

The 2005 OfSTED Report 'Managing Challenging Behaviour'

This important report was slipped out with only muted fanfare early in 2005 and was to be up-staged post-general election by the Secretary of State's new task force on discipline. The SEBDA News Editor wrote the literature review, which preceded this enquiry, with Dr John Visser. Below is reproduced most of the summary given on the OfSTED web-site:

" The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) has published a new report to help schools manage and improve behaviour. It follows concerns raised in the Chief Inspector's annual report last month about disruption by pupils in the classroom. *Managing Challenging Behaviour*, analyses actions taken to manage and improve behaviour in early years centres, mainstream and special schools, pupil referral units and colleges. Inspectors highlight the need for more systematic training for teachers in behaviour management.

David Bell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, said 'The report shows that strong leadership and effective teaching of an appropriate curriculum, supported by training and coupled with good links with parents and outside agencies, are key to managing challenging behaviour. Although the large majority of schools are orderly places where children behave well, it is worrying that unsatisfactory behaviour has not reduced over time.

Unsatisfactory behaviour by a minority of pupils causes nuisance and distress and disrupts the learning of others and I hope this report helps early years centres, schools, colleges and LEAs tackle it effectively."

The report highlights the link between good behaviour and good teaching, while strong leadership is found to be crucial to the effective management of behaviour. Adapting the curriculum so that it is relevant to children's needs is also an important factor.

Other factors which significantly improve behaviour include:

- consistently applied behaviour policies that reward good behaviour;
- a strong sense of community and good links with parents;
- the use of information systems that track and analyse behaviour;
- well-maintained accommodation that fosters a sense of pride in the place of learning.

Regular training, focused on classroom practice, combined with an in-depth appreciation of child and adolescent development is central to understanding and managing behaviour. The report recommends that schools and local education authorities (LEAs) build on current training programmes.

The extent of LEA support varied from school to school. Less than half of schools and LEAs have established strong partnerships with health and social services.

The report reiterates the findings of Ofsted's annual report that the large majority of pupils work hard and behave well and that most schools and other settings successfully manage behaviour.

However, some primary and secondary schools visited by inspectors specifically for today's report regard up to half of their pupils as showing challenging behaviour. There was a very low number reported by the colleges visited, but numbers varied from very few to all pupils on the roll in special schools and from very few to 40% of pupils in some early years centres. These variations reflect differences in the perceptions of what constitutes challenging behaviour and inconsistent use of the term.

As the annual report highlighted in February, although behaviour in primary schools has improved since 1997, the proportion of good or better behaviour in secondary schools has declined from over three quarters to two thirds and there has been no reduction in the proportion of unsatisfactory behaviour (just under one school in 10.) Unsatisfactory behaviour is most commonly low-level disruption of lessons, more often by boys than girls.

The report indicates that pupils displaying withdrawn, anxious and depressed behaviour are potentially under-identified in all types of setting. Incidents of self-harm, usually involving very small numbers of pupils, occur in about a third of the primary schools, special schools and pupil referral units that were visited for this report and in more than half of the secondary schools visited.

Gang culture was perceived to be widespread in one in five secondary schools visited (15 secondary schools were visited in total), although few schools had firm evidence of it. Weapon carrying was described as occurring never or, at the most, one incident per year in 60 per cent of the sample of schools visited. In just under 30 per cent of the schools visited there might be an incident each term and in fewer than 10 per cent the estimated figure was equivalent to two per term. Drug abuse is a daily challenge for some older pupils, more often in PRUs and colleges than schools.

Among the recommendations made by the report are that schools, colleges and pupil referral units should:

- focus on improving the quality of teaching and the provision of an appropriate curriculum that engages pupils and meets their needs
- do more to improve the literacy and other communication skills of pupils with difficult behaviour
- improve systems for tracking academic and social development, and make better use of this information to help pupils improve and manage their behaviour
- provide more systematic training for senior managers, teachers and assistants in behaviour management and in child and adolescent development
- review the way they link with parents
- underline the need for consistency among staff in the way expectations of behaviour are set and maintained.

The report recommends LEAs should:

- monitor and evaluate school's responses to pupils with more challenging behaviour in order to target support more effectively
- build on initial teaching training in order to provide long-term programmes of professional development in child and adolescent development and on the application of behaviour management strategies

- encourage effective partnerships with other services and create more opportunities for joint training. "
-

1. The full report, '*Managing Challenging Behaviour*', is available on the OfSTED website.
2. A research project, carried out by the University of Birmingham, to inform fieldwork by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors), A study of children and young people who present challenging behaviour, is also published on the Ofsted website today.
3. Her Majesty's Inspectors visited 78 nurseries, mainstream and special schools, PRUs, secure training centres and colleges for this report. The settings were in eight LEAs: Camden, Croydon, Durham, North Somerset, Shropshire, Stockport, Sandwell and Wiltshire.
4. The Secretary of State announced [*in Feb. 2005*] that Ofsted will be revisiting within about a year all those secondary schools in which behaviour has been identified as unsatisfactory or poor.
5. Ofsted is a non-ministerial government department established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of all schools in England. Its role also includes the inspection of local education authorities, teacher training institutions and youth work. During 2001, Ofsted became responsible for inspecting all 16-19 education and for the regulation of early years childcare, including childminders