

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

IJS - 21    INSPECTING THE INSPECTORATE 6:  
              PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS CONTINUED

44 Canfield Gardens,  
London, N.W.6.  
England  
25th May, 1972

Mr. Richard Nolte  
Executive Director  
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535 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10017  
USA

Dear Mr. Nolte:

This newsletter is the sixth in a series of newsletters in which I examine the operation of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in England and Wales.

In this section of the ongoing essay, I continue my detailed analysis and criticism of the Inspectorate. I look particularly at the relationships between the HMIs and other sectors of British education and consider the training and contribution to innovation of the Inspectors.

I remind you that the pagination of this newsletter follows the numbering of the essay as a whole.

Let us now continue our critique of the Inspectorate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. J. Spitzberg, Jr.', written in a cursive, stylized script.

Irving J. Spitzberg, Jr.

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

I. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INSPECTORATE AND OTHER SECTORS  
OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

The most important sources of change in the evolving nature of the Inspectorate are the changes in character of other participants in the educational system and especially the emergence of wholly new institutions. The impact of these new participants is quite great, because the Inspectorate is a linking agent among the individuals and institutions playing the primary, first-line roles in the educational system. Therefore, the relationships between the Inspectorate and various other identifiable groups becomes central to an understanding of the Inspectorate and any assessment of its future role in the system.

i) Teachers.

A crucial relationship for the Inspectorate is that between the HMIs and teachers in the schools. It is also the most haphazard: many teachers never see an HMI in a year. The character of this relationship is seldom satisfactory, because of the spasmodic nature of contact between HMI and the teacher. The visit to the school and the inservice training course provide the most usual occasion for teacher/Inspector contact. Neither gives either person much time to get to know the particular problems and ideas of the other.

One technique for overcoming this irregularity of contact with any teacher or group of teachers would be through an ongoing project or two, joining individual Inspectors with a teacher or group of teachers in a common educational venture over a period of weeks or

months. Although such projects would be demanding in time and therefore would have high opportunity costs, the indepth experience and information which an HMI would get out of such a project and the improvement in the relationship with a few teachers would probably justify the cost.

Another possible strategy would be to learn a lesson from the experiment conducted by the I.L.E.A. The Infant Staff Inspector in London has recruited a number of infant school heads and teachers to serve for a year or two as assistants to the Inspector in his duties, with special assignments including some long range research projects. This approach brings a certain number of teachers into the operation of the Inspectorate for a limited period and then returns them to the classroom with a better insight into the problems and promise of the inspectorate, which they can then share with their peers. It also brings to the operating problems of the inspectorate a fresh perspective built on recent classroom experience. This experiment in London seems to have improved teacher knowledge about the operation of the inspectorate and also provided an alternative model for allocating manpower to inspector-type roles.

An experiment within the HMI similar to the London enterprise might improve the relationship between HMIs and the teachers, because both would have a chance to look at each other over an extended period of time. The Inspectorate could institute an Inspectorate Associates program, which would allow one or two teachers to assist each HMI for a year or two and then expect to return to the classroom. The teachers would be seconded to the Inspectorate. Such a program would also act as a recruitment procedure for the Inspectorate and would allow the Inspectorate to judge some of its candidates for positions in a more thorough manner than has been the practice in the past.

These suggestions for improving the relationship between the Inspectorate and the teachers highlight a problem area which could pay great dividends if improvements were possible. One impression I have brought back from all of my visits with HMIs is that teachers in the classroom do not know how to make the best use of HMI resources. Therefore attention to the relationship between HMIs and classroom teachers could help teachers learn how to use the advice and facilities of the Inspectorate. Structuring HMI/teacher relationships to provide greater and more regular contact between at least a few teachers and the HMI would be a useful first step.

ii) Local Educational Authorities: Administrators and Inspectors.

Contact between the local educational authorities and HMIs occurs at two points: the chief education officer and the local inspectors. The role of the HMI in relation to the Chief Education Officer (CEO) is mainly that of consultant in dealings with Curzon Street. Of course the HMI also advises the CEO about other educational problems, but it is as a consultant concerning national issues that the HMI plays his most important role in relation to the CEO. The relationship varies

from that of a formal one limited to occasions such as official submissions to Curzon Street to close personal relationships. Most District Inspectors make it a point to develop close relationships with the CEO, but the possibilities seem to vary.

