

Rhybudd o Hawlfraint

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- gyrchu a lawrlwytho copi;
- argraffu copi;

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Cwrs Astudio: **M6X01441 – Leading and Developing the School**

Enw'r Person Dynodedig sy'n awdurdodi'r sganio: **Anne Harvey**

Teitl: **Leading Primary Schools : the Pleasure, Pain and Principles of being a Primary Headteacher**

Enw'r Awdur: **David Clegg & Shirley Billington**

Enw'r Cyhoeddwr: **Open University Press, 1997**

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6

 WORKING WITH
 STAFF

This chapter will explore some of the key relationships within school. It will focus particularly upon the nature of the relationships between the headteacher and teaching and non-teaching staff. We will pick up many of the earlier themes, particularly those in Chapter 3, and attempt to define what relationships may look like in the light of the democratic values and attitudes outlined in that chapter. The chapter will also try to set working relationships within the context of the school culture which such relationships would produce.

What will emerge in this chapter is a complex picture which contrasts sharply with the sometimes simple and naive ideas of managerialism. A major weakness inherent within managerialism is its claims to be able to predict events, the idea that if one thing happens – a decision is made, for instance – then the rest will follow. What this chapter will try to reflect is the subjective, less predictable way in which primary schools work, while showing how a shared vision can guide a more realistic and honest approach to the realities of working in a school. The starting point for the chapter is the vision of relationships touched upon in the previous chapters, which in turn reflects the values inherent within some of the more radical and democratic views of leadership.

It would be helpful to start to make more explicit some of the connections between earlier ideas, particularly those which focused upon the nature of leadership and the vision of leadership, and the vision of relationships based upon rights and responsibilities. What is being proposed here is that we can begin to think about what responsibilities you as headteacher, and indeed other leaders in the school, may have towards staff given the particular nature of educational leadership. If we accept that educational leadership should be educative, transformative, critical and ethical, then what

are the responsibilities of headship? In a sense a headteacher, to use McLuhan's famous phrase, has to be the medium and the message. Not only must you embody these attributes of leadership, you must also encourage, develop and initiate those attributes among the staff to the extent that ultimately they become characteristic of the school. After all, it should be appropriate to describe a school as critical, transforming, educative and ethical. Such a view carries with it a pattern of relationships and specific responsibilities on the part of the headteacher. To attempt to describe those responsibilities is difficult, however, because they are also deeply embedded within, and help to create, the school atmosphere or culture. We need to identify both the modes of behaviour which will stem from your responsibilities, and the climate in which the behaviour might take place, although we know that each contributes to the other.

To be critical as a headteacher, you must have an acute awareness and understanding both of what is currently happening and of what it may be possible to achieve. To be critical does not mean fearlessly confronting underperforming teachers or boldly informing the cleaners that the classrooms are dirty! To be critical is to be restless, not a restlessness born from frustration or anger but born from a commitment to improve, develop and learn. It is important for you as head to have the sense of being a learner, as it brings with it a degree of humility which is a fundamental characteristic of successful leadership. Being critical also implies being open, open to ideas, suggestions from both within and without the school, together with a preparedness to engage with arguments.

If, as a headteacher, you are to be transformative, you will also need to apply particular skills with some care. The skills of advocacy will be essential if you are actually to change the way people think about something, and it is this deep-rooted change in people's thinking which is the most difficult to achieve. As a headteacher, changing the ways things are done may be simple or straightforward, but changing the way people might think is much more problematical. It requires patience and understanding about how others may make sense of new situations, or, indeed, see old established situations differently. We also know that the real agenda is not simply to change one aspect of schooling, but to change the way the school thinks about change. As a headteacher, therefore, you need to take the long view, although this has been increasingly difficult over the past few years. Taking the long view implies two things: you need to appreciate that it takes time to change and you need to understand that what needs changing may be the way the school views and handles change – the school culture. If your leadership is to transform, then

again you must engage with staff in discussion and argument, and bring to those discussions the added dimensions of experience, knowledge and understanding. You must also provide a degree of wisdom. Leadership must know when to confront and challenge as well as when to withdraw. You must be sensitive to the mode of engagement and the nature of support so that you are aware when it is right to provide space, time, money or resources. As a headteacher you should seek to model through your behaviour the process of transformation. It may be a salutary experience for a headteacher to pause periodically, particularly when confronting a specific issue, and to consider how long it has taken you to arrive at your particular level of understanding. How much experiential baggage has contributed to your particular point of view? How many headteachers have you worked for? In how many schools? And how realistic is it to expect teachers to arrive at the same conclusions within a matter of days or weeks?

