



Specialist Schools Trust
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

From fighting and failure to **shared success**

Neighbouring East London schools
excel together



May 2005

From fighting and failure to shared success

Neighbouring East London schools excel together.

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The Specialist Schools Trust

Founded in 1987, the Specialist Schools Trust (formerly the Technology Colleges Trust) is the registered charity which acts as the lead body for the specialist schools programme. The Trust is funded through a combination of private sector sponsorship, charges for services and government grant.

Mission

The Specialist Schools Trust works to give practical support to the transformation of secondary education in England by building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high performing secondary schools in partnership with business and the wider community.

This publication

Audience

Heads and senior managers in specialist and other secondary schools.

Aim

To exemplify the importance of partnership and managing behaviour in enabling schools to succeed, through the experience of neighbouring specialist schools in the East London borough of Barking and Dagenham.

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Foreword

Collaborating heads bring peace to a school community

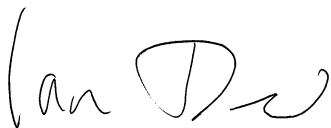
This publication describes an unusually close and effective partnership between two schools in challenging circumstances. Together they have overcome some major obstacles and markedly raised standards.

The two specialist schools are in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham: All Saints Technology College and Robert Clack School of Science. In the mid 1990s both schools were seriously underachieving. Ofsted considered special measures for Robert Clack; while in 1994, only 31% of students at All Saints, the only voluntary aided school in the borough, achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE.

Compounding the problems, both schools had severe problems with behaviour, and there was a great deal of antagonism between the two sets of students, which frequently spilled out into the community.

Not surprisingly, therefore, managing behaviour was seen as key to the schools' revitalisation, and that is the focus of this report. The two heads' emphasis has been on creating a calm atmosphere in which learning can take place. They are frank about the problems, and about the tough stance they had to take at times. This blunt facing of the issues may make uncomfortable reading for some; but we believe many heads and senior managers facing similar challenges will be refreshed and supported by the success of the measures taken. In 2004, 58% of Robert Clack students and 85% of All Saints students achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C. Both schools also now excel in sport, music and drama.

Collaboration between schools and imaginative sharing of their expertise and facilities, as these two schools show, can benefit all learners in the community.



Ian Turner,
Director of Strategy & Programme Networks, Specialist Schools Trust

**Managing behaviour
was key to these
schools' revitalisation**

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Introduction

The subtitle of this publication could be *War and peace*. It is an account of two adjacent schools in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham: All Saints Technology College and Robert Clack School of Science.

Until eight years ago they were at war – and that’s the term used continually by both heads and by many of the staff. They are not joking; they’re describing how it used to be. Students, and even staff, once regarded each other as enemies.

The result was frequent pitched battles between students from the two schools. There were also other forms of destructive violence, ongoing animosity, total lack of collaboration, and low standards in almost everything. Both schools were seriously underachieving. In the mid 1990s Robert Clack came within a whisker of being put into special measures by Ofsted. Meanwhile the LEA was spending quite large sums of money on policing the school sites in an attempt to limit the damage.

Now the war is over, and both schools are recording soaring levels of achievement. It’s what head teachers Des Smith of All Saints and Paul Grant of Robert Clack, both historians, only half jokingly call ‘the peace dividend’. They speak with one voice, agreeing that ‘if you don’t study history you might be forced to relive it.’ That’s why they do everything humanly possible to maintain peace.

All Saints Technology College, Dagenham

Des Smith was appointed headteacher of Bishop Ward School, forerunner of All Saints, in 1984. It was one of only two Catholic secondary schools in the borough. Results were very poor and the atmosphere was, in Mr Smith’s words, ‘depressed and violent’. Inevitably the school was seriously undersubscribed and staying-on rates were low.

A merger with the borough’s other Catholic school, Sacred Heart Girls’ School, in 1992 created a larger coeducational voluntary aided comprehensive and the situation showed signs of beginning to improve. But in 1994, when the school became one of the first technology colleges, still only 31% of students achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE.

Improvement was steady but slow until 1999, when there was a dramatic upturn. And it has continued. In 2003 89% of All Saints students achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C. Around 50 students a year now go on to universities, including Cambridge, London and Nottingham. Yet 24% of its 1200 students are entitled to free school meals and 12% are on the SEN register.

The school had a value-added score of +39 in 2003. In that year, it was the second most improved school in England.