The relationship between HMI and CEO seems to be one of the most successful links between the Inspectorate and other educationalists. One's hope for the future need only be that all of the HMI/CEO relationships come up to the standard of the best. If this happens the oil which the HMI represents will keep the machinery of local authority/national government relationships running smoothly.

The contact between HMIs and local inspectorates seems to be less satisfactory. All District Inspectors cultivate their relationships with the local inspectors, but these relationships are often extremely informal and irregular. There may be the termly meeting between HMIs in an area and local inspectors -- or, in the case of London, there may even be monthly meetings between the Divisional Inspector and the senior local inspector-- but there does not seem to be a general pattern of coordination between local and national inspectorates and their various policies.

To raise the issue of coordination at all levels of local and HM inspectorates is not to suggest the establishment of a hierarchical relationship between the HM and local inspectors. One would never want the Inspectorate to dictate policy to local inspectors.

But because of the overlap of functions and the common constituencies at the local level, it would appear advantageous to formalize and regularize the links between inspectorate systems. The picture of local/HMI relations which appears in Select Committee evidence and in my own conversations -- that is, where neither inspectorate formally deals with the other-- is surely not the optimum relationship.

With the future growth of strong local inspectorates, the local inspectors will have much to contribute to policy development at the national level. And the strength of the local inspectorate will mean that the relationship between HMI and local inspector can become more that of a consultant to the primary adviser of the schools. Both of these developments will require more formal and regularized contact through meetings, training courses, and conversations staged for and with local inspectors. The contribution which an improvement in the relationship between these two inspectorates can make to the educational system has not even begun to be tapped. Minor changes in institutional arrangements and organizational procedures to encourage greater contact and cooperation will bring immense advantages to both inspectorates and the educational system.

iii) Teachers' Centers.

In the evolution of the educational system, entirely new institutions emerge from time to time: the '60s spawned the teachers' center. The appropriate role of the HMI in the life of a teachers' center is difficult to assess, because of the variations in character of these institutions. But since the purpose of these centers is to promote the professional development of local teachers and to improve the curriculum in the schools through local projects, one would think that the HMI has a contribution to make.

Conversations with teachers' center wardens indicate that the HMI relationship with teachers' centers is quite haphazard from area to area. There does not seem to be a formal HMI policy concerning the importance of these centers and the HMI role in them.

My own belief is that the active and regular participation of HMIs in the life of local teachers' centers would encourage their development into important agencies for educational improvement in Great Britain. In his generalist role, the HMI can provide counsel to the local wardens, who have great difficulty in deciding exactly what they and their centers ought to be doing. And in his specialist role, the HMI can contribute to the actual curriculum development going on in the teachers' centers.

Because of the potential which teachers' centers offer for educational change, the investment of more HMI time in these centers could reap substantial rewards for the whole system. I realize that many Inspectors already spend some time in their local centers, but since there are only 500+ centers and there are 500+ HMIs, one could expect a significant contribution from individual HMIs if the demands of teachers' centers were given high priority. And the HMIs would find it quite worthwhile to use teachers' centers as an important forum for fulfilling their communicating and advising roles. If the teachers' center were considered to be one of the primary instruments of HMI/teacher relations, then the HMI would have at hand a local agent in the person of the warden to assist him in the various roles. And thereby the teachers center would become better integrated into the network for change in British education. This relationship between HMI and teachers' center holds great promise for the future.

iv) Schools Council.

The relationship between the HMI and the Schools Council is quite fraternal: not only was the Inspectorate intimately involved in the establishment of the Schools Council, but it also continues to provide one of the Council's Joint Secretaries and a number of senior staff on a secondment basis. With this "blood link", one would expect very few problems -- other than an occasional manifestation of sibling rivalry -- in the relationship between them. And this is probably true at the senior levels. However, there appears to be a major

communications problem between the Schools Council and the HMI in the field.

