervision that they need to complete their daily tasks. As an organisation the police management need to ensure that they understand this issue and the relevance that their support and guidance has upon the role of the officer in school. This means that time is invested in supporting the officers who will experience pressures and feelings of isolation and frustration.

10. Ensure that the work is fully evaluated in accordance with the four e's:  
Evaluation; environment; efficiency and effectiveness.

There is a real need for any future schemes to be fully evaluated in order to enable the partnership to see what is and what isn't working. Valuable lessons can be learnt from simple evaluation and much of the good work in the U.S. has stemmed from an understanding of how police school partnerships work.

11. Formation of a Junior Crimestoppers programme in schools.

There is an opportunity through the school police schemes for pupils to become more familiar with police officers and consequently experience shows that those pupils as well as other members of the partnership are more willing to report crime. One

method for ensuring this happens is to promote the use of Junior Crimestoppers in order to encourage children to report crime and information anonymously.

## 12. Dedicated Juvenile Detectives

A final recommendation, which comes from this study, would be the introduction of juvenile detectives who assist the school officers with both victims of crime such as sexual assaults as well as dealing with the processing of prisoners. This would help raise the profile of the role and offer the school officer some much needed support and guidance in a potentially isolated role.

## 7.2 Recommendations for Strategic Development

### 13. Develop a National Centre of Excellence for School Based Officers.

The impact that police in schools has had so far is that it has directly affected the youth strategy as a whole. At present a new youth strategy is being devised to incorporate these new roles and I am making a proposal to create a centre of excellence to capture much of the good work being practiced to combat youth crime.

### 14. Central Data Base, which will store information on juvenile offenders and "Hot Spot Schools" and areas of crime, associated with juveniles.

The need for a central data base for information on juveniles which is accessible to all suitable agencies such as the police, youth offending teams, social services, courts etc and will house information from each source which may be of benefit to each partner.

There are already attempts to ensure that this happens and ministers are currently meeting to look at ways to overcome data protection issues in order to create this new database.

### **7.3 Future Research**

Since returning from the U.S.A. the Street Crime Action Group which has been formed by the government and attended by the Prime Minister has been looking at innovative and effective ways in which to tackle the concerns over street crime and in particular youth crime. One of the measures that they have adopted after consultation about the role of police in schools and in particular the work in the pilot school has been to introduce more police officers into schools under the Safer Schools Partnership. This has been issued jointly by the Department of Education and Skills, Home Office, Youth Justice Board, Association of Chief Education Officers and Association of Chief Police Officers. The aims and objectives of the scheme are outlined in Appendix T.

The Safer Schools Partnership is currently looking at placing 100 school officers in a number of pilot sites across the country and in order to achieve this they are looking to adopt a training programme, which will be suitable for development in all of these areas. In essence the programme will be wherever possible similar in its style and content for all the schools involved regardless of their geographical location. This will make it easier to compare and contrast the work undertaken in each of the schools and allow the necessary evaluation process to be undertaken.

In conjunction with this I am compiling a training manual in partnership with representatives from the teaching profession and other multi agencies with a view to its content forming an undergraduate degree course for prospective students wishing to study the role of police in schools and partnership work amongst agencies.

It is hoped that this will allow both police and educators to gain a better understanding of the key outcomes that need to be identified such as a reduction in truancy and higher attainment by pupils as well as improved attitudes towards police and a greater understanding and clarity of how this work can be linked with key areas of the

National Curriculum contained within Citizenship and Personal and Social Health Education. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is taking place, however the publication of an evaluation of the Safer Schools Partnership on behalf of the Youth Justice Board due in Autumn 2003, will reveal the effectiveness of these partnerships.

I am looking to establish a National Centre of Excellence for school officers in the U.K., which will enable members of the partnership to develop their training and understanding of the role of the schools officer.

In addition to this I intend to formulate a web forum to generate topics for learning and the sharing of good working practices along with an Internet page which interested parties can use to increase their knowledge and understanding of the partnership.

At present I am working with a number of police officers from around the country assisting them with developing a "Knowledge Map", which is available on software and is guide for dealing with incidents and investigations. It was initially devised for dealing with the investigation of rape but has been adapted to incorporate robbery investigations as well. As an addition to this I am using this opportunity to include a site on schools which will focus on providing the reader the necessary tools to deal effectively with investigations of crimes within the school community as well as offering advice on working with schools and other issues including: Restorative Justice, Problem Solving, School Security, Youth Issues, Education Initiatives, Youth Schemes and links to other agencies.

There has also been interest shown in the role of the Safer Schools Partnership by representatives from other countries that wish to adopt the model and implement it into their own policing model. One West Indian State is particularly keen and work is being undertaken to see what aspects of this programme are transferable and relevant to their society. Issues around the high number of teachers in secondary schools who are female and the their status and standing as authorative figures amongst young boys at school is one factor that needs to be addressed.

## **New Youth Strategy**

The effect of this new role for police officers has meant that a new Youth Strategy has been drafted for the Metropolitan Police that takes into account all of the changes that are taking place around police, schools and youth in general. Appendix U.

What is clearly noticeable is the huge influence that the role of police in schools now has on the policy and the extent of the role for the police officer attached to schools. Many of the recommendations in this report have already been adopted and included in the Safer Schools Partnership.

There have already been several national seminars hosting the Safer Schools Partnership, which has brought together representatives from around the country from education, police, social, political and academic institutions as well as consultation with children. These meetings have included talks and workshops from officers and heads of schools who have experienced the role of police in schools as well as senior representatives from the government who are very positive about the new programme.

The initial work of the pilot project and the responses from many of those who have experienced it suggest that the partnership will be successful and that it is here to stay.

According to one Headmaster

“This has been fantastic. You want to get some too if you can”

Weale. S (2002)

### **7.4 Final Reflection**

As indicated from the outset this thesis adopted action research as its model of investigation at a time when the U.K government were opposed to the idea of placing police officers in school. “The Home Office has rejected suggestions made by the Chief Constable of the Thames Valley Police that officers should be stationed full time in schools” (Mulraney, 2000). What I have endeavoured to show through my

action research is how this work has managed to bring about change not only at a local practitioner level but at a national policy level. This article shows clearly how this process has occurred by showing how, since the inception of the original pilot project the government have taken a different stance on police in schools and now clearly recognise the potential benefits of this new partnership, which has in part been due to the nature and findings of this action research project. The spokesperson for the government is the Education minister Stephen Twigg.

“The Government is “absolutely committed” to the idea of police based in schools; more than 100 officers are already based on school premises in London. He has no problem with the idea of arrests on site. “If crime is committed in schools then that is what may happen.” Times Educational Supplement (2002).

On a personal level this research has affected me on a number of levels. Firstly it has allowed me to apply action research to investigate an area of work, which has resulted in significant impact around policy and procedure (See Appendix U). (Metropolitan Police, 2003). It has also challenged me intellectually and given me the self-belief and confidence that I can affect change as a person regardless of my rank within an organisation. This is borne out by the fact that I am the only police constable ever to become the recipient of the Fulbright Police Fellowship Award and to feature in the Metropolitan Police Youth Strategy and to submit a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has equipped me with the skills and knowledge to address audiences at national conferences as well as being able to publish papers on my work both internally within the police and on a national scale in the *International Journal of Police Science and Management*. (Briers, 2003). The completion of this thesis has given me great personal satisfaction and signals the beginning of a new era for police school partnerships, which I intend to investigate further and publish my findings in a book.

