

**Current Practices and Needs in Primary Schools in Ireland  
and an Exploration of whether there is need for a  
Whole-School Positive Behaviour Support Programme**

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Professional Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology

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Whole-School Positive Behaviour Support Programme**

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## Abstract

This research examines current practices and needs in relation to behaviour support in selected primary schools in the Republic of Ireland and examines whether practices and needs differ depending on location, school gender and perspectives of respondents. It seeks to determine whether the needs could be met with a whole-school positive behaviour support programme.

Whole-school positive behaviour support is underpinned by two psychological theories, namely Behaviourism and Systems Change. The three-staged methodological approach involved Department of Education and Science (DES) Primary School Directory for eligible schools, qualitative and quantitative data, with a combination of questionnaires, interviews and focus-group interviews with principals, teachers and pupils.

The majority of respondents agreed that current practices in behaviour support at school-level included the following: *behaviour rules are enforced consistently, staff roles are clear and school behaviour rules are fair*. On whether current practices differed between location, school gender and perspective, no significant differences were found in relation to location but significant differences were found in school gender on two variables and on perspective of respondents on all three variables.

The most important needs according to principals and teachers were *consistency between school staff and rules systematically taught*. Principals also chose *behaviour management training for school personnel* while teachers chose *rewards and consequences*. Pupils chose *respect between pupils and teachers, social skills taught, rewards and consequences, and consistency between school staff*.

On whether needs differed depending on location, school gender and perspective, no significant difference was noted by respondents in relation to location on the most important needs. No significant difference in school gender was noted except on the *offer of a school behaviour programme*. However, significant differences were found depending on perspective of respondents on *rules systematically taught, consistency between school staff, rewards and consequences* and *respect between pupils and teachers*.

The research concluded that a Whole-School Positive Behaviour Support Programme would be a good fit for Irish primary schools as it answered the needs highlighted by respondents. Additionally, it is flexible and can accommodate each school's unique ethos and culture.

The research concluded with recommendations at macro and micro levels.



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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction to research**

Current practice and needs in primary schools in Ireland and an exploration of whether there is need for a Whole School Positive Behaviour Support Programme

### **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research study is to examine current practices and needs in relation to behaviour support and to determine whether the needs as stated by respondents can be met with a whole-school positive behaviour support programme. Information was sought from the Department of Education (DES) Republic of Ireland's Primary School Directory for eligible schools, from principals, teachers and pupils, utilising questionnaires and in interviews conducted with principals and focus-group interviews with teachers and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils.

The chapter begins with a general overview (Section 1.2) and is followed by the rationale for the study (Section 1.3). Current support systems in Irish primary schools - policy and practice is included (Section 1.4) followed by the aims of the current research (Section 1.5). The importance and distinctive contribution to knowledge for educational psychologists is outlined (Section 1.6) and finally the thesis outline is highlighted (Section 1.7).

### **1.2 Overview of the study**

This study assisted a selected number of primary schools to highlight current practices and more importantly their needs in relation to behaviour support at school level in order to determine whether there is need for a whole-school positive behaviour support programme.

The need for research into misbehaviour is of national concern, and has been highlighted by many studies both internationally (Carter et al., 2006) and

nationally (National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE), 2004). In the Republic of Ireland (hereafter called Ireland) NABMSE (ibid) has shown that there is a perceived increase in behaviour difficulties nationally and called for research into this area. This study has taken up this suggestion and examines current practices and more importantly needs at school level in the researcher's area in a county in Ireland, hereafter referred to as the Abbey region (fictitious), and seeks to explore if a whole-school positive behaviour support programme would be a good fit for Irish primary school needs. Although termed a programme, whole-school positive behaviour support is more a process or strategy for working at system's level, taking into account each school's unique values and needs. Working at the school/macro/policy level was thought to be a better use of scarce resources than working at the micro or individual level. Methodology used was in three phases.

- Phase 1 entailed gathering data from the Department of Education and Science Primary School Directory (DES, 2006) in order to locate schools from different locations and different school types with reference to gender (boys/girls/mixed) in order to get a broad representation of schools in the research study.
- Phase 2 represented a quantitative element where principals, teachers, and pupils completed questionnaires on current practice and needs as well as associated issues in their schools.
- Phase 3 was qualitative in nature, and entailed interviews with four principals and focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils on needs and associated questions.

Respondents were selected partly on the basis of school location, (urban/rural), school gender (boys/girls/mixed) and perspectives (principals/teachers/pupils), so that as wide a mix of views as possible was collected on current practices and gaps/needs in behaviour support. Selection was also contingent on whether the respondents accepted an invitation to take part, as schools are always busy places. Greater priority was given to the quantitative element (in this case, questionnaires) as it

allowed for objective measurement from large numbers of people, in this case from 410 respondents in 16 schools, on practices and needs in their respective schools.

The less dominant qualitative element allowed principals, teachers and pupils to voice their views, which can be honest, open and laden with values, thus emphasising their 'lived experiences'. While this perspective has the effect of bringing the quantitative element to life, it also provided a rich visual subjective picture, which cannot be provided by the quantitative measurement element, thus adding a further dimension to the study.

The seeds for this present study were sown for this research student after placement as a trainee educational psychologist in a special school for children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). Research carried out at this time was the subject of a thesis. On this placement, this researcher witnessed the misery of both staff and pupils daily, with staff being physically and verbally assaulted, and pupils suffering mainly because of one particular pupil who was out of control in this small school, thereby causing, from my perspective, misery to all and sundry. Neither pupils nor teachers seemed to enjoy their environment and this was borne out by an interview with the principal who said that staff turnover was high, with teachers leaving as soon as they found employment elsewhere. In fact during my one-term placement, I never met one class teacher as she had been on sick leave for over a year. Pupils were equally miserable with daily use made of the time-out room where they were brought kicking and screaming when they misbehaved, and where on one particular day as I was leaving the school, I was lucky to escape serious injury as just before I exited, the complete window from the time-out room (positioned just above the front door) came crashing to the ground where a pupil had pushed it out. Virtually all pupils who were interviewed by the researcher at that time wished they were back in their local mainstream schools with their siblings and friends. Placement in this school fired my interest in behaviour support which led to a passionate belief that there must be a better way to manage misbehaviour. The rationale for such a study is now examined.

### **1.3 Rationale for research**

Challenging behaviour by pupils is an important issue internationally. According to Webster-Stratton and Hammond (1998), the prevalence of behavioural difficulties is about 10 per cent and may be as high as 25 per cent for children from low-income homes. Bone and Meltzer (1989) identify behavioural difficulties as the largest single category of difficulties in childhood, and Devlin (1996) and Webster-Stratton and Reid (2003) pointed out that behavioural difficulties have the potential to be a springboard to crime in later life. Similarly in Irish education, behavioural difficulties are of major concern at macro and micro level and are on the agenda annually at teachers' conferences. It is essential therefore that behaviour support be provided to pupils and to school personnel in their efforts at meeting their pupils' needs.

Positive behaviour support (PBS) at whole-school level is provided and funded by the Departments of Education in other countries, including the U.S. and Australia, and now forms part of educational policy in these countries. However, this is not the case in Ireland. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides an educational psychological service for pupils in primary and post-primary schools. Service delivery is within a consultative framework where there is a balance of consultation and casework about individual children (two-thirds) and work of a more preventative nature, generally referred to as support and development work (one-third). However, instead of sometimes working at the wider systemic level, which would benefit all the pupils within a school as well as up-skilling all teachers, educational psychologists are constantly drawn into working mostly at individual level. Consequently, because of the workload, only a fraction of children receive a service and they have to wait to avail of that service. Because the service is about intervention and not prevention, it could be said that the pupil has to wait to fail before advice is provided.

A preventive, positive whole-school approach is defined by Sugai *et al.* (2000, p.133) as *the application of positive behavioural interventions and systems to achieve socially important behaviour change* and is considered an effective



intervention according to research (Turnbull *et al.*, 2002). PBS is not another curriculum or programme that is added to what is occurring in schools according to Sugai *et al.* (2000). Instead, PBS schools are asked to consider ways of working 'smarter' by using time more efficiently and selecting proven effective strategies that work for all pupils and not just those with behavioural difficulties. The PBS approach not only targets all the pupils in the school in preventing problem behaviour, it also increases safety, academic performance and establishes positive school culture (*ibid*).

The critical components of positive behaviour support include: setting consensus-driven behaviour expectations; teaching critical interpersonal skills; providing systematic positive reinforcement; monitoring intervention efficacy continuously through data collection and analysis; involving all stakeholders (students, teachers, administrators, and parents) in formulating discipline practices; reducing and eliminating reactive, punitive, and exclusionary strategies in favour of a proactive, preventive and skill-building orientation (Horner & Sugai, 2000).

The justification and rationale, therefore, for focussing on positive behaviour support at whole-school level within **primary** (national/elementary) schools arose for many reasons:

- The researcher's interest in the topic after a placement in a special school for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD);
- The researcher is a member of the internal working group of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) on behaviour and has a strong professional interest in this topic;
- The growing national concern about the perceived increase in behaviour difficulties, borne out by an increase in the number of special schools for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and the establishment by the Minister of Education of a National Behaviour Support Service at post-primary level;

- A gap in the psychological service to schools where presently, the focus is mostly at individual level;
- Research carried out in the U.S. (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003) advocates that working with younger children is preferable before problem behaviour becomes 'crystallised', which tends to happen after 7/8 years of age;
- Research in Ireland (NABMSE, 2004) stating that support in this area is badly needed.
- A recent publication *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* by the National Education (Welfare) Board (NEWB, 2008) recommends an audit and on-going review of the Code of Behaviour in schools.

The rationale for examining differences between schools on the grounds of location arose from research findings on behavioural difficulties. The seminal study by Rutter (1989), examining behavioural disorders in primary age pupils in a rural setting (Isle of Wight), found a prevalence rate of approximately 7 per cent, while a contrasting urban study of younger children (Freeman, 1991, as cited in Parry-Jones & Queloz, 1991) revealed a prevalence of 22 per cent and this can increase in middle childhood to 25 per cent for disorders of a psychological nature (Richman *et al.*, 1982, as cited in Parry-Jones & Queloz, *ibid*). Two Irish studies showed similar prevalence rates in urban and rural settings. The Porteous study (1991) drew groups from urban and rural locations, and found a prevalence rate of 15 per cent for behavioural disorders while Fitzgerald's study (1991), carried out in an urban disadvantaged area returned a slightly higher prevalence rate of 16.6 per cent. An Australian study (Essen *et al.*, 2002), which examined the public education system in New South Wales covering over 2,000 urban and rural primary and high schools, stated that although parents, teachers and students complained about misbehaving students, few schools reported serious misbehaviour to be greater than 5 per cent. In this study, misbehaving pupils were reported to show a lack of respect for all, especially in the classroom. A consequence of this was that pupils themselves reported misbehaving pupils

to be their major problem at school, it caused teachers to 'count the days' to flee the situation and many believed that it was the single most important reason for parents to transfer their children away from these stressful situations to private schools.

Gender differences will also be examined in this study because gender differences for pupils with behavioural problems are well documented in research. Dawn *et al.* (2000) looked specifically at gender imbalances and found that less than 20 per cent of pupils with behavioural problems are girls, with the vast majority of places taken up by boys in schools for pupils with behavioural difficulties. This study theorised that the ratio of boys to girls could be as high as 6 or 8:1. In Ireland, the ratio of boys to girls with behavioural problems is 4:1 (Department of Education & Science, Special Education Review Committee (SERC), 1993).

Bearing in mind that the above research findings suggest that there are potential gender differences in behavioural problems between urban and rural schools, the researcher deemed it important in the context of this research, to clarify if these issues needed consideration before an implementation could be put into place in primary schools in the Abbey region. Given the important differences in behavioural problems and psychological disorders depending on school location and gender, it is important to determine whether practices that are currently in place differ between school location and school gender. Alternatively, any differences could be because of different approaches dealing with different needs currently seen in the schools.

The perspective of the respondents was added out of interest. The Essen *et al.* (2002) study highlighted the fact that perceived behavioural difficulties differed considerably between school management, teachers, pupils and parents. The researcher was curious therefore as to whether the perspectives of principals, teachers and especially pupils differed in regard to current practices and needs on the topic of behaviour support in their schools.

The need for behaviour support in schools is timely, and because of scarce resources and time management, intervention at systems level is more beneficial than working at individual level. This is backed up by research (Gale, 1993, as cited in Norwich, 2000), which states that *intervention focused on the child is at best ... palliative .....* (p.179). Gale (ibid) also stated that *Interventions at the level of the organisation is more cost effective and carries with it the means of helping the school to help itself* (p.179). Earlier research by Gersch (1986) also pointed out the need to work at systems level and change the system instead of pointing the finger at the individual level of the child.

For the above reasons, this researcher hypothesises that the programme *Positive Behaviour Support at Whole-School level*, which implements preventive practices and targets the whole school population may be a suitable programme for Irish primary schools. But before any programme can be implemented, there has to be preplanning, involving many steps, including the need for change (Oetting *et al.*, 1995). Miller (1990, as cited in Oetting *et al.*, ibid) theorises that need is the basis from which an individual's motivation to seek information, to learn, and to adopt new behaviours is derived. This research aims to establish what is currently in place and seeks to understand if Irish school personnel and pupils perceive a need for systemic change in the form of a whole-school positive behaviour support programme. If there is the need for support at the systemic level, this will be identified by this research study. As already pointed out, working at the systemic level also fits the National Educational Psychological Service model of consultation, which, as well as working at individual level, seeks to deliver support at the whole school level, thereby reaching the maximum number of children possible. The next section sets the scene in the area of government policy and what happens in practice around support systems in Irish primary schools.

#### **1.4 Current support systems in Irish primary schools - policy and practice**

In Ireland, all schools are required by law to have a code of behaviour (Department of Education & Science, 1990), and the Education (Welfare) Act (Department of Education & Science, 2000) requires schools to provide parents with a copy of the Code of Behaviour when pupils enter the school. The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (Department of Education & Science, 2004) provides for integration and inclusion and enshrines the rights of pupils with special educational needs in law. It also established the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) who deals with resources for children with special needs. The NCSE foresees that the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) will be under resourced. NEPS is a statutory agency of the Department of Education and Science which was set up to provide a psychological service to primary and second level schools. At present, NEPS has less than 200 educational psychologists but the NCSE has recommended 400, one for every 10 schools (Walshe, 2007). The NCSE also appointed 80 Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) to coordinate pupils' needs in schools around the country.

Pupils' needs are described as falling into two categories according to the NCSE (Department of Education & Science, 2005) – high incidence disabilities (happening with high frequency, such as dyslexia) and low incidence disabilities (happening with low frequency e.g. Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties - SEBD). All schools (depending on size of school) have a general allocation of Learning Support teachers to accommodate children with high incidence disabilities who fall below the average range in academic subjects (usually English & Maths). When intervention at class level by the classroom teacher is deemed insufficient (class support), these pupils are usually supported by the Learning Support teachers in a group setting (school support) either within the classroom or taken out to another classroom.

SENOs are gatekeepers for allocating teaching hours for pupils with low incidence disabilities and if there are care needs, the SENO may also allocate

a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) to support the pupil. Pupils are allocated a set number of teaching hours per week (commonly called resource hours) by the SENO because of their low incidence disability and depending on the degree of the disability. However in recent times there has been a blurring between the teacher roles of Learning Support/Resource and pupils with resource hours are now mostly managed in a small group setting. Learning Support/Resource Teachers are often called Special Education Teachers (SET) or Support Teachers.

A dilemma for schools and Special Education Teachers who are supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties is that these teachers are trained primarily to support pupils academically. Although they normally attend additional courses/training e.g. Higher Diploma in Special Educational Needs, there is no recognised national training or support generally available to schools that try to provide support to pupils with social, emotional or behavioural needs. While there is some support at second level in the guise of a pastoral care system, counsellors, and in a limited number of schools, the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), there is a dearth of behaviour support in primary schools. The content of the support provided by the Special Education Teacher to the pupil concerning their behaviour seems to be left totally to the discretion of the teacher in question. However, in the last couple of years, a start has been made in providing some training in behaviour management. A small group of NEPS psychologists have run behaviour management training for individual teachers (Incredible Years teacher training programme, Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2004). While this is much needed (as is borne out by the large number of teachers who apply for places), it is administered at individual teacher level and according to feedback from schools and from psychologists who provide the courses to teachers, it is geared to the younger child and is more suitable for pupils up to approximately seven years. It is suggested that the introduction of a whole-school positive behaviour support programme would go some way towards solving this dilemma as it would add structure and provide support at systems level to all primary school pupils, as well as to school personnel, and parents.

### **1.5 Aims of current research**

The main aim of this research is to identify what are the gaps/needs in relation to behaviour support in selected primary schools in the Abbey region (fictitious). The needs will be examined in order to ascertain if a whole-school positive behaviour support programme would be a suitable programme to meet these needs. However, one cannot examine needs without ascertaining what are the current practices in relation to behaviour support, therefore current practices will first be identified. Any differences in current practices and needs depending on location, school gender, and perspectives of respondents will also be examined. Minor questions will also be included, such as: whether school rules need to be improved; whether there is need for a behaviour support programme in schools; whether respondents would endorse such a programme and become involved in its management in schools. The four main research questions on current practices and needs are formally stated in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.7).

The following section reports on the important and distinctive contribution this study makes to knowledge for educational psychologists in Ireland.

### **1.6 Importance and distinctive contribution to knowledge of this research for educational psychologists**

The research is novel as behaviour support at whole school level is not a common feature in Irish schools. Consequently it will produce an original contribution to the knowledge base of behaviour management at systemic level. The intended outcome is that school staff and pupils will identify whether there is a need around behaviour support at school level, and if there is agreement on the need and agreement to endorse such a programme, then the programme *Positive Behaviour Support Programme at Whole School Level* will be examined to determine if it is a suitable intervention for the Irish context. This can then be offered to interested Irish schools and preplanning can begin in the researcher's area. Providing support and development to teachers (by the National Educational Psychological Service – NEPS) in effect supports the up-skilling of teachers thereby empowering them by adding to

their knowledge base, which in turn provides positive support for all pupils in each school.

This programme has the potential to be used at local, regional and national level in Ireland in any educational/training service where behaviour may be an issue (such as pre-schools and special schools) as well as within the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). It is democratic and proactive, serving all the pupils in a school and ensuring that pupils do not have to wait to fail. Additionally it will improve this researcher's practice, as it will be offered as another facet of Support and Development work in schools.

### **1.7 Thesis outline**

The next chapter will review literature on behaviour support, examining research carried out at international (U.S. and Australia), European (Norway and U.K.) and local levels (Ireland) and because support at systems level is of particular interest in this study, research on whole-school positive behaviour support and support at systems level will be highlighted. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the study while Chapters 4 and 5 present quantitative and qualitative analysis of results. Chapter 6 discusses the findings and links the literature review with those findings. Chapter 7 concludes with a summary, future recommendations and concluding remarks.



## **Chapter 2 - Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The importance of behaviour and behaviour support is evident from the amount of literature and studies that have been produced internationally and nationally. This chapter begins with a definition of behavioural difficulties (section 2.2) followed by a description of the search process utilising certain key words (section 2.3). Reasons for behavioural difficulties are reported in section 2.4 and a review of problem behaviour and its management including theoretical underpinnings are examined (section 2.5) both internationally (U.S., Australia, Norway, U.K.) and (section 2.6) nationally (Ireland). The research questions are then explored (section 2.7) and the chapter concludes with a summary (section 2.8) and links the literature review to the current study.

### **2.2 Definition of behavioural difficulties**

The most common terms utilised to describe the behaviour of concern include behavioural difficulties (Cole *et al.*, 2003), problem behaviour (Algozzine *et al.*, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2002), challenging behaviour (National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education, 2004), disruptive behaviour (Didaskalou & Millward, 2007), misbehaviour (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2002), conduct problems (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003), Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (Thacker *et al.*, 2002) and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (Ofsted, 2003). There is fuzziness between these terms, probably because they are subjective, and what constitutes behavioural difficulties varies from individuals or institutions. While these terms are often used synonymously, in this study the term used is 'behavioural difficulties' because it is a widely used term within the Department of Education and Science, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and schools in Ireland (Department of Education and Science, 2005; National Educational Psychological Service, 2010).

While there is no universally accepted definition for behavioural difficulties because of the varying subjective views of what constitutes it, the following definition by the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Early Childhood (Amend, 2005) and the Report of the Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools (Department of Education and Science, 2006a) define it on the basis of its effect:

*Any repeated pattern of behaviour, or perception of behaviour, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults*  
(Amend, p2).

*A school's intrinsic role is to provide teaching and to promote learning for its student body. Consequently, any event or incident which frustrates this process can be characterised as disruptive behaviour*  
(Department of Education and Science, 2006a, p.5).

These definitions appear to be quite wide and thus are favoured by the researcher as they suggest that any repeated or consistent behaviour that prevents one from learning or engaging with others constitutes behavioural difficulties. In other words, the behaviour disrupts the relationship between the parties. This is in contrast to narrower definitions such as King's (in Amend, *ibid*) where aggression must be a feature: *consistent inappropriate and antisocial behaviour, where the child does not respond to redirection and/or guidance* (Amend, p.2).

It is suggested that the prevalence rate of pupils with behavioural problems is about 4% and depending on what constitutes behaviour difficulties, it could be as high as 20% at any one time (Cole *et al.*, 2003). Such problems which interfere with the teaching and learning process in the classroom are detrimental to students, schools and communities at large, therefore what are needed are efficient and effective management strategies so that all pupils can reach their potential. Traditionally, schools have been more reactive than proactive and this is evident in the school discipline policy decisions made in various countries (Schachter, 2010).

