education review

Pupil Behaviour & Special Education - Contemporary Perspectives

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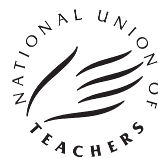

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contents

volume 19 • number 1

Preface
Steve Sinnott, General Secretary, NUT 1

How the Education White Paper will improve education for all children
Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Education and Skills 4

Personal experience
David Cameron, Conservative Party Leader 8

Special Schools or not?
Baroness Mary Warnock, DBE 13

A range of provision
John Bangs, Assistant Secretary, Education and Equal Opportunities Department, NUT 18

Education for well-being
Professor John White, Institute of Education, London University 28

Young people, schools and offending
Graham Robb, Youth Justice Board of England and Wales 34

Learning to behave
Judith Elderkin, NUT Executive Member 42

Learning styles - is there an evidence base for this popular idea?
Elaine Hall, Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Newcastle 49

Beyond behaviour management - manage or motivate?
Michelle MacGrath, Behaviour and attendance service, Kent 57

The key to successful behaviour management is...you!
Phil Craig, Head of Service for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, Kirklees LEA 65

Inside outside
Janet Adamson, Headteacher, Clifton Primary School, Hull 71

Classroom feng shui
Benjamin Poole, Cardiff High School, South Wales 76

Book reviews 84

Preface by Steve Sinnott, General Secretary, National Union of Teachers

Education Review is unique in bringing together politicians, policy 'movers and shakers', philosophers and practitioners. The range of contributors to this edition continues that tradition. Each article offers a perspective on special education needs and/or pupil behaviour.

Lady Warnock's recent re-evaluation of 'her' views on special educational needs – and in particular the desirability and practicality of inclusion of all pupils within so-called mainstream schools – has put SEN right back at the top of the agenda.

At the same time, regular headlines such as, "Unruly boy, 6, suspended from lessons ten times" (Times, 17.01.06) guarantee that unacceptable behaviour by young people continues to be a top priority for comment, policy and action.

For teachers, special needs and pupil behaviour are at the heart of their day-to-day work. Accordingly, the National Union of Teachers has responded, recently and publicly, to both these areas of concern. Our submission to the Education and Skills Select Committee's Enquiry into Special Educational Needs - which was triggered by Lady Warnock's re-evaluation – set out the Union's position on inclusion, special schools and other aspects of special education. And, having welcomed the establishment by the Government of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline, chaired by Sir Alan Steer, the Union's publication 'Learning to Behave – A Charter for Schools' was sent to all schools to provide practical guidance and support.

Promoting good behaviour and making appropriate provision for all pupils with special educational needs are both complex challenges. Rarely are there quick fixes. Finding effective and sustainable ways forward demands consideration of a range of perspectives. That is what this edition of Education Review contains and I am delighted to be able to introduce our contributors.

Ruth Kelly highlights the benefits she believes that the Education Act 2006 will bring. The Secretary of State's clarifications of aspects of the Government's proposals are a direct response to the controversy that has followed the publication of the White Paper preceding the Act. She confirms that the Government will clarify the legal right of teachers to discipline pupils.

When invited to contribute, **David Cameron** was shadow spokesperson for education and by the time his article arrived he was the elected leader of the Conservative Party. He focuses first on his personal

experiences of being a parent of a child with special educational needs. He then puts forward his political views about the future of inclusion, the statementing process and special schools.

Mary Warnock has been described as the architect of policies designed to support the 'inclusion' of SEN pupils in mainstream schools. So, when before Christmas she questioned publicly the way in which inclusion has operated in practice and current thinking about special schools it was no surprise that her re-evaluation caused considerable media interest. This, in turn, led to the Parliamentary Select Committee conducting a new enquiry into special educational needs. Here, Lady Warnock responds to our invitation to put her views directly to the profession.

A summary of the National Union of Teachers' current policies on special education, inclusion and pupil behaviour is provided by **John Bangs**. His article is based on the NUT's submission to the above-mentioned parliamentary enquiry. John says that much of the SEN debate focuses on the rights of pupils and their parents. With regard to behaviour difficulties, however, the appropriateness and availability of support has profound implications for teachers. In this context he highlights the significance of the NUT's charter for schools 'Learning to Behave'.

As philosophers should, **John White** provides an opportunity for readers to reflect on what the education service should be trying to achieve for all young people. He is pleased that the aims of the National Curriculum give the highest priority to promoting individual well-being; but laments the fact that so little attention has been paid to those aims in the drafting of the rest of the curriculum .He hopes that the current re-writing, by the QCA, of the aims statement will give it greater impact in future.

Graham Robb brings us right back to practicalities with his description of the youth justice system. As a secondary headteacher himself he is able to suggest a range of strategies that schools can adopt to help and support both those who have been involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour and those pupils that research suggests are most 'at risk' of such involvement.

In recognition of her sustained and effective leadership of a Salford primary school, **Judith Elderkin** was appointed to the 'Steer' group referred to previously. She reminds us that the task group recognised both the success of most schools in teaching pupils how to behave and also the continuing importance of pastoral work by teachers. Judith describes an intervention by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. She then says how the concern of the group about the negative effects on pastoral work of the introduction of Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payments led to a welcome and significant change in the rules for those allowances.

A review of how learning styles could and should influence teaching

and learning is provided by **Elaine Hall**. In response to the recent high level of interest in learning styles she discusses the use of inventories of pupils and available evidence as to whether identifying preferred approaches to learning is likely to be motivating, liberating or, despite the valuable dialogue it can generate, a red herring.

Our final four contributors are firmly focused on the practice of how to manage successfully the behaviour of children and young people in large groups. Achieving the high standards of behaviour found in the overwhelming majority of classrooms and schools is both a science and an art. Teachers demonstrate, day after day, an extraordinary repertoire of organisational, disciplinary and motivational skills, combined with care and understanding, that is too often under-recognised in our society. Teachers are supported, crucially, by a range of other staff – the best behaviour results from whole school policies consistently and fairly applied.

Maintaining authority – especially in an era when individual choice and freedom is given such primacy in our society – is very demanding on teachers. **Michelle MacGrath**, pinpointing the importance of positive relationships and a sense of achievement; and **Phil Craig**, identifying some key mantras, both offer strategies to teachers by which they can promote positive discipline whilst also preserving their own health and well-being.

Janet Adamson, a primary Headteacher, demonstrates how experienced teachers continue to learn and develop new approaches to promoting good behaviour. She describes how a whole-school approach to improving teaching and learning, based on encouraging more creativity, can have a very positive impact on behaviour. **Ben Poole**, a teacher early in his career and reluctant to simply adopt 'traditional' models, eloquently describes some innovative approaches he and a colleague trialled in their classrooms. He reminds us that, in practice, all teachers have to find their own way of meeting the challenges they face.

All of these contributions will resonate with those who work directly with children and young people; for others they will provide an insight into what all the fuss is about!

Finally I would like to thank, wholeheartedly, **Paul Howard**, **Daniela Wachsening**, **Delphine Ruston**, **Robin Attfield** and **Miranda Bell**. Their informed reviews of recent publications, relevant to the theme, conclude this edition of Education Review.

How the Education White Paper will improve education for all children

Ruth Kelly

Ruth Kelly is Secretary of State for Education and Skills

Abstract: *In advance of the publication of the Education Bill, **Ruth Kelly** addresses issues raised in response to the White Paper. She says that many of the criticisms have resulted from misunderstanding and confusion. This article seeks to clarify the Government's position with regard to school admissions, Trust Schools and the future role of local authorities.*

Over the past eight years we have seen incredible progress in our schools. Primary school children are doing better than ever in English and maths, and going on to achieve record GCSE and A level results. Much of this is down to the quality, commitment and sheer hard work of heads, teachers, support staff, governors and local authorities working together to create a culture where every child is expected to achieve.

But there are still inequalities in the system that we need to address. Not every child gets to go to a good school. A quarter of all primary school pupils still have difficulty reading or with basic maths. Our post-16

staying on rate is one of the lowest in the industrialised world. Around 45 per cent of pupils still do not get five good GCSEs. And among pupils eligible for free school meals (pupils from the poorest backgrounds) this figure rises to 75 per cent. What we aim to do with our White Paper proposals is to ensure that each school is equipped to deliver the best in teaching and learning; and make best the experience of every single pupil, regardless of their background.

This means more personalised education for children, more opportunities for schools to work together and expand, more opportunities to engage all parents, a tougher line on failing schools and unambiguous rights for teachers to discipline children. None of this is a change in direction. Our proposals are based on the same priorities we've had since we came to power in 1997. This is about taking what we know works – excellence in teaching and learning, in leadership and in organisation – and making sure this is what happens in every school.

There are still inequalities in the system that we need to address.

We know that there are concerns about our proposals and we are committed to listening better and explaining more ahead of publication of our Bill. Nothing better underlines the level of misunderstanding than the reaction of one councillor who told the Prime Minister, "I hated every thing about the Schools White Paper….until I read it". But there has been confusion about some of our proposals and there are areas that I am keen to clarify.

There is nothing in our proposals that will mean a return to selection by ability. The safeguards in the system that prevent unfair admissions policies will not be taken away. The legally binding system which obliges schools to follow the Admissions Code of Practice will remain. Where there are concerns about a school's admissions policy, they can still be referred to the School Adjudicator whose verdict is binding. Unlike the opposition, who are in favour of letting heads introduce selection when they want, we categorically do not want to change any of this.

Secondly, our proposals to allow schools to acquire a trust are based on what we know makes a good school. Trusts will enable schools to build better links with the community, with business and with university and FE colleges. They will also be able to work with weaker schools to help raise standards. Successful schools that have expanded or federated with other, less successful schools have already raised the bar on standards for more and more children. And thousands of secondary schools have benefited from sponsor links with external organisations,

Nothing in our proposals will mean a return to selection by ability.

particularly through specialist status. Schools that develop a specialism consistently out-perform non-specialist schools.

Trust Schools will help us create a climate for success in every school. Not one where success is determined by intake, but where it is determined by the quality of leadership and the quality of teaching and learning. This means a school where teachers get the freedoms and support they need to develop high quality teaching and learning approaches that meet the needs of every pupil. A school with more flexibility and active encouragement to deliver learning differently.

And while any school will be able to become a Trust School, we will focus particularly on underperforming schools in deprived areas - bringing the best to the children that have the most to gain. There will be no return to selection and no preferential funding. Trust Schools will

Local authorities should have all the powers they need to raise standards and plan school provision strategically.

work to exactly the same code of admissions that other schools do and they will remain firmly within the local authority maintained sector, unlike Grant Maintained schools.

Thirdly, we do not by any means want to erase the role of local authorities in education. They will still be charged with bringing coherence and co-ordination to local admissions systems. We are clear that local authorities should have all the powers they need to raise standards and plan school provision strategically. But this must be in the context of each local authority's duty to its pupils and parents and responsibility for commissioning innovative proposals where new schools are needed. They will have new powers to intervene where schools are underperforming or failing. What our proposals will do is empower local authorities to be more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

Finally, we will not let the efforts of teachers be hampered by seriously disruptive pupils. From talking to the profession, we know that many teachers feel powerless to act when it comes to tackling the most badly behaved pupils. This is why we have said in the White Paper that teachers will have clear and unambiguous rights to discipline badly behaved pupils. Bad behaviour, left unchecked, impacts not just on the individual child, but on their classmates and on the ethos of the school. We will not let the education of the many be sabotaged by a few unruly pupils.

Our proposals represent our commitment to high standards and high expectations for each and every child. What the past eight years have

shown us, is that we can be confident that among teachers and school leaders we have the knowledge and the expertise in the system to make this happen. The challenge now is to remove the obstacles that stop the best happening in every school. This is how we will ensure there is genuine equality of opportunity for each and every child. ■

Personal experience

David Cameron

David Cameron is leader of the Conservative Party

Abstract: *Building on his own personal experience* ***David Cameron*** *expresses strong concern that a bias towards inclusion has developed and special schools have been closed or threatened with closure. He says that the system must be more responsive to the wishes of parents and proposes a moratorium on the closure of special schools. He calls for statements to be replaced by a new assessment procedure and appropriate provision for all children with SEN. He calls for Government to recognise a shared responsibility to care for those who would otherwise get left behind.*

As parents of a disabled son, my wife and I were desperately concerned that we would never find a school where he could get the care, attention, therapy and education he needs. So when we found the Cheyne Centre in London, which specialises in helping children such as Ivan, it was a revelation.

Here was somewhere with devoted staff, the right equipment and therapies - like music and swimming - that help give Ivan a real quality of life. Yet for many children, getting into this school was like trying to get out of Colditz. The local education authority wouldn't recognise it as a school, and the health authority was trying to close it. I will never forget the parents' meeting when an official told us all that the "model wasn't appropriate" and didn't fit the Government's policy of inclusion.

Parents' anger bordered on rage. We know our children and their needs better than anyone and they simply wouldn't survive in a mainstream school. Like so many of the parents who have contacted me in recent months, I found myself feeling as if everything was an uphill battle. Getting the right information on the most appropriate provision - and making sure that you have access to that provision - can be incredibly tough when you don't know who to talk to.

Parents of children with special needs know the meaning of the word

determination. But their mettle has been tested too often in recent years. Primary Care Trusts and LEAs, determined to cut costs and meet Government targets, consider closing schools down in favour of other less intensive and far less appropriate models of care. Samantha and I, with a few parents whose children benefit so much from the care at the Cheyne Centre, have to fight a vigorous and relentless battle to keep it open. For the moment, at least, that battle has been won, but in other parts of the country, similar battles are still being fought.

The battle against closing schools

The *evidence* that the policy of inclusion has been taken too far is mounting. More than 90 special schools have been closed since Labour came to power. Still more are threatened. The war to save special schools took a new turn last summer, when Mary Warnock, author of the policy of inclusion for all, published a hard hitting critique of her former stance. The second Warnock report was a stunning recantation of the first, which began the inclusion campaign in the first place. Baroness Warnock now says, "there is increasing evidence that the ideal of inclusion, if this means that all but those with the most severe disabilities will be in mainstream schools, is not working."

The clarity and unequivocal nature of her condemnation is valuable. But in the interim period, the drive towards inclusion has done huge damage, and threatens to continue. Anyone who is involved in a personal struggle to secure a special school place for their child and anyone who has waged political campaigns to save these schools, knows what I'm talking about.

There are a number of different challenges parents face. First, there is an overt closure program, where schools are explicitly threatened by authorities that state their wish to close them. The Government can hardly deny this, since the Minister for Children memorably said that to stop closures would be to "create chaos." In fact, it is the closure of centres

Throwing every child into the same class in the same school does not represent equal rights or equal treatment.

of excellence that's causing the chaos – but the point is that the closure plans are openly admitted.

Secondly, there is a set of circumstances that leads in effect to closure by stealth. Some schools are effectively closed without an authority ever signalling a desire to do so. This is achieved by ensuring that fewer and

fewer students are channelled to the schools, thus necessitating their closure – ostensibly by lack of demand, but really by design. Whether explicitly or by stealth, the closure of special schools forces children with special needs into mainstream education.

Inclusion at all costs

But, in too many cases mainstream schools find that they are unable to help students with particular needs. Teachers with classes of 20 or even 30 students cannot devote the time and effort required. A teaching assistant is often no substitute. Teaching children with SEN requires specialised skills that only full time devotion to the subject can ensure. This means that, as Baroness Warnock said, "support for children in mainstream school is patchy and subject to arbitrary change."

Left in this inadequate situation, the child with special needs is often disruptive. This is neither in the interests of the student with special needs, the rest of the class, the teacher, nor the school.

Parents who try to challenge the situation feel they are up against an uncaring bureaucracy that opposes special schools on grounds of political dogma and cost. Politicians arguing for special schools risk being branded outdated and in favour of segregation. As an MP taking up the cudgels for other parents, the stories I've heard are chilling.

Like so many parents I found myself feeling as if everything was an uphill battle.

One mother told me how a local specialist unit was closed, her son was forced into a mainstream school, developed clinical depression and now attends a special school 75 miles away. Another parent had to go through two tribunals just to get one of four children with autism into a special school. Then there were special school teachers who knew they could help children who were sinking in mainstream schools; but whose parents hadn't been told about what special schools could do, or even that a local one existed.

Special schools are not right for all children; but for many they provide the best chance to make real progress. One-to-one attention and patience with those struggling to learn, in combination with special therapies, give children who would otherwise be left behind the chance to thrive. I am determined to go on waging this war. That's why I so welcomed Baroness Warnock's recantation. She admits the concept of inclusion was the "most disastrous legacy" of her 1978 report, accepts that some needs are "more effectively met in separate institutions" and calls for a new generation of special schools.

The Government, as Lady Warnock makes clear, has a "patronising" approach to special schools, with Ministers apparently set on "immovable

tracks" and using every method by "hook or by crook" to keep all children, except those with the most severe and complex disabilities, out of special schools.

I am determined to go on waging this war.

Prominence must be given to the views of parents, bias in the law must be addressed and while it is conducted there should be a moratorium on the closure of special schools.

SEN Commission

The commission that I set into action last summer under the Chairmanship of Sir Bob Balchin published its interim findings into the statementing process in late November. What they found as they looked into evidence from across the special needs world was a process that was very often overly bureaucratic, and in many cases added to the stresses and strains of already overwrought parents.

In the course of their research they found that "the appeals system is thought to be unnecessarily adversarial, expensive and long drawn out". In addition, "there is a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst parents concerning the paucity of special schools and the unsuitability of many mainstream schools for their children".

The Commission recommended that "Statements" should be replaced by a Special Needs Profile. This would be drawn up by independent accredited Profile Assessors who would be educational psychologists and other professionals. Assessments for them would be triggered by professionals within the education, health and social services or by a parent with the agreement of one of the former.

Conclusion

I hope that this will act as a catalyst for further debate in the coming months, as the Commission carries on looking into this and other crucial areas in SEN, in conjunction with the other Policy Groups that I have set up. This issue has a wider significance. Helping the most vulnerable in our society is one of our most profound obligations. How we carry this out is vital.

In education in general, and with special schools in particular, it means recognising that throwing every child into the same class in the same school does not represent equal rights or equal treatment, as Labour suggests. It is thoughtless, uncaring, and as we have seen from the results, often cruel.

Conservative compassion is based on an understanding that we are all

individuals with different needs. It is time for this aspect of Conservatism to come to the fore again. Our approach should be based on real understanding, common sense and practicality - not blind dogma, fake idealism, and political correctness.

