Centre for Understanding Behaviour Change

www.cubec.org.uk

What influences teachers to change their practice?
A rapid research review

Alison Webster, Di McNeish and Sara Scott with Linda Maynard and Sarah Haywood

National Centre for Social Research for CUBeC

February 2012

Short Policy Report No. 12/07

(Funded by Department for Education)

CUBeC delivers evidence and insight into the drivers of behaviour change to inform and improve policy-making. The Centre combines expertise in a wide range of academic disciplines: economics, psychology, neuroscience, sociology, education, and social research.

What influences teachers to change their practice? A rapid research review

Alison Webster, Di McNeish and Sara Scott with Linda Maynard and Sarah Haywood, National Centre for Social Research for CUBeC, February 2012

1. Purpose and scope of the paper

The Department for Education commissioned the National Centre for Social Research to undertake a rapid review of the research on how teachers' practices are established and shaped and what influences their adoption of new practice, particularly in relation to managing behaviour. The majority of teachers manage behaviour well. However, this commission stems from a particular concern that although there are some well-known, simple and effective approaches to behaviour management, not all teachers implement these practices. The Department for Education therefore wants to know what might be effective in increasing teachers' use of effective approaches to behaviour management.

This paper represents the first stage of a planned study using interviews and classroom observation to identify teachers' strategies for managing behaviour, and the facilitators and inhibitors to adopting current guidance. For the fieldwork to be fruitful, it is important to draw on what we already know about what works in changing teaching practices: if I am a hard-pressed teacher, what is most likely to encourage, support and sustain me in developing and changing my practice to meet the needs of my students? What is likely to engage my attention and commitment rather than feel like just another irrelevant diktat from on high?

Our review focused on research into the practice of teachers, but teachers are people first, and susceptible to the same range of influences on their behaviour as the rest of us. We have therefore included a brief overview of recent thinking about what influences behaviour change generally and its potential implications for changing teaching practice.

2. Background

Managing behaviour in the classroom is a key challenge for teachers and schools. Information from Ofsted on schools' most recent inspection (at 30th September 2011) shows that while pupil behaviour in most maintained schools was judged 'good' or 'outstanding', six per cent of primary schools (976 of a total of 16,698 schools) were judged only

satisfactory'. Fifteen per cent of secondary schools (471 of a total of 3,061 schools) were judged 'satisfactory' with a further one per cent (22 schools) judged 'inadequate'.[1]

Surveys of teachers indicate that discipline is a major concern and, although it is not the most common reason for teachers considering leaving the profession, it is a factor, particularly among secondary teachers (MORI, 2003; Association of Teachers and Lecturers, 2008; NFER, 2008; Smithers and Robinson, 2003).

Research has also shown that managing disruptive behaviour has an impact on teaching time. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated that around 30 per cent of teaching time is lost due to poor pupil behaviour (OECD, 2009). A snapshot survey by the NASUWT found that in primary schools, an average of 30 minutes of available teaching time was lost per teacher per day, whilst in secondary schools, this increased to 50 minutes per teacher per day. The NASUWT survey estimated that, if scaled up annually, around 16 days of teaching and learning time are lost each year in primary schools and around 26 days in secondary schools. (NASUWT, 2009).

NFER's Teacher Voice survey (2008) asked teachers to rate the standard of pupil behaviour in their school. The majority of teachers (70 per cent) rated pupil behaviour as either 'good' or 'very good'. Twenty-four per cent of the sample said that pupil behaviour was 'acceptable'; six per cent said that it was 'poor', and less than one per cent said that behaviour was 'very poor'. Analysis by sector, age group and experience found that:

- Poor pupil behaviour seemed to be more of an issue for secondary teachers than for primary school respondents, with only 19 per cent of secondary teachers saying that pupil behaviour was 'very good' compared with 31 per cent of primary teachers.
- The oldest age group in the sample (50 years and over) had the most positive perception of pupil behaviour. Nearly one third of this group (31 per cent) expressed a view that pupil behaviour was 'very good', compared with a maximum of 26 per cent from any other age group. The 25-29 age group took the most negative view, with 41 per cent of this group indicating that pupil behaviour was either 'acceptable', 'poor' or 'very poor', compared with a maximum of 32 per cent from any other age group.
- 51 per cent of newly qualified teachers felt that pupil behaviour was 'good' or 'very good', this rose to 62 per cent for teachers with 1-5 years of experience, and 72 per cent for teachers with more than five years of experience.

---

[1]Taken from 'Inspection outcomes for selected judgements of maintained schools at their most recent inspection at 30 September 2011 (final)' http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/official-statistics-maintained-school-inspections-and-outcomes

- Proportionately more school leaders (48 per cent) than classroom teachers (22 per cent) said that pupil behaviour was 'very good'. Also, proportionately more primary senior leaders (54 per cent) than secondary leaders (38 per cent) said that pupil behaviour was 'very good'.
- About half of the teachers in the survey believed that the standard of behaviour has deteriorated (either marginally or substantially), around one quarter believed that it has remained the same, and the remaining quarter believed that it has improved (marginally or substantially).

In 2010, the Government published new guidance on schools' statutory 'powers to discipline' (for example, confiscation, search, detention). Research commissioned by DfE to explore teachers' use of these powers found low levels of awareness of the powers as a discrete set of strategies. Barriers to using the powers were identified, including uncertainty about the consequences of using them, and a general reluctance on the part of teachers to use them, as they did not fit with their perceived role (Anderton and Westwood, 2010).

