# Supporting school improvement

Emotional and behavioural development

# Contents

# Introduction

Setting targets for improved pupil performance is an important part of the national drive to improve standards in schools. In September 1998, the Government introduced legislation to ensure that all schools participate in the target-setting process as a key strategy for raising standards for pupils aged 11 and 16. In October 2000, a further consultation was conducted leading to the introduction of statutory school targets to include all pupils with special educational needs and all pupils aged 14.

In some schools, including special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), the nature of pupils' needs may mean that targets additional to the statutory targets can add helpful focus, direction and pace to school improvement. These can include performance targets expressed as progress targets, attendance targets and/or targets for pupils' personal development.

This booklet is intended to support school improvement by offering guidance on setting improvement targets for pupils' emotional and behavioural development.

Throughout consultations on school target setting, staff have sought guidance on how the process applies to schools where there are significant numbers of pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff also expressed the need for measures that could be used by all schools for monitoring and setting targets for pupils' emotional and behavioural development. In the light of this request, in 1999, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) commissioned a team of researchers from the University of Birmingham to develop measures in the form of criteria. Those criteria are contained in this booklet, along with guidance on how they may be used for targeting school improvement.

This booklet is in two parts:

- Part 1 sets out the criteria and gives guidance on how to use them for assessing pupils' emotional and behavioural development. The criteria were developed with the wide participation of staff in mainstream and special schools and PRUs.

- Part 2 explains the background to the school improvement cycle, how the cycle relates to schools which may have pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and factors contributing to the setting of effective additional targets.

Finally, although this guidance uses criteria and scales that rely on observation of individual pupils' behaviour, it is also designed to support wider improvement processes. Context is all-important in emotional and behavioural development – the social context of the school; the learning and social context provided in the classroom; the context formed by the pattern of relationships in which pupils find themselves. The measurement and target-setting processes outlined in this guidance are intended to support strategies for school improvement in these important areas. Also, these criteria are not designed to replace the more detailed diagnostic tools that may be used in some specialist settings.

# Part 1: Criteria for measuring emotional and behavioural development

## Background to the criteria

In 1999, the QCA commissioned researchers from the University of Birmingham School of Education Assessment Research Unit to undertake a project aimed at developing criteria that schools might use for measuring pupils' emotional and behavioural development.

The first stage of the project involved reviewing the range of criteria used for assessing emotional and behavioural development by educational psychologists in Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England. The second stage was to develop a set of criteria to support school improvement strategies that included the best of existing practice. The third and final stage of the project was for the team to refine the criteria through consultation with staff.

Drawing on the range of existing criteria used throughout LEAs in England, the criteria developed by the Birmingham team address three distinct aspects of behaviour: learning behaviour, conduct behaviour and emotional behaviour. There are five criteria related to each aspect:

| Learning behaviour | Conduct behaviour | Emotional behaviour |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Is attentive and has an interest in schoolwork | 6 Behaves respectfully towards staff | 11 Has empathy |
| 2 Has good learning organisation | 7 Shows respect to other pupils | 12 Is socially aware |
| 3 Is an effective communicator | 8 Only interrupts and seeks attention appropriately | 13 Is happy |
| 4 Works efficiently in a group | 9 Is physically peaceable | 14 Is confident |
| 5 Seeks help where necessary | 10 Respects property | 15 Is emotionally stable and shows good self-control |