It is now that I can say with confidence that my work has made not only an independent and original contribution to scholarship but also provided a significant input to policy development and the identification and implementation of effective practice.

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## **Appendix A: Protective and Risk Factors for Youth Crime**

### **Risk Factors**

*Family risk factors include; poor parental supervision and discipline, family conflict, a family history of criminal activity, parental attitudes that condone anti social behaviour, low income poor housing and a large family size.*

*Risk factors in the school context include low achievement beginning in primary school, aggressive behaviour (including bullying), lack of commitment to school, (including truancy) and school disorganisation, all of which increase the likelihood that young people exposed to them will become involved in crime.*

*Within the community, the risk factors identified by research are; living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, community disorganisation and neglect, availability of drugs and high turnover and lack of neighbourhood attachment.*

*Risk factors for youth crime that are essentially individual include; hyperactivity and impulsivity, low intelligence and cognitive impairment, alienation and lack of social commitment, attitudes that condone offending and drug misuse and early involvement in crime and drug misuse. Friendships with peers involved in crime and drug misuse also increase.*

*Youth Justice Board November 2001*

### **Protection Factors**

*Factors that will protect against involvement in youth crime, even in the presence of the risk factors listed above, include; female gender, a resilient temperament, a sense of self-efficacy, a positive, outgoing disposition and high intelligence. Social bonding, and the promotion within the family, school and community of healthy standards will also act as protective factors.*

*Youth Justice Board November 2001*

## Appendix B: Opinions From a Police and Community Consultative Group

- They feel that police have a limited understanding of young people and there was a strong feeling that police do not like black people.
- The majority of students stated that they had little contact with the police.
- Criticisms were aimed at police who gave presentations at schools for not using the opportunity to improve relations between police and young people as opposed to just deterring young people from breaking the law. Such an approach gives the impression that police are expecting the pupils to break the law and creates an environment of mistrust.
- One student highlighted the death of Stephen Lawrence and stated “How can you have confidence in the police after what happened to Stephen Lawrence?”
- Another stated, “If police did their job properly there wouldn’t be as much crime as there is now. They’re concentrating on black youths.”
- “Other pupils said, “They always seem to be more suspicious of black people”. They just think the worst of black people”. “They have a stereotype of black people”.

## Appendix C: DfES Criteria for Evaluation of U.K Project

School Community Links-links with the community help schools in raising pupil's motivation, expectation and achievement. This can lead to higher standards and improved behaviour. Support from the local community can be a crucial factor in improving pupil's attainment and combating social exclusion.

Truancy-Improving school attendance and reducing absence levels are key elements in our drive to raise educational standards and combat social exclusion.

Bullying-dealing with all bullying and harassment supports the wider DfES objectives of reducing exclusion and truancy, raising standards and promoting inclusion.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)-helps pupils lead confident, healthy and responsible lives.

Citizenship-gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society. It helps them to become informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens aware of duties and rights. It promotes their spiritual, social moral and cultural development, making them more self-confident.

Public reassurance-to increase police visibility to instil a sense of confidence in the police's ability to deal with crime and bad behaviour.

Fears of Crime-to develop in partnership with other agencies initiatives, which tackle the causes of crime in and around the school setting. Research suggests that the most effective way of dealing with the fear of crime is to initiate crime reduction programmes which have a real impact i.e. burglary initiatives, diversionary activities; Reducing Youth Crime-to tackle the immediate problems created by highly active young offenders; and to establish preventative programmes to divert younger, at risk children away from future criminality.

Government Report to be kept anonymous.

## Appendix D: Columbine

*On April 20<sup>th</sup> 1999 in Littleton Colorado on what would have been Adolf Hitler's 110<sup>th</sup> birthday, Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, stormed Columbine High School heavily armed with a semi-automatic rifle, two sawn-off shotguns, a semi-automatic handgun, and dozens of homemade bombs. They fired randomly at students and teachers, and then hunted down and killed students hiding in various places. Before they killed themselves, they murdered 12 students and a teacher and wounded 23 others.*

*This case caused international concern about school violence in America and became a turning point. After the tragedy at Columbine the fear of "it could happen here" became a real concern for students, parents, administrators and communities all over the country. Evidence of the extent to which this tragedy has affected our culture can be heard in changes in our language. Just as the term "going postal" evolved out of the post office shootings, the term "pulling a Columbine" is gaining popularity. TIME magazine headlined this phenomenon "The Columbine Effect" on the cover of their March 2001 issue. Violence Goes To School: Lessons Learned. John Nicoletti. (2001).*



## Appendix E: Comments Regarding the Placing of Police Officers in Schools

Your reaction:

*The next step will be policeman in every home to make sure we behave ourselves in a fashion that they deem "acceptable". State influence in our lives is already too great- we should be reducing it, not increasing.*

Mark B, England

*It is a shame that it has come to this, but there is a need. If I were a parent, I would not complain-the police are hardly going to cause trouble. A heavy-handed approach is needed to protect our children; they are our most precious asset. A 10 year old was killed-surely that is a sign that police presence-however drastic it may seem-is required-so no-one else has to pay for crime with their life. Better police than the situation they have in some USA schools-where all pupils must have see through bags to prevent them bringing weapons into school. It's just a shame police can't make all the children work in the school as well.*

John Hutchence U.K.

*The problem is that most school age criminals know they are so over-protected by the law that they are virtually untouchable. Unfortunately this is the flipside of the well-meaning efforts of child protection lobbies, the guilty derive immunity from the protection of the innocent.*

Bobby U.K.

*Crazy! Big Brother is here to stay. What a pitiful control freaked, bunch of sheep we are. Who needs a general election? Ask the cops!*

John U.K

*If successive governments over the years had not eroded the powers of teachers in respect of punishing kids, there would not be the need for police officers to be stationed in schools. But it's a damn good idea!!*

Rob Elliot, Kosovo

## Appendix F: Challenges for Police/School Partnerships

- Developing and maintaining effective communication between/among law enforcement, school officials and the community
- Understanding and communicating that placement of an SRO in a school does not mean that a school is unsafe
- Understanding that placement of an SRO in a school does not mean that the staff no longer need to be concerned about school safety
- Paying for an SRO programme
- Facing liability issues which surround SRO programmes
- Addressing “turf wars” which arise among involved jurisdictions
- Recognising the impact of an SRO programme on the internal workings of involved law enforcement agencies
- Selecting the “right” SRO for a school
- Developing effective and efficient school assignment and coverage plans
- Training the SRO to be successful
- Selecting and training the SRO supervisor
- Making expectations of all involved parties clear and understood
- Understanding the differences between school discipline and criminal law
- Understanding the differences between formal counselling and the kinds of counselling and or referral that the SRO will do
- Creating and maintaining successful working relationships between the SRO and the local law enforcement agency
- Creating and maintaining successful working relationships between the SRO and community resources
- Creating and maintaining successful relationships between the SRO and the principal and school staff
- Creating and maintaining successful relationships between the SRO and the students
- Preventing SRO “burnout”
- Evaluating the SRO’s performance
- Determining whether the SRO programme is successful