Most HIMs are well informed about Schools Council activities in their specialities: but they have little active knowledge of overall Council activities which would be relevant to the variety of problems which emerge in their dealings as General Inspectors. I should quickly point out that responsibility for this difficulty lies more with the Schools Council than the Inspectorate, because the Council has not developed techniques for disseminating information about activities which are effective in a world overburdened with information flow.

But the HMIs themselves could more systematically organize an internal information system, such as the one suggested earlier, to filter the Schools Council research and curriculum materials into usable form. Also, the HMIs could develop their own intelligence unit to keep tabs on research in progress in the Schools Council and in the National Foundation for Educational Research.

Another area of contact between the HMIs and the Schools Council is through the Schools Council field officers. One problem here is that some HMIs view the field officers as trying to do a job similar to an HMI's but not being of the same quality and therefore doing a second-rate job. This attitude needs to be explicitly acknowledged and dealt with: if true, then the Schools Council field staff needs improvement or abolition; if false, then the HMIs need to come to terms with the function which the Schools Council field staff serves.

Improved communications between the Schools Council and the Inspectorate would contribute a great deal to the communications process in the whole educational system. Also, it would mean that the money invested in both the Schools Council and the Inspectorate would bring a better return in educational quality. And if this improvement is joined with improved support for teachers' centers through a better informed Inspectorate, then the whole system for supporting education in the classroom would improve in its capability to cope with change. And this capability is the most pressing need for the future.

#### v) Testing Agencies.

The single most influential set of agencies in the British educational system in regard to the substance of education is the group of examining boards which prepare, set, and grade the secondary school examinations. Their influence goes back to infant schools, because they set the skill standards for every child.

The HMIs play an influential role in the examining process as members of Schools Council committees which supervise the regional

examining boards and as assessors directly associated with these boards.

Individual HMIs have taken very strong positions in regard to the policies of particular boards, but the overall impact of the Inspectorate as a whole is hard to evaluate.

Presently the examination process itself is undergoing close scrutiny and is prompting a great deal of debate. So the role of the Inspectorate in the examining process can become quite significant in encouraging reform of the system. Most of the HMIs I talked to had very strong opinions about the inadequacies of the examination system and quite often offered advice to teachers and headmasters about how to manipulate the system in order to minimize its impact on education in the school. But there does not appear to be a systematic effort to encourage Inspectors to use their influence to improve the process.

Because of their advantageous role in the examination structure, the HMIs should think back to their historical role as examiners and exercise their moral authority to reform this particular institution in the educational system. And because one must expect the examination boards to continue to play a crucial role in the decentralized British educational system, the HMIs should husband their relationship with the examining agencies with great care. This relationship is one which gives them great power over educational change.

vi) Institutions of Higher Education.

The HMIs have professional responsibilities in regard to colleges of further education, polytechnics, colleges of education, and assorted other institutions of higher education. Indeed all other but universities. But one must keep in mind that there are special branches of the Inspectorate dealing with the particular problems of these sectors. It is not this professional relationship which interests me here.

In the context of an analysis of the relationship between HMIs and other organizations and agencies in the educational system, I am interested in how the Inspectorate relates to these institutions as well as the universities in regard to the life of the schools, which is the central focus of Inspectorate activity.

When one looks at the overall activities of the Inspectorate, there are a number of points where HMI's come in contact with the institutions of higher education in regard to the problems of the schools. The most important point of contact is the inservice training course, where the HMIs often call on lecturers from institutions of higher education to assist them. However, my impression of the way in which the HMIs call on the expertise of these institutions of higher education is that it is usually

limited to educational faculties, even in regard to specialities. This limited utilization of the universities and other institutions of higher education is not unique to the Inspectorate in the education world. But it is regrettable that the HMIs have been unable to broaden their approach to these institutions in order to involve specialists outside of the education faculties in the problems of the schools.

Because of the stature of HMIs, they would probably get a sympathetic response from any of the scholars in these institutions of higher education if they called on them to assist them in solving particular educational problems. HMIs may be surprised to find that classicists and philosophers may be able to contribute to an analysis of the problems of teaching reading to pupils in infant schools (even though many HMIs were themselves classicists and philosophers at university). The Inspectorate could become a catalyst which brings fresh forces to bear on pressing educational problems.