Des Smith is convinced that one of the turning points was the decision by the heads of the two schools to work together. 'It was a case of the right moment coming,' he says. The arrival of Paul Grant presented a new opportunity for the heads of the two schools to tackle the problems. It brought the end of hostilities. And that, in turn, meant a new opportunity for both schools to focus collaboratively on raising standards, free from the distraction of daily fire fighting.

Robert Clack School of Science, Dagenham

Paul Grant was appointed headteacher at Robert Clack in 1997, having been head of humanities at the school since the early 1990s. Mr Grant comes from a Liverpoolian, working class background, but has spent nearly 20 years working in East London.

Thirty-six percent of Robert Clack's students are eligible for free school meals and approximately a quarter are classified as SEN. Fifteen percent come from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds, and 85% from white working class families.

In 1996 only 16% of Robert Clack students passed five GCSEs at grades A*-C. In the early nineties it had been in single figures – apart from in Mr Grant's beacon history department where the rate was 69% in 1994. We shall return to the extraordinary achievements of that single department within a near-failing school in chapter 3.

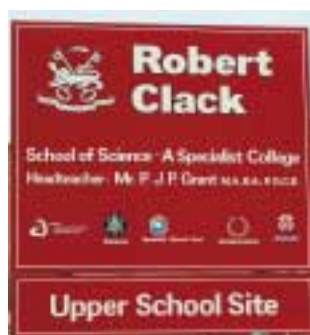
Mr Grant believed that the large number of students whose behaviour was severely disruptive needed to be given the impetus, and the time, to reflect on the consequences of their actions. His solution was radical and risky. 'On my first day as head I excluded 100 students,' he says, 'by the end of the week that number had risen to 246.'

These were short-term exclusions, of course: permanent exclusion of large numbers of students is not an option. Even so, these large numbers of short-term exclusions represented a high-risk strategy. However, Paul Grant was prepared to take that risk in an effort to turn the school around because he believes that, in order to change, people need to feel change and to see its radical and immediate effects.

Today only 2% of the school's 1700 students are likely to be in the referral unit at any one time and there have been only two permanent exclusions in the last five years. Students wear uniform and attendance is improving steadily – 83% in year 11 in 2003. The orderly atmosphere is conducive to work and achievement.

In 2004 58% of Robert Clack students passed five or more GCSE's at grades A*-C. That is four times more than when Mr Grant took over. In the same year Ofsted described the much-changed school as 'a very good school' led by an 'inspiring' head.

Unsurprisingly, Robert Clack School, which became a specialist science college in 2003, is now as oversubscribed as its neighbour All Saints. 'A lot of parents now want their children to go to one or other of these two schools and they don't really mind which,' says Mr Grant. That's a huge change from the old war-torn days, when All Saints and Robert Clack students regarded each other as mortal enemies.'



On his first day as head Paul Grant excluded 100 students

The change

'The last seven or eight years has brought a new vibrancy to this area' says Des Smith. 'Paul has transformed his school and together we are trying to transform the local community in alliance with the local council.'

Clearly this is a case of two talented men who have stood side by side in a challenging situation and supported each other. Together they have probably achieved more than either could have done alone.

It isn't just GCSE results. Everything the schools are involved in now tells the same story:

- SATs results are much improved
- So are AS and A2 levels and other post-16 results
- Both schools are excelling in sport, music and drama.

Robert Clack recently produced national champions in both skiing and gymnastics, and their year 11 boys were Essex county football champions in 2004.

Success is, of course, transferable. Do well in one aspect of life and the confidence it gives you is quite likely to help you excel in something else too.

So how, exactly, has it all been achieved? The secret seems to lie in three things: discipline, leadership and working together.



Des Smith of All Saints (left) and Paul Grant of Robert Clack

2

Discipline

Paul Grant, head of Robert Clack, habitually uses the word discipline, which some might regard as rather old-fashioned. He sees it as an essential prerequisite to learning. Alan Bailey, the science college co-ordinator, lives locally and went to school in Dagenham. Mr Bailey says bluntly that ‘fancy, fashionable terms like behaviour management would simply not work in Becontree.’

‘It wouldn’t be any good calling our teachers “learning advisers” either,’ he says. ‘We use traditional language to describe traditional values, and everyone knows what we’re talking about.’

‘Discipline is the big thing,’ agrees Des Smith. Unfortunately, he believes, this is something rarely mentioned on public platforms.

