Schooling for Violence and Peace : how does peace education differ from 'normal' schooling?

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Introduction

Much of the time an observer of global debates on education would be hard put to notice that there was a serious problem with schooling. Conferences and publications on education, whether of policy makers or academics, overwhelmingly stress issues of access to schooling and the potential benefits of formal education such as higher personal income, economic growth for the wider society, physical well being and good citizenship and ignore, or at least play down, its more negative aspects. Yet, while these are valid concerns and goals, in reality schooling is very far from always being safe for children. Indeed, there is a growing international literature on the different ways in which schools both reproduce violence by failing to tackling it but also actively perpetrate it through the activities of educational systems and individual teachers.

Unfortunately, as the United Nations now officially recognises (Pinheiro 2006), the role of schooling in sustaining overt forms of violence is both consistent and widespread and manifests itself in a number of ways. Among these are:

- Gendered violence where girls are sexually harassed and abused either by male pupils or male teachers (Harber 2004:Ch.7; Leach and Mitchell 2006);

- Bullying, including homophobic bullying, either by other pupils or staff (Benbenishty and Astor 2005; Dulmus and Sowers 2004; Hyman and Snook 1999; Meyer 2006)

- Racial and ethnic prejudice, hatred and bullying (Davies 2003; Harber 2004:Ch.6)

- The use of corporal punishment (Hilarski 2004; Hyman and Snook 1999; Parker-Jenkins 1999; WHO 2002)

- The physical and mental stress and illness caused by the over-testing and examination of pupils in the interests of the state rather than the pupil (Clark Pope 2001; Harber 2004:Ch.8; Kohn 1993)

- The militarisation of schooling and learning to kill as part of the curriculum (Davies 2003; Nelles 2003; Harber 2004:Ch.9; Saltman and Gabbard 2003)

Moreover, schools also play a significant role in the reproduction of 'structural violence' (i.e. the existence of oppressive and unequal socio-economic and political relationships – Galtung 1975). In Britain, the focus of this article, schools still seem primarily to be agents of social reproduction rather than social mobility. Research carried out by the Sutton Trust, for example, concluded that social mobility in Britain was at a standstill and that social class was still the biggest predictor of school

achievement or getting a degree – 'the advantages of being born into a privileged home have not changed in 30 years' (Curtis 2007). The British political elite also continues to be dominated by the products of expensive private schools. Whereas 7% of the general population goes to private school, 76% of judges comes from private schools, 68% of barristers, 55% of solicitors, 32% of members of parliament, 42% of party leaders, 56% of life peers in the House of Lords, 56% of top newspaper journalists and 56% of top TV journalists (Garner and Russell 2006). 90% of the most senior army officers were privately educated as were six out of ten in the navy (Oliver and Grimston 2009). Indeed, within schools there is much evidence of the hierarchical, authoritarian and competitive relationships that Galtung argues are a form structural violence (Harber 2004: Chs2 and 8; Harber 2009).

This article therefore is concerned with violence in school and, in particular, how one peace education course which focuses on learning interpersonal skills in order to reduce violence is in many ways at odds with the assumptions and practices of 'normal' schooling. The article begins by discussing the origins and nature of modern mass schooling in order to understand why such the role of schools in such violence is possible. It then discusses the aims of peace education before examining an empirical study of peace education in a school in England.

Schooling and Violence

What is it about the nature of schooling that not only cannot protect young people from violence and danger but actively perpetrates it? In terms of schooling, the

overwhelming evidence is that the dominant or hegemonic model globally, with some exceptions, is authoritarian rather than democratic (Harber 2004:Ch.2). Education for and in democracy, human rights and critical awareness is not a primary characteristic of the majority of schooling. While the degree of harshness and despotism within authoritarian schools varies from context to context and from institution to institution, in the majority of schools power over what is taught and learned, how it is taught and learned, where it is taught and learned, when it is taught and learned and what the general learning environment is like is not in the hands of pupils. It is predominantly government officials, headteachers and teachers who decide, not learners. Most schools are essentially authoritarian institutions, however benevolent or benign that authoritarianism is and whatever beneficial aspects of learning are imparted. In this authoritarian situation of relative powerlessness and neglect of their human rights pupils can be mistreated violently or be influenced by potentially violent beliefs because the dominant norms and behaviours of the wider society are shared, not challenged, by many adults in the formal education system.

