

Research for Teachers

Multi-agency working and pupil behaviour

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**How might schools manage inclusion in ways that are compatible with raising all pupils' achievements?
How might schools work with others to benefit at-risk pupils?**

It is now widely accepted that exclusion from school and/or poor attendance are related to low academic achievement. The result of this can be less stable career patterns, greater unemployment and generally fewer opportunities for self-development. In some cases the young people concerned may engage in anti-social activity and/or become involved in criminal behaviour. The poor behaviour of some pupils can also disrupt other pupils' learning, reducing educational opportunity for all.

In England, overcoming truancy and bad behaviour in schools has been an important goal for many years. Many local authorities have established multi-agency strategies to tackle these problems. It is seen as crucial to improving levels of attainment for all pupils, improving their life chances and improving communities as a whole.

The national 'Behaviour Improvement Programme' (BIP) set up by the government in July 2002 provided 34 local authorities with the funds to support behaviour improvement strategies aimed at reducing exclusions and raising attainment. In order to do so, the BIP aimed to identify and respond to issues of pupils' behaviour that had the potential to lead from disaffection to disengagement to increasingly poor behaviour that disrupted other pupils' learning and led to the exclusion from school of those responsible. The strategies all involved multi-agency working through behaviour and educational support teams (BESTs).

Evidence about behaviour improvement strategies has accumulated steadily. (See, for example, Halsey 2006 in the further reading section). This TLA research summarises a report which explored the 'Behaviour Improvement Programme' and evaluated its effectiveness. The study describes what schools did - by themselves and through working with other agencies - to try to improve attendance and attainment for the most vulnerable young people.

The study is:

Hallam, S., F. Castle, L. Rogers, A. Creech, J. Rhamie and D. Kokotsaki. *Research and Evaluation of the Behaviour Improvement Programme Research*. London: DfES 2005 (report RR702).

The study found that secondary and primary schools participating in the programme achieved improvements in attendance compared with control schools. The study also found that there was a reduction in fixed period exclusions in the secondary schools and there were some indications of improvements in attainment.

In LAs where there had been the greatest improvements, working in multi-agency teams (Behaviour and Education Support Teams - BESTs), conducting audits of behaviour to identify problems and deploying lead behaviour professionals (LBPs) were all identified as key measures. The study suggests that multi-agency working brings additional dimensions to responding to pupils' needs, including: specialist professional input and support, additional resources and a more in-the-round perspective on young people.

This summary presents teachers and schools with detailed observations and findings in relation to multi-agency approaches to improving behaviour. The focus is mainly on the strategies that have been tried by schools and partner agencies that are linked with improvements in exclusion rates and attendance, and that help to create the conditions needed for learning to take place.

The summary does not provide readers with detailed information about teaching and learning strategies. A wide range of evidence, much of it summarised in other TLA research summaries on this site, suggests that by improving learning teachers can raise pupils' self-confidence and motivation and make a positive contribution to enhancing behaviour. This evidence includes the following conclusions:

- high teacher expectations about pupils' ability to learn are linked to high standards of learning
- teaching that builds on pupils' starting-points helps to connect pupils with their learning
- structured, collaborative group work improves pupils' communication and dialogue and increases pupils' motivation.

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Overview

Why is this issue important?

It is widely accepted that exclusion from school and/or poor attendance are related to low academic achievement. This can lead to greater unemployment, fewer opportunities for self-development, anti-social activity and crime. Improving behaviour can enhance conditions for learning for all pupils.

What did the research show?

Preventative programmes, involving increased pastoral support and working with other professionals, can be effective in helping schools improve behaviour and reduce truancy and exclusions.

How was this achieved?

Teachers and schools combined a number of approaches including: multi-agency working (Behaviour and Education Support Teams - BESTs) using behaviour audits as a starting point for whole school behaviour strategies appointing support professionals such as Lead Behaviour Professionals (LBPs) and learning mentors.

Including a range of professionals in BESTs (teachers, educational psychologists, social workers, and also sometimes police officers) provided opportunities to share ideas and think about alternative approaches to

problems. Basing BESTs in schools meant that support could be provided more speedily than had been previously the case.

Behaviour audits helped schools identify where they needed to focus their resources. These usually related to pupils' experiences in school and underlying causes of non-attendance, such as bullying or family problems.

Key personnel, including 'Lead Behavioural Professionals' (LBPs) and 'Learning Mentors', helped schools develop and provide leadership of behaviour policies such as nurture groups, circle time, student support and family liaison.

Where did the evidence come from?

The research was conducted in two stages. During Phase 1 (the main focus of the RfT) the researchers employed a combination of:

- telephone interviews with coordinators in all 34 local authorities (LAs) fieldwork in 18 LAs
- case studies in ten secondary schools and their feeder primary schools.

Phase two of the project involved a further 26 LAs, from which the researchers selected 16 LAs for visits.

What are the implications?

The study showed that pupil engagement with learning and attendance are improved when:

- behaviour professionals help pupils improve their communication skills and support them through anger management and counseling
- teachers are trained and coached to deal with behaviour issues
- school leaders and teaching staff reach a shared agreement of priorities in relation to behaviour and learning and work together to develop appropriate policies and practice.

What do the case studies show?

The case studies illustrate different ways in which teachers working with teacher colleagues and/or with other professionals tackled problems of poor behaviour and disaffection and sought to create positive conditions for learning for all pupils. They show how:

- a school designed a behaviour policy aimed at creating conditions for learning
- BESTs supported schools so that teachers could focus more on teaching and learning
- behaviour support professionals coached teachers to use behaviour improvement strategies as well as directly supporting students
- a nurture group supported young pupils
- a large scale city project involved parents in their children's learning
- learning mentors helped to raise achievement.

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Study

What were the benefits of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP)?

The study showed that the programme helped schools and students in relation to attendance and exclusions (with a small improvement in attainment in English).

Attendance

Overall the BIP secondary schools showed significant reductions in authorised and unauthorised absence. Total absence rates fell from 11.89% in 2001/02 to 10.13% in 2003/04 (a fall of 1.78%). This compared with a fall of 1.06% for the control schools and 0.66% for all schools. Only the BIP secondary schools reported a reduction in unauthorised absence between 2001/02 and 2003/04. A similar picture emerged for primary schools with total rates down by 0.93% compared to 0.68% and 0.36% for control schools and all schools respectively between 2001/02 and 2003/04. Whilst unauthorised absence rates fell in all primary schools over this period the reduction was greatest for the BIP schools.

Exclusions

The average number of fixed term exclusions in the secondary schools in BIP fell by 14.3% over the three-year period 2001/02 to 2003/04. No comparative data were provided by the study. The number of permanent exclusions fell in 50% of the secondary schools, although the overall average number nationally rose from 3.4 to 4.1. There were no significant changes in primary schools on either measure of exclusion, which, the authors point out, given their normally low levels, is unsurprising.