The ten most frequently occurring forms of minor misbehaviours (termed low-level in the Elton Report, DfES, 1989) according to a survey undertaken with primary teachers in Ireland (Irish National Teachers Organisation, 2002) include: talking out of turn, constant disruption in class, avoidance of work, lying, name calling, infringement of school rules, unruliness in corridors, verbal abuse of peers, non-acceptance of correction, and lack of punctuality. According to Ofsted (2005), these forms of nuisance irritate staff because of their wearing effects and the interruption of learning. In summary, there is no universally accepted definition of behavioural difficulties probably because of its subjective nature.

The search process, examining key words utilised in seeking out relevant research studies will now be examined.

### **2.3 Search process**

Databases of Ingenta, EBSCO, Google Scholar, and the libraries of University of East London, Trinity College Dublin, and University College Dublin were searched in 2009 and early 2010 using the keywords *behavioural difficulties*, *challenging behaviour*, *disruptive behaviour*, *troublesome behaviour*, *discipline* and *misbehaviour*. A second search was also made using the keyword *positive behaviour support*. Because whole school positive behaviour support was of particular interest in this research, a U.S. expert on positive behaviour support (Horner, R.) was contacted by email for more information. The researcher tried as far as possible to utilise studies conducted in mainstream primary schools and as recent as possible i.e. from 2000 onwards. Reasons for behavioural difficulties have been highlighted by many studies and these will now be examined.

### **2.4 Reasons for behavioural difficulties**

There are many reasons for behavioural difficulties and according to Lines (2003) they can be summed up as: pathological (e.g. medical conditions -

ADHD/Autism where the behaviour is part of the child's personality and overt in all situations); situational and contextual. Some researchers argue (Elton Report, DfES, 1989; Geiger & Turiel, 1983; Ofsted, 2005; Watkins & Wagner, 2000) that pupils behave differently for different teachers, in different situations and in different contexts. Geiger & Turiel (1983) studied disruptive school behaviour and concepts of social convention in two groups of early adolescent pupils i.e. those with and without behavioural difficulties. Both groups were administered an interview assessing concepts of social convention, within a sequence of developmental levels and the disruptive students were re-interviewed one year later. At first testing, more disruptive than non-disruptive students displayed (level 4) thinking, which was characterised by rejection of what was socially acceptable. At time 2, some previously disruptive students had moved on to level 5 (characterised by systematic conceptions of the role of conventional regulation in social organisation) and were no longer disruptive, while all who remained disruptive had not shifted to the next level.

Watkins & Wagner (2000) reported on a study (Wayson et al., 1982) involving in excess of 1,000 second level schools that had brought about reduced behavioural difficulties. No common intervention was found in the schools but there was a range of common characteristics which included: working hard over a period of time; creating a whole-school environment conducive to good discipline; student orientated schools; focus on causes of misbehaviour rather than symptoms; emphasis on the positive; expectations of success; principal and staff actively involved with a belief in the students; teachers handle all/most discipline problems themselves; and strong ties between school and parents. This study suggested that schools that actively engage pupils in the organisation of the school and engage older pupils to assist younger pupils generally have better behaviour.

The situational/environmental factors may be demonstrated by the pupil behaving differently at home and at school. In school, where a pupil has learning difficulties, for example, they may have low self-esteem and engage in distracting behaviour to mask a lack of self-worth by avoiding work and

possibly escape from constant reminders of failure (Leaman, 2005). Exclusion is a welcome escape for some pupils according to Lines (2003) who pointed out that some pupils *want to be excluded in order to avoid on-going reinforcement of failure in school (and)....alternative punishments that keep the pupil in school and busy are more of a deterrent* (p. 28). Other reasons for misbehaviour may be because pupils are bored, frustrated, anxious or confused (Corso, 2007) which may be the result of poor quality of teaching or teaching style. This was identified in the Elton report (DfES,1989) which pointed out that 80 per cent of behavioural difficulties in schools was directly attributable to poor classroom organisation, planning, and teaching, and that the key to solving this problem was effective teaching and learning. Another reason for misbehaviour is if pupils are unfairly blamed for something not of their making (Lines, 2003). Contextual reasons (Leaman, 2005) may include unresolved emotional issues (e.g. bereavement, anger, resentment, language difficulties); inappropriate social influence (e.g. peer pressure and lack of role models); and unfulfilled physiological needs (e.g. lack of sleep, inadequate diet). According to Fox *et al.* (2002) other reasons may include children of families who experience marital distress, parental depression and poverty. While Lines (2003) cites three possible reasons for behavioural difficulties (pathological, situational and contextual), Miller (2003) cites four, which are *predisposing* (including early life experiences), *precipitating* (triggers), *prolonging* (e.g. disputes) and *perpetuating* (such as a change in a teacher's class management strategy) factors. Although headings vary between the two studies, there are certain similarities between them. For example Miller's (2003) *predisposing* factors and Lines (2003) *pathological* factors could be said to be somewhat similar while Miller's (2003) *precipitating*, *prolonging* and *perpetuating* factors could be subsumed in Lines (2003) *situational* factors.

An emphasis on the environment came into vogue from the 1970s onwards (Watkins & Wagner, 2000). This could be described as an ecological model where the aetiology of behaviour shifted from 'within the child' to the 'interaction between the environment and the child' (Jackson & Panyan, 2002, as cited in Safran & Oswald, 2003). However, much earlier than the 1970s, a key social psychologist, Kurt Lewin (1946, as cited in Watkins & Wagner,

2000), argued of the importance of contexts and situations in understanding behaviour. Lewin's (ibid) formula for understanding behaviour is ' $B=f(P.S)$ ' which means that behaviour is a function of person and situation.

However, research illustrates that it depends on *who* is asked where the dynamic of 'blame' lies. Lines (2003) in a U.K. based study points out that when teachers refer pupils to the principal for behavioural difficulties, they normally see the problem located solely within the pupil (internal forces/medical model) and do not contemplate that the problem may be located within the school (environmental forces). Yet, Ryan (2004) interviewed marginalized children in Ireland (who had dropped out or were at risk of dropping out of school), aged 8-15, who associated school with failure. In three focus groups, the word 'school' conjured up answers of 'boring', 'homework', 'hard', 'trouble', and 'hate'. Ryan (ibid) concluded that schools could be a place of great joy but equally be places of abject failure. Another study (Galloway *et al.*, 1994, as cited in Watkins & Wagner, 2000) interviewed 26 principals, 22 educational psychologists and parents of 27 children on whether causes of misbehaviour were *within child*, *within family* or *within school* factors. The majority of principals and educational psychologists viewed the problem within the child while parents viewed the problem within the school.

Miller (2003) would agree with the above findings that it depends on *who* is being asked, whether teachers, parents or pupils, on where to apportion blame for misbehaviour. In an early study of 428 teachers, 66 per cent attributed difficult behaviour to *home* factors (parental attitudes, pathological social or emotional conditions), 30 per cent to *within-child* factors (ability, attitude, concentration), while less than 4 per cent to *school/teacher* factors. In contrast, in a study of 125 12-year old pupils, causes of misbehaviour were mainly attributed to *unfairness/injustice of teachers' actions* (teachers shouting, being rude, moodiness, not listening, showing favouritism, pupils being picked on, good work not noticed etc.), and *pupil vulnerability* (peer pressure or emotional turmoil), with fewer pupils stating *adverse family* circumstances and *strictness of classroom regime*. A third study of parents'

attributions showed the most prominent causes for misbehaviour were *unfairness/injustice of teachers' actions*, and *pupil vulnerability*, thus agreeing with the pupils' attributions. However, parents also agreed with teachers that adverse home circumstances can be a major cause of behavioural difficulties in school.

Watkins and Wagner (ibid) argue that in order to move forward, three times as much time must be spent on working on solutions to the problem as time spent on examining patterns of misbehaviour to understand reasons. By doing this, the focus shifts to solving the problem rather than apportioning blame. Understanding reasons for misbehaviour is important and when schools and teachers are open to the fact that the reason may not be within the child or within the home environment, the result is that teachers are rewriting themselves into the picture on their capacity and the capacity of the school to make a difference as well as the capacity of all children to learn. A common characteristic of a successful school in reducing misbehaviour is getting to know and to understand the pupil (Watkins & Wagner, 2000).

Good relationships are fundamental to any effective teaching according to Thacker *et al.* (2002) and their importance in preventing behavioural difficulties is well established. Corso (2007) describes a four-level teaching pyramid, which was developed from research (Fox *et al.*, 2003 as cited in Corso, ibid) for promoting social and emotional development in young children, preventing and addressing behavioural difficulties. The foundation of this pyramid is in developing positive relationships with children, families and colleagues. Other levels include creating supportive relationships (i.e. implementing practices that engage children, and help their understanding of expectations and routines); teaching strategies to enhance social development; and finally, individualised instruction. This pyramid has similarities to the positive behaviour support programme.

Respect is an important variable according to Rowe (2006) and teachers show respect by listening to pupils and engaging in dialogue on issues important to pupils. This conversing has the potential for moral growth as they

endeavour to reach points of shared understanding (ibid). Praise is another key strategy in promoting positive teacher-child relationships and establishing supportive learning environments according to Gable *et al.* (2009) but to be most effective, it must be contingent (dependent on the target behaviour occurring), immediate (occur immediately after the desired behaviour), and consistent (systematically delivered) when teaching a new behaviour. Praise can be related to a child's developmental stage (Spiker *et al.*, 2005, as cited in Hester, 2009) but it is not always effective according to Feldman (2003, as cited in Hester, *ibid.*) as some pupils do not like to be singled out for special attention. It is therefore suggested that teachers need to monitor its effect on the pupil.

Rogers (2007) is a key figure in the management of behaviour and has written many books on the topic. He contends that it is a fine balancing act between fundamental rights and responsibilities (p.5). Pupils and teachers have the right to basic respect but, equally, they have responsibilities in respecting others' rights to learn and teach. Rogers stresses that teacher behaviour as well as pupil behaviour needs to be addressed, and included at both policy level and practice. Providing support for pupils is important but equally, 'teachers supporting each other' is also important and it can be therapeutic for teachers to share their failures with colleagues as this can create genuine problem solving. Rogers further contends that when the culture of the daily workplace is supportive, staff work better, more happily, and in a more relaxed, productive way (p.251).

According to Dreikurs (1972, as cited in Blamires, 2006) because children are not passive objects, it is important that they are involved in the process of improving behaviour and come to understand how their behaviour affects others. Table 2.1 below is a summary of factors leading to behavioural difficulties according to research (Lines, 2003, Miller, 2003, etc.).



Table 2.1 Causal model of behavioural difficulties

Pathological	Situational	Contextual
(ADHD/Autism)	School climate Pupil/teacher relationship Unfairness of teachers' actions Degree teacher understands pupil Degree of respect for pupil Good work not noticed Lack of praise Favouritism Degree of pupil involvement in school Level of self-esteem in pupils with special needs Pupils blamed unfairly Teachers being rude to pupils Lack of home/school interaction	Development level Unresolved emotional issues Inappropriate social influence Unfulfilled physiological needs Children of families experiencing marital distress, parental depression, poverty

In summary, reasons for behavioural difficulties can be pathological, situational or contextual and may include problems located solely within the child or environment. Understanding the reasons for behaviour, developing positive relationships, getting to know/understand pupils, showing respect, giving praise and balancing fundamental rights and responsibilities are important elements in addressing behavioural difficulties.

To learn more about behaviour difficulties and their management at a global level, the following section will take on an international/European focus before narrowing the focus to behavioural difficulties in Ireland.

## 2.5 The International perspective

### 2.5.1 United States

In the U.S, effective management of disruptive behaviour in schools is of national concern (Oswald et al., 2005) and a substantial body of research indicates that behaviour problems and acts of violence in schools are on the increase (Franzen, 2008; Rose, 2009; Schachter, 2010). The consequence of this is that poor school climate affects safety, behaviour, and teachers, so behaviour policies and management of behaviour are essential. Traditionally, punitive disciplinary procedures in the guise of zero tolerance policies, hiring

security officers, expelling or placing pupils in alternative accommodation were used in many school discipline policies (American Psychological Association, 2008; Noguera, 1995 as cited in Lissan et al., 2006; Schachter, 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002). These were said to improve school safety but Noguera (1995, as cited in Lissan, 2006) concluded that the effectiveness of such policies was not sufficiently examined and could have contributed to poor relationships and discipline problems. A landmark study by the American Psychological Association (2008) was set up to examine the zero tolerance approach and despite examining a 20-year history of implementation, the little data available tended to contradict the assumptions of zero tolerance. It recommended either to reform the practice or replace it with a more appropriate practice, which would be more in keeping with best practice concerning adolescent development. According to Schachter (2010) zero tolerance policies engendered poor relationships within schools, turning schools into inhospitable environments that failed to promote school safety, thus, leaving schools no safer than before zero tolerance.

The challenges that teachers faced daily in trying to maintain order intensified with the numbers of students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) entering general education classrooms, where findings indicate that boys cause more problem behaviour than girls (Algozzine *et al.*, 2008). An earlier U.K. action research study undertaken in 14 schools by Dawn et al. (2000) and funded by Newham LEA agreed with the gender imbalance and concluded that because girls generally tend to have emotional issues without the behavioural issues, they get overlooked and are marginalised by schools and teachers who are preoccupied with overt misbehaviour.

Research based on an independent panel of experts in the fields of education, law and mental health and funded by federal offices, focused on proactive and preventative approaches in establishing clear behavioural expectations to improve the school climate (Dwyer, 1998, as cited in Lissan *et al.*, 2006). Proactive and preventative approaches were also advocated by Aber *et al.* (2003, as cited in Lissan *et al.*, *ibid*). Emanating from this research, alternative policies were written across the country, which included:

Restorative Justice; Response to Intervention; and Whole-School Positive Behaviour Support (Schachter, 2010).

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a problem solving approach to behaviour difficulty (Schachter, 2010), which emphasises that the offender understands the impact of their actions and make appropriate amends. Instead of assigning blame, with the help of a coordinator, the idea is to listen actively and create an environment of respect, accountability, taking responsibility for actions so as to restore the environment. Four key questions are asked. What has happened? Who was offended? How do we move forward? What can be done differently in the future? As one co-ordinator commented *we walk them through the feelings of other people it affects* (Schachter, 2010, p.27). There are different versions of Restorative Justice, from informal classroom meetings to more formal victim impact panels, with representations from school and home. However, a limitation from the school's point of view is that the school is not fully in control of the process but is dependent on whether the other stakeholders (family/misbehaving pupil) will agree to take part. Additionally, and as pointed out by Haft (2000), the student may not possess the moral maturity needed in this regard. Restorative Justice (RJ) is an individual approach, and appears to be used in some schools alongside a whole-school approach to behaviour, therefore it could be used in tandem with a systems programme such as whole-school positive behaviour support (PBS).

Response to Intervention (RTI) is an early intervention, mostly classroom based process, to prevent academic and/or behavioural difficulties (Muyskens *et al.*, 2007). This response evolved from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement (IDEIA) Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) and No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), which emphasised the use of scientifically based research to improve outcomes for students with learning needs. With the focus on screening and intervention (Sugai & Horner, 2009), this has now expanded to a general approach for improving learning for all pupils, and many states (e.g. Florida, Ohio) have taken this initiative on board (Jimerson *et al.*, 2007).

While there are different variations of RTI available, it is for the most part three tiered, with Tier 1 focused on universal screening of the pupils in the classroom presenting with academic or behavioural difficulties. Tier 2 provides supplemental support at group level for pupils at risk of failure (e.g. revision of work previously taught at class level), while Tier 3 provides intensive support on a one-to-one basis and generally takes place outside the classroom. Fairbanks *et al.* (2007) reported on two studies, utilising an RTI approach in two classrooms of 7/8 year olds with behavioural difficulties. Study 1 used a targeted intervention of check-in and check-out (CICO e. g. utilising daily report cards) on 10 pupils who were unresponsive to general classroom conditions. Measurement was carried out in three ways: observation of problem behaviour in the classroom, frequency of office referrals and teacher perceptions of intensity/frequency of problem behaviours in class. Two pupils moved away during the intervention and of the remaining 8 pupils, CICO was a success for 4 pupils as a reduction in problem behaviour was ascertained in each of the three areas of measurement. Study 2 involved 4 pupils who were unresponsive to CICO and received individualised and function based interventions and this too was successful, suggesting that RTI is effective in providing social behaviour support to pupils where needed. However some criticisms of this model question the criteria used to identify low responders as this is not well established (Fairbanks *et al.*, 2007). Another criticism is that not enough data has been collected yet to be evidence-based. As this is a classroom-based approach, further research is needed at school level (Jimerson *et al.*, 2007). The Jimerson *et al.* (ibid.) study also pointed out another limitation was that most RTI studies focused on existing models, where randomisation or control groups were not utilised, rather than on more tightly controlled situations. Questions around adequately trained personnel, needs at secondary level, and the role of parents also need answering (Burns & Ysseldyke, 2005). Sugai and Horner (2009) were concerned with its standardisation of assessments, consideration of cultural context and its applicability across grade, age, disabilities etc. However, they suggested that the RTI approach is an excellent umbrella of guiding principles for identifying students with *learning* difficulties and closing

the achievement gap. However, in relation to behaviour, they make a case for Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and point out that PBS focuses on the social culture in the school and establishes formal systems of behaviour support at school level for all pupils. A strong case for PBS is that it is evidence-based (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) and is already in over 4,000 state schools in the U.S. (2007 figures). Because of the wide use of whole-school PBS in the U.S., its theoretical underpinnings will now be examined.

#### **2.5.1.1 Theoretical underpinnings of Whole School Positive Behaviour Support**

This research is underpinned by two psychological theories: Behaviourism (Hannafin & Peck, 1988) and Systems Change Theory (Oetting *et al.*, 1995; Senge *et al.*, 2000).

##### **i Behaviourism**

Behaviourism, one of the theories underpinning Positive Behaviour Support, is firmly rooted in the positivist, objectivist tradition which maintains that knowledge is hard, objective and tangible (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, was the first to describe the phenomenon of classical conditioning when he noted that dogs salivated in response to stimuli which they associated with food. Based on Pavlov's work, Skinner's theory is based on the premise that learning results from the pairing of responses with stimuli (Hannafin & Peck, 1988) and when a particular Stimulus-Response pattern is reinforced/rewarded, the person is conditioned to respond. Reinforcement is the key to establishing and maintaining behaviour. In other words, conditioning is a means of social control.

Behavioural approaches are widely used in teaching and in behaviour management and while the emphasis is on competent performance of basic skills, this is at the expense of complex intellectual functioning and problem solving, which would allow for meaningful reflection on performance. The behavioural approach does not recognise individual differences but sees the individual as passive in the learning process. Although this approach is associated with rewards and punishments, Skinner himself did not favour

punishment as he considered it ineffective (Pound, 2005). Instead, he argued for positive reinforcement which he claimed worked better and resulted in feelings of freedom and dignity. According to Ellis and Tod (2009), in attempting to utilise behaviourist approaches, the following points should be noted:

- What is considered a punishment by an adult may not be viewed as such by a pupil e.g. time out may be seen as a reward and may actually reinforce a particular behaviour;
- Some pupils may not like to be singled out for praise and may exhibit less of the required behaviour;
- Relationships are important and the pupil will have a view of the person providing the reward and will know the teacher's perception of them;
- In attention seeking, the teacher may choose to ignore the pupil but the attention of peers may be more important to the pupil.

However, it is argued by this researcher that a behavioural approach is warranted in some circumstances especially as a 'beginning' strategy, with other more appropriate strategies employed later.

While behaviourist approaches are utilised mainly at the classroom level by some teachers, this results in incentives for those pupils, which is piecemeal and unsatisfactory. Strategies at the macro level would be a better fit in preventing disruption of teaching and learning and the researcher puts forward whole-school positive behaviour support as one strategy to address problem behaviour at school level in a positive and preventive manner.

## **ii Systems change theory**

Systems theory, the second theory underpinning Positive Behaviour Support examines an organisation as one entity and supports collective use of best practice within that organisation. According to Senge *et al.* (2000), system-wide thinking is necessary to enact change within the organisation. The school here is seen as the organisation/unit of analysis and according to Oetting *et al.* (1995) any intervention put into schools requires pre-planning

and systemic readiness. There must be a need for, and an awareness of, the need to change, readiness, capacity, a commitment to engage in the change process and a history of successful change.

Horner and Sugai (2003) agree with Oetting *et al.* (1995) in that for successful change, all personnel in school must commit to change and work towards the common goal. Working towards the systemic implementation of whole-school positive behaviour support is guided by the following elements and these interact and guide each other (Horner and Sugai, 2003). Firstly, the school, as an organisation, establishes achievable and measurable long-term outcomes (behaviour targets e.g. 4/5 rules/expectations such as 'be respectful' endorsed by students, teachers and management). Secondly, the school identifies evidence-based practices i.e. practices that are shown to be successful (e.g. positive behaviour support). Thirdly, the school collects data on current practices and justifies the need for change, intervenes, and evaluates the intervention. Lastly, the school provides support systems (school leadership team, funding, and training) to sustain the practice. As pointed out by Horner and Sugai (2003) cooperation of all school partners, especially school staff, is necessary and this was recognised by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2004) when they stated that the key to success of any system is that procedures are discussed, understood, and agreed by all staff. However, sometimes there is fear of change, perhaps because it is an unknown quantity and teachers may be already struggling in their day-to-day management of challenging behaviour. Lines (2003) took this on board and stated that any change in a system must be designed to support those who are struggling to be effective teachers. Stoller *et al.* (2006) in agreement with Lines (2003) stated that failure is the result of absence of support from persons in key leadership positions and policy makers. They contend that failure is also likely in the following cases where:

- There is no visionary leader
- Consultation is provided by an expert who leads the system
- Innovation is not matched to the culture of the school

- School personnel are not concerned with the problem that is to be changed
- The initiative is not followed by continuous communication, on-going training, on-site coaching, and time for implementation
- People who must implement the programme lack understanding of the rationale and commitment to the new procedures
- A systems perspective on the changes is lacking.

