

Emotionally intelligent behaviour management

Mike Temple, of The Life Skills Company, asks: How do you create an Emotionally Intelligent Behaviour Management programme for your school?

I have visited many schools which have behaviour management strategies, based on a consequences system and where escalating punishments are the order of the day. Some of the children have many outstanding detentions and unauthorised absence is often high. A significant number of children under perform and are frequently disengaged due to time away from the educational environment either through internal isolation procedures or fixed term exclusions. This is not only damaging for the children but also reflects badly on the school's performance figures.

..I utterly reject the views of those who wish to identify only punitive solutions to the problems of bad behaviour in children – Sir Alan Steer

But in the current environment, are these strategies working well enough? Safeguarding and outcomes for individuals and groups are both strongly on the radar within the new OFSTED framework and already schools are beginning to fall into special measures, so is it time to take a fresh look at behaviour management with an emotionally intelligent focus?



*Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.
- Albert Einstein*

So, what is good behaviour management? What does it look like? Is it a system which has clear guidelines for the children to follow, sets clear expectations for them, provides clear consequences which are always followed through, where following rules and fairness is most important, the compliant majority being more important than the disruptive minority?

Or is it one where the children are listened to, coached, supported and each incident is given individual attention and escalation of sanctions is less important than escalation of support?

'Children are not things to be moulded, they are people to be unfolded'

Many times children can be seen responding in an offhand and frequently rude manner and perhaps staff engaging them in a similar fashion. Can there be a better way for these interactions to take place – I believe there is.

'A piece of behaviour is not always all of the problem, sometimes it's part of the message'

A good behaviour management programme should have the capacity for your school to make the transition from satisfactory through to good and on to excellent, allowing you to reduce your exclusions, reduce stress, increase pupils' self esteem and emotional wellbeing and in doing so, make your school a happy and safe school for ALL the children, even the challenging ones?

So what can you do differently?

What if you could help the children to manage their own behaviour? Impossible? No, I've seen it happen. How? By providing the right structure, training, tools and coaching for both the staff and the children, the changes will be there for all to see. What would your school look like if the children truly managed their own behaviour? How would this impact teaching and learning? What greater life skill could you develop in any child?

The Life Skills Company is passionate about helping schools to enhance life chances for disadvantaged children through an Emotionally Intelligent and Supportive Behaviour Management programme and has worked successfully with many schools.

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