



REPORT ON THE
NASUWT'S ISLE OF MAN
BEHAVIOUR SURVEY

Isle of Man
NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

INTRODUCTION

Good pupil behaviour and discipline in schools is a prerequisite to effective teaching and learning. It is axiomatic that teachers cannot teach and pupils cannot learn in environments where behaviour and discipline are poor.

It is for this reason that the NASUWT has continued to place significant emphasis on the need for effective action in every Isle of Man school, and across the wider education system, to promote good behaviour and tackle pupil indiscipline.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

An orderly environment within schools ensures that teachers and school leaders can focus effectively on advancing the educational achievement of every child and young person and contribute to their wider wellbeing.

Sustaining such an environment depends critically on school-level policies, practices and cultures that promote good behaviour and support the management of discipline in the classroom.

Relationships between pupils and members of the school workforce play a central part in this process. These relationships must be focused on mutual respect and recognition of the distinctive roles of pupils and teachers. When poor pupil behaviour undermines this relationship, within and outside the school, teachers' legitimate expectations in respect of their safety and security are placed at risk and their ability to sustain purposeful and positive learning environments is hindered significantly.

Numerous enquiries and studies into school behaviour and discipline confirm the importance of effective policies to ensure positive pupil behaviour and to support the work of teachers in the classroom. The Report of the Elton Committee (1989) inquiry into school discipline made clear that not only could poor pupil behaviour contribute significantly to increasing teacher stress and frustration, but it could also undermine teachers' ability to use their professional skills and expertise to support pupils' learning.¹ More recently, Sir Alan Steer's review of behaviour in schools (2009) confirmed the importance of effective action to tackle pupil indiscipline and poor behaviour and to enable teachers to work effectively to raise standards of pupil achievement.² Further, similar conclusions are evidenced in work published in 2012 by Taylor.³

The Elton, Steer and Taylor Reports placed great stress on the importance of whole-school behaviour policies as a means by which consistent and effective approaches to behaviour management, including the use of sanctions and rewards and the provision of support to staff and pupils in addressing issues associated with indiscipline and disruption, can be secured in practice. The Reports further emphasised that effective behaviour management practice requires a whole-school approach and that all aspects of school life should be guided by behaviour management considerations.

1 Elton, R. (1989). *The Elton Report: Discipline in Schools*, London: HMSO.

2 Steer, A. (2009). *Learning Behaviour: Lessons Learned. A Review of Behaviour Standards and Practices in our Schools*, London: DCSF Publications.

3 Taylor, C. (2012). *Behaviour*, National College for Teaching and Leadership. Available at: www.nationalcollege.org.uk/cm-mc-lit-behaviour.pdf, accessed on 31.01.17.

Clearly, one of the aims of effective whole-school behaviour policies and practices emphasised by Elton, Steer and Taylor is to ensure that disruptive pupil behaviour does not impact adversely on teaching time. Indiscipline not only undermines the establishment of a safe and orderly environment within schools, but also works against efforts to encourage pupil engagement, motivation and achievement. There is also a clear interrelationship between pupils' behaviour and their educational progress and achievement, with high-quality teaching relying on classroom teachers to be appropriately supported by school leaders and managers wherever poor behaviour from pupils arises.⁴

Addressing issues of poor pupil behaviour that arise outside school are also central to the promotion of good order. In light of growing evidence about the adverse impact of pupil indiscipline beyond the school gate directed towards fellow pupils and staff, the Steer Report emphasises the critical importance of effective policy and practice in this respect:

*'Schools need to be reminded of their power to discipline pupils for having behaved inappropriately off school premises and how they can use this to prevent misbehaviour outside the school gates and on journeys to and from school.'*⁵

The Steer report makes clear that, regardless of whether this poor behaviour takes place offline or online, or is physical or verbal in nature, schools have a responsibility towards pupils, staff and the wider community to take action to address it.

The report summarises the outcomes of a survey undertaken by the NASUWT of teachers and school leaders to examine the extent to which policy and practice in the Isle of Man reflects these principles.

METHODOLOGY AND RESPONSES

The NASUWT's Isle of Man Behaviour Survey was held over one month, commencing on 15 December 2016. The questionnaire used for the survey was distributed via e-mail and social media and in hard copy.

A 33% response rate was achieved from a representative sample of the Isle of Man teacher and headteacher workforce.

The survey examined:

- the nature and frequency of negative behaviours in schools/classrooms;
- the types of poor behaviour and disruption that prevent pupils from being ready to learn;
- the amount of teaching and learning time that is lost as a result of poor pupil behaviour and disruption;

4 Ofsted (2005). *Managing challenging behaviour*. Available at: (webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141124154759/http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Care/Childcare/Managing-challenging-behaviour, accessed on 31.01.17.