A systems approach to prevention emphasises a three-tiered continuum of interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Primary prevention is directed towards all students across all school settings. They are directly taught skills (e.g. social skills) and are acknowledged regularly (rewards/praise) for their support. Secondary prevention (e.g. revision of social skills) is applied to a small number of students who require more than primary support to achieve success in school. Tertiary prevention involves individualised support for those students who require more support than that already provided at primary or secondary levels (e.g. children with complex situations and this could include functional assessment to identify the problem such as ADHD, and then design and implement a behaviour support plan). Support from 'outside' such as clinical services may also be warranted.

In summary, the two theories underpinning PBS include Behaviourism and Systems Change and both need to interact for the success of the programme. The step-by-step interactions are as follows: Systems Change theory includes an awareness of the need for change and there is a readiness and capacity for change when all school personnel act as one unit and commit to change. The appointment of a Behaviour Leadership Team (which includes the principal) decides on the behaviour needs of the school and all teachers bring about the necessary changes utilising rewards and consequences. To ensure success, outside support and training is provided to the School Behaviour Leadership Team which provides training and support to teachers. Pupils are supported at three levels - primary (universal), secondary (group) level, and tertiary (individual) level to ensure success. Studies that have



utilised this approach successfully in the U.S., Norway and Australia respectively include Luiselli *et al.* (2005), Sorlie and Ogden (2007) and Yeung *et al.* (2009).

Having examined the theoretical underpinnings of positive behaviour support, its origin and development in the U.S. will now be examined.

#### **2.5.1.2 Whole School Positive Behaviour Support in the United States**

Whole-School PBS emerged in the 1980s and early 1990s in large U.S. cities (e.g. New York, Los Angeles) as an approach to enhance quality of life and minimise challenging behaviour, replacing earlier aversive policies (such as zero tolerance i.e. a policy of punishment for any infraction of a rule, regardless of accidental mistakes, ignorance or extenuating circumstances), which were not perceived to be working (Schachter, 2010; Tincani, 2007). Whole-School PBS is defined as ‘the application of positive behavioural intervention and systems to achieve socially important behaviour change’ (Sugai *et al.*, 2000, p.133). It is a whole school proactive, preventative, and positive strategy, which in altering, helping, or supporting the school environment by improving systems (discipline, reinforcement, managing data) and procedures (collecting office data, training, team decisions) results in happier outcomes for individuals and their families (Horner & Koegel, 2007). According to Vaughn (2006), whole-school PBS swept into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a tsunami-like wave to respond to national initiatives (e.g. No Child Left Behind Act, 2001 – an act to close the achievement gap in public schools so that no child is left behind) and it receives a great deal of federal funding because of consumer reports of positive outcomes (Tincani, 2007). A strength of this system is that it supports greater numbers of pupils in a positive way instead of the former (zero tolerance) which focused negatively at the individual level.

The assumption of PBS is that one can teach behaviour and social skills in a manner similar to any academic subject. It is not a one-size fits all plan but is

custom fit to the ethos, values and needs of each individual school. It is three-tiered. Tier 1 provides *universal* support to all pupils in the school. Tier 2 provides support at *group* level to those at risk (those pupils where universal support is not sufficient and need additional support) while Tier 3 provides support at *individual* level where this is needed. The objective of PBS is to build the social and behavioural supports needed for all pupils in the school (Todd *et al.*, 2008) and it is as much about building relationships as it is about techniques. It has its roots in Applied Behaviour Analysis and in a U.S. public health disease prevention model (e.g. any vaccination that is given at universal level) of reducing/eliminating known risk factors and simultaneously developing protective factors. Walker *et al.* (2003) point to longitudinal and retrospective studies and contend that schools are well placed in accessing at-risk children early in their school careers (preferably before they reach the age of 8), and provide them with a continuum of support i.e. primary support for all pupils, secondary/targeted support for those at-risk, and tertiary or individualised support for those who needed intensive interventions. By minimising bad behaviour, Walker *et al.* (*ibid*) contend that they advance their central goal of educating children.

There is controversy about how similar PBS and ABA are with some contending that they are similar but with just different labels – ‘Some Applied Behaviour Analysts may ..... call it ABA; others may call it PBS’ (Tincani, 2007, p.494). Others see PBS as a new science with multiple theoretical perspectives (e.g. community psychology where various levels are targeted) as well as behavioural analysis (Tincani, 2007).

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) was established in the 1960s as a science in which learning principles are systematically applied to produce socially important changes in behaviour (Cooper *et al.*, 1987, in Dunlap, 2006) but criticisms of the ABA approach saw it fall out of favour (e.g. the passive nature of the individual as well as the focus of the problem being within the individual rather than the environment). However, it has now been repackaged in a more positive, collaborative and holistic framework in positive behaviour support (Safran & Oswald, 2003) with a focus on a) prevention rather than

improvement; b) on systems and embedding effective interventions within systems; c) on contextual fit which takes into account characteristics of the person for whom the plan is designed and d) a successful model of dissemination where PBS has now been funded and written into state law (Tincani, 2007).

The goal of PBS according to Wager (1999) is to understand the behaviour in context in order to prevent it from occurring or re-occurring. The emphasis is on conditions, circumstances and systems that impact *on* the child rather than just looking *at* the child. The critical components include: (1) setting behavioural expectations, (2) teaching interpersonal skills, (3) providing reinforcement for expected behaviour, (4) monitoring intervention efficacy through continuous data collection/analysis, (5) involving all stakeholders (teachers, pupils, parents) in formulating discipline practices management, and reducing reactive strategies in favour of proactive, preventative and skill building initiatives (Horner & Sugai, 2000). The philosophy of a whole school approach is that all teachers are teachers of *all* children. In other words the whole school is responsible for supporting the needs of *all* children and the emphasis is on working smarter rather than harder. The philosophy of PBS and the philosophy of successful parent/teacher/pupil partnerships seem to be similar, in that respect and understanding are the cornerstones of successful outcomes.

One element in the evidence base for Positive Behaviour Support is a case study by Luiselli *et al.* (2005) of an urban elementary school of 600 economically disadvantaged pupils over a 3-year period where there were behaviour problems, poor staff morale and academic underachievement. The results for positive behaviour support interventions were that it was associated with reduced office referrals, reduced suspensions and increased academic performance. Positive outcomes such as this have resulted in consumer support and consequently federal support in the U.S. Studies by Barrett *et al.* (2008), and Lassen *et al.* (2006) concur with these positive outcomes. The Lassen *et al.* (ibid.) study suggested a significant relationship between pupil

problem behaviour and academic performance and adherence to PBS procedures was significantly correlated with reduction in problem behaviour.

An important question is whether this intervention and its benefits transfer across cultures. This is an important point if PBS is to be utilised in Irish schools. To answer that question, behaviour and behaviour support in relation to PBS will now be examined in two countries where PBS has been implemented - Australia and Norway.

### **2.5.2 Whole School Positive Behaviour Support in Australia**

In Australia, challenging behaviour is of constant concern (Carter *et al.*, 2006) with prevalence rates of 3%-6% commonly reported (Carter *et al.*, 2008). Disruptive behaviour impedes learning outcomes and also impacts negatively on teacher efficacy and wellbeing (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

Research suggests (Beaman *et al.*, 2007), that disruptive behaviour increases with age, with boys more behaviourally troublesome than girls. Because of these on-going concerns, the Queensland Department of Education co-ordinated and developed a school-wide system of behaviour support modelled on the U.S. system, with the support of the University of Missouri. This was also implemented in New South Wales because of concerns by the Department of Education and Training of an increase in referrals to the Regional Behaviour Team. They were also concerned with the disparities across the region in the capacities of different schools to deal effectively with student behaviours (Yeung *et al.*, 2009).

But did this model transfer well with positive outcomes similar to those in the U.S.? PBS became known as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) in schools in New South Wales but no other changes were made to the U.S. PBS blueprint. On the premise that positive behaviour leads to an improved learning environment and more time for learning in class, Yeung *et al.* (ibid.) carried out a study between schools with whole-school PBL, and those without, to ascertain if there was an improvement in learning, specifically in English and Maths.

Of six primary schools randomly selected, four schools with a total of 474 pupils were in the experimental group while two schools with 83 pupils were in the control group. Pupils were aged 8-11 years and were from similar backgrounds. Because the programme was only recently implemented, it was decided to measure psychosocial factors, which have been found to be important determinants of academic success (Yeung *et al.*, 2009). Of the nine variables selected (including school self-concept (cognitive, and affective), English, and Maths self-concept, parent self-concept, effort goal orientation, planning, study management, and motivation), significant differences were found in four of the 9 variables tested in favour of the PBS group. These included: school self-concept (affective), parent self-concept, planning, and persistence. In explanation of including *parent* self-concept, it is anticipated that by improving pupils' behaviour, PBL may also improve pupil/parent relationships resulting in higher parent self-concept. The study concluded that PBS has the potential to improve learning by controlling and managing behaviour.

A criticism of this study as perceived by the researcher is that all scales utilised to measure each variable were adapted from other questionnaires and no details were given on whether these scales were pilot tested or were valid or reliable measures. Other weaknesses included the fact that the two groups varied significantly in number with pupils coming only from two schools in the control group. Although the schools' populations were of similar background with a similar proportion of boys, schools may have differed in location, size, culture, organisational structure, and since the Department of Education was already concerned with disparities between different schools' capacity to deal effectively with behaviour management, these findings may be controversial.

### **2.5.3 The European perspective – Norway**

National studies showed that troublesome behaviour was an increasing problem in Norwegian schools (Ogden, 1998, as cited in Bru, 2006) and after reviewing literature, the whole-school PBS U.S. model was adopted as the most promising of effective school intervention programmes on behaviour

management (Sorlie & Ogden, 2007). With adaptations, this model has become the *Positive Behaviour Intervention and Learning Environment in School* (PALS). Sorlie and Ogden (ibid) reported on a quasi-experimental study of four elementary schools two years after intervention of PALS. These schools were matched with an equal number of comparison schools. The pupils numbered 735 across 5 years (3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade). Teachers were informants on the impact of PALS on teacher observed problem behaviour in the school and in the classroom. The impact of PALS on social competence and the learning environment in class was informed by both teachers and pupils. Results showed a reduction of teacher observed overt problem behaviour in the schools and classrooms in favour of the project schools and the number of pupils with severely disturbing problem behaviour in the classroom also decreased. Differences were reported between project schools with most improvement in schools that had most behaviour difficulties, suggesting that whole-school PBS may be very suitable for schools with major behaviour problems.

Social competence increased in all schools according to teachers and pupils but no significant difference was reported in project schools, indicating that PALS was not more effective in promoting social competence in the schools. However, a limitation of the study was that social-skills training was not universally included for *all* pupils in the implementation of PALS and it was suggested this training should be included in the future.

Teacher assessments of the quality of the learning environment in class (classroom climate) showed a negative trend in all classrooms but less so in project schools. However, this was not matched by pupil ratings, where no difference in the learning environment was reported between project and control schools. According to Sorlie and Ogden (2007) this deterioration in the learning climate concurs with previous research (Sorlie & Nordahl, 1998, in Sorlie & Ogden, 2007).

Critically, teachers reported more positive changes than pupils, and Sorlie and Ogden (ibid) theorise that this was probably attributed to teacher-bias on

positive expectations. They suggest that because teachers were practitioners and directly involved in teaching and also in measurement of observed behaviour, the study would have benefited from additional informants e.g. pupils (ibid). In spite of this criticism, in analysis, this study concluded that a reduction in teacher observed overt problem behaviour in the project schools and the reduction in the number of pupils with behavioural problems in the classrooms were directly related to the PALS intervention. This result concurs with findings from Australia that school-wide PBS appears to transfer well, transcending boundaries and cultures.

Behaviour management and strategies will now be examined in the UK before examining provision in Ireland.

#### **2.5.4 United Kingdom**

Research into behavioural difficulties in the U.K. is controversial as some research states that behavioural difficulties are on the increase (Leaman, 2005; Ofsted, 2005; while other research (Steer, 2009) states that behaviour is improving. However, the four-year time gap in research may partly explain this discrepancy.

Falling levels of respect for teachers accompany poor student behaviour (National Union of Teachers 2006; Rowe, 2006) but respect is two-way and as pointed out by Rowe (ibid) the provision of respect by teachers towards pupils in listening and conversing with them on important issues has the potential for pupils' moral growth and shared understanding between the parties.

While high-risk intake factors, e.g. poverty, have a bearing on differences in poor behaviour between schools, it is not always so and some schools with high-risk pupils have low incidences of misbehaviour. Seminal British studies by Mortimore *et al.* (1988) and Rutter *et al.* (1979) pertaining to primary and secondary schools respectively, demonstrated that some schools are more effective than others in their management, consistency and positive climate and where positive outcomes in behaviour as well as learning can occur.

Rutter *et al* (ibid) studied London schools in low socio-economic areas and found that schools with similar intakes had different outcomes. According to that study, effective schools were characterised by: academic emphasis, teacher actions in lessons, availability of incentives/rewards, good conditions for pupils, and the extent that children are able to take responsibility. A review for Ofsted by Sammons *et al.* (1995) identified eleven key characteristics of effective schools and concurred with the Rutter *et al.* (1979) study on the above and also added firm leadership, shared vision by staff, high expectations, monitoring of progress, consistency of practice, home-school partnership, and staff development. While it is suggested that schools cannot right all the wrongs in society, especially where there is a disconnect between home and school, however, according to Mortimore & Whitty (1997), a well-planned intervention can provide a protective environment and prevent social disadvantage becoming educational disadvantage.

Hallam (2007) states that behavioural difficulties are related to the differing disciplinary climates of schools. For example schools with low levels of disruptive behaviour tend to have a pastoral care system with the twin aims of enhancing educational progress and a school climate that promotes discussion of disruptive behaviour (Galloway, 1983, as cited in Hallam, 2007). As already stated by Ofsted (2005), an appropriate curriculum and effective teaching encourage good behaviour.

The importance of discipline in successful schools was pointed out by Lasley and Wayson (1982) in which the five most important features were: strong leadership, involvement of staff, school is seen as a place where success is experienced, problem solving focuses on causes rather than symptoms and emphasis on positive behaviour and preventative measures. Reid *et al.* (1987, as cited in Sigston *et al.*, 1996) concur and state that well-disciplined schools have clearly stated rules which are consistently applied; praise is freely given; students are given responsibility in school and the disciplinary regime is neither too harsh nor too weak.



However, because each school is a dynamic social system in which its organisation, structure, process and climate are linked, this unique mix combines to produce its culture and individual personality (Purkey & Smith, 1983, as cited in Sigston *et al.*, 1996). Because of this unique mixture, it is therefore suggested that different research findings must be viewed with caution. In other words, there is no definitive formula for effective schools as each school is unique.

In the U.K., because of reported behaviour difficulties and lack of respect in schools, Government policies as well as local responses have sought to remedy this problem. Since the 1980s there has been a shift from narrow local authority-based approaches to broader collaborative approaches (Rowe, 2006) and, similar to other countries, there has been a plethora of research, landmark reports and Government legislation on behaviour including the Elton Report (DfES, 1989), Education Act (DfES, 1997), Ofsted (2005), the Steer Reports (DfES 2005, 2006, Steer, 2009), and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) DfES, 2007).

The Elton Report (DfES, 1989) although now over 20 years old, is still important and relevant today according to Cooper (2006). This report found that 80% of disruption in schools was directly attributable to poor classroom organisation, planning and teaching, and the solution suggested for the education of the 'whole child' was improved school and teacher effectiveness (whole-school policy development, ethos and positive behaviour management: better class management and communication skills training). Elton (DfES, 1989) demonstrated a shift away from the notion of controlling pupils to more of a partnership between pupils and teachers (Rowe, 2006). This philosophy has much in common with PBS.

The Education Act (DfES, 1997) required all schools to have a behaviour policy in place and required Ofsted to report on behaviour in schools. Ofsted (2005) reported that in the previous five years, the proportion of schools with good behaviour had shrunk from three-quarters to two-thirds of all schools but it reiterated the Elton Report (DfES, 1989) findings, that an appropriate

curriculum and effective teaching can enhance pupils' behaviour. In 2007 there was a requirement that the school behaviour policy should set out effective behaviour management strategies (DfES, 2007).

The Steer Report (DfES, 2006), a significant government publication on behaviour in schools, sought to promote five themes (namely: schools as places which promote positive, physical, and mental health; pupils to feel safe; provide pleasure in learning; enthusiasm for social participation; and opportunities for eventual positive and active engagement in the future world of work) to enable children to thrive in school, thereby extending the idea of educating the 'whole child' as put forward in the Elton Report (DfES, 1989). Core beliefs included the idea that the quality of learning, teaching and behaviour in schools are inseparable issues, there is no single solution to problem behaviour but respect and the support of school partners are essential elements, especially school leaders who have a critical role in establishing high standards of learning, teaching and behaviour (DfES, 2006).

In 2009, Steer reviewed behaviour standards in schools in the report Learning Behaviour, Lessons Learned (Steer, 2009), and although the report began with the statement that *poor behaviour in schools cannot be tolerated* (p.4), the report also stated that 'there is strong evidence from a range of sources that the overall standards of behaviour achieved by schools is good and has improved in recent years' (ibid). This statement does not concur with earlier findings e.g. Ofsted (2005) which found that good behaviour had shrunk in the previous five years. However, the difference over time may account for this. It is also possible that Steer was recognising improvements made overall. For instance he made 47 recommendations under three headings (*legal powers of teachers to discipline pupils; supporting the development of good behaviour by emphasising behaviour management training; and raising standards to reduce low level disruption*). It was interesting to note that the first theme reported in his review - *legal powers and duties*, recognised the need to raise awareness of the power to exercise discipline outside of school and to work with other bodies such as the police. Steer reported that most

recommendations made in his 2005 report (DfES, 2005) had already been taken on board in the bid to promote better behaviour.

A Government response to behaviour management (Hallam, 2007) was the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) set up in 2002 in 34 Local Authorities (LAs) where there were high truancy and high crime rates. The aim was to provide support in a few designated secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in each LA to improve pupil behaviour, provide support for those at risk, provide innovative methods in teaching and learning, and identify pupils not attending school. As part of this programme, Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) were set up and over 700 schools were involved. Evaluation was undertaken by a team from the University of London and was in three phases. Phase 1 consisted of three stages (telephone interviews with all LAs on methods of implementation of BIP, fieldwork with 18 LAs, and follow up work with 10 secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. Phase 2 involved 26 LAs involving 99 secondary schools and 446 primary schools. Data was also collected on attendance, attainment and exclusion. Results showed that the BIP proved effective in reducing absence, improving attendance and improving positive behaviour but there were no significant improvements found in attainment at any of the stages (Hallam, 2007). However, school staff valued the support of the BESTs because they did not have the time or expertise needed for some pupils and another bonus for pupils was that they were able to talk to outside support personnel rather than an authority school figure.

While the Hallam (ibid) study was a government response to the management of behaviour, a local response to management and disaffection in schools was the programme Towards Responsibility in Education and Employment (TREE) (Didaskalou & Millward, 2007). This response developed individual achievement and progress by promoting five qualities and dimensions of development in order to promote a more rounded person: *me as a person*; *working with others*; *problem solving*; *organising myself*, and *taking responsibility*. The programme was launched in one secondary school and its five feeder primary schools in an area of high unemployment and social

deprivation in the northeast of England where there were problem behaviour and disaffection. The programme, encouraging self-management and autonomy, was put into one to two classes in primary and one class in secondary and because it was web-based, each pupil could identify and monitor personal goals, and staff could monitor group and school progress. Its evaluation at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the programme (utilising semi-structured staff interviews and group student interviews) suggested enthusiasm from teachers and pupils alike. Primary school staff stated that beneficial effects included: improved relationships; focused discussions on learning/behaviour; pupils' enthusiasm because of self-monitoring of progress; and planning for personal growth/development. Principals used school data to plan for staff and school development. On moving to second level, staff reported that pupils were arriving into their school more confident and with a clear idea of how they might achieve their personal goals.

Critically, this study would have benefited from a more objective measure such as a pre and post measurement of learning and behaviour rather than just the subjective enthusiasm of staff and pupils. According to Giallo and Hayes (2007), objective measures must always be utilised as teacher ratings are poor indicators of change. In the Giallo and Hayes (ibid) study, teachers were given one four-hour session of professional development (PD) on strategies to improve problem behaviour. All participants rated the programme highly and stated that their skills and understanding of pupils' difficult behaviour *had improved* or *improved to some extent* and utilising these strategies, teachers expected pupils' behaviour to improve. Objective measures of teacher pre and post workshop data revealed no significant changes in their application of behaviour management strategies and there was no reduction in ratings of problem behaviour for their most difficult pupils. A possible explanation of no improvement may be that the single four-hour professional development session may be too brief for teachers to trial, discuss, receive feedback and follow-up support in using the new strategies (ibid) so a series of sessions was suggested in future. Another factor may be that the strategies suggested were not a good 'fit' for the system in place e.g. if the school highlights the importance of a whole-school approach, then

strategies must be offered to the school staff and principal rather than individual classroom supports.