The future requires the HMIs to expand their relationships with the institutions of higher education in order to assist these institutions to bring their resources more effectively to the problems of the educational system as a whole.

There is no common thread running through this analysis of the various relationships between the Inspectorate and other institutions and individuals in the educational system. Each participant is constantly changing in a way which requires the Inspectorate to respond quickly in its role as a linking organization. Its historical record is pretty good. But there is some indication in the recent past that its response to the changes in other agencies and to the emergence of new institutions has not been as flexible as the problems of the educational system demand. To respond more creatively in the future the Inspectorate must be clearly aware of its linking function and seek to improve its points of contact with all of the other participants in the educational system.



## J. TRAINING HMIs.

The Inspectorate uses an apprentice system to prepare its new recruits for the multiplicity of roles which they must play: each new HMI is assigned to a mentor, an experienced HMI, with whom he works for a year. This process of "sitting with Nellie," as HMI Jack Legge calls it, is one of the most successful socialization exercises there is. And a socialization exercise is what it is: it is not a training exercise which attempts to teach new skills, nor is it an educational experience which gives the new HMI a set of new conceptual categories. It is an exercise in teaching new HMIs how they ought to act by giving them the example of an experienced man dealing with the problems as they arise in the field, and then giving the new recruit an opportunity to deal with these problems under the watchful eye of his mentor.

My experiences with the HMIs attest to the success of the process. Although all of the HMIs were quite diverse in personality and background, their approach to dealing with the schools and their problems was so similar that they could have been acting according to a script. Only one theatrical Welshman provided an exception to this observation; and any Welshman will tell you that the Welsh are incorrigible.

Jack Featherstone, the HMI who was the subject of my account of a day in the life of an Inspector, was himself quite different in background and personality from the stereotype of the HMI. But he still approached the job in a manner consistent with the style of every other HMI I met. And it is into a style that the HMIs are socialized. The unwritten rule is: be low key, unobtrusive, and give your advice in a manner that minimizes your differences with the teacher, or the headmaster, or the chief education officer, or, I guess, even the Secretary.

There is no formal training for the new recruit. This lack of formal schooling and the reliance on the mentor system assumes that the skills of the Inspectorate are the skills of experience which cannot be formally taught. My own impressions indicate that this judgment is probably correct, but not completely so.

Many of the HMIs with whom I travelled were engaged in assignments which called for certain sorts of specialized knowledge which all HMIs need and which only a few bring with them from their experiences in the educational system. For example, many of the HMIs were conducting surveys, an assignment which calls on specialised knowledge if it is

going to be at all sophisticated- and my impression was that most of these surveys of materials and methods were not the least bit sophisticated but could have been and thereby would have been more productive.

Also, in the role of General Inspector, the HMIs were called upon to exercise judgments which should have been based on substantial knowledge of sociology and developmental psychology, as well as the problems of small group social psychology. There was little evidence that this knowledge informed their conclusions.

Because of the differences in background in recruits to the Inspectorate, it would probably improve the performance of the new HMIs if they had some formal training in the analytical skills and substantive knowledge which they need on their job. This formal training need not take the place of the mentor system; it should only supplement the socialization process.

The Inspectorate, as the master of the short course, should be able to devise an effective curriculum which would take no more than ninety days for the new recruit to complete. This curriculum ought to include statistics, survey methods, educational sociology, developmental psychology, economics of education, educational technology, and management methods. It could also include HMI simulation games and critique sessions. Such an educational program should be scheduled after the novice HMI has started his rounds with his mentor; perhaps after three months on the job. Then after his year with his mentor, the probationer could spend another formal month in training by taking a critical look at the roles of the HMI: an appropriate educational exercise for any HMI but especially useful for a new recruit.

The inservice training of Inspectors seems to be quite good in the specialist areas. Through the various panel meetings and short-courses for inspectors themselves, the HMIs have a number of opportunities to stay on top of their specialist fields.

Also, in the process of teaching about 400 short courses to 10,000 teachers each year, the HMIs participate in the best sort of experience in self-education.