In addition to statutory powers to discipline, there are numerous sources of guidance for teachers on strategies to manage behaviour in the classroom. These include Sir Alan Steer's report on behaviour standards and practices which advocates '*the take-up and consistent application by schools of established good principles of behaviour management, as set out in the 'Principles and Practice – What Works in School' advice of the former Practitioners' Group, as well as the implementation of the policy agenda set by the Group in 2005.*' These principles and practice give detailed examples of measures that have been successfully adopted in schools.

Effective approaches to managing behaviour require both school wide processes and individual strategies implemented by teachers. School wide processes refer to rules, procedures and policies that should be implemented across the whole school. Individual strategies refer to the actions that teachers undertake to put these rules, procedures and policies into effect, including the relationships they establish with pupils and what they do in the classroom to negotiate and implement behaviour management.

Research by Marzano (2003) compared the effectiveness of different types of strategy by evaluating a large number of experimental studies that had looked at individual techniques. Marzano identified four types of approach:

- Rules and procedures;
- Teacher – student relationships;
- Disciplinary interventions ('sticks and carrots');
- Mental set (e.g. developing awareness, controlling responses).

In an effort to reinforce the 'basics' of classroom management (the strategies that can be implemented), Charlie Taylor, the Government's behaviour expert, has produced guidance

for investigating processes and strategies that affect behaviour in schools. This includes simple checklists for teachers and school leaders.

Schools are required to produce behaviour policies that set out what acceptable behaviour entails and the sanctions and rewards that will be applied. However, NASUWT surveys in 2009 and 2010 found that the majority of teachers did not believe that school behaviour policies were being consistently applied. For example, while the vast majority of teachers (93%) who responded to the 2009 NASUWT survey said that their schools had a whole-school behaviour policy, teachers did not always have confidence that when a disruptive pupil was referred to school management the teacher would receive swift support or timely feedback about a pupil when s/he is returned to the class. Teachers working in alternative settings (such as Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units) face some specific challenges in managing behaviour and a NASUWT survey of staff in these specialist settings found even lower levels of confidence in the efficacy of school behaviour policies (NASUWT, 2010). These findings suggest that even when schools have behaviour policies in place, both teachers' individual strategies and leadership support are critical to their success.

3. What influences teachers to change their practice?

Teachers' behaviour and practice, and their responsiveness to change, are shaped by three sets of factors. As **individuals,** teachers bring their own attributes and attitudes to change, and are susceptible to the same influences as all of us, as well as being influenced by their training, support and career development. What goes on in schools also influences teachers' behaviour; and what is referred to as 'school culture' is shaped by a range of factors, most notably leadership. But schools and the teachers in them are also affected by external factors, such as the communities in which they operate, national and local policy and the associated inspection regimes. This paper explores each of these sets of factors and looks both at their significance for shaping teachers' behaviour and at the evidence of their impact on behavioural change.

3.1 What individual factors influence the likelihood of teachers changing their practice?

Discussion about change in the teaching profession is sometimes conducted as if teachers were a single block of professionals, all having the same responses. However, individual factors inevitably play a part in how teachers feel about their work and how they shape their practice. These include the following:

Personal attributes and attitudes to change

There is a spectrum of human response to change and individual characteristics inevitably affect how teachers are likely to be influenced to change their practice. Zimmerman (2006) identifies the following barriers which may be at work when teachers resist change:

- Failure to recognise the need for change;
- Habit;
- Fear of the unknown;
- Fear of threats to their expertise or their allocation of resources;
- Fear of threats to existing friendships within the school.

Recruitment, selection and training

The underlying assumptions about what kind of person is likely to make a 'good teacher' influence which people are attracted to teaching and the criteria by which they are recruited and selected. It may be important to consider the relative weight given to an individual's likely ability to manage behaviour alongside their passion for their subject and desire to stimulate children's learning. Gutherson and Pickard (2006) carried out case study research involving interviews with a total of 66 trainees, initial teacher training providers and young people. They conducted assessments of trainees' confidence and preparedness in managing behaviour using a specially designed rating scale plus a standard Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale from Ohio State University. In reporting their findings they suggest that:

- The personality and motivation of trainee teachers and the way in which they perceive their teaching role affects their behaviour management. Gutherson and Pickard's analysis of why trainee teachers wanted to become teachers, suggested that those with a strong desire to pass on knowledge of a subject or who saw teaching as a 'personal challenge' are likely to be less confident in managing behaviour than other trainees. Gutherson and Pickard therefore suggest the development of a tool for looking at motivation and testing potential recruits, not necessarily to 'weed out' potential teachers but to enable personalised support.
- The age of trainees may also be important. Gutherson and Pickard found that the 25 to 30 year old age group are the most confident in managing behaviour. Both older and younger trainees may need more support.
- It is useful for all trainees in initial teacher training to learn about group dynamics and develop listening and engagement skills.

Surveys of newly qualified teachers conducted by the TDA show that trainees completing school-centred courses are more satisfied with their training, both in general and in relation to behaviour management, than those training through University based routes (TDA, 2010, 2011). The most recent survey (2011) suggests that trainees' satisfaction with this aspect of their training has increased compared to previous years.

Stage in career

New teachers

Behaviour management is a particular concern for teachers beginning their career (Owens, Broadhurst and Keats, 2009). Studies suggest that:

- New teachers can feel isolated and ill-equipped for what will face them (Day et al., 2006, and Bush, 2005, cited in Ashby, 2008).
- Induction of new teachers is not consistently implemented (Hobson, 2009; TDA, 2010).
- Permanent, full-time and experienced teachers are significantly more likely to report higher levels of self-efficacy while teachers with relatively less experience, and less stability of contractual status, are less likely to be teaching classes with a positive disciplinary climate or to report high levels of self-efficacy (OECD, 2009).