Improving behaviour and improving learning are two sides of the same coin according to Ellis & Tod (2009) hence the term *Behaviour for Learning* programme, which is a proactive approach to behaviour management. A pupil progresses in learning provided there are efficient behaviour management strategies in place (ibid.). This programme has its roots in a systematic literature review of pupil behaviour (Powell & Tod, 2004) and points out that behaviour is underpinned by social, emotional and cognitive processes, such as participation (social/relationship with others), engagement (emotional/relationship with self), and access (cognitive/relationship with the curriculum). In identifying what is needed by the pupil, teachers and policy makers need to assess strengths and weaknesses in relation to *relationship with self*, *relationship with others* and *relationship with the curriculum* and build up positive relationships in those three areas to promote learning behaviour. It advocates a problem solving approach to learning. For example, the learning behaviour for a child with SEBD may include interventions and strategies involving relationships with self (emotional, i.e. within child factors, e.g. positive feedback, ensuring an ethos where mistakes are OK, work targeting self-esteem/anger management etc.), with others (social, i.e. improving capacity to learn in group situations such as social skills groups) and with the curriculum (cognitive, i.e. improving access such as changing teaching styles, offering a multi-sensory approach, using concrete materials, breaking tasks down into smaller steps etc.). It is suggested that this programme is more suitable at the classroom and individual level rather than at school level as it evolved from research which has been tried and tested by teachers in the classroom and thus builds on a conceptual framework of improving behaviour in the classroom rather than at a whole-school level. The core of the programme *is a concern for groups and individuals for whom behaviour management strategies do not suffice* (p.3, Ellis & Tod (2009)). They stress that classroom contexts and conditions are experienced differently by individuals and where there is misbehaviour, the teachers need to examine which of the three relationships (social, emotional,

and cognitive) need to be supported e.g. a child with social difficulties may need practice working in groups or may need emotional support (building up self-esteem) or cognitive support (ability to perform the action). This work is best suited at the class or individual level.

In summary, behaviour and behaviour management is of concern globally. Responses by the U.S. to the management of behaviour now focus on proactive and positive strategies rather than previously used aversive strategies. These proactive strategies include Restorative Justice, Responsive to Intervention and Whole School Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). The latter, based on behaviourist and systems principles is evidence-based and is already in over 4,000 U.S. state schools. Modelled on the U.S. system, but with slight variations, schools in Australia and Norway have now taken whole-school PBS on board and according to research (Sorlie & Ogden, 2007; Yeung *et al.*, 2009) this has proved successful. However, limitations of the Yeung *et al.* study in Australia included the following: a possibly unreliable measuring tool, no information on piloting, significant differences in group numbers and control participants came from just two schools where the Department of Education had already questioned differences between schools on their ability to cope with behaviour (see section 2.5.2). Limitations were also seen in the Norwegian study in that social-skills training sessions were not universally included for all pupils (see section 2.5.3).

In the U.K., there has been a plethora of research and reports on behaviour/behaviour support including government and local responses. These include the Elton Report (DfES, 1989), Ofsted (2005), the Steer Reports (DfES, 2005; 2006; Steer, 2009), and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL, DfES, 2007). Seminal studies (e.g. Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Sammons *et al.*, 1995) indicate that effective schools and an appropriate curriculum (Ofsted, 2005) encourage good behaviour. Some successful research programmes at systemic level include the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP); Towards Responsibility in Education and Employment (TREE); and Behaviour for Learning.

While this section (2.5) examined behaviour management and its strategies internationally, the following section will examine behaviour and its management in Ireland.

## **2.6 Ireland - review of national studies**

In Ireland, similar to other countries, there has been much debate about behavioural difficulties and because mainstream schools are becoming increasingly inclusive, children with challenging behaviour are regularly encountered (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2004). School numbers have also increased because of the many immigrants coming to Ireland from the 1990s due to the Celtic Tiger, resulting in schools with linguistic and cultural diversity (Department of Education & Science, 2009; Devine & Kelly, 2006). The need for adequate proficiency in the English language was highlighted by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2004) when they pointed out that special needs and learning difficulties may not become apparent if there were language barriers. In attempting to provide for these pupils, many 'language' teachers were appointed to provide additional language classes for pupils with English as their second language.

Devine (2005), in her study, interviewed principals and teachers, including language teachers on how schools were responding and coping with immigrant pupils in the schools. While they spoke positively about their experiences in dealing with immigrant pupils, they highlighted the time involved in 'settling new children into class, catering to their language needs and responding to the challenges of children who had specific traumas and needs' (p.57). Fluency in English was very important according to the teachers because without it, pupils could not integrate socially and be seen as *the same* as their peers (Devine, *ibid*). In response to the needs of immigrant pupils, the Department of Education and Science, through the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) funded a large-scale national study on provision, including language provision for immigrant pupils, in primary and secondary schools (Smyth *et al.*, 2009). This study found that in 2007, 10% of the population in primary schools were immigrant pupils, with three quarters

of those non-English speaking. Similar to that found in other countries, immigrant pupils were most likely to attend urban disadvantaged schools (ibid).

With the downturn in the economy (from 2007 onwards), the number of language teachers has been cut back. This researcher theorises, backed up from her experiences of being at the coal face of visiting schools and dealing with pupils with behavioural difficulties who were not proficient in the English language, that some of these difficulties may be the result of possible frustrations by students. In her experience, many could not communicate their needs or integrate socially because of their lack of fluency in English.

In reviewing research into behaviour management in Irish mainstream schools, one sees there is a paucity of research in this area, and while the Department of Education and Science commissioned research into misbehaviour at secondary school level (Department of Education and Science, 2006a), this did not include primary level. However, the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) carried out a national survey on discipline in primary schools (Irish National Teachers Organisation, 2002) and of the 332 responses returned, 52 per cent of teachers reported no discipline problems, 33 per cent had minor problems (e.g. talking out of turn), while 15 per cent had 'serious', 'major', or 'reasonably significant' disciplinary problems (e.g. indiscipline by a pupil towards a teacher). Almost half of the schools with problems were designated disadvantaged (e.g. area of high unemployment) and 30 per cent were boys' schools. However teachers perceived that the greatest failure had been in inner city and girls' schools, while the highest level of improvement had taken place in boys' schools. The profile of children most likely to present with discipline problems was of those with low general ability (ibid). It is suggested that because the INTO study was undertaken a decade ago, it is unlikely to be an accurate reflection of behaviour difficulties today, particularly since behaviour difficulties are on the agenda annually at teachers' conferences.



Managing challenging behaviour was stressful to school principals who were worried about their staff according to a postal study carried out in special schools by Kelly *et al.* (2007). The study was commissioned by the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE). There was a 67% response rate. Findings included the fact that misbehaviour had increased over the past 5 years; managing misbehaviour was stressful for both principals and teachers alike with teachers having difficulty carrying out their teaching role; and the misbehaviour significantly interfered with the education of pupils exhibiting problem behaviour and with that of other pupils. Lack of appropriate services was a significant stressor according to the Kelly *et al.* study (ibid). While this study set out to look at principals' perceptions of behavioural difficulties and this was achieved utilising a postal study, it is suggested that this study would have been enriched if pupils' and teachers' perceptions were included as they are at the coalface of dealing with problem behaviour on a daily basis. The Kelly *et al.* study (ibid) recognised that lack of support services was a significant stressor in staff burnout. Therefore, the researcher suggests that high levels of personal and professional support are warranted, such as in-service behaviour management training, strategies for supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties, a whole-school positive behaviour support programme such as PBS and outside support from clinical and educational (DES) services.

While in-service behaviour management training is important in supporting school staff, enhancement of social skills and social-emotional development is an important element in pupils' learning and education (Elias *et al.*, 2003). The need for enhanced social skills is recognised by the Department of Education and Science with the inclusion of a programme of social, personal and health education (SPHE) in all primary and secondary schools (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2003).

The effect of a social skills programme on classroom behaviour and social cohesion of pupils was examined by McNally (2005). Participants within the study were 28 secondary pupils from a disadvantaged Co. Dublin school and included a control group. The intervention was implemented in second year

and a pilot study was carried out the previous term. Results indicated no significant change on standardised measures of behaviour. Possible explanations for this were as follows: a programme of 10 sessions over 5 weeks was too short a time to effect change; the small sample size; and a lot of absenteeism in the intervention group which would have a negative effect on the social skills training. Another suggestion is that the test instrument (Conners' Teacher Rating Scale-Revised Long Form, Conners, 2000) was not a suitable measuring tool and to support this claim, this tool was designed mainly to assess externalising behaviours but only half of the experimental group had such difficulties. However, significant changes were detected on students' rating of pro-social skills and teachers' ratings of classroom behaviour on non-standardised instruments. Reports from teachers and school staff indicated that the intervention group had benefited from increased social bonding, reduced verbal insults, increased cooperation and more compliance with instructions. It is possible that during the intervention, the respondents built up positive relationships within the group and with the facilitators and returned positive comments based on friendships rather than the success of the programme. In support of this theory, the following comment was made by one of the pupils 'we didn't know yous, we do now, so it's better' (p.149). The intervention group also wanted to continue with the programme, which, it could be argued, demonstrated their cohesiveness and their enjoyment of the programme.

While objective measures should always be used to evaluate change in place of subjective measures (Giallo & Hayes, 2007), and although utilised in this case, they were not fit for purpose. The researcher suggests, therefore, that the subjective measurement, especially student ratings are useful as a 'therapeutic' instrument because it allowed participants to experience a feel-good factor in relation to their schooling and this build-up of a positive relationship acted as a first step for pupils who may feel alienated from school. This researcher fully subscribes to Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963) point of view that *each child needs encouragement like a plant needs water* (p.3), therefore whatever process taken by schools to encourage pupils to

want to attend, enjoy school and to learn can only be beneficial to all concerned.

While there is some research on the lack of respect that children have for their teachers (National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education, 2004; National Union of Teachers, 2006), there is also research that states that learning will take place when a teacher has a good relationship with pupils, i.e. one based on mutual respect and support rather than direction and control, and both are seen as co-participants in the learning process (Rowland, 1987, as cited in Devine, 1998). Devine (1998) theorises that respect, esteem and giving some control to pupils in school is beneficial in improving pupil/teacher relationships. She examined power between teachers and pupils in three Dublin primary schools. Children of different ages were interviewed about their experiences in school. The differences in the enthusiasm shown by the younger children compared to the alienation of the older pupils suggested that as children's experience of the system grows, so too does their alienation and disenchantment. Devine contended that, because power resides with teachers in school, pupils are excluded from decision-making and ownership of the system and are disempowered. She argued that empowerment should derive from equality of respect and esteem between individuals, rather than age, and argued that pupils who experience democracy in practice will incorporate equality and respect into their worldview. Empowerment and having some control over the learning process extends pupils' knowledge as pupils experience a good relationship with their teachers. Where teachers are open to pupils' views, pupils can take risks with their learning without fear of ridicule (*ibid*). The Devine study collected data (utilising questionnaires) from multiple perspectives, i.e. from principals, teachers and pupils and this triangulation of perspectives was in contrast to the Kelly *et al.* study (2007) where the perspective of principals only was ascertained.

Gender equality and classroom interaction was examined by Drudy and Uí Chatháin (1997) in second level schools in Ireland and results indicated that male pupils had a significantly higher proportion of teacher/pupil interactions,

thereby disadvantaging female pupils. These female pupils were described as quieter, not as willing to put their hand up or become involved, less confident relative to boys and afraid of the prospect of being wrong. This unequal treatment by teachers on an on-going basis has the potential to affect class climate, resulting in low self-esteem in female pupils, which according to Wise (2000) are factors influencing behaviour in pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The above research studies provided some information on behavioural difficulties in Ireland, but what could be argued is missing is behaviour support at systemic level. Many other countries have systems in place (e.g. PBS in the U.S., Australia and Norway, Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), Behaviour for Learning, and Towards Responsibility in Education and Employment (TREE) in the U.K., to name but a few). It is argued that there is a vital need for such a programme in Ireland, especially at primary level, as research (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003) suggests children need behaviour support early on, preferably before problem behaviour becomes crystallised, which tends to happen at 7/8 years of age. While the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides some support at individual level, there is need for support at systemic level. It is therefore suggested that *the* way forward is to provide positive behaviour support at whole-school level as this has been tried and tested in other countries and it appears to transcend country boundaries and cultures.

To summarise, in Ireland, there is a dearth of research into behaviour and behaviour support, especially at primary level. Studies that have been carried out include the following: a national study (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2002) which examined behaviour problems in primary schools; Kelly *et al.* (2007) examined challenging behaviour in special schools; McNally (2005) examined the effects of a social skills programme with secondary pupils; and Devine (1998) examined power relations in three Dublin primary schools. While all these studies provide valuable information on the topic of behaviour and behaviour support, a necessary missing ingredient according to this researcher is behaviour support at systemic level.

Positive Behaviour Support at whole-school level is one such programme that has been tried and tested and found to be successful in other jurisdictions. It is suggested therefore, that a way forward in reducing behavioural difficulties at systems level is the introduction of whole-school PBS into Irish primary schools.

While this section examined problem behaviour and its management nationally, the following section will explore the four main research questions and some auxiliary questions on behaviour management before providing a summary and link to the current study.

## **2.7 Research questions**

While attempts have been made to work at systems level in relation to behaviour management in other countries examined in this literature review, this is missing in Ireland. In attempting to fill that gap and in trying to ascertain if PBS would be a suitable programme in Ireland, this study seeks to address four major questions on current practices and needs in relation to behaviour support. While question 3 on needs is the prime question, current practices were also important as a review of these practices is recommended by the National Education (Welfare) Board in their book *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*. The guidelines were brought out to assist schools to review their existing code of behaviour which is a legal requirement in every school (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Department of Education & Science, 2000). There were many reasons for focusing on primary schools and these are explained in Chapter One (see 1.3) but one important reason is because there is a government initiative already in place at secondary level. However, this does not extend to primary level where it is argued that there is a great need for a systems approach to behaviour management.

**Question 1** What are the current practices in relation to behaviour support at various levels (including whole-school level, corridors/playground, classroom level, and individual level) according to principals, teachers and pupils?

**Question 2** Are there differences in current practices in behaviour support in relation to (2i) location (urban/rural), (2ii) school gender (boys/girls/mixed), and (2iii) perspective (principals/teachers/pupils)?

**Question 3** What are the needs for behaviour support at these various levels (whole-school level, corridors/playground, classroom level, and individual level) as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils?

**Question 4** Are there differences in needs in behaviour support in relation to (4i) location, (4ii) school gender, and (4iii) perspective?

Four auxiliary questions pertaining to behaviour support were also asked and these were as follows:

**Q1** Do school rules need to be improved?

**Q2** Is there a need for a behaviour support programme in your school?

**Q3** If offered to your school, would you agree to endorse a whole-school behaviour support programme?

**Q4** Would you be interested in being included in the management of a whole-school behaviour support programme?

## **2.8 Summary and link to current study**

This chapter sought a definition of behavioural difficulties and found that this was controversial because of the varying subjective views of what constitutes behavioural difficulties. The broad definition chosen defined behavioural difficulties on the basis of their effect and included all behaviour that disconnects the parties involved and prevents learning from taking place. Reasons for behavioural difficulties were provided including pathological and situational/contextual reasons. The search process was conducted utilising key words in databases and libraries in Dublin and London. Behavioural difficulties and responses utilised both internationally and nationally were examined which included responses from the following countries: U.S., Australia, Norway, U.K. and Ireland. Because responding at whole school

(systems) level is pertinent to this study, the two theoretical underpinnings of whole school behaviour support to include Behaviourism and Systems Change Theory are stated. The review of literature has shown that Ireland has not responded at systems level to behavioural difficulties and this research tries to ascertain if there is a perceived need for such an approach. The main research questions seek to find out current practices in primary schools in Ireland and what needs to happen in order to ascertain if a whole school positive behaviour support programme would be a useful behaviour support response in Irish primary schools. Auxiliary questions on behaviour support are also discussed.

The methodology utilised in the study now follows.

## Chapter 3 - Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used in examining current practices and needs in relation to behaviour support and to determine whether these needs can be met with a whole-school positive behaviour support programme.

The route taken was as follows. The location for the study was outlined (Section 3.2) and this was followed by the researcher's epistemological position (Section 3.3). Methods utilised in answering the research questions and how answered were outlined (Section 3.4) followed by the research design (Section 3.5), sampling framework (Section 3.6), instrumentation utilised (Section 3.7) and piloting (Section 3.8). Data collection procedure and time line were stated (Section 3.9) and the chapter concluded with validity, generalisability and reliability issues (Section 3.10), ethical considerations (Section 3.11), the role of the researcher (Section 3.12) and a summary (Section 3.13). See Table 3.1 of the methodology followed in the study.

**Table 3.1 Methodology followed in the research study**

Phases	Documentation
Phase 1	Department of Education and Science Primary School Directory
Phase 2	Principals' and teachers' questionnaires 6 <sup>th</sup> Class (final year) pupil questionnaires
Phase 3	Individual interviews with principals Focus-group interview with teachers Focus group interviews with 6 <sup>th</sup> class (final year elementary) pupils

### 3.2 Location for study

Formal schooling in the Republic of Ireland begins at age four and is divided into three levels: primary level (elementary, for pupils aged 4-12 years); second level (for pupils aged 13-18 years); and tertiary (for pupils aged 18+). The vast majority of all primary and second level schools are serviced by the Department of Education's Psychological Service - the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). The researcher is part of this service and is located in the Abbey Region (fictitious), which includes 150 schools and is



served by 10 psychologists. However, only primary schools with final year (6<sup>th</sup> class pupils) were the focus of this research project.

Primary schools were chosen for many reasons, one important one being that research carried out in the U.S. (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003) advocates that working with younger children is preferable before problem behaviour becomes crystallised at the 7/8 year old stage. This implies that putting a whole-school behaviour programme into primary schools is more effective and should improve behaviour at the macro level.

### **3.3 Epistemological position**

The researcher takes a pragmatic approach to research, and according to Robson (2002) it asks 'what works' in answering the research questions. Pragmatism is compatible with quantitative and qualitative methods (Mertens, 2005) or positivism and anti-positivism. In other words, it is compatible with a mixed design as in this study.

Positivism derives from a philosophical approach and is summarised by the following assumptions:

- Objective knowledge (facts) is gained from direct experience/observation and is the only knowledge available to science
- Science is value-free, thus separating facts from values
- Science is largely based on quantitative data, utilising strict rules and procedures
- Scientific propositions or hypotheses are founded on and tested against facts
- The purpose of science is to develop universal causal laws
- Cause is established through demonstrating a constant relationship between two variables
- Explaining an event is simply relating it to a general law
- It is possible to transfer the assumptions/methods of natural science to social science.

(Robson, 2002, p.20)

Anti-positivists or relativists are critical and take issue with the assumptions of positivists claiming that one cannot separate facts from the values people hold. People are not objects but social beings and when views are sought, they put forward their own unique interpretation of that world (Morgan, 2007). In other words, the methods of natural science are not suitable for social science.

A way forward from the tension of positivism or anti-positivism is to take a pragmatic view. Pragmatists, like positivists, believe in an objective reality but this is grounded in the environment/experience of each individual, similar to social constructivists, but the choice of one reality over another depends on what is more useful to help the pragmatist to achieve their purpose in answering the research questions. Pragmatism has emerged as a major orientation to combining quantitative and qualitative research (Onwuengbuzie & Leech, 2005).

A mixed methods project combines a quantitative and qualitative approach. But how to reconcile these two contrasting approaches, with the quantitative approach emphasising a deductive-objective-generalising approach, in contrast to the qualitative approach which emphasises an inductive-subjective-contextual approach, is problematic. According to Morgan (2007), in a pragmatic approach, there is no problem with asserting both that there is a single “world view” and that all individuals have their own unique interpretations of that world (p.72). In combination, more information is gleaned than from either method alone (Cresswell & Clark, 2004). In other words they become more than the sum of their parts.

How are the two paradigms or epistemologies combined to be mutually supportive and illuminating? In explanation, in this research study, numerical data in the form of questionnaires in Phase 2 was statistically analysed, thus providing factual information on current practices and needs. In Phase 3, data in the form of words was utilised, including semi-structured interviews

with principals and focus group interviews with teachers (Appendix 3) and pupils (Appendix 4). This qualitative data collected the respondents' unique thoughts, experiences and perceptions and in turn supported and illuminated the quantitative results with their insights and explanations.

### **3.4 Methods utilised in answering research questions and how answered**

The three phases in this research, as described earlier in Section 1.2 and explained in more detail in Sections 3.5 and 3.6 were as follows:

- Phase 1 gathered data from the Department of Education and Science Primary School Directory (Department of Education and Science, 2006) for eligible schools and school gender (boys/girls/mixed). Information on location of schools (urban/rural) was ascertained either from the psychologists of those schools or from the schools themselves
- Phase 2 was quantitative in nature with questionnaires completed by principals, teachers, and pupils on current practices/needs in their schools
- Phase 3 was qualitative, and included interviews conducted with four principals and focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils.

The quantitative element (Phase 2) was given more weight than the qualitative element (Phase 3). Table 3.2 provides a summary of how the four main research questions in Phase 2 were answered by principals, teachers and pupils.