## Appendix G: SRO Web Page

*A police officer writes:*

*Subject: Being Left Out*

*There is a moral issue of belonging. The department I work for SRO's are not accepted by the Sheriff's Dept. We are looked down upon by all other Deputies The Administration doesn't get us the equipment we need to do the job and act like the schools should pay for what we need. The schools don't want us meddling in their issues. They want us to hide away in our offices (if we have one) and not come out unless they need us. They feel like the S.R.O. should supply us our equipment because we are deputies, but if something happens they wonder why we can't take care of the problem.*

*First Reply:*

*Subject: Square Peg/Round Hole*

*It only takes one or two road officers coming to you for information on one of your students they have run into for them to see you as a source for them. Trust me fellow "Square Peg", the edges DO come off! To have the chance to be an SRO is worth it. I have over 20 years in law enforcement, yet the last four have been the most rewarding.*

*A second reply:*

*Subject: SRO's*

*Chris, You're not alone. I work for an SO that has over 400 deputies. The four SRO's are looked upon as "kiddie cops" by the rank and file. We even have Sgt's and Lieutenants that feel we're not real cops unless we are working nights. It makes for a rough tour of duty...As far as the schools go, get into as many classrooms as you can. In a short time the students will warm up to you and the school officials will hear a ton of good things about you. Go to as many school events as you can. The more the public sees you, the better they feel...Don't worry too much about the guys humping the calls in your area. When they see how many reports the SRO's take care of they will warm up to you. Attend training with the troops so they don't forget who you are. When all else fails a box of donuts can go a long way at a shift briefing. Hang in there. You are making a difference in those kid's lives.*

*Third Reply:*

*Subject: SRO-ex misfit*

*I don't want to be the advice guy but wow!!! It is amazing that we all have the same basic problems. I cannot wait to go to training on this and possibly meet more in my boat...The school does not want to have reports done because it shows what the kids are really doing. There is so much grey area in this job.*

## **Appendix H: Summary of a School Officer's Day**

Below is a summary of a day in the life of a schools officer at Clearwater School.

0715 Arrive at school and check messages.

0730 To school swimming pool for before school swimming club Years 7/8.

0800 Daily meeting with school head re previous days incidents and forthcoming events.

0810 Outside school gate welcoming arrival of pupils and speaking to parents and local community.

0835 To assembly room re assisting with presentation for Year 7.

0900 To theatre block re Year 7 lesson on bullying with outside agency as part of an ongoing theme around bullying and robbery.

1045 Engaged meeting with senior management re specific year group for pastoral issues. Liaison with Year Head and sharing of information around pupils who have come to notice for a variety of reasons.

1200 Engaged patrols around school and local community re truancy. Pupils returned to school and referred to Head of Year.

1300 Engaged lunchtime activity in sports hall

1330 Out on patrols lunchtime dealing with excluded pupils hanging around the school gates. Dealing with issues created by pupils at lunchtime usually centering on the nearby shops.

1400 Patrolling corridors and liaising with teachers re afternoon registration and chasing up truants with school secretary and local Educational Welfare Officer.

1425 In discussion with pupil and school mentor around issue of theft. Called to classroom to deal with further incident of theft of mobile phone from pupils jacket.

1510 Outside school dealing with pupils from other school and several older pupils in non-uniform.

1530 Called to nearby street re a fight between pupils

1540 Called to nearby commercial premises re vandalism of windows by school children.

1600 To swimming pool re lessons for pupils who are non-swimmers.

1745 Check messages.

## Appendix I: School Press Release

### First version

*XXXX and Clearwater School are working in partnership to launch an innovative new pilot project.*

*From September 2000, Police Constable Andy Briers will be permanently based at the school to work with staff, pupils, governors, parents and the local community to help reduce crime and disorder in the area to create a safer environment for pupils.*

*Constable Briers will be based at the school for two terms after which time the pilot project will be evaluated. He will work with the school to develop anti-bullying and drug policies, promote good citizenship by raising awareness of drugs, race and crime issues and work with parents, teacher's governors and local residents to discuss issues of concern. This is believed to be the first time in London that a police officer has been attached to a school as part of the permanent staff.*

## Second version

### *Press Release*

*XXXX Police and Clearwater School are working in partnership to launch an innovative new pilot scheme.*

*From September 2000 Police Constable Andy Briers will have a base at the school to work with the local community, pupils, staff, Governors and parents to help create a safer environment for pupils and help reduce crime in the locality.*

*Constable Briers will initially be based at the school for two terms after which time this pilot project will be evaluated. He will work with the school to promote good citizenship by raising awareness of drugs, race and crime issues. He will liaise directly with teachers, governors, parents and the local residents to discuss issues of mutual concern. Constable Briers will also be advising the school as it refines its current policies on anti-bullying and drugs.*

*This is believed to be the first time in London that a Police Officer has been attached to a school to work closely alongside staff and students.*



## Appendix J: Example of U.K. School Exclusion Letter

### Fixed Term Exclusion for 5 days

Pupil One    DOB

*Dear Mrs*

*I regret to inform you that with effect from Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June I have excluded XXXX from attendance at this school for 5 days, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2001. It has been necessary for me to take this action because he was involved in the theft of a member of staff's bag and mobile phone.*

*Before this present incident, XXXX has only had two C4's this term.*

*The following arrangements have been made to set and mark work for XXXX during his absence from school. Work will be provided by his Head of Year.*

*Whilst the exclusion is in force, XXXX welfare is your responsibility and he must not come onto or near the school premises. He should return to school on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2001 at 8.40 am. He should report to his Year Head in the first instance. I would like you to come to the school, with XXXX on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June at 2.30pm to discuss the matter.*

*You have the right to access your child's school record. If you wish to do so, please contact the Year Head.*

*Meanwhile, I enclose information on the procedures relating to the exclusion. You may wish to contact the Mediation Officer XXXX or the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) help line for advice. Also enclosed is a list of other people who may be able to help you.*

**Fixed Term Exclusion for 5 days in the first instance**

**Pupil Two      DOB**

*I regret to inform you that with effect from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June I have exclude XXXX from attendance at this school for 5 days in the first instance from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June to Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2001.*

*It has been necessary for me to take this action because of his defiance to a member of staff and a further complaint of sexual harassment.*

*Before this present incident, there has been a Governors meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March to discuss his behaviour and he has been referred to*

*The following arrangements have been made to set and mark homework for XXXX during his absence from school. Work will be sent to you for      to complete.*

*Whilst the exclusion is in force, XXXX welfare is your responsibility and he must not come onto or near the school premises. Please telephone XXXX at the school to arrange a time for you to come in and discuss the matter.*

*You have the right to access your child's school record. If you wish to do so, please contact*

*Meanwhile, I enclose information on the procedures relating to exclusion. You may wish to contact the Mediation Officer XXXX or the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) help line on XXXX for advice. Also enclosed is a list of other people who may be able to help you.*

## Appendix K: Incident outside U.K. School Written by Head.

### Incident Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2001

*Yesterday morning, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March, I received a telephone call from XXXX, Headteacher of XXXX School, concerned that there had been an incident at his school on the Monday afternoon, which might lead to a reaction on Tuesday.*

*He explained that during the Monday afternoon a number of our students-estimation of 30 although he believed it might have been fewer- came to his school and that they "rushed" a number of older students with a view apparently to taking money or mobile phones. He said that there had been quite a reaction in his school partly because our students had invaded their territory but also because it was seen that it was younger students from our school who had harassed older students from their school.*