Responses to the additional support needs of newly qualified teachers have included the production of advisory material by Unions and professional bodies (for example, NUT, 2011; NASUWT, 2008). One such, by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, comments in its foreword that:

> *"Many teachers and education support staff complain that support and training for the core task of classroom management doesn't meet their needs. Coverage of behaviour management is inconsistent in initial teacher training, nor is it adequately addressed in INSET programmes. This is why ATL has gone further… producing this publication to support members,"* (Watkins, 2011)

Others have highlighted the importance of induction for new teachers and additional support and training on behaviour management strategies for newly qualified teachers in their first few years. Owen, Broadhurst and Keats' study following a cohort of teachers over their first five years of post-qualifying teaching concluded that:

- Poor pupil behaviour regularly affects newly qualified teachers. Low-level poor pupil behaviour was reported to be very common and, more disruptive behaviour, such as walking out, shouting, swearing, walking on the furniture and throwing equipment, was not rare. For some interviewees involved in the study, this kind of behaviour occurred weekly, having both a detrimental impact on their ability to teach and affecting teachers emotionally.
- The prevalence and type of poor pupil behaviour did not reduce over the five years of study, despite policies introduced to improve behaviour in the classroom. Although most teachers learned how to manage poor pupil behaviour over their first five years, it continued to impact on their teaching.
- Behaviour management issues were likely to affect future career decisions with most new teachers saying they would avoid 'problem schools'. This has implications for those trying to attract high quality teachers into the most challenging schools.

- Poor pupil behaviour is highly likely to impact on the recruitment and retention of newly qualified teachers. Those that had experienced physical violence were less likely to intend to stay in the career for longer than five years.
- Almost half of the newly qualified teachers involved in the study were dissatisfied with the training they had received on behaviour management once they had been in post for two terms. More than half felt unprepared to deal with physical violence in the classroom and more than a third with verbal aggression.

Owen, Broadhurst and Keats argue that good behaviour management training is needed for teachers once they are in post, and that this training needs to acknowledge the challenges faced by teachers and the true extent of the problem. Opportunities to observe more experienced staff handling behaviour problems is an important element. They also argue that a whole school approach is fundamental to tackling problems of bad behaviour, including a school-wide behaviour policy.

Established teachers

As teachers become more experienced, often taking on more responsibility in the school, some of their needs change and other factors impinge on their practice. Research suggests that:

- Most teachers retain positive professional outlooks as they grow older, but challenges include: how to maintain energy for the persistently demanding work of teaching; coping with changing personal circumstances; adapting to changes in leadership, policy and practice; and responding to children and young people whose attitudes, motivations and behaviour may differ widely from those with whom they began their careers (Day and Gu, 2009);
- By mid or late career, teachers have already had to cope with considerable change within education and re-orientate themselves around the changing needs and demands of the education sector (Kirk and Wall, 2010);
- Goodson (2006) suggests that older teachers often experience a sense of loss at the ending of established ways of teaching. Rapid, imposed educational change, along with public disparagement of them as professionals, can engender a deep sense of instability comparable to experiences of grief or bereavement. Goodsons's study of nostalgia in older teachers argues that large scale educational reform often fails to connect with older teachers because it dismisses their commitment and values as 'old fashioned'.
- However, teachers who remain in the profession typically display high levels of resilience. Interviews with long-serving teachers reveal a strong emotional commitment to their work. This is sometimes in tension with some of the more managerial perspectives on contemporary teaching. It is argued that official recognition of the emotional dimensions within teachers' work could help with

recruitment and retention in schools facing challenging circumstances (McIntyre, 2010).

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a factor in shaping teachers' practice and helping them adapt to the changes expected of them. In most schools, it is linked to school improvement planning and to the individual needs of the teacher (NFER, 2008). It is a costly item in any school's budget, requiring considerable resourcing of time, staff cover and the purchase of outside expertise or training. However, Ofsted reports indicate that CPD can have a positive impact (Ofsted, 2006 and 2010) and research suggests that teachers who report a positive experience of CPD are more likely to feel accountable for maintaining and improving their practice (GTC, 2009).

The NFER survey (2008) asked teachers about the available training and support in their schools for teachers who were struggling to manage pupil behaviour. Respondents were evenly split in their answers: 35 per cent agreed that such training *was* available; the same figure (35 per cent) said that such training was *not* available, and 24 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. With respect to the availability of appropriate school-based support for teachers struggling to manage pupil behaviour, responses were rather more positive Almost half of the sample (49 per cent) agreed that such support was available in their school, just under one quarter expressed a neutral view (22 per cent), and a further quarter (26 per cent) disagreed.

A major study of staff development conducted by Bubb et al (2008) concluded that:

- There is a positive association between school outcomes and staff development, although this is not the case in all schools;
- There is a link between staff development and levels of pupil deprivation. Schools with low numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals were more likely to have strong staff development than those with high numbers;
- There are also differences between high-achieving and under-performing schools. Sustaining staff development seems to be easier for the high-performing schools because staff turnover is low and communication is strong;
- Three quarters of senior staff said they would do things differently if money were no object, but less than half of teacher and support staff thought the same;
- Time was perceived to be the greatest barrier to staff development, although in practice, many schools do not use all their allocated closure or INSET days.

The nature and quality of training may be more significant than the overall amount. It has been found that professional development activities that take place at regular intervals and

involve teachers in a stable social and collaborative context (i.e. networks or mentoring) have a significantly stronger association with improved teaching practices than one-off workshops or courses (OECD, 2009). A recent report from the OECD (2011) highlights a number of factors important to successful professional development:

> • Well-structured and resourced induction programmes for new teachers in their transition to full teaching responsibilities before they obtain all the responsibilities of full-time professional teachers. This could include closely supervised teaching in the transition period, a reduced workload, mentoring by experienced teachers, and continued formal instruction;
> • Effective professional development needs to be on-going, include training, practice and feedback, and provide adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to those they will use with their students, and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities.
> • Teacher development needs to be linked with wider goals of school and system development, and with appraisal and feedback practices and school evaluation.
> • There is often a need to re-examine structures and practices that inhibit inter-disciplinary practice and to provide more room for teachers to take time to learn deeply, and employ inquiry and group-based approaches.