The suggestion that headteachers should be educators is not particularly astounding, yet how often do headteachers see themselves as educators of teachers or support staff? There are several powerful and compelling images which we could employ to describe being a headteacher, such as shepherd, parent, manager. One that may not spring immediately to mind in relation to staff is teacher. If your headship is to be educative then it must have some regard to an approach to staff development which is concerned to develop within each teacher the four elements of leadership. As a headteacher, you have an important and direct responsibility to educate the next generation of headteachers and to secure a future through teachers who also have a fundamental regard for educational values. This again emphasizes the importance of process within headship rather than simply outcomes. To be educative, leadership must allow for and provide all those things with which a class teacher is concerned. As the headteacher you must be concerned with providing appropriate learning opportunities for staff, interacting with them in a manner which promotes exploration and discovery, reminding them of what they know and can do, clarifying and challenging their thinking and making connections between different experiences. One must allow mistakes but give responsibility within a framework of expectations.

If your leadership is to be ethical then it must be able to demonstrate a commitment to the process of management not simply on the basis of how to get the job done, but from a commitment to democratic values and the consequent ways in which people should be treated.

These are major responsibilities which rest upon headteachers' shoulders and they demand courage, determination and humanity, but offer significant and worthwhile rewards. At the heart of this process is the concept of the learning school, first articulated by Holly and Southworth (1989) in which they are clear that a school must put the priorities of learning before the 'demands of the organisation'. They identify the key concepts for the learning school as:

- ◆ interactive and negotiative;
- ◆ creative and problem-solving;
- ◆ proactive and responsive;
- ◆ participative and collaborative;
- ◆ flexible and challenging;
- ◆ risk taking and enterprising;
- ◆ evaluative and reflective;
- ◆ supportive and developmental.

The attitudes, values and implied behaviour inherent within these key concepts stand in stark contrast to the current plethora of headteachers' job descriptions. Like many job descriptions, that of the headteacher does not always represent reality, and often has either a dreamlike or nightmarish quality depending on your point of view or perhaps the type of day you have had! The move towards creating job descriptions in schools was based upon a growing cynicism among managers and teachers. On the one hand, managers were being urged to pin teachers down by creating job descriptions which were as precise as possible about the responsibilities of individual teachers, a view based on the premise that many teachers were not pulling their weight. On the other hand, teachers also welcomed job descriptions but for very different reasons. They saw job descriptions as a form of protection against unreasonable demands and an ever-increasing workload. What is apparent is that job descriptions emerged from a state of mutual mistrust. As we pointed out earlier, the job description is a key document in the appraisal process, so it is ultimately a document deeply bound up with administrative surveillance.

If we accept the social nature of leadership in the sense that leaders need followers and leadership can be exercised by a variety of people, then it would seem reasonable to consult and negotiate about the nature of leadership. This can be a bold but liberating experience. Its boldness lies in the fact that as a headteacher you are rejecting the notion that it is through being the headteacher that you gain authority. You are 'letting go' and genuinely sharing the idea of leadership.

It is liberating, as it allows you a sense of freedom together with security, since you are much more aware of the expectations of others. It will also serve as a useful model for others to follow as they begin to exercise leadership themselves. So one way of defining the responsibilities of the headteacher is to ask others what they are looking for in a headteacher. Following the establishment of the vision, or indeed as part of the visioning process itself, a headteacher can challenge staff to articulate what they see as the headteacher's responsibilities. This need not be one-way traffic. You can argue and similarly challenge views with which you disagree and what this will begin to demonstrate is an openness and commitment to respond to the needs of others. What will inevitably emerge initially will be a messy, complex picture of expectations, but gradually these can be refined through further focused discussion. For instance, the perceptions of the headteacher's responsibility from the deputy's point of view will be very different from those of the newly qualified teacher or the recently promoted postholder. In each case, they will articulate specific demands to which a headteacher can respond at a variety of levels.

An approach such as this communicates many messages, the most important of which is the headteacher's preparedness to uphold the values of democratic schooling. It models many of the key concepts of the learning school and provides a very secure basis on which to build the most productive kinds of relationships. A fundamental belief underlying this approach is that there is very little distinction between the working relationships which are conducive to children's learning and those which produce schools to which staff feel enormous commitment.

Most, if not all, schools have common elements, headteachers and teachers. It is therefore entirely proper that it is these two roles which need the greatest clarity. It is also important, however, that they are defined in relation to each other. If we return to the notions of rights and responsibilities discussed in the previous chapter, we can see how inextricably linked these two jobs are. In a way, in defining responsibilities we are simultaneously defining rights. If staff are involved in identifying a headteacher's responsibilities, they are also defining a headteacher's rights and unavoidably articulating their own rights and responsibilities. We are involved here in defining the framework of expectations within which the working relationships occur. What entitlements do staff have and what obligations are they under?