*Mr XXXX said that he would be visiting all his Year 11 classes warning them against leaving and visiting our school. I spoke to XXXX and asked her to get the registers checked for Monday afternoon to see who in the upper school (Years 9,10 and 11) had been out of school on Monday afternoon. XXXX did this and interviewed a number of our students. Letters were sent home to these students.*

*Midway through the afternoon Mr XXXX came to the general office to say that about 30 students, identified by a Year 11 boy as belonging to XXXX School, had come onto our school site. I went out to look but by this time they had left the site. I left a message for P.C. Briers to be alerted about the situation and walked around XXXX to find them gathered opposite XXXX road near the bus stop; they started to walk back to the school to the XXXX Road entrance. (Previously they had come in from the XXXX Avenue side; the gates had been opened to allow our Year 9 students taking SATs to leave their Maths oral exam).*

*There were about 30 of them-all boys and amongst their number were four or five who were 17 or 18 the rest would appear to be a mixture of Year 10 and 11. I approached them, told them who I was and that I had had a conversation with Mr XXXX and advised them to disperse. They were uncertain what to do but then saw P.C.Briers walking along XXXX Road and they all ran off, first attempting to get on a XXXX bus then they ran up XXXX Road. A few dropped things that they had been carrying and I picked up a bottle and a wooden shaft of a hammer. Also at the bus stop I saw a chair leg, which had been abandoned. P.C Briers found a heavy metal clamp.*

*P.C Briers summoned assistance from the police, I went back into school and contacted Mr. XXXX and made arrangements for staff to be around the premises at the end of the day.*

*Headteacher*

# Socialist Alliance

On Thursday 1st February a black student in year eleven was arrested by the policeman based at this school. He was taken out of his classroom and was handcuffed against a wall. Then he was marched across the school site and taken to [redacted] police station. The headmaster told the policeman he should not do this, but the policeman ignored the headmaster and did it anyway.

**This is disgraceful. Would they have done this to a rich white boy at Eton? Of course not! Whatever the student has done he should not be treated like this.**

[redacted] police have a terrible record in dealing with black people in our community. Last year [redacted] died in police custody and no proper explanation has been given since. Delroy Lindo, a black man, was arrested 37 times, once for "sucking his teeth". He was found innocent by the courts every time. Black people are six times more likely to be stopped by the police.

But now [redacted] School is being treated like a guinea pig in a scientific experiment. No proper explanation has been given for the policeman's presence in the school to students, teachers or parents. Most parents have not even been told that he is here or that he has arrested a student. Questions have been asked about this, but they have not been answered. After the arrest the policeman was suspended but now he is being allowed back in.

Incidents like this must not happen again.

That is why we believe that the policeman should not be allowed to return to school and the police should not be stationed in any school. Students should feel safe at school. Even if they get into trouble, no one should have to fear that they might be arrested.

## POLICE OUT OF OUR SCHOOL

### **FIGHT FOR JUSTICE RALLY**

**Speakers:**

**RAPHAEL ROWE (M25 Three)**

**JUSTICE FOR ROGER SYLVESTER CAMPAIGN**

**DELROY LINDO**

**IRENE STANLEY (wife of Harry, shot by [redacted] police)**

**PADDY HILL (Birmingham 6/Miscarriages of Justice Organisation)**

**WEYMAN BENNETT (Socialist Alliance)**

**FREE WINSTON SILCOTT CAMPAIGN**

**Tuesday 20th February 7:30pm**

**[redacted] Leisure Centre**

[redacted] is the prospective candidate for the Socialist Alliance at the coming general election. He says, "Money should not be spent putting police in schools, it should be spent on more teachers and better facilities."

Contact the Socialist Alliance, [redacted]

## **Appendix M: Copy of Letter Circulated by School Governor**

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE PROJECT**

*At the Governing Body MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February attended by XXXX, it was agreed that the pilot project should continue subject to:*

*The existing protocol being strengthened*

- a) the neighbourhood officer is under the direction of the Headteacher when on site*
- b) management of the officer is strengthened and made explicit*
- c) the police protocol for the arrest is adhered to. The head is "loco-parentis"; no arrest without the agreement of the head unless the situation is immediate and life threatening.*

*There should be a meeting with the head to agree the above, at this meeting there should also be*

- a) an apology for not adhering to the usual police protocol for arrests on school site*
- b) to agree a statement which can be taken to school staff*

*To review the public relations and media management of the Pilot given concerns shared with Chief Superintendent XXXX about the way that this initiative has been reported in the press.*

*XXXX and the school are to liaise and agree evaluation processes; this incident should also be included as part of that evaluation. It may be appropriate to seek advice from the Cabinet Offices Social Inclusion Department with reference to the evaluation.*

*A school governor should also be included to support securing a resolution, which can lead to restoring the post in the school.*

## Appendix N: Copy of Letter Circulated By School Governor

### EMERGENCY MOTION TO THE [REDACTED] SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY, 28th March, 2001

This Governing body is deeply concerned about the use and mis-use by the Metropolitan Police of their powers both within the school and in the local community. The arrest in handcuffs of a black child in class within the school raised profound disquiet about the ability of the officer placed in our school to behave in an accountable and appropriate way, and the Governing body fully supported the Head teacher's action in asking the officer to withdraw from the school for a review to take place.

The Governing body is intensely aware that the placing of a police officer on school premises is controversial and that a judgement of its impact cannot be simply limited to how he contributes to solving the problems and issues being faced within the school. In particular, many people in our community believe that the police have not yet demonstrated that they have been able take on the challenge contained in the McPherson Report to deal with racism within their ranks. However, the school, by maintaining close links with the Metropolitan Police, is sending a message to the local community and wider that we broadly endorse the way that they work and believe that the Police are changing.

The arrest and subsequent release for the 38th time without charge of local black activist [REDACTED] on Friday 17th March has shown that indeed the Police have not yet risen to the challenge of McPherson. The school now needs to play a role in calling the police to account for this failure. We wish to demonstrate to parents, staff, students, the local community and the police that we will not remain neutral in the face of repeated racist behaviour.

#### WE THEREFORE RESOLVE:

- i) To end the stationing of a police officer on the premises immediately.
- ii) To formally adopt the relevant recommendations in McPherson, specifically recommendations 54, 68 and 70 .
- iii) In particular, with reference to recommendation 70, that the school organise a programme of discussions and meetings for staff, students, parents and the local community around the issues raised by the Report and its findings, in which the police be invited to participate.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## **Appendix O: Letter sent to Head by Teacher at the U.K. School**

*Dear XXXX, I am neither pro nor anti-police. I am very happy, however, to have Andy Briers on site.*

*I have been extremely upset, however, by two recent events involving Andy Briers. I witnessed the first one, which occurred on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December in XXXX. Andy was the subject to verbal abuse by XXXX and XXXX for the "crime" of being present in the XXXX corridor immediately after a particularly vicious fight. The second one, which I heard about, happened last Friday (15<sup>th</sup> December) when, from what I can gather, XXXX intervention averted a very unpleasant situation.*

*The above-mentioned incidents occurred because of the hostility of many youngsters towards the police. They also occurred because the first and only contact that many of these youngsters have had with the police is after they have committed a crime. Peer pressure, fear and ignorance also encourage this attitude.*

