

# Learning Behaviour Principles and Practice – What Works in Schools

*Section 2 of the report of the Practitioners' on School Behaviour and Discipline chaired by Alan Steer.*



# Principles and Practice: What Works in Schools



1. The Group was asked to identify practical examples of good practice that promote good behaviour and that can be adopted by all schools. In this section of our Report we have identified aspects of practice that create the right conditions for good behaviour to be learnt. As practitioners, we recognise that most school staff work hard to support pupils in managing their behaviour and are successful. Some staff, however, do not find this easy: systems in school should ensure a minimum level of support to help them carry out their duties.

2. Our examples of good practice come from primary and secondary schools. While we accept some practice is phase specific, we believe it is important for pupils' emotional, social and behavioural skills developed at primary school to be reinforced and extended as pupils move through secondary schools. There is a similar need for pupils' skills to be developed when transferring into special schools or Pupil Referral Units.

3. The Elton Report noted that "bad behaviour in schools is a complex problem which does not lend itself to simple solutions".<sup>3</sup> As practitioners, we believe that remains as true and relevant today as it was in 1989. However, there are strategies and practices that if applied consistently will do much to raise standards of behaviour.

4. Consistent experience of good teaching promotes good behaviour. But schools also need to have positive strategies for managing pupil behaviour that help pupils understand their school's expectations. These strategies must be underpinned by a clear range of rewards and sanctions, which are applied fairly and consistently by all staff. It is also vital to teach pupils how to behave well – good behaviour has to be learned – so schools must adopt procedures and practices that help pupils learn how to behave. Good behaviour has to be modelled by all staff all of the time in their interaction with pupils. For their part, staff need training

3 Committee of Enquiry chaired by Lord Elton, *Discipline in Schools* (January 1989) Section 2, Paragraph 25

and support to understand and manage pupil behaviour effectively.

*“The great majority of pupils enjoy school, work hard and behave well. A strong sense of community and positive engagement with parents are features of schools where behaviour is good.”*

Ofsted, The Annual Report of HM's Chief Inspector of Schools 2003/2004, (February 2005)

*“Well disciplined schools create a whole school environment that is conducive to good discipline rather than reacting to particular incidents...There is collaboration and co-operation at the whole school level, the school is student oriented and focuses on the causes of indiscipline rather than the symptoms. Prevention rather than punishment is central. Head teachers play a key role in developing policies and practices alongside other key members of staff and teachers as a whole are committed to the pupils and their work. Most routine discipline problems are dealt with by teachers themselves and there are strong links with parents and community agencies.”*

Wayson et al 1982, quoted in British Psychological Society, Submission to the Group

5. Schools are not value free communities and the effectiveness of any practice will be determined by the values

and expectations that are agreed by all. Schools work hard to promote respect for all, but this work can be undermined when pupils, staff or parents and carers do not comply with the general expectation. The key to being able to articulate the values a school stands for should be contained in coherent, clear and well communicated policies that are supported by effective practice.

**Recommendation 2.1.1: Schools should review their behaviour, learning and teaching policies and undertake an audit of pupil behaviour.**

6. In undertaking the audit schools should reflect on ten aspects of school practice that, when effective, contribute to the quality of pupil behaviour:

- a consistent approach to behaviour management, teaching and learning;
- school leadership;
- classroom management, learning and teaching;
- rewards and sanctions;
- behaviour strategies and the teaching of good behaviour;
- staff development and support;
- pupil support systems;
- liaison with parents and other agencies;
- managing pupil transition; and
- organisation and facilities.

7. The Primary and Secondary National Strategies have developed tools to help schools audit these aspects of practice, together with case studies. We hope schools staff will review their practice, assessing their needs and using specific case studies to support them improve pupils' behaviour.

### A Consistent Approach to Behaviour Management, Teaching and Learning

8. There are a number of ways to achieve a consistent approach to behaviour management, teaching and learning. For example, some primary schools have a "yellow card" system at lunchtimes. If any pupil presents poor behaviour they are given a yellow card. If they have three cards at any one time they get an automatic detention.