It would seem appropriate at this stage to try to pin down entitlement and obligation by addressing some of the important tasks with

which schools engage. Headteachers will, of course, have responsibilities in all of these tasks, but in a sense they are defined by everyone else's responsibilities. The key tasks are:

- ◆ classroom teaching;
- ◆ provision of a curriculum framework, including arrangements for assessment, and monitoring and evaluating;
- ◆ provision for special educational needs;
- ◆ provision for staff development.

It seems to us that these fundamental tasks share two features. First, they involve everyone in the school to some extent; second, they are sufficiently definable to require distinct organization and management. By looking at each of these tasks in turn we can begin to explore how they may relate to the responsibilities and rights of the various members of staff, including deputy headteachers, curriculum coordinators, classroom teachers and teaching support staff. Through this process, we can also define the headteacher's responsibilities in relation to each of these tasks. Inevitably what will be offered here is not a blueprint. All schools are different and size, together with financial circumstances, will play a part in any decisions that are made. What we are able to offer is a framework of rights and responsibilities based firmly on a clearly defined set of values and aspirations.

CLASSROOM TEACHING

In the majority of primary schools, most teachers will have a full-time teaching commitment. In larger schools deputies will perhaps not have direct responsibility for a class, but still have a significant teaching commitment, and headteachers may be in a similar position. In many small schools, headteachers will have responsibility for teaching a class of children. Given the fact that class teaching is the most fundamental job within schools and in addition is the activity with which most teachers are engaged for most of the time, it is remarkable how infrequently it is paid any real regard in books about primary school management. Since the task of classroom teaching is the most crucial, it would seem sensible to make that the first consideration in terms of articulating responsibilities.

All staff need to be involved in coming to a common understanding of what it means to be a classroom teacher at a particular school. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, depending upon the numbers involved. With only a small number of teachers it can

be discussed at a series of staff meetings, but with larger numbers the process needs to be differently organized. One way is to ask two or three teachers, either individually or collectively, to prepare some ideas on paper to present to different groups of staff whose deliberations can eventually be put to the whole staff. It might be helpful to offer some guidance about the kinds of areas which will need to be addressed in terms of a class teacher's responsibility, which might include the following:

- ◆ preparedness to reflect upon the nature of teaching and learning;
- ◆ working with others, either teachers or teaching support staff;
- ◆ levels of engagement in curriculum planning and preparation;
- ◆ levels of engagement in decisions about whole-school policies;
- ◆ the responsibility class teachers should have for creating an appropriate learning environment.

These kinds of discussions can be extremely fruitful and provide valuable areas for further debate. The collaboration among staff in defining their responsibilities as class teachers offers both a clear statement of priorities and a model of operating. The difficulties (as always) will emerge in the detail and it may be impossible to agree on some areas. This does not diminish the impact and it is important to bear in mind that this process should not be over-concerned with defining any aspect in too much detail, as this can inhibit further discussion. As the responsibilities of the class teacher emerge, so will the parallel rights which in turn impact upon the responsibilities of others.

The importance of reaching broad agreements about what it means to be a class teacher at a particular school cannot be over-stressed. It is only when this is accomplished that the other key tasks which concern a school can begin to be tackled. It is from the classroom teaching that all else flows. The other key tasks and the nature of responsibilities accorded to the tasks are fundamentally about supporting the work of class teaching. In other words, once the meaning of class teaching is articulated, other rights and responsibilities can begin to be unpacked. Because this is a complex business, as we start to identify the other responsibilities so, in effect, do we put more detail upon aspects of class teaching. For example, as a school considers how it creates a curriculum framework, so it will begin to identify what part the class teacher plays in planning, assessment and defining responsibilities within the field of special educational needs. Through examination of the various rights and responsibilities, possible structures and systems of meetings will suggest themselves. In this way, activities will begin to take on an holistic perspective and

responsibilities should begin to become interdependent. Before we move on to other tasks, however, it is important that we consider carefully what might be the rights available to a class teacher. Essentially those rights, or what we may refer to as entitlements, would be very closely bound up with the other key tasks since, as we have said, these should be essentially aimed at supporting the work of class teaching. The rights of a class teacher, therefore, reflect and confirm the importance of the other tasks and would be concerned with:

- ◆ the right to be provided with a clear curriculum framework within which to place his or her own work and the right to have an input into that framework;
- ◆ the right to be consulted and informed about whole-school issues;
- ◆ the right to a programme of staff development which provides opportunities for further learning and offers a framework of support in day-to-day activities.