**Table 3.2 – Major research questions and how they were answered**

Question	Phase 2 Questionnaires to principals and teachers, and 6 <sup>th</sup> class primary (final year) pupils
<b>Question 1</b> What are the <b>current practices</b> in relation to behaviour support at various levels, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole school,</li> <li>• Corridors/playground,</li> <li>• Classroom, and</li> <li>• Individual levels</li> </ul>	Structured questioning schedule consisting of open and closed questions: <b>Stage 1</b> -Principals, Q1, Q7, Q14 <b>Stage 2</b> Teachers Q1, 7, 10, 14 (Appendix 1) <b>Stage 3</b> Pupils, Q1, Q5, Q8, Q12 (Appendix 2)
<b>Question 2</b> Are <b>current practices</b> different in relation to behaviour support at various levels, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole school,</li> <li>• Corridors/playground,</li> <li>• Classroom, and</li> <li>• Individual level between:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) School location (urban v rural)</li> <li>ii) School gender (boys/girls/mixed)</li> <li>iii) Perspectives of respondents (principals, teachers and pupils)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	Analysis of quantitative data - examining associations utilising chi square. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole school, (Q1/1)</li> <li>• Corridors/playground (Q7/5),</li> <li>• Class Q10/8, and</li> <li>• Individual Q14/12 between               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) School location (urban v rural)</li> <li>ii) School gender (boys/girls/mixed)</li> <li>iii) Perspectives of respondents (principals, teachers and pupils)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Question 3</b> What are the <b>needs</b> as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils in relation to behaviour support at various levels, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole-school,</li> <li>• Corridors/playground,</li> <li>• Classroom, and</li> <li>• Individual level</li> </ul>	Structured questioning schedule consisting of open and closed questions to: <b>Stage 1</b> -principals Q6.9.13.16 <b>Stage 2</b> -teachers Q6, 9, 13, 16 (Appendix 1) <b>Stage 3</b> -pupils, Q4, 7, 11, 14 (Appendix 2)
<b>Question 4</b> Are the <b>needs</b> different in relation to behaviour support at various levels, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole school,</li> <li>• Corridors/playground,</li> <li>• Classroom, and</li> <li>• Individual level between:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) School location (urban v rural)</li> <li>ii) School gender (boys/girls/mixed)</li> <li>iii) Perspectives (principals, teachers and pupils)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	Analysis of quantitative data - examining associations utilising chi square. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole school level, (Q6/4)</li> <li>• Corridors/playground (Q9/7),</li> <li>• Class Q13/11, and</li> <li>• Individual level Q16/14 between               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) School location (urban v rural)</li> <li>ii) School gender (boys/girls/mixed)</li> <li>iii) Perspectives of respondents (principals, teachers and pupils)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Question 1 examined current practices in behaviour support at various levels (from whole-school - individual). These questions were answered in the principals' and teachers' questionnaire (Appendix 1) by questions 1, 7, 10, and 14 (principals did not answer Q10 at classroom level) and in the pupils' questionnaire (Appendix 2) by Questions 1, 5, 8, and 12 respectively (see Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3 Current practices in behaviour support as perceived by principals/teachers and pupils**

	<b>Principals' and teachers' questionnaire (Appendix 1)</b>	<b>Pupils' questionnaire (Appendix 2)</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>Current practice</b>	<b>Current practice</b>
Whole-school	Question 1	Question 1
Corridor/playground	Question 7	Question 5
Classroom	Question 10 (teachers only)	Question 8
Individual	Question 14	Question 12

Question 2 on whether current practices differed was answered by Questions 1, 7, and 14 by principals and Questions 1, 7, 10 and 14 by teachers (Appendix 1) and by Questions 1, 5, 8, and 12 in the pupils' questionnaire (Appendix 2). To ascertain patterns of difference, responses of principals, teachers and pupils were combined and comparisons were made between the responses given depending on location (urban/rural), school gender (boys/girls/mixed) and perspective of respondents (principals/teachers/pupils). See Tables 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 below on current practices depending on location, school gender, and perspectives of respondents respectively.

**Table 3.4 Current practices in behaviour support as perceived by principals, teachers, & pupils, and school location (Question 2i)**

<b>Principals and teachers (Appendix 1) and pupils (Appendix 2) questionnaire</b>	
<b>Level</b>	<b>Current Practice</b>
Whole-school	Question 1/1
Corridor/playground	Question 7/5
Classroom	Question 10/8
Individual	Question 14/12

**Table 3.5 Current practices in behaviour support as perceived by principals, teachers and pupils, and school gender (Question 2ii)**

	<b>Principals, teachers and pupils</b>
<b>Level</b>	
Whole-school	Questions 1/1
Corridor/playground	Question 7/5
Classroom	Question 10/8
Individual	Question 14/12

**Table 3.6 Current practices and perspectives of principals, teachers & pupils (Question 2iii)**

	Principals, teachers and pupils
<b>Level</b>	
Whole-school	Question 1/1
Corridor/playground	Question 7/5
Classroom	Question 10/8
Individual	Question 14/12

Question 3 examined needs at various levels, as perceived by principals and teachers (Appendix 1) and by pupils (Appendix 2). These questions were answered in the principals' & teachers' questionnaire by questions 6, 9, 13, and 16, and by pupils by questions 4, 7, 11 and 14 respectively (see Table 3.7 below).

**Table 3.7 Needs in behaviour support as perceived by principals & teachers, and pupils**

	Principals' and teachers' questionnaire (Appendix 1)	Pupils' questionnaire (Appendix 2)
<b>Level</b>		
Whole-school	Question 6	Question 4
Corridor/playground	Question 9	Question 7
Classroom	Question 13	Question 11
Individual	Question 16	Question 14

Question 4 on whether needs differed depending on location, school gender and perspective of respondents was answered by principals/teachers in questions 6, 9, 13, and 16 (Appendix 1) and by pupils in questions 4, 7, 11, and 14 respectively, Appendix 2). To ascertain difference, responses of principals, teachers and pupils were combined and comparisons were made between the responses given depending on location (urban/rural), school gender (boys/girls/mixed) and perspective of respondents (principals/teachers/pupils). See Table 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10 below on needs depending on location, school gender and perspective of respondents respectively.

**Table 3.8 Needs and school location by principals, teachers and pupils**

	Principals and teachers (Appendix 1) and pupils (Appendix 2)
<b>Level</b>	
Whole-school	Question 6/4
Corridor/playground	Question 9/7
Classroom	Question 13/11
Individual	Question 16/14

**Table 3.9 Needs and school gender by principals, teachers and pupils**

	Principals and teachers (Appendix 1) and pupils (Appendix 2)
<b>Level</b>	
Whole-school	Question 6/4
Corridor/playground	Question 9/7
Classroom	Question 13/11
Individual	Question 16/14

**Table 3.10 Needs and perspective of principals, teachers, and pupils**

	Principals and teachers (Appendix 1) and pupils (Appendix 2)
<b>Level</b>	
Whole-school	Question 6/4
Corridor/playground	Question 9/7
Classroom	Question 13/11
Individual	Question 16/14

Additional questions were also asked including whether school personnel perceived a need for a behaviour support programme in their school and whether they would agree to endorse such a programme (Q18, Appendix 1). Not all questions in the questionnaires were analysed but may be at a later stage (see Appendices 1 and 2 - questionnaires to principals/teachers and pupils).

While questions on current practice and needs were asked at various levels, for the purposes of this research only results at whole-school level were analysed and included in the main body of the research for the following reason: The purpose of the research is to ascertain if a whole-school behaviour support programme would be suitable for schools in the Abbey Region, therefore, only research at whole-school level was needed at this point.



### **3.5 Design of study**

The research was divided into three phases. Phase 1 entailed the gathering of information on 'eligible' schools and categories of schools from the Department of Education and Science Primary School Directory 2005-2006 (Department of Education & Science, 2006). This gathering of information was important so that each category of school was represented in the stratified randomly selected sample.

Phase 2 was divided into three stages and consisted of the collection of quantitative data in the form of questionnaires to principals (Stage 1), teachers (Stage 2), and 6<sup>th</sup> class (final year elementary) pupils (Stage 3) on current practices, and needs, in relation to behaviour support.

Phase 3 contained the qualitative element, consisting of semi-structured interviews with primary school principals and focus group interviews with teachers, and pupils, on their perceptions of current practices, and gaps/needs in behaviour support. Focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils were chosen because it was felt that they would be less intimidated with this process than with individual interviews and more likely to agree to take part.

### **3.6 Sampling framework**

#### **Sample**

The population from which the sample was selected included all primary schools in the Abbey Region that included pupils in the final year of their primary education (6<sup>th</sup> class).

#### **3.6.1 Phase 1**

In Phase 1 of the study, the Department of Education and Science Primary School Directory (2005-2006) showed the number of eligible schools to total 95. Eligible schools were primary schools with a sixth (final year elementary) class.

Although unusual in a European sense, primary and second level schools in Ireland are either single sex (boys/girls) or co-educational (mixed). Girls' primary schools are usually mixed at infant level but are single sex girls' schools thereafter (and this described the girls' primary schools in this study). The three different school genders, (boys/girls/mixed schools) when one took location (urban/rural) into account total six different categories of schools. Urban schools were defined as schools in towns and usually had 200+ pupils while rural schools were those located in the countryside or in villages with small pupil numbers. When it was debatable whether the school was urban or rural, either the psychologist for that school or the school itself was contacted to ascertain the location.

According to the Department of Education and Science Directory, each category consisted of the following numbers in the Abbey Region:

Boys urban = 9 schools,

Girls urban = 6 schools;

Boys rural=2 schools;

Girls rural=1 school;

Mixed urban = 33 schools; and

Mixed rural = 44 schools

To make it as representative as possible, the numbers of schools in each category were shown as a percentage of the 95 eligible schools. Reflecting time and resources, and the 18 schools representing the researcher's annual case load, it was considered that 18 schools would be an adequate number of schools to be included in the research sample. Stratified random sampling took place to choose these schools, taking into account the six categories of schools.

The process of selecting schools involved typing out the names of all 95 schools, categorising them into the six different school types and randomly selecting the number of schools needed to represent each category. This stratified random sampling was necessary to draw a representative sample so that findings could be generalised to the total population. However Denzen & Lincoln (2000) indicate that while generalisations can be made, every case is particular and unique in its own way. See Table 3.11 for demographics of the 18 stratified randomly selected schools invited to take part and Table 3.12 showing the actual numbers that took part.

**Table 3.11 Demographics of the 18 randomly selected schools**

<b>Schools gender</b>	<b>Number &amp; % of eligible schools</b>		<b>Number &amp; % of schools/ selected</b>		<b>Number of principals selected</b>	<b>Number of teachers Selected</b>	<b>Number of pupils selected</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>
Boys urban	9	9.5	1	5.5	1	11	29
Girls urban	6	6	1	5.5	1	18	30
Boys rural	2	2	1	5.5	1	5	15
Girls rural	1	1	1	5.5	1	5	15
Mixed urban	33	35	6	33	6	96	131
Mixed rural	44	46.5	8	44	8	73	132
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>352</b>

**Table 3.12 Demographics of the 16 participating schools**

<b>School gender</b>	<b>Number of participating schools</b>	<b>Number of participating principals</b>	<b>Number of participating teachers</b>	<b>Number of participating pupils</b>
Boys urban	1	1	20	21
Girls urban	1	1	13	16
Boys rural	1	1	5	6
Girls rural	1	1	4	14
Mixed urban	5	5	51	75
Mixed rural	7	7	64	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>237</b>

In examining Table 3.11, because the first four school types constituted a small percentage of the eligible schools in the Abbey Region (1%-9.5%) when compared to mixed urban and mixed rural, only one school in each of those categories was randomly selected. It was decided that, should any of those four schools decline an invitation to take part, it was important that a replacement school be selected and this was organised. The boys urban school declined an invitation to take part and the randomly selected replacement school (which was a larger school with a corresponding larger number of teachers) was subsequently invited and this invitation was accepted.

Mixed urban reflected 35% of eligible schools, therefore 6 schools were randomly selected. Likewise, because mixed rural was the biggest category, reflecting 46.5% of the 95 eligible schools, 8 schools were randomly selected. Because these two categories, mixed urban and mixed rural, were the two biggest categories, it was felt that it was not necessary to choose replacement schools should any decline to take part, as adequate data would be collected from the remaining schools. Of the original 18 (stratified) randomly selected schools, one mixed urban and one mixed rural declined invitations and these were not replaced. The total number of schools therefore that accepted the invitation to take part was 16. From the original 18 invited schools, with their 18 principals, 208 selected teachers and 352 selected pupils, 16 schools accepted invitations to take part and this included 16 principals, 157 teachers and 237 pupils (see Table 3.12).

### **3.6.2 Phase 2      Questionnaires to principals and teachers, and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils**

Phase 2 was in three stages, namely questionnaires to principals (Stage 1), teachers (Stage 2) and pupils (Stage 3). The process was as follows:

#### **Stage 1      Questionnaires to principals**

Each principal teacher was invited by letter to complete a questionnaire on current practices and needs around behaviour support. A letter of invitation (Appendix 5i), with copies of both questionnaires (principals/teachers, and pupils) was posted to each principal. A follow-up phone call was made some days later to answer any questions, and ascertain whether the principal would accept the invitation to take part.

Initially, fifteen of the 18 selected principals accepted the invitation to take part. Of the three principals that declined, because one school was the sole representative from that category (boys urban primary), a replacement was randomly chosen and a letter of invitation was sent and accepted. No replacements were needed for the other two as 5 mixed urban and 7 mixed rural had already accepted in those categories. The final number of principals who accepted the invitation on behalf of their schools was 16.

On accepting the invitation to take part, the researcher sought information on the number of teachers in the school for delivery of teachers' questionnaires in anticipation of Stage 2, and the number of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in the school so letters of invitation to parents could be organised in preparation of Stage 3 (completion of pupil questionnaire). A suitable date was organised for the researcher to deliver teacher questionnaires, and the letters to parents seeking permission for their children to complete questionnaires for Stage 3.

#### **Stage 2      Questionnaires to teachers**

From the 16 participating schools and in conjunction with a link person (e.g. a special education teacher - see letter of invitation to link person, Appendix 5iv) the researcher invited all teachers (including full-time, part-time, class and special education teachers) to complete questionnaires, which were similar to the principals' questionnaires (Appendix 1), containing structured and open questions on current practices and needs around behaviour support. The questionnaire, distributed by the link person, was accompanied by a covering letter explaining the research (Appendix 5ii). After completion, the principals' and teachers' questionnaires were collected by the link person who numbered all completed questionnaires for the following reasons: in the interests of anonymity; in case respondents wanted to withdraw their questionnaire in the future; and to enable the researcher to contact a particular respondent if they had information which would be of interest for Phase 3 (focus-group interviews). All principal and teacher questionnaires were returned to the researcher when visiting the school. In total 222 questionnaires were distributed to principals and teachers and 173 accepted an invitation to take part (78% of total distributed). See Table 3.13 for the number of principals and teachers who participated and returned questionnaires.

**Table 3.13 Numbers of principals and teachers who completed and returned questionnaires**

	Number of participating principals/teachers and rate of return		
School gender	Number distributed	Number returned	% returned
Boys urban	25	21	84
Girls urban	26	14	54
Boys rural	6	6	100
Girls rural	6	5	83
Mixed urban	76	56	74
Mixed rural	83	71	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>78</b>

### **Stage 3      Questionnaires to 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils**

The final stage in Phase 2 entailed an invitation to pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> class in all 16 schools. Where there were more than one 6<sup>th</sup> class, the school principal

decided which class to choose. The process of administering the questionnaires was as follows:

The researcher visited the schools taking part in the research to administer the pupils' questionnaires. The returned permission slips (Appendix 5iii) had been collected by the link person or class teacher and on the morning of administration of the questionnaires, each questionnaire was coded numerically, usually by the link person (in the interests of anonymity and so that a key was created and known only to the link person) and the questionnaires were then handed out. After ensuring that only pupils with permission to take part in the research remained in the classroom, the researcher explained the research being conducted and also sought the students' permission to take part in the research. Only one pupil from the 16 schools declined to take part and no explanation was sought or given. Pupils were told that their names were not being used and that anything written on the questionnaire was confidential and would not be shared with anybody in the school. Before commencing, class teachers were invited to remain or to take time-out for the duration of administration of the questionnaires. All teachers left the classroom. To make sure that pupils understood each question and in case some children would have difficulty reading the questions, each of the 16 questions was read out by the researcher and all potential answers were explained to the pupils. It was made clear that this was not like a question in a maths examination where only one answer was correct. The answer for each question was what each person felt was the correct answer for them. The researcher moved from question to question while at the same time observing when pupils finished writing so that they were not rushed and adequate time was accorded to them.

The researcher's experiences on her visits to the schools and administering the questionnaires found that virtually all pupils were very well behaved and appeared to be very interested in the topic. They were very animated on unfair school rules (Q1c). Question 2 on respect was also very pertinent to them. Only one 6<sup>th</sup> class caused some difficulty and this was a mixed rural school in a disadvantaged area. One boy in the class began to shout out

what he felt was wrong with the school and when asked by the researcher to just tick the relevant boxes, he persisted in shouting out and was joined by three other boys. It was the only time that the researcher felt that she needed to be 'saved' by the class teacher.

Of the 329 questionnaires distributed to pupils in the 16 schools, 237 pupils accepted the invitation to take part (72% of the total distributed). See table 3.14 for the number of pupils who participated and returned questionnaires.

**Table 3.14 Numbers of pupils who completed and returned questionnaires**

Number of participating pupils and rate of return			
School type	Number distributed	Number returned	% returned
Boys urban	30	21	70
Girls urban	27	16	59
Boys rural	15	6	40
Girls rural	15	14	93
Mixed urban	99	75	76
Mixed rural	143	105	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>72</b>

The total number of respondents including principals, teachers and pupils who participated in phase 2 of the study numbered 410 (16 principals, 157 teachers and 237 pupils), a response rate of 74% of the distributed questionnaires (see table 3.15).

**Table 3.15 Numbers of principals and teachers, and 6th class pupils who completed and returned questionnaires**

School type	Principal/Teachers			6 <sup>th</sup> Class pupils		
	Distributed	Returned	%returned ed	Distributed	Return ed	%returned
Boys urban	25	21	84	30	21	70
Girls urban	26	14	54	27	16	59
Boys rural	6	6	100	15	6	40
Girls rural	6	5	83	15	14	93
Mixed urban	76	56	74	99	75	76
Mixed rural	83	71	86	143	105	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Total response</b>						<b>74</b>



### **3.6.3 Phase 3 Interviews and focus-group interviews**

Interviews were conducted with a) four principals and b) focus-group interviews with one group of teachers and c) two groups of pupils.

#### **a) Principals' interviews**

Random sampling did not take place for various reasons, one being that it was coming towards the end of the school year and the researcher felt that she had to choose schools that would be 'welcoming' at this time. For the most part, this was an opportunistic sample. According to Mertens (2005), this type of sampling is 'when opportunities present themselves to the researcher during the course of the study (and) the researcher makes a decision....as to the relevance of the .....individual' (p.320). Taking into consideration location and gender so that as wide a mix of views as possible was collected, the opportunistic sample resulted in two principals from an urban setting (one mixed urban and one boys' urban) while the other two principals were from a mixed rural setting. The boys' urban school and one mixed rural school were from disadvantaged areas. One of the mixed rural schools chosen fitted the criteria of selection in a number of ways. It was in a disadvantaged area and where the researcher felt she had lost her touch in trying to 'control' pupils when administering the pupil questionnaires in Phase 2. The second principal who was from a mixed rural school was targeted simply because he had offered his services at Phase 2 of the research. He had just completed a degree in Psychology with the Open University and was interested in research. Of the two remaining principals, one was targeted because she was principal of a boys' urban school in a disadvantaged area, and the other because she was principal of a mixed urban school in an advantaged area. All four accepted an invitation to take part and the interviews took place and were audio recorded in their school offices at a time convenient to them.

#### **b) Teachers' focus group interviews**

The focus-group of six teachers was an opportunistic sample for two reasons: limitations on time, and some teachers were targeted because of their previous experience. For example, one teacher from a mixed rural school in a

disadvantaged area had experience of whole-school behaviour support in another jurisdiction. The group consisted of class and special education teachers (learning support/resource teachers), with four teachers coming from the same four schools as the principals who were interviewed. The remaining two teachers volunteered themselves as they were interested in the study, having completed questionnaires in Phase 2. The categories represented by the teachers included 3 urban and 3 rural schools. Two of the urban schools were boys' schools, one designated disadvantaged. The other was a mixed urban school in an advantaged area. Of the 3 rural schools, all were mixed with one designated disadvantaged. The interview took place in the offices of the researcher's employer – the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and took approximately 45 minutes.

### **c) Pupils' focus group interviews**

The two pupils' focus-groups, each consisting of seven pupils, were opportunistic samples, again because time was limited. They came from the same mixed rural schools as two principals who took part in interviews. One principal volunteered pupils after completing his interview. To balance that, a request was made to the principal of a school which was designated disadvantaged, and another reason for focusing on that school was because it was where the researcher had experienced some behaviour difficulties when administering the pupil questionnaires. She was interested in their perceptions in relation to behaviour in school. Letters were then sent to parents through the school, seeking their permission (appendix 5vi). On acceptance, the researcher came to meet with the pupils and also asked their permission. All pupils accepted the invitation to take part and interviews of approximately 45 minutes were conducted in each of the two schools at a time convenient to all concerned.

## **3.7 Instrumentation utilised**

The three phases of the research utilised: 1) documentation from the Department of Education and Science; 2) questionnaires developed by the researcher to principals and teachers, and pupils; and 3) interviews and

focus-group interviews utilising semi-structured interview schedules developed by the researcher. The following sub-sections list the instruments utilised in each phase and their development in Phases 2 and 3 by the researcher.

### **3.7.1 Department of Education and Science Primary School Directory (Phase 1)**

As already indicated, the Department of Education and Science 2005-2006 Primary School Directory (Department of Education and Science, 2006) was utilised to carry out Phase 1 of the research to determine 'eligible' schools and issue invitations to schools from the 6 categories in the Abbey Region.

### **3.7.2 Questionnaires to principals and teachers, and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils (Phase 2)**

#### **3.7.2.1 Development of the questionnaires**

The researcher examined a number of books, questionnaires, assessment instruments and journal articles (National Education (Welfare) Board, 2008; Sugai *et al.*, 2000; Sugai *et al.*, 2001) on behaviour support, but because there was no suitable 'off the shelf' instrument available for Irish primary schools, the researcher developed her own. However, in devising the matrix of questions listed in Table 3.1, the researcher drew on information contained in the publications listed above.