Paul Grant continues: ‘If a school isn’t doing well, it’s often the ethos and consequently the discipline that you have to change. Almost all teachers are good at teaching and learning. If you promote and reinforce positive behaviour they will almost certainly be able to raise standards.’

Half of the teachers working at Robert Clack today were there before he took over as head in 1997 – and many of those who have left have moved on for promotion. So the school wasn’t failing because it had bad teachers.

‘Oh yes, it used to be very difficult to do a good job in either of these schools because of the tension between them and the poor behaviour,’ confirms Barry Taylor, director of sport and a long serving member of staff at Robert Clack. ‘Today it’s completely different.’

‘A lot of teenagers can’t manage to be self-disciplined all of the time, they need boundaries and parameters,’ he says. ‘They quite simply need a lot of support and guidance, which is what they get at Robert Clack.’

Some refer to Mr Grant as particularly strict; however he actually presents a quite different image if you watch him out and about around his school. He knows many of his 1700 students by name and often stops for a thoughtful word with boys and girls he passes in the corridor. They are clearly happy to talk to him and not in the least overawed. It is obvious to a visitor that, in spite of his joking self-deprecation, he has excellent relationships and a relaxed rapport with his students. It is clearly a relationship based on mutual respect.

He introduces me, for example, to Warren James, 15, who’s in year 10 and happens to pass though the school foyer while Paul Grant and I are standing in it. Six months earlier Warren had been permanently excluded from another school. Now he’s courteous, in full school uniform and hurrying purposefully to his next lesson. ‘Mr Grant’s given me another chance and I’m making the best I can of it,’ he says. ‘It’s good here and I don’t want to mess it up.’

‘If a school isn’t doing well, it’s almost always due to negative behaviours that have to be changed and sometimes, and in certain circumstances discipline needs to be imposed’



Paul Grant (above) and Des Smith (opposite) agree on the importance of discipline - but also on rapport with students.

At Robert Clack's lower school building, half a mile or so away beyond a busy road junction, I meet Samuel Walsh, age 12. The head is not present.

'There are loads of opportunities here. The teachers really want to help you,' Samuel tells me. 'I like it much better than primary school. Robert Clack is a really good school but it used to be a bad school before Mr Grant came and turned it all around.'

So what does this tight discipline mean in practice?

Consequences

'Our policy is to refuse to tolerate bad behaviour,' says Paul Grant, 'Every instance of negative behaviour carries a clearly defined consequence and students know that.' (This echoes the approach taken in another highly successful school, Ninestiles Technology College in Birmingham*)

The cornerstone of the system is scrupulous recording via a referral slip system. Students, like drivers who get penalty points for speeding, know exactly where they are. Consequences could include detention or a spell in the school's referral unit. Fixed-term exclusion is also there as an option in extreme cases, although the school's usage rate of this is very low.

'We make a big thing out of small things,' says Paul Grant, mentioning minor discourtesy as an example. In this way most potential major disciplinary infringements are prevented.

As you would expect, in practice, there's much more positive reinforcement than dealing with negative behaviour, and now that the school is succeeding there is much more to reward than to punish.

The corridors are full of upbeat displays of students' work and lists of successes in academic work, sport, art, drama, music – indeed, anything which any student has done which for him or her is noteworthy.

'We regard celebration of achievement as an entitlement,' says Paul Grant, explaining that, as part of this policy, the school holds an annual presentation evening for each year group, with high profile speakers to help celebrate what the students have done. 'It means six extra evenings of work a year for the teachers, but it's worth it.'

Each week there is also a 'student of the week' in each year group. 'We constantly explain everything – policies, procedures etc - in our old-fashioned, formal assemblies.' The school strives to make the ethos as celebratory as possible.

It all adds up to a comprehensive and overt package of consequences. Students know that pleasant consequences result from hard work and good behaviour, but the reverse is also true.

Working with parents

'Meeting parents and getting them on your side is the most important vehicle for change,' Paul Grant declares. When he first became head he insisted on meeting personally the parents of every miscreant. Some were very reluctant to come into school and many were hostile – the previous war-torn atmosphere of the school had done nothing to make them feel valued or welcome.

But Mr Grant pressed ahead, and he did meet at least one of each set of parents. He recalls seeing one parent at 5am and another at almost midnight, due to the fact that they were shift workers and less than keen

** Top-performing schools start by managing behaviour, April 2004, available from the Specialist Schools Trust*





More than 40 staff are paid to do lunchtime duty

to come along. 'It puts you in a position to change the culture if you get parents talking to you,' he says, although he freely admits that some of the meetings were extremely difficult. He argues that if you make it clear that you really are determined to meet and work with parents, you send a powerful, unspoken message which says: 'We can't continue as we are. So what can we do, together, to change things for the better?'

