

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: A CASE APPROACH

ALAN PAISEY

School management – a case approach

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The Author

Alan Paisey held a number of teaching posts in London schools before being appointed to Bulmershe College of Higher Education in 1967. As Head of Administrative Studies, he has been responsible for the development of school management studies. The college has an established master's degree and research programme and is a centre for school management training recognized by the DES.

He obtained his doctorate at Henley, The Management College, and has published numerous articles and books, including *The Behavioural Strategy of Teachers in Britain and the United States* (NFER); *Small Organisations - the Management of Primary and Middle Schools* (NFER-Nelson); *Organization and Management in Schools* (Longman) and *The Effective Teacher* (ed.) (Ward Lock). As associate editor of the journal *School Organization and Management Abstracts*, he is responsible for theses and dissertations.

After teaching for a time in the United States, he became a founder member and first president of the United Kingdom chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. He is a member of the steering committee of the BEMAS Education Management Teachers' group. Since 1975 he has been involved in a variety of duties for the CNAAB and is currently a member of its Educational Organization and Management Board.

FOREWORD

Training in school management (or school administration as it was usually called then) began in the early 1950s with the first experimental courses organized for the College of Preceptors by W.H. Perkins, previously Chief Education Officer for Warwickshire. Ten years later the College was running half a dozen residential courses for more than 400 heads and deputies each summer, and there had been a remarkable proliferation of bodies providing courses, including university departments of education, local education authorities, the Educational Development Association and, somewhat later, the National Association of Head Teachers.

Until that time systematic training for headship was unknown. Good heads were 'born not made', and once appointed they were expected to switch from being an assistant to headship by instinct. Controlling a school was rather like controlling a car: once you had acquired the feel of it you could 'drive by the seat of your pants'. It is astonishing how many good heads managed to run well-organized schools in those days. Perhaps it is because of increased pressures for accountability, as well as larger schools, that it is less acceptable now to throw a new head in at the deep end and hope for the best, although this is still common practice.

In *Management Development for the Education Profession* (1972), Ron Glatton held that administration and management were interchangeable terms. The local authority courses as established a couple of decades ago, however, were mainly concerned with teaching heads to administer schools within the management structures of the authority. They were usually available just after appointment or, in some cases, during the term before taking up a first headship. The mystique of school administration was not yet shared, at any rate in most authorities, with aspirants further down the scale, whether on a selective or random basis.

During this early period two distinct kinds of course developed. Those provided by local education authorities remained essentially as training in the administrative techniques of the authority concerned, and dealt with matters such as the division of functions between its departments, financial requirements, capitation procedures, etc. Some authorities gradually introduced topics of a general character, such as educational law, but usually these sessions were undertaken by a member of the authority's staff.

and interpretation and illustration were both drawn from the experience of that particular County Hall. Admirably suited as it was to its limited purpose, this form of training remained essentially parochial in its approach, even in a large authority.

Several developments, however, were demanding a different approach, supplementary rather than alternative. Large comprehensive schools, in growing numbers, could not depend entirely on the head's charismatic inspiration, which might have been adequate in small schools. Education, long spurned by the media, suddenly became newsworthy and long-cherished, comfortable traditions were ruthlessly questioned. A vocabulary once confined to industry and commerce began to invade education, its most telling shock, perhaps, being the title of a book by W. Kenneth Richmond: *The Education Industry* (1969).

The non-authority courses were the first to respond to these changes, and the Preceptors quickly amended the name of their programme from 'School Administration' to 'School Management Studies'. Many local authority courses still follow the more limited approach outlined above. This is entirely proper, for an employer should ensure that senior employees understand how to administer particular procedures. Nevertheless, the heads of schools, however much they may appear to be top management to pupils, staff and parents within the context of their individual schools, are very much middle management within the totality of a local education authority's service and they must, therefore, be able to administer management decisions bound on them from above, and to make managerial decisions and establish structures within their schools. In management terminology they are branch managers working for an employer who gives them an exceptionally high degree of discretion.

The first waves of the new managerial approach began to make themselves felt in the mid-sixties, and by the end of that decade the tide was flowing at full strength. It is significant that in a nine-page bibliography in Ron Glatter's book already referred to (1972) there are very few references to any publications earlier than 1967. It was at this time that the writer visited Cheshunt College, Cambridge, then for sale at what seemed the extortionate figure of £150,000 to £200,000, and prepared a feasibility study on its use as a full-time training centre in management studies for the staff and governors of schools. Cash flow problems prevented the College of Preceptors from developing this project but the idea was taken up again a few months later in a pamphlet *The Idea of a Staff College* (1967) written for the Head Masters' Association by Parry Michael.

