In order that children learn at least at an age-appropriate level a class teacher needs to recognise that certain ‘behaviours’ are essential in establishing the conditions which promote engagement with the curriculum task set. So it isn’t really surprising that emphasis for ‘order’ and ‘discipline’ has been a feature of many commentaries on the state of schools during the last 20 years or so (Young, 1997). At times there has been sensationalist coverage in the media on the failure of a school, or an individual teacher, to ‘manage’ pupils who challenge the system on account of their behaviour (Clark, 1998). Moreover, behaviour in schools carries with it a high dividend for politicians, so emotive is the level of feeling about the learning of others being disrupted. Ask any parent to explain what in their view makes a ‘good’ school and they will invariably include ‘good discipline’ as one of their top distinguishing characteristics.

From an official perspective, too, there has been recognition that dealing with behaviours that challenge is a pivotal strategy in establishing the conditions where purposeful learning can take place (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], 1999a). This focus can be traced back many years, and clearly signals the importance of effective classroom management in the repertoire of required teacher-skills. Over 15 years ago the Elton Report, whilst acknowledging that there were no simple remedies to certain complex problem behaviours, nevertheless sought to raise awareness of a set of core skills in classroom management. The Report concluded that ‘teachers’ group management skills are probably the single most important factor in achieving good standards of classroom behaviour’ and that ‘those skills can be taught and learned’ (Department of Education and Science [DES], 1989: 69).

Recognition of the latter by newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is vital. For a long time it has been a subject of debate as to whether the ability to manage the learning and social
behaviour of a large group of lively young people in a single room is a skill which some teachers are simply born with. In reality, though, most new teachers face a period in which they must come to terms with the various challenges presented by their pupils. Echoing this dilemma, Smith and Laslett questioned whether there was ‘… some special personal magic which enables some teachers to quieten excitement merely by arriving at the scene, quell misbehaviour with a glance, make classrooms bustle with activity and hum with cheerful industry?’ (Smith and Laslett, 1993: 3).

You should take heart from Smith and Laslett’s response to their own question. It is a response that permeates the entire content of this chapter: ‘learning behaviours’ can be readily recognised and applied by newcomers to the profession. Moreover, the development of a learning classroom (for the term ‘classroom’ is meaningless if it is characterised by disorganisation, lack of focus and direction) is a key element in raising achievement levels of pupils. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) refers to the establishment of a ‘purposeful learning environment’ and of the development of ‘environments that assist pupils’ learning’ (Department for Education and Skills [DfES]/TTA, 2002).

Looking at the standards set out by the TTA for managing behaviour in greater detail, the Agency requires that the acquisition of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is dependent upon a student teacher demonstrating ‘high expectations of pupil behaviour’. It goes on to state that students must ‘… establish a clear framework for classroom discipline to anticipate and manage pupils’ behaviour constructively, and promote self-control and independence’ (DfES/TTA 2002, S3.3.9: 12).

What will be apparent to those beginning a career in teaching is that the core principles of behaviour management, encapsulated within the TTA standard S.3.3.9 above, are mainly a refinement and a reinforcement of the sensible guidance offered in the companion volume to this book (Learning to Teach in the Secondary School, 3rd edition). The basic strategies, rehearsed in this companion volume, are further reinforced by the DfES (DfES, 2003e). The latter guidance comprises comprehensive auditing materials regarding behaviour; in particular, you are directed towards those annexes dealing with rewards and sanctions and classroom behaviour (http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3). The purpose of this chapter, accordingly, is to amplify and extend these core principles by inviting reflection on some of the social processes and inter-relationships which underpin the way in which children and teachers operate in the classroom.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- identify approaches to managing challenging behaviours presented by some of your pupils;
- be aware of ways to organise appropriate learning environments in which challenging behaviours can be best managed;
- identify features of some specific behaviours which challenge and ways to manage them;
- discuss research and related evidence which assists in understanding and improving behaviour management.
STRUCTURE OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter is divided into three parts, which seek to promote critical reflection as new teachers develop skills in respect of this standard. It should be recognised at the outset, however, that the chapter does not seek to reiterate the full repertoire of behaviour management skills. Comprehensive guidance on these can be readily found elsewhere, and some can be found in the bibliography (see, for example, Department for Education [DfE], 1994b; Blandford, 1998; Gray, 2002; Ayers et al., 2000; McSherry, 2001, amongst others).