As we can see, what is being created is a series of intertwining and interlocking rights and responsibilities which together begin to realize the vision of the working relationships among staff. At this point we can begin to look at the responsibilities which are concerned with creating a whole-school curriculum framework.

PROVISION OF A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Before we explore the responsibilities which go with this it is perhaps important to define what we mean by 'curriculum framework'. For the purposes of this book a curriculum framework is taken to mean those elements which are agreed by the staff to provide the reference points for their own curriculum planning. In other words, it is a collective way of describing the various subject schemes of work and the whole-school policies which make a direct impact upon the curriculum, such as assessment, equal opportunities and teaching and learning styles.

To explore the provision of a curriculum framework is to confront directly the issues surrounding curriculum leadership. Curriculum leadership is a vital component in any school and is increasingly recognized as an aspect of schools which has the potential to be developed further. Curriculum leadership operates on at least two distinct levels. At one level we can assume that there is an overall curriculum coordinator who has a responsibility to support the work

of curriculum subject coordinators, who form a second level. Again, depending upon the size and nature of the school, the organization of this will vary. For example, it can often be split between Key Stages in larger schools, where there may also be coordinators responsible for assessment across the curriculum. Having said this, curriculum coordination across the school is a major task and should be the responsibility of either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. This assertion is in part a direct result of the perceived lack of involvement of headteachers, in particular in curriculum management. The initiatives which have eaten into headteachers' time have ironically taken them away from the curriculum. This issue was addressed in direct terms by the 'Three Wise Men's' report, in which it was said:

There are two broad approaches to primary headship. On the one hand, the emphasis is on the head as administrator; on the other, the emphasis is squarely on the need to provide educational leadership. There is a view at present in England that the introduction of LMS means that the primary head must become an administrator or chief executive. We reject this view absolutely . . . Primary Schools exist to provide a curriculum which fosters the development of their pupils. Headteachers must take the leading role in ensuring the quality of curricular provision and they cannot do this without involving themselves directly and centrally in the planning, transactions and evaluations of the curriculum.

(DES 1992)

This view is one which we wholeheartedly endorse. A primary responsibility of headship is the responsibility for the curriculum. Having said that, however, it is inevitably a responsibility which has to be shared and delegated, and in reality the curriculum is coordinated through a number of teachers who have rights and responsibilities extra to those which are directly concerned with their class teaching. The responsibilities, as usual, take on two forms, those concerned with tasks and those concerned with process. It is the latter which are the more important. Subject coordinators are key players in the school. It is vital that they share the school's values and are in tune with the nature of the working relationships. It is they who will have the major responsibility to create and maintain the vision of working relationships which becomes a reality, and it is for them to model the process involved in school development. The responsibilities of the subject coordinator are fundamental to the school and to colleagues, not merely to the task in hand.

The job of curriculum coordinator has been particularly highlighted since the introduction of the National Curriculum. They were seen as instrumental in the introduction of the various National Curriculum subjects into schools, and what they actually did has become the object of various pieces of research (see Webb and Vulliamy 1996). The story of curriculum coordinators is not an unfamiliar one. The nature of curriculum responsibility and how to manage it have been subjected to as much training as being a headteacher. Courses which explore the management of change, working with others and developing management skills abound, all providing similar messages. The demands on coordinators have also changed. Initially they were mainly concerned with supporting colleagues through the introduction of resources, ideas and activities into school. Some coordinators gave gentle professional advice focused upon their particular subject. Many coordinators have made a significant impact upon the success of a school but the demands have now developed further, to the extent that coordinators produce action plans for inclusion in school development plans, manage budgets and often work in classrooms alongside colleagues. As the baton of 'quality assurance' has been taken up by the managerialists, so curriculum coordinators are now being urged to get into the business of monitoring and evaluating, thus becoming the school's internal subject inspectors. For the vast majority of primary teachers, this is on top of a full-time teaching commitment!

There would be very little disagreement among teachers and heads about the tasks which confront the curriculum coordinator, although lively discussions could be had about the areas of emphasis. It is crucially important, however, to bear in mind the vision of the relationships which will determine the process through which these tasks are undertaken. Day *et al.* (1993) provide a thoroughly useful analysis of much of this process and explore curriculum leadership in some detail. Our purpose in this instance is to provide a broad outline of the responsibilities and rights inherent within the tasks. The major responsibility of curriculum coordinators is to be committed to the agreed vision of school life and to have an acute awareness of what this means in everyday activity. They have a responsibility to model the process of school improvement through reflection and collaboration. It is this fundamental responsibility which again exposes the inadequacy of many job descriptions, since it is an intangible component. In terms of subject-related tasks there would seem to be three major responsibilities which, taken together provide the kind of support which we would argue is the right or entitlement of every class teacher. Those responsibilities are to provide:

- ◆ a framework of operations;
- ◆ a framework of support;
- ◆ a framework for evaluation.