The use of management concepts and technology has not found universal acceptance, however. Many teachers regard education as 'different', partly because they have been conditioned to regard industry and commerce as arid areas of activity dominated by the profit motive. Some, cocooned from the world of business, would hold that even the smiling face of capitalism, concerned with worker welfare, is a mask to enable employers to squeeze more work out of their employees and to garner richer harvests for themselves. Yet the same teachers will go to endless trouble to improve working conditions in schools so that pupils have the greatest possible chance to develop, and so that they and their teachers are encouraged to work harder.

Whilst it must be admitted that some teachers will switch off if their head starts talking about line management objectives, the principles underlying the organization of schools are no different from those applicable to a commercial undertaking. The purpose of management is the organization of resources (including manpower) to produce the optimum result. It matters not whether the end product consists of consumer goods, the sale of which will produce wages and profits, or whether the 'goal' is less tangible, as in education.

Exploration in Management (1960) by Wilfred Brown illustrates this point admirably. The book is a description of the Glacier Metal Company's concepts and methods of organization, as developed during the period when Brown was its chairman and managing director. While much of the detail is clearly the application of principles to industrial organization, any head reading this book is bound to say, time and time again: 'That fits the pattern of my own structures' or, 'That could be adopted in my school'. The same kind of parallels can also be found in *Management Made Simple* (1970) by W.T. Coventry.

Books of this kind, written without a great deal of management jargon, can be of considerable value in assisting a head to formulate his managerial organization.

What is school management?

As has been hinted above, courses in school management and administration were provided for heads and, more rarely, for deputies — the members of a school staff chiefly concerned with administration. The introduction of the term 'management', however, posed another question: 'Where does management stop?' This was put in another context by Brown (1960):

Some years ago I was a member of the Education Committee of the British Institute of Management. We received a communication from the American Management Association asking: "In Britain, is the foreman a member of the management team?" The committee argued the question at great length but the discussion became not in fact an attempt to answer the question, but an examination of the meaning of the words 'foreman' and 'management team'. Clearly, no answer could possibly be found until there was agreement about the content of these words.

Where, indeed, are the boundaries to be found in an educational institution? Brown (1960) defines as a manager: 'A member who has subordinate to him authorized roles into which he can appoint members and determine their work: he is accountable for his subordinates' work in these roles.'

Brown regards the power of hiring and firing to be an essential element of management. If this is to be accepted as *sine qua non*, only a limited number of schools would have any professional managers at all, since few heads (let alone deputies or heads of departments) have this power vested in them.

Coventry (1970) prefers a more sweeping definition: 'A manager is one who is responsible for getting things done through other people, instead of doing the job himself . . . with stated objectives to achieve, i.e. to produce certain goods or services, he directs human activities, with the help of the other resources available, towards those ends. As a positive way of life, the ambitious junior clerk could well think of himself as being on a management ladder the day he delegates some of his work to a new junior clerk, keeping a watchful eye on what he is doing in the process.'

This comes much nearer to the definition already given, that management is the organization of resources to produce the optimum result. On this basis every teacher is a manager, the planning of every lesson an exercise in management by objectives. This is the underlying theme of *The Teacher as Manager* (1970), a symposium edited by George Taylor, formerly Chief Education Officer for Leeds. It began to be recognized that management decision taking was not just a matter for senior staff, but an area in which all teachers should have some training.

The final extension of management training has grown from the recommendations of the Taylor Report (1977) and the Education Act 1980. Section 17 of the Education Act 1944 had provided bodies of governors (until 1980 called 'managers' in primary schools), whose powers were defined by articles of government (rules of management in the primary sector). Under these articles or rules the governors are charged with 'the general control of the conduct and curriculum of the school'. The head has a legal duty to control the internal organization, management and discipline

of the school, and to supervise the teaching and non-teaching staff.

The division of functions envisaged by articles and rules made under section 17 of the 1944 Act was reasonably clear, and was researched in detail by George Baron and D.A. Howell in *The Government and Management of Schools* (1974). The Taylor Report, *A New Partnership in Our Schools* (1977), however, proposed a number of changes, giving parents direct representation on governing bodies (the term 'managers' was to be discontinued) and, most importantly, abolishing the principle which denied a voice to those employed in the school. In particular, the head was to be a governor *ex officio* unless he chose otherwise.

