

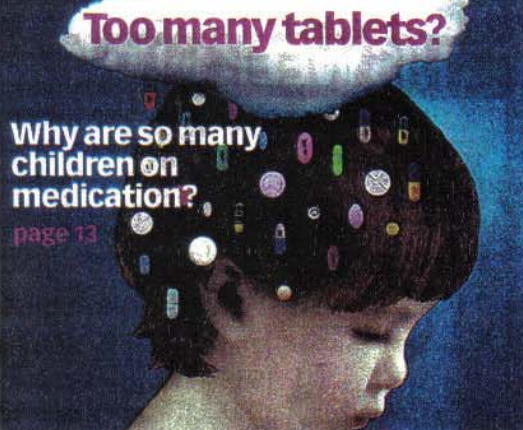
TES

£1.20



JEAN PIAGET

Thinkers behind the theories **page 16**



Too many tablets?

Why are so many children on medication?

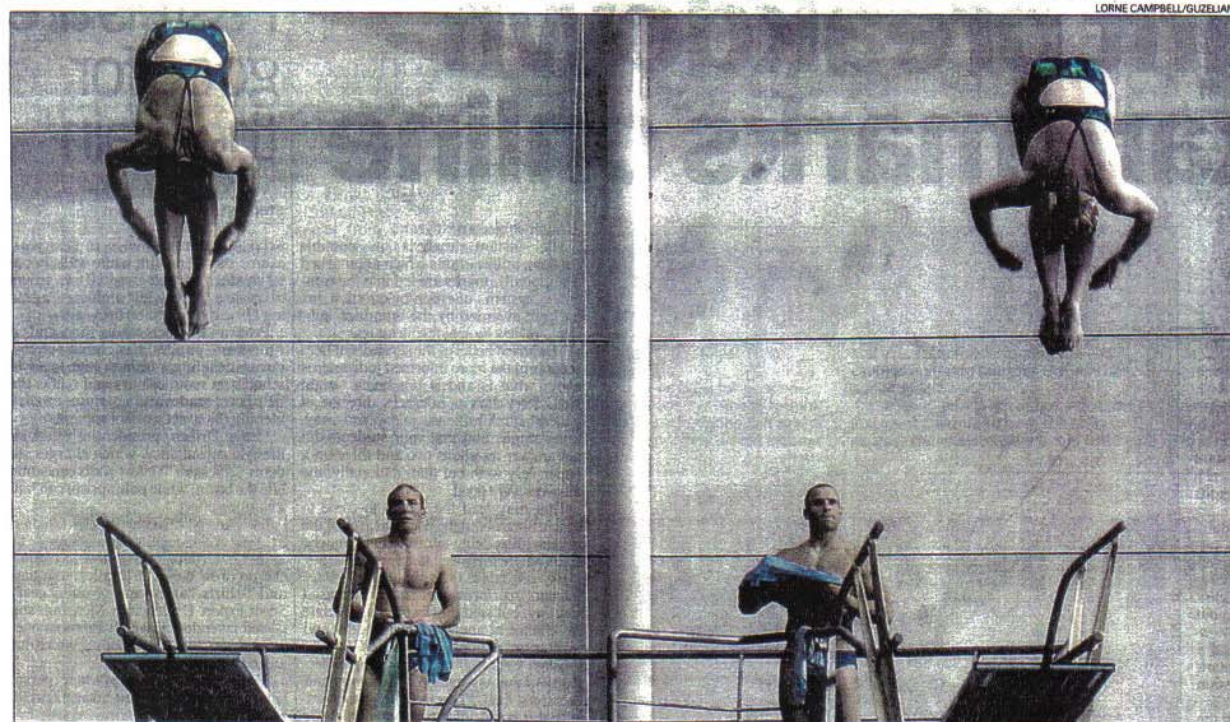
page 13

Kew Gardens

Two go for the price of one

Voucher page 18

FE FOCUS COLLEGES SET FOR £1M SHORTFALL



LORNE CAMPBELL/GUZELIAN

Professor calls for optional maths at 14

Warwick Mansell

Maths should be made voluntary from the age of 14 because much of the subject is of little practical use, one of Britain's leading experts in the subject said today.

David Burghes, director of Exeter university's centre for innovation in maths teaching, risks an outcry after suggesting in today's *TES* that most people had scant need for "higher mathematical skills" taught at GCSE and above.

His views are at odds with the Tomlinson inquiry into secondary qualifications, which wants GCSE-equivalent maths to be mandatory.

"This is a recipe for the complete alienation of maths teaching," which could also put people off wanting to study the subject at university, Professor Burghes writes.

"Do we really all need higher mathematical skills for future life?"