"Any member of staff teaching or support staff can issue a card. The pupil must get a member of staff to acknowledge them presenting good behaviour on two separate occasions before the pupil can hand the yellow card back to a member of staff.

"Initially we were inundated with cards but now the system acts as a deterrent and so we find that the number of cards in circulation is very small. A consistent approach to the use of the system by all staff is what has made it so successful."

9. Similarly, many secondary schools identify pupils who are persistent offenders or are beginning to be noticed because of

"low level" disruption. Where this occurs, **all schools should:**

- ensure staff follow through issues with pupils indicating what must be done to improve;
- ensure that staff discuss with parents the school's concerns and agree a common way of working to help pupils make improvements to their behaviour; and
- establish the best way of communicating with parents and provide regular feedback on the progress being made.

**10. We believe consistent experience of good teaching engages pupils in their learning and this reduces instances of poor behaviour.** The consistent application of good behaviour management strategies helps pupils understand the school's expectations and allows staff to be mutually supportive.

**All schools should:**

- assess staff's needs and build into their in-service training programmes specific opportunities to discuss and learn about behaviour. In doing this, schools should consider the range of professional support they can buy in, taking advice as appropriate from the local authority;
- identify those pupils who have learning and behavioural difficulties, or come from communities or homes that are in crisis, and agree with staff common ways of managing and meeting their particular needs;

- ensure that senior colleagues are highly visible at particular times of the day, to support staff and maintain a sense of calm and order. Critical times in a school day are at the beginning, break and lunch times, changes of lessons (in secondary schools), and the end of the school day; and
- ensure that senior managers regularly walk their building, going into classrooms and assessing how well staff are consistently applying the school's policies on behaviour improvement.

**11.** Senior staff's regular presence around the school building helps them to observe how policies on behaviour, discipline, rewards and sanctions are being implemented. Along with more formal evaluation mechanisms, this enables senior staff to assess the effectiveness of the policies and to ensure that the policies are being consistently applied. We believe that no school policy is of any value if it is not understood and applied consistently by all staff.

### School Leadership

**12.** Effective leadership in schools is central when creating a climate of security and good order that supports pupils in managing their behaviour. Head teachers and governors have a critical role in identifying and developing values and expectations that are shared by pupils, parents and staff.

**13.** Head teachers and members of the school leadership team have a responsibility to 'lead from the front'. However leadership to support positive behaviour must be shared across the whole staff, including senior and subject leaders, pastoral staff, classroom teachers and support staff. Parents have a responsibility to support the high expectations of the school. Governors play a pivotal role in monitoring and supporting the policies they have adopted.

"As a senior leadership team we pay a lot of attention to problem areas in the school day and environment. Our job is strategic – to identify where those problem areas are and plan a system to deal with them. But we also need to model the systems – I am out on bus duty most days, for example. If I wasn't visible to pupils, staff and parents I would soon lose my credibility as a leader."

**14.** There are many ways in which senior managers can support their colleagues:

"To support the all members of staff we have a member of the leadership or middle leader team on duty every lesson of the week. This person walks the school 'on duty' to ask any pupil out of a lesson who has given them permission to be out and why. They carry a duty mobile phone so that they can be contacted immediately if any member of staff needs support."

“Since we instigated the system the number of referrals has decreased due to the immediate action that can be taken. Records of pupils out of class are made and a member of the support staff undertakes an analysis to look for patterns or individual pupils who are out of class. Staff say they like the system as they feel more visibly supported.”

#### All schools should:

- in partnership with parents, set high expectations for pupils and staff in all aspects of the school’s life and show how they are to be met. For example:
  - by clear codes of conduct;
  - by guidance on how to improve their work; and
  - a dress code.
- ensure senior leaders use opportunities such as assemblies to articulate their expectations and reinforce them by their visibility around the building during the day;
- ensure senior leaders model the behaviour and social skills they want pupils and staff to use;
- ensure staff are sufficiently trained and supported and know how to exercise their individual responsibility in the implementation of the school’s behaviour policy;

- recognise that leaders at all levels require training if they are to act as mentors to less experienced staff; and
- clearly identify the responsibilities and roles of senior staff for behaviour improvement.

