

Behaviour experts to support schools with poor discipline

Heads and behaviour leads from some of England's highest performing schools and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) have today been confirmed as mentors and trainers in the Department's £10 million Behaviour Hubs programme.

Designed to support schools struggling with poor discipline, training through the Behaviour Hubs for the first group of participating schools will commence from the start of the summer term, at a time when a minority of pupils may need extra support from their schools to re-engage with education following the pandemic.

The lead schools and MATs will work closely with the schools they are supporting to diagnose what could be improved, develop and launch new behaviour approaches and policies and provide ongoing mentoring and support.

The lead schools selected have shown that good discipline overwhelmingly results in the best Ofsted ratings and overall outcomes for their students, and have demonstrated their capacity to support other schools to achieve the same.

Lead schools will advise their counterparts on issues ranging from setting clear expectations to eliminate low-level disruption in classrooms that is so damaging to teachers and other pupils, to more systematic approaches to maintaining order and discipline across the school, such as forbidding the use of mobile phones and maintaining quiet corridors.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Behaviour and discipline are the cornerstone to so much of what defines this country's most successful schools.

Whether it's supporting some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children with the routines and structures needed to help them fulfil their potential, or helping prepare young people for the expectations of the workplace, parents and teachers know that orderly and disciplined classrooms are best.

That is why I will always support schools taking a firm approach, for example taking action to tackle the scourge of ever-present mobile phones – because I know the positive impact it will have on students' wellbeing and attainment.

Perryfields Primary Pupil Referral Unit is one of the 22 schools and two multi academy trusts from secondary, primary, special and alternative provision selected as leads in the Behaviour Hubs programme.

Peter Hines, Headteacher of Perryfields Primary PRU:

The team at Perryfields Primary PRU is immensely proud of the work that it does to improve the life chances of young people in Worcestershire. We are delighted to have the opportunity to widen the impact of this work by being a lead school in the Behaviour Hubs programme.

We want to share with other schools how we have created the behaviour culture at Perryfields which is underpinned by exceedingly high expectations and a belief that all pupils matter so each and every one of them can be set on a pathway to fulfil their aspirations and potential. We look forward to working with colleagues across the country to share our passion for making a difference and improving young people's education and life chances.

Schools taking part in the programme will also have access to training on common problems and effective approaches led by Tom Bennett, founder and director of ResearchED, and the Department's lead behaviour adviser and his team of behaviour advisers. There will be open days at lead schools to observe good systems and approaches in action as well as hub networking events and online forums for schools to share experiences.

Tom Bennett, Lead Behaviour advisor to the Department said:

It's been a real honour to recruit some of the best schools in the country to offer their support to other schools who want to refocus on behaviour and culture. Every school can, with assistance, be safe, calm places where everyone is treated with dignity, and students and staff can learn and flourish together.

We know that some schools are further towards that ideal than others, and many more that can, and only need direction from those who have walked the path before them.

The Hubs project is designed to start reasonably modestly, build a model that works, and then expand into a size and shape that supports more schools that need it. This has the capacity to make a real and substantial difference to the lives of futures of many thousands of children and families and I cannot wait to see it develop.

Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England said:

Good behaviour is really important in enabling all children to learn and be happy at school.

I welcome this package of support for schools which have

experienced challenges in this area, especially given the extra strains caused by the pandemic, helping children to get back on track and thrive – not just academically, but socially too.

Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said:

Good standards of behaviour in a school are essential to the safety and success of all pupils. Every child has the right to go to a school where they feel safe and able to learn.

Establishing and sustaining a culture of good behaviour can be challenging. CST welcomes the appointment of exemplary schools and trusts with strong cultures of good behaviour. This will enable the system to share the strongest educational philosophies and practices.

The programme will run on a termly basis, with lead schools and MATs forming hubs with a different two supported schools each term. The programme will expand next year, with further lead schools and MATs appointed to support more schools to help reach the target of 500 supported schools over the three-year programme.