

Synopsis : The following are extracts from the publication: **Behaviour and Attendance Materials for Secondary Initial Teacher Training Tutors TUTOR HANDBOOK**

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UNIT 2: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR IN LEARNING AND TEACHING

General features of effective learning and teaching

Behaviour for learning is not achieved by default. It requires the leadership of the teacher in modelling and teaching those aspects of behaviour which enable pupils to engage effectively with the work they are doing. Effective learning is led by teachers who demonstrate practice that is underpinned by:

- clearly highlighting the purpose of the learning to be experienced;
- demonstrating a degree of negotiation;
- encouraging individuals to make progress;
- promoting a sense of achievement among pupils.

These teacher characteristics are recognised by pupils, including those whose behaviour is sometimes unacceptable, as being those which most encourage positive learning and social behaviours.

Some points to consider on the above might be:

- **sense of purpose**– clear aim for the lesson, expectations for achievement are clear, materials and resources are organised, additional adults in the class have a defined role;
- **degree of negotiation**– opportunities for pupils to ask questions, lesson adjusted in response to pupil feedback, pupils actively involved in lesson organisation, pupils participate in evaluating their own learning;
- **encouragement of individuals to make progress** – variety in lesson activities, work pitched at a range of levels, pupils able to work in different groupings, provision for pupils to communicate in a number of ways;
- **sense of achievement among pupils** – teacher gives direct feedback on pupil learning, pupils get rewards for effort and success, strategies to enable pupils to find meaning in the lesson.

Leadership in learning and teaching

The leadership skills required to lead learning and teaching are underpinned by:

- good communication between teacher and pupils;
- secure subject knowledge;
- high expectations of pupils' achievement;
- lively, well-paced lessons;
- understanding and meeting the learning needs of all pupils in the class;
- acting on reflections on previous lessons (feedback loop);
- confidence in managing pupils.

Some of these skills will inevitably be refined over several years of teaching experience. But a deepening understanding of their relevance to pupil learning will be part of a teacher's continuing professional experience on behaviour and attendance issues as their career develops.

Rights, responsibilities, routines, rules and relationships

A framework for promoting a positive learning ethos is commonly constructed around rights, responsibilities, routines and rules – the 4Rs. These should be placed under the overarching 'R' of relationships, which are crucial to the successful implementation of any activity in the classroom.

In introducing the 4Rs (rights, responsibilities, routines and rules) we must consider that effective learning and teaching takes place where:

- there is a shared understanding of what constitutes positive behaviour because it is talked about on a regular basis and is acknowledged and genuinely celebrated;
- there is regular teaching and reinforcement of appropriate social and learning behaviours, using the 'language of choice';
- there is a behaviour framework in place which sets out clear expectations and positive and negative consequences for the behavioural choices the pupils make;
- there is an emphasis on belonging and social responsibility rather than exclusion and externally applied discipline;
- there is an emphasis on building good relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves.

Rights and responsibilities are inextricably linked. They refer to both teacher and pupils and are the basis upon which classroom relationships, teaching and learning are built.

- Teacher's responsibilities – to enable all pupils to learn, to seek out and celebrate improvements in learning, to treat pupils with respect, to create a positive classroom environment in which pupils feel safe and able to learn.
- Teacher's rights – to be able to teach without hindrance, to feel safe, to be supported by colleagues, to be listened to.
- Pupils' responsibilities – to be willing to learn, to allow others to learn, to cooperate with teaching and other staff and peers and to do their best at all times.
- Pupils' rights – to be treated with respect, to be safe, to learn, to be listened to. Concomitant with rights and responsibilities are **choices and consequences**.

- Pupils can be encouraged to make **choices** about their behaviour and thus take responsibility for their own actions. Choice will be guided by their responsibilities and will lead to positive or negative **consequences** according to the choice made by the pupil.
- The **consequences** of sensible or inadvisable choices will be known by the pupils. Responsible choices lead to positive consequences; conversely, where pupils choose to behave inappropriately there will be a known negative consequence.