5 Steer, A. (2009). op.cit.

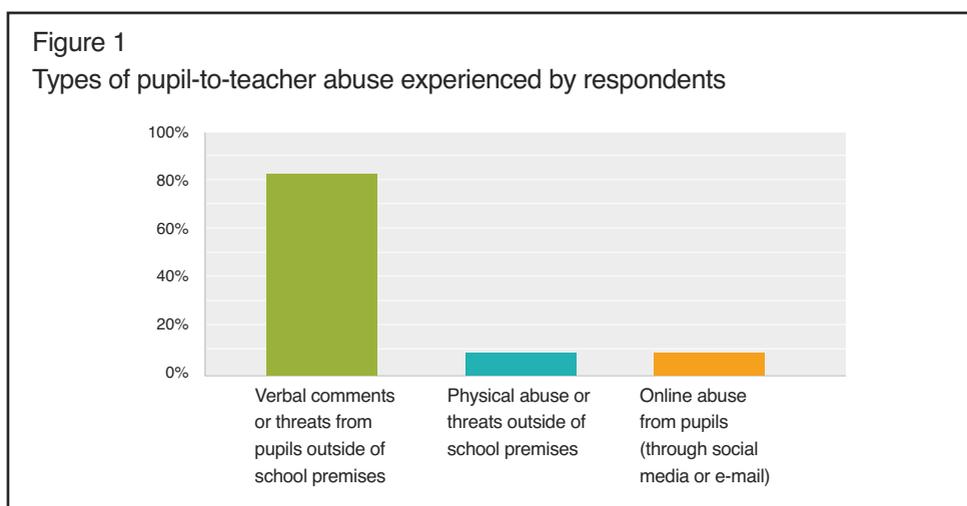
- issues related to poor pupil behaviour beyond school;
- the nature and quality of school behaviour policies;
- the extent to which these policies and procedures are developed in consultation with teachers; and
- the ability of schools to access external advice and support.

SURVEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Pupil behaviour outside school

Respondents reported significant concerns about pupil behaviour away from school sites (figure 1). The overwhelming majority of respondents (82%) had experienced verbal comments or threats from pupils outside of school premises.

One in ten teachers reported that they had been subject to physical abuse or threats by pupils beyond school, while a similar proportion reported experiencing online abuse from pupils through social media or e-mail.



Types of disruption/poor behaviour that delay or prevent pupils from being ready to learn

The survey asked teachers about the extent to which pupils enter classrooms ready to learn. Almost half of respondents (49%) stated that pupils only sometimes, rarely or never came into class with all the equipment, materials and previously completed work they need to participate effectively in lessons.

More than one in ten respondents (12%) reported that pupils only sometimes or rarely demonstrated, through their behaviour and conduct, that they were ready to begin learning once the teacher had signalled that the lesson was about to commence.

Teachers also reported on the extent to which pupils continued with arguments and disputes with other pupils once they had entered the classroom: four in ten

respondents (40%) confirmed that pupils only sometimes or never demonstrated appropriate behaviour in this respect.

Around one in seven teachers (15%) indicated that some pupils were only sometimes or rarely punctual when coming into lessons or returning from breaks.

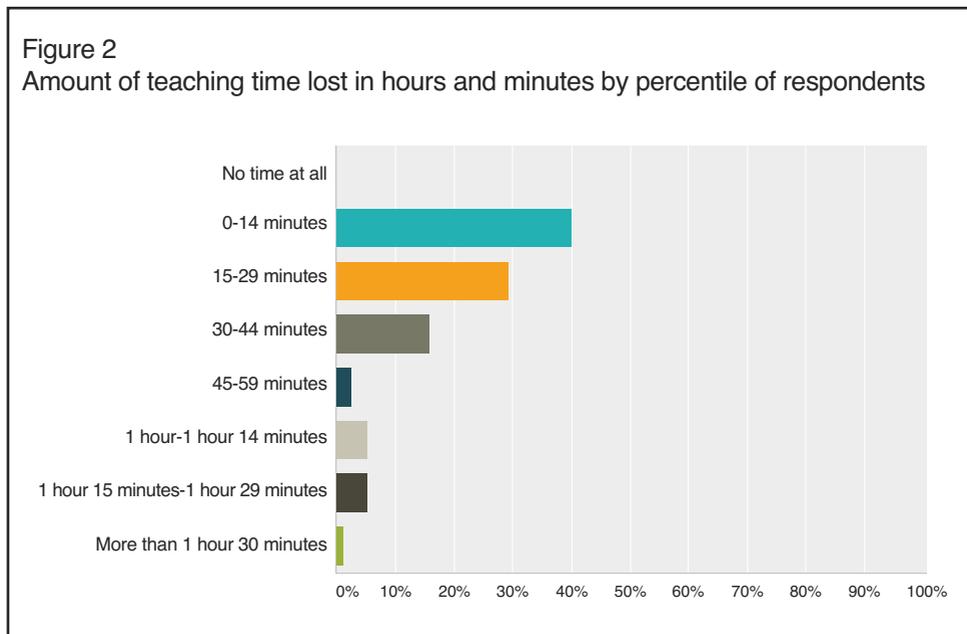
The findings of this section of the survey suggest that for a substantial number of teachers and headteachers, appropriate pupil behaviour that supports the optimal use of available teaching time is not demonstrated consistently.