Our society is becoming increasingly fractured. Whether it's growing rates of family breakdown, sink estates plagued with crime and drugs, alienation among the young or loneliness in old age, our politics needs to focus on building a stronger society.

In education this means that, instead of the top-down Labour approach that ignores parents and implements damaging theories from out-of-touch experts, we need a Government that looks at society from the bottom up. A Government which recognises that as parents, teachers and politicians we're all in this together, with a shared responsibility to care for those who would otherwise get left behind. ■

Special Schools or not?

Baroness Warnock

Mary Warnock chaired the influential Committee of Inquiry into Special Education which published its final report in 1978. The report put an end to labels previously used in education, such as "handicap", and replaced them with "special educational needs" and influenced the Education Act 1981.

Abstract: ***Mary Warnock*** *– in the aftermath of the widespread interest stimulated by her recent comments on inclusion - accepted an invitation to put her views directly to readers of "Education Review". She summarises some of the problems which she believes are currently facing children with special needs and their parents. Having said what she thinks such children need, she highlights relevant aspects of the White Paper and proposes a way forward.*

In June 2005 the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain published a pamphlet in which I urged the Government to set up a Committee of Inquiry to consider the case for the radical reform of the framework of provision which had been in place since the Education Act of 1981, and which, I argued, was failing some children disastrously. The need for a review centred on two issues. First, the policy of issuing formal statements of needs; and secondly the commitment to including in mainstream schools all those children whose parents wanted it (and many whose parents did not) regardless of the nature of their needs.

This policy is enshrined in the 2001 Education Act, backed up by a threat of prosecution under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 if it is not implemented by headteachers and governors. The theory of inclusion has resulted in a habit of referring to special educational needs (SEN) as though it describes a uniform category that can be treated in a uniform way. This has blinded policy-makers and local authorities to the differences between children and precisely what they need in order for learning to be possible for them.

Statements of needs

Statements and inclusion are connected, though somewhat loosely. All children in special schools have statements, but not all children with statements are in special schools. Those people who would like to see

special schools abolished would argue for retaining statements, presumably for those children who are most severely disabled and who would need one-to-one teaching even if they attended a mainstream school. However, there are no clear criteria determining who is and who is not to be issued with a statement and local authorities show great variation in the number of statements they produce. The heart of the matter is, of course, funding. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide what is deemed in the statement to be needed by the child; whereas, though they may be morally committed to making provision for other children identified as having special needs, if they fail to so they are not legally liable.

There are no clear criteria determining who is and who is not to be issued with a statement.

This leads to endless disagreements between local authorities and parents, who understandably want statements for their disabled children in order to be sure that they will get at least some extra support.

Many of these embattled parents believe that mainstream schools will never provide enough support, and seek a statement so that their child may attend a special school. But since in many areas special schools have closed this would involve the authority in the expense of sending the child to a school in another area, or to a fee-paying school. Local authorities want to avoid the expense of this.

Since the publication of my pamphlet I have received literally hundreds of letters from parents, many of them terrified of the battles ahead with SEN tribunals and all the anxiety and exhaustion that they bring. The majority of the letters have been from parents not of children with the most profound learning difficulties. Rather they have been from parents whose children have moderate learning difficulties, Asperger's syndrome, attention deficit, emotional and behavioural difficulties, or a mixture of these; all of which stand in the way of learning.

I conclude that children with very severe learning difficulties are generally well looked after, their needs being met either in well-equipped and highly professional special schools, with expert teachers, or in units attached to mainstream schools which are often less well equipped. Similarly, pupils with physical disabilities and those who are deaf, blind or deaf/blind automatically get a statement of need and, depending on the resources available, either go to a special school or get proper additional support in the mainstream. The children who really suffer from the present system are those whose disabilities are not obvious or visible; for example, those at the moderate end of the autistic spectrum and who may

also suffer moderate learning difficulties as well as communication or behavioural difficulties.

Thinking about SEN

Governments over the years have much to answer for. They have encouraged us to think of special schools as places only for the most profoundly intellectually disabled - those who used to be deemed ineducable. An unspoken corollary has developed that all of those with lesser disabilities can be accommodated in the mainstream with a few hours a week of support. This is far from true, especially by the time the child reaches secondary school. For a child with a moderate degree of Down's syndrome, or Asperger's, the transition from primary to secondary school may be traumatic, even catastrophic. They can no longer even pretend to keep up, and the inevitable demands of the school environment defeat them - the bustle and clamour, the pushing and shoving, and changing from one classroom to another, the pace, and teachers changing every hour. Some of these horrors can be mitigated for such children if they have a personal assistant with them all the time; but some will remain. It is unlikely that any school can provide the level of assistance they need, all day and every day.

I am convinced that for such children what is needed is a mixture of care and small-class teaching in the environment of a small school. Without them education will be impossible and they will constantly be too anxious and miserable to learn. They may begin to refuse school; they may become self-destructive or suicidal; they may be induced to stay at school only by antidepressant drugs. For such children "inclusion" is a nightmare. If they are to flourish and benefit from education they need the relatively protected environment of a small or smallish special school.

I am convinced that for such children what is needed is a mixture of care and small-class teaching in the environment of a small school.

It is really not enough to say that the mainstream schools must change sufficiently to accommodate such children. They cannot, however tolerant and supportive the policies and however understanding the individual members of staff may be. We need to stop thinking that special schools are either prisons from which children must be rescued at all costs or wicked self-indulgent places in which the pupils will never learn the harsh realities of life. A special school may be the only place where a fragile child will learn anything at all.

The White Paper and beyond

The Education Bill about to go through Parliament places enormous emphasis on parental choice. But, for the majority of parents of children with special needs there is no choice, and will not be if the Bill is enacted. They cannot choose to have a statement for their child; that is for the local authority to decide. Therefore they cannot choose what school their child shall go to. They must take a place in any mainstream school willing to accept a difficult pupil – a pupil unlikely to enhance the competitive status of the school. This will most probably be the school with the lowest standards which parents with bright and successful children are unlikely to put top of their list.

There is deep confusion, however, about admissions policy. If schools mostly become independent of local authorities, and possibly free to decide on their own admissions, can they be directed to take a proportion of children with special needs? The recent White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, speaks coyly about "pupils who have fallen behind" (paragraphs 4.12 – 4.16), for whom extra resources are to be supplied. A sub-group of these pupils are those with special needs who are to receive tailored support (paragraph 4.17).

The children who really suffer from the present system are those whose disabilities are not obvious or visible.

Between them these pupils make up the group that are now in Scotland referred to as meriting Additional Learning Support, the term SEN having been abolished. But in Scotland the local authority has a statutory obligation to supply all Additional Learning Support. In England and Wales that duty applies only to those with statements. We do not know, any more than we ever did, who merits a statement; I presume that it is not all those who have "fallen behind", but only those with special needs, and, again presumably, not all of these.

It is possible to read paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of the White Paper as indicating a shift from the policy of full inclusion, which is still the avowed intent of the Government and the confusion in the terminology here is so great that the message is less than clear. First, in paragraph 4.19, the Trailblazer schools are mentioned of which there are at present 12. These schools are otherwise known as specialist special schools. Each concentrates on a particular disability or group of disabilities, cognitive, behavioural, autistic and so on. They not only educate children with these disabilities, but also send out teachers to neighbouring mainstream schools to share their expertise. The White Paper proposes that the number of these schools shall go up to 50 within the next two years.

In addition there are already 30 of a different kind of special schools called specialist non-mainstream schools. These are all former special schools that sought permission to take on a particular specialism as all mainstream schools may. Provided they can raise some initial capital such schools then receive extra Government money to enhance their buildings and other facilities relevant to their specialism. So they can become, let us say, a school specialising in IT or music or sport, but, being special schools at heart, no one can attend them unless he or she has a statement. Because they are special schools, they are all small, usually no larger than 400 or so pupils with favourable staff/pupils ratios, and plenty of built in "tailored support". It is proposed that there should be 50 more such schools by 2008, and special schools will be encouraged to apply for this status. This cannot but seem like an acknowledgement that special schools are no longer to be considered the last resort of the profoundly disabled.

A proposal

I would like to propose that the statement of need should be tied to special schools, so that if parents want a statement for their children they would, in effect, be asking that he or she goes to a special school. This would signal that special schools were no longer officially beyond the pale. Mainstream schools that admit children with special needs should have an obligation to provide support for them and some might decide to apply for specialist status, specializing in special needs and, perhaps, also in sport or IT.

Since money is currently being allocated to school building, schools specialising in special needs, or other specialist non-mainstream schools, might be able to co-locate with mainstream schools. This would enhance the ability of the mainstream to look after children with, say, health problems such as asthma or epilepsy, whether or not they had special educational needs.

All these possibilities need to be discussed. Decisions must be taken on the basis of evidence - perhaps funded by charity and carried out, I would suggest, as much by teachers, perhaps on secondment, as by academics - on how children with different disabilities flourish, or fail to flourish, in different settings. At present there is a vast quantity of anecdote, but, for most people, little else. And anecdote is not enough. ■

A range of provision

John Bangs

John Bangs is Assistant Secretary of the NUT's Education and Equal Opportunities Department

Abstract: *Based on the National Union of Teachers' submission to the Education and Skills Select Committee's Enquiry into Special Educational Needs (NUT, 2005b),* ***John Bangs*** *provides an update of the Union's views on inclusion and its implications for policy and practice. Having called for a spectrum of provision for SEN pupils, he highlights the important role for local authorities as well as the NUT's response to the current debate about pupil behaviour.*

Inclusion is a process that cannot be imposed. The NUT has argued consistently that a range of provision should be in place for pupils to ensure that their needs are met. Baroness Warnock's recent and well publicised reflections on provision for pupils with special educational needs since the 1978 Warnock Report have reinvigorated an on-going and important debate (Warnock, 2005).

In practice, there still appears to be a significant mismatch between the Government's views about the need for a broad range of special educational needs provision and some local authorities' views on inclusion.

Different models of provision

In response to the Government's recent ten year strategy statement, *Removing Barriers to Achievement*, (Department for Education and Skills, 2004c) the six teacher organisations have agreed that they support the view of inclusion set out in the Government's SEN Strategy. Inclusion should not be defined as all pupils being included in mainstream education; but as all schools working together as part of an inclusive education service to meet pupils' needs in the most appropriate setting.

Some pupils with SEN have additional needs that can be met in mainstream schools by strategies put in place by teachers in coordination with the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. Other pupils with SEN have needs which require additional provision. In order to ensure that every child and young person with SEN can achieve equality

of access to good local schools, there must be a framework of provision which recognises and supports that principle. Local authorities leading their local communities are key to that concept. Local authorities must be able to have the capacity to maintain and provide additional support to schools when it is needed.

There should be a statutory requirement on local authorities to maintain, or have access to, a wide range of provision. This should include high cost provision; a range of special schools; schools and dedicated units for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties; and services for low incidence special educational needs. The Government refused to include such a statutory requirement within the Education Act 2002 (Great Briton, 2002). With new legislation following the White Paper in 2006, there is an opportunity to do so.

There should be a statutory requirement on local authorities to maintain, or have access to, a wide range of provision.

All local authorities should maintain or have access to pupil referral units (PRUs). Special schools should be encouraged to provide outreach SEN support to local maintained schools as well as providing for their own pupils. It is important to maintain provision that is working and meets the needs of pupils. Special provision should remain specific to need and not be perceived as a "dumping ground".

Strong local networks of schools, sharing responsibility for the success of all children are needed in all areas. Such collaboration, however, should not be a substitute for local authorities maintaining a wide range of provision.

Local authority reviews of SEN provision should ensure that the development of inclusive mainstream provision includes a range of suitable settings for pupils for whom mainstream schooling is not appropriate at a particular time. Research has demonstrated, for example, that special schools and units often function well for pupils with sensory impairments.

In addition, there should be a range of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), including special and residential schools for pupils with EBD whose needs cannot be addressed successfully in mainstream schools. OFSTED (2004) reported that only a third of secondary schools are effective in meeting the needs of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The difficulty of doing so is often recognised by teachers. As one SENCO, responding to an NUT survey said:

"(We need) a clarification of a school's right to refuse a pupil … we

> have been forced to take pupils where we have known we would not be able to meet their needs. We have subsequently been proved right but not before both the school and the pupil have been put through stress".
>
> (National Union of Teachers, 2004)

Figures released by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES, 2004b) showed that despite the overall fall in the number of permanent exclusions (which was largely in line with the fall in the school population) the number of children with SEN being permanently excluded had actually risen by 6 per cent. Pupils with SEN make up two thirds of permanent exclusions and just over two thirds of the population of pupil referral units. The population of pupil referral units has grown by a startling 40 per cent since 2001 (Advisory Centre for Education, 2004).

The Department of Education and Science, in circular 11/90 (Department for Education and Science, 1990) urged local authorities to look at the overall balance of provision between special and mainstream schools; other specialist provision outside schools; and hospital schools. The aim of the circular was to "move towards a coherent pattern of provision" which gave appropriate support for all pupils with SEN wherever they were being educated.

NUT members say that this overall balance of provision has not been achieved by some local authorities. A new national initiative is needed. New guidance should be agreed between the Government and unions representing teachers and other relevant staff groups to revise Circular 11/90 and reissue local authorities with guidance about staffing ratios for pupils with SEN. It should also introduce a duty on local authorities to review provision and maintain a balance in that provision. This is particularly so because *Removing Barriers to Achievement* proposed reduced reliance on statements through "strategic planning to ensure a spectrum of provision (is available) to meet the needs of local children" (Department for Education and Skills, 2004c).

Furthermore, planning for new schools should include specialist units and other flexible arrangements for pupils to attend both specialist and mainstream provision. Any re-organisation of separate special educational provision should always include a phased programme based on consultation and planning involving governing bodies in mainstream schools and organisations representing school staff. This would ensure that expertise is shared and appropriate provision made.

Statements of need for SEN pupils

The relationship between proposals for inclusion, resources, and the appropriateness of local provision has consistently been a critical issue for teachers. LEA bureaucracy often impedes access to early intervention strategies at a lower level. The Audit Commission (2002) expressed doubts about "the compatibility of current SEN funding systems with promoting early intervention".

Statements of SEN are useful tools for planning for, and supporting, the specific needs of pupils with SEN. Statements give individual pupils real support. They should not, however, be considered the primary route to accessing appropriate provision and intervention early in the process of meeting special needs.

Baroness Warnock is right to express concern about the confrontations between parents and local authorities surrounding statements. Local government, under pressure from OFSTED and central government, has been attempting to reduce the number of new statements they issue. Authorities often refuse statutory assessment even where schools, whose professionals know children best, have asked for it.

Those confrontations around the statementing process would lessen if high-quality provision was made available by local authorities without the need for parents to request a statement. The range of provision discussed above must be in place before local authorities can attempt to reduce so called "reliance" on statements.

Provision for SEN pupils in special schools

Removing Barriers to Achievement (Department for Education and Skills, 2004c) gave special schools a welcome and clear role. It said that mainstream and special schools should work together to support inclusion. Only by such joint working will parents be provided with the confidence that local mainstream schools can effectively support their children's needs.

Baroness Warnock's comments, reflecting concerns of parents, have also reignited the debate about the "role" of special schools. The Conservative Party has called for a moratorium on the closure of special schools. Again, *Removing Barriers to Achievement*, was right in saying:

> "Some special schools have felt threatened by the inclusion agenda and unsure about what role they should play in future. We believe that special schools have an important role to play within the overall spectrum of provision for children with SEN".
>
> (Department for Education and Skills 2004c)

Many local authorities, however, are failing to distinguish between DfES statutory guidance and guidance that is non-statutory. Some believe they have been instructed to close special schools. This is not what the ten year action plan says.

The Secretary of State for Education should communicate to all directors of local authorities and directors of children's services what is expected of them. That is, to maintain a continuum of provision, including special schools and EBD units, as outlined in *Removing Barriers to Achievement*.

This will require some local authorities to reverse their policy of minimal or no special school provision. Inclusion is not about placing all disabled children and children with special educational needs in either mainstream schools or special schools. That approach ignores difference and treats all pupils the same. It is about a range of provision which meets each pupil's needs in the most appropriate setting and making reasonable adjustments to enable each pupil to access the whole life of

The challenge is to develop co-ordinated provision where young people are educated in the right place with the right resources within a continuum of provision.

the school. The provision and the adjustments may be different for each pupil. This is the essence of inclusion and is what teachers work hard to provide.

Many special schools provide an invaluable contribution to the education of young people with SEN and disability. The issue under debate should not be their closure. The challenge is to develop co-ordinated provision where young people are educated in the right place with the right resources within a continuum of provision.

Special school provision should be maintained, co-ordinated, and linked with mainstream provision, particularly those schools and units catering for children with EBD. Such links are important, as is the development of special schools as resource bases which mainstream schools can access.

A two-way sharing of expertise between mainstream and special school teachers is needed. As OFSTED (2004) has said, too many mainstream and special schools are still isolated from each other. Effective partnerships on teaching, curriculum, and professional development are needed.

Access to mainstream schools

Legislation now requires school buildings to be accessible. The Schools'

Access Initiative – triggered by the NUT and SCOPE (SCOPE et al 2000) working in partnership – was successful. However, the funding is not guaranteed beyond 2007/08. Less than half of schools are, so far, fully accessible. A government funded and sustained programme is needed to ensure that all schools are fully accessible.

SENCOs in mainstream schools

Removing Barriers to Achievement (Department for Education and Skills, 2004c) offered a welcome pledge to provide mainstream schools with sufficient skills and resources to enable them to take prompt action to intervene early to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN. Teachers report that this pledge is slow to be implemented.

Bureaucracy, paperwork, and workload – particularly for SENCOs in mainstream schools – must not increase. Evidence shows that these are already excessive.

Special educational needs co-ordinators in mainstream schools have specific responsibilities delineated in the SEN Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). SENCOs cannot carry out their job in mainstream schools effectively unless they have school systems which support them. The unique context of each school varies the actual agreed tasks of the SENCO – sometimes quite dramatically - depending on time, the size and locality of the school, and the managerial position of the SENCO.

All SENCOs need sufficient resources of time, space and administrative back up. Their non-contact time needs to reflect the number of children and young people with special educational needs within the school.

