WHAT DOES DISCIPLINE MEAN IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS NOW?

GILLEAN McCLUSKEY

ABSTRACT

In this paper I argue that the political focus on disciplinary exclusion and the accompanying 'league tables' using exclusion as an indicator of performance, have led to an impoverished understanding of what discipline means in secondary schools today. I suggest that ever-increasing legislation, guidance documents and policy guidelines within a context of an overall tightening of control and surveillance in educational settings cannot bring about the 'workpeace' (MacBeath, 1999: 24) which both staff and pupils seek. I explore the data from a small-scale, qualitative study which gathered the views of secondary-age pupils with a range of experiences and understandings of school discipline systems. The findings from this study are used to interrogate current understandings of discipline processes in general and the national Guidance on Exclusion (C8/03), in particular. I argue that the findings from this study outline a series of challenges to such policies but also offer grounds for hope.

INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, when disciplinary exclusion from school saw a steep and rapid rise (DfES 2001), there was a great deal of political concern about the issues for those pupils whose behaviour placed them on the margins of school experience (Munn, Lloyd and Cullen, 2000; Parsons, 1999; CRE, 1996; Stirling, 1992; 1994). In the UK, this concern was translated by a new Labour Government into a transnational drive to reduce rates of non-attendance and disciplinary exclusion (Scottish Executive 1999). However, when this period came to an end in 2002 there were few demands for schools to continue to seek to reduce exclusion rates. The autonomy of schools was reasserted amid calls to recognise that some level of exclusion was inevitable, that head teachers should control exclusion and that there was a 'need to ensure the rights of the majority of pupils who are hard working and well-behaved' (SEED, C8/03:1).

In this paper I will argue that the political focus on disciplinary exclusion and the accompanying 'league tables' using exclusion as an indicator of performance, have led to an impoverished understanding of what discipline means in schools. I suggest that ever-increasing legislation, guidance documents and policy guidelines within a context of an overall tightening of control and surveillance in educational settings cannot bring about the 'workpeace' (MacBeath, 1999: 24) which both staff and pupils seek. I explore the data from a small-scale, qualitative study which gathered the views of secondary-age pupils with a range of experiences and understandings of school discipline systems. The findings from this study are used to interrogate current understandings of discipline processes in general and the national Guidance on Exclusion (C8/03), in particular. I argue that the findings from this study outline a series of challenges to such policies but also offer grounds for hope.

THE RESEARCH

Design of the study

The study was based in four urban mainstream secondary schools with recognized good practice on exclusion. The schools were situated in catchments of differing socio-economic status with two having high exclusion rates and two much lower exclusion rates. This study set out to explore pupil experiences, based on direct contact with young people through individual interview and focus group, seeking

their views on a range of issues surrounding exclusion, disruption, behaviour management and non-attendance. Until recently, most research in this area has relied on the use of proxy-informants; parents, teachers and other professionals, to interpret and reflect the views of young people. Permeated by notions of young people as either 'incompetent' or a 'threat' (Hendrick, 1994; Qvortrup, 1987) research has often focussed on the deviance of the young person or the damage done to them. It has inadvertently reduced them to a set of needs or failures. The focus on voiced research was an acknowledgement of the imperative of including the views of young people in this area of research; an area from which their voices have, ironically, been too often missing.

In a departure from many previous studies (Padfield, 2002; Pomeroy, 2000; Stirling, 1992; 1994; Hayden, 2001, 1997; Imich, 1994; Hamill and Boyd, 2002; Parsons, 1996) it focused on the experiences of young people regarded by staff as being *on* the margins behaviourally, but who were, significantly, *not beyond* the margins of mainstream school experience. It was interested not only in those with overtly challenging behaviour, but also those whose behaviour might cause concern for other reasons; for example, pupils who were socially withdrawn or isolated or whose attendance was erratic. It sought to understand not only how they experienced their marginalisation but also what prevented their further marginalisation.

Crucially, the study was also interested to explore the experiences of those assumed to be most affected by indiscipline and disruption; the generality of pupils. Concern about the needs of the settled generality of pupils is entirely legitimate, but schools' assumptions about these needs and the detrimental effects of the behaviour of some pupils on the learning and social relationships of the majority seemed to merit much closer examination. These assumptions are so powerful that they validate the most serious response that a school can make to disruptive behaviour without involving the police, that is, exclusion from school. Yet there has been very little research which explores the understandings and experiences of this generality, from their own perspective.

