

Press release: Schools backed to tackle bad behaviour

More than 500 schools will be part of a pioneering scheme to tackle bad behaviour in schools, backed by £10million investment.

Behaviour expert and former teacher Tom Bennett, who led a national review to identify the best ways of dealing with disruptive behaviour in schools, will lead the programme, where a network of expert schools will be identified to help teachers and school leaders in need of support.

More than 82% of parents consider good discipline in the class a key factor when choosing a school for their child, according to research. However, over a third of schools are not currently judged as having good enough behaviour by Ofsted. With low level disruption costing individual pupils up to 38 days a year of learning and dealing with poor behaviour cited as a key reason for teachers leaving the profession, the Government is determined to take action.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

Calm and safe learning environments benefit all students, allowing them to concentrate fully on their studies. Just one instance of bad behaviour in a classroom can derail an entire lesson and hold back every single other pupil in the room.

We know these instances of classroom disruption damage teachers' morale and increase workload and stress and that's why we want schools to instil cultures of good behaviour top to bottom.

As a Government, continuing the improvement of pupil behaviour in our schools is a key priority. With £10million of funding, the support provided to schools will allow teachers to get on with what they do best – teaching – and empower school leaders to implement their behaviour policies correctly and robustly.

The network will be made up of schools that have exemplary behaviour management practices and effective whole-school cultures. They will work with other schools offering advice on ways to better manage behaviour using measures that have been proven to have an effect.

These could include:

- intensive staff training on tackling classroom disruption;
- introducing centralised detention systems;
- new sanctions and rewards systems for pupils; and
- focusing on pupil attendance and punctuality.

Tom Bennett, the Department's Lead Behaviour Adviser, said:

Good behaviour is fundamental – not just to great learning, but countless other goals we value. However, too many students don't enjoy classrooms where they can thrive and feel safe, and teachers need support and training to ensure this is the case.

This scheme may very well be one of the most significant strategies for public good we have seen in decades and I'm thrilled to be leading this national programme that will help schools become safer and calmer, allowing more children and staff to flourish.

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

Good standards of behaviour in a school are essential to pupil safety and success. Every child has the right to go to a school where they feel safe and able to learn. Where there is a culture of high standards of behaviour in a school, more learning takes place and pupils achieve more academically.

As Tom Bennett said in the independent review of behaviour in schools, the key task for a school or trust leader is to create a culture – usefully defined as 'the way we do things around here' – that is understood and subscribed to by the whole community.

Identifying those schools and trusts with strong cultures of good behaviour will enable the system to share the strongest educational philosophies and practices.

Dean Godson, Director of Policy Exchange, said:

This announcement is welcome recognition of the impact low-level disruption and bad behaviour can have on the learning of an entire class. Policy Exchange's research has shown how important it is that teachers feel they have authority to maintain discipline and will appreciate knowing that they have the Government's support.

A team of advisers will shortly be appointed to work alongside Mr Bennett to help develop and deliver the programme of support. The advisers will be education professionals with a track-record and understanding of improving behaviour in schools and will play a crucial role in:

- helping select the lead behaviour schools which will deliver additional support to others;
- working with supported schools to develop an understanding of the causes of the behaviour issues and how these could be addressed;
- developing comprehensive, bespoke action plans for the supported schools;
- carrying out a series of follow-up visits; and

- participating in behaviour conferences to share best practice and ideas.

By the end of the programme, teachers in schools are expected to report fewer incidents of disruptive behaviour and pupils should report they feel safer at school, while able to learn more effectively.

The programme will launch in September 2020 and the programme will run for an initial period of 3 years, improving the culture in schools and sharing good practice, producing disciplined environments where pupils feel safe and able to learn.

Today's announcement builds on the Secretary of State, Damian Hinds', commitment in October 2018 to invest £10 million for schools to share best practice in behaviour management and was reiterated in the Department's Recruitment & Retention Strategy published in January 2019.