In each section a number of basic principles regarding pupil behaviour are examined. Attention to these, alongside the scrutiny of practice-related research evidence and the guidance of more experienced colleagues, will do much to enhance skills in managing a diverse range of behaviours.

The first part of the chapter examines the meaning of the term ‘challenging behaviour’, alongside a brief review of the main approaches that have commonly been utilised in their management. The next section suggests that proactive management of the classroom is a pivotal insulator against misbehaviour. Here some of the conditions which you must strive for to create a learning classroom will be briefly surveyed. A key element of this is your skill in group management whilst taking account of the diversity of learner needs. The third section of the chapter concentrates on individual behaviours which challenge, and offers some examples of strategies which teachers have found to be successful in their management.

Much of what is contained in this chapter is based on existing or emerging research evidence of strategies that work in the classroom. In lots of ways, too, they will strike chords with what have come to be regarded as the ‘folk wisdom’ of the staff room. The evidence base, drawn from our knowledge of theories of how children behave, is a powerful and persuasive one. This has been the focus of recent developments in initial teacher training (ITT), notably the establishment of a ‘professional resource network for initial teacher training which deals with behaviour management’ (TTA, 2004). The core premise of this activity is an understanding of five underpinning principles, adapted from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979):

• Behaviour does not occur in isolation – it is the product of external and internal factors.
• Behaviour needs to be viewed in the context of individual development and social interaction.
• A teacher can understand the meaning of the behaviour of an individual pupil, and respond more effectively to it, if she has greater knowledge of the theories underpinning development and cognition.
• Behaviours relating to social interaction can be better understood, and responded to, by a teacher if she has greater knowledge of behavioural, social and affective theories of development and cognition.
• Positive relationships enable learning.

Each of these principles is referred to at various points in the body of the present chapter.
When teachers talk about a pupil’s ‘behaviour’ it is usually the case that they are referring to their inappropriate behaviour. Used in this way the term is a metaphor for all manner of colourful language: anti-social, disruptive, naughty, acting out, maladjusted, un-biddable, problem, confrontational, off-task, unwanted and so on. What really is missing is a prefix, so that we come to recognise that what we are really referring to is misbehaviour – those actions and activities which interfere with children learning and teachers teaching.

Reflective task 7.1
Explaining pupil behaviour

What are your initial views about each of the principles which Bronfenbrenner argues are at the root of all behaviour? Can you identify any sources of tension between them and the way in which you interpret pupil behaviour?

The Elton Report (DES, 1989) refers to misbehaviour as behaviour which ‘causes concern to teachers’. Elsewhere the term ‘emotional and behavioural difficulties’ (EBD) has been used as a catch-all expression. It describes all those behaviours which comprise a continuum from ‘normal though unacceptable’ through to mental illness (DfE, 1994a). Currently this term has been expanded as ‘SEBD’, with the incorporation of social difficulties into the spectrum. But all teachers quite rightly ask for more specificity than this – such general terms have to be illustrated by particular pupil actions that are observable and measurable, in order that teacher intervention might follow.

One way of illustrating the types of behaviour that teachers have long regarded as unsatisfactory, in that they are generally disruptive and get in the way of their teaching, is to make further reference to the Elton Report (DES, 1989). In a helpful set of research data the study provides a summary of those pupil behaviours which a large sample of teachers (Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4) encountered most frequently in their classrooms. These are summarised in Figure 7.1. What these data tell us is that it is mainly ‘low-level’ disturbance which constitutes the most problematic occurrences for teachers. Such disruption is principally characterised by talking out of turn, hindering other pupils, ‘calculated idleness’ and unwanted movement around the class. All of these, when they present as chronic features of a classroom, are likely to have a long-term negative impact on both the pupils’ levels of achievement and their socially acceptable behaviour.

Reflective task 7.2
Describing pupil behaviours

Write down all of the terms/expression that you know which you/colleagues use to describe children and their behaviour. Do they describe precise, observable behaviour? To what extent might they be susceptible to personal interpretation?
A more recent attempt to provide a tangible set of behaviours can be taken from a study conducted by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2001). This identified 15 behaviours groupings by which a pupil’s emotional and behavioural development might be assessed. These were divided into ‘learning behaviours’, ‘conduct behaviours’ and ‘emotional behaviours’. Each of these groupings is sub-divided into sets of criteria, depicting desirable and undesirable behaviours (see Figure 7.2). A number of conclusions can be drawn from these lists, as well as a set of parallels with the earlier Elton Report. Not least amongst them is the underpinning theme which links social behaviours to learning behaviours in producing what pupils and teachers alike recognise as ‘good’ behaviour.

