

How different strategies are used to support children education essay



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The assignment will develop the work started for log B, looking at how different strategies are used to support children with social, emotional behavioural difficulties, focusing on how rewards and sanctions can improve behaviour. Looking at how a school behavioural policy can help within the classroom and school to tackle and improve behaviour as well as using literature to critically analyse these suggestions.

Concerns about the behaviours of young people are nothing new. Socrates is quoted as saying ' Children today are real tyrants, they no longer stand up when their elders come into the room where they are sitting, they contradict their parents, chat together in the presence of adults, eat gluttonously and tyrannise their teachers'.

What counts as good behaviour can be difficult to identify specifically. Our understanding of the causes and cures of disruptive behaviour over the last few years has grown immensely. Previously, explanations of poor behaviour tend to be based on individual pupils and their families while treatments consisted of drugs, counselling and psychological intervention. Research that is more recent has suggested that school curriculum, teaching approaches, sanction and reward systems and pupil involvement in determining rules, rewards and sanctions contribute to the ethos of high expectations and developing positive teacher pupil relationships where indiscipline is minimised.

Sanction and reward systems, which will be the focus of this assignment, have their origins in behaviourist psychology. They are most likely to be effective if shaped by an overall philosophy and linked closely to the ethos of

the school and in many schools pupils are involved in drawing up the school rules, and consulted about appropriate sanctions, as this is seen as the best way of ensuring that punishments are seen as fair.

Government policy in England states that TES (2005). ' Rewards and sanction systems are essential for a creative teaching and learning environment'. By praising and rewarding positive behaviour, it is believed that others will be encouraged to act similarly. The government believe that school behaviour policy should therefore not only specify what sanctions are available to staff, but also how positive behaviour will be reinforced through praise and rewards.

Surprisingly, ' there's been little research into the effects of sanctions and rewards on behaviour and achievement. One of the most extensive studies was conducted by researchers at the University of East Anglia in 2000. Their survey of Year 8, 9 and 10 pupils in the Norwich area found that the most effective sanction in the eyes of pupils was a letter or phone call home to parents, while the least effective was a verbal warning. Similarly, the use of gifts was seen as by far the most effective reward, with verbal praise at the bottom of the list' (TES, 2005). Recent research (Allen, unpublished) suggests that the school curriculum and the use of teaching approaches through sanctions and reward systems can determine the pupils involvement within the rules, thus contributing to the ethos of high expectations and developing positive teacher and pupil relationships therefore creating the individuality of the pupils.

The types of children and their related social, emotional and behavioural problems must be identified before a sanction and rewards scheme can improve behaviour as part of a behavioural management policy within a Pupil Referral Unit. The definition of emotional and behavioural difficulties in Britain (DES, 1989) refers to: ‘ Children who set up barriers between themselves and their learning environment through inappropriate, aggressive, bizarre or withdrawn behaviour and who have developed a range of strategies for dealing with day to day experiences that are inappropriate and impede normal personal and social development and make it difficult to learn.’ This statement suggests that the problem resides with the child and that it is the child who needs to be treated and cured. However this view is far too simplistic.

Therefore there is a need to understand the child, looking at the root causes of aggressive or socially inappropriate behaviour, by looking at the different perspectives on behaviour this will help teachers to understand individual childrens’ behaviour, and give them strategies to use within the classroom. The use of these perspectives is especially useful in a Pru situation where there are a large proportion of challenging children. Many of these children have had negative experiences in their secondary school and view themselves as inadequate, ineffective, and useless troublemakers, consequently their self esteem is low. Using the following perspectives and observing and recording a child’s different behaviours can give teachers in Pupil referral units’ strategies to overcome pupils displayed behaviours which they can use effectively within the classroom. Firstly, the Pschodynamic perspective looks at how early experiences from childhood,

attachment issues and other conflicts can have an effect on current behaviour traits, understanding these issues can help a teacher develop a positive relationship with the child. The Cognitive perspective, once testing of the child's abilities has been carried out, means that the work can be presented at the appropriate level (Ayers et al, 1995). This will help the child achieve success and develop their selfconfidence and self-esteem when attempting new topics. The Ecosystemic perspective looks at systems that influence the child, such as home, school and peer environments. Looking at all relationships that can affect the child's behaviour, and developing strategies to use within the classroom. Strategies based on this approach, such as nature groups are being used increasingly in primary schools. Although these are implemented mainly by teachers', they sometimes involve assistance from other providers such as peers, parents or psychologists. A Behaviourist perspective approach looks at how positive and negative reinforcements used consistently in school and at home can have a positive affect on behaviour, improving self esteem. A Humanistic perspective to managing behaviour tries to maximise a pupil's inherent motivation to learn by minimising factors that undermine or inhibit this process. Teachers will need to recognise how the pupils feel about themselves and their capabilities. Maslow (1998) 'clarifies how needs such as physical and safety needs have to be adequately met before self esteem even becomes an issue.'