Wheller and Morris (2010) outline findings from three rapid evidence assessments on what works (a) in training, (b) to change professionals' behaviour, and (c) to implement guidance and research in practice. They conclude that there is very limited robust evidence on which particular training approaches are more effective and/or efficient than others in any sector. However, there is strong evidence from three systematic reviews of educational research by Cordingley (2003; 2005a; 2005b), that collaborative professional development is effective in improving pupil outcomes (learning and behaviour) and the practice, attitudes and beliefs of teachers. These reviews also find weak evidence of the ability of individually orientated CPD to influence teacher or pupil change. Key factors contributing to the successful implementation of collaborative CPD include: the use of external expertise; observation; reflection and experimentation; an emphasis on peer support; scope for participants to identify their own CPD focus; processes to encourage, extend and structure professional dialogue; and processes for sustaining the CPD over time.

3.2. What school factors influence positive practice change?

Studies of what impacts most on teachers tend to refer to 'the culture of the school', its 'ethos', its 'sense of community'. It can be easy to imagine that we know what these phrases mean, that we can recognise the presence or absence of 'community' when we walk through the doors of a school. But the challenge is to pin some of this down and to identify more precisely what elements make the difference. Some of these are as follows.

Leadership

The leadership provided by the school's head and senior management team is crucial in developing a positive culture and promoting and sustaining change. The importance of leadership is confirmed by both UK and international studies. The quality of school leadership can significantly affect teachers' morale, job satisfaction and motivation. Leaders and managers can also 'buffer' their staff against potentially demoralizing change (Evans, 2001; Day and Gu, 2009; Robinson, 2006).

Characteristics of effective leadership of change include:

- **A collegiate, facilitative style and distributed leadership** is thought to be a powerful lever in developing innovation (Priestley, 2011; Garner, 2011). This can involve devolving responsibilities in order to shift ownership of initiatives to those who are intended to carry them out. Strategies such as the allocation of part-time responsibility positions or additional remuneration can encourage change (Thomson, 2007).
- **Providing support and encouragement for bottom-up innovation** (Kennedy and Kennedy, 1996; Coburn, 2001).
- **Head teacher involvement in the training and development** of the whole school workforce (Coldwell et al, 2008; Robinson, 2006) along with commitment to staff development from experienced and well-informed senior staff who can make the strategic links between staff development and school improvements in efficient and cost-effective ways (Bubb et al.,2008 and Ofsted, 2010).
- **Planning and managing change** so that teachers know that they will be well supported through change, and not expected to take on too much (Fullan, 2007). Those leading change initiatives must ensure that the wider school community is well-informed prior to the start of any initiative (Thomson, 2007).
- **Making use of 'softer' or indirect approaches** to managing change such as modelling new approaches, leading conversations, distributing relevant research articles, and team teaching.
- **Allowing calculated risk taking** with staff encouraged to use their initiative and innovate (Garner, 2011).

Peer influence

A strong theme from research conducted with teachers is the role of colleagues in providing encouragement, building confidence and supporting new practice. A lively and supportive staffroom and an enthusiastic department head can make a big difference to teachers' day to day work. Findings about the importance of peer support include:

- Teachers do not just make sense of proposed changes as individuals; they do it in formal and informal networks with their peers. It is in conversation with their

colleagues that they interpret and make sense of messages, decide which to pursue in the classroom and plan how to translate abstract ideas into something workable (Coburn, 2001).

- Less experienced teachers can be much helped by skilled practitioners sharing their practice (Brunetti, 2006)
- Mentoring is a powerful enabler of change, especially for younger teachers and appears to be particularly influential for second year teachers in terms of improving practice (notably behaviour management) and career development. Teachers seem to benefit most if they are involved in selecting their mentor (Moor et al, 2005)
- Mentoring and coaching can also encourage the development of new cultures and styles of work, including a culture of 'research mindedness', reflection and collaboration (Lord, 2008).
- Evaluations of collaborative initiatives such as those schools involved in Excellence in Cities, have shown benefits from opportunities for teachers to observe and share practice across schools. The benefits include teachers becoming more positive about their future in the profession with many intending to continue teaching and to stay in the same school for some years (Kendall et al., 2005).

Effective whole school policies

A recent parliamentary report concluded that behaviour was most affected by a good school behaviour policy, agreed and communicated to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers, being consistently applied by the school (House of Commons, 2011). Such policies need to be understood by staff and implemented across the whole school. Support from school leaders and the engagement of parents are important.

A study by Anderton and Westwood (2010) provides some insight into why school policies are not always supported by teachers. Teachers interviewed in the study rejected the idea of a 'one size fits all' approach to behaviour management and believed that whether and how they choose to deal with behaviour is dependent on their ability to make an analysis of what is driving the behaviour. They identified a number of factors inhibiting their ability to deal with behaviour including: the 'strategy gap'. That is, the need for different behaviour management strategies for low, mid and high level behaviour challenges; feeling disempowered and fearing extreme consequences if things went wrong. Teachers agreed that behaviour policies are an important and potentially effective tool but the extent to which they were seen to be effectively implemented varied. Ineffective behaviour policies were generally seen as those where teachers were: unaware of them or thought them unsuitable; they had been devised by school leaders with limited input from teachers; they were big, wordy documents presented alongside lots of other information; and where they focused solely on discipline and punitive strategies.

