

**Creating a Culture : ‘How School Leaders can optimise behaviour’**

**Summary of Report by Tom Bennett – March 2017**

Tom Bennett (Behaviour Tsar) was directed in 2015 by Nicky Morgan to review and advise the DfE on ways to improve core provision for training teachers in the initial phases of their careers. The report concludes that there are substantive opportunities to improve new teachers in both the the content, pedagogy and how they direct behaviour in their classrooms.

It is no coincidence that a revised exclusions guidance is currently being consulted upon by the DfE. This consultation closes on April 25th. The link to this consultation is:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-absence-and-exclusions-team/statutory-exclusion-guidance/>

Poor behaviour can describe many things. It can describe behaviour that is distracting to oneself, to others, or to the teacher. It can range from actions that insult, to ones that endanger safety. The report considers any behaviour that detracts from the academic and social success of the school community, along with behavior that diminishes the dignity of staff or students (for example harassment or name-calling).

The document is 76 pages long and whilst I am sure many will enjoy reading the detail, essentially there are practical messages and examples of how some schools are improving behaviour in different settings. The main premise of the report is the following;

* Key task for any school leader is creating a culture that says ‘*this is the way we do it* *around here’*
* Key features of successful schools are attention to detail, staff engagement, consistent practices, visible leaders, detailed expectations, clarity of culture, high staff support and all students matter.
* Design a school culture you want to see, build that culture with clarity and maintain that culture so staff receive good training and support.

The Executive Summary Highlights the key areas for Justine Greening to consider:

1. Fund schools to create internal inclusion units to offer targeted early specialist intervention with the primary aim of reintegrating students back into the mainstream school community. Funding should be focused on schools with higher than average levels of challenging behaviour.
2. Design a revised certification process for all headteachers that includes a requirement to demonstrate an appreciation of behavioural cultural levers and how to use them.
3. Support the use of a national standardized method, for capturing data on school behaviour that goes beyond present formal recording methods.
4. Ensure school leaders have access to training in a range of behavioural strategies and examples of best practice in the school system, by the creation of an optional training scheme.
5. A Pilot scheme of the above to be trialled in areas of identified need, including consideration of Opportunity Areas, and evaluated after one year.
6. Further discussion about SEND and alternative provision is funded, both inside mainstream schools, and in specialists sites.
7. Provide greater guidance for schools how to manage and support the most challenging students.

The report highlights key features of schools that are successful as follows;

* Committed Headteachers
* Strong management teams with a balance of aptitudes
* A clear and detailed sense of purpose and strategy
* A robust, firm communication of that purpose and strategy
* Consistency between all staff and students about cultural and academic norms
* Close attention to detail
* Well-advertised, repeatedly demonstrated routines
* A commitment to staff development
* High visible leadership
* Behaviour policies that are a continual focus
* A commitment to every student’s well-being and success
* A focus on senior staff supporting the most challenging students appropriately

The report notes that there needs to be a review of ITT looking at opportunities for new teachers to develop more practical solutions to behaviour issues.

Finally, the report highlights that there are excellent schools and school leaders promoting exemplary habits and strategies. The key is to learn from them so that success is replicated more widely.

Further useful links on behaviour can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-government-response-to-carter-review>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/below-radar-low-level-disruption-in-the-countrys-classrooms>

<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmeduc/516/51602.htm>

Nigel Hookway, EPHA Executive Director