Although brief, the above descriptions of the different perspectives can give teachers an insight into why a child behaves the way it does. Many of the strategies mentioned in Log B support children with SEBD within the

classroom. The most important one mentioned is actually listening to the child to try to understand what they feel and developing relationships. ' Emotional and behaviour difficulties are about people who are so badly hurt and in so much pain that they are angry, it is our belief that they express their anger in a place that is safe: to that expression of anger in school could be seen as positive' Mc Namara, & Morton (1995).

Teachers in a Pupil Referral Unit situation often need to learn to also deal with their own emotions, as many feel frustrated because they want to help children to change their behaviour so that the pupils themselves get better outcomes. The usual strategies of sanctions, reasoning, punishments and exclusions used in secondary school don't always work with children in a Pupil referral unit. Therefore, being able to recognise the different behavioural perspectives teachers are able to develop their own teaching strategies within the classroom for the individual child.

Before a child enters the Pupil referral unit they attend an assessment centre which is located within the same building, this gives a chance for the teachers to determine what the individual pupil needs to help them fulfil their potential. A behaviour contract is usually completed between the school, parents or guardian and the child themselves. The main areas that are addressed within this contract are used to develop positive behaviours to support relationships between pupils and teachers, pupils and their school environment, peer relationships and home relationships.

By developing a whole school approach to behavioural management issues the Pupil referral unit involves all staff, some agencies, and the pupils.

Involving parents would seem to be the best way forward. Capstick (2005) suggests ' Establishing good relationships with parents seem an important element when attempting to work with a child as well as giving tangible rewards. Teacher and staff need to examine what outcomes they want to achieve with the pupils and adopt or change the reward system to meet their needs'. The values, which underpin a school behaviour policy, are that all children and adults have the right to work in a safe, calm, supported and purposeful environment. All children have the right to come to school without fear of being bullied. All adults have a responsibility to support the behaviour policy and for it to be consistently applied by all members of staff for it to work effectively.

The Pupil referral unit's behavioural policy aims are to ensure a fair and consistent approach to dealing with the behaviour of children during the school day. This is by providing a safe, caring and supportive environment which allows children to learn and teachers to teach. The policy hopes to promote positive behaviour as a model for all behaviours. Help independence by making pupils responsible for their own actions and provide a structure which moderates children's behaviour while allowing them to develop as responsible citizens within society. To achieve these aims it is vital that a partnership between home and school is established. A lack of, or poor discipline tends to be the result of problems within the family unit or lack of social skills. In a Pupil referral unit this is achieved in the following ways. Communication between a child's key teacher and their parent or guardian is good and means that the parent will phone in regularly to keep staff up to date on any problems at home, staff will in return inform parents

of good behaviour, effort or work that the child has produced. This means that the child is rewarded by the parent or guardian. When surveyed most children rated this highly on encouraging them to behave well at the pupil referral unit.

Smith and Laslett (1993) suggest ' To use rewards and sanctions effectively requires knowledge and judicious application of the principles of behaviour modification' ...the single most important factor in learning behaviour is what happens immediately following that behaviour. Pleasant consequences are most likely to reinforce the behaviour and make it happen again. To develop a whole school policy on sanctions and rewards within the Pupil referral unit, discussions should take place within the school community on how to deal with different types of behaviours observed in different places around the school. Pupils are involved during PSHCE lessons in conducting surveys, and a school council could be established so that the children views on school issues can be heard. For when the pupils understand the simple rules within the classroom the atmosphere is usually pleasant and the teaching enjoyable. The main objective for a school behavioural policy is to ensure that there was is a shared understanding by both pupils and teachers of proportionate and differentiated sanctions that can be used in different situations. The policy needs to be clear on how teachers can acquire assistance in a crisis situation and who to go to for help. It should also be discussed what the protocol would be with the local police and youth offending services, if a serious incident occurred.

Sanctions should be discussed with pupils and school rules displayed in every classroom. Sanctions must be fair and must be used to deal with

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behaviour, as quickly as possible. Pupils must know that when a sanction is applied it will be used. Record keeping is vital in the pupil referral unit, especially recording any behavioural incidents which help teachers deal with repetitive behaviour issues. The Pupil referral unit could also use restorative justice to address poor behaviour, where a child is held to account for their actions and encouraged to put right the harm they may have caused. In some schools and Pupil Referral units this method seems to be working and behaviour is seen to be improving. The school behaviour policy should not only specify what sanctions are available to staff but also how positive behaviour will be reinforced through praise and rewards. The Elton Report (1989) noted that a reward and sanction ratio of at least 5: 1 is an indication of a school with an effective rewards and sanctions system. It also recommended that all schools should have a wide range of both rewards and sanctions that are applied fairly and consistently.

