

## Editor Letters to the Editor Letters

**Comprehensive report**

IT is now a full three years since the former Chichester High School for Boys went comprehensive, and I feel that this is a fair period of time over which to assess the consequences of this change.

One of the main aims of the comprehensive scheme is to broaden the opportunities open to pupils, and yet quite the reverse has taken effect. Subjects such as Greek, Russian, botany and zoology have been abolished in the sixth form all together, and Latin has all but disappeared.

In the lower forms of the school, subjects are generalised to such an extent that they are almost indistinguishable from each other. There has been absolutely no expansion of the practical subjects available to the less academically minded. Even such events as sports day and open days, synonymous with school life, are being done away with.

Uniform disinterest has replaced the former enthusiasm, and healthy air of competitiveness which was once the tradition in both of the schools which merged to form this educational white elephant. Theoretically, there should have been both the facilities for practical advancement from the secondary modern school and those for academic achievement from the grammar

school, but events have gone sadly wrong. Academic results have steadily declined, and only a handful of the original staff remain.

Highly qualified staff are no longer attracted to the school, as they can find better jobs in grammar schools elsewhere, and parents who have a choice send their children to other schools of higher repute. As a result, both the academic intake and the teaching staff, together with the limited opportunities at the school, combine to strike a dismal figure of mediocrity instead of the proposed establishment that would create openings in all fields.

As the school was not purpose-built comprehensive, some people have had their whole pattern of education changed in mid-stream. I do not feel that it is a fair policy for a local authority to experiment with education in such a radical fashion. The experiment is not even well organised, for while plans hang in the air for a proposed new site for the school, money is wasted on renovating old buildings that were originally put up as temporary shelters during the war.

If this school is anything to go by, the comprehensive plan must be doomed to failure. If even our schools are to be standardised in these days of increasing uniformity, the incentive for individuality will be

lost and some elements of the country's unique character may disappear. — ROBIN P. G. GATES, Fishbourne, Sussex.