The task of identifying or defining ‘misbehaviour’ is an important one if a teacher is going to develop strategies to deal with them. There is a need, at the outset, to describe exactly what any unwanted behaviour actually comprises. Telling another teacher that ‘Salim behaved really badly before playtime’ tells a colleague little of value. Indeed, the lack of precision might well lead to Salim acquiring an unwanted label which would become an almost permanent negative descriptor. So it is essential, for both you and your pupils, that precise, objective language is used in any description of behaviour. The description needs to be of the behaviour, not the pupil. Moreover, you need to constantly remember the ‘hidden “E” in EBD’: as a professional group we invariably focus on ‘acting out’ (conduct), as opposed in ‘acting in’ (emotions) behaviour.

Identify six pupil behaviours that you find most difficult to deal with. Compare this list with that of an NQT colleague or a more experienced teacher. Which of the QCA groupings in Figure 7.2 do your selections fit into?

Figure 7.1 Frequency of problem behaviours (1 = most common) reported by secondary teachers (after the Elton Report, DES, 1989)

1. Talking out of turn
2. Calculated idleness or work avoidance
3. Hindering other pupils
4. Arriving late to school/lesson
5. Unwanted non-verbal noises
6. Persistent infringement of class rules
7. Getting out of seat without permission
8. Verbal abuse of other pupils
9. General rowdiness or ‘mucking about’
10. Cheeky remarks or impertinence to teacher
11. Physical aggression to other pupils
12. Verbal abuse to teacher
13. Physical destructiveness
14. Physical aggression to teacher

Reflective task 7.3
Which behaviours do you find the most difficult to manage?
### Figure 7.2 Desirable and undesirable pupil behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desirable behaviour</th>
<th>Undesirable behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **L1. Attentive/Interested in Schoolwork**  
- attentive to teacher, not easily distracted  
- interest in most schoolwork  
- starts promptly on set tasks/motivated  
- seems to enjoy school  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- verbal off-task behaviours  
- does not finish work / gives up easily  
- constantly needs reminders  
- short attention span  
- negative approach to school |
| **L2. Good Learning Organisation**  
- competent in individual learning  
- tidy work at reasonable pace  
- can organise learning tasks  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- forgetful, copies or rushes work  
- inaccurate, messy and slow work  
- fails to meet deadlines, not prepared |
| **L3. Effective communicator**  
- good communication skills (peers/adults)  
- knows when it’s appropriate to speak  
- uses non-verbal signals and voice range  
- communicates in 1:1 or group settings  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- poor communication skills  
- inappropriate timing of communication  
- constantly talks  
- lack of use of non-verbal skills |
| **L4. Works efficiently in a group**  
- works collaboratively  
- turn-takes in communication/listens  
- takes responsibility within a group  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- refuses to share  
- does not take turns |
| **L5. Seeks help where necessary**  
- seeks attention from teacher when required  
- works independently or in groups when not requiring help  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- constantly seeking assistance  
- makes excessive and inappropriate demands  
- does not ask ‘finding out’ questions |
| **L6. Behaves respectfully towards staff**  
- co-operative and compliant  
- responds positively to instruction  
- does not aim verbal aggression at teacher  
- interacts politely with teacher  
- does not deliberately try to annoy or answer the teacher rudely  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- responds negatively to instruction  
- talks back impertinently to teacher  
- aims verbal aggression, swears at teacher  
- deliberately interrupts to annoy |
| **L7. Shows respect to other pupils**  
- uses appropriate language; does not swear  
- treats others as equals  
- does not dominate, bully or intimidate  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- verbal violence at other pupils  
- scornful, use of social aggression (e.g. ‘pushing in’)  
- teases and bullies  
- inappropriate sexual behaviour |
| **L8. Seeks attention appropriately**  
- does not attract inappropriate attention  
- does not play the fool or show off  
- no attention-seeking behaviour  
- does not verbally disrupt  
- does not physically disrupt  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- hums, fidgets, disturbs others  
- throws things, climbs on things  
- calls out, eats, runs around the class  
- shouts and otherwise attention seeks  
- does dangerous things without thought |
| **L9. Physically peaceful**  
- does not show physical aggression  
- does not pick on others  
- is not cruel or spiteful  
- avoids getting into fights with others  
- does not have temper tantrums  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- fights, aims physical violence at others  
- loses temper, throws things  
- bullies and intimidates physically  
- cruel/spiteful |
| **L10. Respects property**  
- takes care of own and others’ property  
- does not engage in vandalism  
- does not steal  | **Undesirable behaviour**  
- poor respect for property  
- destroys own or others’ things  
- steals things |

