

Standing up

In all we do, we aim to be brave, imaginative and decent



David Bell Director for people

For the first time this year we've included a special section on corporate social responsibility in our annual report. This is not because we have just discovered it. Weetman Pearson, who led the company more than a century ago, had a reputation as one of the most enlightened employers of his time.

We have tried ever since to set the highest possible standards in the way we treat our people, our customers and the wider world in which we operate. This section focuses on the progress we are making with all three groups.

More than 30,000 people now work for Pearson in 62 countries. In the past year we have made good progress towards the goal we set ourselves some years ago. This is to be a brave, imaginative and decent company, a place where people want to work, where they treat people as they want to be treated themselves – in short one of the best employers in the world.

It goes without saying that it is our people who create the products we sell. Their strong sense of responsibility and integrity is at the heart of everything we do and all the products we make. You see this when you meet our education experts who produce teaching materials, our journalists who report and analyse the world or our editors and publishers who make the most entertaining and informative books. Pearson could not succeed without their very high standards and a deep-rooted and unswerving commitment to accuracy, independence and learning.

But that is not enough. We also want all our external 'customers' – investors, authors, readers, teachers, printers, distributors, retailers – to judge us by the same high standards. As the world's biggest publisher nothing is more important to us than that we meet these standards.

Of course we have a way to go. But we are making good progress. Opposite are some highlights of our progress so far and some of our plans for 2004.

We very much welcome comments, observations and suggestions which can be sent to me at david.bell@pearson.com.

David Bell, Director for people