Perception data collected from teachers and pupils in the ten case study sites provided evidence of improvement in pupils':

- behaviour
- well being
- learning.

Behaviour

There were many examples of positive changes in individual pupils' behaviour. In some cases there was also evidence of change in behaviour across schools and classes. For many primary school staff behaviour around the school improved noticeably, including behaviour at lunchtime:

'The children are now really well behaved at lunchtimes... They are so well behaved that we are now able to organise a lot of games for them. Before this would not have been possible... The children feel more secure on the playground. It is as if they no longer have anything to prove. When they do something wrong they are able to own up and sort it out... The children are able to go into the class without pushing. They are able to wait their turn.' (Primary School Senior Lunchtime Supervisor)

Well-being

Teachers linked impact on behaviour to pupils' well-being and enhanced self-esteem:

'We have lots of additional clubs running, for instance, motor hockey. This is targeted at disaffected pupils and is motivating them to work together. It also enhances their self-esteem. There has been an incredible interest in these after-school activities. Children are queuing up to join them.' (Secondary School Deputy Head Teacher)

Learning

The pupils were very clear about the difference that the Behaviour Improvement Programme had made to them and were keen to maintain the improvements in their learning. The following comment reflects the views of a wide range of pupils:

'I don't get so angry now and I don't start a fight I just walk away. It has been really helpful to have someone [social worker, BEST counsellor] to talk to who isn't a teacher. Today we get our SATs results and I'm hoping to get 4 in all of them (he did). I have lots of friends now and I enjoy playing football with them...I'm hoping that I can make a new start in my secondary school'. (Year 6 boy who received an award at the end of term for the progress he had made in relation to behaviour and assessment.)

How did the programme affect teachers' and school leaders' approach to behaviour?

The BIP helped schools and teachers change their approaches to the management of pupils' behaviour to make them more strategic and integrated, including:

- raising the profile of behaviour management and pastoral care in their school
- adopting a more consistent and structured whole-school policy for dealing with poor or concerning behaviour
- encouraging teachers to believe that they could change things for the better (improved general efficacy).

School leaders and teachers began to give behaviour policies the same status as the national literacy and numeracy strategies. They designed and implemented more structured strategies for tackling poor behaviour, involving some or all of the following strands:

- identifying the most important issues through a behaviour audit
- adopting a pro-active and preventative approach involving parents, pupils, staff, governors and outside agencies
- creating clear sets of rules with an emphasis on the positive which were displayed prominently
- close monitoring of behaviour by senior managers.

Practitioners may like to look at a case study that illustrates a behaviour policy implemented by a secondary school in Birmingham.

The new approaches involved a much higher profile being given to inclusion with an emphasis on proactive, preventative work. Schools changed their culture in relation to behaviour so that the staff began to see that others could help them too:

'The most exciting thing about BIP is the way that it has acted as a catalyst to bring about cultural change within schools, and with partner agencies.' (LA coordinator)

The BIP helped teachers to see behaviour more in terms of the issues that affected children's behaviour rather than as a matter of a child behaving badly in the classroom. They began to feel they could have a positive impact on children's behaviour through being able to tackle the difficulties the children themselves faced. One senior manager made the following comment that goes to the heart of the BIP approach:

'For the first time ever in my career I am able to pick up a phone and access professionals who have a responsibility for offering services that normally we can't access...Being able to look a parent in the face and say I can help and knowing that I actually will be able to help. I can get children who have been really damaged help.' (Deputy Head/Lead Behaviour Professional, Primary School).

What combination of approaches worked best when tackling behaviour problems?

The researchers found that the behaviour improvement programme was most effective where:

- a multi-agency approach was adopted through the operation of Behaviour and Educational Support Teams (BESTs)
- the focus was on preventative initiatives
- emphasis was given to change at whole school level through the implementation of behaviour audits
- lead behaviour professionals (LBPs) and learning mentors were appointed
- there was effective management and good communication between all parties.

Key factors in the successful implementation of BIP involved tight management and good communication between the LA, the school and the other agencies. There was a greater impact on behaviour and attendance

when the BEST, LBPs and learning mentors were well coordinated and worked in response to the behaviour audit.

Multi-disciplinary approaches enabled teachers to work with and learn from other qualified professionals to address the needs of children and parents in relation to a wide range of problems including bullying, self-harm, transfer from primary to secondary school, depression, and engagement in criminal activity. Students, parents and teachers valued the flexibility and expertise that combinations of professionals could bring to bear on these different issues speedily, before they escalated.

How did BESTs work?

BESTs brought teachers together with a range of professionals, such as educational psychologists, social workers, Education Welfare officers, and also sometimes police officers and professionals from youth or play work backgrounds. In some cases the LA set up and appointed staff to the BEST whilst in other LAs funding was devolved to schools so they could recruit staff to the BEST. Some LA BESTs already existed. All LAs used BIP funding to support BESTs.

The location of BESTs varied considerably. Many, but not all, had on-site locations serving individual primary and secondary schools, and sometimes clusters of schools. For example, in one LA, each school was in a cluster which had a BEST. There was also a central BEST which offered more specialist support. In other LAs, BESTs were not set up in schools. They introduced themselves to schools through visits, presentations at staff meetings and sending flyers.

BESTs supported students, teachers and families in many ways including:

- one-to-one interventions
- group interventions for pupils
- transition work
- establishing effective links with parents
- support for parents.

(We give more details in a later section, What did schools do to try to address the social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils?)

BESTs were regarded by school staff as a resource for supporting students and, where the BEST was linking well to other agencies, for providing speedy access to other support, particularly when the BESTs were located on-site. Teachers valued the input of BESTs. Many teachers had been aware that some children needed more support but they did not have the time, or the necessary skills to respond:

'The whole impact of BIP is in improving pupils' life chances. Teachers are being enabled to focus on teaching and learning with the range of support staff being able to look after very needy pupils.' (Lead Behaviour Professional Secondary School)

BESTs worked closely with schools to provide support at whole school, group and individual level. In one LA, a Family Support Worker and a police officer working as part of a BEST undertook much family support. The police officer also contributed to Year 8 PSHE lessons, particularly on the subject of drugs. In another LA, a BEST supported Circle Time for 10 weeks with two Year 4 classes.

Such teams provided opportunities for the individual members to share ideas and think about alternative approaches to problems. Sharing ideas also spread to BESTs working with schools, and in many cases BEST coordinators worked with teachers and school leaders to develop internal procedures and policies. They also engendered professional learning and development among team members. For example, in one LA the BEST family therapist helped learning mentors develop their own practice by providing them with theory, suggesting new or alternative strategies and supporting them while they tried them out. In another LA, the BEST speech and language therapist designed a programme for teaching assistants (TAs) to work with pupils,

including training to assess language. The TAs were able to work with students in between the therapy visits, thereby creating another source of support.