*Given that Andy is now working in XXXX this shouldn't be the case.*

*In common with the students at XXXX, I was lucky enough to be introduced to the Metropolitan Police while at school (Primary, I must admit). I grew up in Paddington, west London, which is an area not dissimilar to XXXXXX, in the sixties and seventies. However, the fact that my initial reaction to the police is a healthy one, is due I'm sure to my positive encounter with my School's Police Officer (P.C.Barber, 424D!!)*

*We, I, Believe must do all we can to promote good relations between the students at XXXX and Andy Briers for the following reasons.*

*Firstly, we, as teachers at XXXX, should aim to educate children for life in the community. For many youngsters, the Police are the pariahs the untouchables- despicable objects of hate. There has been a lot of discussion about combating racist, sexist and homophobic behaviour, but nothing about anti-Police attitudes.*



*As a teacher, a member of the Afro-Caribbean race and a mother I am appalled by the relations between certain sections of the Afro-Caribbean community and youngsters in general and the police. I am saddened by the reluctance of young black people to co-operate with the Police, even in cases of "Black on Black crime." We owe it to the children of our school, many of whom are black and already involved in petty crime, to suggest to them that co-operation with people in authority and the Police in particular, is the right thing to do. The issue is linked to the increasing disregard of the public authority- whether it be authority granted to teachers, parents, security staff at various venues or the police. In fact, the N.U.T's recent document on behaviour management in schools asserts that "head teachers are required to have regard to the need to promote...proper regard for authority amongst pupils".*

*Secondly, we owe it to Andy Briers, who is obviously operating in a hostile environment, to offer him as much support as we can. It's not fair to expect him to work within a community, which has not been adequately prepared to receive him. He is in an unfairly vulnerable position here. Had he been subject to the incident, which occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> December while on the beat, he would have had the protection of the Metropolitan Police on the other end of his radio. He is understandably, reluctant to summon such help while at XXXX for fear of inflaming an already delicate situation.*

*I'm not so naïve as to want to ignore the grievances that many people have against the police. These can be dealt with easily in the course of any Pastoral Programme that the school may initiate.*

*I hope that I'm not treading on anyone's toes in writing this letter. I'm sure that there are plans in the pipeline for improving Andy Briers' profile but these plans need to be more evident.*

*I know that there are some political implications that have to be taken on board, but lets face it, the cosy "Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" image of education went out the window with L.M.S., P.R.P. and a whole host of other initiatives. Working closely with the Police is just another sign of the times.*

*We now have to look beyond politics and decide on what's best for the children.*

## Appendix P: Letter Sent by Parent to New Scotland Yard via E-mail

### NEW SCOTLAND YARD

To whome may read this:- i am a mother of a 13 year old boy who goes to XXXX on Thursday 16. 11. 2000. My son was humiliated and searched by a policeman who is based at the school. I would not mind but the policeman was told that my son was not to be questioned by him as he was not in the lesson when the school keys were stolen. The policeman who hates blacks shouted at my child and told him to turn out his pockets and bag. My child said no and the teacher told the policeman that he was not in the class at the time of the theft but the policeman refused to listen and screamed at my child to do as he's told. my child then turned out his pocket and bag. He had 2 mobile phones on him 1 was his which i gave him 3 years ago and the other was his friend which was a white girl in his class the copper then said 3 phones were stolen in the week and he was the thief. my son told him that it belong to a girl in his class which he pointed to and one was his the copper gave the white girl her phone and told my son he will have to cheek my sons phone with his stolen list of phone to see if he stole it. the teachers had to tell the copper to give my child back his phone as he is not a thief. this copper is out of order as my child was never in his class when the school keys were stolen so he should be left alone. NO THE COPPER STILL SCREAMED AT MY CHILD. I WANT THAT COPPER TO BE BROUGHT BEFOR HIS MANAGER AS HE IS OUT OF ORDER. NOT ALL BLACKIES ARE THIEFS THE WHITES STEAL TOO. WHY DO YOU COPPERSLIKE TO PICK ON THE BLACK PEOPLE. WE DO WORK AND BUY NICE THINGS LIKE THE WHITE PEOPLE. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHICH HIGHER OFFICER I CAN GO TO AS I WILL NOT BE LEAVING IT THERE OUT OF 30 CHILDREN IN A CLASS WHY DID THE COPPER HAVE TO PICK ON MINE WHO WAS WITH A TEACHER AT THE TIME THE KEYS WERE STOLEN. PLUS IT IS ONLY WHITE CHILDREN OR WHITE WHO CAN HAVE MOBILE PHONES. BLOODY CHEEK I WANT TO TAKT THIS TO THE HIGHER OFFICERS.

## **Appendix Q:**

### **Observation of a SRO's Day**

Below is a brief summary of a day in the life of both officers which was one of many that were recorded over a five month period and are on reflection themselves a fairly typical day. Although it is true to say that no two days were alike.

#### **Tuesday: School One**

0715 Book out vehicle at Police Station. Chat to station officer who works on the front desk. They talk informally about what has been happening recently in the world and appear to have a friendly relationship. Dave then excuses himself and we make our way to the business meeting for the local community.

0730 We arrive and Dave sees his Assistant Principal in the car park and they laugh about the teacher's tie, which has a large Tabasco sauce bottle on it. "That tie always makes me hungry when I see it" says Dave.

We enter the venue and Dave instantly begins to talk to members of the community who know him by name as well as the duty sergeant and watch commander who are in attendance.

0745 The meeting begins during which Dave gives a short presentation on the work of the school resource officer. The duty sergeant reiterates the work of the SRO and commends Dave on his work and the benefit that it has brought to his own team of officers who rely on Dave for information and intelligence. He further explains that these officers are indebted to him for the amount of work he deals with which means that his officers do not have to keep attending school which frees them up to deal with other incidents within the community.

0900 The meeting concludes and a number of those in attendance who are members of the local community thank Dave for his talk and discuss various issues centering on pupils at the school. Dave listens intently and offers advice and his card and makes arrangements to speak to them later.

Dave also talks at length to one lady whose sons he taught several years ago whilst he was delivering the D.A.R.E. programme. She is very complimentary about his work and promises to send his regards on to her sons.

0920 On patrol looking for a suspect vehicle in the local vicinity. Dave states that he enjoys this part of police work and to a certain extent misses the "action".

0935 Liase with school campus security re an intruder and a pupil with welfare problems. This pupil wishes to return to California to be with his mother who has just been released from jail and has sent him a one-way bus ticket. His father is also in jail and he currently lives with his grandparents and several other members of this extended family.

0950 Dave calls records at the police station to check the boy's address for any previous incidents. The records section is open 24 hours a day and Dave chats to the person at the records department who he knows well.

1000 Dave goes to the school counsellor's office to look at the boys record including a letter outlining custody of the child. The counsellor is very attentive and helpful. She and Dave have a good working relationship and she begins to explain her role to me when a student comes in and briefly discusses with Dave some work that he is doing and would like Dave to look at. They arrange a time 0800 the next day and the boy leaves, pleased that he has managed to arrange this.

1015 To grandparents house of the boy. Dave discusses the situation with the grandparents and aunt who live at the house as well as the pupil's behaviour at home in particular with relation to the grandparents. Dave is very diplomatic and offers good impartial advice as well as calming down an irate aunt who accuses the pupil of tormenting her toddler who also lives in the house.

1105 On patrol looking for a young male who has been causing problems around the school whilst trespassing and harassing special education students on the school bus.