They also need to be included in school discussions about financial management and SEN funding so that they can promote changes in school systems that operate for the benefit of pupils with SEN.

Inclusion must be a whole school issue. There must be a link between policy, which often lies with the head teacher and the governors, and the SENCO's responsibility for effecting change.

Availability of resources and expertise

Recent guidance (Department for Education and Skills, 2004a) encouraged local authorities to reduce funding held centrally for SEN support services and delegate more funding to schools.

Further delegation of SEN resources is likely to erode the level of SEN support services – especially for learning and behavioural support. It will lead to the irreversible fragmentation of services.

Adequate funding for behaviour and SEN support services should be

included in each local authority's funding allocation for the "LEA Budget". Each local authority should then be required to maintain a range of behaviour support and SEN support to schools including educational psychology services.

There are, currently, a number of problems associated with the delegation of SEN funding which need to be addressed.

- Funding for statemented pupils is attached to the individual pupil and allocated to the school in which the pupil is enrolled. Centrally retained funding would lessen the need to (impossibly) forecast accurately the number of pupils in each school who will have statements in a given year. It would also facilitate movement between schools within the financial year, if the statement is revised, by ensuring that funding can follow the pupil.

- SEN support services can be undermined and become disjointed by the delegation of funding for statemented pupils. Such support services require guaranteed funding in order to be able to plan provision, give appropriate levels of support; and employ sufficient permanent specialist teachers and other staff with the necessary skills and experience.

- Local authorities have continuing legal obligations in relation to the provision of the support outlined in statements. Delegation conflicts with the principle that funding should be aligned with responsibility.

A recent report by OFSTED (2005) on SEN support services highlighted the damage to pupil support caused by delegation of services and the undermining of local authorities' ability to support pupils with complex needs. OFSTED said that insecure funding arrangements create long-term planning difficulties for many services. It described delegation as diminishing the capacity of many local authorities to monitor the progress of pupils with SEN and reducing the range and quantity of specialist staff available to provide advice and support.

The Government's ten year strategy committed the DfES to developing minimum standards for SEN advisory and support services but no guarantees were given to protect funding for such services. That cannot be acceptable.

Pupil behaviour

Much of the SEN debate focuses on the needs and rights of pupils and their parents. With regard to behaviour difficulties, however, the appropriateness and availability, or not, of support has profound

implications for teachers and other staff.

With unacceptable pupil behaviour being a key negative influence on teacher recruitment and retention, the Union launched a *Charter for Schools*, *Learning to Behave*, in September 2005 (National Union of Teachers, 2005a). The Charter called for system wide reforms which promote enthusiasm for learning and reduce unacceptable behaviour. Accompanying the NUT's Charter were proposals focusing on the needs of school communities and on those of staff and pupils, including pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Schools cater for pupils with increasingly diverse needs. Teachers require more in-depth understanding of child development, so that they can develop appropriately differentiated lessons and minimise the behaviour difficulties that arise from pupils' inability to access the curriculum.

Local authorities have a vital role in providing behaviour support for schools. They should be required to consult on and publish a Behaviour Support Plan, separate from the new Children and Young People's Integrated Plans now required under Every Child Matters. Behaviour Support Plans would outline the range of provision available for behaviour support. No school should be required to continue to accept on roll pupils with continuing unacceptable pupil behaviour. No child or young person should be written off, however, and it should be a requirement on all local authorities to maintain or have access to a range of provision, including behaviour support services and schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Such services are vital in supporting children and young people who are not taught in mainstream schools and are vital also in meeting the needs of vulnerable children. The right to education of all children needs to be protected.

Proposals within the current White Paper (Department for Education and Skills, 2005) to clarify the rights of teachers with regard to disciplining pupils have been welcomed across the teaching profession. Whether or not other Government proposals will provide the degree of coherence, cooperation and coordination within the education service necessary to ensure joined up provision for pupils with special educational needs is far more uncertain. ■

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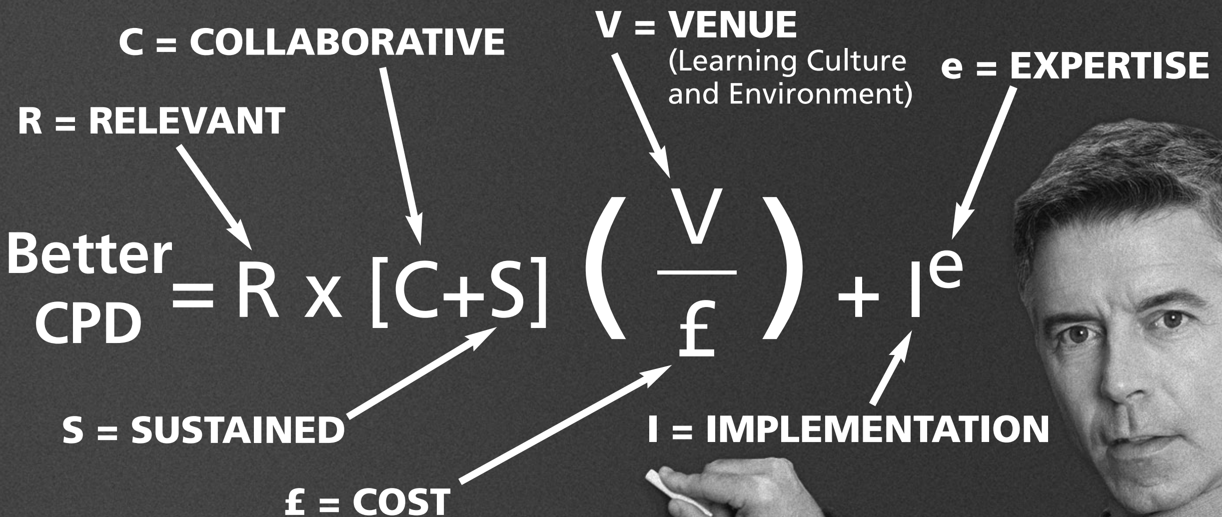

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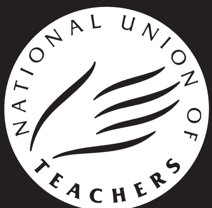

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Education for well-being

John White

John White is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Abstract: ***John White*** *welcomes the priority given to individual well-being in the current aims of the National Curriculum. At the same time he regrets the fact that this, like other aims, has had so little impact on the curriculum itself. Most of the article explores what it is to lead a fulfilling human life. On the way, it dispels certain myths and misconceptions about this and examines the contributions that teachers and parents can make in helping children to live more abundantly. White hopes that children born now, some of whom may well be living into the twenty-second century, will not be hindered in this by that relic of the eighteenth century which is our present school curriculum.*

"Aims? What aims?"

Some teachers are still surprised to learn that since 2000 the school curriculum has had a set of aims behind it. Others may fleetingly notice them at the beginning of the National Curriculum Handbook, but hare past them to find the section on their own subject.

In a well-ordered system aims should come first - before deciding what curricular vehicles best promote them. But this is not what has happened. In 1988 Kenneth Baker succeeded in imposing a traditional curriculum of ten academic subjects – in the teeth of opposition from Margaret Thatcher, who wanted a three-subject core. Aims were far from his mind.

Baker's historic achievement was to lay down a curriculum almost identical to the one introduced in 1904 for the first state secondary/grammar schools. He did not ask himself – historian though he was – whether a curriculum appropriate for a horse-drawn and patriarchal, pre-democratic age was suitable for his own. The last 17 years have shown that it is not. Some pupils really take to an academic curriculum; others grit their teeth and get down to it for the sake of rewards ahead; but far too many find it a turn-off.

It is not surprising that few schools today go in for an aims-led rather than a subjects-led curriculum. The system was stuck for 12 years with an aims-less one. Although aims are at last on the scene, schools still find it hard to make use of them. The demands of the subject curriculum are just too powerful.

"The well-being of the individual"

What has pride of place in the post-2000 aims statement? "Foremost", it tells us "is a belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to …the well-being of the individual". For my money, this is spot on. Why else are we bringing up and teaching children, unless it is to equip them to lead a flourishing life themselves and help others to do so?

The aim is simple, but it is all-important. In an odd way, it lies behind our aim-less academic curriculum, but you have to dig back three centuries to find it. It is to the descendants of the puritans – English dissenters and Scottish Presbyterians – that we owe our curriculum of discrete academic subjects. It is they who abandoned classics-based education in favour of an initiation into all the major forms of knowledge.

Their aim was personal salvation. They thought that understanding the varied elements of God's creation was a precondition of being saved. Science and mathematics were key ingredients here.

You could say that the student's well-being was the central aim of this curriculum. But you'd have to take on board the assumption that our true flourishing occurs not in this world but in the next. This is not much help to an age like our own with its more secular perspective. Agreed, some people may still back quadratic equations because learning them is "good for the soul", but most of us would go for something less transcendental.

The dolce vita?

What is it to lead a flourishing life? Is it a life full of pleasurable sensations and few painful ones? Some may think so. A life of eating, drinking, sex, clubbing, lying in the sun, watching TV may seem to them the way ahead. But this is not everyone's idea of the good life. Take a committed teacher. Her life is far from hedonistic. It may well be filled with more anxiety than joy. Does this mean, then, that it cannot be fulfilling?

Maybe pleasurable feelings shouldn't be the focus. Perhaps we call the teacher's life fulfilling because she is achieving what she set out to do – to help young people to learn, to open up their horizons. If so, then flourishing is a matter of how you succeed in meeting your more important goals. Not just occupational ones. You want to be in a stable

relationship, or own a Previa, raise a family, write publishable poetry, take a year out in Ecuador. Sometimes you satisfy your desires, sometimes you don't. Taking a human life overall, the more one is able to satisfy one's preferences, the greater one's well-being.

This seems nearer the mark. It is a more accommodating notion of well-being than the hedonistic one. Whatever our preferences, whether these be for the dolce vita or for helping children in need, we flourish insofar as we satisfy them, and fail to do so insofar as we don't.

This is a very popular idea of the good life. It fits our diverse society with its multitude of preferred ways of living. It provides a justification of a sort for a market economy. If the latter helps people to get what they

Why else are we bringing up and teaching children, unless it is to equip them to lead a flourishing life themselves and help others to do so?

want – not on impulse but with full knowledge of relevant data – it is furthering their welfare. We want a two-bedroom flat, a holiday in Corsica, red grapefruits for breakfast, a DVD player. If we get them, our well-being is enhanced.

Education is often seen as antagonistic to the consumer market. It is taken to be a surer guide to the good life. But is it? On the view just discussed, wouldn't it be better to see them as collaborators? Parents and teachers help to reveal to children the range of things that they may want – science-based and other jobs, arts and other leisure pursuits, religious attachments, foreign travel, relationships etc - and the market fine-tunes their choices where these involve buyable goods.

Worthwhile activities and relationships

This is a popular view, but is it right? Does it matter what one's desires are, as long as one satisfies them? Would playing slot machines all day every day add up to a fulfilled life?

There is something missing from the desire-satisfaction account. Our goals must be valuable ones. I follow the philosopher Joseph Raz in holding that fulfilment lies in successful and wholehearted engagement in worthwhile relationships and activities.

How do we know what counts as worthwhile? There is less of a mystery about this than one might expect. Friendship, family life and other relationships, enjoyment of the arts, natural beauty, physical exercise, absorbing work. These are some of the elements that most of us would include.

If you ask me how I know that these kinds of pursuit are worthwhile –

as ends in themselves, not only, if ever, as means – I cannot deduce them for you from first principles. They are the fruit of a cultural process going back some four centuries and with roots in the ancient world.

The purer reaches of Christian culture had little interest in this-world felicity. It was only with its gradual erosion that people - the affluent first, and in time most of us – began to attend to the goods of this life in a serious way. Novel-reading came on the scene; greater sexual freedom; the pursuit of empirical science; creating gardens; working as a chemical engineer; wondering at sublimity in nature. Over the centuries new goods have appeared beside the old – new forms and genres of art from the detective story to comedy films, new professions, new kinds of loving relationship.

As a result, in an affluent society like Britain we live surrounded by innumerable worthwhile pursuits – and these are still fructifying. As autonomous, self-directing beings we make our own choices among them. We regretfully give up painting because we can't do everything. We choose teaching over working in computing. We give more weight to steady professional advancement than to intimacy or travelling the world.

Tasks for education

The sadness is that at a time when a reasonably fulfilled life is in principle within almost everyone's reach, too many fail to achieve it.

Sometimes it is down to bad luck. People fall seriously and chronically ill; lose close family members; are the victims of natural disaster. Human fulfilment can never be guaranteed and we all need luck to see us through.

Sometimes it is because people get things wrong. They locate success in life, for instance, not in valuable relationships and activities, but in the accumulation of wealth, positional goods, power, attention, recognition.

Sometimes it is because people simply don't know about many of the possible elements of the good life. They are strangers to poetry, or intimacy, or a host of possible careers. This may be because their upbringing and schooling have failed to widen their horizons broadly enough.

And this in turn may be because their families and communities have had to spend too much of their time securing the basic conditions of the good life to enjoy much of the good life itself. I am thinking of things like food, housing, clothing, heating, health, safety, a reliable income.

Many social agencies help people to lead more flourishing lives. Education plays its unique part in several ways. It underlines the importance of health, safety and other things necessary to our thriving. It develops personal qualities necessary for success in life – a sense of self

worth, wholeheartedness in one's endeavours, persistence in the face of setbacks. It broadens horizons, introducing students to more and more of life's goods.

It is worth dwelling on this last point. There is no élite of experts on what constitutes a flourishing life. Sure, there are plenty of gurus around to tell us that the secret of happiness lies in meditation or yoga or this or that regimen. But there is no good reason to believe them.

If we put too much emphasis on academic learning, children who do not take easily to it will find their models of the good life elsewhere – in unthought-through hedonism, or in unrealisable dreams of fame and fortune.

It is also true that some people are in a better position than others to know about well-being goods. Those who know nothing about jazz, or skiing, or close friendship, or working as a vet are obviously in a worse position than those inside these activities. The most authoritative voices on what constitutes our well-being are those with a wide acquaintance with all sorts of goods. Two centuries and more ago these were confined to the rich. Today nearly all of us can, and many do, acquire the necessary understanding and experience. Not that we all agree about the good life when it comes to details. In fact there are endless disputes about it - the stuff of conversation, good journalism and literature.

Education is partly an induction into this broadly-based community of "authorities" on human fulfilment. Some learners will go further than others in breadth of horizon and/or depth of understanding. But we are not talking about a sharply defined élite. The notion is more open and democratic.

Dispelling myths

Education can also help to dispel two common misconceptions. The first is that in order to succeed in life you must aim at success. This is not true. You may get caught up in relationships and in projects and find that they go well for you. Parents and teachers can best lay the foundations for success by involving children in absorbing activities and social interactions.

The second misconception is a shadow cast by our deeply-rooted religious culture. Some people will say that in making the pupils' well-being a focus, schools are simply making them more selfish or self-centred. They should be teaching them to live for others, not for

themselves.

But the dichotomy is a false one. In working as a teacher or as a hospital porter, in being a good friend or parent, you may not only be achieving personal fulfilment but also helping other people to flourish. Self-interest and morality are not the polar opposites that the culture has assumed.

This is not to say that the moral and civic aims of the curriculum can be entirely subsumed under those to do with the personal well-being of the pupil. In this essay I am discussing just one of the aims, albeit a key one. At the same time, it is important to remind ourselves that no sharp lines can be drawn between these sets of aims.

We now have a National Curriculum in which the well-being of the individual is – in principle, if not always in practice - the foremost value. The QCA is currently rewriting the aims statement, intending that it will have greater impact than the 2000 version on what goes into the curriculum.

I have every confidence that individual well-being will be as prominent in the new statement as it was in the old. If so, this should invite a rethinking of our horse-drawn curriculum. Delighting in academic enquiry is certainly one of life's goods. Like many other teachers, having devoted much of my own life to it I am far from decrying it. But it is not the only type of good and has no priority over others in the vast range of goods available.

If we put too much emphasis on academic learning, children who do not take easily to it will find their models of the good life elsewhere – in unthought-through hedonism, or in unrealisable dreams of fame and fortune. Even students who do well in the system are being ethically short-changed. Curriculum makers have no expertise on human fulfilment that the rest of us lack. If they put great weight on the scholarly pursuit of truth as compared with other worthwhile pursuits, they distort our ethical possibilities.

A child born in 2006 is likely to be living throughout nearly all the twenty-first century, perhaps into the twenty-second. There is absolutely no reason why a curriculum pattern which may well have had a rationale in the eighteenth is the one which makes best sense for him or her today. ■

Young people, schools and offending

Graham Robb

Graham Robb is a secondary school headteacher and member of the Youth Justice Board of England and Wales.

Abstract: *A significant minority of young people are involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.* ***Graham Robb*** *contextualises the public anxiety that is often generated by such involvement. He describes the youth justice system and identifies various preventative and corrective strategies currently in place. The important roles that teachers and schools have in reducing the risk of their pupils becoming "offenders" are highlighted.*

As in any good lesson let us first find out what readers know already.

1. What percentage of young people in mainstream education say that they have committed a crime?

2. What percentage of those excluded from school say that they have committed a crime?

3. What is the peak age of people offending?

4. What is the most common offence committed by young people with their friends?

Answers are:
1. 26 per cent
2. 60 per cent

3. 14 years
4. Arson (75 per cent of young people charged with arson also had a friend on the same charge at the same time), followed by taking a vehicle without owner's consent (74 per cent), graffiti (74 per cent), buying drugs (74 per cent)

MORI (2004)

On average during 2005 there were about 2800 people aged under 18 in secure accommodation under order of the courts. Around 200 of these were girls and the rest boys. Of this 2,800 about 700 were on remand; 1,800 on relatively short sentences (Detention and Training Orders); and 300 on longer sentences.

In addition, in any one year, some 250,000 young people from age 8 – 18 come into contact with Youth Offending Teams; either because they have committed crimes or acts of anti social behaviour; or because local agencies have identified them to be part of preventative programmes.

What has this got to do with schools?

At any time therefore many schools (both primary and secondary) have pupils engaged with the youth justice system. Schools can play a vital role in reducing the risks of young people becoming involved in crime and anti social behaviour. Furthermore, under the Every Child Matters framework, schools and youth offending teams have a common agenda of multi-agency working; early prevention work; information sharing; and child safeguarding - especially for looked after children. The "Steer" report from the Practioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline (2005) and the White Paper (DfES, 2005) make clear a range of functions which schools have which contribute to reducing the risk of children being involved in crime and anti social behaviour.