By listening to the voices of a range of young people in secondary school then, the study sought to clarify the imbrications and the distances between these young people and gather their views on responses made to their perceived needs.

One-to-one interviews were conducted with 17 pupils (10 male and 7 female), ages 13–15 across the four schools, as national statistics reveal the highest levels of non-attendance and exclusion around this age. All pupils involved had been identified by school staff as giving cause for concern, related to disruptive behaviour or attendance issues or social isolation and all had been identified as requiring inter-agency support of some kind. A semi-structured approach to interviewing was felt to offer the most appropriate way of engaging with these young people, allowing the flexibility for both etic and emic themes (Stake, 1995) to emerge. The questions were based on Munn, Johnstone and Chalmers (1992a, 1992b) and Johnstone and Munn's (1997) large surveys of teachers views on discipline.

At the same time, focus groups of between 9–14 pupils were set up in the same schools and with a generality of pupils at a similar age and stage. As with the interviews, all involvement of pupils was on a voluntary basis. Groups were formed from registration classes, none of which was 'set' by ability. 25 female pupils and 21 male pupils were involved in the focus groups overall. The focus groups were seen as a way of gathering the views of a larger number of young people in schools, who might or might not include pupils with more direct experience of exclusion, but who comprised overall what might be described as a generality or typical pupil group.

The focus groups were asked to reflect on the same major themes as the pupils in the individual interviews, though data collection was based on groupwork approaches as this was felt more appropriate to the group situation. Instruments were developed which initially sought pair and small group responses (from Brandes and

Norris, 1998; Phtiaka, 1997), and finally asked pupils to complete an individual, anonymous behaviour questionnaire, again based on the surveys of Johnstone and Munn 1997. The questionnaire asked about many different aspects of disruption in school; attitudes of group members to peer behaviour, the management of disruption by school management and understanding of the process, aims and effectiveness of official exclusion process. In addition, it asked pupils to detail their own involvement, if any, in disruptive behaviour or unauthorised non-attendance and then to comment on the effects of such behaviour by their peers.

Approaches to analysis borrowed from Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Stewart and Shamdasani (1990), Ryan and Bernard (2003) and Morgan (1977), and also took account of Kitzinger's concern for 'collective remembering' (1994:105). The findings were coded into a thematic conceptual matrix (Miles and Huberman 1994:130) which sought to maintain the integrity of the contact with these pupils and at the same time value them as rich, personal accounts of experience.

FINDINGS

One of the most striking initial findings was an unexpected commonality of view among the pupils in the study. Surprisingly, this did not vary according to school attended or gender or whether the pupil might be regarded as typical or more marginalized. This commonality centred on two main areas; attitudes to staff in school, and perceptions about school discipline and behaviour management systems.

Adult relationships

In view of the continuing concerns about indiscipline in schools it was expected that pupils might have a poor regard for staff in schools. However, there was found to be widespread support for individual staff members both among the generality of pupils, and perhaps more surprisingly also among marginalised pupils including those who had been excluded from school on disciplinary grounds. This is not to say all teachers and support staff were held in high regard, but that for these pupils, there was at least one and sometimes more members of staff whom they valued.

In the individual interviews, all 17 pupils made both positive and negative comments about adults in school, but 15 made more positive comments than negative, and in terms of the number of comments made, there were twice as many positive comments made overall. It is also worth noting that many of these positive comments came from the 9 pupils in the study who had been temporarily excluded and they referred to senior management and to subject teachers and their ability to offer academic support; staff who might be assumed to have poorer relations with some more marginalized pupils. Comments included, 'Mrs A has been an excellent help' and 'Mrs B is always building my confidence', 'Mr C listened to my point of view', 'If you're sound with [Mr D] he's sound with you' and 'Miss E is brilliant. She treats everyone like gold'.

Exclusion from school

By contrast, attitudes to discipline were often similar, and were largely very critical. It might not be surprising that pupils with attendance issues or challenging behaviour had a low level of confidence in school discipline. However, it is interesting that the generality of pupils also had a very low level of confidence in school discipline, especially in view of the positive comments made about individual teachers. When asked, for example, to explore in pairs notions of the effectiveness of official exclusion process with a question such as 'Do you think exclusion works?' pupils construed effectiveness in terms of a change in the behaviour of the pupil concerned and then responded as shown below.