His determination paid off. The vast majority of parents were persuaded to come round to the new way of thinking at Robert Clack, a way of thinking fully supported by the governing body and the LEA. They could see that the new regime was genuinely committed to making changes that would guarantee their children a better deal.

Mr Grant and his staff regard the ICT revolution as a mixed blessing when it comes to building relationships with parents. Staff can still hand-write reports to parents if they wish, many feeling that this is more personal – and they believe parents take the messages much more seriously. 'It's a deliberate choice in our part and some respect rests on it.'

For similar reasons the school still uses a paper registration system for students and has 'human' attendance secretaries to liaise with parents. The LEA has a very high regard for this highly effective system. The personal contact makes a big difference and helps to underpin the ethos of the school.

Paul Grant also makes it a policy to be the opposite of distant. He takes a personal interest in families, regarding them as part of the school community. He and his staff lose no opportunity to make contact. If they learn about an illness or a bereavement they get in touch immediately. Human kindness often wins people round.

Last year one student had just been diagnosed with diabetes and was very distressed about it in school. Mr Grant arranged for flowers to be sent to her at home. Her mother rang the school in surprise, verging on hostility – until it was explained to her just how upset her daughter had been in school that day and how much the school wanted to support her.

Not surprisingly the mother is now completely supportive of the school and has become a member of the school's support staff. More than 20 staff members have children at the school, and six of the teaching staff are recent former pupils of the school, a sign of the strong bond the school inspires among all members of its community.

Breaks and the end of the school day

Unlike many schools, Robert Clack has not shortened its lunch break as a means of keeping control of discipline. The lunch break is seen as a valuable rest period and a time for activities such as homework club.

There are two strategies, however, to ensure that the lunch break does not cause indiscipline. More than 40 staff are paid to do lunch time duty. A substantial staff presence keeps the situation under control and ensures that student behaviour is carefully monitored.

Also, unlike at many other schools, students are not allowed to leave the premises of Robert Clack at lunchtime. This ensures that there is no potential for behaviour problems starting in the neighbourhood during the midday break, which can affect the local community, and can be brought into school in the afternoon session. 'It's a matter of common sense versus the human rights issue,' says Paul Grant. As with all other discipline related matters, he makes a point of talking to the 'difficult' people and, almost always, persuading them to his point of view.

At the end of the school day senior staff from both Robert Clack and All Saints schools go into an extraordinary, almost military manoeuvre. It's tightly organised, collaborative and tactical. Although discussed humorously, it is clearly a serious and central part of the schools' shared activity and behaviour management.

Both heads, with their deputies and other key staff, put on their coats five minutes before the end of school. Robert Clack teachers wear brightly coloured all-weather jackets, emblazoned with the name of their school. Several members of staff strategically command the school gates, while others cross the main road and stand by the bus depot. Others patrol the nearby road junction, local buildings and known trouble spots. They are all in constant contact with each other by mobile phone.

At one level, what they are doing is simply supervising the 3,000 students leaving the two schools in order to prevent skirmishes and other unacceptable behaviour on the streets and so on. But there's more to it than that.

Part of the point is that the two staff bodies work together amiably in an exercise which is seen by hundreds of students from both schools every day. It's very public. It also means that senior staff from the two schools meet daily, if only for a few minutes for a joke or to rag each other about football matches. Although they frequently meet at other times too, this happens every afternoon. They are all very clearly part of the same team and the world of Becontree knows it.

Des Smith and Paul Grant are setting the tone very effectively. Although there is banter, everyone is vigilant. Experienced eyes are continually scanning the middle distance for signs of trouble. On the day I was a part of this, one of the All Saints deputies spotted a crowd gathering two or three hundred metres away. Adult forces closed in to investigate with speed and skill. It turned out to be a minor fracas between a very small group of All Saints boys. There was no altercation with Robert Clack students. Des Smith took 'his' culprits back into school to deal with them immediately.



At the end of the school day an almost military operation swings into gear, as staff from both schools patrol the neighbourhood

During this half-hour exit period, students on their way home from both schools speak quite naturally to staff from either. They can see that these teachers are a single group. Occasionally a parent will pass and have a friendly word too.