Schools can play a vital role in reducing the risks of young people becoming involved in crime and anti social behaviour.

What are "they" like?

Any child becoming engaged with the youth justice system (YJS) has an assessment done of their needs. This includes personal circumstances and detailed information about health, education, and other needs. From data collected to date the following profile has emerged:

- 75 per cent of them have behaviour patterns described as 'impulsive' – ie not liable to think through their actions;

- 20 per cent are vulnerable to harm as a result of the behaviour of others;
- 9 per cent of the boys and 15 per cent of the girls are at risk of self harm;
- 70 per cent of the children involved with YJS live with only one parent;
- 15 per cent are or have been permanently excluded from schools;
- 41 per cent have a pattern of truancy from school; and
- 42 per cent are considered by their schools to be underachieving.

Research has identified the following key risk factors for young people getting involved in crime and antisocial behaviour.

- Children exhibiting aggressive behaviour including bullying;
- Low school achievement and low attendance;
- A family history of behaviour problems;
- Alienation and lack of social control;
- Family conflict or breakdown;
- Peer involvement in problem behaviour; and
- Availability of drugs.

Risk factors	Protective Factors
Low achievement (esp. late KS2)	Schools which enable a sense of achievement
Alienation from and lack of commitment to schools	Schools which integrate children well and help them feel a valued part of the community
School organisation which promotes punitive relationships and limits praise	High quality teaching and organisation. Effective whole school behaviour policy including anti – bullying

Research by the DfES synthesised all that is known about the school role in "risk" and "protective" factors for young people engaging in crime and antisocial behaviour. It is no surprise that the role of the school was shown to be of great importance.

Adapted from Prior and Paris (DfES Research report RR 623.March 2005)

Youth Offending Teams (YOTS)

Youth offending teams or services are inter-agency teams which usually include staff from children's services, education, police, health and probation service backgrounds.

The key aims of YOTs are to prevent offending by children and young people, identify and deal with young offenders, and reduce reoffending. A whole range of prevention and intervention programmes are used including:

- the youth inclusion programme – targeted work with prolific young offenders;
- youth inclusion and support panels;
- parent support programmes;
- safer schools partnerships (police working in schools);
- out of school hours prevention and diversion programmes; and
- individual programmes to address issues of health, education attainment, accommodation, drugs and alcohol abuse.

For most of these programmes responsibility does not rest solely with the YOT but relies on mainstream services working effectively in partnership. More details of each of these are given on the Youth Justice Board website.

Youth Justice Board

This is a national independent body established to set standards and monitor the YOTs and the "secure estate" (ie all the young offender institutions, secure training centres and local authority secure children's homes/units). The board also:

- commissions sufficient places in the secure estate;
- promotes effective practice through training;
- monitors the youth justice system; and
- advises the Home Secretary.

In autumn 2005 a significant increase in funding was given to YOTs to promote local prevention work over the next three years. However, the Board still spends some 74 per cent of its budget on the secure estate because of the high costs associated with such provision. Clearly, the better the prevention work, the fewer children and young people would be in the secure estate!

The youth justice system has various functions and responsibilities designed to respond to the full range of offences from minor to major. Not surprisingly the more serious the offence the more expensive the provision needed for offenders.

How can schools contribute to better prevention?

Against this background I would like to suggest several things that schools can do to intervene positively and lessen the likelihood of young people offending.

Schools can develop prevention programmes as part of their extended schools policies. The peak time of offending by young people is between 3pm and 6pm on weekdays. Extended school provision could incorporate some targeted work for young people at risk. Over recent years Positive Action for Young People programmes have demonstrated success in reducing offending.

For vulnerable pupils – those with special education needs; looked after children, and transient (sometimes missing) children - schools can make and keep contact, contribute to effective assessment, and ensure

Evidence from a number of schools has shown the effectiveness of restorative approaches in reducing exclusions.

that records are kept and transferred promptly. Multi-agency sharing of information is an essential element of this.

Schools can also redefine support staff roles under the remodelling agenda. For example, one London school has family support workers attached to each year team. These have been trained by the staff of the youth offending team so that they can effectively make links with the team when necessary. The school funded these posts through a Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP).

Safer School Partnerships (SSP)

As more than 500 schools have done to date, others could form a Safer Schools Partnership (SSP). These encourage police and schools working together. Such partnerships can help to:

- reduce victimisation, crime and anti-social behaviour in the school and its community;
- improve whole school behaviour and attendance;
- support children at risk of being offenders;
- ensure the full time education of young offenders;
- support vulnerable children through critical transitions; and
- create a safer environment for learning.

Bowles et al (2005) found that schools involved in SSPs valued:

- an increase in the range of pastoral activities for pupils;
- a quicker response to behavioural issues;
- more engagement with the local community;
- improved school ethos for respect and inclusion; and
- the SSP staff presence in "supporting, challenging and engaging pupils".

The recommendations from the study were that schools and local agencies should:

- continue to develop closer information links between primary and secondary schools especially about vulnerable children at the time of transition;
- develop closer links with YOTs and the police in relation to youth offending and problem behaviour;
- make greater use of electronic attendance data for following up truancy
- develop greater local dialogue about school and community safety and youth offending; and
- encourage police area commanders to review the role of schools in their community policing plans and how best to support officers working in schools.

It is also beneficial for groups of schools to develop protocols with their local Youth Offending Team. Such protocols cover issues such as practical aims; clear leadership and management systems; flexible problem solving strategies to deal with a crisis for a young person; monitoring and evaluation systems; arrangements for sharing information; strategies to support young offenders leaving custody; and clear systems for working together.

Restorative justice

As the statistics at the start of this article showed, exclusions are a very significant risk factor for children and young people. Evidence from a number of schools has shown the effectiveness of restorative approaches in reducing exclusions while promoting a positive behaviour ethos within the school.

For example, in an authority in North West England three schools reported a 55 per cent reduction in permanent exclusions and 38 per cent reduction in fixed term exclusions. This experience has been replicated in other schools using restorative approaches in a wide range of settings. They have dealt with issues which might have led to permanent exclusions and also the sort of daily incidents which take so much time to sort out – the minor squabble which can so easily escalate out of control.

The principles of restorative approaches can be summarised as a process of :

- establishing the facts;
- putting an emphasis on meeting the emotional and other needs of all those affected;
- agreeing a resolution of the conflict; and

- monitoring the agreement.

The Youth Justice Board funded programmes of restorative justice in schools between 2001 and 2004. Six hundred and twenty five formal restorative conferences held during the pilot period showed the outcomes below:

- 92 per cent of the conferences ended in an agreement between all parties;
- 96 per cent of these agreements were being upheld 3 months later;
- 89 per cent of pupils taking part were satisfied with the outcome; and
- 93 per cent felt the process was fair and that justice had been done.

Most restorative work does not take place in conferences; but in the usual range of informal settings of a school, supported by developments such as circle time. The proposal in the White Paper that mandatory reintegration interviews take place after exclusions, if enacted, will provide a significant opportunity to develop restorative approaches within schools.

It's the curriculum

Last, but by no means least, schools can use the curriculum to influence behaviour. There is much which schools are already doing through PSHE, citizenship, and other aspects of the curriculum to help children and young people develop understanding and skills to deal with issues of crime and anti social behaviour. The establishment of social, emotional and behavioural skills (SEBS) can build on these foundations. The aim must be to broaden the ability of children to manage themselves better and understand consequences. Young people need to have the language of choice in their minds when, in other circumstances, they would be at risk of being involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour.

Conclusion

These are difficult issues. We are talking about some very damaged young people and families within complex personal, social and community settings. There are, of course, competing pressures on schools and teachers are aware of the effects which a very disruptive child may have on the learning of others, let alone themselves.

The cost to the individuals and local communities of children becoming engaged in crime and antisocial behaviour is high. Where possible, schools can help by deciding:

- they will not give up on any child;
- they will find new solutions; and
- they will recognise that progress often comes in small steps

(sometimes backwards).

Taking such decisions is vital for the future of the individual pupils concerned and the communities that schools serve. ■

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Learning to behave

Judith Elderkin

Judith Elderkin is an Executive Member of the NUT and a primary headteacher in Salford.

Abstract: ***Judith Elderkin*** *writes about her experience of being a member of the enquiry into behaviour set up by the Government and chaired by Sir Alan Steer. Judith gives an insider view of the development of the "Practitioners' Group's" work and highlights some of its key recommendations.*

Around Easter 2005, the main teacher unions debated the issue of pupil behaviour at their conferences. Several speakers, moving and seconding motions or just speaking in the debate, gave detailed verbal descriptions of disruptive and violent behaviour in schools. Some speakers had experienced these difficulties personally. Others had assisted their members who were in need of support, help and advice, as to what could be done in order to remedy the situation, seek legal help and redress, or just talk through the issues with a fellow teacher.

These reports of disruptive and violent behaviour hit the headlines and the national press printed several articles over the Easter holiday period, giving the background information to some of the cases. Some papers commissioned their journalists to investigate the issues in depth and in the days that followed the union conference season, further reports appeared which gave the public the impression that schools were out of control and unsafe for staff and pupils.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour, especially violent acts are extremely rare in our schools. Evidence from OFSTED in 2003/4 found that behaviour in 90 per cent of primary schools and 68 per cent of secondary schools was either excellent or good. Unsatisfactory behaviour was only found in 1 per cent of primary schools and 9 per cent of secondary schools.

Where misbehaviour is a problem, there are often difficulties in other aspects of the teaching and learning or in the management of these schools. Some of these schools are deemed by OFSTED (2005) to have "serious weaknesses" or require "special measures".

Most schools successfully manage pupil behaviour and strive to create a learning environment in which pupils feel valued and safe.

For some pupils, school is a calm and orderly place compared with the situation at home or in the world in general. Unsatisfactory behaviour, in the majority of cases, involves the low level disruption of lessons; as the Chief inspector has said, "The most common forms of misbehaviour are incessant chatter, calling out, inattention and other forms of nuisance that irritate staff and interrupt learning." (OFSTED, 2005)

Two enquiries

In the aftermath of the teacher conferences the Government decided to set up two working groups to consider school discipline. The first was a task group, which came to be called the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline, and was chaired by Sir Alan Steer. The second group was the Ministerial Stakeholder Group on Behaviour and Attendance.

I became a member of the Practitioners' Group, which consisted of 13 professional practitioners, including six members nominated by the main teacher professional associations. All members of the group were either school leaders or senior teachers, with experience in successfully improving pupil behaviour and discipline.

The time scale set for the Practitioners' Group was short. We met over a period of four months and were asked to report our conclusions to the Ministerial Stakeholder Group before the end of October.

The full terms of reference were:

> "How effective practice in promoting positive behaviour and preventing misbehaviour can be embedded in all schools, drawing on approaches currently used by successful schools, including specific consideration of:
>
> - how can we build up effective collaboration between schools;
> - whether teachers need further support through initial teacher training or professional development in managing behaviour;
> - whether there is merit in a national code of behaviour setting out the responsibilities of schools, pupils and parents in promoting good behaviour;
> - Whether there are any further developments in policy or new powers for head teachers which would help in enforcing school discipline, including specific consideration of the process for exclusion appeal panels; and
> - How parents can be more effectively engaged in supporting

schools in promoting good behaviour and respect."

Prime Minister intervenes

In July, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, wrote to the Group emphasising aspects of the terms of reference, particularly on the issue of spreading good practice and the more effective use of exclusions and parental responsibility. At the end of our second meeting in July we were invited to attend a special meeting, held at 10 Downing Street in order to meet with

Reports appeared which gave the public the impression that schools were out of control and unsafe for staff and pupils.

the Prime Minister, Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State, and Jacqui Smith, Minister of State for Schools.

Sir Alan Steer, the Chair of the Practitioners' Group, outlined to the meeting the progress of the task group so far and two of the head teacher members of the group summarised the sound practice in their schools which had led to the development of good behaviour and discipline.

Tony Blair was particularly concerned about the problems surrounding pupils who had been excluded from school, either temporarily or permanently. He asked us to consider this issue and to make recommendations as to how parents could be made to take greater responsibility for their children whilst excluded from school and whether or not schools needed to have the power to issue "parenting orders".

Discussions also focused on the positive role played by learning mentors in the Excellence in Cities areas in supporting inclusion and encouraging learning. The problems experienced by some schools when

Tony Blair asked us to make recommendations as to how parents could be made to take greater responsibility for their children.

the parents arrive on the school premises and become physically or verbally abusive towards school staff were also highlighted.

With these points in mind, we resumed our meetings after the summer break, keen to identify the key factors in promoting good behaviour in schools and provide examples for the report. It seemed clear to us that pupils needed to have consistent experience of good teaching to learn good behaviour. Pupils needed to understand what was expected of them within an agreed behaviour policy which was applied fairly and

consistently by staff, underpinned by a transparent range of rewards and sanctions.

Good behaviour needed to be modelled by all school staff working with the pupils and all staff required training and support in order to manage pupil behaviour. As the staff in a school can change this needed to be an on-going feature of staff development. Teachers who mentor trainee teachers needed to support new teachers in learning disciplinary techniques and skills.

Sound pupil support systems were of paramount importance in all schools, whatever the size of the school population. All schools needed access to specialist support services such as education welfare officers, mental health services, speech and language therapy and youth support teams. Teachers with pastoral responsibilities needed time to do this work as well as training and the necessary administrative support which may be provided by the non teaching staff of the school.

Unhelpful structures

When the Practitioners' Group began their work in the summer term, all schools in England were preparing to reorganise their management structures. Head teachers were beginning to draw up proposals for consultation with staff on the distribution of the Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments, which were to replace management allowances. As the autumn term started, the advice being given to schools was that teachers were no longer to be rewarded for taking on responsibility for pastoral care, for example, as heads of year. It even seemed as if this work was to be deleted from the list of teachers' duties, as the new system was said to focus just on teaching and learning.

The Practitioners' Group debated this issue and felt that effective pastoral support systems were vital and needed to be led by teachers, as this work impacted on the ability of schools to meet the needs of vulnerable children. Down-grading pastoral leadership would also diminish schools' efforts to tackle unacceptable behaviour, truancy, bullying and other serious problems affecting young people's development. It is often a teacher who spots at an early stage the child who is being abused or who is experimenting in drugs and other substances.

The Practitioners' Group felt that effective pastoral support systems were vital and needed to be led by teachers.

As the work of the Group progressed, it became clear that the Government's proposals for teachers' pay would be counterproductive. The important link between learning and underlying personal or social problems needed to be made. Similarly that such difficulties for some

pupils could lead to serious behavioural problems and have an impact on whole school discipline. At the eleventh hour proposals to exclude pastoral work from the new Teaching and Learning Responsibility criteria were modified and new advice sent to schools.

A strong conclusion of the Group was also that pastoral support systems in schools played a vital part in the links with parents and other agencies. Evidence from the Behaviour Improvement Programme indicated that where resources were enhanced to enable collaborative working between school and home, parents and communities benefit.

The Group looked at many aspects of school life. Managing effectively pupil transition between phases of education; the physical aspects of school buildings; building design and the teaching environment were all considered crucial to encouraging positive attitudes and good behaviour.

Members of the Steer Group, as we came to be known, were very impressed by the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme used in the primary sector and felt it could benefit the secondary sector. Creating a safe school environment and providing a non violent climate

It was agreed to advise that regular staff training to improve behaviour in schools was very important.

were essential and the publication of the Government's Violence in Schools programme would be helpful, together with the re-issue of the Anti Bullying Charter for Action. The group recommended that the DfES should issue further advice on tackling bullying motivated by prejudice - including homophobia, racism and persecution in all its various manifestations.

Behaviour Charter

All the teacher organisations submitted examples of good practice to the group. These culminated in a call for a national behaviour charter which would set out the responsibilities of schools, pupils and parents in promoting good behaviour. Schools would then be prepared to make their own decisions to reflect their own context and define appropriate rewards for good behaviour and the sanctions to be imposed on pupils for breaking the school rules by exhibiting poor attitudes and behaviour. National consultation to develop the charter was recommended.

It was agreed to advise that regular staff training to improve behaviour in schools was very important. Staff coaching, training for school leaders, training within schools, specialist training and the use of Teachers' TV programmes were all recommended. A review of the

standards for initial teacher training in promoting positive behaviour was also called for.

The importance of diet, sport, the arts and the wider curriculum were recognised as helping motivate pupils and the Practitioners' Group received evidence from several experts in these fields. These offered excellent guidance which has been incorporated into the final report.

A long discussion and debate occurred about school exclusions and the alternative provision of education for excluded pupils. It was agreed to recommend a review of DfES guidance on exclusions to reduce the risk of cases being overturned by lawyers on technicalities and also that information to parents be emphasised in a simple leaflet.

Collaborations between schools to encourage the use of managed transfers on the basis of "one pupil out, one pupil in" should be arranged, with the co-operation and support of parents. It was strongly agreed that the DfES should require all schools including Academies to be part of such local partnerships. Home/school contracts, parenting contracts, parenting orders and how schools can deal with violent and abusive parents were all debated and recommendations were made in the final report.

Key recommendations

To be invited to be a member of the Practitioners' Group was a great honour. I am often asked to single out the most important recommendation the Group made. Without doubt it is the recommendation to introduce new legislation to make it clear that teachers have an overall right to discipline pupils. This will be framed in such a way as to not diminish existing legal rights; provide a clear statement about the duties and responsibilities of parents; and reaffirm teachers' rights to restrain pupils using reasonable force. The Elton Committee's Report (1989) recommended many years ago that "this authority is not delegated by the parent, but derives from the teacher's position as a teacher. In matters relating to the school, this authority overrides that of the pupil's parent."

I am pleased to say that the Government has been very supportive of the report from the Practitioners' Group. Many of the group's final recommendations have been included in the education White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* published at the end of October, for Parliament to debate early in 2006. ■

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Elaine Hall

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Learning styles – is there an evidence base for this popular idea?

