

What then are the problems within the school?

Firstly, it is recognised that over the last 3 years, there has been a degree of disruption due to problems of appointing a headmaster. There have been several acting heads, and hence no quality continuity.

The school runs around two systems, which appear not only to run separately, but in opposite directions: The teachers are on duty until 3.30 p.m. after which the Social Care Staff; Houseparents, take over the children's care. A head of care is presumably the link between the care staff and the headmaster. The communication between the two departments is tenuous to say the least. Staff meet casually in the staff room, where there seems to be a friendly relationship, but otherwise no official communication of note.

There is one curious area of overlap. Teachers have to work 10 hours per week E.D.A. (Extra-neous Duties). These hours are often split to cover lunch, breakfast and some evening work. What was once apparently a system designed around project work in the evening is now simply a matter of making up hours and staff members.

Social care staff see teachers frequently undergoing training of one type or another, whilst they have little or none. They are therefore frustrated at being unable to help the boys with counselling or support as they are largely untrained in this area. It is not certain that anyone else has offered any of the boys involved any counselling.

There is a management group:

Social Care Staff comprise:

- 1 Head of Care - grade 6 (about to leave)**
- 2 Team Leaders - grade 5 (only 1 at present)**
- 4 Group House Parents - grade 4**
- 2 Assistant House Parents - grade 1/2**

These staff describe themselves as "baby sitters". They are unique within the Social Services set-up in Rochdale. As such, they feel isolated, as senior managers outside the school are rarely seen.

They have a training budget which amounts to peanuts, and they perceive themselves as second class citizens within the service. They are often deprived of information they believe to be relevant and important, i.e. background social histories of children, and even the fact that an intruder had been in the school was not communicated to some staff for days!!

The units where least problems occur appear to be where staff consistently are able to work "back to back" but even then it means that staff on an inappropriate grade are left to supervise units; they themselves feeling that this is unsafe. Amazingly it would appear that anyone can be left to supervise the children, and on one of the units where most problems occur, the caretaker and other casual staff work back to back with a team leader.

How can staff have any sense of worth, self esteem, motivation? when they are on low grades; anyone else will do to cover their work, they are not offered training, not given information and unable to effectively communicate with other staff??