It is worth having a brief look at what each of these might include.

By a framework of operations we refer to that part of the curriculum framework which consists of schemes of work and any subject policies or guidelines. Essentially this framework is providing the parameters within which class teachers or year groups set their own curriculum planning. Once this is established it needs to be enhanced by the next framework.

A framework of support is simply that part of the job which is involved in maintaining up-to-date knowledge about developments in the subject, ensuring that resources are available and that any new ideas and activities concerned with the subject are brought to the attention of all staff.

The framework for evaluation is the final subject-related task which is currently the priority for many schools. It is this area which has been most recently highlighted, and schools feel an acute need for coordinators to play their part in accounting for the standards attained within their subjects. The need to monitor and evaluate has been stressed to schools, particularly through the activities of Ofsted. There is a temptation on the part of schools to copy the Ofsted model of inspection and to set up systems which tend to portray curriculum coordinators as internal inspectors. This tendency may develop further as more headteachers become involved in Ofsted inspections themselves. A headteacher needs to consider carefully how the school evaluates itself and maintain a very clear distinction between its own internal mechanisms and those of Ofsted. Any degree of reflection about what is achieved clearly implies an element of evaluation. If curriculum leadership is to be critical, there has to be that sense of restlessness about current practice and achievement. This restlessness is based not upon apprehension of impending inspection, but a determination to do the best possible job. Any evaluation undertaken by coordinators must be done with teachers, rather than to them, and should demonstrate and eventually implant the process of evaluation within each teacher. In other words, the responsibility of the coordinator is to support each teacher in his or her own reflection upon the activities of a particular class. This may well involve some of the practices used by Ofsted, such as looking carefully at children's work, but this should be done in collaboration with teacher colleagues rather than in isolation. It could also include developing school portfolios and good recording systems

which track children's progress. Much has been written about working alongside colleagues as a way and a means of monitoring the curriculum and it is worth just considering this for a moment. In reality the opportunities which will be available for this to occur in the average primary school will be extremely limited. It is our view that such a strategy is not particularly helpful in monitoring the curriculum simply because of the infrequency of the activity, but it can, and often does, become a strategy to support colleagues through teaching partnerships. It certainly has a part to play in staff development.

What is important within these responsibilities is the realization that the activities of curriculum coordinators should make a positive impact upon what happens in classrooms and particularly on what children are able to achieve. This refocusing of the job has been a welcome development in recent years, as assessing children's achievement often did not feature in a coordinator's agenda. As always, with responsibilities come rights. Once again, a headteacher's responsibilities are closely bound up with the rights of others. If curriculum coordinators are to have the ability to fulfil their responsibilities, then they have particular rights. These will reflect the overall pattern of relationships within the school, but could include the following.

- ◆ Receiving support without interference.
- ◆ Being able to make mistakes. This is important in any educational enterprise, but if we want teachers to grow and develop then mistakes are an inevitable consequence of taking risks.
- ◆ Having access to the headteacher and support networks outside the school.
- ◆ Being given the opportunity to do the job. This does need a degree of planning and it is important that time is managed carefully. Rather than all coordinators having the right to the same time, the school may have particular priorities which means that time to do jobs is not distributed equally, but reflects the priorities.

What is offered here is a broad view of the rights and responsibilities of a curriculum leader. The detail (if that is what is required) can be agreed among the staff in the same way that the headteacher's rights and responsibilities were made explicit. What is certainly the case is that there are no blueprints for the job, since it will be different from school to school. What is vital is that the rights and responsibilities sit comfortably within the school's vision of its working relationships.

PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

This is identified on the third key internal task, as it touches almost every school activity. It also carries with it quite specific responsibilities which it is important to make explicit. Having said that, some of the responsibilities of the special needs coordinator (SENCO) will be implicit within those applicable to the curriculum coordinator, and the process or climate in which the work is done will be similar. The specific responsibilities of the SENCO include:

- ◆ ensuring that the requirements of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs are fully met (this has clear implications for the maintenance of records, the updating and monitoring of individual educational plans, the annual reviews and ensuring that the school fulfils the requirements of any statements);
- ◆ coordinating the work of special needs support assistants;
- ◆ coordinating the involvement of parents;
- ◆ coordinating the involvement of outside agencies.