1120 Calls the records department at the police station for picture of the above trespasser. Dave comments on his new phone given to him by the job. He jokes about not being sure how it works; it's a mobile phone, radio and pager all in one. We discuss issues around police equipment being made idiot proof. If a police officer can break it he will. Dave comments on the music on the car radio which is thumping out dance music. He explains that you can tell who had the vehicle last by the music the radio is tuned into. Night watch is full of youngsters he explains who are "full of life and pumping". As the early watch comes on its more of your "easy listening".

1145 Returns to school and deals with several cases of lost property brought in by a teacher. Dave discusses with campus security the problems of pupils losing phones through carelessness and reporting to police as theft. It's an issue, which Dave feels is an unnecessary waste of his time.

1150 Speaks to the welfare pupil who is extremely upset. Campus security in attendance and comforting the boy who listens to Dave's advice. Again Dave offers excellent advice and manages to calm the pupil down and promises to sort the situation out for the boy.

1205 Discusses other security issues with campus security around graffiti in the toilets.

1210 Checks messages in his office.

1215 Assistant principal enters and discusses information from that morning's business meeting about drugs. In particular he refers to the issue around suspects buying in bulk common pain relieving pills, which are used in the production of illegal drugs. He reinforces the story by commenting on tales that his son has relayed to him since he has been working part-time in a local superstore where he has witnessed such events first hand.

1220 Dave leaves the school and checks out with the Assistant Principal.

1230 Dave goes to the station and picks up picture of the trespasser suspect and liases with the juvenile detective department about a recent case he has dealt with.

1250 Out on patrol looking for a car near a busy shopping parade, which has been known to sell drugs to some of the pupils.

1310 Lunch in local community cafe. Dave and myself are welcomed by the proprietor and throughout the course of lunch several people approach us and exchange pleasantries.

1345 On patrol-looking for a suspect who has escaped police custody. Flagged down by owner of local tattoo bar who is aware of the man at large and asks for a description. He talks at length about parental consent forms for teenagers who are seeking tattoos and Dave provides him with a form with all the relevant guidance.

The man then discloses problems that he is having with his daughter and asks if Dave can read her the "riot act" or scare her by "banging her up for the day". Dave says he will talk to her and offers him his card and promises to be in touch. The man thanks Dave and says that he needs "someone that I can trust" to help him sort out his daughter.

1400 On traffic patrol outside the school slowing traffic down and speaking to pupils about their driving.

1420 Speaks to several members of the public who approach the car about incidental matters and sits up on a suspicious incident where the kiosk of a local petrol station is left open.

1440 Speaks to campus security re identification of the trespasser and advises him and the bus driver of the action he intends to take.

1450 Speaks to Assistant Principal with regards to the welfare of a pupil.

1500 Speaks to the school psychologist and the welfare pupil who it is revealed has learning difficulties. Dave offers him advice about travelling alone on a bus and where to sit as well as avoiding the toilets and certain types of people that may approach him on his journey. Dave is very genuine and tells the boy that he will miss him and worries about him going back to California. He tells the boy to ring him and gives him his card.

The pupil states "It's good to know someone cares for me". He then reveals that he has a one-year-old daughter back in California who he hasn't seen since birth.

1530 Takes welfare pupil home and discusses the arrangement with the grandparents who are very aggressive towards the boy. Several comments are made about the police being outside the house and the effect, which the presence of police has on the neighbourhood. Dave chooses to ignore the comments.

1600 On patrol.

1630 Return to station and book in the car.



## **Wednesday: School Two**

0800 Check messages and speak to staff in the office. Very friendly atmosphere.

0810 Arrangements made to attend local community meeting with people from nearby shop, offices and local apartments.

0815 Talks to Assistant Principal re child abuse issue and makes way to see the school counsellor.

0830 Called to counsellor's room re attempted suicide of a young female student. On arrival the student has a leather belt tightly strapped around her neck and is barely conscious. First aid is rendered and ambulance called for. Both officer and Assistant Principal in attendance. John and the Assistant Principal work well together and there is no sign of a power struggle between them to deal with the incident.

0835 John talks to boyfriend of victim to gain the facts of what has happened and at the same time comforts the boy. He then speaks to the counsellor who was first on scene and liaises with Assistant Principal and fire brigade who are now in attendance.

0900 To Children's Hospital. John states that in 22 years of service this is the first time that he has dealt with a suicide attempt at school.

0930 Arrive hospital and liaise with nurses, counsellor and psychiatrist. Several of the nurses are quite territorial and begin to exert their authority. John ignores their manner and speaks to the Doctors.

0945 John speak to victim and foster mother. Very sympathetic and assures victim that she has not done anything criminal and that despite her fears she will not be excluded from the school. She states that she still wants to commit suicide, but John manages to make her laugh on several occasions.

1015 John comforts the school counsellor who is visibly shaken and upset with the morning's events. She begins to cry and it is ironic that John is now counselling the counsellor.

1115 Back to school with the counsellor.

1130 Liase with the Ass Principal about the victim's welfare.

1135 Meeting with all six school counsellors to discuss the morning's events as well as two other pending issues regarding pupils at the school. It is noticeable how all the counsellors look to John for the lead and general advice. They are very respectful of him and thank him for all his work that morning.

1145 Liase with Assistant Principal.

1150 Speaks to head counsellor and two special education teachers with regard to a child assault, which has occurred. John tells them the legal position and again they thank him for his assistance. One of the counsellors says, "John is the first point of call" in these instances, "He's invaluable, we consult him on everything".

1210 Speaks to campus security re suicide attempt.

1220 Liase with the SRO sergeant re advice about the child assault and updates them about the suicide.

1230 Calls fellow officers with regard to assist him with interviewing victim of alleged assault and witnesses.

1240 Speaks to juvenile detectives re advice on the legal issues surrounding the child assault.

1245 Speaks to a child regarding unsuitable pictures adorning his school folder and advises Assistant Principal of his actions.

1250 Patrolman arrives and updates him of the assault case. The officer is quite happy to assist and offers to attend the victim's house to speak to her, as she is currently not in school. John knows the officer personally and is confident that he will be an asset.

1255 Liaison with Assistant Principal and campus security.

1300 Teaches lesson to a class of 12 pupils who are referred to as needing an alternative curriculum. The pupil's listen attentively to John who it is quite apparent has good teaching skills. These have been honed over the years from teaching the D.A.R.E programme in schools. The pupils are responsive and seem to enjoy the lesson.

1400 Lunch

1430 Speaks to campus security re his inability to attend that morning's meeting and chats to several girls in canteen who he has known for seven years when he first taught them in their middle school on the D.A.R.E. programme.

1445 Speaks to local sheriff who explains to him that two of the schools pupils have been found "making out" in a car in a local park. John phones the parents and explains to them what their children have been doing. The sheriff offers to stay at the scene with the pupils until the parents arrive and John thanks him for passing the information on to him. There is some difficulty communicating with the sheriff at first as the officers belong to different law enforcement agencies and have different radios. John highlights this as a problem.

1455 Campus Security checks in with John before leaving for the day.

1510 Checks all doors are locked and secure.

1515 Writes out school log detailing activities for the day. Checks messages.

1530 Interviews witnesses re child abuse and liaise with fellow officer who interviews the victim. All the girls who are friends are particularly loud and opinionated and make a lot of noise in the school office. They all know John well and although they are cheeky they are also very respectful of him. They talk freely to John and do not appear to withhold anything from him. They are happy to talk to the police and express concern for their friend who although is the victim of the crime is also very unstable and has self harmed herself in the past.