Lost learning time in a typical school day

The survey highlights some significant findings concerning lost learning time in a typical school day. A summary of respondents' reported experience is set out in figure 2.

Overall, three in ten teachers (30%) reported that 30 or more minutes were lost each day as a result of pupil indiscipline and poor behaviour. More than one in ten teachers (12%) reported losing an hour or more of teaching time per day for this reason.

The cumulative effect of pupil indiscipline on lost teaching time is considerable. The results of the survey indicate that on the basis of a typical school day of six hours' timetabled teaching time, in 30% of classes over 16 hours of teaching time per year are lost as a result of inappropriate pupil behaviour.



School behaviour policies and support for teachers

Around one in seven teachers (15%) reported that their school did not have a behaviour policy in place.

On the application of the provisions of behaviour policies, only 11% of respondents could confirm that their schools' behaviour policy was implemented consistently by all staff.

The survey sought to establish the extent to which teachers are given the opportunity to contribute to the development and implementation of whole-school behaviour policies. Nearly four in ten respondents (38%) reported that the policy in place in their school had not been subject to discussion and consultation with members of staff, with a further quarter of teachers (25%) unsure whether their policy had been developed on this basis.

Given the professional responsibility of headteachers to ensure that effective behaviour practices are established in their schools, the survey asked respondents to describe the extent to which their headteacher acted in accordance with the provisions of the whole-school behaviour policy. Over a quarter of respondents (26%) indicated that the headteacher in their school did not act in this way. Nearly one in four teachers (38%) could not confirm that their headteacher complied with the terms of the behaviour policies in the schools they lead.

A significant number of respondents indicated that serious deficiencies existed in respect of the application of several essential practices upon which effective whole-school action to tackle pupil indiscipline and promote good behaviour are based. For example, 46% of respondents reported that effective procedures were not in place to provide senior management support to staff in classrooms to deal with incidents of pupil indiscipline. A further nine per cent of teachers indicated that senior management support for staff in classrooms does not include provision, where appropriate, for the withdrawal of pupils from the classroom.

The extent of these reported experiences of teachers and headteachers are consistent with the finding that almost half of respondents (46%) had no confidence that when they refer a pupil for a behaviour issue they will receive swift support to address their concerns.

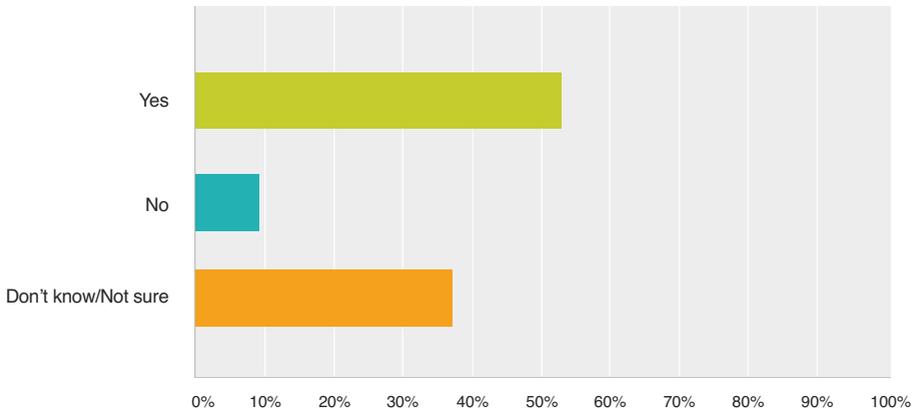
External sources of support for pupils with challenging behaviour issues

Respondents were asked to share their experiences of accessing external support and advice for pupils with particularly challenging behaviour issues. The survey findings in this respect are set out in figure 3.