continued ...
### Figure 7.2 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desirable behaviour</th>
<th>Undesirable behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E11. Has empathy</strong></td>
<td>• intolerant • emotionally detached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is tolerant and considerate</td>
<td>• selfish • no awareness of feelings of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tries to identify with feelings of others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tries to offer comfort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is not emotionally detached</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• does not laugh when others are upset</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E12. Is socially aware</strong></td>
<td>• inactive, daydreams, stares into space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understands social interactions of self and peers</td>
<td>• withdrawn or unresponsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• appropriate verbal/non-verbal contacts</td>
<td>• does not participate in class activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not socially isolated</td>
<td>• few friends • not accepted or well-liked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• has peer-group friends; not a loner</td>
<td>• shows bizarre behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• doesn’t frequently daydream</td>
<td>• stares blankly, listless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• actively involved in classroom activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not aloof, passive or withdrawn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E13. Is happy</strong></td>
<td>• depressed, unhappy or discontented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• smiles and laughs appropriately</td>
<td>• prone to emotional upset, tearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• should be able to have fun</td>
<td>• infers suicide • serious, sad, self-harming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• generally cheerful; seldom upset</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not discontented, sulky, morose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E14. Is confident</strong></td>
<td>• anxious, tense, tearful • reticent, fears failure, feels inferior • lacks self-esteem, cautious, shy • does not take initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not anxious • unafraid to try new things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not self-conscious, doesn’t feel inferior</td>
<td>• willing to read aloud, answer questions in class • participates in group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E15. Emotionally stable/self-controlled</strong></td>
<td>• inappropriate emotional reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• no mood swings • good emotional resilience, recovers quickly from upset</td>
<td>• does not recover quickly from upsets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• manages own feelings • not easily flustered or frustrated • delays gratification</td>
<td>• does not express feelings • frequent mood changes; irritable • over-reacts; does not accept punishment or praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• does not delay gratification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from QCA 2001.

Note
L, learning behaviour; C, conduct behaviour; E, emotional behaviour

During the course of your early career, several of these behaviours are likely to be encountered. The first question you may need to ask is, ‘What do experienced teachers do when confronted with such pupils?’ Generally speaking there are a small number of intervention models which are currently in common usage. Before briefly describing each of these it is worth adding a word of caution. Most teachers tend to use their personal judgement and intuition in responding to unwanted behaviour; in other words they will try for a ‘best-fit’ intervention, based on what they see as those elements of these models which, in their view, are appropriate and workable. So the key here seems to be the adoption of a ‘pick-and-mix’ approach to managing behaviour, so that the needs of the pupil and the teacher are catered for. A second proviso is that a classroom teacher needs to be aware of the broader ‘behaviour
ethos’ within the whole school. And so individual actions need to be sympathetic to the spirit and aims of a whole-school behaviour policy.

Generally speaking the management of pupil behaviour is usually mapped against six broad conceptual models, informed by certain theoretical principles (Evidence for Policy and Practice Information [EPPI], to be published 2004). Each of these six models has its merits, and as has been pointed out in the preceding paragraph, there is a tendency for teachers to draw from each of these orientations. Recognition of their existence, and an understanding of them, will allow you to understand where a certain pupil behaviour is coming from and, because of this, enables you to arrive at an appropriate intervention (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 summarises both explanations and possible action and offers some clues as to what the underlying theories are, which can be drawn upon to justify or validate those actions. What is apparent, and confirmed by emerging research, is that teachers use an intervention model based in some part on their interpretation of the behaviour and the causal factors underpinning it (Garner and Gains, 1996).