Practitioners may like to read the case study that describes the work of BESTs.

How did behaviour professionals help schools, teachers and students?

The study identified two key groups of behaviour professionals:

- lead behaviour professionals (LBPs), and
- learning mentors.

The first group was involved in helping schools and teachers develop and implement behaviour support strategies. The second was more concerned with running and maintaining behaviour support programmes.

Lead behaviour professionals

LBPs were usually recruited from school staff using BIP funding. In primary schools the LBP was typically a senior teacher, a TA, a SENCO or a learning coordinator. Secondary school LBPs were almost always a member of the senior management team. Schools, particularly secondary schools, regarded LBPs as crucial to raising the profile of behaviour and attendance issues in the school. Their impact was greater where they were members of the SMT and were able to challenge and influence whole school practice. LBPs were pivotal when it came to facilitating the development of whole school policies and the consistency with which schools dealt with behaviour issues.

Practitioners might like to read the case study that shows how lead behavioural professionals supported staff and students.

Learning mentors

Learning mentors played a key role in 'supporting at risk pupils, improving behaviour and freeing up staff time', according to one head teacher. Many learning mentors had formerly been learning support assistants; one was a sports coach/drama specialist. They were employed either by the school or by the LA as part of a BEST. They had non-teaching roles, and coordinated and led many different activities designed to support students with social and behavioural problems. These included:

- running nurture groups, breakfast clubs, school and lunchtime activities
- working with difficult young people in groups or one-to-one
- working in-class with teachers to support individuals or groups of pupils, and
- following up absences including home visits.

Practitioners may like to read the case study that illustrates how learning mentors tackled low attainment in a London borough.

How did behaviour audits help schools identify and act on problems?

The LAs reported that they found the DfES Behaviour Audit procedure useful for identifying the problems that needed to be tackled in their schools. Many schools regarded it as long and complex, and modified it to suit local needs. Findings from the audits informed the schools' BIP action plans, highlighted where staff needed training in behaviour strategies and made teachers more aware of the need for consistency.

Specifically the audits helped schools and teachers to do the following.

Identify patterns of disaffection and exclusion

Schools were able to identify particular individual pupils or groups of pupils, the subjects and teachers of the lessons in which problems had arisen, and which days and times of the day seemed to be risk times.

Identify pupils with low self-esteem

In some schools, teachers identified groups of pupils with low self-esteem who then became a focus for mentoring or other supportive activity.

Identify vulnerable children

Teachers were able to gain an accurate picture of who the most vulnerable children were, the support they were already receiving and what extra support they might need.

Provide evidence to support school behaviour plans

The audits sometimes challenged existing school practices and led teachers and school leaders to look more closely at what they were doing. Examples of changes in practice following behaviour audits included the restructuring of classroom systems to vertical grouping, the introduction of pastoral prefects to provide 'good' role models, the development of a new code of conduct, rescheduling of the school day by reducing the lunch hour, changes to lunchtime supervision arrangements, the establishment of a time out room, and the re-writing of the school's behaviour policy.

What did schools do to try to address the social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils?

BIP had the most impact when it tackled the underlying causes of non-attendance and poor behaviour. In the LAs that showed the greatest improvements in attendance, attainment and reductions in exclusions, the BIP operated at several levels: that of the individual child, the school and the community. Schools allocated a named key worker to all students who were identified as having emotional and behavioural problems that put them at risk of exclusion or poor attendance. Key workers were nominated from among teachers, LBPs, learning mentors, members of senior management teams or members of BESTs. Working with other professionals, schools engaged in a number of supportive activities identified with successful practice, including:

Nurture groups

Nurture groups addressed social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the early years with a view to reducing disaffection and increasing attendance. They supported personal and social skill development through a structured routine that included individual, small group and whole group activities.

Practitioners may like to look at the case study that illustrates how nurture groups work in practice.

Counselling

Support professionals including learning mentors, family and community liaison officers, family therapists, educational social workers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMMHS) staff and educational psychologists gave one-to-one support for students and their families. In most cases these professionals were part of the BESTs, but sometimes they were members of other agencies which schools had access to under the BIP. The more specialised staff such as those from CAMHS and educational psychologists were likely to be part of BESTs located in the LA rather than from those in schools.

Group interventions for pupils

Interventions for small groups of pupils tended to focus on anger management and self-esteem. Groups generally ran for between 6-8 weeks. Such interventions were usually conducted by BEST members.

Working with parents

By working directly with parents, schools were able to raise parents' understanding of how to manage their children's behaviour at home and to encourage them to attend school. Work with parents took a number of forms including:

- family therapy to support children and parents
- one-to-one counselling support for children
- providing opportunities for parents to meet in the school, and
- responding to families' needs, such as helping parents with parenting skills, providing breakfast clubs and working with families to improve pupils' attendance.

Practitioners may like to read the case study that shows one way in which schools and parents worked together to raise children's achievement in mathematics and reading.

What changes did schools make to curriculum provision for disaffected pupils?

Schools in over half of the LAs used project funding to support the development of alternative curricula. There were a number of different approaches, often reflecting specific local features of the school and community. Most initiatives involved an alternative approach to the existing curriculum that incorporated some degree of off-site education. Other strategies were based in the schools such as nurture groups, which we have discussed already. In a few cases there were very different curriculum designs:

- alternative curricula involving off-site experience - a fairly typical pattern entailed the students spending time in school on a restricted curriculum, work experience and time in college
- community based initiatives, such as Re-Entry, that had an educational bias - such initiatives were frequently aimed at helping young people excluded or truanting from school to embark upon a programme leading to their return to mainstream education, or access to a training programme

vocational schemes such as Skill Force - this is a Ministry of Defence (MoD) sponsored youth initiative, jointly funded with the DfES; it offers 14-16 year old students a key skills based vocational alternative to the traditional curriculum based on a wide range of practical and life skills activities

Notschool.net - this is an online education service that provides education for children who are not attending school. It has its own accreditation scheme and pupils are supported by mentors and specialists.

Many centres were run by teachers and youth service workers, although more specialist organisations, such as Skill Force, either had their own staff or recruited them from the local community (see the next section). Students in off-site settings enjoyed the more relaxed atmosphere in which they could talk to members of staff at any time. Staff got to know them and their families well and this made them feel supported. Links with the schools were maintained through staff. Whilst pupils continued to follow some of the mainstream curricula such as mathematics, English and, in some cases, ICT, they also had extra lessons, for example, in citizenship and drug awareness. The additional tuition often involved other agencies such as the police.