Just over half of respondents reported that their schools could obtain external support and advice. Concerning the quality of this advice, a third of respondents (33%) felt that this support was, at best, 'sometimes effective but mostly ineffective'. Almost a quarter of teachers (24%) believe that this support is 'mostly effective but sometimes ineffective', while almost four in ten respondents (39%) were unsure.

Figure 3

Is your school able to access external support and advice to meet the needs of pupils with particularly challenging behaviour issues?



Conclusions

The findings of the NASUWT's survey raise important issues about the impact of pupil indiscipline on the ability of teachers to ensure that the time available for learning is optimised and the nature of whole-school behaviour management strategies. The findings also highlight profound concerns about teachers' experience of poor pupil behaviour outside school.

In respect of the types of behaviour that delay or prevent pupils from being ready to learn, the findings of this section of the survey suggest that for a substantial number of teachers and headteachers, appropriate pupil behaviour that supports optimal use of available teaching time is not demonstrated on a sufficiently consistent basis. Notwithstanding the fact that relatively lower levels of concern were reported about the extent to which pupils are punctual coming into lessons or returning from breaks or taking their designated seats promptly on entering the classroom, more than one in ten responses to these specific questions indicated that pupils did not behave in this way the majority of the time.

It should also be noted that many of the dimensions of poor pupil behaviour highlighted in the survey relate to issues mostly or wholly beyond the control of individual teachers. It is, therefore, legitimate to suggest that these problems result from poor whole-school behaviour management practices, rather than as the result of any inability on the part of teachers to exercise effective approaches to classroom management.

The implications for pupil progress and attainment of these findings are clearly reflected by the substantial overall amount of teaching time lost over the course of a year as a result of behaviour issues.

The results of the survey on school behaviour policies and support for teachers suggest that there is a need for the agencies and bodies with responsibility for pupil behaviour across the Isle of Man to investigate further the extent to which whole-school policies are in place and to mandate the adoption of such policies in all settings.

Notwithstanding the significant extent to which respondents reported that their schools have behaviour policies in place, if school-level practice does not reflect their requirements, the effectiveness of these policies is severely undermined. It is, therefore, a matter of grave concern that over three quarters of all respondents indicated that the behaviour policy in their school is not applied consistently by all staff. This significant shortcoming in school-level practice is likely to be a major contributor to many of the behaviour issues identified by respondents.

Ensuring that all members of staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the development and implementation of whole-school behaviour policies is an essential element in securing their consistent application. It is therefore unacceptable that a significant proportion of teachers have not been involved in the development of policies in their school.

Consistent application of whole-school behaviour policies is critically dependent on clear signals from members of the school leadership team that compliance with a whole-school behaviour policy is a common expectation of all staff. It is troubling that many respondents indicated that their headteacher does not act in accordance with the behaviour policy.

The extent of teachers' experience of poor pupil behaviour away from school sites is alarming. It cannot be acceptable that the overwhelming majority of teachers surveyed report receiving verbal abuse from pupils away from school sites or that nearly one in ten teachers has been subject to physical threats. The findings indicate a clear need for all schools and agencies within the children and young people's services sector to develop strategies to address this dimension of poor pupil behaviour.

The NASUWT remains concerned that the interpretation of current legislation by the Isle of Man Government is that there is no meaningful action that schools can take to tackle the impact of poor pupil behaviour outside school. While the Union does not accept this interpretation, its effect is that schools do not have the same tools and powers available to those in the UK to address incidents of indiscipline of this nature. As a result, pupils and staff in schools face unnecessary barriers to securing the best possible standards of pupil conduct and behaviour.

Recommendations

- All schools, departments and agencies with responsibility for pupil behaviour across the Isle of Man should work with the NASUWT and other appropriate stakeholders to undertake further research on the experience of teachers of poor pupil behaviour and the effectiveness of school and multi-agency policy and practice in this area.
- Further analysis should be commissioned by the Department of Education and Children (DEC), in collaboration with the NASUWT and other stakeholders, on the cumulative impact on pupil progress and attainment of lost teaching time.
- Additional work should be undertaken by the DEC to examine in more detail the potential causes of inconsistent application of whole-school behaviour policies.
- The NASUWT and the DEC should work to develop advice and guidance for schools on establishing and sustaining effective policies and practices in respect of tackling pupil indiscipline and promoting positive pupil behaviour.
- Urgent steps should be taken by the DEC to ensure that schools have the powers necessary to address poor pupil behaviour away from school sites and its implications for teachers and other members of the school workforce.



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