Why are the key international formal institutions of learning socially constructed in this way? Throughout the history of schooling there has always been a conflict between education for control in order to produce citizens and workers who were conformist, passive and politically docile on the one hand and those who wanted to educate for critical consciousness, individual liberation and participatory democracy on the other. It is the contention here that the former has dominated the real world of schooling, as opposed to educational debates and theory, because this was the main reason that formal, mass schooling systems were established in the first place and then expanded numerically and geographically. Some educational writers, practitioners and policy makers have championed the latter approach to schooling and education in

general but the global persistence of the dominant authoritarian model suggests that the original purpose of control and compliance is deeply embedded in schooling and is highly resistant to change as a result.

Green's historical study of the origins of formal schooling systems in England, France, the United States and Prussia in the nineteenth century argues that a key purpose of their construction was the formation and consolidation of national consciousness. Schooling provided a means of social and political control, in particular to counter the threat to the state of increasingly industrialised, urbanised and potentially organised working populations. As Green's study argues, 'The task of public schooling was not so much to develop new skills for the industrial sector as to inculcate habits of conformity, discipline and morality that would counter the widespread problems of social disorder' (1990:59). Schooling would be organised to prepare future workers with the subordinate values and behaviours necessary for the modern bureaucratic, mass production workplace and the existing social order – regularity, routine, monotonous work and strict discipline. Its organisational form would therefore need to be authoritarian in order to inculcate habits of obedience and conformity.

Moreover, this authoritarianism was also reflected in the curriculum. Kelly (1986) argues that historically the dominant epistemology or view of knowledge that has influenced curriculum planning is 'rationalist', that is that knowledge is certain, factual and objective rather than contentious and subject to change and interpretation. This rationalist view of knowledge stems from European culture at the end of the eighteenth century, the period of the 'Enlightenment', when the aim was to formulate

general laws based on observation and experiment. He argues that this stress on certainty and the one 'right' answer leads to authoritarianism. This is because if knowledge is absolute and unchanging then there cannot be legitimate alternatives to it. There is little point in discussion and dialogue as the role of the teacher is to impart a factual body of knowledge to immature recipients. This means a stress on the transmission of cognitive knowledge, subject content and values as though they were facts over education about values, skills, feelings and relationships. It also means an emphasis on teacher-centred learning over enquiry, discussion and critical analysis – and also helps to explain why there seems to be considerable teacher resistance to teaching controversial issues in schools.

Thus through both organisation and curriculum content schooling became one of the new institutions of social control, along with prisons, hospitals and factories, that used continual surveillance to, in the words of Foucault, 'discipline and punish' in order to avoid social fragmentation and to create order and docility,

'Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labour, it authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penality? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons' (Foucault,1977:227/8).

This authoritarian model of schooling with its origins in state formation, modernisation and social and political control gradually extended globally from European societies and Japan through colonisation where the key purpose of

schooling was to help to control indigenous populations for the benefit of the colonial power. By the 1930's colonialism had exercised its sway over 84.6 per cent of the land surface of the globe (Loomba,1998:15). When formal education was eventually provided missionary schools and those of the colonial state were used to control local populations by teaching the superiority of the culture of the colonising power and by supplying the subordinate personnel necessary for the effective functioning of the colonial administration (Altbach and Kelly1978). Even if it was not always entirely successful in this, and indeed in the end helped to sow the seeds of its own destruction, the organisational style of schooling bequeathed by both the needs of industrialised mass production and then colonialism remains as a firm legacy in many post-colonial societies. Moreover, this, authoritarian, style, even if not spread directly through colonisation, was adopted and imitated by other nation states as *the* only 'modern' mass model of education. Subsequently, many post-colonial governments did not hesitate to use schooling for political control purposes of their own.

School organisation and curriculum today still internationally very much reflect their original historical purposes.

Peace Education

Peace education here is understood generally to aim to offer opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and values required for the practice of conflict resolution, communication and co-operation in relation to issues of peace, war, violence, conflict and injustice. Peace education can be implemented in societies in conflict, post-

conflict societies and stable societies in order to achieve peaceful problem-solving. Thus peace education is defined by UNICEF as,

'the process of promoting the knowledge ,skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youths and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intra-personal, interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level' (Fountain,1999:1).

Although the number of peace education programmes has been increasing in both the formal and informal sectors, there have been few empirical studies of peace education as they have tended to lack systematic evaluation (Nevo and Brem,2002:271-282; Fountain,1999:31-37). However, given the aims of peace education, and in the light of the analysis of contemporary schooling presented above, it would seem likely that any programme of peace education would be different from many other aspects of formal education. This article discusses one empirical study of both an organisation involved in peace education and a one term programme of peace education carried out in a multi-ethnic, urban primary school in England (Sakade 2008). The organisation was the West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (WMQPEP) and the study used interviews and questionnaires with project workers, teachers and pupils as well as participant observation of the programme (entitled the 'Peace Maker Project') itself. One important dimension of the research was a comparison between the experiences of children on the peace education programme with the rest of their experiences in school, which will be the major theme of the article.