Throughout the development of the criteria, practitioners emphasised the importance of taking a positive approach to pupils' behaviour and their emotional and behavioural development. However, trialling revealed that staff were generally more confident in rating pupils' performance against the criteria when descriptions of undesirable behaviours were also provided. The full criteria are given on pages 13–17.
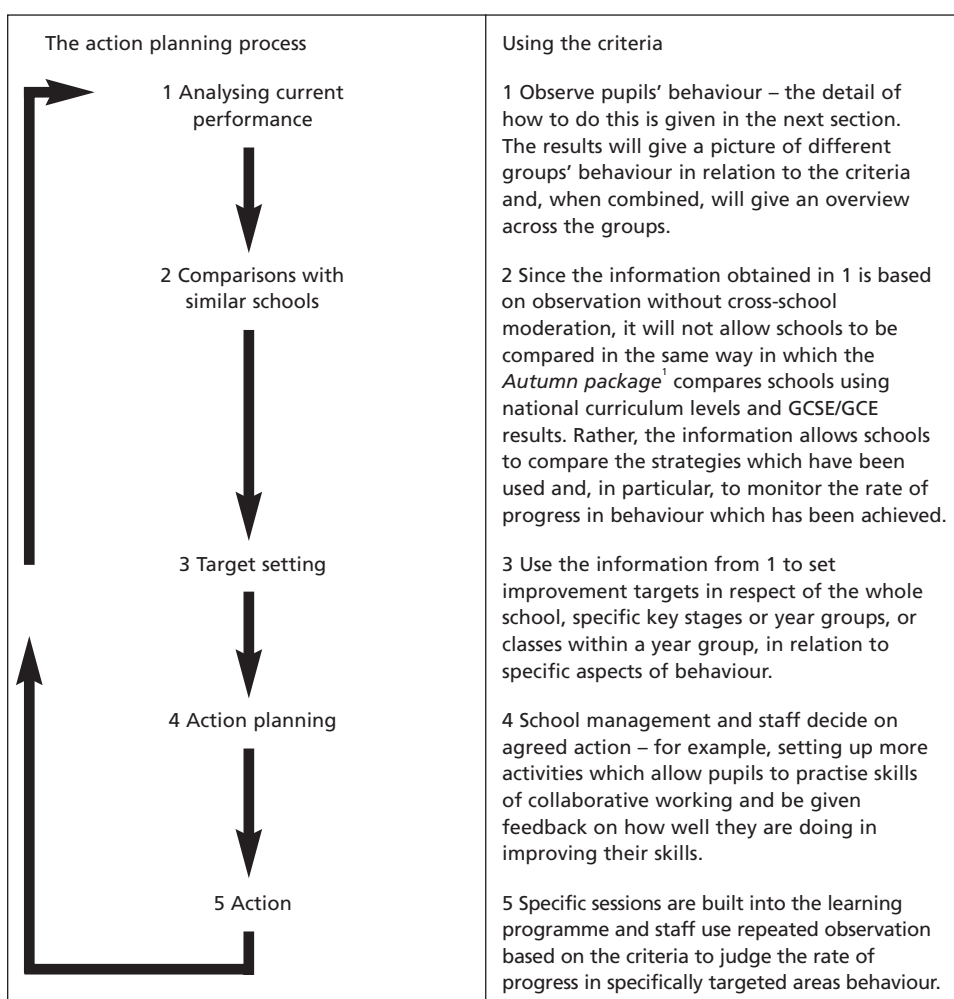
For convenience and ease of use, pages 11 and 12 of this booklet provide a record sheet of the desirable behaviours under all 15 criteria, accompanied by a six-point scale. The scale can be used for rating the extent to which pupils display those behaviours.

## Using the criteria

There is no statutory requirement for schools to set behaviour targets. However, some schools choose to do so, and the criteria in this booklet have been developed in response to requests from staff about how they might measure pupils' behaviour and set targets for improvement. The criteria represent a management tool that schools may adopt and adapt in ways they find useful to support systematic approaches to school improvement. Some schools have found it useful to share this process with staff from LEA behaviour support teams.

As outlined in the introduction, the criteria in this guidance do not replace existing behaviour criteria scales that are used by some schools; these may contain more detail and be better suited to individual formative assessment with pupils. However, schools using such scales may also wish to use the criteria given here in order to support school-level target setting for areas which the other scales do not cover.

It is up to individual schools to decide which aspects of behaviour to target. They may choose to use all the criteria or, possibly in response to specific issues, be prompted to use only selected criteria. For example they may focus on Criterion 4: Works efficiently in a group and Criterion 9: Is physically peaceable.

| The action planning process | Using the criteria |
|---|---|
| 1 Analysing current performance | 1 Observe pupils' behaviour – the detail of how to do this is given in the next section. The results will give a picture of different groups' behaviour in relation to the criteria and, when combined, will give an overview across the groups. |
| 2 Comparisons with similar schools | 2 Since the information obtained in 1 is based on observation without cross-school moderation, it will not allow schools to be compared in the same way in which the *Autumn package*[1] compares schools using national curriculum levels and GCSE/GCE results. Rather, the information allows schools to compare the strategies which have been used and, in particular, to monitor the rate of progress in behaviour which has been achieved. |
| 3 Target setting | 3 Use the information from 1 to set improvement targets in respect of the whole school, specific key stages or year groups, or classes within a year group, in relation to specific aspects of behaviour. |
| 4 Action planning | 4 School management and staff decide on agreed action – for example, setting up more activities which allow pupils to practise skills of collaborative working and be given feedback on how well they are doing in improving their skills. |
| 5 Action | 5 Specific sessions are built into the learning programme and staff use repeated observation based on the criteria to judge the rate of progress in specifically targeted areas behaviour. |

[1]The *Autumn package* of Pupil Performance Information contains analysis of key stage 1, 2 and 3 assessments and GCSE/GNVQ exam results, including National Summary Results, information on Value Added between Key Stages and Benchmark Information (DfES).

## Getting started

Pages 11 and 12 give a record sheet which provides an overview of the criteria, with each criterion linked to a six-point rating scale. For example:

| Learning behaviour | not at all | rarely | sometimes | fairly often | often | always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is physically peaceable | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| eg is not physically aggressive, avoids fights, is pleasant to other pupils, does not strike out in temper | | | | | | |

The scales are intended for completion after staff have made judgements about either the whole school or selected groups of pupils. The information provided by the scales can be used to devise and monitor:

- school strategy, in areas ranging from the implementation of new policies to changes in teaching and learning practice;

- ways of working with, and supporting, specific groups of pupils.