However, in regard to their generalist functions, the inservice training of HMIs is much weaker. There seem to be few opportunities for short courses to keep up with the latest developments in the various topics which I suggested might be part of a training program for new Inspectors and which are relevant to the continuing activities of all HMIs. This weakness is part of the general lack of organized support for the HMI in fulfilling his generalist function.

Because of the pace of change with which the Inspectorate must deal, as well as its breadth, the inservice training programs for HMIs must be more carefully targeted to support the different roles of the Inspectorate. And because of the expense of providing very sophisticated inservice training experiences, many of these programs

could be jointly staged by and for HM and local inspectorates and other educational bodies such as universities. Such joint provision of inservice training programs for various professional staff would create more exciting learning experiences for all concerned. Some of the imagination and vitality which teachers indicate characterize HMI inservice training programs could well be developed to the provision of such experiences for the HMIs themselves.

And a more vigorous inservice training program for HMIs might reduce one cost of the success of the socialization process: that cost is a style which minimizes the forceful presentation of a position. The enthusiasm and self-confidence generated by a strong inservice training program may encourage more active HMI contributions to educational change.



MR. A. WIGGLESWORTH, AN HMI IN LIVERPOOL, WAS ORIGINALLY AN INDUSTRIAL ARTS TEACHER. HOWEVER, AFTER ALMOST TWENTY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE INSPECTORATE, HE FEELS QUITE QUALIFIED TO TALK TO SISTER AUDREY, HEADMISTRESS OF AN OPEN PLAN INFANTS SCHOOL IN THE IRISH GHETTO OF LIVERPOOL.

## K. INNOVATION AND THE INSPECTORATE.

One standard by which to evaluate the Inspectorate is the manner in which it has contributed to the dissemination of new educational ideas. Dissemination is the activity at issue, it is important to note; not the generation of new ideas themselves. Although one might expect such an outstanding group of men and women to provide a fertile source of new ideas, the number of demands made on their time make it less likely that they will have time to articulate these ideas in the systematic manner necessary for even the best ideas to have impact. But at the very least the Inspectorate should be an agency which actively disseminates the latest bright ideas generated both by educational research and the experiences of various teachers in the classroom.

There are two cases by which we can test the HMI contribution to educational innovation. The first is the slow but steady spread of the open classroom design and operation of primary schools. The second is a new system for unit analysis of the deployment of teachers in secondary schools, which gives the headmaster a clear idea of the teaching demands of and the resource allocations to various parts of the curriculum. Both of these cases will tell us something about the Inspectorate's efficacy -- or lack thereof -- in promoting change in British education.

The spread of open classroom organization throughout Great Britain's primary schools has been spasmodic but continuing during the post Second World War years.<sup>6</sup> The spread of this movement has not been documented in detail; however, I have been able to construct a general impression of the HMI's role in it. But I would strongly urge a graduate student or professional educational research worker to undertake a systematic analysis of various professional organizations' roles in this innovation, because such a study would tell us much about how certain organizations act as change agents. I can only suggest the outlines of the forces at work.

The HMIs themselves claim little credit for the spread of open classrooms. And some even today view them with strong reservations. One senior HMI said that he thought the most important forces for promoting open classroom primary schools had been a few head teachers and chief education officers in Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, and Hertfordshire.

I have asked a number of primary school head teachers who use the open classroom plan about the source of the idea for them; the answer has been consistent: "I devised my open classroom arrangement myself, with no help from outside of the school." Some new teachers from

6. By "open classroom" I mean relatively unstructured and free learning environment instead of the formal "teacher -lecturing-to-this-class" arrangement.



SISTER AUDREY, THE HEADMISTRESS OF ST. NICHOLAS' INFANT SCHOOL IN LIVERPOOL HAS RECEIVED GREAT SUPPORT FROM HER HMI, MR. A. WIGGLESWORTH, IN HER EXPERIMENTATION WITH AN OPEN PLAN ARRANGEMENT IN AN OLD BUILDING; BUT ITS IMPLEMENTATION HAS BEEN TO HER OWN DESIGN. IN ADDITION TO THE OPEN PLAN ARRANGEMENT, WHICH YOU CAN SEE BELOW, SISTER AUDREY HAS ORGANIZED HER CHILDREN INTO FAMILY GROUPS OF MIXED AGES. SHE SAYS THIS ARRANGEMENT IS ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE IN HER SCHOOL, BECAUSE CHILDREN ARE OFTEN ACTUALLY MEMBERS OF THE SAME BIOLOGICAL FAMILY IN ONE OF THE SCHOOL GROUPS; THIS HAPPENS BECAUSE OF THE LARGE FAMILIES IN THIS IRISH CATHOLIC NEIGHBORHOOD.