The very different curricula offered by Skill Force and notschool.net were both reported favourably. The more relaxed and informal approaches to learning in these programmes contributed to their success. For example, Skill Force was described as 'popular with pupils', 'well received in secondary schools by pupils and teachers' and as a 'offering innovative approaches to teaching and learning to meet the needs of disaffected pupils.'

Practitioners may like to read our earlier RfT, 'Alternative curriculum provision'.

What measures did schools adopt in relation to exclusion?

Whilst the responsibility for arranging provision for excluded pupils ultimately fell on LAs, the strategies employed were often initiated by schools. It was common for excluded pupils to spend the first day of exclusion at home with work provided by the schools. From the second day, there were a variety of approaches to excluded pupils. Many schools preferred to handle exclusion themselves without involving the LA, often in partnership with other schools in a cluster, so that excluded pupils remained within their own school community. The study described arrangements for exclusion in which individual schools and clusters of schools developed their own provision. To do so they used a mix of strategies selected from the following menu:

- in-school support, often provided by learning mentors
- an exclusion base in school usually staffed by teachers on a rota, although in some cases it was overseen by a full time member of staff; there was evidence that schools sometimes found it difficult to maintain internal exclusion centres
- using outside agencies such as Re-Entry, who recruited members of the community who were trained by a mentor development officer
- reciprocal arrangements between schools; they provided a location for each other's excluded pupils. Responsibility for setting work usually remained with the excluding school.

Some schools rearranged the school day for excluded pupils so that they attended at different times to the other children. The timing was left to schools to organise; usually pupils attended during the afternoon until 5:30pm-6pm. This strategy seemed more common in extended schools.

Practitioners may like to read a case study describing how professionals of various kinds supported students and teachers in a behavioural support unit.

Practitioners may like to read our earlier RfT, 'Positive alternatives to exclusion.'

How was the study designed?

The aims of the study were to examine and evaluate:

- how schools and LAs implemented the BIP programme
- which measures or combinations of measures school staff, parents and children perceived to be most successful, and
- the impact of the programme on pupils, teachers and school leaders.

The researchers collected and analysed data to help them make comparisons in relation to attendance, attainment and exclusion between:

- schools in the BIP and similar schools that were not part of the programme
- schools in the two phases of BIP
- schools in the BIP and the national average figures.

The study was conducted in two phases.

Phase 1

In phase 1, the DfES funded 34 LAs to support behaviour measures in two to four secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. Altogether 700 schools were involved. The LAs were selected on the basis of their high truancy and crime figures. Overall, secondary schools were selected to participate in the BIP on the basis of their relatively low attendance levels, high exclusion rates and location in high crime areas).

All the schools served socially and economic deprived communities, as indicated by these statistics about their pupils:

- 2.3% had SEN with statements
- 22% had SEN without statements
- 42% were entitled to free school meals

- 34% had English as an additional language.

Some LAs also took into account other factors, when selecting schools, including ethnicity and gender balance, and evidence from behaviour audits already undertaken.

The evaluation of Phase 1 of the BIP was undertaken in three stages. Firstly, the coordinators in all participating LEAs were interviewed by telephone. The researchers collected exclusion data where possible (120 schools). From these data, 18 LAs were selected for fieldwork. The sample was chosen to reflect the different types of interventions and the combinations which had been most commonly adopted. Meetings were arranged with the coordinators and interviews were undertaken with individuals or with teams involved in the implementation of BIP. The teams included those which were school led and those which were LA led.

To find out what measures or combinations of measures were most successful in improving standards of behaviour and reducing truancy and exclusions, the researchers examined the practices of ten secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in more detail. Evidence from the interviews, and the data collected relating to exclusions, attendance and behaviour were used to select the schools for extended field visits. Interviews were undertaken with teachers not directly involved with the implementation of the project, classroom assistants, pupils and parents.

Phase 2

In the second phase of BIP the programme was rolled out to include a further 26 LAs involving 99 secondary schools and 446 primary schools. Sixteen of the LAs were selected for visits; the selection was made so that it included LAs which were different in type, had different school populations and adopted different approaches to the implementation. The visits were made at LA level and interviews were undertaken with LEA personnel. No visits were made to schools.

What did the programme involve?

Local authorities and schools in BIP were presented with a menu of strategies based on existing good practice for LAs and schools to choose from. They were also offered the opportunity to develop and put into practice their own ideas. The menu included:

- whole-school approaches to promote good behaviour, including anti-bullying initiatives
- strategies to support individual pupils at risk of developing behaviour problems, including alternative curricula and internal exclusion units
- innovative approaches to teaching and learning to meet the needs of students at risk of disaffection, including nurture groups, circle and ICT based approaches to learning
- measures to identify and respond to students who were not attending school regularly and to respond effectively
- activities designed to extend the use of school premises to provide a range of services, activities and additional learning opportunities for pupils, their families and the wider community
- Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) with the capacity to draw together the full range of specialist support
- police based on the school site working alongside school staff
- the services of key workers to act as coordinators who can provide or broker the necessary help for students in need of support
- any training that was needed for the personnel involved in the above.

Over 50% of the LAs adopted their own strategies, including:

- teenage mothers' projects
- working with the voluntary sector
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) support programmes.

The main difference between the activities in the two phases was that there was more uniformity in the strategies adopted in phase 2 and a greater emphasis on curriculum development, support for parents and

independent initiatives. In phase 1 LAs held the finance and responded to schools' needs; in phase 2 25% of the budget was delegated to schools. There was little difference in the way the programmes were implemented or in the overall impact in the two phases.

Implications for practice

Teachers seeking to improve behaviour in their schools and classrooms may like to consider the following implications of the findings of this study:

- the study reported several ways in which other behaviour professionals try to help pupils including improving pupils' communication skills, helping them with anger management and counselling. How could you get together with colleagues to identify the particular needs of pupils in your school and devise a programme that targets their needs?
- could you do more to involve parents of children with behaviour problems, by for example, structuring homework tasks so that children are encouraged by the task to talk to their parents about their learning and, work with them? Would it be possible for parents and pupils to take part in after-school family learning activities that parents can follow up at home? Could you discuss with parents what alternative strategies you could adopt that might help their child in school?
- have you noticed (or could you make use of data to identify) a particular group, or groups of students who seem to be falling behind in the classes you teach? Would you find it helpful to investigate strategies you could use to help them? Are there ways in which other professionals such as learning mentors might be able to help in this?
- evidence in this RfT indicates that teachers benefit from training in dealing with behaviour issues. Can you identify areas for your own development that you would like to pursue with a lead behaviour professional?