This guidance also outlines how the scales can be used with individual pupils and thus involve them in the improvement process, but the principal focus is on target setting and the design and monitoring of strategies at school level.

## Using the scales over time

The scales can be used initially to give a baseline, and then on subsequent occasions to give an idea of trends in key areas of behaviour. This allows crucial questions to be asked such as:

- In what direction is any overall change? Has there been an improvement or has there been a deterioration in ratings?

- Is there improvement in some areas but not in others?

- Is some pupils' behaviour deteriorating and some improving? If so, which pupils or groups of pupils are improving – are there any clear patterns?

- What is the most likely cause of any improvement or deterioration?

There are different reasons for why pupils' ratings on the scales can change over time:

A: Things happening inside the school which are associated with an improvement strategy (eg target setting, improving timekeeping and working to deadlines)

B: Things happening inside the school which are not associated with an improvement strategy (eg high levels of pupils leaving and joining the school)

C: Things which are happening outside the school (eg issues at home, problems in peer group)

D: A 'normal' level of fluctuation in pupils' behaviour

E: Inconsistencies in the way the scales have been used and/or judgements made

To ensure that real change is being looked at, whether from A or B above, it is important to be as consistent as possible in using the scales, with the aim of reducing the effects of E to a minimum. Staff using the scales to gather information will find it helpful to discuss the way in which they will:

- undertake observation of groups of pupils;

- use evidence to make judgements and rate pupils/groups on each scale;

- standardise the way the scales are used in order to minimise undesirable inconsistencies.

This is particularly important where the scales will be used on a number of occasions with some months in between. Staff using the scales may change or forget exactly what was done the previous time around. It may be helpful to keep a brief record of how the scales are used in order to improve consistency of use over time.

It is useful for staff to decide how they are going to use the scales in their own context. It may be helpful to do a few 'dry runs' to get a feel for using the scales and to discover problems and issues, then get together to discuss any problems and possible solutions before using the scales in earnest.

Before embarking on using the scales, staff should be clear about:

- whether they will use all the scales in order to build up a general 'benchmark' or selected scales in order to benchmark specific aspects of behaviour;

- which groups of pupils they will focus on;

- over what timescale and in which contexts evidence from teaching sessions will be gathered.

Examples of a specific aim and clear plans to achieve it might be:

### Getting a baseline for monitoring a school strategy

Choose a week in which to observe groups of pupils, make notes or keep a brief diary throughout each day, and complete the scales at the end of the week, basing the judgements specifically on the behaviour shown during that week.

### Working closely with a group

Set an activity oriented towards a specific behaviour scale and observe pupils' behaviour during the activity, completing the relevant scale immediately after the session.

## Pupil awareness and involvement

The scales are designed to support school improvement; making pupils aware of the scales can therefore be a part of the process of improvement. The scales give pupils a means of reflecting on behaviour – by making expected standards of behaviour more explicit, by describing them in clear language, and by describing behaviour in separate parts. Thinking clearly about different aspects of behaviour is particularly important. It encourages pupils to reflect consciously about which things they need to change. It also encourages the idea that 'it's not *all* bad' and that tackling some things in particular is a manageable way of improving.

The criteria are intended to help provide a qualitative picture of pupils' behaviour and development. There are different approaches to involving pupils in the process; the best approach in a particular school will depend on the circumstances in the school:

### *1 Using the scales for discreet measurement*

Staff observe behaviour, using the scales to gather evidence from learning activities and behaviour in the school. Pupils are generally aware that this process is going to happen, have been introduced to the scales and the improvement strategy, but are not aware of exactly when they are being observed. This approach can be important for gaining an initial benchmark and subsequently assessing the impact of measures which the school has put in place to improve behaviour.

The issue here is an obvious one: that behaviour can change when people know that they are being observed. The whole point of using the scales is to improve things, so is there a problem with this? Yes, if the behaviour change is only superficial and for a short period of time. Therefore, discreet use of the scales is important where a school is trying to build up a valid picture of the position in the school and the direction and extent of any changes over time.

### *2 Using the scales in collaboration with pupils*

The scales can also be used in close work with pupils. This may involve setting learning activities where key aspects of behaviour are needed – such as sustained collaborative working – and completing a 'before and after' assessment using specific scales. Pupils can work together to discuss where they are on a specific scale and what things need to be changed in order to achieve a higher rating.

These approaches are not mutually exclusive but it is important to recognise that they have different purposes, the first having a school focus and the second a pupil focus.

The criteria and scales are tools for probing, for benchmarking within schools, for exploring patterns of behaviour, and for focusing discussion of action and progress. The key issue is improvement for all.

## Using the scales: case studies

Case study 1: Using the scales to devise a school-level target and an associated action plan

In an EBD school with pupils aged 8 to 16, use of the scales to get a baseline indicates a low score for emotional behaviour 12: Is socially aware. This is true of both younger and older pupils.

In response, management formulates the target: 'All pupils will improve on the scale for emotional behaviour 12 in the next two terms.'