By the bus depot, Paul Grant introduced me, for example, to a passing couple. They were former Robert Clack parents from whom he was asking for news of their children. They told me: 'Oh it was never like this in the old days. Behaviour was so bad you'd never walk along here at 3.30 if you could help it.'

Due to the fact that discipline is clearly and consistently enforced at both schools, both schools benefit, and are free to concentrate on achievement. According to Val Stevens, science teacher at Robert Clack, this collaboration has come about because 'both men are visionaries.' As this strong comment implies leadership is the key to the success of both schools.

'In the old days, behaviour was so bad you'd never walk along here at 3.30 if you could help it'



Leadership

3

The leadership of Des Smith, who has been at All Saints for 20 years, was constrained during the early years by the stultifying ‘war’ with Robert Clack. It was only after the appointment of Paul Grant next door that he could lead his school in a way which allowed real improvement in standards.

As a historian himself, Des Smith noticed what was going on in the history department at Robert Clack after Paul Grant was appointed as head of humanities in 1990. By 1994, results in this department had rocketed to 69% GCSE grades A*-C.

‘Paul is a brilliant teacher’ says Mr Smith. ‘It wasn’t long before he was running a beacon department within a school which was falling apart – a very strange phenomenon. He had his own rules for the humanities building. So when students stepped through the door it was as if they were entering a different school. He won the confidence of the students, staff and parents.’

That phenomenon was researched and written up as ‘A very peculiar department: a case study in educational success’ by Terry Haydn of the School of Education and Professional Development, University of East Anglia*.

Haydn wrote: ‘A strand running through all the comments of all the students and teachers interviewed was the establishment of “the right to learn” in a calm, purposeful and teacher controlled working environment, where teaching activities would not be compromised by the appeasement of disruptive or disaffected students. This had not been achieved without difficulty but was an important factor in students’ attitudes to learning in history and to teachers’ job satisfaction.

‘One of the factors underpinning the achievement of the history department at Robert Clack High School is the success in creating a working climate where teachers can enjoy teaching, and students who want to learn can do so in a relaxed and co-operative working environment.’

Paul Grant’s leadership had achieved something remarkable in a microcosm. On the strength of that, the authorities took the very unusual decision to appoint him to the headship of the school. He hadn’t, after all, ever been a deputy head. The school’s governors and Barking and Dagenham LEA (and Des Smith next door who supported the appointment vociferously) believed that what he had done on a small scale he could replicate across the whole school – and they were right.

Some of the secrets of good leadership evident in Paul Grant’s style are:

- he knows everyone
- he leads from the front, by example
- he is clear about what he wants and where he’s going
- nothing is too much trouble



* Published in Guyver R, Phillips R (Eds). *Preparation for teaching history; research and practice.* 1998, Lancaster SCHTE



- everyone knows that everything he does is because he cares about people.

Des Smith says that the principal is the most important influence in a school – possibly because of England’s tradition of the ‘heroic headteacher.’

Paul Grant maintains that leadership is central to school improvement. Every one of the Robert Clack’s students and staff that I spoke to speaks warmly about his skills as a leader. He retains about 50% of teaching staff who predate his appointment as head. To him, this is evidence that staffing is less of a factor in school failure than inadequate leadership, but, inevitably, some staff had to be ‘let go’.

Unsurprisingly, Mr Grant is in demand as a mentor. During 2001-2002 Lynne Dawes, then deputy head at Stratford School in Newham, spent a year at Robert Clack under a DfES-funded scheme to enable deputies to learn, hands-on, the art of headship in a challenging school. She sat in with Mr Grant while he handled personnel matters, dealt with awkward parents or negotiated with the local authority and the unions. Later they would spend time analysing their decisions and discussing consequences and possible alternatives. Since then, Paul Grant was proud to note, Lynne Dawes as a headteacher had brought her school out of special measures.

In the latter half of 2004, Paul Grant was formally involved in helping Warren School, nearby in Barking and Dagenham, which was in special measures. He visited once or twice a week and worked with the acting head there. In January 2005 Warren School was taken out of special measures, the HMI team noting how rapidly behaviour had improved. Paul Grant comments: ‘Nothing we do at Robert Clack is rocket science. It’s all replicable.’



Working together

When Paul Grant was appointed as head of Robert Clack in 1997, one of the first things he did was to organise with Des Smith a meeting of the two schools' management teams. The schools had been neighbours for several decades, but never before had there been such a meeting.