Abstract: *The idea that it is possible to raise attainment and improve behaviour by teaching according to individual learners' styles is a popular one; but is it grounded in reliable research evidence? **Elaine Hall** reports on work by a team from the University of Newcastle examining the claims made for learning styles. There are both pitfalls and potential for teachers and the useful aspects need to be placed in context with other key ideas of "personalised education" and "learning to learn".*

The appeal of learning styles

There is enormous intuitive appeal in the idea that teachers and course designers should pay closer attention to students' learning styles: by diagnosing them, by encouraging students to reflect on them and by designing teaching and learning interventions around them. The shift to a focus on the learner, rather than on the subject matter which may (or may not) be learned would, it is argued, have a positive effect both on students and on teachers.

A further impetus to interest in learning styles is given by government policy that aims to develop the necessary attitudes and skills for lifelong learning, particularly in relation to "learning to learn" and

personalised learning. The development of a skilled workforce that contains individuals so self-aware that they can make career and training decisions more independently and quickly is a treasured goal of economists and policy-makers. Some learning style theories describe learners extending their skills and work strategies; as well as developing creativity and experimentation; plus analytic, intuitive and reflective thinking –key foundations for productivity and economic growth.

Making sense of a complex field

A team at Newcastle University was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Research Centre to survey the field of learning styles and identify the most important and influential theoretical models. The next step was to assess the reliability and validity of the instruments developed from these theories and to evaluate the extent to which they offered interesting, new or practical implications for teaching and learning. Finally, we were asked to examine the evidence that using learning styles inventories with learners and changing teaching methods based on these results had an impact on achievement or motivation (Coffield et al, 2004a & 2004 b).

Our initial systematic searches threw up nearly four thousand references to books and articles about learning styles. We eventually accumulated a research database of (at the last count) 836 references,

We need to incorporate our emerging understanding of how styles can be used strategically for specific tasks and new ideas about how each individual's orientations to learning fluctuate.

covering 70 models of learning style published between 1902 and 2002. Since our focus was on implications for teaching and learning we chose to organise models of learning styles according to the extent that the theorists believed that learning styles are changeable (Figure 1).

If learning styles are relatively fixed, it follows logically that teachers should attempt to alter their delivery in order to provide a "match", so that students can operate most effectively. However, if learning styles are more fluid, dependent on context and motivation, it is important for teachers to make students more aware of the ways in which they currently learn best and to make them aware of the alternative approaches and strategies which they could use to extend their repertoire of styles.

What is the evidence for the impact of learning styles?

The 13 models which we chose for in-depth evaluation were either well-known and widely used in educational or business contexts or were models that offered new and interesting perspectives on learning styles. We found several significant problems which affect the learning styles debate, although some models were significantly more successful in avoiding these pitfalls than others.

- There is an emphasis away from learning on to learner characteristics. This could underplay the importance of both acquiring subject knowledge and skills and could also obscure the differences between the learning cultures of different academic subjects: for example, identifying an individual as a kinaesthetic learner may have less relevance in physics than in PE, unless this is an overt "labelling" which implies that expectations of this person's achievements in physics should not be set very high.
- The theoretical and practical applications of many of the leading models are either under-researched in educational contexts or mired in controversy. Learning style theory is complex and demanding and the desire to provide categories and groups inevitably leads to dangerous simplifications in practice.
- None of the models we reviewed passed all of the "good test" criteria of reliability and validity, with the result that one cannot use a learning styles instrument and be sure that all the items are measuring what they intend to measure, that the results will be the same if the test is taken again or that the results can predict how someone might approach a learning experience in the future.
- Most disappointingly, we found little good evidence to suggest that using a pedagogy influenced by the idea of learning styles, either directly or indirectly, has a significant effect on achievement or motivation.

What do learning styles theorists have to say to teachers?

Overall, we concluded that the implications for teaching and learning which spring from learning styles models are not exclusive to this field, nor unfamiliar to accepted canons of good practice. Many researchers do not go much further than suggesting that a variety of teaching approaches could benefit students. However, theorists differ considerably in terms of what teaching should do for a student with a particular learning style, with views along a continuum from "matching" teaching to learning styles to extending students' repertoire of skills.

As Figure 1 implies, the "matching" hypothesis stems from a belief that individuals are unable or unlikely to change their learning style.

Figure 1

More fixed ⟷ *Less fixed*

Learning styles and preferences are **largely constitutionally based**	Learning styles reflect deep seated features of the **cognitive structure**, including patterns of ability	Learning styles are one component of a relatively **stable personality type**	Learning styles are flexibly stable **learning preferences**	Move from learning styles to learning approaches, strategies, orientations and conceptions of learning
Dunn and Dunn **Gregorc** Bartlett Betts Gordon Marks Paivio Richardson Sheehan Torrance (Theorists from this group make use of VAK)	**Riding** Broverman Cooper Gardner Guilford Holtzman-Klein Hudson Hunt Kagan Kogan Messick Pettigrew Witkin	**Apter** **Jackson** **Myers-Briggs** Epstein & Meier Harrison-Branson Miller	**Allinson and Hayes** **Herrmann** **Honey & Mumford** **Kolb** Felder & Silverman Hermanussen, Wierstra, de Jong & Thijssen Kaufmann Kirton McCarthy	**Entwistle** **Sternberg** **Vermunt** Biggs Conti & Kolody Grasha- Reichmann Hill Marton and Säljö McKenney & Keen Pask Pintrich, et al Schmeck Weinstein, et al Whetton & Cameron

Implications for teaching and learning

'Matching' teaching to individual needs ⟷ *Enhancing the repetoire of styles availableto each learner*

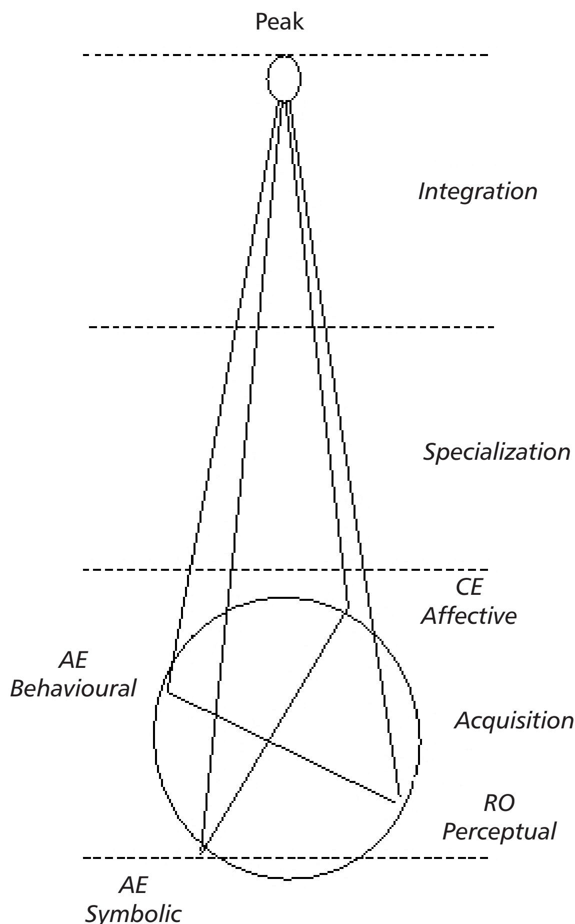
The theorists in bold type are the ones that were chosen for evaluation in depth.

Therefore following diagnosis, pedagogical approaches should match their prefered style of learning. These views are broadly espoused by Gregorc, Dunn and Dunn, and Riding. The advantage for practitioners of these kinds of learning styles theories is that a "type" of student can be identified and a specific curriculum designed for them, and with the increasing use of communications technology, individual "prescriptions" can be provided. However, while these theorists admit the possibility of change and development, the strong emphasis on diagnosis and matching makes it likely that learners will accept labels and be reluctant to move beyond their "comfort zones" to develop new skills or styles. This could have the effect of closing off areas of experience for lower-

achieving students, particularly since some of these style "diagnoses" appear to correlate strongly with low attainment.

For theorists who extrapolate learning styles from overarching models of personality, the position is more ambivalent. So far, there has been little empirical work that explores the extent to which aspects of personality that are more amenable to change interact with more fixed traits. As a result, it is unclear in the learning styles field as a whole whether emphasis should be put on matching dominant characteristics to particular career paths or activities (as the practical application of the Myers-Briggs model has so far implied) or whether greater understanding

Figure 2: The Experiential Learning Theory of Growth and Development



Source: Kolb (2000: 14)

of personality can be used, either as a learning aid or professional development tool, to enhance an individual's repertoire, as Jackson advocates. New developments in our understanding of the fluidity of motivation, including the recent work of Apter with the Myers-Briggs team, suggest that the personality theorists are developing a more variable model of the role of personality in learning.

The theorists we placed on the right hand side of our continuum tend to emphasise the process of learning as one of a complex, iterative engagement between external factors such as the curriculum, environment and culture of a course or institution, innate habits and dispositions and lived experience. Kolb's influential concept of the

A constructive dialogue between teachers and students about the results of different instruments that offer a sophisticated view of learning is, we believe, a positive thing.

learning cycle (see Figure 2) has stemmed from this focus on dynamic change, through the various stages of experience, observation, conceptualisation and experimentation, strengthening each area in turn, until the learner begins to be able to combine styles, eventually having all four to draw upon (Kolb et al, 2001). However, the extent to which the process of learning can consistently be seen as a smooth upward cycle is still an area of debate. We need to incorporate our emerging understanding of how styles can be used strategically for specific tasks and new ideas about how each individual's orientations to learning fluctuate.

Policy documents and inspection reports increasingly refer to the diagnosis and matching of learning styles as an example of "good practice". The LSDA and the DfES both publish quick guides to the use of learning styles which lean heavily on visual, auditory and kinaesthetic modalities. As a result, there may be an expectation that teachers should be making use of them in their teaching, despite the current lack of hard evidence that they will improve students' performance or motivation. The suggestions that we make are not intended to be a "best buy" guide to learning styles – indeed the most dangerous aspect of learning styles is that they may be mis-used in an unreflective "off the shelf" manner. Our research has shown, this is a theoretically complex field which demands serious engagement by anyone wishing to develop the idea of learning styles. We are offering suggestions for interest and further investigation. Alternatively, if teachers have to be seen to be using learning styles, these

approaches may be the most productive and the least potentially limiting.

Using inventories to diagnose individual learning styles has to be managed very carefully, since it is probably unhelpful to have students remarking "I can't listen to you, I'm not an auditory learner". The key is probably in the quality of the diagnosis, review and feedback about styles or approaches. A constructive dialogue between teachers and students about the results of different instruments that offer a sophisticated view

Our research would suggest that learning styles are at best, only one part of a series of essential and related elements of learning and thinking and at worst a red herring.

of learning is, we believe, a positive thing. For example, Jackson's Learning Styles Profiler can be completed on-line and provides useful, non-judgemental feedback about the behaviours described, their associated strengths and weaknesses as well as indications of how these can be enhanced or toned down, depending on the context. Learning styles instruments have also been used to group students within settings, placing them with similar and differently styled peers to support behaviours or stimulate new ways of working. Herrmann's Brain Dominance Instrument has been used particularly effectively in this way in business and management contexts.

Models that present a more complex view of learning aim to increase teachers' and students' understanding of their own learning and to provide a common vocabulary in which strategies, motivation and the processes particular to each learning experience can be collaboratively explored. This is a very different approach to the diagnosis and matching of individual styles. The disadvantage for practitioners is that these models are more theoretically complex and do not (indeed, cannot) provide detailed "schemes of work" for different "types" of students and thus require a considerable investment of time and intellectual engagement.

Our research would suggest that learning styles are at best, only one part of a series of essential and related elements of learning and thinking and at worst a red herring. The theories which underpin the better models of learning style have the potential to provide teachers and learners with concepts of learning which can be both motivating and liberating. In this respect, the theories are greatly superior to the instruments which follow them, since they can all be misused to label or limit learners. By offering learners a vocabulary for understanding both

how they learn and why they learn more effectively in different contexts at different times, learning styles may help students to become more autonomous, more motivated and more self regulated (Moseley et al, 2005; Hall and Moseley, 2005). ■

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Michelle MacGrath

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Beyond behaviour management: manage or motivate?

Abstract: *This article suggests that how we think about learners and teaching is crucial to outcomes.* ***Michelle MacGrath*** *puts forward the idea that focusing on how to motivate children and young people may be more constructive than concentrating directly on behaviour management as an aim in itself. In order to motivate, teachers need to be able to develop positive relationships and to help learners achieve. The conscious development of an emotionally literate environment facilitates relationships and achievement and behaviour will inevitably improve. The place to start is with our own thinking and personal development.*

Rather than giving solutions and techniques I am attempting to question and to invite you along a way of thinking that, ideally, will lead you to generate your own questions, thinking, strategies and creative solutions. There is a great deal written now about effective behaviour management, including my own books; but is "managing" behaviour really the most productive way of thinking about how best to deal with children and young people?

I would suggest that how we think is crucial to the results, that our thinking matters greatly to the process of teaching. Acknowledgements of its importance are already present in teaching, for example, the technique of asking children and young people to do something and then saying 'Thank you,' (that is, having no doubts that it will be done and conveying this) rather than 'please' (asking, but unsure of the others' co-operation).

Let us consider the role of thinking a little further by taking a fairly common situation. It is Monday morning and a 14-year-old boy saunters

Your reaction depends on how you interpret events, on the pictures you create in your head about the situation.

into your classroom 15 minutes late. What do you do? This will depend on a whole range of assumptions and predictions on your part. It is unlikely that you would treat every 14-year-old coming in late in exactly the same way. Even if the overall strategy is the same it is likely there will be differences in your manner or your tone of voice at the very least. These differences will probably depend on school policy, as well as a variety of thoughts, feelings and assumptions at the time. For example, your response will differ if you think he came late as a deliberate attempt to disturb your lesson or because the bus genuinely broke down.

In other words, your reaction depends on how you interpret events, on the pictures you create in your head about the situation. If the boy has disturbed your lessons before, or you have been warned by colleagues that he is a 'troublemaker' you are more likely to consider the former interpretation. If he is usually quiet and hardworking and has always shown himself to be honest, you will probably choose the latter. In other words, you will be making sense of the present in relation to your past experience and will use this to predict the future. Consequently, if the same boy causes a disturbance in some way in the future, your response to him then will be coloured by the picture you have already created of him. Clearly if you are expecting him to misbehave you will, however subtly, treat him differently than if you expect him to work co-operatively. Not only will you treat him differently, but you will also notice different things about him. If you expect him to disrupt, you will perceive anything that could be construed as a disturbance, even if it was not intended, as such. You are likely to interpret an intention to disrupt in his actions, even if they are not there.

Construct theory

This is a universal human phenomenon, part of our need to understand

the world and predict events so we can adapt to them and was described as construct theory by Kelly (1951). Everybody does it, all the time. It is as if we are wearing spectacles with lenses tinted to filter out certain actions and thoughts and to home in on others, having created a picture of the world we then seek confirmation of it by finding additional evidence to substantiate our original hypothesis. Consequently, when an adolescent answers aggressively to what we considered a reasonable request, it may well be because he or she is working from a picture based on earlier experience that all teachers are 'the enemy', or unreasonable or 'out to get you' and it is in no way personal. Indeed, he or she does not really see you, but only an image of you adjusted to fit into the understanding of the world he or she has already created.

Following from this, I would suggest that the question 'How can I manage behaviour?' implies an assumption that there will be unwelcome behaviour that will have to be managed. If we in any way expect unwanted behaviour then we will relate and perceive differently than if we know our students will be so involved in work that everything will flow smoothly. Ways in which we may treat children and young people if we expect misbehaviour of some kind are very likely to invite the very behaviour we are hoping to avoid.

Relationships are at the heart of teaching since it is an activity based on communication

Take, for example, a recent year 10 science practical lesson. The teacher comes in and explains the experiment the students are to do. It involves using syringes. He makes it quite clear they are not to squirt people with the syringes or generally to play around with them. As soon as the class set to work a boy starts to pretend injecting air into his friend's arm. In this and similar cases it seems that the teacher's words may sound like a challenge to some young people! Others will inevitably exhibit the behaviour the teacher has told them not to do, in a Basil Fawlty way of 'not talking about the war' - trying not to misbehave but nonetheless focusing on what they have been told not to do.

Of course, realistically we know that children, young people, and indeed adults will wander off task, talk and generally be unco-operative when they are unmotivated and disengaged. This then seems to be the point. Although we know a group of young people could misbehave in all kinds of ways from the mild to the wild, predicting and focusing on this is, I think, unhelpful because of the subtle messages we will inevitably convey in the way we relate to them.

I would suggest it more constructive to base our planning around a totally different question, for example, 'How can I best motivate?' To

motivate every individual in a class will require all the elements of excellent behaviour management, yet without the focus sticking on behaviour. The image I get is of a wave of energy. Instead of stopping that energy at the students, questioning their behaviour, you send it sweeping on towards the interesting learning goal. Such is your concentration on the goal that the class, like it or not, are swept along with you. Behaviour management is, after all, only a means to an end. The aim of education is not to get young people to sit quietly and concentrate. Although these may be useful skills, they are just this, desirable skills to aid learning, but not the ultimate goal itself. The questions then remain, how do teachers best engage children and young people and facilitate their learning? How are young people best motivated?

Raising achievement

Marland (1993) states that, "…the second greatest motivation (that is, after achievement) is the pupil's relationship with his teachers." Achievement may be the ultimate motivator, but for many young people they need a motivating relationship before they will even try to achieve. Similarly, a relationship in which a student perceives him or herself to be unfairly and disrespectfully treated by a teacher can de-motivate as easily as an unexpectedly poor grade. Think of the teachers you had. Sometimes

Behaviour management is only a means to an end.

the subject matter may not have been the most exciting, but if the relationship with the teacher was good, then it was worth turning up willingly because generally you felt better for being there.

The same holds true for achievement. If you manage to complete something, overcome a difficulty, improve a grade, learn a new skill, understand something incomprehensible then you tend to feel good. A sense of achievement helps you to grow a little and want more. This gives us some other questions to guide our practice. For example, what do I need to put in place for everyone to feel better at the end of the lesson/ the term/ the year? How do I need to relate to everyone in order to make this happen?

So, let us now consider in more depth these two crucial elements, the relationship and achievement. In particular, what do teachers need to put in place to ensure all children and young people can achieve and what kind of teacher:pupil relationship enhances and facilitates achievement and how do you build and maintain it?