It is beyond the capacity of this book to explore the detailed responsibilities of the SENCO, but it is worth bearing in mind that a school's values could legitimately be identified through its approach to special needs. It is through a school's commitment (or not) to making provision for special needs that it will express its vision of the nature of education. The approach taken to special needs is a powerful indicator of the nature and purpose of the school as a whole.

The SENCO, of course, enjoys the same rights as everyone else, but there is another specific right which should be clearly articulated. The SENCO should have very clear expectations about the precise responsibilities of the class teacher in providing for special needs. As a school makes provision for special needs, and particularly as provision is extended, there may be a temptation for class teachers to 'pass the buck' for special needs to the SENCO. This particular SENCO's 'right' could be specifically articulated within the responsibilities of the class teachers. Once again, what we see is that the way the school operates is a complex intertwining of various rights and responsibilities. We can now turn to the final area of school activity which is crucial to the nature of working relationships.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This is a fundamental issue because it is directly concerned with the nature of education. It is about the continuing education and

development of all staff within the school and, like special needs, is a feature of school life which can act as a window through which we can begin to see the underlying values and attitudes which guide the school. It is also a symptom of the school's culture. We have already made clear that involving staff in a continuous striving to improve by providing opportunities to reflect upon and refine their practice is a major responsibility of educational leadership. To discuss the nature of staff development is to go to the heart of the school's working relationships. Whoever takes on this major responsibility must be cognizant of the possibilities which staff development creates and should appreciate the central importance of staff development to the well-being of the school. Too often, staff development coordinators are left to administer a budget and book courses, rather than engaging directly in promoting improvement through reflection. Schools are becoming increasingly sophisticated in identifying their own requirements and are also much better at seeing how they can unlock the resources they already have to tackle new initiatives. Consultants, advisors or support from outside, while being important, can only assist a school to improve itself. In a very real sense, staff development coordinators have a pivotal responsibility for one of the fundamental purposes of the school: the improvement of teaching. These responsibilities are difficult to pin down in terms of tasks, as they are bound up with ideas and attitudes dependent upon those leadership elements discussed earlier. In this sense they have a responsibility 'to be' as much as 'to do'. Such responsibilities would incorporate:

- ◆ understanding that staff development is a continuous and intrinsic part of the job of teaching;
- ◆ having knowledge and understanding about learning;
- ◆ appreciating the importance and potential of teachers working reflectively in partnerships;
- ◆ maintaining various networks within and outside the school;
- ◆ understanding that all initiatives have staff development implications.

This is only to touch the surface of what it means to coordinate staff development. The qualities it requires are, in many respects, already contained within the characteristics of the learning school. As before, the rights of the coordinator are bound up with the responsibilities of others. He or she has the right to expect some degree of involvement on the part of staff and the right to appropriate support from the headteacher.

The staff development coordinator also has the right to expect that all staff are working within a culture which is amenable to staff

development, while at the same time contributing to the creation of that culture. This is another complex, chicken and egg situation. In exploring staff development, there needs to be an appreciation that we are dealing with both the formal and informal. Staff development occurs as much informally as it does formally, and therefore everyone bears some responsibility to ensure that it is an intrinsic part of school life. This means that planning meetings, year meetings and staff meetings all constitute opportunities for staff development. Those with specific responsibilities must be conscious that they will model modes of behaviour which in themselves will set examples for younger teachers.

This brings us to the end of those key tasks which each school needs to accomplish. We have explored the rights and responsibilities of various members of staff who may be engaged directly or indirectly in accomplishing the key tasks and so we have inevitably looked at class teachers, curriculum coordinators and SENCOs. The omission in this section so far has been the deputy headteacher. The role of the deputy headteacher creates a complex problem. On the one hand he or she is identified as a key member of staff who has a significant influence on the success or otherwise of the school (Mortimore *et al.* 1988) but has no clearly identified universal responsibilities unless we regard deputizing for the headteacher as a generic responsibility. This is in contrast to the more specific responsibilities identified for curriculum coordinators. The fact that the deputy head's job is relatively undefined is both a strength and weakness. On balance, and perhaps unsurprisingly, we consider it a strength, as it provides yet more opportunity for a school to respond to its own particular circumstances. The deputy's job clearly needs to encompass some of those key tasks and so his or her responsibilities and rights will be defined through them. It is worth giving some consideration to which of the tasks a deputy should engage with in a direct way. In terms of curriculum leadership, he or she can often play a major part in developing and supporting a core subject. In terms of broader leadership he or she could take on the job of SENCO or coordinating staff development. In some respects, both the latter options provide opportunities for a wider and deeper engagement with children and staff. Webb and Vulliamy (1996) see the potential significance of staff development with regard to the deputy headteacher. 'While responsibility for staff professional development and INSET was generally undefined and underdeveloped, it is a potentially important and demanding role.' Others have argued that the deputy should become the curriculum supremo, with a title such as 'director of curricular studies' (Harrison and Gill 1992). What does seem both important

and appropriate is that the deputy head has a significant job which involves a whole-school dimension and it is this dimension which is critical.

