Teacher action

Activity 14

Read each of the courses of action outlined on Form 9 (page 45). Think about the same pupil as before and what they do that is disruptive and needs changing. Tick each of the actions that you have used more than once. Alternatively, you might prefer to tick only those actions that you use most frequently.

Your responses to the checklist on Form 9 need to be examined more closely and you need to ask yourself some key questions. For example:

- What will happen if you constantly use actions 12-18 from the checklist of possible action?

- Will they help you solve the problem?

- Do you use these kinds of actions?

- When do you use them and under what circumstances?

- Do they work?

- What will happen if you use action 19 onwards?

- Will they help the pupil?

- Under what circumstances would you use them?

- Is there sometimes a need for pure punishment?

Setting behaviour targets

So far, this section has suggested ways of analysing and recording disruptive behaviour, and looked at some of the possible kinds of action you could take. You should now have a framework within which you can work to create an individual plan of action for a particular pupil and set a precise behaviour target.

You must always remember that, despite your irritation and frustration, the pupils we are now thinking about are the most vulnerable. They may have low self-esteem, and may believe that others do not value them. Because of this, they may feel that there are few constraints on their behaviour and they will always be looking for confirmation of this poor view of themselves. Also, because failure brings what they feel are further insults, they are reluctant to fail and, therefore, very reluctant to try things out and learn from new experiences. This can include new patterns of behaviour which might be difficult to sustain and which carry the possibility of failure. Each individual may have very different problems and it may be necessary to set up a way of closely monitoring their behaviour.

What happens in your classroom does not just depend on your individual skills. It relies to some extent on whole school support, consistency between classes and teachers, and a certain amount of backing from other staff, pupils and parents. Pupils have to be aware that there are constraints placed on them from many people, not just their teacher, and that certain behaviour will not be tolerated by anyone.

Activity 15

In the previous activities in this section, you have identified behaviour traits of an individual pupil and examined some suggested actions that might be taken. It is now time to develop strategies for confronting an individual pupil with their own behaviour. Form 10 (page 46) offers a form you can use to build up a file on an individual, either as a way towards a 'cure', or as a collection of evidence for further action. Ask the pupil to think about their actions, and to write down what they did and how they can stop themselves from doing it again. This form involves parents but it can be used without any input from them if that is thought to be more appropriate.

Activity 16

The final form in this section (Form 11, page 47) allows you to chart an individual pupil's behaviour. It is designed to be used on a daily basis and, like the previous form, confronts the disruptive pupil with their own behaviour and makes them consider the consequences of their action through discussions with you. It is more difficult to use because it requires you to monitor what the pupil is doing five times each day. If another teacher works with the pupil, they must be prepared to use it and make comments on it. Using this form will also make the pupil realise that they are being closely observed and that this is happening because of their behaviour.

The form can be used in the following way. First of all, sit down with the pupil and decide on some of the behaviour issues that you want to confront. Remember, this is you wanting this, not the pupil choosing. For example, you may decide that these three areas need to be monitored and improved:

•   the pupil should remain in their chair for at least 80% of each block of time

•   the pupil should not prevent other pupils from working

•   the pupil should complete all the work that is set.

It is better to stick to a limited number of issues. There are five points at which behaviour should be monitored: before morning break, after morning break, during lunchtime, before afternoon break, and after afternoon break. If the pattern of your day means that this is impractical, use it approximately every hour, but make sure that it is also used at lunchtime.

After every part of the day, sit down with the pupil again and decide what to write. The pupil should write down what they have done, eg 'I did finish all my work...' and you write down what you think has happened, eg 'Work all finished but disturbed James twice'. In the mark column choose from these grades: Very good, Good, Quite good, Bad and Very bad. For example, on this occasion, where work was finished but there were two disruptions, you might write 'Quite good'.

It is essential that the pupil knows that there are rewards and sanctions in place. For example, three 'Bads' or worse in a day will result in a missed break; one 'Very bad' means a detention, or similar sanction. Equally, three 'Goods' must lead to a meaningful reward suited to the age of the pupil. The reward and sanction column can be used each day, or can be limited to the last day of the week. In practical terms, this kind of close monitoring is time-consuming but, if you want to work closely with a pupil to modify their behaviour, it is worth trying.

Pupil behaviour chart

Pupil name: ....

Positive patterns of behaviour		Negative patterns of behaviour	Comments
Attends school		Misses school	
Happy at school		Unhappy at school	
No physical complaints		Complains of aches and pains	
Confident		Lacks confidence	
Responds well to discipline		Responds badly to discipline	
Parents support the school		Parents do not support the school	
Arrives on time for school		Arrives late to school	
Helpful to others		Unhelpful to others	
Can work and play independently		Finds being independent difficult	
Responds well to praise		Responds badly to praise	
Behaves well outside class		Behaves badly outside class	
On-task in class		Off-task in class	
Can remain in seat		Restless and often out of seat	
Relaxed when on-task		Irritable and fidgets when on-task	
Respects peers		Does not respect peers	
Respects others' property		Abuses others' property	

Positive patterns of behaviour		Negative patterns of behaviour	Comments
Good concentration		Poor concentration	
Well controlled		Lacks self-control	
Moves from task to task easily		Disturbs others between tasks	
Settles down quickly		Takes too long to settle	
Copes with changes		Cannot cope well with change	
Usually asks for help		Waits for help to be provided	
Likes to complete tasks		Does not bother to complete tasks	
Follows teacher's instructions		Disobeys teacher	
Cooperative with teacher		Uncooperative with teacher	
Can talk positively with teacher		Makes negative remarks to teacher	
Is fair to peers		Is unfair to peers	
Communicates well with peers		Uncommunicative with peers	
Not aggressive with peers		Fights peers	
Popular with peers		Disliked by peers	
Interested in others		Only interested in self	
Not a bully		A bully	
One or more friends		Isolated with no friends	
Joins in playground games		Plays alone	