The proposals were given legislative force in the 1980 Act, and for heads a third dimension of government was added to those of management and administration. The right given to heads to opt out of government was secured by the pressure of the National Association of Head Teachers. Among many heads there was a feeling that they would be in a weaker position as members of a governing body than when they were attending as officers. One seldom hears a managing director complain that he would rather be a general manager and, if he does, it is not for this reason, yet this is basically the change of status accorded to heads by the 1980 Act.

Management training has been compelled to include this new dimension, however, and it is interesting to note that the feasibility study prepared for the use of Cheshunt College, Cambridge, in the winter of 1966-67, envisaged courses for governors. Then as now, however, there were few financial resources for training teachers, and fewer still for governors.

Over the years, therefore, there have grown up two parallel lines of courses, one local and administrative and the other dealing with broader principles, often national in character. The latter group has generally recruited students on a regional or national basis, and lecturers and group leaders have not been drawn from the area of a single local education authority. The course directors generally have been people with a national reputation in their particular fields. As a result, these courses have provided all the ingredients for a free interplay of ideas from many different sources, both staff and students contributing an input of rich variety.

Enough has been said to demonstrate that both streams of development have made an essential contribution to the growth of management studies. The local authority courses have included the acquisition of a necessary body of knowledge dealing with the 'nuts and bolts' of a particular authority's systems. The courses based on wider areas have contributed a background knowledge of management principles freed from the

administrative inbreeding which it is difficult for even the largest authority to avoid in its internal provision.

Case studies

In the early years of management training, courses frequently followed the study pattern first established many years previously by the Student Christian Movement at Swanwick: a lecture followed by discussion in groups of a dozen or so members, the unit being rounded off by a plenary session at which the group either asked questions or reported back. This method continues to be used for many sessions, but a new development introduced from the United States in the early 1960s.

This is a case study or simulation exercise and, as Glatter (1972) points out, the various forms which have developed are all projects in which course members are asked to respond to various typical situations which are presented to them. The idea of involving course members in this way was adopted enthusiastically by the bodies concerned with planning in this field, and was a reminder that well-established educational principles may be relevant in parts of the system other than those in which they have been developed. The Report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education on *The Primary School* (1931) advised: 'The curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored.'

The early case studies generally consisted of 'in tray' exercises in which a number of papers were presented as 'authentic' documents for action and the student was required to imagine himself in the role of the recipient, and make a response. One of the earliest of these was *The Prentice Affair* (1964) devised for the College of Preceptors. For five years members of the College courses derived a great deal of information and amusement from the difficulties of Reginald Prentice, whose dubious use of corporal punishment has caused considerable embarrassment to John Squeers, the headmaster of Eatanswill County Secondary School.

This particular case study, like a number of others, simulated the kind of file which a head might find on return from a period of absence. Of the 28 documents in the tray only seven dealt with the Prentice issue, and these were interleaved with various routine matters and minor problems. The unit was divided into three parts. During the first hour students were required to sort the papers individually, discarding trivia, delegating routine work and minor problems and preparing their response to the major theme. To simulate the pressure of time the papers were not

distributed until the beginning of this period, which was followed by the preparation of a report in groups for the plenary session, which ended with an assessment by the lecturer responsible for the unit.

In 1965 the College organized its first advanced course, and for some years this consisted entirely of case studies, one being presented on each day of the five-day course. These included planning a new school building (introduced by experienced school architects), timetabling and a governors' meeting. *The Prentice Affair* was published in *Education Today* (1969) shortly after it was replaced by a new study.

Using case studies

It is possible to build in almost any desired degree of sophistication in order to make the working of case studies more attractive and effective. Management decisions are almost invariably made under some pressure, a pressure which is often responsible for errors of judgement. Anything which can heighten the feeling of pressure adds to the value of a case study. It is possible, for example, to arrange for the individual study to be undertaken in one room, so that a number of verbal interruptions can be arranged. Even more realistic would be the preparation of an audio or video tape which could be programmed with parental interruptions, a reminder that the school is waiting for assembly, etc. A further extension could be the provision of recording facilities so that the course member can record his reactions to these interruptions as they occur, or make 'telephone calls' or engage in conversations arising from the study itself.

In presenting 30 case studies in a single volume, Alan Paisey has made a significant contribution to the use of this technique. Although they are arranged in pairs, each pair being drawn, broadly, both from the primary and the secondary sector, teachers will find that the case which does not belong to their particular field may nevertheless have considerable relevance for them. Management is management, and efficient management frequently depends, among other things, upon skill in delegation.