The National Education (Welfare) Board publication (NEWB, 2008) in developing a code of behaviour for schools in Ireland ascertained that a review of the code of discipline should describe what is happening now, evaluate how it is working, explore options for improvement and implement them. Using this as a template, I devised the following two questions (1 & 3) *what are the current practices in relation to behaviour support* and *what are the gaps/needs in relation to behaviour support in your school?*

A journal article and a questionnaire by Sugai *et al.* (2000 & 2001) in the implementation of whole-school positive behaviour support into schools in the

U.S. sought information at four levels: whole-school, non-classroom (informal e.g. yard/hallway), classroom, and individual settings. Taking this as a template, information on current practices and needs at these levels was included in the questionnaires, namely: whole-school, corridors/playground (informal level), classroom, and individual level.

Questions 2 and 4, on possible patterns of difference in behaviour support depending on a) location (urban/rural), and b) school gender (boys/girls/mixed schools) were included after research concluded that these variables could make a difference (Dawn *et al.*, 2000; Rutter, 1989). The perspectives of the respondents (principals, teachers and pupil) were also included in questions 2 and 4 (2iii & 4iii) because research highlighted differences in perspective (Essen *et al.*, 2002) and the researcher was curious to find out whether this was so. The researcher theorises that one would expect some differences in perspective in relation to behaviour, taking into account the inequality of power as pointed out by research (Devine, 1998; 2000).

### **3.7.2.2 Principals' and teachers' questionnaires**

The researcher decided that principals' and teachers' questionnaires would be similar (except for two questions aimed at teachers at classroom level). The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was divided into four sections, seeking information at four levels (whole-school, corridor/playground, classroom and individual), similar to the whole-school PBS model in the U.S. (Sugai *et al.*, 2000). However, only information at the whole-school level is the subject of this research.

While most questions were closed, some were open-ended, thus allowing each participant to offer rich data on their thoughts, experiences, and explanations. When gathering information at the macro level, the questionnaire is a very suitable instrument according to Langdridge (2004) as it allows one to collect data, including opinions, beliefs and attitudes from large numbers of people. In all 19 questions, divided into four sections of different levels, were contained in the principals' and teachers' questionnaires.



### **3.7.2.3 Pupils' questionnaires**

Pupils' questionnaires (Appendix 2) covered the same basic questions as the principals' and teachers' questionnaire (on current practices and needs), but for simplicity, it utilised more simplified language to make it more suitable for young primary pupils with an average age of 12 years. Also, it asked just 16 questions compared to the former questionnaire, which contained 19, and in order to cut down on words and to make it shorter, it did not have separate sections (whole-school, corridor/yard, classroom, and individual level).

### **3.7.3 Interviews and focus-group interviews (Phase 3)**

Similar questions were designed for principals and teachers (Appendix 3). Semi-structured interview schedules were designed for principals, and focus-group interviews for teachers and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils, and were approximately of 45 minutes duration. Interview schedule questions were simplified for pupils (Appendix 4).

#### **3.7.3.1 Development of questions**

The schedule of ten questions was developed using questions similar to those in the questionnaires, as well as controversial statements made by participants in the completion of questionnaires during Phase 2. Questions 1 to 4 asked about behaviour support needs at whole-school level, at classroom level supporting teachers and supporting pupils, and at individual level. Question 5 gave results from the questionnaires about what principals, teachers and pupils suggested was needed most in schools, and respondents were asked their opinions on these statements. Question 6 asked about the usefulness of a Whole-School Behaviour Support Programme while Questions 7, 8 and 9 asked for respondents' views on controversial comments made by a principal, a teacher and a pupil. In Question 10, respondents were asked their opinion on research findings on behaviour when taking gender and location into account.

### **3.7.3.2 Interviews with principals, and focus-group interviews with teachers and with pupils**

All interviews and focus-group interviews were audio taped, and later transcribed verbatim. On reading the data, the researcher identified, analysed and reported patterns/themes within the data, associated with the research questions. Thematic analysis was chosen because according to Braun and Clarke (2006), it is the first qualitative method of analysis that a researcher should learn, as it provides core skills that are useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. As this researcher is a novice in qualitative analysis, it was deemed suitable. Additionally, it is very flexible, not being aligned to one epistemological position within psychology but compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms (ibid). This flexibility enables it to provide a rich, detailed, and complex account, thus adding depth and understanding to the quantitative element.

### **3.8 Piloting of questionnaires and interview questions**

A pilot study of the questionnaires was carried out in a primary school in Dublin known to the researcher. Because the questionnaires were 'home grown', this was considered necessary to test the clarity of the questions, as well as for omissions and ambiguities. The principal and four teachers completed the questionnaires for principals and teachers, which were made up of five sections (demographics, whole-school, corridors/yard, classroom, and individual) and numbered 29 questions. Six 6<sup>th</sup> class (final year) pupils completed the pupil questionnaire, which had the same five sections and numbered 22 questions. Feedback from the pilot study resulted in many amendments including fewer questions and their reorganisation, and in the case of the pupil questionnaire, deletion of all headings and use of more simplified language to make it shorter and more user-friendly.

In analysis, the feedback from the principal and teachers indicated that the questionnaire was long and repetitive regarding current practices and needs at different levels (i.e. whole-school, corridor/yard level, classroom and individual level). This comment was taken on board and while some questions were deleted, it was decided some questions at each level would

be retained. It was decided not all questions would be analysed but could be at a later stage. However, the four main research questions at whole-school level would be analysed. The lower levels of behaviour support in corridors/yard, classroom and individual behaviour support would not be analysed in this research but would be included in table form in appendices.

Other amendments included moving questions from one section to another and because it was sometimes unclear whether the questions were for principals or teachers, prompts were inserted (e.g. for teachers only).

Open-ended questions were added to each of the four sections to allow respondents greater flexibility in answering (see Appendix 1, question 1d *other school practices that help with behaviour*). According to Robson (2002) open-ended questions allow a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes.

Some questions were amended to being rank ordered instead of just ticking variables as this was thought to provide more information on what was considered most important by the respondents e.g. questions 6, 9, 13 and 16 (needs from whole-school level - individual level (Appendix 1)).

To make the questionnaires more user-friendly and shorter, it was decided to drop the demographics section as all information needed could be ascertained from the Department of Education and Science Primary Schools' Directory, from the principal or secretary during the researcher's visits, or from the psychologist assigned to the school. Besides shortening the pupil questionnaire by removing the four headings/sections of whole-school, corridor/yard, classroom, and individual level, and cutting out any words that were considered unnecessary, language considered too vague or difficult was amended and simplified e.g. *penalties* was utilised instead of *consequences* for bad behaviour.

After piloting and carrying out amendments, the questionnaires for principals and teachers were reduced to 19 questions, while the pupils' questionnaire



had 16 questions. In summary, each questionnaire included questions on the following four sections with a decision made that only the whole-school element would be analysed at this stage:

- Section A - whole-school support level (general school support);
- Section B - corridors/yards supports (non-teaching areas);
- Section C - classroom support level; and
- Section D - individual support level.

Piloting of interview questions for principals and teachers and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils was carried out on a different audience to that used for piloting of the questionnaire. A retired principal teacher and a class teacher were interviewed and asked the 10 questions listed (Appendix 3), while a focus-group interview (Appendix 4) was conducted with two 6<sup>th</sup> class boys known to the researcher. No amendments were made to these questions.

### **3.9 Data collection procedure and time line**

The letters of invitation to the 18 principals were posted in March 2009 and the follow-up phone calls to the principals were made during the following two weeks.

During the phone call to each principal, the researcher sought permission to make two visits to the school - the first, to deliver the teacher questionnaires after ascertaining the number of teachers in the school and the number of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils; and the second, to administer the questionnaires to 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. A suitable date was suggested by the researcher and sanctioned by the principals, to make the second visit to administer the questionnaires to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

The visits to the 16 sample schools were spread over eight weeks, 12<sup>th</sup> March - 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009. During the first visit to each school, the appropriate number of teacher questionnaires and accompanying envelopes were delivered for each teacher as well as a letter to teachers explaining the research (Appendix 5ii). A letter to the link person was also left, explaining the research and asking for assistance in distributing and collecting questionnaires (Appendix 5iv). The

appropriate number of letters to parents seeking permission for their child to take part in the research (should they accept the invitation) was also included. All questionnaires and letters were inside a large envelope with the date of the researcher's return visit to administer pupil questionnaires and collect the teacher questionnaires. In each school, the researcher met with either the principal or the link person and answered any questions asked. In all, 222 principal and teacher questionnaires were delivered to the 16 schools in the sample.

The second visit to the schools began approximately one week after the questionnaires were sent, provided the date was suitable for the school. During this second visit, the researcher administered the pupil questionnaires with those in 6<sup>th</sup> class who accepted the invitation to take part and who returned a permission slip from their parents. It was thought this second visit would be timely as it would enable the researcher to collect all questionnaires – principals', teachers' and pupils'. While this happened in the majority of the cases, some schools had to be visited up to four times because of various difficulties. The difficulties included: school closure, administration of the sacrament of confirmation, school outing, sports fixture, permission letters to parents not sent. When these difficulties arose, the principal gave a suitable alternative date for the researcher to return. The time line of 8 weeks included the sending out of invitations to principals, delivering questionnaires to teachers, and delivering and administering questionnaires to pupils in those schools. In all, 329 pupil questionnaires were distributed and 237 were collected with the help of either the principal or the link person in each school. The time lines for stages 2 and 3 of Phase 2 took two and three weeks respectively (see Appendix 9 for time lines for the research project including Phases 2 and 3).

### **3.10 Validity, generalisability and reliability**

Validity is concerned with accuracy of measurement of results and this is important in many respects including the important aspect of generalisability, or the extent to which findings are generally applicable (External validity is

sometimes used in place of generalisability according to Campbell & Stanley, 1963, as cited in Robson, 2002). While it can be said that any one way of gathering data is considered weak, fallible and therefore suspect, an antidote for this suggests the use of multiple methods and in this research project, mixed methods of both quantitative and qualitative data collection goes some way to addressing this potential weakness. Similar patterns of findings from different methods increase validity confidence (Robson, 2002).

Cohen *et al.* (2007) state that it is not possible to erase all threats to validity, but the researcher can minimise them by being aware of them and addressing them. Possible threats to validity of research design include *reactivity*, *respondent bias*, and *researcher bias* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Robson, 2002). *Reactivity* may arise if the researcher's presence in some way interferes with the setting/environment and especially with the behaviour of the people in the study. *Respondent bias* may take various forms, from withholding information (where researcher is seen as a threat) to conforming to providing answers perceived as wanted by the researcher. *Researcher bias* may arise where the researcher brings biases and assumptions into the setting and in this way affects their own behaviour in terms of who is selected, how questions are asked and how the data is reported and analysed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, *ibid*). It is suggested by the researcher that these threats to validity were not perceived to be such a danger in Phase 2 (Stages 1 & 2) as questionnaires completed by principals and teachers were completed in the privacy of each school and at a distance from the researcher. In Stage 3, however, the researcher was in close proximity to the pupils but was careful when administering the questionnaires that this was done ethically and responsibly. For instance, and as highlighted earlier (see Section 3.6.2, Phase 2, Stage 3), permission to take part was sought from the pupils as well as from their parents, it was explained to pupils that their decision would not be questioned, respondents were made aware that any information given by them was totally confidential and all pupils' names were numerically coded in the interests of anonymity.

It could be said that Phase 3 of this research project, which involved interviews and focus-group interviews had more potential for both *respondent* and *researcher bias* because it was conducted face to face with respondents. However, the researcher was mindful of these threats and balanced this by being careful in carrying out the research, by being honest, thorough and open to 'good listening', hearing what each respondent had to say, and taking care as far as possible not to include leading questions. Good listening according to Robson (2002) includes all observation and sensing, not simply via the ears but collecting information by listening with the eyes also.

Reliability, which is *essentially a quality control issue* (Robson, 2002, p.108) requires that data collection instruments are consistent. In this research project, the instrumentation used (questionnaires and interview schedules) was 'home grown' and therefore had the potential for being unreliable. To help redress this imbalance, questions were plainly put to the respondents and every step was taken to ensure accuracy. This included pilot tests, thoroughness in collecting and analysing data, and reporting results in an open, consistent and honest way.

### **3.11 Ethical considerations**

The ethical guidelines, or general rules of conduct, require *researchers to conduct their research in a competent manner and with concern for the dignity and well-being of the participants* (McDonald & Stodel, 2003, p.1). In keeping with these standards, this research was informed and underpinned by the ethical guidelines of the University of East London where anonymity and non-disclosure of individual details were required and where approval was received in March 2009. Additionally, it was informed by the Psychological Society of Ireland (Psychological Society of Ireland, 2008) and the British Psychological Society (British Psychological Society, 2006). In accordance with these ethical standards, the names of the schools were not identified nor were the names of interviewees. Instead, all 16 schools involved in the research were coded, as were all participants. Participants were also informed that they would not be identified in the final write-up. Besides the

ethical considerations above, coding was necessary in order to identify participants for Phase 3 of the study (interviews) where they were perceived to have something of interest to contribute. Also, in case participants wished to withdraw their data at a later time. Ethical considerations should be accorded to all participants according to Banister *et al.* (1994), and this means that they should not be identified or harmed by the publication of any material.

This study was carried out with the full consent of Boards of Management in each school. Permission was then sought from school personnel (principals and teachers). Pupils are seen as a vulnerable group, being legally underage, but at 12 years of age they would be capable of understanding what is involved. Esbensen *et al.* (1996, as cited in Robson, 2002) suggest they need to be asked directly for permission in addition to their parents. This permission was sought by the researcher in the two phases involving pupils. All participants who took part in the research were informed of the purpose of the research. Respect for the right and dignity of each participant was adhered to and participants were made aware of the voluntary nature of the research and that they could opt to withdraw at any time without explanation or consequence.

Procedures were established to ensure confidentiality around storage and access to data. All questionnaires and data were kept locked in a cabinet in the researcher's home. It is planned that raw data will be kept for approximately five years and then destroyed after use and after publication in a research journal.

While the topic 'behaviour support' was not thought to be a subject where respondents would become upset and possibly require care during the research process, nevertheless, the researcher was conscious of vulnerable students with additional learning needs. For this reason, based on her knowledge of child development, her primary school teaching background, and additionally her skills as an educational psychologist and counsellor, the researcher was vigilant for any signs of upset and was ready to respond appropriately and sensitively to any situation that presented itself. While

tending to care needs was not necessary during the research, the option to withdraw was exercised just once by one pupil who re-joined his class next door without being required to give any explanation.

### 3.12 Reflective role of the researcher

Robson (2002) distinguished between the various types of researcher. The *practitioner-researcher* is one who works within an organisation, holding down a job as practitioner there, including carrying out research. If lack of expertise in research is a difficulty, then the *researcher as consultant/project advisor* can assist. The third type of *researcher* is one who is *external* to the setting forming the focus of the enquiry.

While the present researcher could be said to be *practitioner-researcher* to a small number of schools in the research, strictly speaking, she was not part of the staff within the school, therefore, in her view, the third type of researcher – *external researcher* more aptly describes her role. An external researcher is responsible for most aspects of the research and in this case, it includes methodology, instrumentation (questionnaires and interview schedules), sampling, piloting, distribution of questionnaires (with help from a link person in the schools), collection and analysis of data. The present researcher suggests that this sums up her position.

Because some schools were within the researcher's catchment area, she felt that it needed to be explained to them that the project was not part of the psychologist's everyday work, and this distinction was understood and accepted by them.

Anderson (1993, as cited in Mertens, 2005) in discussing the role of the researcher reiterated the *bias* that the researcher carries and rejects out of hand the idea of an objective and scientific stance. In other words, the researcher is laden with values that cannot be shaken off. For her part, the researcher had to recognise this bias and become a reflective researcher. In the present research, this means a true and fair account of all parts of the research - having a truly representative stratified sample of the primary schools in the Abbey Region, ensuring all data was coded and analysed appropriately, ensuring that questions utilised in interview schedules were fair, and that all interviews were transcribed and analysed transparently.

Ensuring that all participants, especially vulnerable children, were equally

listened to and heard during data collection, was important. Fine and Sandstrom (1988, as cited in Mertens, 2005) addressed the role of the researcher when working with such a group and claimed that he/she could adopt any of the following three positions, with the age of the child a factor in which of the roles to take: *supervisor*, where the researcher is the authority figure; *leader*, which is an improvement over the supervisor in that the person is still an authority figure but includes positive effect e.g. scout leaders; and *friend*, where the researcher assumes no authority but tries to adopt a positive relationship. In this present research project, the children had an average age of 12 years and in attempting to put them at ease, the researcher spent some time introducing herself and explaining the research, thanked the children for agreeing to take part, and explained that anything said or written would be confidential and no pupil would be identified in the report. It was clear that some groups of children saw the researcher as *friend/ally*, as on a few occasions, on leaving the classroom after collecting questionnaires, pupils asked how soon the researcher would be back to make the necessary changes to improve school rules for them.

### **3.13 Summary**

This chapter outlined the methodology used in examining current practices and needs around behaviour support to determine whether these needs can be met with a whole-school positive behaviour support programme.

The location for the study was in the Abbey Region where 16 schools took part. A pragmatic approach was adopted and this included a mixed methods design of questionnaires, interviews and focus-group interviews with principals, teachers and 6th class pupils on current practices and needs in their schools. The procedure used in the sample selection and data collection was outlined. Validity, generalisability and reliability issues, ethical considerations and the role of the researcher were featured.



The following two chapters provide the quantitative and qualitative findings from the questionnaires and interview schedules with principals, teachers and pupils.

## Chapter 4 - Analyses and presentation of quantitative results

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative data emanating from questionnaires to principals, teachers and pupils (Phase 2). Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. This chapter begins with steps in data coding and analysis (4.2) followed by results from each of the four major questions, namely: 1) *What are the current practices in relation to behaviour support at school level?* (4.3); 2) *Are current practices different depending on location, school gender, and perspective of respondents?* (4.4); 3) *What are the needs in relation to behaviour support at school level?* (4.5); and 4) *Are needs different in relation to behaviour support at school level depending on location, school gender, and perspective of respondents?* (4.6). A summary and interpretation follows (4.7). Section 4.8 presents results and interpretations of some sub-questions, namely: i) *Do school rules need to be improved in your school?* (ii) *Is there a need for a behaviour support programme in your school?* iii) *If offered, would you agree to endorse a behaviour support programme?* iv) *Would you be interested in being included in the management of a whole-school behaviour system?* The chapter concludes with a summary of results (4.9). The research question on needs (research question 3 above) and associated questions were also answered qualitatively (phase 3) in the following chapter.

### 4.2 Data coding and analysis

Nineteen questions were investigated in the principals' and teachers' questionnaires (Appendix 1) which corresponded to 16 questions in the pupils' questionnaires (Appendix 2). While information was sought at various levels, only data at whole-school level was presented in this chapter because the aim of the research is to ascertain if a whole-school behaviour support programme, similar to the U.S. model, is a suitable model of behaviour support for the perceived needs of Irish primary schools in the Abbey Region in Ireland (results at other levels are included in Appendices 6 & 7). Open-

ended questions on current practices and needs featured in the questionnaires. While participants offered suggestions on *current practices* (research question 1) that enabled themes to be identified (see Table 4.2 & appendix 6, tables 4.1-4.3), only a small minority offered suggestions on *needs* (research question 3), consequently themes could not be identified but suggestions made by respondents were included in Appendix 7 (see table 4.7 *other needs* at whole-school-level).

Each of the 16 schools was numbered 1-16 in a logbook and as each set of questionnaires was received, they were manually coded with the school number (1-16) as well as individual coding for each respondent.

Once coded, questionnaires from principals, teachers, and pupils (n=410) were statistically analysed using SPSS (Version 15), the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and categorical responses to the questionnaires were collated. This method of analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics.

Descriptive statistics provided data on Question 1, current practices in behaviour support (questions 1/1, 7/5, 10/8 & 14/12) and Question 3, needs (questions 6/4, 9/7, 13/11 & 16/14) in terms of whole school, corridor/playground, classroom, and individual levels in appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

Inferential statistics, using chi-square compared differences between the groups. Question 2 asked whether current practices at school level differed between the groups in terms of location, school gender and perspective (questions Q1/1, 7/5, 10/8 & 14/12) while Question 4 asked whether needs differed depending on location, school gender or perspective (questions 6/4, 9/7, 13/11 & 16/14) in appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

Data was checked for omissions and errors. Omissions were checked by running a check on each question and if data were missing, this was entered (as 99). Errors were checked by examining the coding of each answer and if

they did not correspond to the number of variables for each question, corrections were made by going back to the questionnaire and checking the answer and inserting the correct code.

### 4.3 Current practices at whole-school level (Research question 1)

This information was addressed by Question 1 in both the principals' and teachers' questionnaire, and the pupils' questionnaire (Appendices 1 & 2). The results, utilising descriptive statistics are now presented in Table 4.1 (see Appendix 6 for results of 'other' current practices at school level and current practices at the levels of corridor/playground; classroom and individual levels). Principals, teachers and pupils were asked to endorse the statements (*behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *school rules are fair*) if these practices were currently utilised in their schools. There were no perceived omissions in the coding of Question 1 as respondents ticked the box if they endorsed the statement. If the boxes were not ticked, it was deemed to indicate that the given practice was not happening.

**Table 4.1 Current practices at whole-school level**

Category & number of respondents		Current practices					
		Behaviour rules are enforced consistently		Staff roles are clear		School rules are fair	
		%	n	%	n	%	n
<b>Principal</b>	n=16	81%	13	100%	16	81%	13
<b>Teacher</b>	n=157	73%	115	88%	138	87%	136
<b>Pupil</b>	n=237	62%	113	81%	192	62%	147
<b>Total</b>	<b>n=410</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>296</b>

Of the 410 respondents in the research sample, 59 per cent endorsed the statement that *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, 84 per cent agreed that *staff roles are clear* and 72 per cent stated that *school rules are fair*. While the majority of principals, teachers and pupils endorsed the above statements, they differed in their rate of endorsement. While 81 per cent of principals agreed that *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, only 73 per cent of teachers agreed and only 62 per cent of pupils. Similarly, on whether

*staff roles are clear*, all 16 principals (100%) stated this was so compared to 88 per cent of teachers and 81 per cent of pupils.