The objective was to concentrate on 'what we have in common' rather than worry about differences. One of their main common concerns, of course, was student behaviour. The new rapport created an instant climate change, greatly helped by the fact that Paul and Des already knew and respected each other. They were also determined to work together and to establish peace between their schools.

Now they work together in a number of ways.

Specialist status

Difficult as it is to find sponsorship in a socio-economically deprived borough like Barking and Dagenham, both schools have specialist status – and the network enabled by the Specialist Schools Trust is another strong link between them. All Saints has been a technology college since 1994 and Robert Clack became a science college in 2003.

'Barking and Dagenham isn't an excuse for failure,' says Val Stevens who, with John Jarzabek, science teacher at Robert Clack prepared the school's science college bid. 'We regard the deprivation indicators as an irrelevance. Our science department is strong in terms of both results and recruitment. Many of our students get 10 good GCSE's.'

Post-16 consortium

Robert Clack's scientific strength, at post-16 level, is shared both with All Saints and with the other two schools in the local post-16 consortium, Warren School and Eastbrook School.

All four schools share a central grid of subjects catering collectively for about 800 16-19 year old students. They offer 26 different academic subjects and a wide range of vocational courses.

'The common timetable means that there are no excluded combinations of subjects,' says Des Smith. 'Any student can do any subject he or she chooses because across the consortium we can offer every possible computation of subjects.' Despite the four locations, he says, 'in practice, most students don't have to travel very far.'

He adds: 'peace has allowed us to do this and symbolic of that peace is the way in which our sixth form students and staff go in and out of each other's schools.'

SCITT

Both schools are also involved in the same school centred initial teacher training programme too and both are Training Schools. They also use the Graduate Training Programme.

4

One of the first actions of the new heads' partnership was to arrange a meeting of the two schools' management teams



‘All of this helps us to recruit good staff’ says Des Smith, pointing out that it is very beneficial to the students to be able to practise in both schools.

Sharing resources

The quality of the relationship between the two schools means that they help each other out by lending rooms in emergencies. Sometimes a subject expert from one school will, by arrangement, pop into the other to cover a lesson for an absent teacher if it means that students wouldn’t otherwise get the right subject specialist. There is a lot of goodwill, and a lot of give and take.

Direct line contact between heads

Unusually, the two heads have a direct phone link between their two offices and they speak to each other every day, often several times.

‘There are no gatekeepers on this line’ says Des Smith. ‘If it rings I know it’s Paul, and vice versa, because no one else has access to it. Secretaries are usually very protective of their bosses and that’s often very helpful, but this is different. Between Paul and me there has to be direct and instant contact.’

The phone line is obviously useful in day-to-day practical ways. While I was there they phoned each other several times about the logistics of my visit, for instance.

It is also, however, symbolic of the unusually close working partnership and rapport between these two heads. Imagine the effect on a student in either office who sees his or her head pick up the phone and speak immediately to the other. It carries a very clear message of unity. And it’s a very far cry from the war-torn 1980s, and most of the 1990s, which so many people in both schools still remember very clearly and describe with horror.

The sense of harmony filters down through both staff bodies because everyone knows that co-operation and mutual respect starts from the top and is very strong. ‘Everyone in either school knows his or her counterpart(s) in the other,’ says Des Smith, mentioning junior staff as well as deputies, assistant heads and heads of faculty.

None of this was the case before 1997 and ‘the outbreak of peace’ – as I was told repeatedly by everyone I speak to in both schools, from headteacher to the youngest students.

Des Smith believes it goes far beyond the schools’ gates. ‘I’m convinced we’re having an impact on the Becontree community,’ he says. ‘There is now less vandalism on the estate than there was a few years ago. And we used to have frequent break-ins at both schools, but these are now very rare.’

A direct phone link connects the two headteachers’ offices



Conclusions

5

This investigative case study suggests that:

- Inter-school hostility can be devastatingly destructive.
- Such hostility can be ended if the will is there – but change has to start at the top.
- Two schools cooperating can achieve much more collectively than either could achieve individually.
- Schools are more likely to succeed if they're not distracted by rivalry, violence and other forms of aggression.
- Leadership is the most important factor in school improvement.
- Indiscipline prevents learning and holds standards down.
- A traditional approach may be the best option for a community set in its ways.
- Systematic, ongoing, benign policing – such as the bus depot routine – can prevent most disciplinary problems.
- School improvement applies to every single aspect of school life and work, not just examination results.



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