WMQPEP itself understands peace education as promoting the awareness of the nature of conflicts (knowledge and attitudes) and providing people with the means (tools and skills) of managing conflict without violence. In practice, the learning includes handling conflicts without hurting people and finding peaceful ways of solving problems. This means that peace education is understood as providing alternative strategies to violence in difficult situations (Harris and Morrison, 2003: 28). These general ideas of peace education as understood by WMQPEP- improving human relationships, handling conflicts in peaceful ways and providing necessary knowledge and skills relating to peace and conflict - seem to coincide with the definition of peace education put forward by UNICEF above.

Peace education as understood by WMQPEP not only deals with violent conflicts or aggressive behaviour but also works on solving problems in peaceful ways and improving human relationships. It reflects two concepts of peace defined by Galtung (1975:29-30): 'negative peace' ('the absence of violence') achieved by eliminating violent, and 'positive peace' ('a pattern of co-operation and integration among people with the absence of both physical violence and injustice') achieved through co-operative relationships.

In understanding WMQPEP's approach it is also useful to distinguish between education for peace and education about peace. The first, education for peace, aims to improve peaceful relations. The second, education about peace, aims to promote awareness of peace and conflict and offer the means of conflict resolution in school and the wider world. It also includes knowledge and understanding of conflict theory: its causes, process and effects in social conditions and in personal relationships.

In terms of the two concepts of peace defined by Galtung above, WMQPEP's understanding of peace education seems to have more emphasis on creating 'positive peace' ('a pattern of co-operation and integration among people') in which peace is built through co-operative relationship alongside reducing violent behaviour toward 'negative peace' ('the absence of violence'). WMQPEP also seems to focus more on education for improving peaceful relationships in practice on a smaller scale than education to learn about a wider concept of peace and conflict in the world. This is because they stress the importance of building peace in daily life. Experience of peace arises from something that people can relate to. Peace education needs to begin in the context of intra-personal or interpersonal relationships.

From their viewpoint, building peaceful relationships involves emotional literacy, skills for good communication, co-operation and problem-solving, and positive attitudes towards themselves and others (e.g. getting on with each other, learning about each other, understanding and respecting other people, in particular, from different backgrounds as well as recognising something common to everybody). The project promotes peaceful relationship within a class and hopefully gradually throughout the whole school. Although the project is only involved in schools, its work also has a positive impact on the improvement of people's relationships in community and that peaceful relationships will spread further to a wider community in all areas of life (school, family, workplace, community and international relations).

This emphasis on peaceful relationships in WMQPEP's understanding of peace education is underpinned by Quaker philosophy, in particular the idea that God is in every person so that it is important to respect and value each individual equally. This is

also why, considering that children often learn to fail in school and have low self-esteem, WMQPEP emphasises the importance of involving everyone in having fun and working together.

As well as their belief in peace as Quakers, WMQPEP also sees peace education as a way of tackling problems of children's exposure to fighting, violence and aggression through the opportunity for them to learn social skills in daily life experience. Many project workers mentioned noticing that children's learning and growth are often undermined by disruption and emotional disturbance caused by bullying or conflict that happen in schools and in their daily lives. They tend to see behavioural problems as consequences of children's struggle to deal with their strong emotions, negative views on self and others, and a lack of communication skills. This problem of the effect of negative emotion on children's learning is pointed out by Daniel Goleman in his book, 'Emotional Intelligence' (1995:78-9):

> 'Students who are anxious, angry, or depressed don't learn; people who are caught in these states do not take information effectively or deal with it well…powerful negative emotions twist attention toward their own preoccupations, interfering with the attempt to focus elsewhere…When emotion overwhelm concentration, what is being swamped is the mental capacity cognitive scientists call "working memory", the ability to hold in mind all information relevant to the task at hand…On the other hand, consider the role of positive motivation – the marshalling of feelings of enthusiasm, zeal, and confidence – in achievement.'

WMQPEP started peace education in schools in England two decades ago to enable children to deal with problems or challenging situations by themselves, in particular,

through providing them with opportunity to develop their self-esteem and confidence. It was seen as important for children to learn non-aggressive approaches to problems as alternative experiences to fighting and to develop peaceful relationships while creating a safe and peaceful learning environment where the children feel happy and fulfil their potential.

