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**Towards inclusion? Models of behaviour support in secondary schools
in one education authority in Scotland**

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Abstract

The paper is based on data emerging from an evaluation of behaviour support in secondary schools in an education authority in Scotland. The growth of behaviour support in Scottish schools is related to broader social policy on social inclusion, it is argued. New models of behaviour support should be developed in the light of previous and related experience of trying to develop inclusive support systems in schools. In the course of the evaluation, a typology of behaviour support was developed and the emerging ‘types’ of behaviour support will be discussed here. Finally, related implications for the development of behaviour support will be considered.

Introduction

For decades, school inclusion has been pursued through developing provision for special educational needs in mainstream primary and secondary schools. A range of approaches has been advocated and adopted, varying from specific mechanisms to assist inclusion such as individualized educational planning (Banks et al, 2001) to widescale and radical reviews of school processes (Booth et al, 2000). However, whilst 56% of pupils with Records of Needs in Scotland are now in mainstream schools (Banks & Riddell, 2001), difficulties experienced in reducing the number of exclusions from Scottish schools (SEED, 2001) would seem to indicate that the experience of more than two decades of developing inclusive support systems has not yet enhanced schools' capacity to include those young people with challenging behaviour. The exclusion of young people continues to present the strongest challenge to the intention to offer education in line with the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) which constructed education as a human right.

Government-funded 'Alternatives to Exclusion' initiatives have enabled local authorities to establish and/or further develop support systems which will at reduce the number of young people excluded from school. One such project, in a local authority (LA) in Scotland, was evaluated by the authors. This paper considers models of behaviour support as they have emerged from that evaluation and relates those models to older, more established models of support for learning and teaching. It argues that the growth of behaviour support presents an opportunity to re-assess support systems in schools and to develop new systems which offer the possibility of more effectively including pupils with

social, emotional and behavioural difficulties through developing teacher practice and school policy in the overall endeavour to build inclusive education systems (Gray, 2002).

The paper begins by contextualising the development of behaviour support in attempts to reduce school exclusions as part of a broader social policy agenda. Then the typology used to compare and contrast different forms of behaviour support is described. Findings are discussed in relation to the purpose of behaviour support, its functioning in different schools and its impact on staff development needs. Finally, the paper considers implications for the development of behaviour support systems designed to enhance inclusion in schools.

Background to behaviour support

In Scotland, exclusions are framed by Scottish Office Circular No /02 (SEED, 2002) which sets out procedures and requirements for reporting exclusions. Exclusions are the most serious of the sanctions used by schools when pupils break the behaviour code of the school. Pupils are asked to leave the school for a fixed period of between one day and four weeks. Where the offence is regarded as serious or where a particular pupil has had a number of previous exclusions for earlier breaches of the code, the exclusion may be final. In that case, the local authority is required to find alternative educational provision for the pupil.

Schools have very different rates of exclusion and various studies (Munn et al, 2000; Head et al, 2001) have tried to identify the factors which differentiate high- and low-

excluding schools. Important among those factors are levels of social exclusion in the communities served by different schools, for instance, an urban authority which has some of the poorest communities in Europe, has a school exclusion rate of 96 per 1000 pupils whereas an island authority has 7 exclusions per 1000 pupils (SEED, 2002). Such comparisons have made possible by the publication of exclusion statistics by SEED, with information available for four years, from 1998 through to 2002 (Scottish Executive, 2000, 2001, 2002b, 2003). It is worth noting that, when published, the national statistics are structured by a range of social factors: gender, stage of schooling, poverty indicators (free school meals), looked after by local authority and special educational needs (existence of a RoN). Thus, the data are organized in ways that make specific links between exclusion from school and factors in broader social exclusion.

The factors which characterize social exclusion are noted by Silver (1994) as long-term or repeated unemployment, family instability, social isolation and the decline of neighbourhood and social networks. 'Social exclusion' has replaced 'poverty' in the discourse on inequality. Alvey and Brown (2001) distinguish between the notion of social exclusion and poverty, arguing that social exclusion covers both the causes and effects of poverty, discrimination and disadvantage:

Definitions of social exclusion often resemble those of relative poverty, and the term is sometimes used interchangeably with poverty, but the concepts are not identical. A key difference between them is that ideas about exclusion are primarily concerned with processes (the way things happen) whereas poverty has

tended to be thought of as a condition or set of circumstances (the way things are).
(Alvey and Brown, 2001: 1)

Riddell and Tett (2001) take the distinction further to explain the extra dimension intended in the use of the term:

In conceptualizing social exclusion, the government has sought to shift away from a sole focus on material deprivation towards a recognition of the salience of wider social and cultural factors. Thus, while it is recognized that poverty is likely to produce social alienation, it is also recognized that, unless ways are found of hooking individuals and communities into positive social networks based on trust and reciprocity, money spent on alleviating material disadvantage may be wasted.