School leaders may find the following implications helpful in acting on the messages in this RfT:

- would it be helpful to find out more about how teachers in your school view your existing school behaviour policies - in terms of usefulness, appropriateness and effectiveness and what improvements they think might be made?
- the study highlighted the effectiveness of drawing on the experience of other qualified professionals, such as from the LA or other schools, to support staff, help develop whole school approaches and train teachers in tackling behavioural issues. Is this an area that you could explore with your staff, perhaps beginning with a behaviour audit to identify the key areas? What kind of access do you have in practice to a range of suitably qualified and experienced professionals and how might you improve this if necessary?
- support from LAs was a significant feature of the BIP. What sort of links would you need to develop with local agencies such as social services to develop similar programmes? Would it be feasible to approach your LA to make sure your school is linked to the full possible range of such support?
- some schools in the study began to place behaviour strategies on a par with national strategies in literacy and numeracy. How far do staff in your school see social behavioural and learning strategies as interdependent? Is this an area in which staff would value discussion?

BESTs are now being created in LAs all over the country, and evidence in the RfT study suggests that the combination of different specialisms in the teams makes them particularly responsive to the range of issues underlying social and behavioural problems. To what extent are you aware of or involved in your local BEST? Would it be helpful to include the work of the local BEST as a factor in your whole-school plan?

Filling in the gaps

Gaps that are uncovered in a research study have a useful role in making sure that future research builds cumulatively on what is known. But research also needs to inform practice, so practitioners' interpretation of the gaps and follow-up questions are crucial. Some gaps in the research we noticed while preparing this RfT were:

- what are the most effective ways of developing teachers' expertise in tackling behaviour problems in their classrooms?
- what do pupils think about possible intervention strategies aimed at improving attendance and behaviour? Could existing pupil voice work provide a basis for further research? (You may find it useful to look at the RfT on pupil voice (click to RfT 26))
- what are the long-term impacts on attainment of behaviour improvement practices in schools?
- how do improvements in teaching and learning affect behaviour?
- what specific forms of multi-agency working have the greatest impact on attendance and learning?

- how have different schools set about building behaviour for learning policies and practices that are sustained over time?
- is the citizenship agenda having any impact on patterns of behaviour in school?

Overall, there is a shortage of longitudinal studies on the impact of behaviour improvement practices in schools on attainment as well as attendance.

What is your experience?

Do you have any evidence regarding the impact of different approaches to teaching in your school? Do you have action research or enquiry based development programmes running that explore cultural differences and attitudes in education, for example, which we could perhaps feature in our case study section.

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Case study

We have selected the following case studies to illustrate different ways in which teachers working with teacher colleagues and/or with other professionals have tackled problems of poor behaviour and disaffection. The case studies focus on behaviour strategies designed to create positive conditions for learning for all pupils. Most of them also discuss issues of professional development of staff. All the case studies were drawn from research conducted by teachers and other behaviour professionals.

BFL: Boosting staff and pupil morale to help increase academic attainment

We chose this case study because it illustrates how a school designed and implemented a discipline system known as 'Behaviour for Learning' (BFL) designed to tackle 'low level behaviour' problems in order to boost conditions for learning. The study took place in a large 11-18 Technology College of 1500 pupils in Birmingham. The school had a history of underachievement. There was intensive streaming; many of the students in the lower streams were not attending, whilst those in the higher streams received a lot of attention. Many students left with bad feelings about their time in school. Despite changes to the pastoral system to make it more student-centred, the school considered there were still too many low-level behaviour problems and launched the BFL programme. The scheme took a lot of time to develop, but was relatively inexpensive to implement. The head teacher and the staff worked hard to establish the BFL as a coherent, consistent whole-school strategy.

What were the main features of the programme?

BFL was based on four 'consequences' (C1 to C4 for short) for students in relation to behaviour in classrooms, circulation areas (CCTV is used in these areas) and toilets:

- C1 and C2 were verbal warnings
- C3 led to a detention, usually held the day after the offence
- C4 resulted in a one-day referral spent in the school's isolation unit.

The isolation unit was a small room which could accommodate up to five students at a time. Referred students were usually kept in the unit for one school day from 9am until 3pm although this was extended in more serious cases. The students were under continual supervision of a member of staff, a former head of year who had returned from retirement. The most likely reasons for internal exclusion in the unit were bullying, verbal violence or swearing at another student. Students were also excluded for any physical violence or verbal violence aimed at a member of staff. Students were permanently excluded for carrying inappropriate items such as a knife or drugs.

In all cases in which a student received a C3 or 4, the details of the incident were input directly by staff into a

searchable intranet database; teachers could readily access these data to show to parents.

A deputy head was responsible for overseeing the scheme with help from the heads of year. Administrative support was provided by a pastoral secretary.

How was the BFL supported by the school ethos?

The programme was complemented by the creation of an ethos that aimed to get the students onside. The staff stressed that the overall aim was to remove the negative effects of bad behaviour and to inculcate a greater sense of individual responsibility among the students. Each of the consequence levels were explained to the students and any changes announced in assemblies.

What did the programme achieve?

Between 1988 and 2003 the number of pupils gaining five A* - C GCSE results rose from 6% to 75%. BFL also has boosted staff and pupil morale. In 2000, the chief inspector of schools described the achievement of the school in these words: 'Of the 1,650 secondary schools receiving a full inspection since September 1997, the teaching quality profile is the best of any.'

Reference:

TeacherNet case study from Ninestiles school, Acocks Green, Birmingham

Behaviour and Education support teams in Sunderland, UK

We chose this case study because it showed how two behaviour and education support teams (BESTs) worked as part of a Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) initiative in Sunderland LA. The aim was to improve behaviour and attendance in schools, to promote the emotional health and well-being of children and young people and to provide targeted support where necessary for early intervention and preventive strategies. Two BESTs were created in order to enable staff from a range of agencies to work together.

BEST professionals helped staff devise more personalised learning and provide out-of-school learning opportunities. They also prepared groups of vulnerable primary children for transition to secondary school.

The two BESTs were based on a primary school site and they shared resources and personnel. They aimed to reach a point where they were not seen as an outside service, but as providers of a 'way of working' within schools and communities, in which all partners took a collective responsibility for young people.

How did the BESTs support schools, children and families?

The BIP schools were grouped into four clusters, each made up of one secondary school and between two and five primary schools in the same local area. Each BEST served two clusters. The amount and type of support provided to each school was based on their particular level of need. The teams work with 5 to 13 year olds; this age limit helped to set boundaries for the scope of the service and the number of cases they dealt with.

They offered support in a variety of ways, including:

- therapeutic sessions for children and families
- project work with groups of children to raise self-esteem and develop social skills
- after school and transition groups
- advice to schools and parents/ carers on a wide range of issues
- alternative curricular programmes
- signposting to relevant external support services
- training for schools to enable them to develop a range of strategies for promoting emotional well-being, positive behaviour and attendance.