Valuing relationships

Relationships are at the heart of teaching since it is an activity based on communication. These are the elements that will help develop and maintain constructive relationships with individuals and classes:

- Build trust: show the class that you are on their side. This does not mean trying to be their friend as this is impossible. The power balance of the roles is unequal and, therefore, friendship cannot happen. You can be friendly, but not friends. Rather, demonstrating that you are on their side relates to your attitude towards them and how you behave as a result of that. If you are on their side you care for what happens to them. You have for them as individuals and as a class what Rogers (1961) calls 'unconditional, positive regard'. This does not mean that you like them all but it does mean you go beyond being judgemental to being open to the possibility of good in them. This gets us back to the importance of how we think in relation to teaching. If a teacher does not hold onto that potential, how can the child ever find it on his or her own? This does not mean that you lack 'withitness' and pupils can 'lead you up the garden path' since you remain very aware of the fact that people often like to get their own way and that those of us with difficulties very often cause difficulties for those around us. But you accept the person wholeheartedly, and even if you challenge unacceptable behaviour and impose sanctions, you do so without personal blame. Focus on the behaviour not the person.
- Treat everyone with respect all the time. A learner's behaviour may be totally unacceptable and you can tell them so with respect towards the human being who exhibited the unwelcome behaviour. In this way, it is possible to maintain some kind of relationship, or at least to leave the door open. A critical and blaming approach leads nowhere other than to entrenched positions of hostility. From this standpoint the young person can justify his or her behaviour in response to an unfair adult world. Ultimately there is no challenge in this: judgemental attitudes merely confirm the young person's existing picture of the status quo, the 'them' and 'us' mentality of opposition towards authority. By maintaining unconditional regard and communicating respectfully and non-judgementally towards the person (whilst making it clear the behaviour is unacceptable) a teacher can challenge such pictures. If the relationship is sufficiently trusting, there may be a chance of change.
- Be in charge: show you can make it safe physically and emotionally for all and that you can lead them as far as each can go. This requires the ability to organise for purposeful activity. It also means you have to convince everyone that you can help them achieve. What procedures

will you need in order to create a calm environment? How can you ensure that everyone has something to think about or do in connection with your lesson from before they enter the classroom until after they leave? How can you ensure they will be so engaged with the subject matter and the process that they will not need to 'amuse' themselves in various undesirable ways?

- Work together: bear it in mind that you cannot be a teacher without children and young people. They could learn in other ways without you, but you cannot teach without them. It is a partnership with distinct but complementary roles. You have to spend hours together in a room: the only way to make it work is to work together and co-operate. In this spirit, desired learning behaviours can be introduced, not as something imposed by the teacher, therefore becoming a potential battleground, but as an organic part of the process of joint working. What do we need to work well together? Having come to an understanding themselves of what is needed to learn, the children and young people are more likely to practise the skills and support their peers in doing so. As the teacher you are in charge of the process, with the expertise of knowing what has to be learnt in terms of skills and content; the children and young people have their ability, their skills, differing learning styles, strengths and weaknesses. Helping them to become aware of these empowers them to work with you actively. Everyone has a job to do. How can you work together to ensure all succeed?
- Show you can listen. That teachers do not listen is such a common complaint among children and young people that it is worth considering. (Only once have I heard a child or young person referred to the behaviour service say that a teacher, in this case the head teacher, listened.) What exactly do they mean by this? I would suggest that this is not just about listening but about accepting what the young person says. As a teacher you usually have your own agenda, a clear picture in your head of what you should tell the young person: tell to instruct, tell off, and so on. This makes it difficult to really follow what is being said, to stand in their shoes, to show empathy. I suspect this is what is meant by this universal complaint. Clearly, you cannot settle down to long empathic conversations with all and sundry. This is not appropriate and not your job. However, at times showing empathy is important in order to build a trusting relationship.

Questions and answers

When considering how to promote achievement what thinking will help

you? Useful questions might include some of the following: What is it like being a learner in my class? What do I need to have in place in order to help the learners in my class achieve? How can I help these young people learn? Who is working hardest in this classroom – me or the children and young people? What will they need in order to achieve?

Answers to this last question might include:

- To see the point of it all, what they will get out of it.
- Good relationships and positive experiences in the classroom
- To know how best to learn – their own strengths and weaknesses.
- To know what they need from the teacher in order to learn and to have a means of communicating this.
- To understand the relevance of the work, what they need to know and why, how it links into their existing knowledge and thinking so that they are empowered to generate ideas and make their own links.
- To know how to view and use mistakes and poor performance so that they can grow and develop.
- Work that is accessible, interesting and possible. The degree of challenge they can successfully manage will depend upon their levels of self-esteem and resilience and their ability to manage obstacles and difficulties.
- A process in the classroom that is dynamic and engages their thinking processes so that the learners, rather than the teacher, are doing most of the work.
- A variety of teaching styles that is helpful to auditory, visual and kinaesthetic/tactile learners and those who need both the big picture and open-ended debate and those who want to home into detail and concrete answers.
- Support and encouragement of self-awareness, calm and social skills to be able to work in a group and to learn.
- A growing sense of unconditional positive regard towards themselves so that they can develop skills of constructive self-evaluation.

There is growing evidence to show that emotional literacy has a positive impact on a range of areas including achievement, mental health issues, behaviour and workplace effectiveness. It is, perhaps, common sense that the more comfortable we feel in ourselves and with others, the easier it is to concentrate and achieve. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials, ethos and process, that are currently being introduced into primary schools, aim to improve standards by equipping children with essential life skills and learning behaviours including self-awareness, empathy, managing feelings, motivation and social skills. The acquisition of these skills, that are both taught and modelled, will

inevitably have an impact on behaviour. Any consideration of how to motivate children and young people (or indeed how to manage their behaviour) must necessarily include an understanding that the development of these skills and concepts is crucial. An essential part of helping children and young people develop these important skills and understanding is the creation of an emotionally literate environment based on unconditional positive regard and an understanding that all are working from their own pictures of the world.

So, where to start? As always when considering how to work with others and possibly help them change, the place to start is with ourselves. Starting teachers might take the following steps.

- Get your thinking straight so you can really stand firm. Be aware of the pictures you have of children and young people, yourself as a teacher, your role and the processes of teaching and decide which of these facilitate or impede you in helping children and young people to learn.
- Refine your communication skills so that you can relate positively and creatively with children and young people in a range of situations.
- Develop an ever-increasing sense of unconditional positive regard towards yourself and others.
- Develop a support network for yourself and a supportive lifestyle to maintain a balanced perspective and keep things in proportion.

Experienced teachers, as they will know, might keep all these steps under constant review! ■

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Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/banda/seal/

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills (SEBS) is to be piloted in secondary schools in 2006.

The key to successful behaviour management is…you!

Phil Craig

Phil Craig is Head of Service for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties for Kirklees LEA. He has taught in mainstream and special schools in Britain and Canada and has lectured in both countries.
He is an experienced trainer in positive behaviour management.

Abstract: *Drawing on his own experience as an advisor and trainer, as well as ideas from some prominent behaviour "gurus," **Phil Craig** offers some friendly advice about behaviour management to teachers and other adults. He describes how selfish altruism can ensure that adults stay in control whilst also reducing the stress to themselves that is increased by confrontational situations.*

A few years ago, I heard an educational psychologist called Simon Cusworth talking at a conference about a concept he referred to as "selfish altruism". Basically, he said the first priority for all teachers was to look after their own emotional, physical and psychological well-being. If they were able to do that successfully, then they would be better placed to be "altruistic" towards their pupils. Conversely, if teachers are constantly stressed by the inappropriate or challenging behaviour of their pupils, then they are likely to react in ways that will actually escalate situations rather than resolve them. The end result of this is that both teacher and pupil are damaged by the process, creating lose-lose situations rather than the win-win ones we want to achieve.

This concept of selfish altruism really makes sense to me and I refer to it all the time whenever I deliver training on behaviour management.

More importantly, it is evident that it also makes sense to many teachers and support staff in schools, lecturers and support staff in colleges and to the leaders in scouting to whom I have delivered training programmes. The simple fact is that if we allow situations to develop into confrontation then we damage not only the pupil but ourselves as well.

Rules for behaviour

Smith (1998) when talking about behaviour management in the classroom, says that pupils need to know:

- Who is in charge?
- What are the rules?
- Are the rules applied fairly and consistently?
- What are the consequences of breaking the rules and/or adhering to the rules?

That's the "what" of behaviour management in the classroom. Quite simple, really, isn't it? However, the "how" is much more difficult to accomplish. It's my belief that implementing many of the strategies of positive behaviour management espoused by colleagues such as Bill Rogers (2000), Alistair Smith (1998), Andy Vass (2000), Trevor Hawes (1998), Sue Roffey (2004)and Sue Cowley (2003a, 2003b) will make the "how" a lot easier to achieve. In fact, these strategies are the very foundations of "selfish altruism".

It is estimated that over 20 per cent of teachers leave education within the first three years of qualifying and up to 50 per cent within five years (Roffey, 2004). Many of these teachers cite the poor behaviour of their pupils as one of the principal reasons for their departure. For that reason alone, it is plain to see that effective and positive behaviour management in schools is a very important issue for all concerned with the future of education, not just in this country but elsewhere because this crisis in teacher retention is mirrored in the USA, Australia and many other European countries.

Key concepts

What then are the key concepts in achieving "selfish altruism"? I offer the following advice to teachers and other staff with responsibility for young people.

1. It's not personal – so don't bite!

A good beginning is to tell yourself that it's not personal. Easier said than done, I hear you say, but it really is true. Very, very rarely is it personal. When a pupil has lost control, in the "immediate emotional moment" as

Bill Rogers (2000) calls it, he/she is telling authority (because that's what you represent), the school, the world to "get lost" (that's the polite version) – not you! If the problem you're facing is just general low-level misbehaviours then it's pupils testing the limits. Again, it's not personal – it's just what pupils do. The important thing is not to bite. If you do, then you break Alistair Smith's first rule about the teacher being in charge. In the classroom, only one person can be in charge and it's got to be the teacher. If we react badly, we have lost control twice - of ourselves and of the class. We have shown our students how easily we can be wound up. Isn't that entertaining for the rest of the class? Additionally, we have raised our own stress levels and damaged at least two people in the process.

Many teachers cite the poor behaviour of pupils as one of the principal reasons for their departure.

A really good example of "not biting" came from a teacher who had attended one of my training sessions. I recently delivered two sessions on positive behaviour management, a month apart, in a Bradford secondary school. When I arrived back at the school for the second session, a colleague came rushing up to me with a story about a strategy that I had covered that had actually worked for her. She recounted that very soon after my first session, a pupil had said to her, for no apparent reason, "Miss, why are you so fat"? Prior to my visit she said that she would have gone ballistic with the pupil. However, this time something inside her clicked into gear and she heard herself say to the pupil, "You know, Jack, I've often asked myself the same question. I go to the gym, I try to eat sensibly but I still can't seem to shift the weight". The pupil was shell-shocked by her response and blurted out an immediate apology. This was not the response he had expected from her and, as a result, she had created a win-win situation out of something that could have spiralled out of control. She also reported that she had felt "powerful", in control of the situation, and that this interaction had marked a turning point in her relationship with the pupil.

Allied to this strategy is "partial agreement". I really advocate this strategy, particularly when I train support staff in schools. They frequently report responses from pupils such as, "You're not a teacher." Partial agreement requires them to respond with something like, "Absolutely correct, Kyle, I'm not a teacher but I am a lunchtime supervisor (or whatever the colleague's title is) and I am responsible for your behaviour during the lunchtime period (or whatever period we're talking about)". Again, the secret is not to "bite" and risk escalating any situation into a lose-lose one. This strategy works at all levels because teachers, and even senior managers in schools, also get retorts such as,

"You're not the Headteacher".

2. Is it an 8 or is it a 2?

I read about this strategy in a book called "59 Minutes to a Calmer Life" by McGee (2001) and it made an awful lot of sense to me. The author proposes that when something negative happens in your life, give it a score out of ten where nine or ten is really, really serious and two or three is much less so. He adds that when something happens today that you would score as an eight, nine or ten, ask yourself will it still be that important in six months' time or even next week? Hence, if a pupil does not respond in an appropriate way to you, ask yourself immediately, "Is this an 8 or is it a 2"?

3. Rules rule

Alistair Smith's second question about classroom management was whether or not pupils know what's expected of them. He states that they need to know the class rules in order to comply with them.Every classroom should have the classroom rules on the wall in print big enough to be read by everyone in the class. Additionally, the language used on the poster should be the language of inclusion such as, "In our class, we will keep hands, feet and objects to ourselves". As well as governing everyone (adults as well) in the classroom, how many misdemeanours does that one rule cover? The important point about

They need to know the rules in order to comply with them.

rules is that pupils should be involved in the making of them and, once they have been decided upon, they need to be constantly reinforced with reminders. Otherwise, they get forgotten and become redundant. Additionally, when a pupil asks, "What have I done?" it's much more effective to point to a rule on the wall and say, "We all have a rule about keeping objects to ourselves, (name of child), and I expect you to comply with it".

4. Admit you're fallible.

Pupils like teachers who are human. When a situation has not ended in the way you would have hoped for (for example, when a student has had to exit the classroom in a previous lesson), it's OK to begin your follow-up with something like "Maybe I didn't handle that situation in the best way that I could have, Saied, but in order to prevent this happening again, this is what I need you to do in the future".

5. Sometimes you have to lose the odd battle in order to win the war.

As a teacher, it's sometimes easy to slip into the frame of mind whereby you can't be seen to be wrong – or be seen to "lose" in interactions with pupils. This is where we can inadvertently react to the "secondary behaviours" of pupils and not focus on the primary reason for the interaction. For example, reacting badly to a pupil's poor body language when they are doing (unwillingly) what you are asking of them is a classic example. What do we seriously expect of them in this situation? They're doing something that they really don't want to do: do we really expect them to be, and look, happy about it? We've got to realise that the pouting and sulking is their "battle" (their little bit of victory) after the "war" has been lost.

6. Rewards are more powerful than sanctions – choice is the key!

In any school, the reward system is much more important than that of sanctions. Ridiculous as it sounds, I have had very difficult 16 year olds almost turning cartwheels for a positive letter or even phone call home telling parents how well they were doing. However, no matter how good the reward system is there will always be occasions when sanctions are needed. The key to effective sanctions is that they are "certain" rather than "severe". I believe that sanctions have to be perceived by the pupils as an irritating inconvenience. For example, if a pupil is consistently off-task and not working during a lesson, then I think it is perfectly legitimate to say something like, "I need you to finish this piece of work during this lesson, Natasha. You've got 20 minutes left. If you don't choose to finish it during class time, then you're choosing to finish it during break/ lunchtime/ after school. It's your choice. I'll let you think about it". You then walk away, expect the pupil to be compliant and give him/her what Bill Rogers (2000) calls "take-up time". You are not challenging and you matter-of-factly, unemotionally, state the consequence. The important issue here is not to bluff. If the pupil doesn't finish the work during class time, then he/she must finish it in his or her own time. The powerful issue here is that, if the pupil does not make the right choice, the teacher can say, "Natasha, you chose to miss your break".

The important issue here is not to bluff.

7. Use the collective power of the organisation: you are not alone!

All schools are powerful institutions. Don't forget that fact. If you are struggling with a difficult individual or class, do not suffer in silence.

Tell someone. Members of the Senior Management Team have a duty of care to all staff in their school and if you are really struggling with an individual pupil or class, then seek advice and support from one of them. If you are reluctant to involve a senior manager straight away, seek advice from a colleague you trust and respect. The worst thing you can do is to bottle it up and hope the problem goes away, because it won't!

8. Cherish and cultivate your life outside school.

Some teachers feel guilty if they think they're putting their own interests before those of their pupils but McGee (2001) writes that "guilt" needs to be re-defined as "Give yourself uninterrupted, indulgent, leisure and pleasure time at least twice a week". This seems to me to be the core of selfish altruism – look after yourself first and be in a better state of mind to help your pupils.

Feedback from teachers who have adopted the principles of "selfish altruism" has been very positive. Many have reported reduced stress levels both at work and at home, including comments from one colleague, "I wish I'd known all this 20 years ago. I could have saved myself, my pupils and my own family an awful lot of stress".

What I've described above is only the start of a different way of thinking about the demands of behaviour management. The reading list below will give you lots more ideas and strategies! ■

Further Reading:

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(A version of this article first appeared in NUT's *Teacher-to-Teacher* Primary Supplement, 2004)

Inside outside

Janet Adamson

Janet Adamson is Headteacher at Clifton Primary School, Hull

Abstract: *Clifton Primary School, an inner city school in Kingston upon Hull, made a discovery about the influences on the choices children make about their behaviour.* ***Janet Adamson*** *describes how the school responded by working with Creative Partnerships to improve teaching and learning by encouraging more creativity across the curriculum. The Inside Outside project was developed to provide teachers and children with a toolkit of strategies which they can use when making decisions about how to respond to a range of behaviours in different situations and circumstances. Creative professionals have worked with children and staff both inside and outside of the school building to influence play, extend language, build self-esteem and develop pupil voice. The project has done all of this and more.*

Clifton Primary School is an inner city school, just ten minutes from the centre of Hull. Judged by OFSTED to be a "highly inclusive school", it caters for all possible vulnerable groups and is very challenging. The existing ethos has developed over nine years and the climate of the school is calm and purposeful. Music plays through the corridors and staff give children every opportunity to achieve. The curriculum is creative, inspiring and relevant. The school is regarded as innovative and forward-thinking and standards are good.

The thinking behind our current strategy began with the realisation that children sometimes think differently about behaviour inside and outside of the classroom. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is recognised by OFSTED as good. Outside, the decisions children make are influenced by a very different culture. Staff could either accept this or challenge it. At Clifton we decided to challenge it.

In discussions staff discovered that children could "talk the talk", but did not necessarily "walk the walk"! They could tell others what to do in difficult circumstances, but struggled when challenged to apply it to their own situation. The capacity they had developed for working co-operatively was not so evident in the playground. They used words in an

aggressive and hurtful manner, with little heed for the feelings of others. Inside school they were generally polite, saying good morning and opening doors for others. The school recognised that parents also had an unbalanced perception of behaviour in the playground, seeing only the negative aspects, when much was positive. Some children developed a negative relationship with lunchtime staff, perceiving them as unhelpful, but not always seeking their help.