#### Classroom Management, Learning and Teaching

**15.** Schools must ensure an appropriate curriculum is offered, which must be accessible to pupils of all abilities and aptitudes. Schools should develop a Learning and Teaching policy that identifies the teaching and classroom management strategies to be followed by all staff. Consultation on the policy would involve all members of the school community. We believe that this approach, when supported by high quality assessment, assists pupils to learn and teachers to teach. By engaging pupils more effectively, standards of behaviour improve.

“Our Learning and Teaching policy identifies teaching and classroom management strategies which we all follow. It is a ‘must do’ document, but we find this to be supportive rather than restrictive. By having a common approach to what we call baseline issues we support each other and pupils understand our expectations. Above that common baseline the school culture is to encourage us all to be innovative and creative. Our policy is reviewed each year by teachers and is a subject for constant discussion. It links to our training programme so we have the support to improve our teaching. The focus on learning and teaching makes feel truly professional and the impact on pupil attitude and behaviour is striking.”

**16.** To ensure pupils, teachers and support staff all understand the school’s expectation there is a need for a clear and positively worded Code of Conduct.

“Every classroom has a ‘Code of Conduct’ notice on the wall. This code has been agreed by all staff and we involved all pupils in discussions as to what should be allowed and what should not be acceptable in lessons. We decide as a staff to remind all pupils of the code on a different lesson each week. We announce at briefing which lesson we all agree to reinforce the messages in the Code.”

**17.** Similarly, there need to be agreed procedures for support staff.

**All schools should:**

- ensure all staff follow the learning and teaching policy and behaviour code and apply agreed procedures;
- plan lessons well, using strategies appropriate to the ability of the pupils;
- use commonly agreed classroom management and behaviour strategies such as a formal way to start lessons. In secondary schools this could include: all pupils being greeted by the door, brought into the classroom, stood behind their chairs, formally welcomed, asked to sit and the teacher explaining the purpose of the lesson;
- offer pupils the opportunity to take responsibility for aspects of their learning, working together in pairs, groups and as a whole class;
- use Assessment for Learning techniques, such as peer and self assessment, to increase pupils’ involvement in their learning and promote good behaviour;
- collect data on pupils’ behaviour and learning and use it, for example, to plan future groupings and to target support on areas where pupils have the greatest difficulty;
- ensure that all teachers operate a classroom seating plan. This practice needs to be continued after transfer to secondary school. Educational research

shows that where pupils are allowed to determine where they sit, their social interactions can inhibit teaching and create behaviour problems;

- ensure teachers build into their lessons opportunities to receive feedback from pupils on their progress and their future learning needs;
- recognise that pupils are knowledgeable about their school experience, and have views about what helps them learn and how others' poor behaviour stops them from learning; and
- give opportunities for class, year and school councils to discuss and make recommendations about behaviour, including bullying, and the effectiveness of rewards and sanctions.

“As a staff we have drawn up agreed guidelines of how support staff can be involved in managing pupil behaviour in classrooms. Before we did this both teachers and support staff were unsure of what each could expect of each other.”

**18.** We believe homework can be a major source of challenge that often results in confrontation. Planning homework carefully and setting it early in a lesson can significantly increase the number of pupils who subsequently have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. This is particularly helpful to pupils with special educational needs who can be

disadvantaged by the volume of work presented.

### Rewards and Sanctions

**37.** As experienced practitioners we know many schools have excellent systems in place to reward good work and behaviour. However we believe some schools use sanctions to enforce good behaviour but neglect the use of appropriate rewards.

“We introduced reward postcards. Each day every teacher was expected to send one reward postcard home to a set of parents/carers. The focus for the reward would change on a weekly basis to ensure that the widest possible number of students became eligible.

“One week the focus might be on best homework produced, on another biggest improvement in effort, or highest quality of work achieved today. This had the effect of improving relationships with parents who were tired of receiving letters and phone calls when things went wrong.”

**19.** Schools should provide a range of opportunities in which pupils can excel and be rewarded. Of equal importance is a practical set of sanctions that deal appropriately with poor behaviour.