Anderton and Westwood's study also found that teachers often did not feel supported by the behaviour of other stakeholders. There was a clear discrepancy between the level of support school leaders felt they provided and the support that teachers experienced. A lack of cohesion and support from other teachers was also identified as a factor that can lead to behaviour management attempts being undermined. Government and local authorities were seen by teachers as completely removed from behaviour management.

Attitudes and behaviour of students and parents

Children and young people are not just recipients of teachers' behavioural strategies – they can be actively helpful or hostile, as can the attitudes and behaviour of parents. Effective behaviour management strategies need to take account of the role of students and parents as active participants.

Parents' will vary in terms of their own school experience, their expectations of what their children can achieve and their attitudes as to what constitutes acceptable behaviour. A 2009 survey by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) found that nearly 40 per cent of teachers surveyed had experienced some form of aggression from a parent or guardian. This was mostly in the form of verbal insults and threats, though 3.7 per cent reported some form of physical assault. Teachers reported that in most cases aggression from parents was in response to their children receiving poor grades or being disciplined in class.

There is a growing body of literature on parental engagement with schools. Most of this focuses on parental engagement in learning rather than in managing behaviour, although their importance in this regard is implicit in much of the research. Reviews by Desforges (2003) and Harris and Goodall (2007) report similar key findings:

- Parental engagement can be a powerful lever for raising student achievement in schools. Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of pupils through supporting their learning in the home rather than supporting activities in the school.
- Parental engagement is linked to socio-economic status, as well as parental experience of education. Schools that offer tailored support to these parents (i.e. literacy classes, parenting skill support) are more likely to engage them in their children's learning.
- Parental engagement is positively influenced by the child's level of attainment: the higher the level of attainment, the more parents get involved.
- Parental engagement tends to diminish as children get older with secondary schools generally finding it harder to engage parents than primary schools.
- Parental engagement is viewed as a 'good thing' by teachers, parents and pupils although interpretations of the term vary. Parents view parental engagement as offering support to students while teachers tend to view it as a means to improved

behaviour. Students view parental engagement as being primarily about moral support and interest in their progress.

- Parents who are viewed as 'hard to reach' often see the school as 'hard to reach'. Where schools have made concerted efforts to engage the 'hard to reach' parents', evidence shows that the effect on pupil learning and behaviour is positive. The research shows a consistent relationship between increasing parental engagement (particularly of hard to reach parents) and improved attendance, behaviour and student achievement.
- The barriers to engaging parents include practical issues such as lack of time, language barriers, child care issues and practical skills such as literacy issues and the ability to understand and negotiate the school system. Schools can offset these barriers by supporting parents to help their children learn; personalising provision for parents as learners; improving pastoral care; listening to parents and responding to real rather than perceived needs.

In addition to research reviews, other sources of evidence about parental engagement comes from Ofsted and reports from the National College for School Leadership. An enquiry by the National College conducted in 2010 explored the factors contributing to the successful leadership of parental engagement. The report concluded that successful approaches to engaging parents required a collaborative culture of doing things *with,* rather than *to,* parents, and reached out to parents in the community as well as bringing parents into the school. Campbell (2011) focuses on 'hard to reach' parents and concludes that schools need to work differently to engage parents according to their context. She emphasises the role of school leaders:

'School leaders and parents must form trusting relationships to support children in attending school and behaving in an appropriate way that is conducive to learning and will enhance opportunities for themselves and their peers. In this, school leaders must be proactive' Campbell, 2011: 6

An Ofsted report on re-engaging disaffected and reluctant students in secondary schools (Ofsted, 2008) based on a survey of 29 secondary schools, highlighted the difficulties of re-engaging students if parents were unwilling to work with the school (and, in some cases, colluded with the student against the school). The report emphasised the importance of regular and effective communication with parents and involving them closely in determining the strategies used to support their children.

Visser (2003) conducted a study of children and young people who present challenging behaviour. Visser points out that involving parents is a necessity for schools working with such students, and suggests that home-school diaries and regular phone contact between schools and parents are experienced as effective by teachers. More recently, an evaluation of the impact of Parent/School Contracts, found that schools, local authorities and parents

were generally positive about the role of Parental Contracts in reducing poor attendance and improving behaviour (Evans, Hall and Wreford, 2008).

3.3. What external factors influence practice change?

Schools and the teachers in them work within a wider context. Taking account of the contextual factors is important for understanding why strategies to change teacher's practices might work better in some schools than in others. It is also important to consider the potential levers for change that exist outside schools.

The environment of the school

Schools operate in very different environments and factors such as the characteristics of the pupils and levels of disadvantage in the neighbourhood impinge on teachers' performance. A range of other factors, outside the immediate control of teachers, have been identified as having an impact on behaviour management, such as the physical design of school buildings and the nutritional content of schools meals.

Local authority and government policies

Research suggests that teachers are more likely to respond positively to new policies when they are convinced of the need for change in the first place, trust that a new policy has been thoroughly researched, and believe that it will be of benefit to children and young people (Hallam, 2009; Kennedy and Kennedy, 1996).

Barriers to teachers changing their professional practice arise when teachers feel overwhelmed with new policies and proposals coming in from the outside. What has been described as 'initiative overload' or 'initiative tourism' can give teachers a sense that as soon as one plan is taking shape another comes along to take its place (Kendall et al, 2005). If support given to schools to implement a change does not last long enough or is inadequately funded, staff can feel overwhelmed and stressed by what they perceive as an increased workload (Hallam, 2009; Goodson, 2006; Day and Gu, 2009).