One BEST worked with a school to enhance the pastoral support system and complement changes in the

learning support unit (LSU) provision. It helped staff develop a more appropriate curriculum, introduce individualised learning and provide after-school clubs and school holiday programmes. The team also set up a transitions group with the SEN coordinator that was well received by staff and students. Pupils likely to have difficulties adjusting to secondary school were grouped and taught together in ways that addressed their problems.

How were referrals made and what happened afterwards?

Pupils, parents and carers as well as teachers could make referrals when the pupil was experiencing difficulties with:

- behaviour in school or at home, such as difficulty in concentrating or settling in school
- school attendance, including non-attendance and exclusion
- emotional well-being as indicated by being withdrawn, anxious or depressed.

Once a referral was accepted, the pupil entered the teams' 'comprehensive case management process'. This aimed to ensure that interventions were carried out and progress recorded consistently. The BESTs recorded the perceptions of pupil, parent and school regarding the pupil's learning, relationships with others and emotional well-being. A simple 'red, amber, green' coding system was used to plan support and assess progress. The profile was completed at the start, after six weeks and at the end of the 12-week intervention.

During the intervention the pupil was allocated a link worker from the team who acted as a point of contact for pupils and families. The link worker could access support from the other members of the team or from other agencies.

If a pupil was not taken on because their needs did not meet the criteria, the team discussed possible strategies with the school.

How were the BESTs structured?

The Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), of which the BESTs were a part, are one component of the local Excellence in Cities (EIC) programme.

The two teams were made up of 27 staff altogether, including coordinators, mental health staff, social workers, health staff, youth workers, teachers and mentors. The coordinators were members of the BIP management group that met every half term. Associate members of the BEST included school attendance staff, police, youth offending team, local authority and all the BIP schools. The BESTs kept all partners informed about the work of the teams, and drew on them as necessary for joint working. Communication with partners and stakeholders in the BIP was regarded as a core responsibility and gave the BESTs an opportunity to stress that this was a long-term project requiring changes in the way that all agencies worked together, and that it was not just about 'parachuting in a support service to scoop up' challenging pupils.

Staff were selected jointly by the BIP management and partner agencies on a secondment basis; this removed any uncertainty staff had about their future employment. Team members were managed on a day-to-day basis by the BEST coordinators, but professional supervision remained with the home agency. In developing the teams, BEST coordinators built on the individual skills of members rather than their particular professional backgrounds. They invested time at the start of the project on induction and team building, in order to create openness and trust.

What did the BESTs achieve?

Evidence about the programmes was still emerging at the time of writing. However, in one school a figure of 140 exclusions five years ago had fallen to only two in the current year. One deputy head commented:

'BEST provides direct, quick access and also an appropriate response to our needs. The breadth of experience of the team means they can

look below presenting symptoms and identify what the problems really are. They provide positive activities at lunchtime, which has reduced pupils going off site at lunchtime. It's also beneficial that the BEST works with families not just children.'

Reference:

Paul Threadgall, Sunderland local authority

The impact of Oxstall Community School's behaviour support unit

We selected this case study because it described a behaviour support unit (BSU) that not only provided for students at risk of exclusion, but also helped to drive school policy, with a particular focus on the professional development of newly qualified teachers in relation to social, emotional and behavioural issues. The BSU was situated in Gloucester Education Action Zone and the 11-16 school was facing challenging circumstances. The majority of students came from socially and economically deprived areas and almost half had special educational needs (SEN). The unit was housed in a classroom in the main school building.

The BSU staff helped students develop social and personal skills in relation to self-esteem, conflict resolution and emotional intelligence, as well as providing teaching of several curricular areas including the core subjects. Staff development was also a key objective and involved shared planning and coaching of behaviour strategies.

How was the BSU organised and how did it work?

Overall responsibility for the unit lay with the school's Director of Inclusion. The unit staffing consisted of the unit manager who had previous experience in learning support and three behaviour support workers. Professionals in the BSU collaborated with other agencies including health visitors and a child action worker from the social services department and together they adopted an integrated approach to preventative work.

The BSU staff offered students a broad range of skills through mentoring, counselling and behaviour management as well as expertise across several curricular areas including the core subjects. Much of the support was in-class although some pupils were timetabled in the unit as part of a planned intervention programme, those pupils most at risk of exclusion being the main target group. The behaviour modification curriculum was carefully designed and included raising self esteem, conflict resolution, social skills and emotional intelligence conducted in one-to-one mentoring sessions, group work and workshops.

The approach adopted by the unit was based on a number of strategies for pupils and teachers including:

- referral of students to the unit by staff or the BSU usually after four or more unsatisfactory behaviour grades
- analysis of assessment grades to identify patterns, for example, in relation to subjects and/or teachers
- enabling teachers who have issues with behaviour management to receive appropriate professional support and development
- preparing detailed behaviour support plans for each student referred, structured on the common format of learning behaviours, conduct behaviours and emotional behaviours with clear action points for each area
- close monitoring of students' progress with presented of data in a graphical form keeping parents and carers informed.

During sessions with individual students, staff explored with them the underlying causes of problems and behaviours. Creating trust between staff and students was a key element in the BSU's success in establishing relationships in which students felt safe enough to discuss their feelings openly with the adults.

What were the benefits of the BSU?

The BSU aimed to create consistent practice across the school, including sharing common strategies and language when dealing with students' behaviour. All teachers benefited from this but particularly NQTs and

other recent entrants. The unit provided resources for teachers and conducted teacher and pupil mediation sessions. Main school teachers and BSU staff undertook training in coaching Building Learning Power and staff in the unit used their coaching skills to develop NQTs with whom they worked in partnership. The BSU used specialist and peer coaching with observation and feedback to develop staff expertise.

The work of the BSU to support NQTs was complemented by the LA's Secondary Behaviour Management Team which provided a range of support activities. These included:

- a one-day behaviour management course
- half day visit in school by one of the team who observes the NQT teaching against a checklist of criteria; feedback following the lesson forms the basis of further action and support from the LA
- more advanced CPD for teachers in their second and third years.

Records maintained by the unit suggested that rates of improvement for pupils attached to the BSU were generally good.

Reference:

Teacher Training Agency regional induction consultants (RICs), 2003/04

Nurture groups

We chose this case study because it showed how a nurture group operated in a primary school in England. Nurture groups aim to create a safe environment for vulnerable children in which teaching professionals can help them develop social skills. A key focus is to encourage them to talk and to listen to others as a foundation for future learning.

What are nurture groups?

Nurture groups usually consist of a class of about 10 children, mainly, but not always in primary schools. They have their own room, preferably in a central part of the school. The group is part of the school's planning. Children usually spend up to four terms in the nurture group before re-joining their mainstream class. Training for nurture group staff is based on responding to the children's needs at whatever developmental stage they might have reached. Nurture group activity is underpinned by a number of core principles:

- children's learning is understood developmentally
- the classroom offers a safe base
- nurture is essential for the development of self-esteem
- language is a vital means of communication - more than a 'tool', it is a vehicle for expressing feelings and emotions
- all behaviour is communication
- transitions are important in children's lives.