Rules are the mechanisms by which rights and responsibilities are translated into adult and pupil behaviours.

Routines are the structures which underpin the rules and reinforce the smooth running of the classroom. The more habitual the routines become the more likely they are to be used.

Developing social, emotional and behavioural skills (SEBS)

Most pupils move in to secondary school with a good range of social, emotional and behavioural skills (SEBS), some with very few. All need to continue to enhance these skills as they develop, mature and progress through secondary school.

We should recognise the importance of SEBS as a core element in promoting behaviour for learning. Weare and Gray (2003) have identified a range of benefits for pupils:

- greater educational and work success;
- improvements in behaviour;
- increased inclusion;
- improved learning;
- greater social cohesion;
- improvements to mental health.

Moreover, the Healthy Schools project (DoH, 2004) stressed that where pupils have good emotional, social and behavioural skills they will be able to:

- be effective and successful learners;
- make and sustain friendships;
- deal with and resolve conflict effectively and fairly;
- solve problems with others or by themselves;
- manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety;
- recover from setbacks and persist in the face of difficulties;
- work and play cooperatively;
- compete fairly and win and lose with dignity and respect for competitors;
- recognise and stand up for their rights and those of others;
- understand and value differences between people.

We should try to reflect on how they can help develop these attributes in KS3 and KS4 pupils, and how they might be modelled by staff in schools. The materials contained in Promoting emotional health and well-being (DoH, 2004) provide further valuable resources for the value of a SEBS/EHWP approach in promoting positive behaviours. Thus it indicates that behaviour and attendance improve because:

- pupils are more involved in school life and have a say in what happens;
- pupils have a higher self-esteem;

- pupils recognise the value of positive behaviours;
- fewer pupils disengage from learning and school;
- bullying behaviour is minimised;
- truancy rates, drug misuse and young offending are reduced.

The following sections give further details Weare and Gray's (2000) research regarding the benefits of SEBS for both pupils and teachers, with reference to behaviour.

Improvements in behaviour

Many reviews of programmes dealing with 'emotional intelligence' have reported improvements in behaviour. One systematic review (Wells, 2001) looked at programmes designed to promote mental health in schools in the USA. It concluded that many had clear and positive effects on behaviour. The successful programmes taught emotional and social skills and focused on the whole-school environment, not just on behaviour – or the pupil – alone. Such a systemic approach is a core principle of behaviour for learning.

A comprehensive review of interventions, also in the USA, designed to prevent childhood behaviour problems (Marshall and Watt, 1999), concluded that the 11 programmes it reviewed, which were intended to teach social skills, were effective in decreasing early behaviour problems.

Increased inclusion

Teaching social and emotional skills has been shown to play an active part in enabling the inclusion of those pupils who frequently display inappropriate behaviours. For example, those projects which taught such pupils the kinds of skills they needed to interact positively in social settings or classrooms more easily, and to control their own behaviour, were very successful in promoting inclusion. The importance of such intervention is that the focus is also on helping their peers both to insulate themselves from inappropriate behaviour while modelling positive behaviours for pupils who present unacceptable behaviour. It was apparent that, while effective in including all pupils, these programmes enabled pupils who presented difficult behaviour to remain in the classroom without detriment to the learning of other pupils (Rogers, 1994; Epstein and Elias, 1996).

A final, important theme is that, just as pupils' learning in the curriculum can be orchestrated by the class teacher, so too can their social learning.

In other words, acceptable behaviour can be taught. An understanding of this principle will enable us to have a clearer grasp of what comprises 'behaviour for learning' and 'positive behaviour' strategies.

Typically the process of developing social, emotional and behavioural skills can be tackled by a three-stage approach:

- (i) What are the social, emotional and behavioural skills I want to see in my class?
- (ii) What do I need to do to teach the pupils those social, emotional and behavioural skills?
- (iii) What do I do once those social, emotional and behavioural skills have been taught?