On whether *school rules are fair*, 81 per cent of principals and 87 per cent of teachers agreed, but only 62 per cent of pupils. If rules were perceived as not fair, respondents were asked to state more precisely what was not fair and why (Q1c, Appendices 1 & 2). Only one principal perceived school rules to be unfair and he explained that it was difficult to legislate for individual differences. Seven teachers thought school rules were unfair and the majority referred to the lack of consistency in the application of rules. Other remarks made by teachers included the fact that children who misbehaved were given extra attention and allowances were made for them. Seventy-seven pupils made their feelings known about various unfair rules e.g. *lack of consistency; lack of respect from teachers; blanket punishment in class when a few in the class misbehave; not allowed sweets but teachers have them; not allowed run in the yard; not allowed throw football in the yard but allowed to kick it; rules too strict; not allowed mobile phones; not allowed wear nail polish; peers not nice* and being *constantly told to be quiet*.

Mostly, principals returned the highest endorsement of these current practices in school, confirming that these practices were currently happening in school. This was in contrast to pupils returning the lowest ratings thereby not agreeing so strongly with the statement. Because principals are responsible for the day-to-day management of schools, the researcher suggests that they like to think that they are good managers with adequate behaviour support systems in place in their schools.

Respondents were given the option of listing *other school practices* at whole-school level currently in place that help with behaviour (Questions 1d appendices 1 & 2). Three main school practices were identified by the 31 per cent of all respondents who answered this open-ended question and as displayed in Table 4.2 below, these were: *In-school support* (including *rewards and sanctions*); *school partnership support*; and *outside support* (see Appendix 6 for themes identified by principals, teachers and pupils in detail).



**Table 4.2 Overview of themes identified by principals, teachers and pupils on *other school practices/strategies* currently in place in their schools at whole-school level that assist with behaviour**

Question 1d Other school practices/ strategies currently in place that help with behaviour at <u>Whole-School level</u>		
Principals	Teachers	Pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-school support</li> <li>• School partnership support</li> <li>• Outside support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-school support (Rewards &amp; sanctions)</li> <li>• School partnership support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-school support (Rewards &amp; sanctions)</li> </ul>

4.3.1 In-school support identified by principals, teachers and pupils  
All respondents mentioned *in-school support* currently available in school. Principals mentioned programmes and policies in force in the school e.g. *Code of Discipline*, *Stay Safe* programme taught in every class, *anti-bullying policy*, *Discipline for Learning behaviour policy*, *reward systems*, and *set targets*. Teachers also mentioned the above programmes and policies as well as other strategies e.g. a *positive school environment*, *written rules*, *rules taught*, *rota for use of basketball court to avoid arguments*, and *clear communication between staff*. *In-school supports according to pupils* included *school programmes/strategies*, *teachers' supports* and *support from pupils themselves*. School systems that were helpful included a *homework journal listing behaviour rules*, *anti-bullying policy*, *anti-bullying week*, *buddy system*, and *teachers helping by being friendly and supportive of pupils* and *encouraging them to behave appropriately*.

*Rewards and sanctions* were identified by both teachers and pupils as supports currently utilised in school. *Rewards* listed by teachers included *merit awards*, *star chart*, *certificates*, *golden time*, *positive reinforcement*, *raffles*, and *praise*. *Sanctions* included *standing still in the yard at playtime*, and *appearing before the Board of Discipline for serious or on-going misbehaviour*. Pupils listed *rewards and sanctions* more often than other supports with *sanctions* listed more often than *rewards*. *Rewards* included *homework passes*, *use of stamps/charts for good behaviour*, *class and individual rewards*, *golden book raffle* and *use of a DVD*. *Sanctions* included *time-out*, *threats*, *detention*, *(previously held) stamps deducted*, *name listed in behaviour book*, *missing school trips*, *notes home* and *suspension*. Some

miscellaneous comments mentioned by pupils included *lack of consistency in treatment of pupils, extra home-work for the whole class when only one pupil misbehaved* and a final remark by a pupil stated '*if we had more fun in school, we would want to go*' (school 4, pupil 14).

4.3.2 School partnership support identified by principals and teachers  
*School partnership support* was mentioned by both principals and teachers. Principals saw this as support emanating from both parents and pupils e.g. *senior pupils practising self-regulated initiatives* (principal 4), *pupil-teacher consensus* (principal 16), and *engaging with parents where necessary* (principals 1 & 8). Teachers listed *supports from pupils, teachers and parents*. Pupil support included *self-discipline strategies* and *giving pupils responsibility*.

4.3.3. Outside support  
*Outside support* was mentioned by one principal (Principal 1) who used a community-based family support project, funded by the Department of Health to strengthen family relationships and well-being.

While this section supplied quantitative data analysis on *current practices in school*, the following section will supply data on whether there was a difference between current practices depending on *location* (urban/rural), *school gender* (boys/girls/mixed) and *perspective of respondents* (principals/teachers/pupils).

#### **4.4 Are practices different depending on a) location, b) school gender and c) perspective of respondents? (Research question 2)**

The answers given by respondents to research Question 1 *What are the current practices in behaviour support at whole-school level* were used again in this question but responses from the 410 respondents (principals, teachers and pupils) were combined. To ascertain if practices differed depending on location, the 410 answers were separated into responses from those in urban/rural locations, which numbered 203 and 207 respectively. Similarly, for school gender, the 410 respondents' answers were separated into whether



responses were from boys'/girls' or mixed schools, which numbered 54, 49, and 307 respectively. In relation to perspective, the 410 respondents' answers were separated into 16, 157 and 237 respectively. To answer research question 2 on whether differences existed depending on location, school gender and perspective, inferential statistics, examining associations utilising chi-square were used.

#### 4(i) Differences in current practice depending on school location

In this section, practices currently used in urban and rural schools were compared. Of the 410 respondents, 203 fell into the urban category compared to 207 in the rural category. The results on whether school practices were different depending on *school location* (urban/rural) are displayed in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3 Are current practices at whole-school level different depending on school location (urban v rural)**

Location	Current practices		
	Behaviour rules are enforced consistently	Staff roles are clear	School behaviour rules are fair
	% N	% N	% N
Urban n=203 true	55% 111	84% 170	69% 140
Rural n=207 true	63% 130	85% 176	75% 156
X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup> =2.79, df=1, p>.05 not significant	X <sup>2</sup> =.128, df=1, p>.05 not significant	X <sup>2</sup> =2.089, df 1, p>.05 not significant
Total n=410 true	59% 241	84% 346	72% 296

As Table 4.3 illustrates, no significant differences were indicated between urban and rural schools on the three variables of *behaviour rules enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *school behaviour rules are fair*. Fifty-five per cent of urban school respondents endorsed the statement that *behaviour rules are enforced consistently* compared to 63 per cent of rural schools. An equal number of respondents from urban and rural schools, (84% and 85%) endorsed the statement that *staff roles are clear* and equally 69 per cent of urban schools and 75 per cent of rural schools endorsed *school behaviour rules are fair*.



#### 4 (ii) Difference in current practice depending on school gender (boys/girls/mixed)

The results on whether school practices are different depending on *school gender* are displayed in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4 Are current practices at whole-school level different depending on school gender (boys/girls/mixed)?**

School gender	Current practices			
	Behaviour rules are enforced consistently	Staff roles are clear	School behaviour rules are fair	
	% N	% N	%	N
<b>Boys</b> n=54 true	52% 28	67% 36	65%	35
<b>Girls</b> n=49 true	69% 34	90% 44	47%	23
<b>Mixed</b> n=307 true	58% 179	87% 266	78%	238
<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	X <sup>2</sup> =3.374, df=2, p>.05 Not significant	X <sup>2</sup> =15.149, df=2, p=.001 <b>Significant</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =21.380, df=2, p<.001 <b>Significant</b>	
<b>Total</b> n=410 true	59% 241	84% 346	72%	296

As the above table illustrates, there were no significant differences between the three types of school on the variable *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, with 52 per cent of respondents from boys' schools endorsing the statement and indicating this to be true, with 69 per cent from girls' schools and 58 per cent from mixed schools.

On whether *staff roles are clear*, a significant difference was indicated between the schools. The vast majority in girls' and mixed schools (90% and 87% respectively) endorsed the statement and agreed that *staff roles are clear*, whereas only 67 per cent of respondents in boys' schools endorsed the statement. Thus, the remaining 33 per cent of respondents in boys' schools did not endorse the statement that *staff roles are clear* compared to only 10 per cent of girls' schools and 13 per cent of mixed schools. A further analysis of data utilising descriptive statistics (see table 4.5 below) shows this

difference is due primarily to the views of pupils (52% of pupils compared to 16% of teachers and no principal). Consequently staff roles are unclear according to pupils in boys' schools.

**Table 4.5 Further analysis of data indicating that staff roles are not clear according to pupils' views in boys' schools**

Gender	Category	Staff roles clear? %	N
<b>Boys schools</b>	<b>Principals</b>		
	(did not endorse statement) - true false	100% 0%	2 0
	<b>Teachers</b>		
	(did not endorse statement) - true false	84% 16%	21 4
	<b>Pupils</b>		
	(did not endorse statement) - true false	48% 52%	13 14

On whether *school behaviour rules are fair*, there were striking differences from respondents in girls' schools compared to boys' and mixed schools. A minority of respondents in girls' schools endorsed the statement that *school behaviour rules are fair*, thereby insinuating that school behaviour rules are not fair (53%) compared to boys' and mixed schools where the perceptions were that school rules are fair (65% and 78% respectively). A further analysis of data (see table 4.6 below) shows this significant difference in girls' schools was primarily due to the views of pupils, where 83 per cent thought that rules are unfair.

**Table 4.6 Further analysis of data indicating that school behaviour rules are not fair according to pupils' views in girls' schools**

School gender	Category	School behaviour rules are fair? %	N
<b>Girls' schools</b>	<b>Principals</b>		
	(did not endorse statement) - true false	100% 0%	2 0
	<b>Teachers</b>		
	(did not endorse statement) - true false	94% 6%	16 1
	<b>Pupils</b>		
	(did not endorse statement) - true false	17% 83%	5 25

This section provided data analysis on whether there were differences in current practices in relation to *school gender*. Information below is now

provided on whether there were differences between current practices according to the *perspective of principals, teachers, and pupils*.

#### 4(iii) Differences between current practices and perspective of respondents (principals/teachers/pupils)

The results on whether school practices are different depending on *perspective of respondents* are now displayed in Table 4.7 below.

**Table 4.7 Are current practices at whole-school level different depending on perspective of respondents (principals, teachers, pupils)**

Category	Current practices					
	Behaviour rules are enforced consistently		Staff roles are clear		School rules are fair	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
<b>Principal</b> n=16 true	81%	13	100%	16	81%	13
<b>Teacher</b> n=157 true	73%	115	88%	138	87%	136
<b>Pupil</b> n=237 true	48%	113	81%	192	62%	147
$X^2$	$X^2=28.952$ , df=2, p<.001 <b>significant</b>		$X^2=6.479$ , df=2, p<.05 <b>significant</b>		$X^2=29.148$ , df=2, p<.001 <b>significant</b>	
<b>Total</b> true	100%	410	100%	410	100%	410
	59%	241	84%	346	72%	296

A significant difference was indicated between respondents on the statement that *behaviour rules are enforced consistently* with a minority of pupils (48%) endorsing the statement compared to a majority of principals and teachers who endorsed it (81% and 73% respectively).

Similarly, on whether *staff roles are clear*, a significant difference was indicated between respondents. While the majority of respondents from all three categories endorsed the statement that *staff roles are clear* (100% principals, 88% teachers, and 81% of pupils), no principal thought staff roles were unclear compared to 12 per cent of teachers and 19 per cent of pupils.

Again, on whether *behaviour rules are fair*, a significant difference was indicated between respondents. While the majority of respondents from the three categories of principals, teachers and pupils endorsed *school behaviour rules are fair*, principals and teachers endorsed the statement (81% and 87% respectively), compared to only 62 per cent of pupils. Therefore, 38 per cent of pupils perceived school behaviour rules to be unfair compared to only 19 per cent of principals, and 13 per cent of teachers.

While this section supplied data on whether *current practices are different depending on location, school type, and perspective of respondents*, the next section examined gaps/needs in relation to behaviour support at school level as well as respondents' perceptions on the most important needs in relation to behaviour support.

#### **4.5 What are the gaps/needs as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils in relation to behaviour support at whole-school level** (Research question 3)

Respondents were asked to prioritise needs at school level (i.e. not already happening but that are needed) and because this question was the most important of the four research questions, respondents were given nine choices and a tenth open-ended question allowed respondents to make *other suggestions*. Initially, respondents were expected to rank order all the needs. This would have proved difficult to analyse as there would be 10 different categories to be ranked. Also, some respondents only identified a small number of needs. Because needs would be ranked in order of importance, the researcher was of the opinion that those ranked 1, 2, and 3 would be adequate to analyse as they would capture the most important needs as perceived by respondents. Data was coded and rankings marked 1, 2 and 3 were included in coding. With regard to *other suggestions*, not enough participants completed this to enable themes to be identified. However, suggestions made were included in Appendix 7 (table 4.7, *other needs*) and where possible, suggestions were included as qualitative data to reinforce quantitative results.

The results of *what are the needs in relation to behaviour support at school level*, utilising descriptive statistics, are now presented in Table 4.8 below (see Appendix 7 for results of needs at the other levels of corridor/playground, class, and individual level).

**Table 4.8 Percentage (and number) of respondents identifying the most important needs at school level**

Needs	Principals		Teachers		Pupils	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Social skills taught	25%	4	27%	43	<b>30%</b>	<b>70</b>
Written rules	13%	2	12%	19	14%	32
Rules systematically taught	<b>38%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>52</b>	18%	43
Consistency between staff	<b>38%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70</b>
Rewards/consequences	25%	4	<b>37%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>101</b>
Respect between pupils and teachers	6%	1	26%	40	<b>53%</b>	<b>124</b>
Offer school behaviour support programme	19%	3	23%	36	29%	69
Access to a behaviour support service	25%	4	17%	27	22%	52
Behaviour management training for school personnel	<b>31%</b>	<b>5</b>	24%	38	26%	60

Percentages over 30% have been emboldened to indicate the most important needs

Table 4.8 identifies the most important needs (ranked 1, 2 and 3 with each given equal weighting) as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils, and percentages of 30 per cent and over have been emboldened to indicate the most important needs. On inspecting the above table, *consistency between staff* was the only variable endorsed as one of the most important needs by all respondents (38%, 58% and 30% respectively).

The principals perceived that the (three) most important needs were *rules systematically taught* (38%), *consistency between staff* (38%) and *behaviour management training for school personnel* (31%). Principals were the only group who chose *behaviour management training for school personnel* as one of the (three) most important needs.

Teachers agreed with the principals on two of the above needs, namely *rules systematically taught* (33%) and *consistency between staff* (58%). However,

teachers (37%) also perceived *rewards and consequences* as one of the three most important needs.

The majority of pupils (53%) chose *respect between pupils and teachers* followed by *rewards and consequences* (43%), *consistency between staff* (30%) and *social skills taught* (30%) as the most important needs.

Pupils and teachers agreed on two needs: *consistency between staff*, and *rewards and consequences*. Pupils perceived *respect between pupils and teachers*, and *social skills taught* among their most important needs, with *respect between pupils and teachers* chosen by the majority of pupils (53%). Interestingly, *respect between pupils and teachers* was not chosen in the first three most important needs by either principals or teachers.

While this section supplied quantitative data on needs at whole-school level, the following section supplied quantitative analysis on whether there were differences in needs depending on *location* (urban/rural), *school type* (boys/girls/mixed), and *perception of respondents* (principals/teachers/pupils).

#### **4.6 Are the needs different depending on school location, school type, and perspective of respondents? (Research question 4)**

To answer question 4, the same data supplied to answer research question 3 (needs) was utilised. However in order to make comparisons, principals, teachers, and pupils' endorsements were combined and in examining associations, inferential statistics in the form of chi-square were utilised.



#### 4.6.1 Differences in needs depending on school location (urban/rural)

In this section, the three most important needs in urban and rural schools prioritised by respondents from the nine choices offered were compared to find out if school needs are different depending on *location* (Q6/4 of Appendices 1 and 2). The results on whether school needs are different depending on school *location* (urban/rural) are now displayed in Table 4.9 below (see Appendix 7 for a comparison of needs at other levels of corridor/playground, class and individual levels).

**Table 4.9 Percentage of urban and rural respondents' identification of the most important needs at whole-school level**

Needs	Location				X <sup>2</sup>
	Urban		Rural		
	%	N	%	N	
Social skills taught	26%	53	31%	64	X <sup>2</sup> =1.163, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Written rules	12%	24	14%	28	X <sup>2</sup> =.269, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Rules systematically taught	24%	48	26%	53	X <sup>2</sup> =.212, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Consistency between school staff	<b>41%</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>84</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =.004, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Rewards & consequences	<b>39%</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>82</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =.002, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Pupils & teachers respect each other	<b>41%</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>82</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =.069, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Offer a school behaviour support programme	28%	56	25%	52	X <sup>2</sup> =.321, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Access behaviour support service	22%	45	18%	38	X <sup>2</sup> =.921, df=1, p>.05 not significant
Behaviour management training for school personnel	25%	51	25%	52	X <sup>2</sup> =.000, df=1, p>.05 not significant

Percentages over 30% have been emboldened to indicate the most important needs

As table 4.9 illustrates, no significant differences were indicated by respondents from urban and rural locations on the following needs: social skills taught, written rules, rules systematically taught, consistency, rewards and consequences, pupils and teachers respect each other, offer a school behaviour support programme, access a behaviour support service, and behaviour management training for school personnel. *Consistency, rewards and consequences, and pupils and teachers respect each other* were chosen as the three most important needs by both urban and rural respondents.

#### 4.6.2 Difference in needs depending on school gender (boys, girls, mixed)

In this section, the three most important needs in boys', girls', and mixed schools ranked by respondents from the nine choices offered were compared to find out if schools' needs are different depending on *school gender* (boys/girls/mixed). The results on whether schools' needs are different depending on *school gender* are now displayed in Table 4.10 below (see Appendix 7 for a comparison of needs at lower levels of corridor/playground, class and individual levels).

**Table 4.10 Percentage of boys', girls' and mixed schools' respondents' identification of the three most important needs at whole-school level**

School level							
Needs	School gender						
	Boys		Girls		Mixed	X <sup>2</sup>	
	%	N	%	N	%		N
Social skills taught	24%	13	18%	9	31%	95	X <sup>2</sup> =3.885, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Written rules	13%	7	2%	1	14%	44	X <sup>2</sup> =5.769, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Rules systematically taught	22%	12	35%	17	24%	72	X <sup>2</sup> =3.071, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Consistency between school staff	<b>37%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>129</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =.841, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Rewards & consequences	<b>46%</b>	<b>25</b>	35%	17	<b>39%</b>	<b>120</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =1.539, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Pupils & teachers respect each other	<b>35%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>126</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =.663, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Offer school behaviour support programme	<b>35%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>19</b>	23%	70	X <sup>2</sup> =8.064, df=2, p<.05 significant
Access behaviour support service	20%	11	20%	10	20%	62	X <sup>2</sup> =.002, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Behaviour management training	<b>35%</b>	<b>19</b>	25%	12	24%	72	X <sup>2</sup> =3.372, df=2, p>.05 not significant

The most important needs have been emboldened

The above table illustrates that no significant differences were indicated by respondents from the three different types of school (boys/girls/mixed) in relation to eight of the nine needs listed, namely: *social skills taught*, *written rules*, *rules systematically taught*, *consistency*, *rewards and consequences*, *respect*, *access behaviour support service*, and *behaviour management training*.

The only variable that indicated significance was: *offer a school behaviour support programme*. Respondents from mixed schools saw less need to offer this facility with only 23 per cent stating this need compared to 35 per cent of boys' schools and 39 per cent of girls' schools.

On observing the most important needs from the above table, the most important needs have been emboldened. *Consistency* and *respect between teachers and pupils* were chosen among the most important needs by boys', girls' and mixed school respondents, thus indicating some conformity between the schools. Additionally, boys and girls schools chose the need to *offer school behaviour support programme* as one of their most important needs while boys' schools also chose *behaviour management training* as an important need. Respondents from boys' schools returned five variables as important needs as three were jointly chosen (35%). These were: *respect between teachers and pupils*, *offer a school behaviour support programme* and *behaviour management training* were jointly returned as important needs by 35% of respondents after *rewards and consequences* (returned by 46% of respondents) and *consistency* (returned by 37% of respondents). In mixed schools, *rewards and consequences* was viewed as one of the three most important needs, similar to boys' schools.

#### **4.6.3 Are the needs different depending on perspective of respondents?**

In this section, the three most important needs as prioritised by respondents depending on *perspective of respondent* (principals, teachers, pupils) were compared. The results on whether whole-school needs are different depending on *perspectives* are now displayed in Table 4.11 below (see Appendix 7 for a comparison of needs at lower levels of corridor/playground, class and individual levels).