Table 1: Concentric Conversations: 'Do you think that exclusion works?'

Pupil comments		
No	I think it does, sometimes, depends on the pupil, if someone has ambition and wants to be there then it is more likely to work. If they aren't bothered and haven't ambition, they probably don't care and then Exclusion won't work.	Yes, it does get rid of the idiots from our school
No	Yes and no	Yes
No	Sometimes	
No	Yes/no	
No		
No because they enjoy being off school		
No		
No it does not		
No people think it's good getting time off		
No it bloody well doesn't		
No!		
No		

It was also clear that official exclusion was seen as a very serious process; 'a really, really desperate measure' as one pupil explained. Paradoxically, it was also clear that most of these pupils, irrespective of their own direct involvement in the exclusion process, regarded official exclusion as entirely ineffective or only partially effective, and sometimes counter-productive. A number of pupils were also keen to elaborate notions of differential effectiveness and suggested that exclusion might work for some people, some of the time. One young man, who had been excluded himself said, 'It just made me mad!' while another reflected,

> 'It depends on the things and on the person it is. It works for somebody who never really meant to do the thing they were suspended for. And they'll be more careful from then on. And for somebody who does things all the time…it doesn't work'.

Discipline

Related to this specific issue of exclusion, there emerged a clear consensus about failings within the discipline system in general. Most of the young people, whatever their relationship with school, and regardless of school attended, were dissatisfied with their school discipline system. It was interesting, for example, that in one of the schools with very low exclusion levels and a strong local reputation, none of the focus group expressed confidence in their school's approaches to behaviour management. Typical comments here included 'pupils get away with mucking about' ' teachers

favour some pupils' and 'teachers are too soft'. There was found to be limited support for some specific aspects of the system, but pupils continually drew attention to a lack of consistency, the importance of reputation, unresolved problems with bullying and repeatedly called for teachers to be stricter echoing findings of previous studies by Munn, Lloyd and Cullen (2000), Chaplain (1996), Crozier and Antiss (1995) and Garner (1995) as well as the Scottish School Leavers' Survey (2000).

It may be argued that young people of this age might object to any constraints on their behaviour. However, it is important to note that young people's objections were most often not to the use of exclusion *per se* but to its overuse, its sometimes inappropriate use and to its perceived lack of effectiveness in many cases. In the same way, objections to the school discipline system were to a perceived lack of consistency and effectiveness, not to the need for its existence.

Attendance

A similar complexity was apparent in discussions about attendance and non-attendance at school. Although sometimes scathing of school monitoring procedures for attendance ('They phone home. And you're not exactly going to answer it, are you?'), there was also a general acceptance among these pupils of the need for regular attendance and an acute awareness of the problems associated with missing school. However, missing school was also seen as a valid response to difficulty, especially when this related to bullying or family issues.

Although more tentative than some of the findings, it is also important to note the indications in the study which suggested that non-attendance is a common issue for pupils and perhaps more so for young women than national data would suggest. Seven of the 17 individual interviewees, including 5 female pupils, referred to their own attendance issues, although staff had alerted the study to this as an issue for only 2 of the pupils. Of these, two talked about period absence only, four talked about taking full days off only and one talked about being involved in both. These pupils seemed comfortable talking about the absences; where they went and with whom, and which classes they had missed and how often; for example, '…just sat in the toilets…then go to the next class'. Similarly, in the focus groups, attendance emerged as more of an issue than expected, with female pupils reporting higher levels of unauthorised non-attendance than their male counterparts; 9 in total reported missing school either occasionally or sometimes. One of the young men also commented that 'girls skive more'

Although the numbers are too small to permit generalisation, it is interesting that these young women saw attendance as an issue for themselves, when school staff had not. National statistics on attendance are not presently gathered in such a way as to permit a detailed analysis based on gender. However, if the finding in this study were to be confirmed by further research, it would present schools with an urgent set of questions about an important aspect of behaviour management and about the invisibility of girls in general (Osler, *et al.,* 2002).