(Riddell and Tett, 2001: 5)

It is this 'hooking' in to education (and, in this case, to schooling) of individuals and communities which encapsulates the challenge faced by schools as they try to tackle exclusions within the local and national policy and organisational framework, whilst taking account of the broader social and cultural context of the school. Both the Scottish Executive and the UK parliaments have set up Social Exclusion Policy Units and, in November 1999, the Scottish Executive issued a new Report 'Social justice... a Scotland where everyone matters.' The report was intended to provide a framework of targets (long-term aims) and milestones (short-term) to enable judgements about progress towards social inclusion. Targets were aimed at, for example, ending child poverty, increasing the educational attainments of school leavers and increasing the financial security of older people. Amongst the targets specified are those related to reducing

school exclusions. The target-setting approach to reducing school exclusions has been discussed in the literature (Stirling, 1996; Blyth & Milner, 1996; Munn et al, 2000) as encouraging schools to utilize a range of tactics to limit the number of exclusions actually recorded; for example, ‘informal’ exclusion, ‘sending home’ or ‘internal exclusion’. The last of these three tactics is discussed further on in relation to the purpose of bases in mainstream schools.

Funding was available to support government priorities and the LA concerned took advantage of this to set up its own behaviour support initiative at the start of the 1998 school session. The initiative was aimed at the authority’s secondary schools and SOEID funding was used to enhance staffing in each of the schools. This additional resourcing was to be used specifically for the reduction of exclusions but, within parameters set by the education authority, each of the schools had scope to decide how behaviour support should be provided. The emerging models of behaviour support were the focus for the evaluation.

Design of the study

Four questions were addressed through the evaluation:

- What is working?
- Where are systems not working?
- What else is needed?
- Is this aspect of the whole strategy providing value for money?

For the first two years of the three-year project, these questions were addressed using three sets of data provided annually from the LA's secondary schools. Exclusion statistics from the Scottish Education Establishments Management Information Systems (SEEMIS), annual reports from schools and case study information on six pupils from each of the schools provided a range of quantitative and qualitative data to inform the study. However, by the third year of the project some interesting lines of enquiry emerged which could not be pursued using this data. Significant among these was the question of pupils' views of behaviour support and the views of teachers including those not directly involved in that form of provision. Data from schools was compiled by a single person, usually a member of the senior management team, and it was thought necessary to go beyond this group. For this reason, interviews with key informants were conducted in six of the schools. The six schools were chosen using a typology which we had developed as a way of categorizing schools' approaches to behaviour support. It is these 'types' of behaviour support which provide the focus for discussion here.

Typology

From annual reports and case studies, it was possible to make broad distinctions between the emerging types of behaviour support, for example between behaviour support as located in a place with designated staff, and behaviour support as permeating all support systems. This allocation of behaviour support to 'types' or categories was intended to help in analysing what worked where, how and for whom. Previous studies (Cooper, 1993; Daniels et al, 1999; Munn et al, 2000; Cole et al, 2001) have pointed to 'school ethos' or the combined and pervasive influence of relationships, values and attitudes in

shaping both how schools respond and how well they respond to young people with challenging behaviour. Daniels et al (1999) endorse the central importance of shared values in providing well for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties but argue that the articulation of values in the school setting is more important than the adoption of a particular set of values. Cooper et al (2000) discuss the relationship between values and structures and argue that schools' success in reducing exclusions is associated with:

.....the existence of a strong framework of value and a tight relationship between values and structure; and that lesser success might be associated with situations either where there was no strong framework of value shared by the majority of staff, or where the relationship between structures and values was not clearly articulated. (page 168)