**Figure 7.3** Explanations of pupil behaviour

*Source: Adapted from EPPI, 2003.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequent behaviour</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>Pupil gets more attention by being off-task</td>
<td>Reward on-task behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Pupil thinks he can’t do task</td>
<td>Encourage pupil to identify parts of task that he can do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Pupil fears failure</td>
<td>Build self-esteem (e.g. ‘Circle Time’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>Social/Environmental</td>
<td>‘He has a brother who is just the same’</td>
<td>Nurture group work/ work with parents/family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>Pupil has attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD)</td>
<td>Refer for medical assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Pupil not ready for independent work</td>
<td>Learning Support and set more appropriate learning target</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflective task 7.4**

*Identifying the cause of unacceptable behaviour*

Discuss with a colleague the strengths and limitations of the models outlined in Figure 7.3. How applicable are they to a given pupil in your own classroom?
MEETING THE CHALLENGE IN THE CLASSROOM: PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

The first task of any teacher is to establish a positive learning environment. This is a key element in any approach to managing classroom behaviour. From the outset you need to ensure that a set of insulating conditions are established; these will go a long way to minimising problematic behaviour. Some writers on the topic have even stated that there are deviance insulative and deviance provocative teachers (Jordan, 1974). The former is able to prevent the development of long-term problem behaviour by ensuring that certain routines are followed. In Smith and Laslett’s work (1993) the way in which this ‘insulation’ process is accounted for is straightforward. Teachers have to:

- get the pupils into the classroom;
- get on with the lesson which has been planned;
- get on with the pupils themselves; and finally
- get the pupils out of the classroom.

But whilst this four-stage process might sound relatively straightforward, each one of these phases requires thought and planning from the outset. If a teacher gets things ‘right’ the chances are that the classroom will be a place where all of the pupils come to recognise that purposeful learning takes place.

Entry and settling down

The key word here is routine. Pupils are creatures of habit; they like their teacher to adopt a set of sensible routines from the outset; and they like to know the framework and boundaries for their learning. This process will begin before they get inside their classroom. All the sensible advice states that the teacher must be in the classroom before the pupils; greeting pupils is very important. Studies have shown, for instance, that so-called disruptive pupils dislike being treated with disrespect – a friendly nod, a word of encouragement on entry to the room can prompt appropriate behaviour where otherwise it may not be forthcoming.

Effective insulative teachers also make sure that they have a firm idea of how the class is to be seated – here again is a basic strategy to inhibit problem behaviour and promote learning (Hastings and Chantrey Wood, 2002). Such teachers are firm and directive, whilst ensuring that the pupils know why they are being seated in a particular place. A set of rules is an essential feature of learning classrooms – these need to be publicised and constantly reinforced. Good practice also suggests that the pupils are involved in this process. Again, research suggests that classrooms in which children take responsibility for behaviour are successful learning environments (Coulby and Coulby, 1995). It is worth remembering that you have to plan for learning behaviour as much as for actual curriculum content. All too frequently the basics of the ‘social curriculum’ of the classroom are left to just happen by chance. A failure to attend to learning behaviours is offering an open invitation to some pupils; you are indicating to them that you are not in control of the teaching space. Research studies also show that pupils who are inclined to misbehave prefer teachers who convey a strong message that they are ‘in charge’ (Davies, 1996).

It is worth pointing out, however, that compliance, pro-social behaviour and positive approaches to learning do not happen overnight. One of the frequently expressed concerns
of new teachers is that they feel that their pupils are failing to respond to classroom protocols. Some pupils, they believe, do not want to accept the rules and procedures commensurate with effective learning. It is at this stage that you have to bear in mind two important issues. Firstly, that behaviour does change, but that it will be a slower process for some children. The key, therefore, is to persevere, keep your nerve and maintain (though monitor and review) established routines at all costs. The second issue is that you should make full use of the resources at your disposal in helping to develop classroom management skills. Close liaison with an induction mentor, making full use of training opportunities and, importantly, observing more experienced teachers in their dealings with pupils are three strategies which need to become second nature.

Teaching the lesson

The National Standards for QTS are perhaps a useful basis to explore the key pedagogical issues that help teachers to secure pro-social behaviour and advance the learning of all pupils. Teachers are required to address what are regarded as the three principles of inclusion: setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils’ diverse needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning (TTA, 2002: 26). Consideration of these issues is, in fact, at the heart of many chapters in the present volume. But they have especial relevance to pupils whom, for whatever reason, present the teacher with unwanted problem-behaviour.