Involvement in disruption

Turning to more general issues of disruption, it emerged, as expected, that the generality of pupils was not often involved in serious disruptive behaviour. However, each of the four focus groups reported much higher than predicted involvement in minor disruption; the kinds of low level disruption which research (Munn, Johnstone and Sharpe, 2005; Johnstone and Munn, 1997) has suggested teachers find most difficult to tackle (see Table 2 below). All of these examples of behaviour are relatively minor if taken individually and would not in themselves be grounds for concern. However, such data also highlights the cumulative and powerful effect of these many small acts of disruption or resistance.

Table 2: Behaviour Questionnaire: Own involvement in disruption/rule breaking

	Never	**Occasionally**	**Sometimes**	**A lot**
Smoking in the school grounds	44	1	1	0
Been suspended/excluded for causing trouble	43	3	0	0
Swearing at teacher	39	6	1	0
Fighting after school	36	6	4	0
Drinking at the school disco	35	7	2	2
Refusing to do a punishment exercise	34	11	1	0
Fighting in the classroom	31	14	1	0
Taking up teacher time	30	12	4	0
Fighting in the corridor	28	17	1	0
Winding other people up so they get in trouble	28	16	2	0
Got negative referral* (N=33)	27	2	3	1
Picking on people	25	16	5	0
Skiving school* (N=33)	24	6	3	0
Not bringing PE kit	22	16	6	2
Throwing things	17	25	4	0
Swearing at pupils	15	20	8	3
Shouting out	14	24	5	3
Forgetting Maths homework	15	15	12	4
Interrupting the teacher	12	23	8	3
Wandering about the class	11	24	8	3
Turning round in your seat	4	21	10	11

N = 46 (adapted from Johnstone and Munn, 1992;1997)

Furthermore, female involvement in this low level disruption was found to be at a much higher level than would be predicted from local and national statistics on exclusion. This raises again a number of questions about widespread and powerful conceptions of disruption, including those which see it primarily as a male phenomenon associated with working class rejection of school. It may be that such conceptions offer a restricted understanding of the disruptive behaviour of both young women and young men in school. In the broader context of increasing public and media concern about the prevalence of 'girl gangs' in the UK, it also suggests the need to consider more closely whether there is in fact a change in female behaviour as such or an increased female visibility allied to a shift in thinking about the sources of threats to moral order (Brown, 2005).

Alternatives to exclusion from school

Finally, it was clear that young people's views on alternatives to exclusion also raise urgent questions for schools. Nearly all spoke of the value of a space and opportunity to talk, though as Cruddas and Haddock remind us, 'Time is a precious commodity in schools' (2005:162). It was found that some vulnerable young people had a clear idea of the range of supports available in and around school, and that they felt able to approach individual adults with their concerns. However, this knowledge seemed much greater in the two high excluding schools than in the low excluding schools. While this may be partly related to a higher level of resources in the high excluding schools, it nevertheless has clear implications for the troubled and troublesome pupils in the low excluding schools. Though perhaps fewer in number, their difficulties are not necessarily less complex nor are they in less need of support. Of great concern was the complete lack of talk by any young person, in any of the four schools, about professional inter-agency groups, set up by the local authority and seen by them as central to its provision for vulnerable pupils. While it is important to acknowledge the huge amount of hard work undertaken by many of these professional groups, there must be concern that young people and those with a duty of care for them have such different terms of reference for the meaning of 'support'.

In summary, the contributions of these young people offer some very clear indications of how they feel about indiscipline, disruption, as well as detailing clearly their own relationships with this disruption. Pupils expressed their regard for individual teachers often in very warm terms, but many responses also indicated deep dissatisfaction with these schools' approaches to indiscipline. Responses also revealed an unexpectedly widespread direct involvement in low-level disruption by the generality, from both male and, importantly, female pupils. Many of the most important findings in this study were consistent across all four schools; for excludees, for other marginalized pupils, for the generality of pupils, and among male and female pupils. It had been assumed that in schools known to have lower levels of disruption and higher attainment levels, the pupils would express greater satisfaction with overall discipline. This was not found to be the case. Exclusion was seen to be a major event by the majority of these pupils. It was also seen as ineffective by most pupils. It should be of immediate concern to schools that such a central, long-established part of the school discipline process was seen simultaneously as significant and yet ineffective by a range of pupils. It seems likely that experience of this paradox must influence pupils' engagement with the broader priorities of schools in terms of discipline.

