

Restoring order to the classroom

Ensuring that teachers have the authority to maintain order in the classroom has been one of the areas where the Government has been making progress since 2010. One of the [changes](#) Michael Gove brought in was to reduce the pages of guidance that teachers were expected to follow from 600 to 50. It was also clarified that a teacher could use “reasonable force” – for instance to remove a pupil who was disrupting a lesson. Teachers can now give detentions without notice.

There will certainly be some teachers who will never be up to what is a very difficult job – and it is much better for everyone that they should pursue alternative careers. But there are very many others who can or could maintain good order with the necessary support. Tom Bennett has already produced proposals to make teacher training more practical in this regard. (He offers his top ten tips for behaviour management [here](#).)

Bennett has now offered some more recommendations for the Government – in the form of an [independent review](#) of behaviour in schools. He says that even if individual teachers are capable and well trained they will still struggle to maintain order in a badly run school. The head needs to provide the right culture in the school.

Naturally the permanent exclusion of a pupil is regarded as rather drastic and only happens to a small number. Bennett proposes “internal inclusion units to offer targeted early specialist intervention with the primary aim of reintegrating students back into the mainstream school community” – in other words the pupil is removed from the class and therefore the disruption ceases, but this is as a temporary measure.

More visits should be made to those schools that have succeeded with regards to school discipline – often despite challenging circumstances, says Bennett. He also suggests that Ofsted could do a better job at gathering the views of teachers and pupils on behaviour management. Research has confirmed that many teachers ignore “low level disruption” and just try to carry on as best they can.

Ebbsfleet Academy in a deprived area of north Kent is offered as a case study. It was previously the Swan Valley Community School and began in its present incarnation under new management in 2012:

“All staff had their classes monitored and performance management put in place. This resulted in many teachers resigning of their own accord and some being dismissed. The former leadership team was made redundant.”

The school has “a leadership team with a clear culture, standards and vision for the school”; there is “attention to detail – strict rules, weekly equipment checks, detentions for such things as rubber or pen missing, uniform infractions, colour of hair”. While “any child caught with a mobile phone has it confiscated until the next school holiday”.

Bennett quotes plenty of other heartening examples of schools doing well. He looks at the importance of assemblies and wall displays, of involving governors and catering staff as well as teachers in upholding the school ethos. There was recognition of the need for teachers to maintain punctuality.

In Passmores Academy in Harlow the school charter which pupils sign up to includes the behaviour expected of pupils on their way to or from school and when in uniform as well. There is a centralised detention system. This helps ensure the rules are consistent and that the teachers handing out the detention do not have to take up their own time to supervise it.

Bennett also argues that where exclusions are needed the school make the tough choice to proceed with them:

"When they are required, they should be used. Inspections must not unfairly deter schools from meaningfully using exclusions by treating their existence as an exclusively negative strategy. It is important to examine the patterns of exclusion carefully, and to consider the context of exclusions in order to understand how appropriate they are. In some schools, a temporary, high exclusion rate may be a sign of effective leadership, not weak or over punitive."

In the past, the reluctance to exclude has come from a concern that sending a child to a Pupil Referral Unit will set them on to a downward spiral. But the answer to that is to drive up the standards at these Units.

The [Government's response](#) to Bennett's report says:

"It is our ambition to give schools control of Alternative Provision budgets to enable them to commission AP for pupils who require it (including those who have been permanently excluded) as well as accountability for pupils' educational outcomes whilst they are in AP. Giving schools responsibility for commissioning AP and accountability for pupils' educational outcomes will incentivise them to take preventative approaches and to achieve value for money when identifying the best and most suitable alternative provision for any child that needs it."

There is plenty of good progress being made. On the other hand, attempts to evaluate the scale of disorder in classrooms have probably resulted in underestimates – due to many teachers and their heads being reluctant to acknowledge such difficulties. Bennett's report is positive and constructive but also honest about the scale of the challenge – and robust in identifying how it can be met.

[Press release: Raytheon UK invests in North Wales](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Alun Cairns: Defence market place is a major driving force for Wales' economy

[Press release: Guidelines on reducing sugar in food published for industry](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Reduction programme could see 200,000 tonnes of sugar removed from the UK market per year by 2020.

[‘The Daily Mile’ officially launched in Wales](#)

Team GB weightlifter Michaela Breeze and sprinter Christian Malcolm, adventurer Tori James, Public Health Minister Rebecca Evans, founder of The Daily Mile Elaine Wyllie, and head of physical activity at Public Health Wales Robert Sage, will officially launch the initiative at Pontllanfraith Primary School in Blackwood .

The Caerphilly primary school is the latest school in Wales to sign up to The Daily Mile – an easy, fun way to improve children's health and wellbeing. The initiative is the brain-child of Elaine Wyllie, former headteacher of a large Scottish primary school in Stirling. The initiative sees primary-aged children run, walk or jog for 15 minutes every day in school. It is inclusive, simple and free, with no equipment or set up required.

Minister Rebecca Evans said:

“The Daily Mile is an easy and fun way for children to improve their health and wellbeing. It is a fantastic way to support young people to get the recommended amount of physical activity each day, and will help them grow up healthier and happier. Well done to everyone at Pontllanfraith Primary for getting involved! I encourage schools across Wales to follow hot on their heels and

sign up to The Daily Mile.”

Elaine Wyllie, former headteacher and founder of The Daily Mile, commented:

“I’m delighted to see The Daily Mile being launched today in Wales and congratulate the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales in recognising the long lasting benefits that this simple, effective and free initiative will bring to the children of Wales – better physical, emotional, social and mental health now and into their future lives.”

Christian Malcolm, World and European 200m Medallist, said:

“I’m thrilled to be joining the staff and students of Pontllanfraith Primary School for the national launch of The Daily Mile Cymru. It’s such a simple yet effective initiative – within a month the children are much fitter, and feel happier and more confident in themselves. By instilling these healthy habits at a young age, we’re helping our children to live full and healthy lives.”

Michaela Breeze, Commonwealth Games weightlifting gold Medallist, said:

“Getting children active at a young age is key to setting them up for a healthy lifestyle. The Daily Mile is so simple. There’s no set up, tidy up, or equipment required. Children simply run outside in the fresh air. It’s fully inclusive; every child, whatever their circumstances, age or ability, succeeds at The Daily Mile.”

Angela Talor, Headteacher of Pontllanfraith Primary, said:

“Some of our year 6 pupils took part in Young Ambassador training with the local Sports Development team, and came back really enthusiastic about The Daily Mile. We discussed it with staff and they were keen to do it too. The Young Ambassadors have really got involved in organising and planning for our Daily Mile – we’ve had a few practices to work out how to make it work. We’ve decided that we’re going to be out running or walking every day during afternoon play.”

Robert Sage, Physical Activity lead for Public Health Wales, said:

“We are delighted to have helped bring The Daily Mile to Wales and look forward to encouraging all schools in Wales to adopt The Daily

Mile as one of their Healthy School actions. The best way to establish and maintain an active life is to make it part of your day to day routine. The Daily Mile is an excellent way for children to develop good habits that can last throughout life.”

Press release: Low Pay Commission analysis of 1 April 2017 minimum wage rise

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The 1 April 2017 minimum wage rise is set to benefit 2.3 million but create pressure for employers. Read the Low Pay Commission’s analysis.