Methods

The researcher, one of the authors who is not a project worker, adopted a case study approach to portray and investigate an existing peace education organisation and one of its projects in a primary school with a view to understanding the principles and the practice of peace education in school as well as exploring its impact. The study also concerns a potential tension between the principles and practice of existing peace education, and those of schools where the peace education is practised, considering that schools can be seen as places where structural violence is exercised as a means of social control to reproduce existing unequal power relationship in social structures (Apple, 1982).

The research focused on two samples as subjects of the study: one organisation - West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (WMQPEP), and one state urban primary school, where WMQPEP has run its ten-week peace education programme which promotes peacemaking skills (co-operation, communication, affirmation and problem-solving skills) based on a Circle Time model and child-centred, experience-based learning (i.e. co-operative games and activities) facilitated by project workers. WMQPEP was chosen as a case study for its long lasting active work on peace education in schools. To understand the principles and practice of peace education carried out by the WMQPEP,

the research used short questionnaires and more in-depth semi-structured interviews with the project manager and 7 project workers.

A particular school was chosen since it was one of the schools where WMQPEP has been active (the school had had the programme for over 5 years), and it has common characteristics of many urban schools in England (e.g. multi-ethnic composition, high transience rate among pupils). Along with participant observation of the ten-week programme by the researcher and interviews with school staff to ask about their previous experience of the programme, the research also conducted interviews with the class teacher and a series of small group interviews with a whole class of about 30 pupils who participated in the programme, with the aim of exploring their perceptions of the programme and its impact and of comparing the findings with the aims and expected outcomes of the programme (see appendix for interview questions).

Differences Between Schooling and Peace Education

While the key historical purposes of schooling remain dominant globally, as the study took place in England it is necessary to note briefly some key contemporary features of education in England as relevant background to the findings which are discussed below. England possesses a very detailed, content-laden and centralised national curriculum for both primary and secondary education. This is tested at four key stages – age7, 11, 14 and 16 – though the wider effect of this is to make English children among the most tested in the world (Alexander 2000; Harber 2004:Ch.8). The key purpose of such tests is not diagnostic for the benefit of the pupils but to provide statistical information about schools so that they can be ranked in league tables and

parents can choose between schools in a quasi-market. Pupils therefore have little say over curriculum content or teaching methods, are not on the whole represented on school governing bodies and do not play a very significant role in school decision-making (Harber 2009). Schools are inspected against set targets in the context of a discourse of school 'failure' and putting schools in 'special measures'. Not surprisingly, many teachers find such inspections threatening and stressful. As corporal punishment was finally legally abolished in 1999, the dominant organisational nature of English schooling can perhaps best be summarised as 'friendly or benevolent authoritarian', though failure to address widespread bullying sufficiently and the physical and emotional effects of hyper-testing are two more serious negative aspects.

The selection below will summarise some of the data gathered by the researcher that indicates some of the key differences between peace education and 'normal' schooling.

- **Relationships between adults and children**

Considering these current conditions of schooling in England, there are many examples of contrasts between 'normal' schooling and peace education that can be found in the experiences of WMQPEP project workers, pupils and teachers in carrying out the Peace Maker Project in the case study school. The project workers, for example, perceived their relationships with children as very different from those of teachers. Several project workers commented about the difference between teachers' control over children and children's self-control over their action:

'It's very different relationship to that of the teacher. I'm an ex-teacher and I really have to modify the way that I used to work with youngsters where control was absolutely essential in a particular kind of way because you've got educational targets to hit. And with these, I pull much more from my experience of a drama workshop leader.'

'Sometimes teachers think that they have to keep their distance from children whereas in Circle Time (a period of time outside normal lessons where children and teachers sit in a circle to exchange views in a non-didactic manner) everyone is equal within a circle. Some teachers are really concerned about that as they think that if they don't remain the boss, children are going to run riot. But when they see how it does work by changing their teaching methods around, at the end of 10 weeks, they realise that it does work and children still do respect the teacher. I think that if teachers control children all the time, they are never going to learn self-discipline.'

- **The role of a project worker and that of a teacher**

Many project workers also made similar comments about the role of teacher as controller, which differs from that of a project worker as a facilitator who encourages children to control themselves, to keep rules set up by themselves and to take responsibility for their own behaviour:

'We don't shout at them and we have more choices and a right to pass. I think that our role is very different from a role of a teacher where you do what you are told. I think that rules are quite important. Actually you're not working to your rules,

you're working to the rules that children set in Circle Time. Once you have those

boundaries, my role as a facilitator is like a referee in football. The rules are there

and all you're doing is keeping the rules.

'We try to encourage the group to exercise self-control. So they are doing the

controlling because they want to get more activities and games into the time. So

they see a reason for co-operating and behaving well.'