The action plan to effect this is determined through discussion at the next INSET day, and comprises:

- Introduction of a breakfast club and lunchtime activities that encourage interaction.

- Drama will be introduced through English and the arts curriculum.

- All teachers will introduce and monitor pair working, since pupils work individually at present.
- All pupils will see their key workers in small groups as well as one-to-one.
- The school will arrange for the behaviour service staff to run a twilight session on the 'healthy schools' initiatives.
- Advice will be sought from the child psychiatry team on further strategies.

Case study 2: Using the scales to implement a whole-school behaviour curriculum and monitor its impact over time

Following an Ofsted inspection of a mainstream school with an on-site unit, staff agreed to review behaviour policy and practice.

Teachers completed the EBD scales for each class group as a baseline. Staff met in groups to plan new curriculum elements to implement a 'behaviour curriculum' to elevate individual pupils' ratings and the overall rating for the school.

It was agreed that emotional skills and behaviours would be promoted by teaching across the curriculum, and would also include circle time to teach and promote skills and behaviours.

Teachers and pupils were involved in writing class management plans to develop common routines, positive behaviour management strategies to react to 'misbehaviour', and positive and negative consequences based on rewards and sanctions. Class rules were then negotiated within each class group. They were referred to frequently within the classroom and reinforced through consistent use of positive and negative consequences.

Case study 3: Using the scales with a specific pupil group

In a secondary pupil referral unit, the year 8 class includes some particularly troubled pupils and has given cause for concern in the past. The pupils have developed a very positive relationship with their form teacher, who is with them for 40 per cent of their curriculum time. But the form teacher is leaving at the end of the year and there is concern about the effect that this will have.

The school uses the scale to measure pupils' current scores; this shows that while all three areas need to be supported, emotional development is in particular need of reinforcement.

The unit sets the following target: 'That all pupils will regain or exceed their current levels within half a term of the teacher leaving'.

Support strategies include:

- sharing the potential difficulties with parents and carers before the teacher leaves;
- providing additional support for the new teacher in managing the class's behaviour;
- involving the pupils in setting targets based on the scales and selecting their own rewards in meeting them;
- regular meetings between the head teacher and the class to discuss progress on the behaviours described in the scales.

## Record sheet

| LEARNING BEHAVIOUR | not at all | rarely | sometimes | fairly often | often | always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Is attentive and has an interest in schoolwork eg is not easily distracted, completes work, keeps on task and concentrates, has good motivation, shows interest, enjoys schoolwork. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Good learning organisation eg works systematically, at a reasonable pace, knows when to move on to the next activity or stage, can make choices, is organised. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. Is an effective communicator eg speech is coherent, thinks before answering. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. Works efficiently in a group eg takes part in discussions, contributes readily to group tasks, listens well in groups, works collaboratively. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Seeks help where necessary eg can work independently until there is a problem that cannot be solved without the teacher's intervention. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| CONDUCT BEHAVIOUR | not at all | rarely | sometimes | fairly often | often | always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Behaves respectfully towards staff eg respects staff and answers them politely, does not interrupt or deliberately annoy, does not show verbal aggression. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. Shows respect to other pupils eg interacts with other pupils politely and thoughtfully, does not tease, call names, swear, use psychological intimidation. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. Only interrupts and seeks attention appropriately eg behaves in ways warranted by the classroom activity, does not disrupt unnecessarily, or distract or interfere with others, does not pass notes, talk when others are talking, does not seek unwarranted attention. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. Is physically peaceable eg is not physically aggressive, avoids fights, is pleasant to other pupils, is not cruel or spiteful, does not strike out in temper. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. Respects property eg values and looks after property, does not damage or destroy property, does not steal. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR | not at all | rarely | sometimes | fairly often | often | always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Has empathy<br>eg is tolerant of others, shows understanding and sympathy, is considerate. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12. Is socially aware<br>eg interacts appropriately with others, is not a loner or isolated, reads social situations well. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13. Is happy<br>eg has fun when appropriate, smiles, laughs, is cheerful, is not tearful or depressed. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14. Is confident<br>eg is not anxious, has high self-esteem, is relaxed, does not fear failure, is not shy, is not afraid of new things, is robust. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15. Is emotionally stable and shows self control<br>eg moods remain relatively stable, does not have frequent mood swings, is patient, is not easily flustered, is not touchy. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# Emotional and behavioural development criteria

## 1. Is attentive and has an interest in schoolwork

The pupil:

- is attentive, listens to the teacher and is not easily distracted from the task in hand;
- should not find it difficult to work when others around them are talking at a reasonable level;
- shows an interest in most schoolwork;
- gets started on tasks without delay and has the motivation to carry them through;
- generally gets enjoyment from school tasks and consequently completes them without complaint.

Undesirable behaviours

A pupil may show verbal off-task behaviour, lack interest, not finish work, not listen or hear, have to be reminded again and again, have trouble paying attention, find it hard to sit still, not concentrate on tasks, have a short attention span, be easily distracted, fail to maintain interest in their work, give up easily, have a negative approach to school work in general, be lazy, respond negatively to school, be frequently absent or arrive late at lessons, arrive late at school, not have ambition, not be keen to achieve.