The types of rewards used in a Pupil referral unit to motivate children are, verbal praise, rewarding positive behaviours which encourage the pupils to behave in lessons, showing examples of exemplar work on walls, displaying work showing the different levels of academic achievement. Giving all children the chance to succeed and develop their confidence and using the lessons they enjoy improving their self esteem. Reward strategies also used are certificates, postcards, prizes within lessons for consistent behaviour, effort or quality work. Parents should be routinely informed of all of the above and termly assemblies given with parents encouraged to attend as recognition of their child's achievement.

Teachers and staff within the Pupil referral unit therefore have high expectations of the pupils and encourage standards in collective and self discipline, encouraging purposeful learning opportunities within the classroom in order to support the behavioural management policy. An example of this is where children can be given target cards each day with one behaviour target on, they take this to each lesson and teachers record their behaviour, adding initials in the centre of the bullseye on the card if they have met that target for that lesson, at the end of the day the points (Initials in the centre of the bullseye) are added up and recorded on to a visual record sheet so that the pupils can see their achievements.

Dealing with the different types of disruptions that can occur in lessons at the Pupil referral unit can also be challenging for teachers. Disruptions can manifest themselves as low level such as persistently talking to peers, seeking too much attention, or failing to cooperate. Whilst these disruptions can often be put down to stresses or difficulties outside school, it is evident that some situations arise because of the learning environment within the Pupil referral unit itself and this must be tackled in order for a behavioural policy and rewards and sanctions system to work effectively. Children can be bored with the work set especially if the level is incorrect, and will 'kick off'. Some teachers as Ashman and Conway (1993) suggest 'see the problems as lying with the child rather than the curriculum or the methods used to teach'.

Lessons in the Pupil referral unit therefore can be timetabled for half hour and hour slots at various times of the year or timetables can be disbanded meaning that children experience a variety of different teaching styles within the day. This can also have a positive effect on behaviour management <https://assignbuster.com/how-different-strategies-are-used-to-support-children-education-essay/>

within the unit for example in practical lessons teachers are used to movement and children often have more freedom to move around depending upon the activity, the teachers tend to be more relaxed in their methods and consequently so are the children. Whereas, in theoretical lessons some teachers tend to regard movement as threatening and can apply sanctions more vigorously, if a child is criticised or put down for something they have done wrong in class, this can add to a lowering of their self esteem and increase behavioural problems. Rogers (1998) Suggests that all teachers should develop their own discipline plan so that they know what to do in advance when classroom behaviour is disruptive, to develop goals of discipline in school such as; helping the child accept responsibility for their own behaviour, exercise self control, respect the rights of others, adopt the principles of fairness and honesty and face logical consequences of their behaviour.

The behaviour policy in the Pupil referral unit should also cover strategies such as tactical ignoring of certain behaviours, using simple directons, postive reinforcement of rules, behaviour and work. Strategies such as giving the children simple choices about sanctions, giving time out for five minutes, using isolation for counselling to discuss problems, or using break and lunchtime detentions, or keeping children for ten minutes after school can also be used as a positive way to modify pupil behaviours. Deflecting and defusing situations are one of the unit's strengths, as mentioned in Log B. The most common deflecting strategy used to distract the child from their behaviour, is usually humour but not with added sarcasm; this usually works and seems to calm the children down very quickly, without letting them '

lose face'. The child is then reminded about giving an apology to the appropriate teacher. A room could also be used to mentor children who have caused disruption within a lesson so that they can discuss their actions with a member of staff. These are all positive steps in helping children to understand how their actions can affect themselves and others and to consider the feelings of others and attempt to perceive their point of view. By enabling a child to empathise with others behaviours can often be modified in a more positive way.

In conclusion the most important aspect of improving behaviour in any school is to develop a positive relationship with the children you teach, this is especially important in a Pupil referral unit as the pupils find it more difficult to make positive relationships. However, when they find a teacher that is friendly, caring, consistently predictable and reliable many pupils will react positively and consequently their behaviour improves. For children who the above approach doesn't work, time and effort including observations are needed to determine which behavioural perspectives to use to help that child progress.

In the Pupil referral unit therefore, the most effective way to help a child who has experienced traumatic events would be to use counselling by other services, or having a teacher they like discussing aspects of their behaviour with them, but being consistent with all the strategies included within the whole school behavioural policy and the use of sanctions and rewards helps improve behaviour.

Unfortunately, in recent years the incidents of emotional and behavioural issues among children in all schools (not just pupil referral units) has increased and the different sanctions and strategies mentioned previously have yet to be embedded and used effectively everywhere. This is due to government pressure and league tables. Teachers have had to move away from listening to pupils in class time in order to get children through examinations, and to reach targets. As many of the solutions to helping improve behavioural issues for children with SEBD are based on a within child view and the team around the child, these things involve a commitment from the government of time and money to enable these areas to be accessed by both pupils and teachers in order to improve behaviour effectively. An acknowledgement therefore that time spent on developing relationships within schools is in fact key to effecting education, requires a shift in government attitude in terms of expectations and targets. Only then will pupil behaviour ultimately improve across educational establishments.