Circular 9/94, which addressed pupil behaviour and discipline, confirmed a long-held view that ‘an effective curriculum, appropriately differentiated to stimulate and engage the pupils, is a key factor in motivating children and maintaining an orderly learning environment’ (DfE, 1994a: 13). Moreover, research into the views of pupils who misbehave is conclusive about their expectations of teachers (Wise, 2000). These pupils want a teacher who presents lesson content in ways that engage them, irrespective of their own preferred style of learning. They want their teacher to be interesting, well prepared and able to recognise that all pupils can contribute very effectively to their own learning.

A crucial element in this process involves a recognition that pupils who misbehave are frequently struggling because of specific learning difficulties. The Code of Practice (DfES, 2001b) is very explicit in stating that the first-line responsibility for addressing such difficulties is the class teacher. So it is very important that you move beyond the misbehaviour presented: as has been stated earlier, all behaviours are a means of communication. In many cases, the pupil is saying, ‘I can’t do this work,’ and attempting to disguise this by ‘displacement behaviour’ – actions which are off-task and often disruptive to other learners.

As has also been mentioned, pupils are creatures of habit; they feel safe when a learning routine is established. But all teachers can expect a period of subtle ‘negotiation’ – this is the time, comprising the first few weeks of working with a group of pupils, during which pupils can be expected to test the boundaries that have been set out as a framework for their behaviour (Woods, 1990).

As I have indicated, there is now a huge literature of sound practical advice regarding the explicit routines (and their implicit meanings) of classroom management (for example, see Chaplain and Freeman, 1998). Figure 7.4, adapted from one set of guidances, provides a basic checklist. Whilst some of its recommendations may seem obvious, these commonsense approaches are sometimes overlooked as too basic to address complex interactions and behaviour. But it has to be emphasised that such guidance is the bedrock which both
pre-empts many unwanted behaviours and insulates classrooms from the negative impact of pupil misbehaviour. Periodic reflection, therefore, on each of the issues highlighted in Figure 7.4 will pay significant dividends in helping to establish a learning classroom.

Establishing relationships

Further reference to existing research will confirm the long-standing belief in importance of the social role of the teacher (Polat and Farrell, 2002). Establishing – and maintaining – good relationships with all pupils is a vital insulating factor against problematic behaviours. In much the same way that adults draw inferences from the ways in which their friends or associates relate to them, so too do pupils in class. They formulate a profile of how their teacher communicates, and with whom, and they are quick to seize upon any inconsistencies and apparent favouritism.
One of the frequent protestations by such pupils is that a teacher is unfair and does not treat each pupil as an individual (Wise, 2000). There is also a lack of recognition that reward is a major motivational factor. Pupils who misbehave feel that they are unable to achieve in the terms recognised by the school: as sociologists would have it, they become ‘status deprived’. This situation is fertile ground for pupils’ seeking alternative means of recognition – by engaging in individual or group actions which disrupt the class.

You will need to continually review your social relationships with those pupils who are most at risk of misbehaviour. There is a tendency to view classroom relationships as fixed, but such a view fails to recognise that pupils arrive at a lesson bringing with them all manner of immediate experiences which might influence their behaviour. Nor should it fail to be acknowledged that the same would be true for teachers themselves. Understanding these systemic but changing linkages is a vital element of relationship building, and has been elegantly theorised by Bronfenbrenner (1979). It is a sad, but common, occurrence that the profile of a pupil who is inclined towards misbehaviour will usually highlight a background of domestic dysfunction, negative peer influences and the involvement of social service departments and/or the police. Securing a positive relationship against such an unpromising backcloth is obviously difficult, especially when the young person sees himself or herself as being incapable of doing so. But again, research evidence can assist us by showing that such pupils require:

• consistency in their relationships with adults;
• unconditional positive regard from their teacher;
• opportunities for pro-social relationship modelling (Sage, 2002).

Conclusion and dismissal

The conclusion of a lesson, ending with the dismissal of the class, is a potential trigger for problem behaviour. And yet it is frequently discounted in ‘… a sigh of relief that it is nearly over’ (Gray and Richer, 1988). A pupil will experience as many as six or seven lesson endings during the course of a day in school. A noisy, unstructured or chaotic conclusion minimises any lasting effect of the learning that has taken place during the lesson. It also ensures that these pupils arrive at their next classroom in a frame of mind which is not geared towards effective learning.