"Yes, we do need an understanding of number and the ability to estimate so that we can check whether automated results are of the correct order of magnitude, but this should be covered in depth at primary school. The average young person will need very little mathematics for their future life."

He said the present system in which maths is taken up to the age of 16 had led to children being demotivated. Such pupils should, however, be able to take practical mathematics courses instead.

But Margaret Brown, professor of mathematics education at King's college, London, writes in response that the proposal would only worsen Britain's already poor adult numeracy. Admitting that many are bored by maths lessons, she adds: "The remedy is to improve the forms of assessment, the quality of teaching and the syllabuses rather than throwing our hands up in despair and giving up."

SUMMER DEBATE 15

Cash-back for sponsors

Firms connected to private benefactors receive thousands of pounds from academies

William Stewart and Warwick Mansell

Two flagship academies have paid out large sums of money to companies that their private-sector sponsors have major interests in, *The TES* can reveal.

The payments for a variety of services, show up in the latest published accounts of academies sponsored by Sir Peter Vardy, the Christian fundamentalist car dealer and Alec Reed, chairman of Reed Executive, parent company of one of the country's biggest recruitment agencies.

The accounts reveal that West London academy, Ealing, paid a total of £180,964 to businesses and a charity with major connections to Mr Reed. King's academy, Mid-

dlesbrough, was billed by organisations and individuals with connections to Sir Peter for £290,214, including £14,039 to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Both the academies, semi-independent, state-funded secondary schools, said that none of the work for these payments had been put out to tender. Academies, like normal state schools, are expected to obtain at least three quotations before purchases of services.

Academy sponsors do not contribute towards the schools' running costs but have huge influence over how they are run, typically nominating the majority of governors, who have wide-ranging powers over the curriculum, staff pay and conditions and timetables.

The West London academy

accounts show that it paid £140,030 for personnel services to Reed Charity, chaired by Mr Reed, between May 2002 to August 2003.

Another £37,683 was paid to Reed Learning and £3,251 to Reed Training, companies for which Mr Reed is a director, "for project management and training services". A spokesman for Mr Reed said the payments were made with Department for Education and Skills grants and with its approval.

The King's academy accounts show that between April 2002 and August 2003 the school was billed £111,554 for "support services such as marketing and recruitment" supplied by car dealers Reg Vardy plc. Sir Peter Vardy, founder of the Vardy Foundation - the academy's main sponsor, is the major share-

holder in the dealership.

The school was also billed £121,514 for "educational advice" by Emmanuel college, Gateshead, another school sponsored by the Vardy Foundation.

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association was paid £14,039 by King's for time spent on academy work by the association's employee David Vardy, Sir Peter's brother and another academy director.

John Burn, a director of the King's and former head of Emmanuel college, was paid £43,107 for educational advice.

A spokeswoman for the foundation, which has attracted controversy for teaching creationist theory at Emmanuel college, said that the payments represented value for money.

The *TES* investigation into the accounts of the 12 academies reveals that half have yet to receive the full £2 million pledged by their sponsors. But the taxpayer's contribution has swelled by nearly £40m over the past year to £275.7m - an average of £23m an academy.

Gwen Evans, deputy general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "Academies were supposed to lever private finance into public education, not lever public money into private pockets."

The DfES said: "It is easy to criticise radical steps to break the cycle of educational underachievement. We prefer to get on with giving children in these areas the very best education that we can."

NEWS 8



The cheery copies of Van Gogh masterpieces Dr Wilson Tafner paints for his office walls are his escape from the horrifying images that await him at work each morning. Sighing and making the sign of the cross, he takes a yellowing file from an enormous pile and begins another investigation into a child's nightmare in a Brazilian children's prison.

A prosecutor in the São Paulo state's Ministry of Justice, Dr Tafner has the job of assessing the progress and development of juveniles imprisoned in units of the euphemistically named State Foundation for the Wellbeing of Minors detention centres, known as the Febem. Most are detained for drugs crimes and robbery: some for murder and others for repeated lesser offences. In reality, Dr Tafner is fighting a daily battle to protect children from torture and brutalisation in this very institution.

It is to Dr Tafner that relatives come for answers. "The kind of information we have to give families is so brutal, so shocking, that there is often no point in telling them the whole truth," he shrugs. "Why tell a mother her son was stabbed more than 100 times?"

His video evidence shows teenagers, too scared or too numb to cry any longer, displaying black welts from beatings with iron bars. The holes in their flesh, made by nail-studded clubs, look

almost like acne, until the camera zooms in. Children display empty gums where front teeth have been smashed out, and show how heavy chains and padlocks are used to inflict beatings, twist fingers and strangle them.