The relationship between the headteacher and deputy is obviously a crucial one. It is vital that the deputy has a whole-school job so that he or she is able to demonstrate and model the school vision across the whole school. At the same time, the relationship with the head must also represent in microcosm the nature of relationships at all levels. This calls for genuine partnership and collaboration which is focused upon shared values and attitudes. Nias *et al.* (1989) argued that the deputy was 'the leading culture bearer' securing staff commitment to the school's 'mission' through his or her actions and examples. In other words, a deputy has a powerful impact upon the cultural circumstances of the school. What this means is that the deputy has a responsibility to promote and sustain those processes which flow directly from the vision of the school's working relationships, and the particular relationship with the head should embody the qualities and practices to sustain the vision. A further responsibility is to develop and maintain relationships with all staff which also reflect the emphasis upon collaboration.

Before we leave the subject of working relationships it is worth giving some thought to the kinds of structures needed to support these. Any staffing structures must reflect the nature of the relationships but once again it can become a complex issue of chicken and egg – some relationships can be a reflection of the structure. To a large extent, structures will be dictated by circumstances. It is of very little use talking about senior management teams if there are only three or four teachers in a school. In fact there is a good case to be made that the concept of a senior management team is not appropriate for a primary school, as it emphasizes a hierarchy without focusing upon the jobs to be done. It is also emphasizing a degree of exclusivity which would not sit comfortably with the relationships described here. The emphasis within any structure should be embracing rather than excluding, it should be task-oriented rather than hierarchical and it should reflect an implicit understanding that all developments and activities contribute to defining and maintaining the school's culture. All tasks have a part to play in staff development insofar as they provide different staff with new opportunities. It seems to us that any structures need a large measure of flexibility and that they should assume and support varying degrees of collaboration. This may mean that curriculum coordinators work through a curriculum subject team, it may mean establishing teaching partnerships using the notion of the 'critical friend' and it could mean

working parties being established to get a job done and then being disbanded when the task is complete. Such structures would provide opportunities for leadership to be exercised by several members of staff, as they would tap into a variety of expertise and allow everyone to have access to models of collaboration.

An increasingly important element in school life is the growing number of people employed to support teachers. These members of staff are either assigned to particular children with special needs or brought in to work alongside classroom teachers. It is important that classroom assistants are included within any school's vision and are enabled to make a full contribution to the work of the school. In the past, schools were often rather ambivalent about classroom assistants and other support staff, sometimes to the extent that assistants were not always welcome in staffrooms. As their number increases and the impact that they make becomes increasingly apparent, they too must become an integral part of the pattern of relationships. This also implies particular rights and responsibilities. We have already touched upon some of the rights which may be carried by support staff, which would certainly include:

- ◆ to be regarded as colleagues who have a full part to play in school;
- ◆ to be included in discussion about whole-school issues and in particular to be consulted about aspects which impact upon their specific areas;
- ◆ to have access to staff development opportunities;
- ◆ to have some input into the planning and assessing of curriculum provision.

As they work in classrooms these rights will become more specific, but it is a responsibility of the class teacher to involve the assistant fully in what is happening. It is the class teacher who can enable (or not) children to gain from the work of the assistant. This involves class teachers spending time explaining the learning intentions behind activities and providing guidance to assistants about what strategies could be used by them to achieve the intention. If this professional dialogue is missing, then assistants will not be in a position to think and reflect upon their work and there is a possibility that children will not gain from an activity. It is this close professional discussion which seems to us to be at the heart of ensuring that classroom support is used in the best way. Once again, as the headteacher, you will need to be very active in promoting and modelling this collaborative way of working.

The final part of this chapter exploring working relationships will look at that between the headteacher and governing body, in

particular upon the relationship with the chair of governors. It is a truism that governors play an increasingly important part in managing schools. As their responsibilities have been increased and defined so their involvement has become more vital. It has become such an issue that it is not unusual to come across the notion of 'managing governing bodies' as part of a training course for headteachers. For us, this has a rather sinister connotation and could be taken to imply, at worst, a degree of manipulation, or at best, how to deal with a necessary evil. Perhaps this is too pessimistic. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence from headteachers that when the relationship between head and chair of governors is a good one it makes a great difference to the job of being a headteacher. There is also plenty of evidence which suggests that when the relationship turns sour it is very damaging for the school.

