

The Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP)

Ofsted inspectors have, over a two-year period, monitored the development of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). This leaflet is to share initial findings with schools and local authorities (LAs) as to what has been most effective and where there is room for improvement.

These findings will be relevant to all schools and LAs and not only to those involved in BIP.

What is BIP?

The BIP developed in phases and targeted schools serving complex catchment areas. Most primary schools selected were located in areas where there was high pupil mobility. BIP aims to reduce non-attendance and exclusion while improving pupils' behaviour. Across the LAs visited the key elements of the programme were:

- the development of behaviour and education support teams (BEST)
- the introduction or extension of 'learning mentor' roles
- appointment of attendance workers (usually administrative staff)
- establishing provision for disruptive pupils
- developing provision for excluded pupils from day one of the exclusion.

Outcomes

Local authorities, despite some difficulties in recruiting and retaining core staff, have managed BIP well. The link between BIP and Excellence in Cities (EiC) partnerships is a strong feature and successful schools can demonstrate how they have used BIP to build on and extend success under EiC. All LAs supplied schools with robust data on attendance and exclusions. Advice offered about developing behaviour strategies, though not always taken, has been good. Other LA services, such as education welfare and the school psychological service, have contributed to the establishment of BESTs. Recruiting other professionals from social services and the child and adolescent mental health services has been more problematic. As a result, there is considerable variation in the composition quality and working of BESTs.

What LAs do well:

- give sound and helpful advice to schools on behaviour and attendance strategies
- provide quality in-service training
- facilitate opportunities for schools to share good practice
- monitor the work of BIP through EiC partnerships.

Across all LEAs, BIP has made a positive contribution to schools facing high levels of challenge to improve pupils' attitudes, motivation, attendance and behaviour. The schools selected for the BIP experience higher than average levels of pupil mobility and, in some cases, as many as 60% of children move school during the academic year. Primary schools have made better overall progress than secondary schools. The key features of their success are:

- making an audit of behaviour and attendance to gain an overview of issues
- using data to inform organisational practice, deployment of staff and other resources and in-service training
- collaboration between schools, and with the LA, leading to common practices in tackling break and lunchtime behaviour, particularly through play activity
- introducing a range of other professionals in schools to work with parents and pupils, such as BEST teams
- a strong emphasis on preventative work, exploiting their daily contact with parents to involve them in managing attendance and behaviour
- pupils supporting each other through activities such as 'nurture' groups, 'a quiet place', support/befriending groups including 'circles of friends', and 'golden time'
- structuring finances so the work of BIP is sustainable beyond the period of initial funding
- deploying funding to introduce, or increase, the numbers of learning mentors and learning support assistants to work with children and parents

In these schools small but significant changes have increased or maintained attendance, reduced parentally condoned absence and improved attitudes, motivation and pupil behaviour. The secure environment created by these primary schools enables pupils to feel safe. An ethos that values pupils' academic and social achievements has been created and the schools involve parents more.

BIP is only effective when headteachers use additional money and resources to change or enhance good practice. Where they work closely in partnership with the LA and a range of other agencies, changes made to ways of working are nearly always sustainable. In contrast, where headteachers use funding to maintain systems that are not working well, outcomes are poor.

The Behaviour Improvement Programme has enabled well-managed schools to improve attendance and behaviour. Sustaining such gains in these schools is likely because of fundamental changes to how the schools work and how they monitor progress and evaluate their own performance.

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