"They treat us like animals," whimpers one boy to camera, a sentence that became the title of an Amnesty International report condemning the Febem. He looks no more than 13 years old.

The Febem were set up 30 years ago. Dr Tafner, a local man, has been uncovering the horrors behind their doors for the past five. "We currently have almost 300 investigations into maltreatment and torture by Febem employees," he says. Seven wardens, including a director of one unit, were convicted of torture in May, and 22 more await prosecution as a result of his work.

Brazil's law for adolescents is regarded as exemplary, specifying that children should receive psychological, socio-educational and vocational assistance to prevent social exclusion and end delinquency. In reality, says Dr Tafner, they come out far worse than they go in. Every second day a former Febem inmate kills someone in São Paulo. Every day another ex-inmate goes to an adult jail.

The São Paulo Febem's 68 units hold 6,500 13 to 18-year-olds – half of Brazil's growing adolescent prison population, and seem unable to cope. Dr Tafner has sued the state government for overcrowding four times. "Until 1999 there were

Two of Michael's friends died inside, one was shot, the other was taken from his cell at night and beaten to death

only a few Febem units, including Immigrantes, where there was a huge riot five years ago," says Dr Tafner. "It had a capacity of 320 but when the riot happened in October 1999, there were nearly 1,600 adolescents. It was like Auschwitz."

Worse than the overcrowding are the medieval methods of discipline. Michael Pereira da Silva, 19, knows all about them. In five years he has spent time in nine Febem units. Two of his friends died inside, one was shot, the other was taken from his cell at night and beaten to death, with no warning or apparent reason. "If I was to use what I learned inside," he says, "I'd rob a bank or two. There are all kinds of criminals in there, from chicken thieves to bank robbers and killers."

Many of the guards, he says, are on cocaine,

and the riots and rebellions that break out each month are a reaction to beatings and abuse. "It's a war, but we always lose – because they've got the police, shock units, everything."

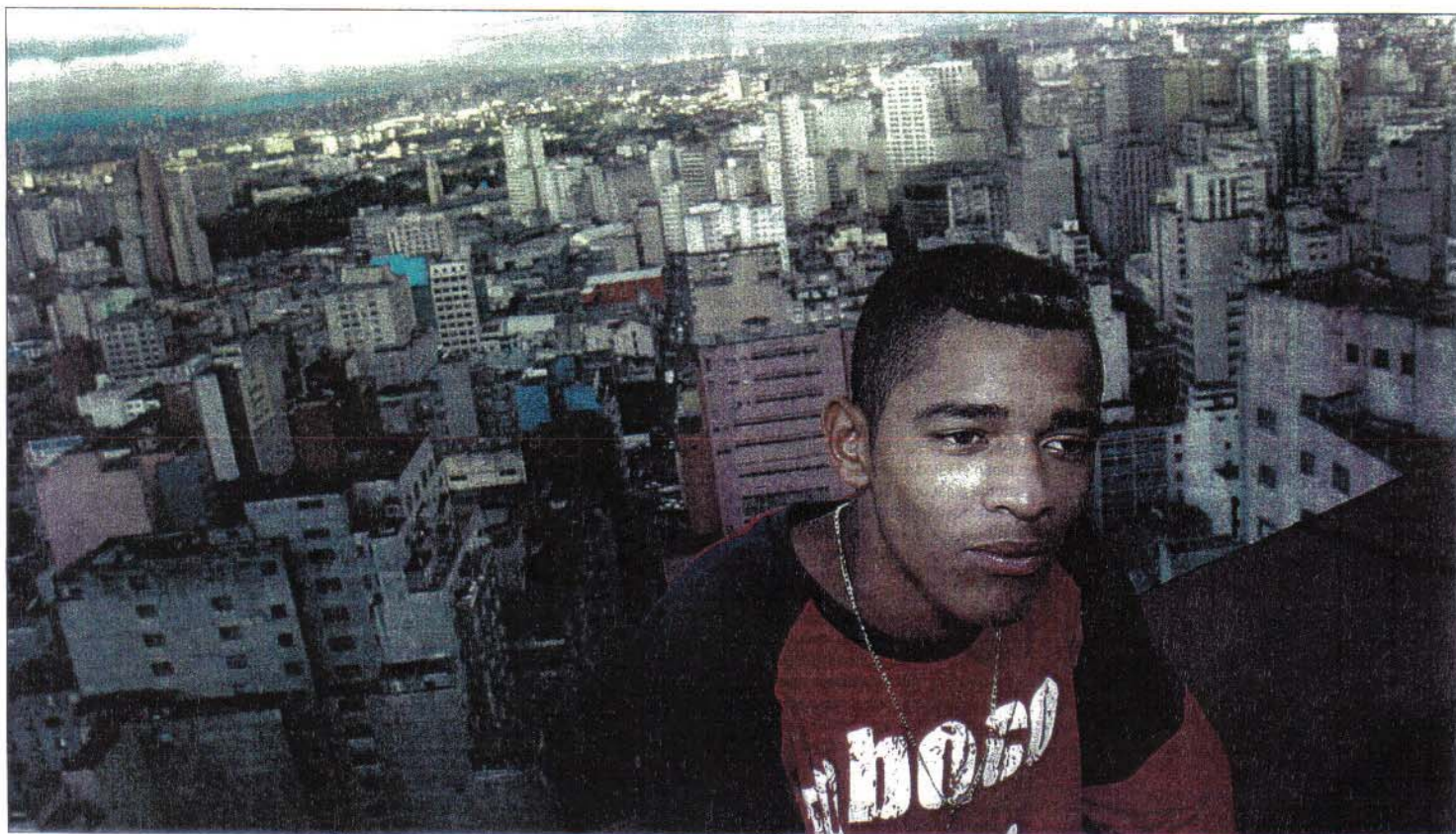
"Chuck", another boy released two months ago says he was attacked with truncheons, iron bars and chairs – "everything", he shrugs. Once, he was beaten simply for taking his shirt off in bed when he was too hot. "Their favourite punishment is the Polish corridor: they form two lines and you must run through being beaten by them all."