## 2. Has good learning organisation

The pupil:

- competently copes with individual learning situations;
- produces tidy work, at a reasonable pace;
- seems to have a good grasp of how to organise learning tasks so that they can be successfully completed.

This item deals with organisation deficits, which significantly hamper the learning of the individual, rather than motivational deficits.

Undesirable behaviours

A pupil may be forgetful, copy, have trouble organising schoolwork, rush into things without thinking, appear confused about learning tasks, be slow/inaccurate, worry about things that cannot be changed, get overly occupied with one activity, get easily frustrated, have difficulty in making choices, be fussy, have messy schoolwork, fail to meet targets/deadlines, complain of not being able to cope with schoolwork, not be prepared for lessons.

## 3. Is an effective communicator

The pupil:

- will show good communication skills;
- should be able to communicate effectively with adults and peers;
- is coherent, knows when it is appropriate to speak;
- is able to alter voice pitch and tone appropriately and uses non-verbal signals effectively, eg eye contact, stance, distance;
- should be able to organise communication in both individual and group situations.

This item refers to using or ignoring social communication, rather than to medical problems, such as stuttering.

Undesirable behaviours

A pupil may answer before a question is finished, not attempt to furnish information when requested, answer without stopping to think, not use language to communicate, have repetitive or incoherent speech, avoid looking others in the eye, have difficulty communicating, have a speech difficulty, have limited non-verbal support of speech, have difficulty planning behaviour and feedback and responding to feedback, have limited non-verbal communication of attitudes and emotions, talk constantly.

| 4. Works efficiently in a group | |
|---|---|
| The pupil: | Undesirable behaviours |
| • works well in a group situation;<br>• works collaboratively with others and is an effective communicator in group discussions;<br>• listens to what others have to say and consequently adds positively to group discussions;<br>• is willing to take on responsibilities in a group context. | A pupil may refuse to share with another student, have trouble waiting their turn, refuse interactive games or tasks, not be willing to work collaboratively. |

| 5. Seeks help where necessary | |
|---|---|
| The pupil: | Undesirable behaviours |
| • seeks attention from the teacher when appropriate;<br>• works independently unless a problem arises that cannot be solved without the teacher's help. | A pupil may be unable to work independently, constantly seek help, make excessive demands, persist and nag, not seek information appropriately or ask relevant questions. |

| 6. Behaves respectfully towards staff | |
|---|---|
| The pupil: | Undesirable behaviours |
| • respects the teacher and is cooperative and compliant, responding positively to instruction;<br>• does not talk back to the teacher or aim verbal aggression at the teacher;<br>• interacts politely with the teacher;<br>• will not be quarrelsome or deliberately try to annoy the teacher and will not interrupt or answer the teacher rudely. | A pupil may respond negatively to instruction, talk back to the teacher, be uncooperative with the teacher, be impertinent to the teacher, aim verbal violence at the teacher, swear in the teacher's presence, answer the teacher rudely, be quarrelsome with the teacher, deliberately annoy the teacher, interrupt the teacher, think it is funny to make the teacher angry. |

| 7. Shows respect to other pupils | |
|---|---|
| The pupil: | Undesirable behaviours |
| • respects other pupils and uses appropriate language, eg not swearing or calling them names;<br>• treats other pupils as equals and does not dominate them by intimidation or abuse;<br>• respects the views or rights of other pupils and avoids bullying or intimidation. | A pupil may aim verbal violence at other pupils, use psychological intimidation, show social aggression, be scornful with other students, call other pupils names, tease, try to dominate, use unethical behaviour (eg inappropriate sexual behaviour), blame others, push ahead in queues. |

## 8. Only interrupts and seeks attention appropriately

The pupil:

- does not seek to attract inappropriate attention in the classroom;
- acts in a manner appropriate to the classroom situation and does not play the fool, try to make the class laugh, shout out smart remarks or show off in the classroom;
- does not display attention-seeking behaviour;
- does not unnecessarily disrupt or interrupt other pupils who are working;
- does not verbally disrupt the class and keeps unauthorised talking to other pupils to a minimum;
- does not disrupt other pupils by physical disruption such as nudging or poking.

Undesirable behaviours

A pupil may hum, fidget, disturb or disrupt others, talk to other pupils when not authorised to, seek attention, make the rest of the class laugh, pass notes in class, be verbally disruptive, throw things about during lessons, often talk when someone else is talking, climb on things, run around classroom, tap their foot or pencil, call out in class, eat, suck or drink inedible substances, behave like a clown, be loud, get into everything, be hyperactive, act smart, show concern for immediate rewards, need excessive adult contact, be excitable, do dangerous things without thinking, talk about imaginary things as if they were real, shout in class.

## 9. Is physically peaceable

The pupil:

- does not show physical aggression towards adults or other pupils;
- does not physically pick on others;
- is not cruel or spiteful to others;
- avoids getting into fights with others;
- does not strike out in anger, have temper tantrums or aggressive outbursts.