Reflective task 7.5
Minimising unacceptable behaviours

Reflect on each of the four insulation phases described above. Construct a personal checklist of your actions which you believe

1. insulate against misbehaviour
2. might trigger unwanted pupil actions.

How might you be able to move checklist items from 2 to 1?
Once again, an ordered routine is paramount. Reviewing lesson content and pupil achievement as part of this process offers an opportunity to give positive feedback and recognition to pupils who otherwise might regard themselves as invisible. It also can be used to signal ‘closure’ to pupils; it is their ‘signpost’ to the next part of their day in school, and as such is an appropriate time for you to quietly reinforce, by instruction or praise, social behaviours that are acceptable.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE: RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL CASES

In spite of a proactive approach to classroom management it is sadly the case that a small percentage of pupils will misbehave. For some pupils this is an infrequent and uncharacteristic action; but some other pupils offer a greater challenge, such is the chronic nature of their misbehaviour. This section of the chapter examines possible responses in such cases. At the outset it is reassuring to return to the Elton Report’s research on teacher opinion, which states that ‘We find that most schools are on the whole well ordered’ (DES, 1989: 11) and that serious incidents are rare. At the same time, the Report believes that ‘… even in well run schools minor disruption appears to be a problem’. So all teachers need to refine strategies for dealing with misbehaviour as soon as it occurs. What follows is a rehearsal of what will be familiar territory for some; but all teachers, whether newly qualified or experienced, are likely to benefit from continued reflection on these ‘basics of behaviour’.

The ABC of behaviour is a good starting point. When confronted by a pupil who is misbehaving you need to address the (B)ehaviour in ways in which its (A)ntecedents are recognised and its (C)onsequences are understood. Few teachers would argue that the unwanted action should be the focus of immediate attention. This is a ‘public’ performance, and all eyes in the classroom are on the teacher’s response to this challenge. But it is the behaviour that is unwanted, not the pupil himself! All too frequently the two are merged in the mind of the teacher. If Rory’s immature behaviour is publicly rebuked as ‘Stop behaving like a five-year-old, Rory’ it merely exacerbates the situation, as Rory needs to save face (and maintain his status with his peers) with a teacher-directed insult.

Avoidance of confrontation is essential, as a minor disagreement could escalate into a more serious form of disruption. But that is not to say that unwanted behaviour should be tolerated. Rather, it needs first to be neutralised so that effective learning can continue.
Typically such neutralisers involve use of a traffic light system, where a pupil is given feedback about his or her behaviour so that he or she can be involved directly in its own management. Where a pupil is working efficiently (green), communicate this with verbal approval, recognition that the pupil is retaining focus on the task set. Other rewards can follow continued positive behaviour. On noticing the first sign of non-compliance the traffic light shows amber, to alert the pupil to the fact that this inappropriate behaviour has been noticed. This can be reinforced by a verbal cue ('On-task, John … please') or a non-verbal signal. This should be followed by the use of choices: 'You can either do this work now, John, or you can complete it during break-time.' Further failure to comply means a red alert. Here is a pupil who may have learnt to off-task behaviour. The failure to comply needs to be neutrally acknowledged publicly as it happens (again, all the pupils need to know that you are in charge): 'John, I want to see you after this lesson to discuss your work.' This approach, which provides a structured approach in shared behaviour management, can be utilised in a range of cases where pupil misbehaviour is apparent. It should be the basis of a routine that all pupils come to regard as non-negotiable.

The class as a whole will be rating a teacher’s performance in managing the classroom. The class, above all else, want its teacher to demonstrate confidence in managing any misbehaviour likely to be encountered in the classroom. The pupils do not want to be taught by a teacher who is easily rattled by the few pupils who appear unwilling to follow the rules of the classroom. In consequence you should always adopt a defensive and de-escalating approach in managing individual incidents by trying to offer the pupil at least one way out of a conflict situation. This is vital to the pupil, in that if a battle of wills between the two of you results in that pupil being ‘shamed’ in front of his peers, the relationship between you will be shattered, almost beyond the point of recovery.