One mother who knows the risks of having a child in Febem is Solange Queiroz. She sent her son Sidney to another prosecutor, one who deals with sentencing and appraisal. "God forgive me," she recalls. "He was addicted to drugs and I didn't know what else to do. They beat him with iron bars. He was just 16." Several weeks after he reported the violence to Dr Tafner's office last November, he was put in a cell and burned alive, the second boy to die in the same way in that unit. It took him 10 days to die.

Conceicao Paganelle, the head of a network of mothers of Febem children, and the only person to have won Brazil's national human rights award twice, says crime is the unavoidable reality of existence for most São Paulo children. "These children grow up on the streets. The people they're surrounded by are drug traffickers. If the government gave more money

Lessons in torture

Juvenile offenders in São Paulo should be able to spend their time in one of the most forward-looking penal regimes in the world. But the reality is very different. **Enda Leahy** reports



for primary schools and day care centres, they'd be spending less on Febem and on prisons."

The director of Brazil's office of Unesco, Jorge Werthein, agrees, calling Febem a "typical example of a costly programme which is repressive, not preventive and, in most cases, not educational" – even though they have been the responsibility of the secretary of education for the past year. Febem cost about 300 times the price, per person, of opening schools at weekends to keep children off the streets, he says.

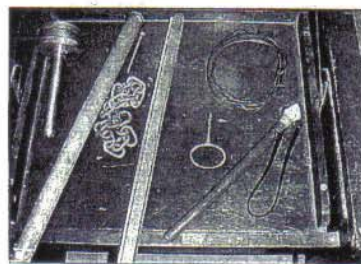
One lawyer representing inmates described a unit where guards said they were schooling the boys. "Lessons" consisted of a piece of paper being pushed under a locked door. Inmates of all levels and abilities are taught in the same classes.

Jorge Werthein applauds the Febem administration's efforts under its latest president to weed out violent staff and create work partnerships with the private sector to find jobs for the youths when they get out – McDonald's, for example, has employed 59 ex-inmates. But he insists that in most cases these youngsters have "neither a present, nor a future". Attempts to build new, smaller units, as the law stipulates, have foundered due to lack of funds, and the population of the Febem is thought to be rising by 500 a year.

Unlike the sunny canvases in his office, the art Dr Tafner has produced since starting in the Febem is a catalogue of dark, blood-soaked testimonials, which he keeps at home. "I put a lot of what I've seen into my paintings," he murmurs. "It's a way to exorcise these things."

Turning back to his files, he stares at a photo of a young boy's corpse lying twisted and bloody on a filthy Febem floor, a broken cigarette contemptuously stuffed into the mouth. "I painted it," he says sadly. "We have many ghosts here."

Amnesty International will be launching a campaign on torture in Brazil, including in the Febem, later this year. To find out more, visit: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/eng-bra/index>



Hitting back: (clockwise from left) former Febem inmate Michael Pereira da Silva, who has detailed official violence including the beating to death of one of his friends; Dr Wilson Tafner; inmates in an overcrowded Febem unit; objects used for beatings and torture found during a search by Dr Tafner's team

Portraits by Fernando Cavalcanti