“Simple sanctions are more effective than exclusion from class. We use sanctions in a matter of fact way expressed as a consequence of the way the pupil has chosen to behave, always trying to avoid escalating conflict. It is vital to pre-empt dispute. A teacher may ‘tow’ a pupil around with them all day. We always have a stock of clean school uniform and P.E. kit available and just expect pupils to put them on.

“There is a room for withdrawal at certain points, but not a permanent ‘sin bin’. We plan week by week asking ourselves – do we need to have a withdrawal room this week or not? We might feel that we need to have a room to tighten up on behaviour. When we have a room we log all children sent there – which children, which lessons, which teacher, which times of day. This gives us valuable management information, which we follow up with class teachers, subject heads of department, pastoral staff and parents.”

#### All schools should:

- have a wide range of appropriate rewards and sanctions and ensure they are applied fairly and consistently by all staff;
- ensure that planning about behaviour improvement is informed by statistical information about the use of rewards and sanctions – for example, how many

pupils in a given period have received rewards for completion of homework on time, and how many have had a detention for failing to do so; and

- ensure their systems identify which matters should be dealt with by classroom teachers and those which require referral to a more senior member of staff.

**20.** In schools with good standards of behaviour, there is a balance between the use of rewards and sanctions. Praise is used to motivate and encourage pupils. At the same time, pupils are aware of sanctions that will be applied for poor behaviour.

#### Behaviour Strategies and the Teaching of Good Behaviour

**21.** The school’s policies on behaviour and learning and teaching will create an ordered school climate that is supported by clear rewards and sanctions. It is critical that these policies are communicated to all staff (particularly part time, new and supply staff) and of course, pupils and their parents.

“As a staff we reinforce the behaviour we expect from pupils on a regular basis. Pupils who are struggling to behave well in class are identified and get special one to one coaching by a member of the support staff who has received specific training on behaviour and anger management strategies.”

### All schools should:

- ensure all staff understand and use consistently, the behaviour management strategies agreed by the governing body and school community;
- use pupil tracking systems to identify positive and negative behaviour. An effective policy and practice is based on accurate information; and
- ensure all staff joining the school (including supply teachers) are given clear guidance and use the school's systems and its expectations for behaviour.

“We found that 50% of our behaviour issues emanated from the 7% of lessons taught by supply teachers. So now we have someone who is head of this department who monitors the quality of learning and teaching in these lessons. Lessons set by absent staff all go through this postholder. There is evidence that lessons have improved and as a result there are fewer behaviour problems. We have now changed our policy on supply and are employing our own cover teachers.”

**22.** Understanding how to behave has to be taught. Schools must adopt procedures and practices that help pupils learn how to behave appropriately. Good behaviour must be modelled by adults in their interactions with pupils.

**23.** The National Primary and Secondary Strategies on Behaviour and Attendance offer schools practical materials to help develop pupils' emotional, social and behaviour skills.

### All schools should:

- use the National Strategies materials to develop pupils' emotional, social and behavioural skills. This involves:
  - familiarising staff with the SEAL and SEBS<sup>4</sup> materials that can be used through the taught curriculum to develop pupils' emotional literacy;
  - developing and using a common language to describe behaviour;
  - agreeing with staff how they will teach pupils to manage strong feelings, resolve conflict, work and play cooperatively and be respectful and considerate; and
  - arranging additional small group support for pupils who need it.

**24.** As Practitioners we are aware that there are many policies and practices to develop good behaviour in the early years of education that are applicable to older pupils. It is important that schools build on the skills pupils have developed. We recognise that children learn respect by receiving it. How staff speak to pupils and praise them helps motivate them to do well. By not taking account of pupils' prior learning, secondary schools can inadvertently de-skill and de-motivate

4 See Section 3, Chapter 1, for further details.

them. For some pupils this will result in alienation by the end of Year 8.

### Staff Development and Support

**25.** All staff in schools should be equipped with the skills necessary to understand and manage pupil behaviour effectively. This is as important for heads as it is for Newly Qualified Teachers and support staff. Training and coaching are both vital elements of a high quality professional development programme. They must be made available to staff taking up a new post and form part of a regular training programme.