Typically the children register with their 'base' class, are collected by group staff, and spend most of the day in the group room. They keep in contact with the rest of the school at midday lunch, at breaks and in their base class for the last part of the day, although precise details can vary from school to school. Nurture group staff find it useful to have protected time for recording and planning, for training or for meetings with parents.

How did the staff create a supportive social context?

In this nurture group, breakfast was a key time and offered the teacher and the learning support assistant who ran the group the opportunity to engage the children in good social behaviours and to encourage them to talk and to listen to others. The staff helped the children to feel valued and 'thought about' by significant adult figures. The same adults and children stay together through most of the school day in a secure, safe and pleasant environment.

Modelling the use of language to express feelings rather than acting them out, using names and eye contact, reminding the children to say please and thank you were more than just polite social conventions - they were the core of training children in sharing and taking turns.

How did teachers monitor children's progress in the nurture groups?

On entry to the group, each child was assessed in relation to their reaction to early learning processes and behaviours that acted as barriers to normal school development. This constituted the child's Boxall Profile (after the late Marjorie Boxall, who started nurture groups in 1969). It showed the child's strengths and weaknesses and enabled staff to construct individual educational plans. It also helped the staff build a store of case experience which they could draw on in new situations. As one teacher commented:

'Confronted with a child whose anxiety-provoking behaviour seems to make no sense, the Profile is where you start. It gives you insights and suggests points of entry into the child's world.'

How did the nurture group benefit the pupils?

The following comment indicated the potential of nurture groups for making the difference to emotionally and socially disadvantaged children:

'When Robert entered school aged 4, he hit the other children, grabbed their toys and destroyed their work. He had no measurable attainments and poor control over his movements. He never seemed to listen so never did anything his teacher asked. It soon became clear that he was a very angry child defending himself as best he could...

'After less than a year all his skills were up to par... He has learnt to trust the adults in the group, to work with other children and to take pride in his progress. He was ready to return full-time to his normal class. His mother, who had been afraid that the school would reject him, was delighted with the change in him and was also beginning to get her own life back under control.'

Reference:

'Nurture Groups - It's the stories that matter'
Jim Rose, Director, The Nurture Group Network
Young minds Magazine, Nov. 2004

Inspire: involving school parents in reading and mathematics

We chose this case study because it described the Involving School Parents in Reading and Mathematics (Inspire) project, an initiative set up by Birmingham LA's Core Skills Development Partnership. It was (and remains) a multi-agency programme aiming to encourage the involvement of families and parents in their children's literacy and numeracy in all of Birmingham's 370 primary and nursery schools. The project's premise was that by engaging parents and families in their children's learning, not only does children's achievement rise, but adults and siblings also learn. Specifically the aims of Inspire were:

- to achieve more effective partnerships between school and home
- to enhance and increase the opportunities for learning in and through the home
- for schools to share information about teaching and learning in school with parents
- to contribute to raising achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Inspire was designed as an integral part of mainstream education and cross-departmental city planning. The project is led by the Head of Family Learning, Birmingham Education Service, working with seven Inspire tutors. The partnership brought together key agencies including the City Council, Health, Learning and Skills Council, Connexions, Jobcentre Plus, and the Voluntary Service Council. Networking remains a key element

of the programme linking schools to health through infant clinics, to libraries, and to social services through Sure Start and Early Years workers.

How did Inspire work in practice?

Implementation of Inspire involved these key features:

- an induction day for senior managers, and teachers from each Key Stage
- a workshop for parents at which they were supported by trained mentors from Inspire - adults worked with their children and teachers for practical activities such as producing a game, song, stories, puppets or books
- after the workshop the teachers shared experiences and planned how to extend the practice throughout the school
- a lead teacher in each school to coordinate Inspire and integrate it into the whole school planning process.

A project manager, paid for by the local authority (LA), organised the induction, support and further training, and co-ordinated a group of mentors. These mentors were teachers released from their own school for a payment from Inspire, to support new schools.

How successful was Inspire in engaging parents and families and improving learning?

The authors reported that the impact on adults was one of the Partnership's significant achievements:

- an average of 87% of families in each class attended the workshops
- 45 000 families were involved in Birmingham every year
- 18% of participants were men (8000 per year).

Schools reported:

- increased educational activity in the home in 73% of schools
- increased parental understanding of children's learning in 88% of schools
- raised achievement in literacy and numeracy in 61% of schools.

Evidence showed that over 40 000 parents were involved with their child's teacher in relation to literacy and numeracy skills development each year, including some groups who have been hard to engage, such as men and some minority ethnic families.

Inspire helped to point parents towards other family learning initiatives, including:

- 'Keeping Up with the Children', a programme that aims to deepen parents' understandings of the national literacy and numeracy strategies at primary and Key Stage 3 levels
- family Literacy and Numeracy courses provided jointly by teachers and adult basic skills providers using an approach that links the content to the skills from the literacy/numeracy framework that the children are practising in class at the time
early years programmes, such as Flying Start (conducted by Pre School Workers) and the family learning team's Early Start and drop-In activities designed to boost language, literacy and numeracy within families
- support for families in hostels and refuges which works through a mix of workshops, short courses and book sharing sessions to help parents' use of books and maths games, communications and parenting skills and behaviour management
- Bookstart (run through libraries) set out to boost interest in books and access to library services for families with young children.

Reference:

Inspire: involving school parents in reading and mathematics

North Fulham learning mentor project

We selected this case study because it illustrates how the North Fulham New Deal for Communities (NFNDFC) partnership implemented a learning mentor project in order to tackle the problems faced by schools, pupils and families in this disadvantaged community. Around 11 820 people lived in the area, of whom almost a third were from ethnic minorities. The population was relatively young, with a fifth under 16 years of age. English is an additional language for 18% of residents, and recent years have seen a significant increase in the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in the area. Children in the area were underachieving educationally. Family dysfunction was a significant issue.

The NFNDFC's learning mentors scheme began in August 2001. There was one full-time mentor in each of the three local primary schools engaged in the project as well as a project coordinator and a learning mentor assistant. The partnership later took on an additional half time learning mentor for each school.

Specifically the project aimed to:

- raise educational achievement among NDC area pupils
- improve attendance at school
- reduce the number of exclusions
- develop a preventative, early intervention programme for families who need support.

A key area for attention for the learning tutors was improving pupils' organisational skills, such as planning their time and prioritising tasks. This helped pupils get more control of their learning and contributed to improved attainment. The mentors also worked with families and informed parents about what the children were learning in class.

