

Difficulties have arisen in the evening when tired, bored children return to their units. The feeling within the units is that teaching staff during the day, finding it difficult to keep children in chairs, engage them in a range of social activities, easier to undertake. This means that in the evening there is little left for the social staff to do with them. They would prefer that teachers "teach" more and they be left with "social activities".

Certainly the most amazing thing to me, after some months, and possibly years of sexual problems within the school, there appears to be no real sex education for the pupils. Other staff in contact with pupils E.W.O.s are viewed as "taxi drivers".

We felt a degree of anger, a degree of desertion and isolation, even a degree of despair within this group of staff. At the moment there is a reluctance to form links with education staff as past experience has shown this to be fruitless. This deep seated divide must be taken into account when planning in future.

Difficulties encountered by us in attempting to speak to various agencies outside the school lead me to believe that although a lot of people know bits of information about children in this school, there is no-one pulling this information together. Symptoms are being treated without the real problems being recognised. If I am wrong in this belief communications between staff groups is certainly abysmal.

The sexuality course we had planned was largely abandoned for obvious reasons. Nevertheless some important information did emerge about feelings and attitudes, not just to sexuality but to infection control measures; these need to be dealt with alongside everything else at a later date.

We asked the staff what their one main aim was in the coming months. Their answer was:

*To Achieve consistent, quality child care*

It would be nice to think that this could be achieved within the next 2 years.

With the help of these staff I am now going to make some suggestions by way of a strategy, in the hope of stimulating discussion:

STRATEGY

01. All staff involved in any way with children in this school should meet urgently to collate information. This to include education staff, social workers, child protection officers etc.
02. The management structure of the school should be reviewed, with particular attention paid to the relationship between education and social services staff.
03. A policy review should be carried out to cover areas of reporting of incidents - staffing levels, management procedures, training.
04. Regular management - staff meetings (including lowest grades) to avoid present crisis management.
05. Regular formal meetings between all grades of staff should be implemented, during which free exchange of information should take place. i.e. educational and social.
06. Social care staffing levels should be increased and maintained to avoid the present situation of casual staff taking responsibility.