1600 Photo injuries of the victim. John has been trained to take his own photos on a new digital camera, which saves calling out the police photographer. He takes a photo of the case number on a piece of paper first to avoid embarrassing the victim who would normally hold it out in front of her as if she were a criminal.

1615 Speaks to parents about the incident and checks with the police station to see if child is a runaway. John is well aware that all is not well at home. The mother committed suicide several years ago and the father is the suspect in this case.

1645 Checks messages and finishes for the day.

## Appendix R: Letter Written by School Pupil in U.S.

*I hate all people and I never plan on trying to like anyone...I wish that there was a bomb or something like that to kill off the entire world and all you assholes in it...but until that time I'll have to settle for the next best thing.*

*I am assuming that no one will find this until I am already dead. I am going to kill myself and I hope you all realize the pathetic beauty that was my life.*

*My hatred of this world grows everyday I continue to live. I hate school, I hate all the people around me, I hate work, I hate my life!!!*

*I will explain....I am fat, ugly, tremendously stupid and pathetic. I fell in love with a pathological liar and i have no one in this world that gives a god damn about me.....*

*All I have to say anymore is....Fuck you all.....*

*Fuck you and your horrible world.....*

*Believe me, I'm happy now than I have ever been before....*

## Appendix S: Summary of Conference Notes

Offender pre conference questions:

- “Tell us about the events that brings us here”
- “What were you thinking about at the time?”
- “How do you feel now about what happened?”
- “How do think you have affected everyone?”

Victim pre conference questionnaires:

- “Tell us how you were affected by this”
- “How do you feel about happened?”
- “What has happened to you since the incident?”
- “What are the main issues for you?”

The conference itself focuses on the above issues and includes the opinions of other family members and /or members of the local community. Once every body’s point of view has been listened to the relevant parties set about agreeing a statement which the offender has to adhere in order ”to make things right”.

The agreement has to be:

- Measurable (everyone must know what is expected of the offender)
- Specific in length (beginning and end dates)
- Achievable (should not set anyone up for failure)
- Fits the offence (relate the consequences as much as possible, to the harm done).

The agreement is then discussed and agreed by everyone.

## **Appendix T: Aims of the Safer Schools Partnership**

### **Safer School Partnerships**

**To reduce the prevalence of crime and victimisation amongst young people and to reduce the number of incidents and crimes in schools and their wider communities by:**

- working together to provide consistent and appropriate support and intervention to divert young people from social exclusion and criminality.
- sharing information to identify those young people at risk of becoming victims or offenders as well as those who already are.

**To provide a safe and secure school community which enhances the learning environment by:**

- reducing the incidence of bullying and violent behaviour experienced by pupils and staff in school and the wider community.
- reducing substance misuse in the school and wider community.
- developing crime prevention strategies to improve the physical security of the school and the personal safety of all who use it.
- developing a multi-agency approach to supporting teachers and other school staff in managing the learning environment.

**To ensure that young people remain in education, actively learning and achieving their full potential by:**

- developing strategies to improve attendance by addressing both authorised and unauthorised absences.

-supporting vulnerable young people through transition, between phases in their education and other aspects of their lives.

-raising attainment by ensuring a calm learning environment free from disruption.

**To engage young people, challenge unacceptable behaviour, and help them develop a respect for themselves and their community by:**

-developing a whole school approach to conflict resolution.

-ensuring that young people have opportunities to learn and develop citizenship skills.

-promoting the full participation of all young people in the life of the school and its wider community and decisions that directly affect them.

Safer Schools Partnership 2002



**Appendix U: Metropolitan Police New Youth Strategy 2003.**

**Appendix V:**

**Questionnaires for U.K. Staff**

**Questionnaires for U.K. Pupils**

## Questions for Staff

Gender: Male  Female

Age range: Under 30  30 – 40

Over 40

Please describe your ethnicity:

**Please answer the following questions honestly. Where the question requires a yes or no answer, please briefly explain your choice. Your answers will form part of the research for my PhD.**

1. What is your understanding of the police officers role in this school?
2. Was his role fully explained to you when he joined the school?
3. What do you think the role should be (if different from above)?
4. What qualities does a police officer need to successfully work in a school?
5. Should the police officer be in uniform or plain clothes?

6. Does having a police officer in school make you feel safer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Have you reported anything to the police officer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Can you describe a situation where the officer has assisted or helped you in any way?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Can you describe a situation where the officer has been unhelpful or inflamed a situation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Are you aware of any comments that the pupils make about having their own police officer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What are the positive changes that you have noticed taking place in the school since the inception of a police officer?



1. Developing trust and confidence and enhancing relationships between the school, police and the community.

2. Representing the police service in the XXXX XXXX.

3. Developing and implementing partnership activities with the school to reduce crime and disorder in the local area.

18. In what ways would you like to see the police more involved in the community? i.e. schools, youth clubs, organised activities, sports, drama clubs, summer camps, churches etc.

19. Do you think that it is a good idea to have a police officer in this school? Briefly outline your reasons.

20. Would you like the current police officer to continue to work in this school?

21. Would you prefer to see a new police officer in this school?

22. Do you think that other schools would benefit from having their own police officer?

23. Please make any other comments about the police officer or pilot project:

## Questions for Pupils

Gender: Male  Female

Please describe your ethnic group:

Age:

**Please answer the questions honestly. Where the questions require a Yes or No answer please circle your choice. You may explain your answer if you wish.**

1. Do you like having a police officer in your school? Yes or No.

Please explain.

2. Do you understand why there is a police officer in your school? Yes or No.

Please explain.

3. Do you think that the police officer should be in uniform or plain clothes?

Please explain.

4. Is the school a safer place since having a police officer? Yes or No.

Please explain.



5. Has your view of the police service changed since having your own police officer in school? Yes or No.

Please explain.

6. Do you view a school-based officer the same as one who you see out on patrol? Yes or No.

Please explain.

7. Do you trust the police service? Yes or No.

Please explain.

8. Do you trust your school officer? Yes or No.

Please explain.

9. Have you ever been the victim of a crime at school or to or from school? Yes or No.

Please specify.

10. What crimes do you fear the most? Circle the 3 most feared.

- Mugging
- Bullying
- Violence
- Sexual harassment
- Theft
- Racial harassment
- Other (please specify)

11. If you were the victim of a crime at school would you tell the police officer in your school? Yes or No?

Please explain.

12. Has the school officer helped you in any way? Yes or No

Please explain.

13. Has the school officer upset or annoyed you in any way or done something you feel was wrong? Yes or No

Please explain.

14. Do you think that the police officer should stay in your school permanently? Yes or No.

Please explain.

15. Would you think about joining the police cadets? Yes or No.

Please explain.

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire, please return to A Briers.**

**Appendix W:**

**Questionnaires for U.S. Staff**

**Questionnaires for U.S. Pupils**

**Questionnaires for U.S. Community**

**Questionnaires for U.S. Parents**

**Questionnaires for U.S. School Resource Officers**

**Questionnaires for U.S. Patrol Officers**

## Questions for Staff

Gender: Male  Female

Age range: Under 30  30 – 40

Over 40

Please describe your ethnicity:

**Please answer the following questions honestly. Where the question requires a yes or no answer, please briefly explain your choice. Your answers will form part of the research for my PhD.**

1. What is your understanding of the police officers role in this school?
2. Was his role fully explained to you when he/you joined the school?
3. What do you think the role should be (if different from above)?
4. What qualities does a police officer need to successfully work in a school?
5. Should the police officer be in uniform or plain clothes?