ABOVE: CHILDREN FROM ST. NICHOLAS' INFANT SCHOOL MEETING TOGETHER IN ONE OF THE OPEN ROOMS OF THE SCHOOL. THEY ARE TOO BUSY WATCHING ME TAKE THEIR PICTURE TO BOTHER WITH THE COMMENTS BEING MADE TO THEM BY SISTER AUDREY.

BELOW: MUSIC FINALLY PROVIDES MORE OF A DISTRACTION THAN I DO.  
AFTER THIS COMMON MEETING, THE CHILDREN WENT OFF TO SEPARATE AREAS OF THE BUILDING TO PURSUE THEIR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS.



colleges of education who have come to the primary schools in the last three or four years come with well articulated ideas about the open classroom. But the heads who have been developing their own open classroom arrangements in the schools for a number of years all claim to have developed their approaches themselves.

These claims by the head teachers may just be the self-congratulations of proud men and women whose good work is now being recognized. Of course all of these head teachers would admit to being aware of the idea "in the air," but each claims an independent approach to the actual organization. The eclectic character of the various approaches to open classroom organization which I have seen lends strong support to the claim that this technique for organizing primary schools has been developed inside the school.

Each plan seems to differ in rationale and in implementation: some heads refer to the ideas of Froebel and Summerhill, others cite Rousseau and Montessori; some schools have detailed curriculum plans for each subject area, others have only general themes of the month.

All of the heads have said that the HMIs played no role whatsoever in the development of open plan classrooms in their schools. At best, according to these heads, HMIs have provided an enquiring and sympathetic audience for their experiments; at worst they have been actually discouraging. None have taken an active role in assisting the development in the schools.

Although this evidence is not conclusive, because it has not been gathered through extensive and systematic sampling, it does at least indicate that the Inspectorate's role in promoting this particular educational innovation in Great Britain has not been great.

It would be unfair to say that the HMIs have been merely marginal in the dissemination of information about open classrooms, because for a number of years their inservice training courses have dealt with open classroom organization for primary teachers. But it is quite clear that the Inspectorate cannot claim to have been a leading agency for change in this particular area: not even as an important communications network for local schools and local authority advisors.

If the record of the HMI in the open classroom case, in terms of innovation is not good, in the second example it is quite fine indeed. A number of HMIs in Wales noticed that headmasters and chief education officers had little hard information about how they had deployed their teachers in various parts of the curriculum. Heads knew that they had, for example, a French teacher who also taught a couple of periods of English or German, but they had no information about percentages of time devoted to particular subject areas, nor did they have a method of comparing the time allocation of one school with another. Therefore, the Welsh HMIs developed a time accounting technique which made it possible to compare teachers within schools and schools with other

schools so that judgments could be made about the allocation of personnel resources and future planning would be possible.

For our purposes of analysing the HMI role in this innovation, it is not necessary to present the details and understand them. It is only necessary to understand the source of this system: the Welsh HMIs. Later the national panel of HMIs dealing with secondary school management improved on the system. And now a group of HMIs throughout the country is trained in the system of analysis, and these HMIs are making comprehensive studies of schools in a number of local educational authorities. Also, the Inspectorate is providing inservice training for headmasters, so that they can use the system themselves.

Although this second case of innovation is not a first order educational change, it will make an important contribution to improved resource allocation in the educational system by providing headmasters and chief educational officers with more - and more usable - information.

The successful record of the Inspectorate in the second case and the not so impressive performance of the Inspectorate in the first deserves further analysis and explanation.

The success in the second case relates in part to the character of the innovation. It provides an analytical tool for management and comparisons. It was devised by men who had to advise educational managers about the operations of schools from a comparative perspective. The innovation was a response to a need generated by the job of the HMI as well as by those working in the schools. It is for this reason that not only have the HMIs been quickly successful in disseminating the innovation but that they were the source of the new idea.