A small scale study in Canada reviewed interview data from teachers and administrators. The teachers' commitment to making a new policy work was less than hoped because they had negative views on the new policy in question and did not like the authoritarian, non-consultative processes used by government. The key implication from the study was that governments often overrate the effectiveness of authoritarian strategies that attempt to control what teachers do. And, once governments have embarked on an authoritarian approach, it can be difficult to change to a more consultative strategy in order to win the commitment of teachers.

Inspection frameworks

The 1992 Education (Schools) Act set up national arrangements for inspection to improve standards by inspecting schools against specified criteria, using methods such as classroom observation, and interviews with teachers, heads, parents, students and governors.

Research into how inspection regimes influence teachers' classroom practice report both positive and negative impacts. A Dutch study of ten schools showed that provision of feedback about weaknesses, the assessment of these weak points as unsatisfactory, and the agreements between an inspector and the school about improvement activities, seemed to make a difference in promoting school improvement, regardless of the school culture and general attitude to innovation and change (Ehren and Visscher, 2008). However, other studies have found that school context and culture are important factors in determining teacher perceptions, responses and intentions to change classroom practice as a result of inspection (Chapman, 2001).

Research suggests that teachers have mixed views on the inspection process. In one large scale study, just over one third of teachers expressed an intention to change their practice as a result of inspection (Brimblecomb et al., 1996). Other studies indicate that teachers regard inspections as having a negative effect on teaching in the lead up to the visit and the post-inspection period. Case et al (2000) reported that when asked if an Ofsted inspection had changed their day to day teaching practice in the long-term, primary school teachers said the impact was either minimal or none. Case et al also found that many teachers felt undermined and demoralised by the inspection process, and were not persuaded that inspection could either support them or improve outcomes for children. They reported feeling significant anxiety and stress (see also Jeffery, 1996).

Research and other evidence

Another lever that is used to influence practice is the communication of research and other evidence. The sheer volume of guidance material available to teachers on behaviour management is indicative of the faith placed in the effectiveness of this approach. However, most teachers work long hours in school and at home and have many competing demands in their lives. They may have little time to make use of the wealth of educational research about the practice of teaching. So what is known about how teachers use research and other evidence to influence their practice?

The research on knowledge transfer tends to be cautious about the efficacy of simply communicating information, pointing out that evidence is only one of many factors influencing behaviour. Studies which have looked at how knowledge is transferred in the fields of health and social care as well as education (Walters et al, 2004; Morris et al 2007), suggest that well-communicated research can have an effect on professional practice, but only as part of a whole systems approach to achieving change. A typical cautionary comment comes from Morris et al: '*There is no favoured device, or process, no website,*

*guidebook or CPD event that alone will assure impact on practice. All depends on the
condition of the practice-setting in which the outcomes of the R and D are intended to play.'*
(Morris et al., 2007)

Studies suggest that research use is more likely amongst school staff who are more senior
and experienced and have postgraduate qualifications (Everton et al., 2002; MORI, 2004;
Taggart et al., 2004, all cited in Morris et al., 2007).

There are features which can encourage or discourage teachers to use findings in their own
practice. Above all, evidence needs to be relevant, responsive and accessible. Reviews by
Hemsley-Brown (2004) and Bell et al (2010) highlight the following factors:

- Many teachers only consider research when it matches their personal experience.
  Some believe research should only identify strategies and techniques that can have a
  direct impact on their teaching, and these teachers judge a study's merits on the
  basis of whether the findings can be directly translated into procedures that work in
  the classroom (Zeuli, 1994).
- Teachers do learn from research but this is most effective when they are in a setting
  characterised by collaboration and mutual support. Successful programmes for
  change should be utilitarian, inspirational, provide immediate pay offs and meet
  local needs.
- Research can have an impact on practice as long as teachers are involved in
  identifying problems and are provided with the context in which they can learn
  strategies for improvement.
- Barriers to the use of research include volume, lack of applicability and ambiguity of
  findings.
- Facilitators include: information being readily available; teachers having time to
  spend on reading research; using outside consultants; providing evidence of the
  benefits of using research; making sure the practical applications are clear; and the
  promotion of collegial relationships between researchers and teachers.
- Involvement of teachers in action research projects can be instrumental in changing
  practice, and there is a role for specialists in supporting teachers to engage with
  research. Collaboration with peers is important in supporting practitioners to use
  research.

A recent survey of teachers confirmed many of these points, but noted that research use
seemed to be increasing among teachers. The role of school leaders in encouraging research
use was also highlighted (National Teacher Research Panel, 2011).

4. Nudging teachers to change their behaviour

Policy-makers traditionally use three main ways to influence behaviour:

- Rewards: incentives to make it worth our while to change;
- Sanctions: laws and regulations to compel us to change;
- The use of reason: information and guidance to persuade us to change.

All of these can be effective, but in recent years there has been a growing interest in how the application of behavioural theory can make them even more so. Dolan et al (2010) argue that existing approaches can be enhanced by evidence about how our behaviour is influenced and that there are new, and potentially more effective, ways government could shape behaviour. This has become known as 'nudge' theory.

4.1   Using MINDSPACE to consider teachers' behaviour

Dolan et al set out nine influences on our behaviour, captured in a mnemonic – MINDSPACE:

Messenger	We are heavily influenced by who communicates information
Incentives	Our responses to incentives are shaped by predictable mental shortcuts such as strongly avoiding losses
Norms	We are strongly influenced by what others do
Defaults	We 'go with the flow' of pre-set options
Salience	Our attention is drawn to what is novel and seems relevant to us
Priming	Our acts are often influenced by sub-conscious cues
Affect	Our emotional associations can powerfully shape our actions
Commitments	We seek to be consistent with our public promises, and reciprocate acts
Ego	We act in ways that make us feel better about ourselves

Applying MINDSPACE to an analysis of how to change the behaviour of teachers could provide some useful insights.