Our starting point must be the vision itself. If governors are to subscribe to the vision and feel a sense of commitment to it, then they should be involved in defining it. They need some input to the school process which explores the nature of education, the kind of working relationships and the nature of the school curriculum to which the school aspires. In some respects, forging a shared vision among governors may present some difficulties. Teachers at least share the common experience of teaching, but governors can represent a very diverse range of experiences. The governing body could potentially be made up of people with widely differing views, attitudes and values based largely upon their own everyday experiences. Having said that, governors are (or should be) united in a single purpose – namely the success of the school. Involving them in the visioning process is important since it can be helpful in providing opportunities for governors to work with teachers and other members of staff, but perhaps more importantly because it gives the governors a greater insight into the context within which they, along with staff, are working. This can have enormous benefits when governors are confronted with different issues to do with their particular responsibilities. For instance, they will be in a much stronger position to exercise their responsibilities for special needs provision if they know, understand and share the school's vision of how it promotes achievement for children with difficulties. Governors will be much better placed to make decisions about curriculum provision if they know, understand and share the vision of teaching and learning. It is commonplace advice offered to governors (for example, the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 1995) that they should regularly discuss values and attitudes as a governing body, but that they should also engage in such discussion with all staff.

The critical relationship is that between the headteacher and chair of governors. The potential for disharmony is considerable, mainly because there are significant grey areas in the statutory responsibilities of governing bodies and headteachers. Most disagreements occur when boundaries are thought to have been breached. The simplest way of preventing such problems is to have clearly defined responsibilities and tasks. How they are defined and allocated is not too important, it is awareness of them that is critical. It is our view that the significant responsibility is upon the headteachers to make the relationship work. As the Advisory Centre for Education advises, 'As far as heads are concerned, it would transform relationships if they could see the effective development of a Governing Body as a professional challenge worthy of the most outstanding talent' (ACE 1995). It may be, in fairness, to this that the idea of 'managing the governing body' refers. What is clearly the case is that headteachers need to understand that governors will require time and attention. It is only the foolhardy headteacher who contemplates significant developments without consulting governors. If the pattern of the relationship is one of regular meetings, mutual consultation and a degree of flexibility about who does what, then there should be few problems. The governing body should be operating at a strategic level, not on the day-to-day organization of the school. Governors do need to be consulted, however, on anything which may cause some concern to parents or provoke dissension among staff. This might include changing the organization of year groups, altering approaches to teaching reading or developing new whole-school policies.

We have said that problems can arise when boundaries are breached – often headteachers feel that governors have encroached on their territory and sense that the governors are interfering. In some cases the problem is the exact opposite, with governing bodies reluctant to take on some of their new responsibilities. This is sometimes the case where governing bodies are well established and have found it hard to adjust to the new demands. Again the onus is upon the headteacher to begin to develop the governing body and bring it more on to centre stage. One way of achieving this is to concentrate on tasks rather than attitudes. It is easier, as we acknowledged earlier, to change what people do rather than what they think, and it is also the case that as they change what they do they may come to think differently. What this might mean is that headteachers begin to specify jobs that need to be done and ask the governing body actually to do them. This could take the form of collecting ideas, writing reports, dealing with the administration of a particular problem or liaising with a member of staff over policy

development. As they work with each other and members of staff they will be initiated into the processes which lie at the heart of the school. Alongside this gradual introduction it is also important that governors have full access to a programme of training, which will not only explain their responsibilities but give them some ideas about how to fulfil them.

This chapter has been continually concerned with the nature of working relationships at all levels. The primary responsibility for creating successful relationships rests upon you as headteacher but they rely upon everyone to sustain them. What is being proposed here is both simple and complex. It is simple in the sense that the nature of the relationships is fundamental to the success of the school, they are at the heart of the enterprise and touch all aspects of schooling. It is complex because people are complex and relationships are never entirely smooth or predictable. What is being asked of headteachers is also demanding and difficult, and will require enormous skill, understanding, determination and, perhaps above all, confidence. As a headteacher you will need the confidence to maintain a healthy scepticism about current managerial shibboleths, the confidence to go with what you know – that the nature of the job is often messy and unpredictable. You will also need confidence to let go, to relinquish power and push it towards others, to allow others to lead – all this despite the urge to control. Finally, you will need the confidence to act in the knowledge that what you are doing takes time. Remember how long it has taken you personally to arrive at what you think today – can you really expect other people to arrive at similar conclusions within a matter of days?