'I would like to see myself being as a facilitator of the group, not the controller. If

the group is working very badly together, I would like to think that I would be able

to say something like, "It seems like it's really hard for us to get on with each other

this afternoon. I wonder what's going on. I wonder what's happening." And to try

and help the children think about their relationships with each other, and begin to

offer ideas about what they could do about it. I have observed a teacher as a

controller, I think that the teacher in that situation would identify particular

children as trouble makers, and would ask those children to stop doing what they

are doing or to leave the group. So that would be a fundamental difference.'

- **Approaches to teaching and learning**

In order to ensure that children learn to control the situation by themselves, one project

worker emphasised the important role of facilitating children to come up with their own

understanding of their experiences:

'Other things in terms of teaching in some of the work, particularly to do with

conflict management, are didactic, which means that I'm imparting knowledge or

ideas to them, for example, conflict escalator or anger rules...But most of the time,

I would hope that my teaching style, or rather the way of encouraging them to learn, is through their experiencing. So having experiences and then facilitating the children to try and understand their experiences and to come up with their own understanding of their experiences. So I suppose those are the two main ways.'

In order to draw out children's own understanding of their experiences in conflict situations, the same project worker described a practical approach in which children are not told off but are asked questions to reflect on the situation:

'I hope to have a non-punitive but questioning approach to conflict so that if children in a class do get into conflict or the whole group gets into conflict, I would hope to say, 'I wonder what's going on. Can anybody tell me what's happening?' So I ask them those questions for them to observe and to reflect on what's happening instead of telling them off.'

Another project worker said that teachers are asked to support and understand the principle of self-regulation within the group and to trust children's learning process:

'And also teachers are asked at the beginning of each project if they will in effect sit on their hands when they become part of the circle, and not intervene. If there are disciplinary problems coming up, we try to resolve them as a group. A teacher doesn't come in as a teacher because that would completely destroy the atmosphere that we try to create. Always at the introductory meeting with teachers, we try to alert them what to expect if it's the first time they go through Peacemakers, and to encourage them to trust the process that we go though with the youngsters, actually

will work if you let it happen. Because teachers often have to jump in at a first sign of trouble, they can't wait for the group to self-regulate whereas we can. We are helping the group self-regulate.'

Several project workers pointed out that teachers were governed by educational and disciplinary targets whereas project workers have more flexibility to respond to the need or the mood of children at that moment:

'Teachers have targets in the National Curriculum and discipline, and they also have ultimate discipline to the children who are particularly difficult in order to get on with the class. They are more directed to that. But we can set up our own programmes and can be more flexible with delivering the programme each time according to children's condition.

'Although I might have an idea in my head about what I would like them to learn or what the main focus of the session to be, I can't predict before I go in that afternoon exactly what's going to happen. So I might've decided, for example, I did set the learning outcome and as a teacher I might've said, "By the end of this afternoon, you would all have learned anger rules. That's your learning outcome…" But I might go in and I might realise that the actual state of the class was such that they just do not concentrate on that issue. There was much more important things to discuss. If I had my leaning outcome and if I set outcomes, I would be constantly trying to get back to it in order to achieve the outcome. If I don't set outcomes, it gives me that flexibility to respond to the need or the mood of the class that afternoon.'

One project worker also made a similar comment that teachers work towards targets and learning outcomes while project workers help children deal with their problems:

'In another way, my role is to enable children to find their solutions to their problems rather than having a learning outcome which they have to achieve. Particularly at the moment in education, it's very oriented on target setting, and it's very oriented on learning outcomes. So teachers' job by and large would be to make sure that children have achieved their learning outcome. I don't set outcomes, and therefore, I'm different from a teacher.'

The same project worker also pointed out that if children are told what their learning outcomes should be, they are given a passive mentality of being told what they are meant to do. This also creates the condition where children have experience of failure:

'In some schools in all the core lessons; English, Maths and Science, children are actually told what their outcome is for that lesson so it would be written up on the board and they are writing in their books, like "By the end of today, you will know how to do this and this…." So I think that gives the children a whole mentality of being told what they are meant to be learning, and then being able to judge whether they have achieved that learning or not, and therefore, whether they are successful or not successful. I don't do that, so that is another major difference.

'If I set targets or gave children the outcomes… some people might say that would be perfect because that gives them something to work towards, gives them a challenge, and tells them what exactly I want them to do. However, my concern with that is that there may be children who have found it really hard for all sorts of reasons. Then they are failing to do it and feeling that they failed because they haven't done what I wanted them to do, or they are doing it because they want to please me and get a smiley face or something. But actually it's very superficial because they've done it for me that afternoon, but actually they don't really want to do it.'