Messenger: Most of us are more or less receptive to information according to who delivers it. Research from the health promotion field, for example, suggests that we are more likely to take on board information given to us by people we see as having expertise. Demographic and behavioural similarities between the expert and the recipient can also improve the effectiveness of the intervention (Halpern et al, 2004). Studies indicate that teachers may be more likely to respond to advice from those they view as having expertise in terms of professional knowledge and experience, suggesting that messages about behaviour management may be more effectively delivered by other teachers (for example

Cordingley, 2003; 2005a; 2005b). However, peer effects can change behaviour both positively and negatively, suggesting the need for strategies to counter possible negative peer pressure from other teachers as well as make use of positive peer influence.

Incentives: Studies on using incentives to change health behaviours suggest that incentive schemes can be effective in encouraging positive health behaviours when a simple or single action is required. However, there is little evidence of incentives having a beneficial effect on complex health behaviours over the long term and small financial benefits may not be sufficient to counteract the wider pulls of social context, personal habit or psychological dependence on a behaviour. Incentive-based interventions require behaviours to be logged and rewarded consistently, and financial incentives on their own are less effective than incentives combined with some other form of support (Boyce, Roberts and Dixon, 2008; Kavanagh et al., 2009; Jochelson, 2007).

Dolan et al's work suggests that incentives may not work in a straightforward way because: 1. People may be more motivated by the fear of losing something they value than by gaining a reward; 2. Depending on the context, a small incentive may be very effective and increasing it make no difference; 3. People overweight small probabilities (such as winning the lottery or their child being abducted); 4. There is a strong preference for immediate rather than long term benefits and a danger that applying external rewards may 'crowd out' the significance of intrinsic value.

If incentives are to be used to change the practice of teachers, then a number of factors need to be considered:

- They're more likely to work if linked to a simple, required action rather than anything more complex – so the expectations on teachers need to be clear;
- They're more likely to work if linked to other strategies to encourage practice change;
- On their own, incentives are unlikely to be sufficient to counter other influences such as peer group or schools norms;
- Strategies might usefully consider what teachers are most afraid of losing if they don't comply with approved behaviour management techniques e.g. losing the respect of other teachers and pupils.

Norms: Teachers, like everyone else, are strongly influenced by the behaviour of others. Health research has shown, for example, that the decision to smoke or drink alcohol is heavily influenced by the choices of those around us. If one spouse quits smoking it has been shown that their partner is 40 per cent less likely to smoke themselves (Kavanagh et al., 2009). With regard to teaching practice, there is good evidence that schools develop their own norms which have a strong influence on teaching styles.

The challenge is how to make the use of effective behaviour management approaches a prevalent school norm. Strategies might include providing information to teachers emphasising that most good teachers use such techniques. In-service training on behaviour management might build on school initiatives that have already achieved norm status to indicate that adopting particular techniques is simply 'the way we do things round here'.

Defaults: Many decisions we take every day have a default option, whether we recognise it or not. Defaults are the options that are pre-selected if an individual does not make an active choice and individuals regularly accept whatever the default choice is. The power of defaults may be observed in teaching as in many other activities. Studies suggest that teachers often prefer the security of existing routines and practices (Eisner, 1996; Wubbels and Poppleton, 1999; Gitlin, 1995). These default practices may be even harder to change if teachers fail to see the relevance of reforms. The challenge is to establish the desired practices as defaults, perhaps by embedding some aspects into daily school procedures.

Salience: The volume of information most of us are exposed to on a daily basis means that we unconsciously filter much of it out in order to cope. People are more likely to respond to stimuli that are novel, accessible and simple. We are more likely to take on board information which relates directly to our personal experience. We are also susceptible to confirmation bias – we tend to pay little attention to information that challenges an existing belief or hypothesis, and focus intently on any supportive information. There are evident implications here for providing guidance to teachers. Ensuring recommendations are framed in ways that teachers see as relevant is an obvious strategy, but more than this will be needed to overcome confirmation bias, if teachers have pre-existing contrary beliefs about behaviour management. Guidance may have extra power if it acts as an initial anchor, which may be easier to do when people enter a new situation or life-stage. This gives support to the suggestion that recommendations need to be embedded at the earliest stage i.e. when trainees start out in teaching.

Priming: Peoples' subsequent behaviour may be altered if they are first exposed to certain sights, words or sensations – people behave differently if they have been 'primed' by certain cues beforehand. For example, a study asking participants to make a sentence out of scrambled words such as fit, lean, active, athletic made them significantly more likely to use the stairs, instead of lifts (Wryobeck and Chen, 2003). If a happy face is subliminally presented to someone drinking alcohol, it causes them to drink more than those exposed to a frowning face (Winkleman et al., 2005). Priming seems to act outside of conscious awareness, which means it is different from simply remembering things. As Dolan et al point out, priming is the least understood of the MINDSPACE effects, but it has significant implications for policy. It is likely that governments unintentionally 'prime' people to act in certain, perhaps undesirable ways. It is not clear how this could be applied to teachers' behaviour but it may be worth considering what unconscious cues may be at play when teachers choose particular behavioural approaches.

Affect: Emotional responses have a strong influence on our decision making. Emotional responses to words, images and events can be rapid and automatic, and moods, rather than deliberate decisions, can therefore influence judgements. Provoking emotion can make us spend more (as advertisers know) and has been shown to change health behaviour (Curtis et al., 2007). However, as Dolan at al point out, affect needs to be used with care by policy makers and there is a particular danger of creating an emotional response without obviously connecting it to a desired change in behaviour. It is likely that affect does influence teachers' behavioural management. Dealing with troublesome young people provokes strong emotional reactions and may lead to teachers responding in ways which are not simply driven by rationality. Charlie Taylor's advice to teachers to 'keep calm' recognises this, but it may also be fruitful to build on an understanding of the most common emotional responses to difficult behaviour in order to provide support to teachers.