In this study, schools were typed according to information provided by schools about their developing behaviour support structures. The 'types' of behaviour support were based upon the literature which has influenced the development of learning support in Scottish schools (see, for instance, HMI Progress Report, SED,1978; the Warnock Report, DES,1978; and Effective Provision for Special Educational Needs ,SOEID, 1994). Within learning support in mainstream schools, five key roles are direct teaching, cooperative teaching, consultancy, liaison with others and staff development. For the purposes of this investigation, the five roles were used to develop criteria which could be used to analyse information about developing approaches to behaviour. Those criteria and the 'types' of behaviour support emerging are outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 : Characteristics of behaviour support (BS)

	<u>Providers of BS</u>	<u>'Clients' of BS</u>	<u>Approaches to BS</u>
<u>Type 1</u>	All teachers	All pupil teachers And other adults	Embedded in Curriculum and wider support systems
<u>Type 2</u>	Designated teachers	Pupils with challenging behaviour	Establishment of a Base for referred pupils
<u>Type 3</u>	Designated teachers	Pupils with challenging behaviour and teachers requesting help	Targetted support within ordinary lessons

The presence or otherwise of these characteristics in the data enabled us to identify three approaches to behaviour support as follows:

1. Behaviour support as permeating

In some schools, the additional staffing was used to enhance existing support systems (such as Learning Support or Guidance) to enable these to diversify the range of approaches used. Support for pupils with behavioural difficulties was set in a context of broader support systems. So, for example, one school was able to develop further a study skills programme and to target this more effectively at particular pupils, including those whose behaviour had been problematic.

Schools operating a Type 1 approach saw behaviour support as permeating all aspects of provision and believed reductions in exclusions would be a bye-product of very broad approaches to supporting pupils' learning, of encouraging teachers to learn and of the development of the whole curriculum to be more appropriate and inclusive. Behaviour

support was ‘invisible’ in that it was not located in a place or a group of people but also because it was embedded in support for pupils’ learning.

2. Behaviour support as a discrete entity

Here, behaviour support was distinct both in terms of having dedicated personnel and in operating separate approaches to supporting behaviour. In this model, behaviour support involved a few teachers who worked with nominated pupils within a specified area or base. Schools operating a Type 2 approach to behaviour support saw a reduction in exclusions as a task to be tackled more directly through the establishment of a base which was, in some cases at least, literally an alternative to exclusion. The role of behaviour support teachers was:

To provide a medium of support for children who are experiencing a range of difficulties....a full range of different needs come to the Base from time to time. It is better than a straightforward exclusion. They get a chance to think about it and we can help them by talking about the surface things and help to understand why they have problems in that sort of situation. (Behaviour Support teacher)

3. Combined approaches to behaviour support

In this model, behaviour support was a distinct element in school organisation (usually with identified behaviour support staff). Its mode of operation, though, tended to be through the ordinary curricular and pastoral systems of the school. Sometimes behaviour support was linked to learning support departments and mirrored learning support practices such as cooperative teaching. Schools operating a Type 3 approach to

behaviour support (the largest group within the whole group) were characterised by their efforts to strike a balance, encompassing features from the other two models. Behaviour support was constructed as both a discrete entity (with, for example, designated staff) and as permeating other aspects of support systems in the school.

All of the schools in the study were found to use behaviour support to achieve greater inclusion but schools varied in the ways in which they pursued that end. In their evaluation of behaviour and discipline pilot projects in England, Hallam and Castle (1999) noted that the success of individual projects depended on the extent to which staff in the school became committed to the project, irrespective of the form of the initiative. The data available gave insight into what schools were doing in relation to behaviour support but said little about why they were doing it that way, nor about who amongst the stakeholders in behaviour support had influenced the approach adopted. Further investigation was needed to determine the rationales behind the approaches to behaviour support. Through a sample of the schools, the researchers sought further information about how each of the schools conceptualised the purpose of behaviour support, how behaviour support operated, and the implications for staff development. Of the 6 schools from which further data was collected, two were viewed as operating the permeating model, two as operating behaviour support as a discrete strand of provision and two as operating behaviour support by combining both permeating and discrete approaches. Semi-structured interviews with a range of key informants (behaviour support teacher, a manager of behaviour support, a subject teacher, pupils and parents) were used to investigate more fully the nature of behaviour support.

