



## BACKGROUND

- 1 The remodelling of the school workforce over the period 2003-6 highlights the need to refine our understanding of the role of the teacher. At a time when teaching assistants and study supervisors manage groups of school students, and learning mentors or pastoral managers deal with many pastoral issues, it is important to clarify the distinctive nature of the professional teacher's role: what exactly is a qualified teacher for? SHA is committed to a holistic view of teaching; while supporting the move to re-focus the teacher's role around the core activity of teaching and learning, we remain convinced that teaching is a human rather than a mechanistic activity, and we therefore want to highlight the personal dimension of teaching.

## PERSONAL LEARNING

- 2 Long before the recent statutory requirement to teach a citizenship curriculum, schools recognised the importance of those aspects of education which are not subject-specific. These 'personal' aspects of education relate to how we should think and behave rather than to what we should 'know, understand and be able to do'. They are value-related rather than fact-related. This personal dimension of education has always been of concern to good teachers and good schools.

## FORMING THE WHOLE PERSON

- 3 Teachers recognise that they cannot enable students to learn unless there is a shared value-system operating in the school. This value-system supports collaboration in the interests of learning for all students, and it is under particular challenge where children have not learnt at home the importance of rule-based social behaviour. But teachers create orderly and supportive school environments not simply to maximise learning outcomes. They seek to enable students to understand social rules and customs as a way of preparing them for the adult world. Equally, teachers help students in their own exploration of personal and moral values. Behind this lies a recognition that schools are not just places of academic learning, but of growth, development and a maturing understanding of life. Schools are about the development of the whole person.

## THE PASTORAL CURRICULUM AND ETHOS

- 4 What has been called the 'pastoral curriculum' combines all the aspects of a school's life which together contribute to the formation of the whole person. Curriculum subjects clearly play a part, but so also do less tangible things such as the quality of relationships within the school community, the value the school puts on individual students, and school ethos. School leaders have a particular responsibility for setting and maintaining the ethos of a school: and research has consistently indicated the central importance of ethos in determining the quality of a school's work.

## THE PASTORAL ROLE OF THE TEACHER

- 5 In this context, SHA urges all concerned with schools and the recruitment and training of teachers to affirm the pastoral role of the teacher, that is, the role of the teacher as someone who seeks to further the personal development of students as well as their academic learning, to support students as persons as well as

learners. Teaching is about working with young people, gaining their confidence, trust and collaboration for the task of learning, and is not simply about the delivery of a curriculum. Another way of putting this key point is to say that teachers are inherently involved in working pastorally, and that among their capabilities should be a high degree of emotional intelligence (EI).

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### ASPECTS OF THE PASTORAL ROLE

- 6 SHA continues to value the role of the teacher as form tutor. As a trusted adult in the school context who carries an overall management brief for students, the form tutor is in a position to provide not only academic support and tutoring across the curriculum, but also personal support and encouragement. The form tutor remains an important source of adult support and understanding for the student, and this aspect of the teacher's role can also be deeply rewarding for the teacher. SHA recognises that other patterns of pastoral support can be effective, but endorses the now familiar form tutor role as a highly valuable one.
- 7 In addition to the form tutor role, which is evidently pastoral, other aspects of the teacher's task also involve pastoral awareness. For example, the subject teacher needs to be an expert not only in delivering the content of a particular curriculum, but also in adapting teaching methodologies to the specific individuals in his or her care. Good teachers want to know how the individual student best learns, and refine their approaches in the light of this. Equally, good teachers form positive attitudes to learning in their students, and are successful in motivating individual students to want to learn.
- 8 Pastoral awareness is a key aspect of successful teaching. Good teachers recognise that changing family circumstances, personal relationships or the process of growing up may preoccupy students and affect their ability to learn. Again, behavioural difficulties in the classroom may have their origin not simply in negative attitudes to learning but also in personal problems related to home or family. Good teachers are aware of their students as whole people, and this is a key to helping them learn effectively.

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### PERSONAL SUPPORT

- 9 Teachers recognise that they may often be seen as a 'trusted adult' by a student who has personal difficulties in their learning or in their personal life. This status may lead to a teacher receiving confidences from a student who has few if any other adults to turn to. While acknowledging that they cannot be personal counsellors to students, teachers will want to support the individual student personally by listening and encouraging. Good teachers will often be those who know their students best as individuals, and who are most willing to offer personal support.

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### TEACHING: AN INCLUSIVE, PERSONAL ROLE

- 10 In emphasising the pastoral role of the teacher, SHA seeks to underline one of the strongest distinctive features of the British educational tradition. Other traditions have sought to separate the academic and pastoral aspects of teaching. We believe that this is fundamentally mistaken. SHA considers that to reduce the role of the teacher to that of an instructor - someone who simply delivers the curriculum - is to narrow the essentially inclusive, personal role of the teacher and to render the teaching profession that much less attractive to prospective professionals. SHA believes that all teachers need well-developed emotional intelligence and a broad pastoral awareness. We believe that teachers who have an active interest in and commitment to their students as persons as well as learners are likely to be among the very best in the profession.