DISCUSSION

Emerging from the discussions with these pupils was an unexpected consensus and a challenging set of views about discipline process as it presently operates in Scottish schools. Their views and experiences offer a valuable and timely contribution to the debate surrounding the turbulence in schools, to how we understand its effect on a range of pupils within our schools, and how we might move forward.

Turning to discipline systems as they are practised within schools in more detail, we may note the following; twice daily registration, period attendance via computer analysis, toilet passes, late slips, behaviour sheets, regular, controlled, long timed periods of work and short periods of rest, lining up for classes, the control of eating and drinking in class, fully supervised areas of study and a common curriculum, warning bells and period bells, closed circuit television, study contracts and so on. In short, the lack of autonomy and the level of surveillance of pupils, both within and outwith the classroom, has intensified greatly in recent years. The detail of knowledge amassed, Foucault argued, allows much greater control. He noted the shift in 'the scale and continuity of the exercise of power, which also involved much

greater knowledge of detail' (Gutting, 1994:94). 'Detail', 'knowledge' and 'control' are all notions which seem to translate easily into the daily life of most secondary schools in the UK today. Foucault also offers the phrase 'disciplinary space' and suggests that,

> 'Its aim [is] to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communication, to interrupt others, to be able to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits' (1977:143).

The very fact that the examples given above are common to so many schools across the UK supports Foucault's view that normalisation on this scale is about an increased ability to control. However, it is important to consider how the widespread involvement in low-level disruption and the pragmatic attitudes to attendance issues reported by 'hard-working and well-behaved'(SEED C8/03) pupils in this study may then be understood. For Fullan, many of the difficulties in schools arise as they attempt to respond to the 'juxtaposition of a continuous *change theme* with a continuous *conservative system'* (1993:8). Rudduck notes the 'earlier physical maturation of young people; an awareness that the structures of schooling offer, on the whole, less responsibility and autonomy than many young people experience in their lives outside school'(2001:7).

These tensions are compounded by other pressures and priorities in schools. Scheerens, *et al.* argue that in education, the talk is dominated by 'instrumental rationality (how to do things right) and not so much with substantive rationality (how to do the right things)' (2001:132). Mintzberg describes this as the difference between creative 'adhocracy' and professional bureaucracy; 'One engages in divergent thinking aimed at innovation; the other in convergent thinking aimed at perfection'(1979:436) and, in consequence, talk is dominated by relatives rather than absolutes.

This emphasis on 'how to do things right' is reflected in the huge growth of interest in whole school 'performance' and 'quality improvement' and a proliferation of instruments for measuring performance. In terms of whole school responses to indiscipline, its influence may be seen, for example, in the 'assertive discipline' approaches advocated by Canter and Canter (1992) and developed extensively in Scottish secondary schools, through, for example, Discipline for Learning and Framework for Intervention (Scottish Executive, 2001). Such approaches have often been welcomed by many schools, with their clear staged system of rewards and sanctions applicable to all pupils. However, in the same way that the school improvement movement has been criticised in the past for failing to take adequate account of context, many of these approaches falter because they call upon a simplistic view of the child as having control over his or her situation, paying scant attention to the impact of personal circumstances such as those outlined by the pupils in this study or to broader social differences.

In terms of the disciplinary exclusion process, and the experience for those who challenge the circumscribed parameters of acceptable behaviour, it is important to consider how and in what ways this process of discipline as control is so problematic. The invocation of the exclusion process, for example, pays no attention to pupils' concerns, for example, about the role of reputation. It is based on a notion of individual 'defective student pathologies' (Slee, 1998) and a 'will to punish' (Parsons, 2005); premised on the assumption that young people in schools always have an individual choice to be 'bad' or 'good' and their having made the choice to be 'bad'.