Interviews

In each of the six schools, semi-structured interviews with a range of key informants were used to investigate more fully the nature of behaviour support. In total, interviews were conducted with forty two informants. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 90 minutes, with interviews with pupils being generally shorter than the rest. The interviews were not intended to represent a sample of opinion or experience in each school. Rather, the range of interviews was constructed to allow a broad and multi-faceted view to emerge. For that reason, interviews were conducted with teachers of a variety of subjects, with behaviour support teachers (where there were such postholders), with senior managers such as depute headteachers and with pupils and parents.

Purpose of behaviour support

Those involved in behaviour support identified its main purpose as being the reduction of exclusions. They saw their work as arising out of local and national ‘alternatives to exclusion’ initiatives. However, there were differences in the ways in which this specific purpose was pursued. Those associated with Type 1 behaviour support believed reductions in exclusions were a bye-product of very broad approaches to supporting pupils’ learning, of encouraging teachers to learn and of the development of the whole curriculum to be more appropriate and inclusive. Type 1 behaviour support was ‘invisible’ in that it was not located in a place or a group of people. One of the pupils who had received Type 1 support and who saw herself as having benefited from support, said

behaviour support was ‘nothing in particular’. It had just been her guidance teacher and the Assistant Headteacher listening to her and talking to her.

In Type 2 behaviour support, on the other hand, a reduction in exclusions was a task to be tackled more directly through the establishment of provision, often a base, which would be, in some cases at least, literally an alternative to exclusion (that is, upon a decision to exclude, the pupil would go to the base instead of to their own home). This practice has been termed ‘internal exclusion’ and has been criticized (Bourne et al, 1994; Cohen et al, 1994) as a means of under-reporting exclusions and disguising their full extent. However, in this study, it was not apparent that those bases which had been established served only or mainly that function. Those interviewed identified a number of purposes. For some teachers, the purpose of behaviour support was to provide respite for subject teachers and other pupils:

I think there is the majority of people, the majority of staff, who do not understand what we can do and the work we are doing. I think a small percentage are happy to see behaviour support as just a place where children can go out of their way. The pupils are not in their class and so it is better for them. I think that is it. (Behaviour support teacher)

Behaviour support teachers themselves, however, saw their purpose also as supporting the individual pupil who was experiencing difficulties. Some considerable time and attention had been given to developing alternative educational provision for pupils who were in bases. Often this was weighted towards personal and social development (PSD), with those involved in planning a curriculum for pupils with challenging behaviour

recognizing the importance of the affective domain (Cole and Visser, 1998; Head & O'Neill, 1999). Whilst asserting the value of PSD for their pupils, however, those involved in behaviour support also acknowledged the practical difficulties in offering a full and subject-based curriculum. Those difficulties lay in the limited range of subject expertise available from behaviour support staff and their consequent inability to ensure curriculum continuity for pupils coming out of, and going back into, the ordinary mainstream timetable.

In developing behaviour support, schools sought to achieve a balance between apparent polarities – for example between flexibility and structure, between permeation and visibility, between targeted support and inclusive approaches and between responsiveness and appropriate prioritizing of need. Type 3 behaviour support systems in particular, were characterized by their efforts to strike a balance which encompassed all of these features. Here, behaviour support was constructed as both a discrete entity (with, for example, designated staff) and as permeating other aspects of support systems in the school.

Although behaviour support was seen as serving a specific purpose by all of the schools, there were differences in the perspectives offered by different groups of respondents within schools. For example, there was a marked difference in the views of teachers and pupils, which varied little across all schools. Where teachers saw behaviour support as about support for pupils and, less unanimously, as support for teachers; pupils themselves saw behaviour support as a form of punishment. Of the 15 pupils interviewed most saw behaviour support as helpful but they did not make a link to their learning or their

general development. Two pupils did have a different view and were able to say how behaviour support had helped them to develop and to take greater control over aspects of their lives. Overall, though, the perspective of pupils was that behaviour support had nothing to do with learning or pastoral care but was, instead, part of the discipline system of the school.

Functioning of Behaviour Support

On the surface at least, some constructions of behaviour support resembled pre-Warnock ‘remedial’ education with pupils spending some or all of their time in a separate place with a specialist teacher who would try to equip them to re-enter the ordinary curriculum. Type 2 behaviour support was generally defined as a place, although at least some of the service provided by behaviour support might be outreach support into ordinary subject classes. However, it was recognised that whilst flexibility was to be valued in responding to the difficulties experienced by young people, it might also disrupt the continuity of learning within the ordinary curriculum. As the initiative progressed, however, contact between subject teachers and behaviour support teachers became increasingly frequent and co-operative teaching was cited as the preferred means of support. This mechanism, as well as offering classroom-based support for young people, was important in building what Visser et al (2001, page 187) have deemed so important to the development of inclusive schools, that is, ‘a critical mass’ of staff committed to inclusive values.