Undesirable behaviours

A pupil may fight, aim physical violence at other students, often lose their temper, yell and throw things, bully, aim physical violence at staff, force other students to do things against their will, be deliberately cruel, pick on others, try to get even, be spiteful.

## 10. Respects property

The pupil:

- respects the property of others, eg takes care of school property;
- does not take part in acts of wilful damage or destruction;
- does not steal from others.

Undesirable behaviours

A pupil may have poor respect for property, destroy their own things, destroy others' things, damage school property, steal things.

## 11. Has empathy

The pupil:

- is tolerant and considerate towards others;
- understands how others are feeling and tries to act in a way appropriate to the situation, eg the pupil may try to comfort someone who is upset or hurt;
- displays emotions appropriate to the situation and is not emotionally detached;
- does not laugh at someone who is upset or injured.

**Undesirable behaviours**

A pupil may lack the ability to take on the role of others, be intolerant of others, be emotionally detached, be selfish, have no awareness of others' feelings.

## 12. Is socially aware

The pupil:

- who is socially aware will be conscious of, and understand, the social interactions happening around them;
- interacts appropriately with other people both verbally and non-verbally;
- is not socially isolated and does not spend long periods of time sitting or standing alone;
- has friends among their peers, and is not a loner;
- is not frequently daydreaming and staring into space;
- is actively involved in activities within the classroom;
- does not seem aloof, inactive, passive or withdrawn.

**Undesirable behaviours**

A pupil may daydream, stare into space, be inactive, be passive, be aloof, be out of touch with reality, be withdrawn and unresponsive to stimulation, not participate in class activities, not be accepted, not be well liked, lack accurate perceptions of others, say or feel they do not have any friends, stare blankly, be listless, show bizarre behaviours, lack self-awareness.

## 13. Is happy

The pupil:

- appears happy by smiling and laughing when appropriate;
- should be able to have fun;
- is generally cheerful and not tearful and upset;
- is not discontented, sulky, morose or miserable.

**Undesirable behaviour**

A pupil may be depressed, discontented, unhappy, distressed, talk about not wanting to live, be prone to emotional upset, be unable to have fun, be tearful on arrival, cry easily, be sullen or sulky, be serious or sad, be self-harming, be pessimistic.

| 14. Is confident | |
|---|---|
| The pupil: | Undesirable behaviours |
| • is not anxious and is confident in most situations, while not showing bravado, recklessness or unrealistic expectations of their competence;<br><br>• is not afraid of new things and does not fear failure when taking on new tasks;<br><br>• is not self-conscious or shy in most situations and does not feel inferior to other pupils;<br><br>• is willing to read out aloud in class and put their hand up to answer or ask appropriate questions;<br><br>• is typically forthcoming in group/ class discussions. | A pupil may act as if extremely frightened to the point of crying, be anxious, tense, fearful, upset by new people or situations, be reticent, suck their thumb or bite their nails, lack confidence, fear failure, have feelings of inferiority, worry about things that cannot be changed, be negativistic, be afraid of new things, feel unable to succeed, lack self-esteem, be self-conscious, be overly submissive, be cautious, be shy, not take the initiative. |

| 15. Is emotionally stable and shows good self-control | |
|---|---|
| The pupil: | Undesirable behaviours |
| • remains relatively emotionally stable and does not frequently swing from positive to negative moods;<br><br>• soon returns to a stable frame of mind after being upset, shows good emotional resilience and is not moody;<br><br>• shows good self-control and is able to manage their feelings and actions to suit the situation;<br><br>• is not easily frustrated or flustered and does not show signs of being touchy or uneasy;<br><br>• is able to delay gratification when required, and can wait for rewards or pleasurable items for prolonged periods of time. | A pupil may be touchy, display inappropriate emotional reactions, have difficulty expressing needs and feelings, have frequent or strong mood changes, be irritable, be tough-minded, stay disappointed for a long time if a favourite activity is cancelled, be unable to delay gratification, be easily flustered, be sensitive, have little self-respect, over-react to normal situations, not accept punishment or praise, instigate poor situations, be unable to accept responsibility. |

# Part 2: The school improvement cycle

This part of the booklet provides a general overview of the school improvement cycle, as background to the specific approaches to target setting in the area of emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD).

The benefits of a regular cycle of auditing school performance and planning for improvement are well known. The majority of schools now engage in an annual cycle of self-evaluation and development planning. In maintained schools, this process often informs the statutory targets that they are required to set annually.

Statutory school targets apply to all maintained schools and are expressed in terms of pupils' attainment in national curriculum levels in core subjects at ages 11 and 14, and in GCSE/GNVQ qualifications at age 16.

For many mainstream, special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), other aspects of pupils' development are of equal priority to their academic attainment. In some, the priority will be pupils' emotional and behavioural development. Staff will want to adapt their approach to the school improvement cycle to encompass this and to monitor and inform targets for driving improvement in pupils' emotional and behavioural development.