6. Does having a police officer in school make you feel safer?
  
7. Have you reported anything to the police officer?
  
8. Can you describe a situation where the officer has assisted or helped you in any way?
  
9. Can you describe a situation where the officer has been unhelpful or inflamed a situation?
  
10. Are you aware of any comments that the pupils make about having their own police officer?
  
11. What are the positive changes that you have noticed taking place in the school since the inception of a police officer?
  
12. What are the negative changes that you have noticed taking place in the school since the inception of a police officer?

13. Do you trust the police service?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. Do you trust your school officer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. Do you have concerns about what happens to confidential information and how it is used? Please specify.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
16. Has having your own police officer in your school changed your opinion of the police service and if so in what way?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
17. In what ways would you like to see the police more involved in the community? i.e. schools, youth clubs, organised activities, sports, drama clubs, summer camps, churches etc.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
18. Do you think that it is a good idea to have police officers in schools? Briefly outline your reasons.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
19. Please make any other comments about the police officer or partnership project:

## Questions for Pupils

Gender: Male  Female

Please describe your ethnic group:

Age:

Please answer the questions honestly. Where the questions require a Yes or No answer please circle your choice. You may explain your answer if you wish.

1. Do you like having a police officer in your school? Yes or No.

Please explain.

2. Do you understand why there is a police officer in your school? Yes or No.

Please explain.

3. Do you think that the police officer should be in uniform or plain clothes?

Please explain.

4. Is the school a safer place since having a police officer? Yes or No.

Please explain.

5. Has your view of the police service changed since having your own police officer in school? Yes or No.

Please explain.



6. Do you view a school-based officer the same as one who you see out on patrol?  
Yes or No.

Please explain.

7. Do you trust the police service? Yes or No.

Please explain.

8. Do you trust your school officer? Yes or No.

Please explain.

9. Have you ever been the victim of a crime at school or to or from school? Yes or No.

Please specify.

10. What crimes do you fear the most? Circle the 3 most feared.

- Mugging
- Bullying
- Violence
- Sexual harassment
- Theft
- Racial harassment
- Other (please specify)

11. If you were the victim of a crime at school would you tell the police officer in your school? Yes or No?

Please explain.

12. Has the school officer helped you in any way? Yes or No

Please explain.

13. Has the school officer upset or annoyed you in any way or done something you feel was wrong? Yes or No

Please explain.

14. Do you think that a police officer should be in your school permanently? Yes or No.

Please explain.

15. Would you think about joining the police cadets? Yes or No.

Please explain.

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire**

## Questions for the Community

Gender: Male  Female

Age range: Under 30  30 – 40

Over 40

Please describe your ethnicity:

**Please answer the following questions honestly. Where the question requires a yes or no answer, please briefly explain your choice. Your answers will form part of the research for my PhD.**

1. Are you aware of the School Resource Officer partnership?
2. Do you know what the SRO's role is?
3. Can you describe a situation where a SRO has assisted you in anyway?
4. Can you describe a situation where a SRO has been unhelpful?
5. What are the sorts of problems that you endure in your community?



## Questions for Parents

Gender: Male  Female

Age range: Under 30  30 – 40

Over 40

Please describe your ethnicity:

**Please answer the following questions honestly. Where the question requires a yes or no answer, please briefly explain your choice. Your answers will form part of the research for my PhD.**

1. What is your understanding of the police officers role in this school?
2. Was his role fully explained to you when he/you joined the school?
3. What do you think the role should be (if different from above)?
4. What qualities does a police officer need to successfully work in a school?
5. Should the police officer be in uniform or plain clothes?
6. Does having a police officer in school make you feel that your child will be safer?

7. Have you reported anything to the police officer?
  
8. Can you describe a situation where the officer has assisted or helped you in any way?
  
9. Can you describe a situation where the officer has been unhelpful or inflamed a situation?
  
10. Are you aware of any comments that the pupils make about having their own police officer?
  
11. What are the positive changes that you have noticed taking place in the school since the inception of a police officer?
  
12. What are the negative changes that you have noticed taking place in the school since the inception of a police officer?
  
13. Do you trust the police service?

14. Do you trust your school officer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. Do you have concerns about what happens to confidential information and how it is used? Please specify.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
16. Has having your own police officer in your school changed your opinion of the police service and if so in what way?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
17. In what ways would you like to see the police more involved in the school and community? i.e. classes, youth clubs, organised activities, sports, drama clubs, summer camps, churches etc.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
18. Do you think that it is a good idea to have police officers in schools? Briefly outline your reasons.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
19. Has recent violent events in local schools affected your view of having police in schools? Please explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
20. Do you believe that having a police officer in school is worth the time and money expended?

21. Please make any other comments about the police officer or partnership project:





4b. How important is this in the overall effectiveness of your role? Rate 1 low importance to 10 high importance, and please explain your rating.

4c. How did you establish and maintain your relationship with your supervisor?

5a. Do you feel supported by police colleagues in other units?

5b. How important is this in the overall effectiveness of your role?  
Rate 1 low importance to 10 high importance, and please explain your rating.

5c. How did you establish and maintain these relationships?

6a. Could you describe your relationship with the Principle of your school?

- 6b. How important is this relationship in the overall effectiveness of your role?  
Rate 1 low importance to 10 high importance, and please explain your rating.
- 6c. How did you establish and maintain this relationship?
- 7a. Could you explain your relationship with school security/campus security if applicable?
- 7b. How important is this partnership in the overall effectiveness of your role?  
Rate 1 low importance to 10 high importance, and please explain your rating.
- 7c. How did you establish and maintain this partnership?
8. Who do you need to have a good working relationship with out of the following: Principle, Assistant Principle, Deans, Teachers, and Students? And which is the most important? Please explain.

9. Do you feel supported by the school structure/policies/procedures?
- 10a. Is information ever kept from you/withheld by the school?
- 10b. How does this make you feel?
- 10c. If it has been withheld from you in the past, how did you overcome this?
- 11a. What resources do you have at your disposal to help you achieve your role?
- 11b. What additional resources would be helpful?
12. Do you feel you should be in uniform or plain clothes?





## Questions for Patrol Officers

Gender: Male  Female

Age range: Under 30  30 – 40

Over 40

Please describe your ethnicity:

**Please answer the following questions honestly. Where the question requires a yes or no answer, please briefly explain your choice. Your answers will form part of the research for my PhD.**

1. Are you aware of the School Resource Officer partnership?
2. Can you explain the role of a SRO?
3. Can you name your local SRO's?
4. Do you feel that SRO's perform a worthwhile role, in terms of the resource and expenditure?
5. Do you view SRO's as real police officers or "kidicops"?





## **Appendix X: Sample Sizes for Questionnaires and Rates of Return**

### **U.K**

80 Staff were given questionnaires with a total of 27 replies.

30 Pupils from each of the following Years 7/8/9/10 were given questionnaires all of which were returned

### **U.S.**

75 Staff were given a questionnaire in the High school with a total of 29 replies

40 Staff were given a questionnaire in the Middle school with a total of 17 replies

30 Pupils from each of the following Years 7/8/9/10/11 were given questionnaires all of which were returned