Project workers' therefore generally see their relationships with children as friendly, informal, not authoritarian, and more equal compared with teachers' relationships. WMQPEP emphasises the importance of building supportive and trusting relationship rather than imposing external discipline and rules to maintain hierarchy in the education system. WMQPEP thinks that it is important for teachers to learn the approach used in the project and reinforce the principles in classroom since teachers can make can a big difference in making children more aware of the principles on a daily basis. ….

- **Issues and challenges facing peace education**

However, the overall educational context of teachers within formal schooling makes this much more difficult. One project worker, for example, said that peace education was not prioritised in schools because it was not part of National Curriculum and that some schools found it difficult to connect peace education to the rest of the curriculum:

'Another problem is that peace education is not part of National Curriculum so it's not assessed or reported on. Peace education is not generally perceived as helpful in getting good inspection outcomes... It is also not easily connected to the rest of school curriculum in some schools.'

Many project workers noticed, as another major problem, that schools often have difficulty in finding time for peace education:

'I think it's the time to fit it all in. I think that the curriculum is so heavily loaded. So it's very difficult for them to give up 10 afternoons, which for some schools they think it's worth it while other schools might not think that they could give up that amount of time… Each school should have Circle Time on the timetable, but anything gets squeezed out, if the week is busy, it would be Music, PE or Circle Time that goes, but Circle Time should be there.'

'Teacher overload means there is no time available for peace education, in particular, peace education is not seen as high enough priority, and the curriculum is also overloaded so there is no room for peace education.'

Furthermore, several project workers pointed out that the current situation in schools makes it difficult for teachers to use the same approach in the classroom because of the pressure of meeting educational targets in limited time:

'I think it's difficult for teachers to use the same approach in classroom. I don't think it's impossible but it's more difficult because it takes more time. I think that

one thing that teachers don't have anymore is time. Everything is in such a rush to cram everything in. It's quicker to tell somebody rather than asking what they should be doing, but in a long term, it would be better to take time so that the child can do it by themselves. In a long term, it's worth it. I think that some teachers lose sight of that in their hurry to get things done.'

On the other hand, one project worker also said that finding time might be a problem but there were also often other reasons relating to teachers' values or a lack of knowledge about peace education:

'One of problems would be where they can fit it into the timetable. It's very difficult at secondary schools. At primary schools, sometimes it's difficult, depending on how committed the school are. I think they could fit it in. It depends on their values or teachers not knowing what is about because they haven't been trained and they feel uncomfortable with it.'

Similarly, another project worker mentioned that there was a lack of understanding or knowledge of peace education in schools:

'Some of the problems are misunderstandings because some schools think that all peace educators are peace activist… There is lack of knowledge about what peace education really is, both education about peace and education for peace. Peace education is often perceived as slightly weird, off-beat or threatening.'

Several project workers commented that peace education is often contrary to school ethos in terms of structures, customs and teaching methods. Sometimes peace education is seen as a threat to the existing hierarchy in schools and also peace education does not work well in a hierarchical and punitive school ethos:

'Peace education is contrary to school ethos in some schools. Some of the problems facing peace education in schools relate to the structures and customs in schools. Some professionals are actually afraid that to question the underlying assumptions of the structure will lead to anarchy. In peace education, we do encourage the pupils to question and put forward new ideas. This is seen as potentially threatening to the existing hierarchy.

The other problem that peace education faces is the ethos of the school. So if the ethos of the school is one where children are told what to do and children's views are not held to be important, then peace education is not working very well... In schools that have a very strict hierarchy where a Head Teacher tells senior managers what to do, senior managers tell teachers what to do, teachers tell children what to do, and nobody listens to people who are below them, I'm not going to find that education is very easy or peace education work is not found easier.'

One of the project workers also noted some aspects of school ethos which are in accord with peace education:

'Peace education will work better in a school which already values children's opinions about themselves, about each other, about members of the school staff, and also in a school that has an emphasis on what is called "positive behavioural management", which is helping children to change behaviour by giving them positive incentives rather than punishments.'

- **Pupils' perceptions of the project in relation to normal lessons**

Pupils were also asked whether the project was different from normal lessons. One pupil said:

'Yes. You played games all the time and also learned how to respect others.'

Another pupil said, being different from normal lessons, in the project:

'We were allowed to express our true feelings.'