“Our senior managers recognise that, as the term goes on and we get tired, we sometimes forget to follow through agreed practices. In briefings they gently remind us about simple things like smiling at children, saying good morning and getting to classrooms on time. You can’t do this once or twice a year; it has to be every two or three weeks. Then we take a shared whole staff focus for our own behaviour. We might identify a group of children whose behaviour presents problems and all make a point of saying something positive to them when we meet them in lessons, or around the school.”

“As part of staff induction we provide a series of relaxed after school sessions, over a cup of coffee, for all new staff. We encourage teaching and support staff to attend these sessions and cover all aspects of school life during the term with a different speaker each time and then discussion. We find that the mix of leadership team members through Newly Qualified Teachers to support staff leads to a rich exchange of ideas and is a great way for people to meet and get to know each other.

“Our performance management system is key. All staff grade themselves as needing support, doing well, or having strengths they can offer to others. This is then drawn together so a teacher who is good in one aspect of classroom management can work with others who have identified a learning need.”

#### All schools should:

- provide regular opportunities for all staff to share and develop their skills in promoting positive behaviour;
- monitor the effectiveness of the behaviour management techniques used by the school as part of the school performance management system;
- ensure funds are allocated within training budgets to enable support staff to be involved in training programmes with teachers using a variety of

expertise including specialist advisory teachers;

- ensure that all staff joining the school receive induction training. This need applies equally to Newly Qualified Teachers, senior managers and experienced teachers from other schools whose needs are often neglected;
- create opportunities for staff to learn from the expertise of those with a particular responsibility for pupils whose behaviour is challenging. This could include teachers who manage Nurture Groups, Learning Support Units or other provision, and specialist advisory staff; and
- develop the specialist skills of staff who have particular leadership responsibilities for improving behaviour.

### Pupil Support Systems

**26.** We believe it is important for schools to have effective pastoral support systems. We recognise that in primary and special schools this is the responsibility of the head teacher and often their deputy. Secondary schools use pastoral support teams. Dealing with the pastoral needs of pupils can require the school to use external agencies, such as those services provided by the local authority, police, health, social services and other agencies.

#### All schools should:

- recognise that a good pastoral system involves teachers and support staff.

Schools should use Teaching and Learning Responsibility points to support this work;

- ensure that staff allocated with pastoral responsibilities:
  - have appropriate time to carry out their task;
  - are appropriately trained;
  - have adequate administration support; and
  - have access to specialist support. This might include, as appropriate, services such as educational psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Speech and Language Specialists. For secondary schools, it would in future, include Targeted Youth Support Teams.
- recognise that pupil support is not just about behaviour. Poor pastoral support just focuses on 'naughty pupils'. Good pastoral support is concerned with academic attainment and developing pupils' ability to become good citizens;
- ensure that pastoral staff understand and are responsive to the needs of particular groups within the school and wider community; and
- ensure that pupils are helped to identify as belonging to a community by sharing a common dress code. The dress code should be arrived at after consultation with parents.

27. A society is judged by how it cares for the most vulnerable. Similarly, schools are often judged by parents by how they ensure that pupils are not victimised, bullied or harassed. *Every Child Matters* identifies that children should feel safe, be healthy, and enjoy and achieve in school. This cannot take place in a climate that allows bullying, harassment and oppressive behaviour to thrive.

“As part of our anti-bullying strategy we placed a post box near reception so that any pupil could, anonymously, report any incidence of bullying. All referrals were followed up. Whilst initially the number of reported incidents of bullying increased, we believe that incidents of bullying across the whole school actually declined.”

#### All schools should:

- regularly make clear to pupils, parents and staff, that bullying, harassment and oppressive behaviour in any form is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated;
- ensure that bullying, harassment and oppressive behaviour is punished; and
- use the Anti-Bullying Charter for Action to involve pupils in creating systems to support each other. Schools should consider the use of strategies such as Restorative Justice or “buddying” and “befriending” systems.

28. We applaud those schools that have appointed a range of support staff to work with parents, allowing for early intervention and support when problems arise. In the next section of our report, we suggest how this might be developed further for all schools.