Influence and intervention

Staff were keen to influence children's thinking and the rationale behind it; whilst realising that there would be no quick-fix solutions. It was evident that whatever happened would need to impact in a positive way upon the culture of the school and would need to be maintained in the long-term. The initial developmental work involved all the children, plus those who were involved with them both within and beyond the school. Children needed to recognise and understand their emotions and staff needed to know how to work with them to make that happen.

There were a range of strands to this developmental approach. The first was to look at emotional literacy within the school and ascertain how it supported children in their decision-making about behaviour. The school had been developing this area for some time so there was a good foundation. The behaviour policy, ethos and structures were all sympathetic to further work.

Secondly the school introduced Clifton Good Citizens. This was an Investors in People type model which involved the children in decision making about various aspects of the school. Clifton Good Citizens gave

They could tell others what to do in difficult circumstances, but struggled when challenged to apply it to their own situation.

the children a voice and a greater understanding about their school and how it works. This encouraged good practice within the school in terms of the children setting themselves targets for personal development, attendance, learning and behaviour. It also involved them in discussions about what their classroom should be like and how the people within it – staff and children –needed to behave in order for that to become reality. As part of these discussions, children in Key Stage 1 worked with a filmmaker to produce a DVD for a parents' assembly about the role of key people in the school. They interviewed and helped with the filming and compilation of the elements of the DVD.

Creative Partnerships

Collaborative working with Creative Partnerships Hull has opened up a diversity of approaches to learning. Creative Partnerships is a national initiative, which gives school children the opportunity to develop their creative potential, whilst examining how creativity can be used to animate teaching and learning across the curriculum. Through this partnership the school developed a project entitled Inside Outside, which ran during the spring and summer terms of 2005.

The project had two distinct aspects at its core. Firstly, it was geared to empower pupils by giving both them and the staff a range of emotional intelligence strategies to use when interacting with each other. Secondly, it was angled towards regenerating the school's outdoor area, extending creative learning outside, and promoting positive play. The outside area had suffered from vandalism, so the project required careful planning in order to stand the test of time. We also wanted not only to address the physical design of the playground space but also to put emotional intelligence into practice to drive children's development.

The toolkit of strategies presented, during the course of this project, varied according to the age of the children, but always started from ideas based in "philosophy for children". Early work focused on the four core emotions of happiness, sadness, anger and fear. Through their work with a filmmaker and musician, very young children used a resource called the "Box of Feelings" to explore their emotions in the safe and supportive environment of their classroom. This worked on the premise that unless children recognised their emotions for what they were, they could not learn to control them. These very young children began to learn the appropriate emotional vocabulary, which would then be built upon as they moved through the school.

Coordinated strategies

Establishing how to talk about changing behaviour was seen as very important. The project needed to build both capacity and vocabulary. Working with a neuro-linguistic programmer, children from Key Stage 1 learned about De Bono's thinking hats and were able to identify when they were behaving in a particular "hat way". They learned how to change their thinking from negative to positive. All children and teachers were trained to use circle time to consider the "what, how and why" approach as a useful technique when choosing behaviour. Staff were trained in developing creative ways of establishing rapport with children and how to initiate discussion about these behavioural issues in a positive way. Lunchtime supervisors were also trained in finding satisfactory solutions and resolutions when children came to them with problems.

Children's thoughts about the behaviour they both experience and exhibit have been recorded. They have given serious consideration as to how they can change behaviour and the impact that change might have. A DVD showing children speaking frankly about behaviour has been produced. This was screened for children and staff midway through the project and all the children received a copy of the DVD to take home in order to involve parents in the thinking behind this work.

In addition the children were taught circus skills to build physical confidence, self-esteem and co-ordination. Both children and staff have

Early work focused on the four core emotions of happiness, sadness, anger and fear.

learned how to juggle, spin plates, balance and walk on stilts. This was great fun and required co-operation and development of a slightly different language of play. Children and staff discovered that they could do many things they had never before thought possible and were surprised that they were so successful.

Older children worked with a screenwriter to develop role-play in co-operation and conflict. This has been a good forum to learn about conflict resolution providing children with practical strategies. They have written scenarios from their role-play and developed empathy by "walking in the moccasins of others". The screenwriter said: "This scheme of work all depends upon the children owning the ideas. It will be moved forward by their thoughts, discussions, debates and actions. I am only here to light the blue touch paper!"

The oldest children in the school worked with a graphic artist to produce cartoon strips in order to reflect playground life. These have been developed into a graphic novel that takes children through a variety of life situations, whilst examining the choices they can make to resolve the problems that arise. These children also developed their drawing skills and were very pleased with the results.

Complementary work

Alongside this work the second strand began to develop focusing on the outside area of the school. A consultation process gathered opinions of children, parents and staff in order to establish the ownership of this element of the project. Currently, a team of artists are developing this element by working with these groups. Creative thinking will be the key to providing areas suitable for a variety of activities but which do not encourage antisocial behaviour from local children out of school hours.

The existing outside area is split into two surfaces, grass and hard

standing. Visually there is nothing to interrupt the space. The Victorian brick building to one side and a metal paling perimeter fence on three sides provide the borders. Improving this is a huge challenge, but crucial to the project. An artist will work with the children on the design of mural and floor games to bring visual design and creative learning into the playground. In addition, pupils will work with a landscape artist to examine the natural aspects of their space, by looking at habitats, wildlife and ecosystems. A team of community wardens are working to support this initiative, by clearing wooded areas, so that they can be developed. Children and artists working together will develop plans beyond this stage. The digital filmmaker is currently working with children in upper Key Stage 2 to enable them to evaluate this element of the work themselves through film and commentary.

The long haul

Our project is viewed as long term, in both the planning and the execution. We want to ensure it has sustainability. We hope that it will impact on children's thinking in the future, although we recognise that it is impossible to eradicate all incidents of emotional difficulty. Life and all it brings to our pupils has no let up. The project's principal intention is to give children the language and understanding to articulate how they feel both to themselves and others. In addition, it is geared towards giving the staff strategies to behave effectively; and providing space and time for debate about behaviour, without something having to go wrong first! Finally, we aim to provide children with life skills, self-esteem and confidence so they can cope with difficult circumstances by finding solutions. If we can do that for children I believe we will have done them great service.

This is undoubtedly a part of the "raising standards" agenda and can only have a positive impact on achievement. However, I recognise that it will be very difficult to quantify and evaluate the effectiveness of large parts of this project. In the short-term the comments stakeholders make will be important and we will actively seek these. The work will continue to develop – and in so doing, develop the people involved until it becomes part of the life and culture of the school. We will never cease to challenge people's thinking in terms of behavioural change and we hope we will improve the quality of the dialogue for all. ■

Classroom feng shui

Benjamin Poole

Benjamin Poole entered the noble profession of teaching via the Graduate Training route; teaching English at Cardiff High School in South Wales.

Abstract: *During the 2004/05 school year, the NUT CPD Programme offered a teacherstogether programme focusing on classroom management for teachers engaged in the "Graduate" or "Registered" teacher training programme. Participants discussed "positive strokes" and progressive approaches to achieving orderliness within the classroom. After trying out new strategies in their classroom, participants regrouped and shared their experiences. This article is based on the presentation given by first year secondary graduate teachers,* ***Benjamin Poole*** *and Mark Lewis. Here Ben describes some interesting approaches that they took to solve a range of "problems" which teachers will recognise.*

Shinichi Suzuki asserted that, "Man is the child of his environment". With this maxim in mind, as graduate teachers, we endeavoured to engineer a classroom atmosphere that was welcoming, safe and stimulating for both educator and pupil. We attempted to bolster this environment with the natural effusiveness that is inherent to each child, alchemising negative energy into a positive voltage that supercharged the learning experience.

Our first target was to focus on the "feng shui" of our classrooms, the "placement and arrangement of space to achieve harmony within an environment". Our aim was simple at the early stages; we simply endeavoured not to allow our classrooms to become "stale". Aiming to fashion rooms that looked interesting and inspiring, we were surprised by how much difference that simply rotating posters made towards rejuvenating the classroom environment. Of course, when injecting colour and visual iridescence into the learning arena, a teacher is gifting a classroom with a sense of the lively - you are giving it a personality. We found that big, blown up posters of comic characters or particularly

vibrant book covers were effective.

Crucially, we involved the pupils with this process wherever possible. By covering the classroom's walls with children's work, we were effectively "publishing" it. This ensured that the pupils had a stake in fashioning the classroom's style; we hoped they would feel more relaxed within it.

As for the set up of the room, we found the "horseshoe" style of organising desks works very well. This ensures that pupils can see each other and interact during class discussions, a crucial aspect of our approach we will explore later. Attending to details created a dynamic that made it harder for us to "overlook" any pupil. Buoyed by a sense of experimentalism, we even tried beginning new topics first lesson after lunch, when the sun was on our classroom, in an attempt to make use of natural light.

Our first target was to achieve harmony within an environment.

Positive plants

Research has proved that contact with animals and plants seems to help people with illnesses recover more quickly. Science teachers will attest that plants filter out poison in the air, drinking up all those negative carbon dioxide atoms and pouring out positive ions of oxygen; fresh food for the air starved brain. This is essential to a classroom where 30 plus children are breathing out nullifying toxins! We resolved to place around three to four potted plants around our classrooms in the hope of recycling carbon dioxide toxins.

Aside from this scientific benefit, of providing an oxygenated atmosphere, the clean green sway of household plants has a calming effect, bringing something of the fresh outdoors to the stale, musty classroom. Finally, we found that watering them can be an unlikely "reward" for younger children!

The battle against silence!

> "A solemn air, and the best comforter. To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains".
>
> Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

An old wives' tale proposes that playing classical music to shrubs and flowers results in the plant blossoming brighter and sooner than expected. Incredibly, scientific research has actually borne this hypothesis out! If music can act as a catalyst towards a humble vegetable's maturation and expansion, then imagine what it could do to the hungry,

developing minds in your classroom?

We believe that most noise in the classroom, general low level disruption, is a clamour of unease. It is the troubled children, the disaffected and less able who are most prone to chatting. For these children, the bravado sound of their own voices is a measure of control in an environment that they perhaps dread - deathly silence serves to fuel this unease. Talk is a way of interacting with friends and classmates on a level they feel more comfortable with.

In the first instance, music can be used as a relaxant to quell the "noises of anxiety": a Radox bath to soak away the nervous, verbal tension

Utilising music not only as an instrument of calm, but as an actual tool for learning.

of the disaffected. The soothing tones of Chopin, Brahms or even the Aphex Twin are a more effective way of filling silence than the anxious chatter of a seditious pupil.

Research has also suggested that music has been proven to encourage the "alpha brain state"- the mind's creative peak. We endeavoured to investigate this theory by utilising music not only as an instrument of calm, but as an actual tool for learning.

Aside from the novelty factor of "listening to music", we found that sound engendered a creative atmosphere. We were particularly interested in the research of Don Campbell, collected in his book, T*he Mozart Effect: Tapping the Power of Music to Heal the Body, Strengthen the Mind and Unlock the Creative Spirit*. Campbell defines the "Mozart Effect" as "signifying the transformational powers of music in health, education, and well-being. [Music can] activate the body; and improve memory or awareness" Campbell (2001).

Our initial experiments involved using music that was subject specific, for example, using blues music when studying *The Color Purple*; and playing suitably dramatic music before a particular scene in a play. This music at least provided an aural backdrop to certain texts, encouraging empathy and deepening understanding.

Music played while children wrote poetry, encouraged them to soak in the rich, warm waters of whatever tides the music encouraged in the oceans of their imaginations. We found that the effortless relaxation the music inspired, united with the evocative powers of organized sound, proved to be a great stimulus. Nothing is created in a vacuum and music proved to be a shining key to the rusty locked door of imagination. We chose the music we played carefully, tending toward the abstract and

trying not use lyric based pieces. It was imperative for the music to spark a fire in young minds; we didn't want the lovelorn lyrics of a pop song to burn interpretations onto the mind's retina, dictating the imaginative set!

Focused energy

"The energy of the mind is the essence of life."

Aristotle

We agreed that what challenging pupils had in common was "energy". The disruptive children unsettle the class; the more able question; and the anxious pupils doodle or tap their pens. This energy will not disappear! It is a child's natural way! Suggesting a child stop talking for a full hour is akin to telling a dog to stop barking.

So, instead of wasting energy and risking conflict by combating this truism, we endeavoured to provide a channel for this energy within our classes. Like conductors of some wild and many faceted orchestra, we aimed to direct this energy toward something powerful and creative.

Brin Best (accelerated learning guru) asserts that teachers should only spend 25 per cent of the lesson talking. Silence, for pupils, is not golden! Of course, nobody should speak when the teacher, or another, is making a point or engaging others in their point; but, like all living things, ideas and thoughts do not thrive in a vacuum. Vocal participation in a lesson is vital to the pupils' development.

With Best's assertion on board, we attempted to provide more opportunities for pupils to cooperate with the lesson. Firstly, we attempted to encourage more partner based discussions, rather than the dead didacticism of simply "listening" to the teacher. Of course, we aimed to facilitate discussion; but the onus was on the pupils to take the basis of the lesson and play with it like clay, shaping and stretching it to make new and exciting shapes.

In our capacity as facilitators, we encouraged more reluctant students with pointed questions. Instead of, "What do you think of Shylock?" – a question open enough to encourage agoraphobia in the less able pupil - we undertook to ask more direct, gently supportive questions such as: "Do you think Shylock is proud, Laura? If so, why?"

This type of closed, interrogative mode bestows a template within which the student can focus and answer, providing depth and understanding through their selection of example. Any opinions or answers proffered were prized by the facilitators, and offered, like fruits, to be chewed over by the class at large. This essentially offers the

individual pupil a sense of involvement in the direction of the lesson.

For disaffected children, entering a classroom can invoke a "fight or flight" reaction, a stress response that triggers the nervous system and engenders energy. Once the child has entered the room and settled, where does this acetylcholine induced stress energy go? Like steam from a kettle, it needs room to disperse. We found the above techniques useful to harness noise and use it to contribute to the lesson.

Finally, we found that simple physical exercises - letting out a huge yawn - could go far to dispelling nervous energy and renewing enthusiasm for the lesson!

Classroom etiquette - our guidelines Vs the school rules

Having instigated a creative ambiance by paying attention to the surface appearance of the classroom; and engendered a soothing atmosphere by introducing music and channelling noise; we finally looked to ourselves and how we could act as conductors of positive energy in the classroom. Our ultimate goal was to undermine the traditional teacher/pupil power dynamic inherent in the classroom. By undertaking to establish the learning environment as a common ground for teacher and pupil, we aspired to shape a mutually "safe" environment in which both parties would have a personal stake and interest.

We engaged our pupils to agree a set of rules regarding behaviour, homework and anything else we and the class felt should be addressed. Instead of classifying the results of our discussions as a set of rules, we (the pupils and teachers) referred to them as guidelines. By making these said principles "our guidelines": rather than the "school rules", we

...the onus was on the pupils to take the basis of the lesson and play with it like clay.

involved students in the architecture – the individual etiquette - of our classroom. By allowing the children to have an artistic stake in the creation of the code of conduct, we would hopefully decrease the likelihood of said code of conduct being broken.

As specialists in the field of language, we were also particularly engaged with the lexis we used within the classroom. Is "work" the accurate term to use when referring to the opportunity of expression and self improvement that creative writing entails? We determined that referring to this "work" as "tasks" or "writing" persuaded pupils' minds away from thinking of classroom activity as "hard slog", and more towards something interactive, and worthwhile. We consolidated this in creative writing lessons by actually writing ourselves, which goes

someway towards diminishing any "power dynamics" in the minds of the children.

Any opportunity to learn should be treated with a sense of occasion. To consolidate the principle of the class work as its own reward, as if they were guests, we would welcome pupils as they entered the classroom, and held the door saying goodbye as they left. Certainly, at the very least, this provided a "warm" atmosphere for the pupils to enter, and, over time, this courtesy engendered a greater sense of "camaraderie"; respect for the environment, the teacher and each other.

Of course, while these measures contributed towards diminishing low level disruption, it would be fantastical to expect a complete eradication of challenging behaviour. Spurred on by our esurient, experimental attitude, we aimed to enact a different method of "disciplining" our classrooms. Persevering to establish a policy of positive reinforcement, instead of chastising negative behaviour, we focused on the constructive conduct in the classroom. Rather than chastising the pupils who were not on task, we shone an enthusiastic light on those who were engaged with the lesson, "I'd just like to say thank you to the people who are getting on with their writing quietly. Good practice, there". This served to recognise and galvanise the efforts of those pupils who were working in a productive way - those who were disruptive were robbed of a platform and provided with a positive role model.

Instead of chastising negative behaviour, we focused on the constructive conduct in the classroom.

In a similar vein, we discovered that challenging any confrontation more often than not led to further disruption. Disaffected children only desire a spotlight, after all. We found that offering disruptive students "take up time" served to neutralise these problems rather than feed them. Essentially, this involved not rising to the bait! Stating what we required of a student unequivocally and then walking away to allow the student time to meditate on their dissent and make a decision (and maybe faces to our backs) ultimately served to nullify resistance. Like superheroes, we developed teflon skin and deflected any inappropriate comments by returning attention to the task- "Sir! Your tie is horrible!" "That may be so, Sophie, but I'd like you to carry on with your work now". Again, this is a process of aversion, steering negative exertion towards positive strength.

In addition to this avoidance of verbal engagement, we found using our hands helpful! Instead of verbally telling a pupil to take her i-pod out, we would simply motion to her with our hands: a simple, exaggerated mime of removing a foreign body from the ear. The flow of the lesson

wasn't interrupted, and the pupil had no forum to argue back. This could be consolidated by offering a big "thumb up" when the pupil did as we asked. Correspondingly, if a pupil was chewing gum, then instead of engaging in the potentially contentious dialogue of telling the child to put it in the bin, we found that simply picking the bin up and performing a motion led to the same desired effect without running the risk of pyrrhic challenge.

Conclusion

We discovered that by using positive strokes and channelling energy rather than challenging it, our classrooms benefited atmospherically. Instead of denying or repressing energy, we aimed to use it, alchemising charged conversation from the hot air of nervous, low level disruption. We began to view our pupils not as vessels to be filled, but candles to be lit. ■

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‘BEHAVIOUR’ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON OFFER FROM NUT CPD PROGRAMME DURING 2005/06

For all teachers:

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“Thanks to our tutors – Rob Long, Giles Barrow, Paul Howard & Pete Hrekow”

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Book reviews

MANAGING VERY CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Louisa Leaman

Continuum Books London 2005 ***£9.99*** *ISBN 0826485391*

Given the enduring interest in and concern over behaviour in schools, there is always a place for well-written, insightful and practical books on the subject. Sadly, Louisa Leaman's contribution, *Managing Very Challenging Behaviour* is below par in each of these qualities. That is not to say that this book is devoid of good points – there are several snippets of sound advice – but these are outweighed by the fact that it will add little or nothing to teachers' understanding of what to do in response to challenging behaviour in the classroom.