The cases set out in this book are not cast in the in-tray mould, and the format in which they are presented makes them equally suitable for consideration during a course, or for private study. The introduction to each serves the same purposes as the headnote to a law report, giving a concise summary of the main features of the case. The narrative provides a great deal more detail about the background than is possible with an in-tray exercise, where students often complain that they have not been

told enough about the school.

Those with experience in relevant areas of school management will probably prefer to identify their own questions for discussion to compare with those set out by the author but it is likely that everyone will value the commentaries which have been provided. It is essential in working through these exercises to remember that they are drawn from real life. They are sober accounts of the management problems which heads and senior staff have had to solve, and the commentaries have been forged on the anvil of experience.

The book can be used in a number of different ways. Aspirants to senior management appointments may well find it valuable to treat it as a personal study course to enable them to identify a variety of issues which can arise, to think purposefully about them, and to consider a wider range of decision implications than they have so far met in practice. Those already in such a post may find help in dealing with problems which have already asserted themselves.

In recent years, schools have been encouraged to undertake school-based in-service training. This has often proved ineffective because of difficulties in planning a relevant programme. Here is such a course which may well achieve two desirable ends — an understanding by all members of the staff of the problems faced by a head (and the constraints surrounding him or her) and the essential managerial functions of every teacher. Furthermore this can be done with the minimum of management jargon. The cases might also be used in training educational administrators, to give them an insight into the problems of those whose institutions they administer.

Although there is a logical arrangement of the cases, it is by no means necessary to work through them in the order given. Indeed relevance to the job in hand, and interest (e.g. in personal relationships or curriculum development) are more important. It is interesting to note that the plan of the book is circular — starting with the opening of a real school, it ends with the closure of existing schools in a reorganization, which in effect brings the reader back to the beginning with the opening of the reorganized school.

It is also possible to use this book in conjunction with the study of specific management techniques, in order to appreciate their appropriateness in the school situation. There is perhaps hardly an avenue of organization to which management by objectives is not appropriate though Case Studies 7.1 and 7.2 may seem most appropriate in this context. Those who have some experience of the use of critical path

analysis (Programme Evaluation Review Technique or PERT) in schools, know that it can save the sanity of the head faced with a complex reorganization (Case Studies 15.1 and 15.2) or even when planning the annual timetabling operation (Case Study 9.1).

A personal example may show how this book points to management techniques which have been used for years by teachers, but which are sometimes resisted because they are called by strange new names. In 1935, I joined the staff of a public elementary school on the Essex coast. The school consisted of about 240 pupils aged between 5 and 14 in six classes. Apart from religious instruction (in which the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus was used) the head wrote every syllabus in every subject throughout the school. These syllabuses, written on Imperial-sized card, were comparatively brief, but gave an outline of the topics which it was expected would be covered by each class in each subject during the year. It was then the duty of the class teacher, during the summer holiday, to prepare a list of topics, called 'the scheme', showing how he proposed to complete the syllabus week by week.

In the opening paragraph of Case Study 7.1, we find:

The senior management team had produced a document which in very broad terms itemised the general aims of the school. However, these aims had not been interpreted into practical teaching objectives, although some isolated attempts had been made to produce check lists at the 'breakdown of skills' level, by individual teachers.

Here, quite plainly, we have identical management practice, taking into account the differences in the educational setting which have evolved during half a century. The syllabuses devised by the head of the Essex school were the generalised aims of instruction for a period of a year, the class teachers' schemes were the interpretation of those aims into what the case study calls 'practical teaching objectives'.

So, in the totality of planning a school's development it is possible to fix generalized aims which perhaps it is intended should remain reasonably static, or at least recognizable for the duration of the school lives of all the pupils currently on the roll. Changes will come, but, in general, it is desirable that they should not be so radical as to alter the aims beyond recognition. In a secondary school with a sixth form, planning for a period of stability of this generalised kind would be for seven years. The school must then identify annual, possibly termly, objectives — the steps by which the school will seek to achieve these aims.

Just as teachers in the 1930s had to record the work they had done each

week, and produce a forecast for the next week which would, if necessary, state how and when shortfall would be made up, so a school must evaluate its progress towards its stated aims and review the objectives in order to make achievement possible. The terminology has changed; the practice remains the same.