The pupils also monitor your performance for any signs that you are becoming angry. Research by social psychologists indicates conclusively that human beings are much more influenced by non-verbal than by verbal communication (Argyle, 1983). It follows that, irrespective of the level of frustration felt on account of continued low-level disruption to a class; any tendency to interpret these actions as being directed at you personally must be avoided. If this is not done it greatly increases the stress and frustration felt by you, which in turn influences future teacher–pupil interactions. Concomitant to these feelings are visible signs of anxiety and anger. This has two equally negative effects: it reduces the capacity to think objectively in order to ‘problem solve’ the behaviour and it models unwanted behaviour for all the other pupils in the class. And of course, a teacher who is ‘mad’ is a gift horse to any pupil wishing to misbehave.

Much has been written of the need to identify sets of rewards and punishments (or sanctions). Whilst guidance on the nature and use of these are usually to be found in the staff handbook, it is worth noting a number of classroom principles. Firstly, that the most potent form of reward is verbal praise from the teacher (thereby indicating recognition of the pupil). Next, that rewards should be based on what has currency in the eyes of the pupils. Key rewards here, apart from verbal praise, are positive communication with the pupil’s home, or to other teachers, display of pupils’ work or recognition of progress or achievement during assembly or class discussion.

It is vital, in promoting a classroom ethos where learning can be accessed by all pupils, that a balance is struck between rewards and punishments. You should recognise that, in the pupils’ mind, punishment is a legitimate response to wrongdoing. Equally, though, they are very aware that certain teachers make use of more punishment than rewards, and also that
these are often out of proportion to the wrongdoing. Punishment should be both directed towards an individual and explained in order that social learning might ensue from it. Punishing a large group of pupils, or even a whole class, is seldom productive and inevitably leads to pupil resentment. At all costs effective teachers avoid what some pupils refer to as revenge-punishment, which is destructive to both pupil and teacher.

In spite of these interventions some pupils are unable to follow the normal routines and rules of the classroom. Such pupils usually have associated emotional or learning difficulties and have been brought to the attention of the school’s special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). In collaboration with the SENCO it is the job of the subject teacher to identify which behaviours are to be prioritised – usually in terms of their rate of occurrence, longevity, impact on the pupil’s learning, impact on others and so on. The process usually involves an observation checklist, completed over several weeks. This then forms the basis of that pupil’s individual education plan (IEP). A characteristic of the plan is its limited number of behaviour targets; care has to be taken to ensure that such targets are ‘SMART’ (Tod and Cornwall, 1998): those which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time related (can be reviewed and monitored in a sensible time span).

Finally, in those individual cases where pupils present the severest challenge, the role of the school as an active professional community comes into play. Colleagues on the staff will be very supportive – after all, there will be few experienced teachers who have not encountered at least one pupil whose behaviour was so extreme that they felt unable to cope. Experienced teachers in school can offer an opportunity for you to obtain non-judgemental feedback on the strategies they use in individual cases. And it is worth remembering that teachers learn as much from a failed strategy as from those that appear to work.

**SUMMARY**

Managing behaviour in schools is a topic which has been covered in hundreds of books, research papers and official documents. Much of what has been written has a basis in common sense. Rather than replicate the substance of that literature this chapter has sought to identify certain principles that help promote a learning classroom, in which pupils at risk of misbehaviour can thrive. What will be apparent is that much of this relates to your adopting a proactive approach to behaviour, in which conditions are established that minimise the likelihood of long-term problem behaviours arising by promoting effective engagement with learning. The existence of such conditions will also significantly insulate you and other pupils from widespread negative impact of misbehaviour. Placed in the context of both whole-school mechanisms for promoting good behaviour and of the clearly evidenced

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**Reflective task 7.7**

List the rewards and punishment that you make use of in your classroom. Does your list emphasise one or the other? How do you make sure that your preferred approaches in each case are effective?
link between the curriculum and social learning, they offer opportunities for a more positive engagement with pupils who are inclined towards misbehaviour.

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FURTHER READING

Hanko, G. (2003) ‘Towards an inclusive school culture – but what happened to Elton’s “affective curriculum”?’ British Journal of Special Education, 30 (3), 125–31. This article emphasises the importance of establishing an appropriate set of conditions, or ‘ethos’, in your classroom in order to promote pupil learning. Hanko suggests that a deeper understanding of social and emotional factors will enable disaffected pupils to be more fully included within curricular and social processes, resulting in greater engagement in appropriate learning.

Visser, J., Cole, T. and Daniels, H. (2002) ‘Inclusion for the difficult to include’, Support for Learning, 17 (1), 23–6. This article reports on findings from a major study funded by government in England into what conditions need to be present in schools in order to meet the needs of children and young people who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.