Overall, many pupils thought that the Peace Maker Project was different from normal lessons because: 'In the Peacemakers, there is no test and you don't use papers and pens much because you don't need it and you get up and do something' and 'we play games and talk', but 'in normal lesson, we don't get to play games and we don't get up'. One pupil thought that 'the Peacemakers is more fun. In normal lesson, you have to learn maths or literacy and sometimes they are boring because you just have to sit down and concentrate.' Similarly, other pupils said, 'it was fun', 'more active' and 'it stimulates your brain'.

Several pupils mentioned that 'working in a team as a class' is different from normal lessons:

> 'We learnt something which you had never been taught in normal class. I liked the team work when we moved the chairs around, and you learned to be patient. For the first time, the Peacemakers was hard, from the second time, we were slightly improving in working together.'

Many pupils also thought that the project provided the opportunity for getting to know their classmates:

> 'You learned more about your classmates, which you don't do in other lessons. It's a good thing.'

> 'You got to know more about your friends, that you never knew before.'

> 'Because we were sitting in a circle, we got to know our class much better. In normal lessons, we get on with our work and just have the same people on the table.'

Some pupils thought that normal lessons don't teach them to 'trust people':

> 'You can talk about problems to somebody else. When you need help, you don't have to be alone. You have some people to talk to.'

Several pupils said that learning about fighting is different from normal lessons:

'It teaches to protect yourself when somebody else is fighting. It is always annoying but if you fight, you get hurt.'

'Teachers don't teach anything about fighting.'

'We learned not to fight or to stop it.'

'Be strong and try not to pick a fight with someone.'

On the other hand, pupils also thought that they learned some things which are useful in normal lessons, in particular, good communication and self-confidence such as 'listening to someone who is talking', 'paying attention to the teacher', 'not shouting' 'eye-contacting' and 'courage to put your hand up (even if you think it might be wrong)' as well as co-operation such as 'be happy who you work together with – don't complain, working quietly, be calm', 'to work with different people even though they are boys' and 'try to get on with people even in your normal lesson.' They also seem to have learned appropriate attitudes in normal lessons such as 'not fidgeting', 'sitting nicely', 'stop talking to other people and disturbing them' and 'ignore people who are bothering you'.

- **Teacher's perceptions of the project in relation to normal teaching**

The teacher was also asked whether there are any different or similar approaches to normal teaching in the project, and whether there are any particular aspects of teaching methods

that can be used in normal lessons. The teacher thought that the emphasis on positives in the approach of the project is similar to the school's behavioural management:

'Positive ways of behavioural management are similar. We give them lots of smiley faces instead of sad faces. If they get sad faces, it means it's very serious.'

However, perceiving that the project worker's relationship with the pupils is more informal than that of a teacher, the teacher didn't think that it works in normal lessons which require control over the pupils in order to meet many targets within limited time:

'Compared to teachers, the project worker and the children have more informal relationships. Certainly, they were always looking forward to the Peacemakers and I noticed that whenever they saw the project worker, they were ready to run up to chat to her. And also she never told them off. As a teacher, you still need to have that control. And you can't have that time to keep stopping because I've got a list of things we've got to get through in lessons.'

The teacher thought that some aspects of the project could be useful in normal lessons as models of good behaviour:

'If you explore issues in the Peacemakers, and if you are in the middle of numeracy or other lessons and something happens, you could always refer back to the Peacemakers, such as models of good behaviour, how we treat other people, and how we teach each other. I think it has value even though it's kind of separate in order to refer back to it. Like today in one class, when somebody said an answer that was incorrect and some

people laughed. I was shocked. This is something we usually have to tell them not to do. So I was surprised. That would be something perhaps to pull out of the Peacemakers, asking like, "Do you remember how we talked about and how it's nice when you were sitting in the middle and everybody says how good you are? You don't want to laugh at each other."

The teacher also thought that the way that the class made rules for themselves in the project would be useful in normal lessons:

'And also the rules of the Peacemakers such as good listening, helping each other and so on. They could be out up on the wall in order to refer to in any lessons.'

However, a continuing fundamental problem was the national curriculum and the way it had changed relationships with pupils,

'I have to say, because of the reason of the curriculum, we don't have much time with children anymore. I used to spend a lot more time talking with the children in a more informal way when I didn't have to get through a whole lot of literacy lessons. These lessons actually stop me from talking to the children. I used to know the children better'.

Conclusion

This article has used empirical data from England to explore tensions and contradictions between the aims and practices of peace education and the existing structures and processes

of formal education. Similar tensions and contradictions exist in relation to the recently introduced subject of citizenship education (Harber 2002). Too often, because of their historical and contemporary imperatives, schools can be dehumanising institutions that stress cognitive forms of knowledge over the affective and which play down important inter-personal skills of the sort that the project described in this article tries to achieve. This doesn't negate the need to try and to acknowledge and celebrate successful courses when they occur but such courses do also tend to reveal significant and contrasting ideologies of practice. They also beg questions of the extent to which education for peace can ever be truly compatible with, or comfortably coexist with, formal education as currently constructed in many parts of the world.