For all schools, the annual school improvement cycle is summarised in five steps:
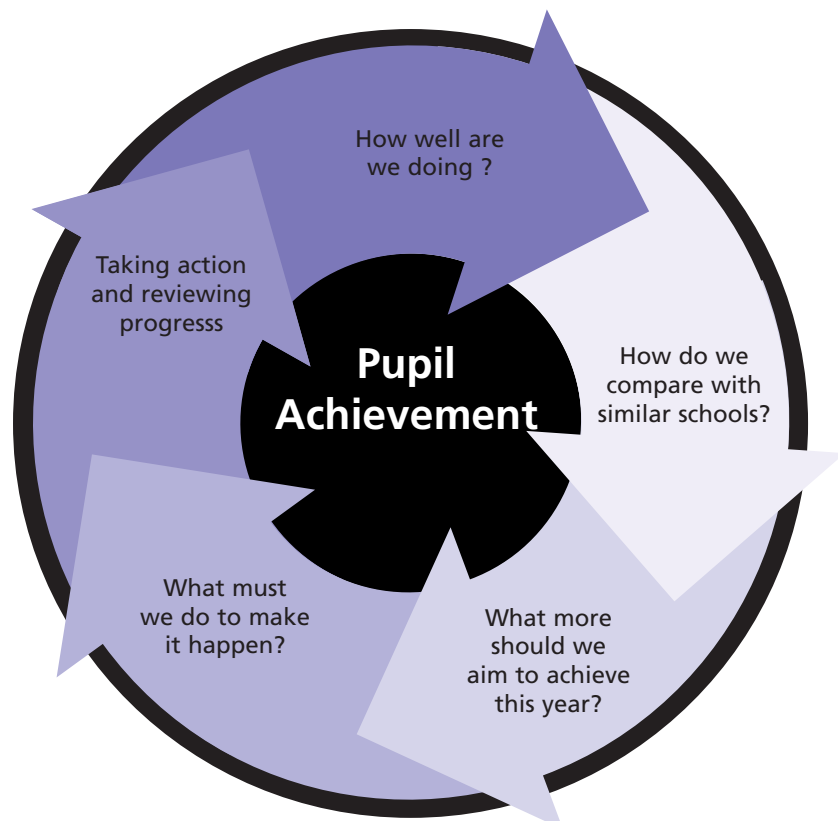
## Step 1: How well are we doing?

The first, and most important, stage in the school improvement cycle involves carefully reviewing school performance in terms of pupils' performance. In the context of improving pupils' emotional and behavioural development, 'How well are we doing?' means looking critically at pupils' behaviour for those aspects that should be prioritised and improved through planned action taken by the school.

Pupils identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) have the potential to achieve the same standards as other pupils of their age, including high achievement. With this in mind, schools will want to ask probing questions about pupils' performance in terms of their academic achievements. National curriculum level descriptions set the standards to use in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' performances at the end of a key stage are appropriate measures of this aspect of the school's overall performance.

This guidance looks at ways of moving beyond academic performance, in order to measure aspects of pupils' learning, conduct, and emotional behaviours – addressing questions about how well the school is doing in responding to those aspects of pupil performance.

Measuring individual pupils' behavioural development is a challenging task. The common pattern of progress, when measured using ratings such as the national curriculum eight-level scale, is one of the majority of pupils making linear progression over time.

This pattern of progress is not, however, true for pupils' behavioural development. It is normal for behaviour to fluctuate. Environmental factors in particular have a much stronger influence on behaviour than they do on academic attainment. For example, the behaviour of a class can change because of changes in staff, the arrival of a new pupil, or changes in the peer groupings within the class. Nonetheless, useful qualitative pictures of the behaviour of pupils can be developed which provide a valuable basis for discussions about the development and monitoring of strategies designed to improve pupils' learning, conduct, and emotional behaviours.

The measurement of pupils' learning, conduct, and emotional behaviours relies on teacher observations. Comparisons of the performance of different groups or different schools can be reliable only where teachers' judgements have been standardised – through discussions and the use of common procedures. Approaches to this are given in Part 1 of this guidance.

It is important to recognise that the nature of behavioural development, and the effect of the environment upon it, means perceptions of behavioural standards can be very different between staff within the same school and between schools. A useful starting point for a school looking to target improving behaviour is to take stock of how pupils' behaviour is currently assessed throughout the school. It is also helpful to consider how the school's criteria, assessment systems and record keeping can be improved for the purpose of supporting school improvement.

### Step 2: How do we compare with similar schools?

The second step in the school improvement cycle is considering how well the school is doing in the wider context of what pupils are doing in other similar schools. This is important to set the school's performance in the context of what might be expected of it. It can also be the first stage in uncovering different, sometimes more effective, practices.

It is important not to waste time and energy looking for too much precision in the similarity between schools. Comparing school performances does not always provide answers about the effectiveness of teaching practice between schools. Rather, the point of such comparisons is to fuel professional discussion amongst staff in the school about its performance by raising questions about practices and pupil outcomes. Those questions will, in turn, need to be probed further.