However, this assumption about agency seems paradoxical within a system which is otherwise only rarely interested in the agency of pupils, and which, I would argue, is not structured to promote active pupil agency or more flexible constructions of discipline. The incongruity of the call upon a notion of pupil agency is reflected in

the ways schools seem to borrow the procedure and formality of the legal system but without being able to adopt the tenet of 'innocent until proven guilty'. It is accepted practice to inform parents of an exclusion by official letter, often recorded delivery, although, significantly, recorded delivery letters are rarely used nowadays except by the courts or in formal business. This takes no account of home literacy levels. The fact that a re-admission meeting takes place at a time arranged by the school, that the meeting takes place in the school itself, that a written contract between pupil and school management is often signed before re-admission is permitted, all imply a presumption of 'guilt' and a very particular power relationship between the pupil, pupil's family and the school.

This relationship is framed by national policy on disciplinary exclusion and I now turn to examine this in more detail. It is interesting that national Guidance on disciplinary exclusion introduced soon after the new 'inclusive' Labour Government took office in 1997, has already been revised. The more recent Guidance, Exclusion from Schools in Scotland (C8/03) marks a clear change in emphasis. It refers explicitly and repeatedly to the rights of the majority of well-behaved pupils, and quotes directly from relevant pieces of legislation seeking to lend weight to its statement that, 'it is vital that the option of exclusion is available to education authorities' (C8/03:6).

Talking of statutory, legal punishment, but in ways which suggest interesting parallels with disciplinary exclusion, David Garland suggests that its

> 'role in modern society is not at all obvious or well known… That it is not always perceived as such is a consequence of the obscuring and reassuring effect of established institutions, rather than the transparent rationality of penal practices themselves…once a complex field of problems, needs and conflicts is built over by an institutional framework in this way, these problematic and often unstable foundations disappear from view'. (1990:3–4)

Garland talks of institutions such as punishment as having 'created a sense of their own inevitability and of the necessary rightness of the status quo' (1990:3). Even were the aims and effectiveness of official exclusion not so closely bound up with questions of discipline, punishment and power, the analogy would be powerful.

The previous Exclusion Guidance, much less formal and legalistic in tone, and the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000), laid much stronger emphasis on an inclusive ethos. This support is now more muted, except where it refers specifically to those pupils with special needs of some kind; a group which has rarely included those with behaviour difficulties. This more recent Guidance on Exclusion (C8/03) also substantially erodes the support it offers to those excluded. One significant example of this lies in the reference to consultation with pupils, the right of children and young people to have a say in matters directly affecting them (Article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child). In the earlier Guidance it was advised that consultation should be part of the *process* of exclusion, but the newer Guidance notes only that such consultation should take place in the case of an appeal against an exclusion. This significantly undermines the importance of dialogue and negotiation in general by moving it to much later in the process. It restricts the obligation for consultation to a much smaller number of cases, as very few exclusions are appealed and it effectively further distances the 'disruptive' from the 'disrupted'.

There is no doubt that there are occasions when for the immediate physical safety of all, it is better that a pupil be removed from a situation. While it may be argued that it is difficult to make consultation at the point of exclusion meaningful, the premise which underpins it; that of respect for young people in general, was an important step forward in policy terms. It is of concern, then, that though this consultation is one of the few formal opportunities excludees have to speak and to be listened to, there is no monitoring of whether schools actually do seek the views of pupils in

these situations, nor whether pupils take up that opportunity, nor whether, if they do express a view, this has any influence on subsequent actions of schools.

There also appears to be a change in emphasis with regard to parents and carers. The new Guidance contains many more references to the responsibilities and duties of parents to provide an 'efficient education' for their child. This change, I suggest, is part of an attempt by policy to respond to a wider anxiety in schools about the role of parents, and reflects a set of assumptions about the lack of parenting skills in some sections of the community (Levitas, 1998).

CONCLUSION

The finding in this study that the generality of pupils is involved in low-level disruptive behaviour provides evidence that most pupils in these high and low excluding schools are both disrupted and disruptive to some extent and thereby challenges a popular discourse in schools about 'good' and 'bad' pupils and the distance between the two. This finding strengthens the argument for re-examination of the recently introduced Guidance on Exclusion in Scotland (C8/03) which presumes and emphasises the distinctions between these groups of pupils. The arguments made by those who advocate more punitive responses to difficult behaviour are often based on a concern that a small troublesome minority have undue detrimental impact on the lives of the settled majority of pupils. The findings from this study do not contradict the suggestion that this minority exists, but they do suggest the prevalence of a 'transfer of risk from the collective to the individual' (Levitas, 1998;4); a 'reprivatisation' discourse (Fraser, 1989) which may result in a fundamental misrepresentation of what is actually happening in schools. This misrepresentation is important, I suggest, because it obscures the fallacy of a conceptual distinction between the 'disrupted' and 'disruptive' while simultaneously creating a dangerous elision of notions of 'authority' and 'authoritarianism' (Baumrind, 1991).