Commitment: Dolan et al suggest that our behaviour is strongly influenced by a desire to fulfil commitments we have made, particularly those made 'publicly'. For example, people are more likely to maintain weight loss programmes if they have shared their commitment with others (Kavanagh et al., 2009). It may be that teachers are more likely to maintain a consistent use of behavioural management techniques if they have made a commitment to do so alongside colleagues. There may be an argument for formalising this commitment within teachers' contracts. The issue of 'reciprocity' is also important here. We are generally more likely to commit to changing if others change too. Teachers may be less likely to commit to managing behaviour differently if they perceive a lack of commitment on the part of students, parents and school managers. Parental contracts are a tangible example of engaging the commitment of parents and they may also be a tool for encouraging teachers to commit to managing behaviour in desirable ways (Evans, Hall and Wreford, 2008).

Ego: As Dolan et al point out, we tend to behave in ways which support the impression of a positive and consistent self-image. When things go well in our lives, we attribute it to ourselves; when they go badly, we blame other people or the situation we are in. We think the same way for groups that we identify with. People are therefore more likely to adopt behaviour which reinforces a positive self-image, and because we also like to be consistent, once we have started to adopt a particular behaviour pattern we are more likely to continue. It is important for most teachers to maintain an image of themselves as people who can manage the behaviour of their pupils – and it therefore matters that the adoption of new approaches reinforces rather than threatens this self-image. If teachers are more likely to respond to feedback which reinforces a positive self-image, this has implications for how information from inspections is communicated. For example, it might suggest that negative aspects of inspection reports may be harder to learn from than positive ones which may undermine teachers' self-image and be 'filtered out'.

4.2. Applying MINDSPACE

Dolan et al suggest a framework for applying MINDSPACE in practice using a 6 E's policy framework. The 6E's are actions that should underpin governments' attempts to change behaviour:

Explore: Understand those who behaviour you are changing;

Enable: Start from where people are;

Encourage: Apply lessons from MINDSPACE to change behaviour;

Engage: Facilitate debate and gain approval;

Exemplify: Change government's behaviour;

Evaluation: Work out what works.

5. Implications for policy makers

So what do these findings mean for policy makers seeking to influence teachers' adoption of behaviour management approaches? In this section we highlight the key implications of the research findings for future interventions.

5.1. Recruitment, training and continuing professional development

- The tools used to attract people into the teaching profession and to select recruits need to reflect the importance of behaviour management as a central part of the teacher's role. This has implications for the images used in promoting teaching as a career as well as for the tests used to select candidates, which need to reflect the importance of recruiting candidates with both subject expertise and the confidence and capacity to learn how to manage behaviour.
- Initial teacher training needs to give a strong emphasis to practical approaches to managing behaviour, providing additional support to those trainees who lack confidence. These may include both older and younger trainees.
- Support for behaviour management needs to continue when newly qualified teachers enter the classroom in order to establish effective habits early. Further training as part of induction, opportunities to observe and receive mentoring from more experienced teachers are all important, though mentors need to be chosen on the basis of their track record in managing behaviour so that they model effective approaches.
- Continuing professional development is important for all teachers but is most likely to be effective when it is part of a whole-school approach to behaviour management, that is, when it is supported by good policies and leadership commitment. It is more likely to be effective if delivered by 'messengers' respected

for their experience and expertise (in particular other teachers) and in a collaborative learning context.

- Schools may need to give extra attention to the needs of part-time staff or those on time-limited contracts.

5.2. Leadership, peer influence and school policies

- Leadership is widely recognised as critical to any school improvement strategy, and behaviour management is no exception.
- Good leaders share the responsibility for behaviour management policies with those who have to implement them.
- The support and challenge that comes from peers is also critical and effective leaders harness this. Sharing good practice between schools has also been shown to have value.
- Incentives for teachers might include peer recognition and respect for their ability to manage behaviour. Teachers may be encouraged to use approaches that work in order to not lose this recognition.
- School behaviour policies are a key part of the jigsaw and need to be 'active' strategies understood and owned by staff, parents and pupils.
- The role of parents and pupils in helping or hindering behaviour management should not be under-estimated. Teachers may require support in negotiating behaviour strategies with parents including the use of parental contracts. Schools' approaches to parental engagement may need to include a consideration of how to actively involve parents in deciding the best ways of managing behaviour.

5.3.   Inspection and guidance

- Guidance needs to reflect the different contexts in which schools are operating. Some schools simply have a more difficult job than others and this needs to be recognised.
- Policies which engage the commitment of teachers are more likely to succeed than those that seek to control. Teachers are more likely to become involved in change efforts if they are involved from the start and feel their experience is valued.
- Research suggests that inspection can be effective in influencing practice but also reports teachers experiencing inspection as unhelpful and overly stressful. Consideration needs to be given to how inspection can be used to identify and reward good practice. Dolan et al's analysis of behavioural psychology indicates that teachers are more likely to respond to information which reinforces a positive self-image. This might suggest that negative aspects of inspection reports may be harder to learn from than positive ones which may undermine teachers' self-image and be 'filtered out'.

- There is no shortage of guidance to teachers and considerable effort has gone into making this clear, simple and accessible. However, research on knowledge transfer suggests that any information, however well communicated, plays only one (relatively small) part in changing practice. If guidance is not being adopted, it may be useful to test its salience with teachers, that is, the extent to which it is seen as relevant and pertinent to teachers' day to day practice.