Looking at performance in the context of 'broadly similar' schools is very important. National benchmark information in the annual DfES/QCA/Ofsted *Autumn package* allows 'like for like' comparisons to be made about performance measured by national curriculum levels and GCSE/GNVQs. This information presents the range of performance of similar schools, grouped together on the basis of socio-economic factors and pupils' prior attainment.

Comparisons between schools can be made on the basis of other factors. For example, at a local level, comparisons might be made between EBD schools or PRUs about the proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations. However, as is always the case with relatively small datasets and among small groups of pupils, small changes can cause big shifts in overall ratings of achievement, of behaviour and so on.

Useful questions about pupils' behaviour can be explored through comparing performance on the basis of other measures, such as comparing *rates* of progress made, or comparing profiles of pupils' behaviour using commonly applied criteria (using the approaches outlined in Part 1 of this guidance). When using performance measures such as these, the progress or performance profile of one cohort can be considered against other cohorts at the school, between schools and, over time, against the progress made by cohorts at the school in previous years.

Throughout this guidance, we emphasise the importance of careful interpretation of the information produced by using the EBD criteria and scales and the need to be clear about what is being measured and what is causing variation over time and/or between pupil groups. With due care, questions arising from comparing the performance of similar schools and cohorts can help to reveal the priorities for development, both in terms of priorities for the curriculum or pupils' personal development, and priorities for particular cohorts of pupils at the school.

### Step 3: What more should we aim to achieve?

Staff working with pupils with special educational needs are familiar with setting targets, through the use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Targets in IEPs help staff to focus work to meet priorities for individual pupils and may address aspects of behaviour or basic or study skills. They are not the same as school improvement targets. The key difference is that school targets drive *school* improvement – including approaches to learning, assessment, support to individual pupils, and the general social context operating within the school.

At the heart of the Government's introduction of school target-setting legislation in 1998 (requiring all schools to set targets for pupils aged 11 and 16) was evidence that setting targets can drive school improvement. Following that initial target-setting legislation, further consultations on target setting at key stage 3 and in schools that set zero-rated targets, took place in 2000. The outcomes of those consultations are that schools will be required to set key stage 3 targets in English, mathematics and science, and that schools which set zero-rated targets will be required to set their measurable performance targets at key stages 2, 3 and 4 in the relevant subjects using the P scales or other performance criteria where appropriate.

Over and above the statutory requirements, it is for schools to decide how many additional targets to set and what for. It is important to strike the balance between setting enough targets to give focus to day-to-day action on improvement and setting so many that effectiveness is diluted.

The features of effective target setting for improving pupils' learning, conduct and emotional behaviours will mimic those of statutory targets – they will be SMART. This means they will be:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and set against Timescales.

What constitutes an appropriate timescale will depend on the nature of the target set and the subsequent necessary action for achievement. Effective targets are set against timescales that both maintain impetus in the work of the school and are sufficient for new strategies to take effect. The key to this element of target setting is to set a timescale that will provide the optimum effect in terms of pupils' achievement – it should be challenging but achievable.

## Steps 4 and 5: Taking action

Having reviewed pupils' behaviour, identified priorities for development and set targets for improvement, the final step in the school improvement cycle presents the same challenge for all schools – the challenge of taking effective action. From a shared understanding of performance and with clear targets for improvement, action needs to be planned. The plans should show clearly what is needed to be done by staff, pupils and any other key players (for example from other services) to achieve the targets, and how implementation will be supported with both resources and staff development. Taking action can include identifying tasks such as improving accommodation or using greater opportunities for integration and inclusion.

It is important to put in place effective strategies to monitor and evaluate changes in behaviour as the new practices take effect. This ensures that the school is on course for the target, and helps with any decision about whether aspects of the strategy need to be changed.

Crucial at this stage is commitment and support from school management to ensure that targets and action plans are shared with colleagues both within and outside the school. This will enable all relevant staff to shape the action, to clarify and reinforce exactly what the school is trying to achieve, how this will be done and how the school will evaluate its success in meeting these aims.

It is important that targets are expressed clearly in terms of outcomes for the group of pupils. Evidence indicates that best practice occurs when all relevant staff are consulted on the targets and are fully involved in their implementation. In addition to teachers, key staff to consider are, where appropriate, learning support services, counsellors, community psychiatric nurses, external agencies, youth services, teaching assistants, midday supervisors, and bus escorts. Many schools will also seek to involve parents and, of course, the pupils themselves.

## Annex: Useful references

A list of relevant resources can be found at
http://www.qca.org.uk/links/res/ebd.asp

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# About this publication

## Who's it for?

This document can be used by managers in mainstream schools, EBD schools and specialised units. LEA Support Service might also find this useful. It is relevant to pupils in all key stages.

## What's it for?

This document is intended to support school improvement by providing guidance on setting improvement targets for pupils' emotional and behavioural development.