With this fallacy exposed, the questions about a more meaningful construction of the term 'discipline' are thrown into sharp relief. The sense of unease in schools is significant, not least because it emerges from the responses of groups of pupils who are usually regarded as affected by disruption rather than causing it and thus also regarded as less likely to be prejudiced against the discipline system. The juxtaposition of the generality's direct involvement in minor but persistent rule-breaking with such strong views on current discipline processes presents an uncomfortable paradox to those who would see 'the disruptive' and 'the disrupted' as two quite distinct groups. If the experience of these young people is also the experience of the wider school populace then it confirms in part the legitimacy of policy concern about the effects of disruption on learning and social relationships in schools. However, by revealing the widespread involvement of the generality in rule-breaking, it places concerns about disruption within a much more demanding policy context. These responses require a new, much larger set of questions about schools and schooling.

REFERENCES

Allan, J. and I'Anson, J. (2003) Children's rights in school: assemblies and assemblages, paper presented to seminar, *Challenging 'Social Inclusion', Perspectives for and from young people*, Glasgow: Strathclyde University.
Baumrind, D. (1991) Effective parenting during early adolescent transition, in P.A. Cowan and M. Hetherington (eds.) *Family Transitions*, Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Blyth, E. and Milner, J. (1994) (eds.) *Exclusion from School*, London: Routledge.
Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. (1982) *Qualitative Research*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
Brandes, D. and Norris, J. (1998) *The Gamester's Handbook 3*, Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes.
Brown, J. (2005) 'Violent girls': same or different from 'other' girls? In G. Lloyd (ed.) *Problem Girls: Understanding and Supporting Troubled and Troublesome Girls and Young Women*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Canter, L. and Canter, M. (1992) *Assertive Discipline*, Santa Monica: Lee Canter Associates.

Chaplain, R. (1996) Making a strategic withdrawal: disengagement and self-worth protection in male pupils, in J. Rudduck, Chaplain, R. and Wallace, G. *School Improvement, What Can Pupils Tell Us?* London: David Fulton.

Crozier, J. and Antiss, J. (1995) Out of the spotlight; girls experience of disruption, in J. Lloyd-Smith and R. Davies, (eds.) *On the Margins; the educational experience of 'problem pupils'*. Stoke: Trentham.

Cruddas, L. and Haddock, L. (2005) Engaging girls' voices: Learning as social practice, in G.Lloyd (ed.) *Problem Girls: Understanding and Supporting Troubled and Troublesome Girls and Young Women*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Department for Education and Science (2001) *Permanent Exclusions and Exclusion Appeals*.

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish*, (A. Sheridan, trans.) New York: Pantheon.

Fraser, N. (1989) *Unruly Practices*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Fullan, M. (1993) *Change Forces*, Falmer Press, London.

Garland, D. (1990) *Punishment and Modern Society; A study in social theory*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Garner, P. (1995) Schools by scoundrels, in J. Lloyd-Smith and R. Davies, (eds.) *On the Margins; the educational experience of 'problem pupils'*, Stoke: Trentham.

Gutting, G. (1994) *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hamill, P.and Boyd, B. (2002) Equality, fairness and rights: the young person's voice, *British Journal of Special Education*, 29 (3); 111–117.

Hayden, C. (2001) *Outside Looking In*, Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth.

Hayden, C. (1997) *Children Excluded from Primary School*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hendrick, H. (1994) *Child Welfare; England 1872–1989*, London: Routledge.

Imich, A. (1994) Exclusions from school, current trends and issues, *Educational Research*, 36 (1); 3–11.

Johnstone, M. and Munn, P. (1997) *Indiscipline:A Survey of Scottish Primary and Secondary School Teachers*, Edinburgh: Moray House.

Levitas, R. (1998) *The Inclusive Society*, London: Macmillan.