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Appendix 1 Interview Questions

Interview questions for the manager and project workers of WMQPEP

[Peace education in general]
1. What do you understand by peace education?
2. Why is peace education needed in schools?
3. What are important aims of peace education in schools?

[Peace education in WMQPEP]
4. What is WMQPEP's understanding of peace education?
    Where did it get this understanding from?
5. Why does WMQPEP think peace education is needed?
6. What are the important aims of peace education for WMQPEP?
7. What methods does WMQPEP use?
8. What materials does WMQPEP use?
9. It seems that, of the key elements, WMQPEP seems to focus mostly on communication, co-operation and affirmation. Is this the case? If so, why?
10. Please give examples of teaching methods of some of these key elements of WMQPEP.
11. What impact on children can be expected from WMQPEP's work?
12. How does WMQPEP's peace education contribute to the development of children?
13. What kind of relationship do you form with children through your work in school?
14. How does your role as a WMQPEP project worker differ from that of a teacher?
15. What are some of the problems facing peace education in schools?
16. Is peace education commonly practised in schools? If not, why not?
17. Are there any limitations to this approach to peace education?

Interview questions for a class teacher (after the project)

About the overall project

1. What did you expect from the Peacemakers?
2. Did the Peacemakers meet your expectations? If so, how?
3. Do you think that the Peacemakers were beneficial to children? If so, how?
4. Do you assess the impact of the work of the Peacemakers? If so, how?
5. How do you fit the Peacemakers into the National Curriculum?
6. Are the Peacemakers linked to any curriculum subject?
7. If so, what are the possible learning outcomes?
8. Have you found any impact of the Peacemakers on children?
9. Are there any particular aspects of the Peacemakers that you think are beneficial to you as a teacher?
10. Are there any different or similar approaches to standard/normal teaching of children in the Peacemakers?
11. Do you do any follow up work after the Peacemakers?
12. How do you think the Peacemakers might contribute to 'peace'?
13. Are there any other comments on the Peacemakers?

About children's certain attitudes

14. Have you noticed any changes in relationships between children?
15. Have you noticed any changes in relationships between children and you as a teacher?
16. Have you noticed any changes in children's ability to work with others?
17. Have you noticed any changes in children's ability to listen attentively?
18. Have you noticed any changes in self-esteem or confidence of children?
19. Have you noticed any changes in children's attitudes to affirming others?

Interview questions for Year 5 pupils (after the project)

1. Did you enjoy (like) the Peacemakers?   Yes / No
    If you did, can you tell me something you particularly enjoyed (liked)?
    If you didn't, why not? Can you tell me something you particularly didn't enjoy (like)?
2. What did you and your classmates do well in the Peacemakers?
3. What did you learn in the Peacemakers?
4. What is a good Peacemaker like?

5. Did you learn anything that will be useful for you in class or in the playground?
6. Do you think that the Peacemakers were different from normal lessons? If so, how?
7. Did you learn something which will be useful for you in normal lessons?
8. Do you think that the Peacemakers helped you in any way? If so, how?
9. Did the Peacemakers have any influence on you or your class? If so, in what ways? (Have you changed in anyway because of the project?)
10. Any other comments?

Interview questions for the head teacher

1. What do you understand by the Peacemakers?
2. Why do you invite the Peacemakers into your school?
3. What do you expect from the project?
4. Has the project met your expectation? If so, how?
5. Are there any aspects of the project that you value in particular?
6. What impact can be expected from the project?
7. Have you found any impact of the project on the children, teachers and other staff?
8. Do you do any follow up work after the project?
9. The project calls itself 'the Peacemakers'. What attracted you to a project with the word 'peace' in the title?
10. How do you think the project might contribute to 'peace'?
11. Are there any other comments on the project?

Interview questions for a learning mentor

1. What do you understand by the Peacemakers?
2. What do you expect from the Peacemakers?
3. Have the Peacemakers met your expectation? If so, how?
4. Have you found any impact of the Peacemakers on children?
5. Do you think that the Peacemakers are beneficial to children? If so, how?
6. Are there any aspects of the project that you value in particular?
7. How do you think the project might contribute to 'peace'?
8. Are there any particular aspects of the Peacemakers that you think are beneficial to your work as a learning mentor?
9. How do the Peacemakers fit in with behavioural strategies in the school?
10. Are there any other comments on the project?