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Case study

Using simple, clear behaviour expectations in school

How Forest Academy used the Behaviour Hubs programme to change perceptions of misbehaviour and respond to pupils' complex needs.

From: [Department for Education](#)

Published 5 June 2023

The [behaviour in schools guidance](#) says:

“By having simple, clear and well communicated expectations of behaviour and providing staff with bespoke training on the needs of the pupils at the school, behaviour can be managed consistently so that both pupils and staff can thrive, achieve and build positive relationships based on predictability, fairness and trust.”

Forest Academy is an example of how to do this.

Characteristics of Forest Academy

Forest Academy is a primary school, for children aged 3 to 11, in the small town of Brandon, West Suffolk. It has two-form entry with 448 children on roll, including 52 in the school's nursery.

Twenty-five per cent of the school's pupils are on the pupil premium and

20% have special educational needs and disabilities. Both these proportions are higher than the national average. Fourteen per cent of students speak English as an additional language.

The school noticed that in recent years children starting school had low speech and language levels. Leaders made this a focus for the whole school.

What the school aimed to achieve with Behaviour Hubs

Forest Academy joined the [Behaviour Hubs programme](#) in April 2021 and graduated in March 2022. Their goals included:

- simplifying behaviour expectations
- developing the school's positive behaviour and relationships policy
- ensuring consistency, by revising expectations for all staff and children regularly

Working with lead schools

Forest Academy worked with a lead school – a school with an exemplary behaviour culture, Lyons Hall – and drew on their example of how to approach behaviour expectations.

The school's leaders attended open days at several other lead schools and opened conversations with various staff about their practice.

Solutions

The school:

- developed a simple, consistent approach to behaviour
- adopted the mantra “be kind, be safe, be responsible”, and used it consistently around the school

The school also focused its continuous professional development programme on improving behaviour. The programme had training sessions on topics including:

- [Behaviour Hubs webinars](#)
- [Tom Bennett's independent review of behaviour](#)
- restorative practices
- [mental health and child wellbeing](#)

Results and benefits

Ofsted rated the school ‘good’ in November 2021, part way through the Behaviour Hubs programme. It had previously been ‘requires improvement’.

The inspection report said staff had high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. It said pupils:

- felt “safe at school”
- used the school’s mantra to guide their conduct

- could explain what they would do if they had concerns
- said bullying was rare and were confident it would be addressed quickly
- enjoyed coming to school
- said the school was a happy place where everyone got on well

At the end of the programme, survey data showed staff agreeing that :

- there was a clear vision of what was expected, and what good behaviour meant
- policy, rules and routines were easy to follow
- pupils were given information to know how to behave in school
- behaviour rules and procedures helped to make the school safe and happy
- staff built positive, respectful and supportive relationships with all pupils

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