Lloyd, G. (ed.)(2005) *Problem Girls: Understanding and Supporting Troubled and Troublesome Girls and Young Women*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Lloyd-Smith, J. and R. Davies, (1995) (eds.) *On the Margins; the educational experience of 'problem pupils'*, Stoke: Trentham.

MacBeath, J. (1999) *Schools Must Speak for Themselves; the Case for School Self-Evaluation*, London: Routledge/Falmer.

Miles, M. and Huberman, M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2nd ed, London: Sage.

Mintzberg, H. (1979) *The Structuring of Organisations; a synthesis of the research*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Morgan, D. (1977) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed, Beverley Hills: Sage.

Munn, P., Johnstone, M. and Sharpe, S. (2005) *Discipline in Scottish Schools*, Scottish Executive Education Department.

Munn, P., Johnstone, M. and Chalmers, V. (1992a) *Effective Discipline in Primary Classrooms*, London: Paul Chapman.

Munn, P., Johnstone, M. and Chalmers, V. (1992b) *Effective Discipline in Secondary Classrooms*, London: Paul Chapman.

Munn, P., Lloyd, G. and Cullen, A.M. (2000) *Alternatives to Exclusion from School*, London: Paul Chapman.

Osler, A. and Osler, C. (2002) Inclusion, exclusion and children's rights: a case study of a student with Asperger Syndrome, in *Research Papers in Education*, 15 (1);49–67.

Olser, A. and Vincent, K. (2003) *Girls and Exlcusion; Rethinking the Agenda*, London: Routledge/Falmer.

Osler, A. Street, C.. Lall, M. Vincent, K.(2002) *Not a Problem? Girls and School Exclusion*, National Children's Bureau.

Osler, A. (2000) Children's rights, responsibilities and understandings of school discipline, in *Research Papers in Education*, 15 (1); 49–67.

Osler, A. (1996) *Exclusion from school and racial equality; a good practice guide*, London: Commission for Racial Equality.

Padfield, P. (2002) What's your reputation at school like? *SCRE Newsletter*, 70; 6–7.

Pomeroy, E. The teacher-student relationship in secondary school: insights from excluded students, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20 (4);465-482.

Parsons, C. (2005) School exclusion; the will to punish, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 43 (2); 187–211.

Parsons, C. (1999) *Education, Exclusion and Citizenship,* London: Routledge.

Parsons, C. (1996) The cost of primary school exclusions, in E.Blyth and J. Milner (eds.) *Exclusion from School*, London: Routledge.

Phtiaka, H. (1997) *Special Kids for Special Treatment*, London: Falmer Press.

Qvortrup, J. (1994) *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics*, Vienna: European Centre.

Rudduck, J. (2001) Students and school improvement; transcending the cramped conditions of the time, *Improving Schools*, 4 (2); 7–16.

Rudduck, J., Chaplain, R. and Wallace, G. (1996) *School Improvement, What Can Pupils Tell Us?* London: David Fulton.

Ryan, G. and Bernard, H. (2003)Techniques to identify themes in qualitative data, *Field Methods*, 1; 85–89.

Scheerens, J. Bosker, R. and Creemers, B. (2001) Time for self-criticism: on the viability of school effectiveness research, in *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 12 (1).

Scottish Executive (2003) *Exclusion from School*, (C8/03), Edinburgh.

Scottish Executive (2001) *Better Behaviour, Better Learning*, Edinburgh.

Scottish Executive (2000) *Scottish School Leavers Survey: 17 in 1997*, Edinburgh.

Scottish Executive (1999) *Social Justice – A Scotland Where Everyone Matters*, Edinburgh: SEED.

Scottish Office (1998) *Guidance on Issues Concerning Exclusion from School*, (C2/98), Edinburgh: HMSO.

Slee, R. (1998) Student action research and school discipline; consulting the experts in the field, conference paper presented *to American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting*, San Diego.

Stake, R. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*, London: Sage.

Stewart, D. and Shamdasani, P.N. (1990) *Focus Group Theory and Practice*, London: Sage.

Stirling, M. (1994) The end of the line? *Special Children*, 76; 27–29.

Stirling, M. (1992) How many pupils are being excluded? *British Journal of Special Education*, 19 (4); 128–130.

Thomson, R. and Holland, J. (2002) Young people, social change and the negotiation of moral authority, in *Children and Society*, 16; 103–115.