The lack of influence of HMIs in the open classroom is much more difficult to explain. In part it may reflect the lack of primary school experience of most HMIs, who come, in the majority of cases, from secondary school backgrounds. But more important in this case, and in regard to most examples of substantive classroom innovation, is the norm of behaviour established for and by the Inspectorate. You will recall the Senior Chief Inspector's testimony before the Select Committee when he said that the Inspectorate was not looking for men who had a particular message to deliver to the world. But it is exactly this sort of person -- the one who is committed to a set of ideas -- who is most likely to act as an effective change agent in a decentralized and conservative educational system. Someone who, once he decides that an idea is worthwhile, vigorously promotes its acceptance. Of course there are limits to such activities: persuasion must not slip into indoctrination. But enthusiastic advocacy of new educational ideas is what is required if the Inspectorate is to be an agency for educational innovation. This advocacy is what is discouraged by the present style of the Inspectorate, and the whole process of socialization of HMIs is designed to prevent it.



In fairness to the Inspectorate it should be noted that presently the HMIs are taking a very close interest in open classroom organization. Because of previous lack of external support, the manner in which open classrooms have been implemented has created some drawbacks in the operation of the system -- for example, many open classrooms lack formal evaluative systems for the system as a whole and some even for students in particular. Variation in quality of implementation has led the Inspectorate as a matter of national policy to examine the operation of open classrooms. So in the future one can expect more formal support for teachers in open classrooms.

But the important point to be made by the open classroom case is that this innovation has been the result of individual efforts, mainly by primary head teachers, who have been historically the low men and women on the status ladder in British education. They have been the creative and imaginative innovators in this field; it has not been the HMIs at the top of the educational world.

This record of primary school head teachers is especially impressive because of the usual conservatism of educational systems. And as a general rule in the British system, with its decentralization of power and authority to the headmaster, the role of the headmaster is most conservative of all, because he has usually succeeded to his position because of his caution and discretion, not because of his imagination and reforming zeal. Therefore, the general character of the British system seems to require a system of external change agents willing to use their persuasive powers in the schools and to support the innovators in the schools as much as possible. In the latter role, the Inspectorate is now achieving some success; in the former, it has a long way to go.

If the Inspectorate is to play an important role in encouraging innovation in education, it will have to play a much more active role. Its greatest opportunity is providing the means for cutting down the time required to disseminate the best educational ideas throughout the British educational system. To play this role will not require any major structural changes in the organization of the Inspectorate. But it will require a dramatic change in attitude and style of operation. The HMI's only power is that of persuasion; and this he must use actively in order to wield it effectively. Effective persuasion may in some situations be low key; but rarely will one achieve significant change without forceful action as well. This action may be support for a beleaguered innovator in the schools or the finding of a source of money for a penurious educational experiment. However, the action will as often be telling a conservative headmaster that he is running his school like the court of Louis XIV and expecting to provide education for the 21st Century based on the divine right of headmasters; this would be quite a change for the Inspectors.

To change the style of the Inspectorate will itself be an innovation of the first order. Whether or not the Inspectorate can follow the example of the open classroom primary schools and generate this change internally will tell much about whether the Inspectorate can be expected to play an important role in the improvement of the British educational system.

L. GENERAL COMMENTS.

This critique of the Inspectorate, in spite of its length and diversity of subject matter, is necessarily partial and incomplete. However, on the basis of this limited survey, my overall assessment of the Inspectorate must be quite positive. For in spite of its problems and failings, the essential soundness of the structure and organization of the Inspectorate cannot be denied. And the extraordinarily high caliber of the HMIs themselves can only lead the outside observer to expect further significant contributions by the HMIs to the life of British education.

The model of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools, with its strong and weak points, with its successes and its failures, has much to teach other countries about how one can provide professional advice to an educational system which values both educational quality and institutional decentralization and freedom. And no better lessons can be learned from the HMIs than how one would change their roles to improve their performance in their own cultural milieu and then how one would adapt their performance in the context of other countries. One way to systematize these lessons is to create an ideal Inspectorate. It is to this task that we should next turn.

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