Schools operating Type 1 behaviour support placed a high value on flexibility, and particularly the freedom to operate as the school saw appropriate to its ever-changing circumstances. For example, one of the schools which started with Type 1 or permeating approaches to behaviour support considered setting up a base in order to deal with a particular problem that had its roots in the community and was beginning to appear in the school. Again, co-operative teaching was cited as the preferred method of behaviour support.

Schools operating Type 3 behaviour support were prepared to try a range of strategies in order to reduce the number of exclusions. Throughout the three years for which annual reports were available, collaborative strategies, and co-operative teaching in particular, were cited as the preferred methods of support.

However, in type 2 and 3 schools, subject teachers complained about the lack of responsiveness of behaviour support, arguing that respite did not happen quickly enough, thus limiting the capacity of behaviour support to provide respite for teachers, for pupils in difficulty and for other pupils in the class. This criticism was recognised by those responsible for managing behaviour support, some of whom, nevertheless, felt that greater responsiveness, could rapidly result in the overload of behaviour support.

Staff development

Groups of staff in all six schools identified staff development as an important strand in behaviour support provision. Schools operating Type 1 behaviour support viewed staff

development as the main thrust of behaviour support, and invested considerable resources in the planning and coordination of staff development for all staff. For example, one of these schools adopted a research-based approach to the development of behaviour support by interviewing 50 pupils to gain pupil perspectives on behaviour management and pupil/teacher relationships. One of the results emerging was the need for consistency in the approaches of teachers because that created pupil perceptions of ‘fairness’ in behaviour management systems.

Type 2 or discrete behaviour support was seen as offering opportunities for reciprocal staff development between subject teachers and behaviour support teachers. Subject teachers who opted to work in a base for even a short time each week were able to develop deeper appreciation of the difficulties experienced by some young people and a greater empathy with them. Behaviour support teachers working cooperatively in classrooms with subject teachers were able to develop clearer understandings of the demands of the curriculum and the strategies needed to manage behaviour in an ordinary class context.

In schools operating Type 3 behaviour support, the ‘modelling’ of good teacher/pupil relationships was viewed as a worthwhile form of staff development offered through cooperative teaching by behaviour support teachers.

Conclusion

Regardless of the model of behaviour support adopted, all schools in this study emphasised the increased flexibility behaviour support offered to the school. Schools

operating Type 2 and Type 3 models argued, for example, that by enabling troublesome pupils to be removed from timetabled lessons, ongoing learning and teaching were protected whilst the interests of the extracted pupil could be pursued in a 'welfare' context and not necessarily through a disciplinary route. More than this was gained, however, because bases established to provide an alternative to exclusion were found to serve a broader range of purposes than had been intended originally. Pupils who, for a variety of reasons, could not readily be fitted into the school routine were accommodated in the base for a limited time or for part of the timetable. Systems designed to provide behaviour support were evolving into more encompassing pupil support systems where, for example, children with a range of social and cultural needs could be supported through the curriculum and organisation of the school.

However, this flexibility could also be interpreted as ambivalence about the purpose and function of behaviour support. Is it intended to serve a discipline function? Is it primarily to promote the welfare of vulnerable pupils or is it just an uneasy compromise between these two functions? Ambivalence about the purpose of behaviour support was apparent in the views of many of the young people interviewed. Even where they saw behaviour support as helpful, they perceived it to be part of the discipline system of the school. Behaviour support was not in itself viewed as a form of punishment but it was seen to be part of a system which still encompassed punitive approaches. The challenge for schools, therefore, may be to locate behaviour support more firmly in broader and more inclusive approaches to pupil support.

School-based developments in pupil support are based on pragmatism. As such they are reactive, responding to a current or anticipated context in terms of the most practical and effective solution. In increasing the capacity of schools to be reflexive and constructively responsive to the diversity of the pupil population, however, it may be that pragmatism is what is needed to advance the cause of school inclusion.

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