“We pooled our local authority’s inclusion budget with our Education Action Zone schools to appoint a Social Worker whose time was split between the schools. When working for a particular school she worked under the direction of the head teacher with a range of hard to reach pupils. As a result of being free of her social services’ commitments she had more flexibility to respond to the schools needs and time to liaise with school colleagues and Education Welfare Officers. She was particularly effective in facilitating meetings between the school and home where relationships had broken down.”

#### Liaison with Parents and other Agencies

29. In managing pupil behaviour schools need the support of parents and carers. Primary schools have more opportunities to meet on a daily basis with parents and carers than secondary schools. Primary schools can more easily identify that where they work in partnership with parents and carers there is an improvement in pupil behaviour. Where parents and carers do not cooperate with the school, improvement is minimal.

**30.** Opportunities to meet parents and carers at secondary school are more limited, as pupils by and large make their own way to school. This means that secondary schools need to be more active in linking with parents and carers to help pupils who have difficulty with their attitudes and behaviour.

“We identified a core team of professionals including the school counsellor, Education Welfare Officer, Connexions Adviser, Youth Tutor, Head of Year, School Nurse, and others as appropriate to run parent ‘information’ evenings that focused on building relationships/ communication issues with adolescents. By running the evenings as information sharing it avoided the concept of ‘poor parenting.’”

“We trained a member of our existing support staff team to organise first day absence phone calls. We found that this person already possessed excellent negotiation skills, which we developed further with training and he soon built a rapport with many of our parents that had been considered unsupportive to the school’s aims in the past. Before long he was texting some parents, emailing others as well as having regular phone contact with a number of other parents. The lines of communication improved rapidly and it had a remarkably positive impact on both attendance as well as pupil behaviour.”

**All schools should:**

- ensure that reception and other support staff and teachers are trained, so that they are welcoming, and have the skills to deal with difficult parental conversations;
- have clear and well understood procedures in place for dealing with distressed and angry parents;
- ensure staff receive professional external training, from local authorities or other agencies, in managing and dealing with people’s anger;
- ensure parents and carers hear from the school when their children are doing well so that the first contact is positive. There is a greater willingness to work with the school when the parent or carer believes the school has the pupil’s best interest at heart;
- allocate sufficient resources to allow the school to communicate effectively with parents and carers; and
- take advantage of new technology such as emails and mobile phones to improve communications with parents and carers. This should not replace personal contact.

**31.** As practitioners we regard it as vital that schools maintain the trust and confidence of parents who are our partners in educating children. We accept that good liaison takes time, is demanding and requires resources. In section 3, we suggest a way in which schools may wish to develop this through Pupil Parent Support Workers.

**32.** Parents need to be aware, when dealing with the school, that it is helpful if they, like the staff, try to model appropriate behaviour for their children to see. Abusive and intimidating behaviour can come about through frustration, but should not be tolerated. Schools have legal powers to deal with this and should involve the police as appropriate.

**33.** Schools by themselves cannot resolve all the issues that some children come to school with. Liaison with other agencies takes a great deal of time and can be frustrating where the priorities of each partner are not well understood by the others. However, despite the frustrations that can occur, we believe that working with other agencies is important. We know, through the Behaviour Improvement Programme, where resources are enhanced to enable agencies to work together, that pupils, parents and communities benefit.

“Our local Constabulary have worked with a number of secondary schools in the city, allocating dedicated officers on either a part time or full time basis on school sites. These officers have worked with school leaders to promote safe learning environments, assisting in the management of incidents that occur from time to time in the neighbourhood surrounding the school, working with school based attendance teams on tackling truancy and providing input into Personal, Social and Health Education programmes. The response of the community, students, staff and parents has been very positive and has enabled schools to develop a range of strategies for dealing with situations that may otherwise threaten safety and well being. The scheme has been so successful that it is being extended.”

### Managing Pupil Transition

**34.** Early Years’ education and work in the Foundation Stage provide examples of good practice in the induction of pupils. Personal development and pupils’ skills are assessed to help them settle. Subsequent transition is not always successful. Irrespective of age, pupils may find moves between Key Stages and between schools unsettling.

**35.** Some schools are adversely affected by high pupil mobility. This results in large numbers of children arriving and leaving at times other than the beginning and end of the school year. These pupils in particular require a great deal of support.