How did the learning mentors work with teachers and schools?

The learning mentors worked closely with teaching staff to identify children who were at risk of underachieving. Members of staff referred children to the scheme for a number of reasons, including:

- challenging behaviour or anger management problems
- difficult personal circumstances, such as being in care
- bereavement
- difficult peer relationships or low self-esteem
- evidence of neglect, food issues or housing issues
- missed medical appointments
- persistent lateness or poor attendance
- secondary school transfer.

A major strength of the scheme was that by working together teachers and learning mentors could spot children having difficulties, identify their needs and develop appropriate responses. When a child was referred, the learning mentors not only provided counselling for the child but supported the family too.

The mentors were flexible in their responses to the needs of the pupils and adopted a variety of approaches, including:

- using 'circle time' to help children develop their educational and social skills
- monitoring attendance and developing strategies to improve poor attendance and following up absentees with home visits
- class-based support

- one-to-one sessions
- case conferences
- working with parents through surgeries, parents' groups and practical support such as accompanying children to and from school when their siblings are ill
coordinating outside support in order to make links between the children and their families and other services
- organising social/sports activities; for example, football clubs, school journeys, and lunchtime or after school clubs.

What did the project achieve?

During its three years the project made an impact in a number of ways including:

- improved attainment at the three primary schools - as measured by teacher assessment and SAT scores
- the behaviour of children who have taken part in the scheme has improved
- pupils' attendance has risen
- there have been no exclusions.

The learning mentors helped pupils to develop better organisational skills, so that they were more able to plan their time, set priorities and follow instructions. Improved behaviour gave children the opportunity to work better in class. In addition, the mentors' emphasis on working with families as well as the children themselves meant that parents got more involved in their children's education and became aware of what the learning mentors were trying to achieve.

Reference:

North Fulham learning mentor project.

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Further reading

What else might I enjoy reading?

Parsons, C., Godfrey, R., Howlett, K., Hayden, C., Martin, T. (2001) 'Excluding Primary School Children - The Outcomes Six Years On', Pastoral Care in Education, 19 (4), pp.4-15.

Pearce, N. and Hillman, J. (1998). Wasted Youth: raising attainment and social exclusion. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Related research

Positive Activities For Young People: National Evaluation - Final Report

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/EP00202/>

Research Informed Practice website digests

TRIPS: Inclusion digests

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/research/themes/inclusion/?digest=all>

Includes the following:

- o Can Instructional and Emotional support in the Key Stage 1 classroom make a difference for children at risk of school failure?
- o Inclusion in action: an in-depth case study of an effective inclusive secondary school in the south-west of England
- o Reducing School Exclusions: an evaluation of a multi-site development project
- o What is the effect of after school provision on children's academic performance and motivation?

TRIPS: Speaking and listening digests

Includes 'Widening access to educational opportunities through teaching children how to reason together.'

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/research/themes/speakandlisten/?digest=all>

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Appraisal

Robustness

This study investigated a behaviour improvement programme (BIP) which was piloted in 700 schools (primary and secondary) from 34 local authorities (LAs) selected on the basis of their truancy and crime figures. The researchers wanted to find out what measures, or combinations of measures teachers, school leaders and pupils felt were most successful in improving standards of behaviour, and reducing truancy and exclusions, thereby creating the conditions for effective learning.

The research was conducted in two stages. During Phase 1, the researchers conducted telephone interviews with coordinators in all the LAs regarding the way they had implemented the programme. They then selected 18 LAs for fieldwork. The sample of LAs was chosen to reflect the types of interventions and combinations of interventions most commonly adopted. The researchers visited and interviewed the teams involved in implementing the programmes.

On the basis of the interview data and data relating to exclusions, attendance and behaviour, the researchers chose ten secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. They interviewed teachers not directly involved in the implementation of the programme from these schools as well as classroom assistants, pupils and parents. Phase two of the project involved 26 LAs and 545 schools. The researchers selected 16 LAs for visits and conducted interviews with LA personnel. The researchers used the data they collected to make comparisons in relation to attendance, attainment and exclusion between schools involved and not involved in the BIP programme, schools in both phases of BIP and schools involved in BIP and national average figures.

The study found the schools that were most effective at improving behaviour were those that:

- undertook preventative initiatives
- adopted a multi-agency approach (Behaviour and Education Support Teams - BESTS)
- emphasised change at whole school level through the implementation of behaviour audits
- appointed Lead Behaviour Professionals (LBPs) and learning mentors
- had effective management and good communication between all parties.

Relevance

Tackling truancy and bad behaviour in schools is currently a national priority. Exclusion from school and poor attendance are related to low academic achievement, unemployment, antisocial behaviour and crime. Improving attendance and behaviour are crucial to raising all students' attainment generally, improving the life chances of at-risk students and improving communities as a whole. The study showed that preventative programmes, increasing pastoral support and working with other professionals was effective at helping schools to improve standards of behaviour, and reduce truancy and exclusions.

Applicability

The study provides rich detail about what schools did in order to identify and tackle social, emotional and behavioural problems. They used behaviour audits to support the development of behaviour improvement plans. The audits helped schools identify where they needed to focus their resources. Their programmes had most impact when they focused on pupils' experiences in school - leading them to want to attend. Initiatives that focused solely on improving attendance (such as truancy sweeps and rewarding pupils for good

attendance etc) had a more limited impact because they tended not to address the underlying causes of non-attendance, such as bullying or family problems.

The study describes how the appointment of key personnel including 'Lead Behavioural Professionals' (LBPs) and 'Learning Mentors' helped raise the status of pastoral support and behaviour management in schools and provided leadership in the design and implementation of behaviour policies. Their impact was greater where they were members of the Senior Management Team and were able to challenge and influence whole school policy. Learning Mentors (who were often recruited from among learning assistants, or teachers with specific learning responsibilities such as SENCOs) played a key role in running various strategies such as nurture groups, circle time, student support and family liaison.

The study also provides details of multi agency 'Behaviour and Educational Support Teams' (BESTs). BESTs brought teachers together with a range of professionals, such as educational psychologists, social workers, Education Welfare officers, and also sometimes police officers. This gave them opportunities to share ideas and think about alternative approaches to problems. Basing BESTs in schools made it possible to provide multi-agency services more speedily than had been previously the case.

Writing

The report is reasonably accessible for a teacher audience, although it is a little long and the style is wordy in places. The study reports on two levels - the local authorities and the schools - the latter being the more useful for a teacher audience. There is no complex jargon, but there are a great many terms for those with core roles such LBPs, Learning Mentors, key workers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) workers, and in some cases there are different terms for those with similar roles such as community link officer, home school liaison worker, family liaison worker. Findings and processes are well signposted and all the numerical data are clearly and helpfully presented.

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