Those who, like myself, served their headships between about 1954 and 1977, were without doubt fortunate. Problems there were, but education was an expanding industry; financial resources were comparatively easy. Fortunate were we who knew, in those days, that next year's roll would be larger; that there would be more teachers; and that the capitation allowance would rise. Today, heads must manage for contraction: lower rolls, fewer staff, and a capitation allowance which does not pretend to keep pace with inflation. Almost invariably a reorganization will mean redundancies, with a smaller staff attempting to do the same job and with minority subjects being eliminated. These problems are dealt with in the last two case studies in this book. All the efforts made by the local education authorities to cushion redundancy by redeployment or early retirement cannot hide the fact that ultimately someone who feels they still have a contribution to make, will be out of a job.

At one time, those concerned with educational management needed to know little of the law, apart from the Education Acts (chiefly for administrators) and the common law position of the teacher in *loco parentis*. Today, he or she must be reasonably familiar with modern employment legislation, defamation, copyright, and a host of other matters. Many of these fringe areas are dealt with in the case studies, and the student working through them should always be ready to refer to the legal constraints which may often prove a limitation on otherwise acceptable solutions.

Indeed, one of the principal advantages of the simulation technique is the way in which it compels students to be aware of constraints — legal, professional and moral. The legal limitations are the most rigid of all, distinguishing between what is permitted and what is forbidden. Managers must work within the legal framework of the society in which they are operating and any course of action which they adopt must be amenable to the law.

It is a different matter with professional and moral constraints. Professional considerations will often set the boundaries of what is or is not practicable in any situation. They will indicate to the practising manager the area which will enable him or her to use resources to the best

possible advantage. Where such an area permits more than one solution of similar quality, the manager is free to choose that which seems best. Moral considerations deal with what is right; 'what ought to be done' is the final imperative. These cases provide the reader with an opportunity to distinguish these different constraints and to identify their respective influences.

The case studies in this collection place considerable emphasis on the ethical dimension, which is plainly drawn out in many of the commentaries. If this is borne in mind by the reader working through the problems, the book will have made a significant contribution to the literature of management studies in schools, by drawing attention to the need for a systematic approach to decision making in a complex network of human and administrative situations.

Geoffrey Barrell
August 1983

PREFACE

This book is offered as a contribution to the literature in educational management. It is intended to be of particular interest to teachers who manage schools or who aspire to do so, as well as to those who are not teachers but who work in or for schools.

In recent years the potential value of case material for training programmes in educational management has become evident. The growing number of short and award bearing courses in educational management has indicated a need for teaching materials of all kinds.

The cases in this book are authentic. The narrative of each is compiled from information supplied by the following staff in the education service. Apart from one member of an independent school, they are between them employed by eight local education authorities.

Frank Agniesz, Head

Roy Bone, Deputy Head

Jean Bull, Head

Robert Burton, Deputy Head

Dennis Fullerton, Head

Geoffrey Green, Head

Michael Green, Deputy Head

Robert Griffin, Head

Neil Hawkes, LEA Advisor

Anthony Hill, Head

John Honeybourne, LEA Assistant Director for General Services

Winifred Howard, Head

Rodney King, LEA Adviser

Michael Lusty, LEA Assistant Education Officer

Anne Mace, Head of Department

Julie Makin, Deputy Head

Ivan Marks, Head

Wendy Merwood, Head

Michael Newton, Deputy Head

Patrick Paisey, Head of Department

Richard Peppin, Head

David Picton-Jones, Head

Elizabeth Pye, Scale 1 Teacher

David Smith, Head of Department

Jenny Willcock, Head

Keith Williams, Head

John Woodcock, Head

Susan Wootton, Scale III Teacher

Anne Wrighte, Deputy Head

I record my sincere thanks to them for giving their time and attention to the task in the middle of a busy school year. Without them this book would not exist.

It has been my good fortune to have the interest and support of Geoffrey Barrell, whose own endeavours in case study work in educational management have justly assumed a high reputation and whose books on legal cases have become classic in status: *Legal Cases for Teachers* (London, Methuen 1970) and *Teachers and the Law* (London, Methuen 1984).

This book is enhanced by his special contributions, reflecting his immense knowledge and experience in this field.

In addition I record my thanks to my wife, Audrey Paisey, Principal Lecturer at Bulmershe College of Higher Education, whose careful perusal of this book at each stage of its development resulted in many helpful suggestions, the clarification of difficulties, and the solution of problems.

My thanks are also expressed to Pât Richards for her expert translation of manuscripts into typescript.

It is hoped that the book does justice to all these people. Any remaining shortcomings, however, are my own responsibility.

Alan Paisey