**36.** Primary schools supply secondary schools with helpful information about individual pupils. Schools need systems to track those pupils who have been identified as at risk, including by agencies working with children and families, and allocate resources to help them in the transition.

“We found that transition from primary to secondary was leading to behaviour difficulties. We asked Year 6 teachers from our partner primary schools to come in and track the pupils they had taught for a day. They then reported to us on whether the pupil had made progress in academic work and behaviour. This has radically changed what we now do in Year 7.”

“Prior to transferring to secondary school we identified a core group of ‘at risk’ youngsters and initiated a programme of behaviour/anger management sessions for the first term in school. Y9 mentors were attached to each pupil to keep them on track and act as a ‘buddy’. This provided leadership opportunities for the Year 9 students as well as supporting the induction of vulnerable Year 7 pupils.”

#### **All schools should:**

- ensure that teachers receiving a new class at the beginning of the year be given appropriate information to help the teacher plan work and manage the class;
- ensure that the class teacher builds on the social, emotional and behavioural skills developed by the previous teacher;
- where there is high mobility, consider managed entrance, at the beginning of each week, to stop the day by day arrival of pupils;
- develop buddy systems, using pupils to support each other, and allocate named staff to act as mentors for a time limited period for new arrivals; and
- draw on the expertise of specialist local authority services, such as Traveller education teams.

**37.** Changes of class, moving to new teachers and new schools causes pupils and parents anxiety. As professionals we recognise if we get this wrong it can adversely affect pupils’ motivation, attitude, attainment and behaviour. Working constructively with parents and others can significantly reduce this stress.

#### **Organisation and Facilities**

**38.** The school ethos is communicated in actions as well as words. A school’s set of values can be supported or undermined by such things as timetabling arrangements, the degree of movement between lessons

and the management of breaks and lunchtimes. The quality of social areas has an impact as does the provision of, and access to, toilets. Pupils' attitudes can be positively or negatively influenced by the ambience of the dining area and quality of food. How parents and pupils are greeted and received determines their attitudes and subsequent behaviour towards the schools.

"When we timetable we make every effort to ensure that pupils have a practical experience each day. If teachers have to move between rooms we ensure that this only happens to those who are senior and experienced. We constantly monitor the group dynamics of classes to ensure that we avoid developing a negative ethos. We also looked at the organisation of our school day. We have a long morning and a short afternoon with assembly being after lunch. This means that pupils are in lessons ten minutes after arriving at school and when they are fresh and most receptive.

"We try to prevent future problems by how we organise. We identify classes that are more challenging and ensure that a significant proportion of their lessons are taught by experienced senior staff. We make sure that no class has too many student teachers in a year."

#### All schools should:

- recognise that good behaviour and learning are improved when pupils and staff enjoy an attractive, clean environment;
- ensure that when graffiti and mess occurs it is cleaned up immediately;
- ensure that toilets are clean throughout the day, have soap, paper towels or hand dryers, and are accessible;
- ensure that social areas in the school are identified and seating provided to encourage pupils to interact;
- zone the play-areas so that there is a separation between boisterous activities and quiet areas;
- ensure that timetabling arrangements are checked to see whether they cause difficulties for particular groups of pupils and teachers, for example:
  - that teachers are not timetabled for a second year with classes that they had a poor relationships with the previous year;
  - that pupils with reading difficulties are not timetabled for a whole day without some lesson where they have a practical activity;
  - that teachers are timetabled so that they can get to their teaching areas quickly; and
  - that at key points of movement, staff are on duty to supervise.

- create welcoming and comfortable areas where parents can be received; and
- use available financial resources wisely, recognising the importance of the fabric of the building in making pupils feel valued and respected. Inexpensive actions can have significant impacts.

**39.** The way schools organise and timetable can inadvertently cause problems for pupils and teachers. The design of school buildings is not always helpful. For example, problems can be caused by very long or narrow corridors, secluded areas where teachers cannot see what is happening, classrooms that are through corridors and (in the case of some primary schools) a lack of facilities for children to hang coats. In section 3, chapter 9, we discuss further what practical improvements can be made with rebuilds and refurbishment.

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