In its favour, it can be said that it is not a complicated read. It is well organised and all of the sections are concise and written in jargon-free language. However, the book's simplicity is also one of its weaknesses. As the author herself recognises on at least one occasion, her explanations and advice are frequently too simplistic. So, for example, in response to pupils' negative attitudes, the reader is encouraged to "promote respect". This process is condensed into four bullet points, without any detailed examination of how a culture of respect can be developed and supported.

The second flaw in this book is its confused purpose. As befits the title, Louisa Leaman sets out her stall to address the high end of challenging behaviour; but then proceeds to devote most of the book to lower levels of difficult or disruptive behaviour. Of course, it is no bad thing to remember that the extreme behaviour of a very small minority often has its roots in the less challenging behaviour of a much larger minority; however, this does not justify the extent of the departure from the author's intended focus. Furthermore, there are better sources of insight into managing lower levels of behavioural challenge.

Whether or not the author was working to an editorial brief of "keep it simple", she has missed the opportunity to question some of the assumptions that surround pupils' behaviour and adults' responses to it. Thus, for example, we are encouraged to adopt proportionate responses to situations (one of the author's sound-bites) without some reflection on the UK's disproportionately high categorisation of pupils as having emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD). Similarly, a blanket

assumption about ADD and ADHD being factors in challenging behaviour, without any critical thought about how those particular manifestations of ESBD are socially constructed and open to question.

Perhaps the biggest criticism that can be levelled at this book is that it conveys some counter-productive, even damaging, messages. Sensible advice that screaming at a young person with ESBD will escalate the problem comes with the rider "unless you have a strong relationship with them". Does this mean that it becomes OK to scream at the young person in these circumstances? Evidently so, for Louisa Leaman suggests that for a selection of students intimidating methods of behaviour control such as aggressive shouting are the most effective. This, the very antithesis of what we should be encouraging teachers to do, is alarming, as is the author's tendency to couch much of her advice in terms of "making (sic) pupils like you".

While Louisa Leaman doubtless has insights into how to work successfully with challenging pupils, she fails to present those insights coherently in this book. Among the pieces of good advice, there are too many contradictions and misguided ideas for me to be able to recommend this as a valuable, let alone invaluable, contribution to effective and successful practice.

PAUL HOWARD

PROBLEM GIRLS: UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING TROUBLED AND TROUBLESOME GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

Gwynedd Lloyd (Editor)

RoutledgeFalmer Publication 2005 £16.99 ISBN 0 415 30314 1

The nature of women's oppression, in the context of a patriarchal society, has been at the centre of feminist theorising for decades. Yet, as more and more women began to speak about their often contradictory experiences, the possibility of a theory of women's oppression that coherently encompassed all these experiences fast disappeared. In response to this challenge of "difference" among women, a significant number of feminist theorists therefore concluded that there was no such thing as "patriarchy", or that we can only speak of a multiplicity of different "patriarchies" in different socio-economic and cultural contexts. The "p-word", in short, has somehow slipped off the feminist agenda.

Gwynedd Lloyd's timely edition of *Problem Girls*, however, reminds us that there is still some unfinished business. It enjoins us to re-consider

and talk about patriarchy and the impact of a heterosexist culture on the learning experiences of girls and young women.

The book consists of a collection of articles written by both academics and practitioners. The themes and issues investigated range from girls' classroom behaviour, the impact of poverty, mental health problems, emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), violence, sexuality and race discrimination to non-participation and conflicts with the criminal justice system. A major aim of the book is to encourage professionals to think more about their work with girls and young women and to promote a wider understanding of reasons why girls may experience or cause difficulties. Based on the premise that as researchers and/or practitioners we are often ourselves caught up in gendered beliefs, the book seeks to facilitate an examination of the roles we play in reinforcing the dominant social constructions of femininity and masculinity, and hence contribute to the "deviance" in "problem girls". It is no good expecting pupils to change, the authors concur, if we are not open to change ourselves.

What makes this book so important, as the editor rightly observes, is that gender issues in education are currently addressed primarily through the underachievement of boys. Close investigation of the concept of the EBD pupil, for example, reveals that much of the discourse about EBD pupils is in fact dominated by a concern with disruptive boys by male writers. As a result, girls are less likely to be diagnosed with EBD because they are not boys (p.130). There is also a disparity of provision for girls' special educational needs, the authors observe, with girls being allocated fewer hours of support than boys and less expensive forms of support. This trend towards rendering girls' problems "invisible" has serious consequences in terms of their access to help and support.

Similarly, the habitually quiet and non-participatory behaviour displayed predominantly by girls does not tend to be regarded as a problem within schools. Hence, the social, emotional and academic needs of quiet children are often overlooked (p.160). Furthermore, the discrimination experienced by black and minority ethnic girls and young women on the basis of racial and gender stereotyping has persistently evaded systematic scrutiny and targeted intervention. Asian girls who break the stereotyped expectation of being quiet, deferential and repressed by their home culture, for example, are likely to be penalised particularly harshly within schools (p.11). At the same time, there is a tendency to construe black girls as undisciplined, "troublesome", over-sexualised and over-assertive.

The core message from this book is that "problem girls" who do not conform to conventional gender behaviours are liable to severe criticism.

From teachers, who see their behaviour as a character defect; from boys who feel threatened by these girls in their own constructions of masculinity; and from other girls who regard the deviation from "acceptable" gender behaviours as a threat to their own identity and self-understanding.

These are not particularly new insights, but the book also shows that it is not only the social, emotional and academic needs of girls and young women who rebel against conventional gender expectations that remain unmet. Those needs among girls who fulfil the dominant gender expectations are equally unmet. Indeed, what makes this book so topical and relevant is that it serves as a powerful reminder that our heterosexist culture with its emphasis on particular definitions of masculinity and femininity restricts the aspirations and ability of both girls and boys.

This has important consequences for society as a whole. Anyone with a commitment to gender equality, therefore, will not only find this book a useful and important complement to the existing literature on "problem pupils". They will also find it an encouragement, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, to strive to "be the change we wish to see in the world". It will remind readers of how they need to avoid being part of the problem to contribute to the solution. There is still some unfinished business.

DANIELA WACHSENING

100+ ESSENTIAL LISTS FOR TEACHERS

Duncan Grey

Continuum 2005 £5.99 ISBN 0-8264-8718-1

100+ Essential Lists for Teachers is part of the Continuum One Hundreds Series which covers "100 ideas for…" a range of education subjects. However, this book is perhaps the epitome of this notion, as the author, Duncan Grey, states in his introduction: "I've always made lists… Judging from the popularity of the first edition, I'm not alone." Certainly, ticking off the day's list is an occupational habit for many teachers but this book makes the reader view this activity in a fresh light.

The ten chapters cover a veritable gallimaufry of topics. A few titles give the flavour: "Sucking up to your superiors"; "Using Latin phrases"; "Voice Maintenance"; "Netiquette (email)"; "Emergency lessons with no equipment"; "Never trust computers: contingency plans" and "What the head really means to say". Witty, tongue-in-cheek and playful, the book transforms the idea of the list to the level of a little genre in itself. "Stripped bare of ornament" as the author says, that is spare on

continuous prose, the book nevertheless delights and informs with its inventiveness and resourcefulness.

100+ Essential Lists for Teachers gives some useful tips along with inconsequential nuggets that are simply entertaining to read. The many footnote quotations from famous commentators add another dimension to the book's fabric, as well as providing food for thought. Some are humorous, for example, Sam Levinson's, "Give a child an inch and he'll think he's a ruler," and Lenny Bruce's, "I won't say ours was a tough school, but we had our own coroner. We used to write essays like; What I'm going to be if I grow up." Others are profound, for example Joseph Carroll's "Nothing has happened in education until it has happened to the student" and Albert Einstein's "It is the supreme joy of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge." These invite reflection and any of them might be handy to drop into conversation at opportune moments to reinforce a point of argument – in the classroom, at department meetings, or socially.

Like a hoarder, Duncan Grey has bagged the information from many sources, which he acknowledges. These include literature, the *Times Educational Supplement* and websites. This also means that the book is of the moment and parts will date. But as Grey invites interaction with his readers by way of submitting their own lists to a third edition, the reader, if so inclined, could become part of the evolving fun and creativity. It's a book to be read aloud and shared. Crafting a new list could brighten a tired break in the staffroom.

DELPHINE RUSTON

THE ULTIMATE TEACHERS HANDBOOK

Hazel Bennett

Continuum 2005 £12.99 ISBN 0-8264-8500-6

For the busy teacher eager for survival strategies, the word, "ultimate" in the title, *The Ultimate Teachers' Handbook*, may catch their eye on the book shop shelf. And the subtitle, "What they never taught you at teacher training college", indicates that the book's contents focus not on detailed pedagogy but on everyday realities. The target audience is mainly NQTs and those teachers who may take a varied route in their professional life.

With the benefit of thirty years' teaching experience in a variety of settings, including primary, secondary, and special schools, both inner city and suburban, Hazel Bennett gives a wealth of well-grounded and practical advice. The book is divided into two sections. Part One, "The

induction year (the bits you're not prepared for)", has 73 pages and 10 chapters covering such topics as discipline, report writing, dealing with parents and the politics of the staffroom. Part Two, " How to make the most of the next 30 years", has 164 pages and 21 chapters which address career options (for example, becoming an Advanced Skills Teacher, adviser, consultant, peripatetic teacher) as well as subjects such as surviving OFSTED, working in a school under special measures, dealing with bereavements in school and finally alternative career paths.

The book is written in the first person with a conversational tone, combining warmth and reassurance with gritty realism and firmness. Concrete, workable advice is given, often along the lines of, " When this happens, do this and say this…".Since communication is important in teaching, the book is strong on improving interpersonal skills, The starting point is looking after self and then exercising assertiveness and appropriateness in day-to-day interactions with others. Brief examples, often from Hazel Bennett's personal experience, help to illuminate the particular situations.

An easily readable style and format with frequent headings as signposts and ample use of bullet points, makes for an immediate impact. This is pertinent for a quick reminder at the end of the day when the new teacher is alone at home and has little remaining mental space to evaluate problems and challenges and perhaps has no-one to turn to.

The handbook is selective rather than comprehensive, with noteworthy omissions. Although it covers Key Stages 1-4 and also non-school settings such as private tutoring and advisory work, there is no reference to Key Stage 5. Information is given about career paths and promotion but there is no section on leadership and management development, for example how to co-ordinate a team. Similarly, although there is a chapter on combining full-time work with part-time study, there is not a discrete chapter on professional development, as might have been expected. Furthermore, examples are weighted towards primary school teaching and some of the discussion assumes a primary school context. So, although "ultimate" may catch the eye, this should rather be received in a lighthearted way and the book appreciated for its wealth of friendly advice.

DELPHINE RUSTON

LEADERSHIP FOR MORTALS – DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING LEADERS OF LEARNING

Dean Fink

Paul Chapman publishing 2005 £19.99 ISBN 1-4129-0054-9

Dean Fink is a respected school leader of 30 years at school and district level in Canada. In addition, he has spent the last ten years extending his knowledge and input through extensive international work. The title of his book encapsulates his key message that leadership has to be, and can be, undertaken by a range of "ordinary" people; and that the notion of the superhero is a dangerous myth which limits the number of those who may want to do the job and the way in which they may do it.

The book is both practical and theoretical. The book quotes from the work of many eminent researchers and is thoroughly up-to-date. The quotations used are brief and pertinent and add to, rather than detract from the flow of the narrative. Many are pithy and go straight to the heart of the issue. I especially liked the quote from Wayne Gretsky who is generally regarded as the finest ever player of ice hockey. He was asked about his abilities and explained simply that " you must skate to where the puck is going, not where it is." The book is liberally illustrated by anecdotes from those with whom Dean Fink has worked and from his own career. Whereas this may be frowned upon in the realms of theory, the stories bring alive the issues he approaches in a practical manner.

Above all this is a humane book. At the heart of leadership are people and the leader has to work with, and through, a range of networks. The concept of distributed leadership is central and the theme he developed earlier with Louise Stoll on "invitational" leadership is stressed. The early chapters of the book prevent a considerable challenge to those responsible for the political climate in which education takes place and, especially, the recent focus on standards to the detriment of much else. Fink describes this as a technocratic approach to educational leadership in which outcomes may be assured if the right procedures are adopted. Whilst not underestimating the importance of structures or efficient management Fink makes clear that these alone will be insufficient to make a difference. They must be joined to a strong focus on leadership for learning which is the core business of education and which must be undertaken through communities of learners.

I especially enjoyed the chapter on the "qualities" of effective leadership. The six headings to which he writes are: reason, ethics, imagination, intuition, memory and common sense. These are far from unrelated themes but combine together to provide a blueprint for action which respects what has gone before, what needs to be done and those

who are part of the activity. Fink makes clear the importance of the moral purpose of the leader if s/he is to be effective building logically on the previous chapter entitled "values".

For the most part, the transatlantic context of many of the examples and the language are readily understandable. The issues identified cross international boundaries with little difficulty although the constant moving of headteachers to British eyes is always a surprise. I did find, however, the language of the penultimate chapter on trajectories a little less accessible. However, it is worth additional reflection as it deals with important issues of the leader working through internal and external networks and the issues involved in gaining credibility in contexts.

The final chapter is concerned with the key issue of succession planning and building leaders for the future. It gives some attention to leadership development. The book is short, eminently readable, intensely humane and contains many succinct and well presented ideas which are the distillation of experience and reflection. It contains numerous nuggets which would, individually, provide the focus for lengthy and meaningful discussion. As a whole, it is coherent and is well worth the short time needed to read it. It is a book I know I shall come back to repeatedly.

ROBIN ATTFIELD

TEACHERS LEADING CHANGE
DOING RESEARCH FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Judy Durrant and Gary Holden

Paul Chapman Publishing, 2006 £19.99 ISBN 1-4129-0067-0

The underpinning rationale at the heart of this new book by Judy Durrant and Gary Holden is that the key to unlocking learning and effective school improvement is teachers leading learning in communities of enquiry. There is evidence to support aspects of this proposition from recent systematic reviews of research into continuing professional development. The evidence also supports their emphasis on non hierarchical, trust-based models of professional development such as collaborative coaching and collaborative enquiry.

This may already be sounding like a familiar message. It is certainly very much in tune with the new, national school improvement climate with its emphasis on the "new professionalism" and the developing consensus around collaborative coaching. What makes this book different and causes it to stand out from the growing school improvement

literature is that it represents a serious attempt to engage practitioners with the public knowledge base – or, as the authors put it, "bridge theory and practice…." Engagement with the underpinning knowledge and theory enables practitioners to avoid becoming bound by the context in which their learning and innovation have developed. This means that they can use evidence to expand or transfer their learning to other areas of their own practice and to help others to learn from it too.

The authors put their considerable experience as educators to use in constructing a narrative which weaves theoretical insights and explanation together with school-based activities and workshop plans, teacher vignettes and example cases. They offer a window into practitioners' daily lives; a lens through which to examine some of the ideas and insights from theory. Complex concepts, such as professional development or leadership, are unpacked through a structured series of activities. For example, readers are invited to consider their own practice in the light of definitions of the "restricted" or "extended" professional or offered a framework for drawing up an action plan. All these activities have been tried and tested with groups of teachers. They offer guidance and support in the processes identified by the authors as integral to teacher leadership of change. These processes include integrating research into day to day practice; developing meaningful dialogue with colleagues; reflecting on professional roles; and engaging with evidence.

The authors make it clear that what they are offering are approaches to change and development which "harness yet transcend the latest [policy] initiatives"; whilst also contextualising their ideas in current policy. This is helped by the fact that many current policy initiatives include recognition of the contribution that collaboration between practitioners can make to improving learning outcomes for adults and children in schools.

Thus, for example, pupil voice is discussed in relation to the inclusion agenda, the OFSTED framework and DfES guidelines as well as the extensive research literature. Similarly, the DfES personalised learning agenda is explored in relation to theoretical models of transformation.

Given their aim for "teachers and headteachers to engage with the interacting school improvement, school leadership and methodological discourses" references to the wider policy context are entirely appropriate. They help readers to appreciate more readily how the processes with which the authors are encouraging them to engage can be integral to improvement rather than "add ons" to meet specific goals or targets. The ultimate aim is to create sustainable learning communities which enable teachers and schools to "maintain excellence" through shifting policy, technology and demographic changes.

Collaborative enquiry is a powerful force for change and capacity building. There is also strong evidence that "specialist" input is important – something which is acknowledged by the authors who explore the role of facilitators or consultants. Specialist input can take the form of contribution from a third party, for instance a national strategy consultant. Resources can also provide specialist input, however, and this book, with its mix of practical advice, examples, and access to theory is one example of such a resource for those who facilitate continuing professional development.

MIRANDA BELL

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education review

volume 19 • number 1 • winter 2005/2006

Preface
Steve Sinnott, General Secretary, NUT 1

How the Education White Paper will improve education for all children
Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Education and Skills 4

Personal experience
David Cameron, Conservative Party Leader 8

Special Schools or not?
Baroness Mary Warnock, DBE 13

A range of provision
John Bangs, Assistant Secretary, Education and Equal Opportunities Department, NUT 18

Education for well-being
Professor John White, Institute of Education, London University 28

Young people, schools and offending
Graham Robb, Youth Justice Board of England and Wales 34

Learning to behave
Judith Elderkin, NUT Executive Member 42

Learning styles - is there an evidence base for this popular idea?
Elaine Hall, Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Newcastle 49

Beyond behaviour management - manage or motivate?
Michelle MacGrath, Behaviour and attendance service, Kent 57

The key to successful behaviour management is...you!
Phil Craig, Head of Service for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, Kirklees LEA 65

Inside outside
Janet Adamson, Headteacher, Clifton Primary School, Hull 71

Classroom feng shui
Benjamin Poole, Cardiff High School, South Wales 76

Book reviews 84

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