**Table 4.11 Percentage of respondents' identification of the three most important needs at whole-school level**

Needs	Perspective of principals, teachers and pupils						X <sup>2</sup>
	Principals		Teachers		Pupils		
	%	N	%	N	%	N	
Social skills taught	25%	4	27%	43	29%	70	X <sup>2</sup> =.316, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Written rules	13%	2	12%	18	13%	32	X <sup>2</sup> =.354, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Rules systematically taught	<b>37%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>52</b>	18%	43	X <sup>2</sup> =12.895, df=2, p<.01 significant
Consistency between school staff	<b>37%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =31.682, df=2, p<.01 significant
Rewards & Consequences	25%	4	<b>36%</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>101</b>	X <sup>2</sup> = 3.041, df=2, p<.05 significant
Pupils & teachers respect each other	6%	1	25%	40	<b>52%</b>	<b>124</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =36.297, df=2, p<.01 significant
Offer school Behaviour support programme	19%	3	23%	36	29%	69	X <sup>2</sup> =2.356, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Access Behaviour support service	25%	4	17%	27	22%	52	X <sup>2</sup> =1.549, df=2, p>.05 not significant
Behaviour management training	<b>31%</b>	<b>5</b>	24%	38	25%	60	X <sup>2</sup> =.395, df=2, p>.05 not significant

Most important needs are emboldened

As Table 4.11 illustrates, no significant differences were indicated between respondents on five of the nine school needs, namely: *social skills taught*, *written rules*, *offering a school behaviour support programme*, *access to a behaviour support service*, and *behaviour management training for school personnel*.

Significant differences were indicated on the following four variables: *rules systematically taught*, *consistency between school staff*, *rewards and consequences* and *respect between pupils and teachers*.

On *rules systematically taught*, both principals and teachers chose this as one of their three most important needs with returns of 37 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. In contrast pupils did not see the same need and only 18 per cent chose this variable. It was not one of their priorities. This is perhaps because the teaching of rules is part of the brief of principals and teachers and therefore would be chosen as an important need by school personnel.

*Consistency between school staff* was chosen as one of the three most important needs by all respondents, and while similar numbers of principals

and pupils (37% and 33% respectively) chose it as an important need, a much higher number of teachers – 58 per cent, chose it as an important need. More teachers saw the need for consistency between staff than principals or pupils. However, inconsistency between school staff was a common topic among all respondents during the research cycle and pupils especially felt hard done by because of different treatments for different pupils for the same offence (e.g. the following comments were made by pupils: *some people don't get in as much trouble for doing the same thing; some people get different punishments for breaking one of the rules*).

*Rewards and consequences* was chosen as one of the three most important needs by teachers and pupils (36% and 43% respectively) in contrast to principals where only 25 per cent chose this variable as one of their most important needs. This reflects the importance of rewards and consequences to the daily lives of teachers and pupils.

There were significant differences between respondents' views on pupils' and teachers' respect for each other. While only one principal (6%) chose this variable as one of the three most important needs, 25 per cent of teachers chose it. In contrast, *respect* was seen as of major importance by pupils where 52 per cent chose it as a most important need. However, in pupils' conversations about being respected, it was nearly always about how they were being disrespected by teachers and not vice versa. Neither principals nor teachers chose respect as one of their most important needs.

#### **4.7 Summary and interpretation of the four research questions**

In answer to question 1 on *current practices*, the vast majority of principals, teachers and pupils agreed that *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *school rules are fair*. However, in general, more principals agreed with these statements than teachers or pupils. One possible interpretation of this is that they see themselves as effective managers of the schools in their care.

In question 2, in examining whether current practices (*behaviour rules are enforced consistently, staff roles are clear and school behaviour rules are fair*) differed depending on *location, school gender and perspective*, no significant difference was found on *location* (between urban and rural respondents). However, significant differences were found on *school gender* (boys/girls/mixed) and *perspective of respondents* (principals, teachers, pupils). On *school gender*, 33 per cent in boys' schools did not endorse the statement that *staff roles are clear* compared to just 10 per cent in girls' schools and 13 per cent in mixed schools. Similarly 53 per cent of respondents in girls' schools did not endorse the statement that *school behaviour rules are fair* compared to boys' and mixed schools where the perception was that rules are fair. These differences were due primarily to the views of pupils. This suggests that boys in boys' schools need more clarity in relation to teachers' roles and the vast majority of girls (83%) in girls' schools are unhappy about school behaviour rules, thus indicating that they would like some consultation on this topic.

According to the *perspective* of respondents, significant differences were noted on *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*. The majority of pupils felt that behaviour rules are not enforced consistently compared to the majority of principals and teachers who thought that they are. This implies that pupils perceive a lack of consistency among staff in relation to enforcing school behaviour rules. On whether *staff roles are clear*, 12 per cent of teachers and 19 per cent of pupils thought staff roles were unclear while no principal thought so. One interpretation of this is that principals see themselves as good communicators with clarity around staff roles and in this way that they are effective managers of their schools. On the question *behaviour rules are fair*, a significant number of pupils (38%) felt that school behaviour rules are unfair compared to only 19 per cent of principals and 13 per cent of teachers, thereby suggesting that pupils would like to be consulted on this matter.

In question 3, the three most important needs were selected by respondents and *consistency between school staff* was selected as one of the most important needs by all parties. This indicates that all school partners perceive

this as a most important priority in their schools. Principals and teachers commonly chose *rules systematically taught*, indicating their understanding that pupils must be taught school rules to enable them to obey them. *Behaviour management training* was another priority need according to principals, indicating that they perceive a need to train staff to enable them to support pupils in relation to behaviour. Teachers and pupils both chose *rewards/consequences* as a priority need, indicating the importance of this variable in the day-to-day management of behaviour. While *social skills* and *consistency between school staff* were jointly chosen by approximately one-third of pupils as important needs, in contrast to school personnel (principals/teachers), *respect between pupils and teachers* was chosen as a priority need by the largest number of pupils. The fact that the need for *respect* was chosen only by pupils indicates that they feel disrespected by school personnel.

In question 4, in examining whether needs differed depending on *location, school gender and perspective*, no significant difference was found on *location* but differences were noted in *school gender* and *perspective* of respondents. In *school gender*, a significant difference was noted between schools on the need to *offer a school behaviour support programme*. Mixed schools saw less need for this service than boys' and girls' schools. It is unclear why this should be so but the researcher suggests that the gender mix was a positive variable in relation to the management of behaviour and consequently there was less felt need for such a programme. It is not a new idea that girls act as a civilising influence and provide a supporting role for boys in the classroom and the following two studies can be interpreted as pointers in this regard. Foster (1998) argues that in mixed classrooms that female pupils act as caretakers of boys and that this is an expected part of their day-to-day schooling experience. Although the composition of male/female pupils in the classroom is not known in this current study, Lavy and Schlosser (2007) found that a higher proportion of girls in a classroom have the effect of significantly lowering the level of disruption and violence.

According to the perspective of respondents, significant differences were noted in four of the nine variables offered and these included: *rules systematically taught*, *consistency between school staff*, *rewards and consequences* and *pupils and teachers respect each other*. Pupils did not see a need for *rules systematically taught* in contrast to principals and teachers. This may be that pupils feel they already know the rules and do not need to be taught them or they may feel that there are enough rules already. Teachers saw a greater need for *consistency between school staff* than principals and pupils. One interpretation is that teachers realise that there has to be consistency among all staff in relation to behaviour support, e.g. *rewards and consequences* has to be consistently applied in relation to pupils' behaviour in school. The majority of pupils chose *respect between pupils and teachers* as a priority need, and this was significantly higher than principals or teachers. One suggestion is that pupils are intimating that they are not respected and are seen as passive objects whose opinions are not sought or heard.

The above sections have answered the four research questions on *current practices* and *needs* in behaviour support and whether current practices and needs were different depending on *location*, *school gender* and *perspectives* of respondents. The next section provides results, summary and interpretations to four auxiliary questions on behaviour support.

#### **4.8 Auxiliary data on needs in relation to a behaviour support programme**

This section provides results and interpretations to the following four auxiliary questions related to whole-school behaviour support:

- a) Do school rules in relation to behaviour support need to be improved in your school?
- b) Is there need for a behaviour support programme in your school?
- c) Would you endorse such a programme?
- d) Would you be interested in being part of the management of a behaviour support programme?



#### **4.8.1 Do school rules need to be improved in your school?**

All participants were asked *if school rules in relation to behaviour support needed to be improved*. (Q5/Q3, Appendices 1 & 2). In all, 97 per cent replied to this question. Those who did not answer were included in *don't knows*. Forty-four per cent of principals replied *no*, school rules did not need to be improved. On the contrary, 40 per cent of teachers and 41 per cent of pupils indicated that school rules needed improvement (see Table 4.12 below).

**Table 4.12 Do school rules in relation to behaviour need to be improved in your school?**

Category	%	N
<b>Principals</b>		
Yes	37%	6
<b>No</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>7</b>
Don't know	19%	3
<b>Teachers</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>63</b>
No	35%	55
Don't know	25%	39
<b>Pupils</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>98</b>
No	34%	81
Don't know	25%	58

Of those who answered, majority numbers emboldened

#### **4.8.2. Is there need for a behaviour support programme in your school?**

Principals and teachers were asked *if, in their opinion, there was need for a behaviour support programme in their school* (Q18, Appendix 1). See Table 4.13 below for their opinions.

**Table 4.13 Is there need for a behaviour support programme in your school?**

Category	%	N
<b>Principals</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>7</b>
No	31%	5
Don't know	25%	4
<b>Teachers</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>60</b>
No	24%	38
Don't know	37%	59

Of those who answered, majority numbers emboldened

As the above table indicates, the majority of principals and teachers who answered agreed on the *need for a school behaviour support programme* with more principals than teachers concurring.

#### **4.8.3 Endorsement of behaviour support programme?**

Principals and teachers were asked *if a behaviour programme was offered to their schools would they agree to endorse it* (e.g. set targets, teach social skills, etc.). See Table 4.14 below for responses.

**Table 4.14 Responses of principals and teachers on agreeing to a behaviour support programme if offered to their school**

Category	%	N
<b>Principals</b>		
Yes	<b>81%</b>	<b>13</b>
No	6%	1
Don't know	13%	2
<b>Teachers</b>		
Yes	<b>84%</b>	<b>132</b>
No	2%	3
Don't know	14%	59

Of those who answered, majority numbers emboldened

As Table 4.14 indicates, the vast majority of both principals and teachers would agree to endorse such a programme. This is important as a whole-school programme cannot be implemented without the endorsement of school management and without the co-operation of all staff.

#### **4.8.4 Interest in management of behaviour support programme?**

Running a behaviour support programme in a school requires a leadership team within the school to set behaviour targets and monitor progress. Principals and teachers were therefore asked *if they would be interested in being included in the management team*. See table 4.15 for their responses.

**Table 4.15 Responses of principals and teachers to inclusion in management of a school behaviour support programme**

Category	%	N
<b>Principals</b>		
Yes	<b>75%</b>	<b>12</b>
No	13%	2
Don't know	12%	2
<b>Teachers</b>		
Yes	<b>52%</b>	<b>81</b>
No	15%	24
Don't know	33%	52

Majority numbers emboldened

Seventy-five per cent of principals and 52 per cent of teachers agreed that *they would be interested in being included in the management of a school behaviour-support programme*.

In summary, in answer to whether school rules need to be improved in their school, a majority of principals who answered replied *no*, school rules did not

need to be improved, while the majority of teachers and pupils who answered indicated yes, school rules need improvement. One interpretation of these findings is that principals do not like to admit that school rules need to be improved as it may be seen as a reflection on their management style. This interpretation was based on a principal who wrote the following when completing his questionnaire '*I know it sounds cocky but we do not have behaviour problems in this school*'. Yet the vice principal in the same school spoke of the difficulties encountered by staff with pupils who misbehave and to strengthen this argument further, the School Board of Management funded three teachers to attend a behaviour management course.

In spite of principals replying that school rules did not need to be improved, the majority of both principals and teachers who answered said yes, there was a need for a school behaviour support programme. This may be because principals recognise the need for all staff to work at systems level in order to improve pupil behaviour.

The vast majority of principals and teachers would endorse a behaviour programme and while the vast majority of principals would be interested in managing such a programme, a smaller majority of teachers were interested in being included. This suggests that principals as well as teachers perceive that working at systems level is mostly the brief of principals and teachers at school management level.

#### **4.9 Summary of quantitative results**

Sixteen principals, 157 teacher and 237 pupils completed and returned questionnaires. The majority of all respondents agreed that the current practices of *rules were being enforced consistently, staff roles were clear and rules were fair* were being practised currently in schools.

Results were analysed to investigate if there was a difference in responses dependent on location (urban/rural), school gender or perspective (principal/teacher/pupil). No significant difference in current practices was

found on *location* but significant differences were found on *school gender* and *perspective* of respondents.

*Consistency between school staff* was chosen by all respondents as one of the most important needs. Principals and teachers also chose *rules systematically taught* while both teachers and pupils chose *rewards and consequences*. *Behaviour management training* was an important need according to principals while *respect* and *social skills* were most important to pupils.

According to the respondents, no significant differences on needs were reported in relation to *location* but significant differences were found on *school gender* and *perspective of respondents*. With regard to the summary of four auxiliary questions, a majority of principals who answered thought that school rules did not need to be improved, in contrast to teachers and pupils who thought otherwise. Yet principals as well as teachers saw the need for a school behaviour support programme and the majority of them would endorse and be interested in managing such a programme.

While Chapter 4 provided quantitative data on the four research questions and auxiliary questions on current practices, needs, differences and related questions on behaviour support, Chapter 5 provides qualitative data on *needs* and *gender* emanating from Phase 3 of the research.

## Chapter 5 - Analysis of qualitative data on needs in relation to behaviour in school

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides data collected from interviews conducted with principals and from focus group interviews with teachers and pupils. Four principals were interviewed, and focus-groups were conducted with one group of teachers and two groups of 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed and then analysed and coded using thematic analysis (Open University, 2007). While Chapter 4 provided quantitative results for the four research questions and four auxiliary questions, the most important question - the research question on '*needs*' (Research question 3/Question 1 of interview schedules) was answered qualitatively in this chapter along with (Auxiliary Q2/Q6 interview schedules) *whether there is need for a whole-school behaviour programme*. The third question examined qualitatively included Q10 – *whether boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls and whether town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools*. Therefore, a total of three questions, namely Q1, Q6 and Q10 are included in this chapter.

All ten questions from the interview schedule were thematically analysed and those not included in this chapter (Q2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9) are included in Appendix 8 (1). Because the answers given to the 10 interview questions were lengthy, all ten questions and answers from all respondents are also included in Appendix 8 (2) on a CD Rom.

This chapter begins by describing thematic analysis (Section 5.2), followed by the process of coding for thematic analysis (Section 5.3). Themes on *behaviour support needs* are presented, summarised and interpreted in Section 5.4. This was followed by *whether there was need for a whole-school behaviour programme* (Section 5.5) and responses from principals, teachers and pupils on *whether boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls* and *whether town schools have more behaviour problems than country*

*schools* (Section 5.6). The chapter concludes with a discussion/reflection on the behaviour of students during the focus-group interviews (Section 5.7) and summary of qualitative results (Section 5.8).

## **5.2 Thematic analysis**

There is no universally accepted format for collecting qualitative data, partly because of the diversity in research design, researcher roles, and differing techniques of gathering data. However, a widely used qualitative *method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns* (themes) *within data is thematic analysis* (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.79). *A theme captures something important about the data and represents ..... meaning within the data* (ibid p.82) and these *meaningful themes* (come) *from the participant's own words* (Open University, 2007, p.291). An advantage of thematic analysis is its flexibility as it is not associated with any one theoretical framework and can be used by researchers from different perspectives and different paradigms within psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

While thematic analysis is widely used, it gets bad press (Roulston, 2001). This criticism was made because of the absence of clear guidelines around it, consequently, it can be said to lack rigour and transparency. But thematic analysis *can* follow a rigorous, systematic and transparent approach in the way the themes are categorised and by stating clearly the assumptions utilised by the researcher in analysing the nature of the data used. In this case the researcher made a decision that a pragmatic approach, asking what method of analysis could be used to answer the questions asked and recognised that an insider, subjective viewpoint can illuminate data obtained in the quantitative findings.

Of the two methods of identifying themes, the top down (theoretical/deductive) method (Boyatzis 1998, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006) rather than the alternative bottom up (inductive) data driven approach was utilised (Frith & Gleeson, 2004). In other words, the questions asked guided the coding and analysis of the data. This was thought to be more suitable in this case as the researcher was interested in identifying themes from specific questions asked

and on ascertaining if themes differed between respondents. In the next section the process utilised in thematic analysis will be clarified.

### **5.3 Process of thematic analysis**

There are three stages to successful thematic analysis (Open University, 2007): transcription, familiarisation with the data, and coding.

#### **Stage 1: Transcription**

This stage entailed transcribing all taped interviews and focus-group interviews into written form. This was advantageous as it provided some familiarity with the data collected and as recognised by Bird (2005), it is *regarded as a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology* (p.226). All lines of the transcripts were then allocated numbers (see Appendix 8 (2) CD Rom for all 10 interview questions and answers given).

#### **Stage 2: Familiarisation with transcripts**

Data was read again for accuracy and keeping the initial question in mind, various themes were identified. This reading and rereading is essential in becoming familiar with the data and in providing an accurate record (Open University, 2007).

#### **Stage 3: Coding**

This is the process of identifying themes and labelling them to answer the question asked. It was carried out at three levels as suggested by Langdridge (2004): *first order* (descriptive), *second order* (combining descriptive codes), and *third order* or thematic analysis.

##### **First order coding:**

At this first level, the researcher underlined chunks of data (respondents' language) to answer the question asked. Occasionally where the respondent's answer was extensive, a summary was written in a right hand margin. This 1<sup>st</sup> order coding was then typed and listed as a table for each of the ten questions of the interview schedule and coded as to each respondent



who quoted it (principal/teacher/pupil) and the line where it could be located (e.g. P4L52, see Appendix 8 (1), tables 5.1-5.21). Tables were created for each group of respondents (unless principals and teachers had similar themes where just one table sufficed).

### **Second order coding:**

This phase involved the refining of data given by respondents in first order coding into similar topics and this clustering of ideas had the effect of reducing data into two or three headings, thus making the amount of data more manageable. This second order coding was summarised into table form, thereby making the process more transparent. This stage of coding, along with third order coding has been included in tables in this chapter (unless 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding were similar).

### **Third order coding/themes**

In this final phase, themes were identified and summarised in table form, and these themes are included in this chapter (see Appendix 8 for themes identified for Q2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 & 9).

The following sections (Sections 5.4 - 5.6) will focus on *needs* (Q1 interview schedule and Q6 interview schedule) and questions associated with behavioural problems, gender and location (Q10 interview schedule) as perceived by principals, teachers and pupils. Principals' and teachers' themes will be presented in separate tables under one heading (unless themes are similar and are merged), followed by pupils' themes.

## **5.4 Outcome on *what help/supports are needed to manage behaviour at school level?* (Q1 interview schedule)**

### **5.4.1 Data analysis and presentation of themes from principals' interviews and focus-group interview with teachers**

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding identified in principals' and teachers' interviews. As already explained, data from the 2<sup>nd</sup> order

coding was merged or summarised into themes (or 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding). The exemplars used from the interview schedules identified which of the four principals (P) or which of the six teachers (T) in the focus-group spoke, together with the line (L) number in the interview schedule (e.g. principal 1, Line 44-6 was presented as P1L44-6).

**Table 5.1 Overview of themes identified in principals' interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order coding)	In-school management responsibi	Co-operation & clear communication between school partners
2 <sup>nd</sup> order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of discipline policy</li> <li>• Behaviour management group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operation between school partners on values</li> <li>• Co-operation on code of behaviour</li> <li>• Understanding of what drives behaviour</li> <li>• Communication of school rules/ consequences</li> </ul>

**Table 5.2 Overview of themes identified in teachers' interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order coding)	In-school ma na	Co-operation & clear communication between school	Collective tea che
2 <sup>nd</sup> order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff responsibility</li> <li>• Care team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School partners develop a code of behaviour</li> <li>• School rules democratically selected</li> <li>• Correction of pupils</li> <li>• Everybody informed of school rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher responsibilities</li> </ul>

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show two common themes identified by principals and teachers, *in-school management responsibilities* and *co-operation and clear communication between school partners* but different second order codes inform these. The third theme identified by teachers was *collective teacher responsibilities*. These will now be examined.

#### 5.4.1.1 In-school management responsibilities

This could be defined as the responsibilities of the school management team, which includes the principal and staff members with a management role.

Principals and teachers made suggestions on strategies for managing behaviour at macro level i.e. the need for a watertight code of discipline (P2L10), and a whole-school approach within the school (P4L44-5), managed

by a behaviour management group which would bring continuity and consistency to managing behaviour (P4L51-6; T2L141-3). School management is responsible for managing behaviour within a school according to teachers (T1L65-6) and the principal has to be committed and has overall responsibility (T1L80, T2L142-5, T1L154).

*What you need is consistency. You need a behaviour management group as such. In a school I worked in, we had a whole-school behaviour policy and all teachers were talking from the same page... it worked well, partly because of the head teacher (T2L141-5).*

This quote highlights the importance of having a principal with firm leadership qualities who understands the importance of behaviour management and has the ability to unite the staff into working together as a team for the good of all school partners.

#### 5.4.1.2 Co-operation and clear communication between school partners

This was the second common theme identified by principals and teachers. Principals suggested that there has to be good co-operation between home/school and within the school on the management of behaviour with a shared understanding of aims/values by all parties including school staff, parents (P1L5-7) and pupils (P3L30-32).

*You need co-operation between staff and parents so that they'll both have a good understanding of what's required, similar values, similar aims in behaviour, similar boundaries... (P1L5-7)*

Teachers were more inclusive and suggested involving parents in the development of a code of behaviour (T1L84/5) and on agreeing the code. Parents should sign it as otherwise it causes difficulties when sanctions are enacted (T1L80-97).

*We wouldn't have..... major disruptive behaviour in the school but ... it's part of our new code of discipline.....we put a lot of work into developing our code..... it's ongoing....Everything was about the positive element, but when children did something wrong and sanctions were given, parents came in giving out .... But we said, listen, we sent you home this code of discipline. You signed it, you agreed to it. When it's signed, it makes it a lot easier .. to do what you have to do (T1L80-97).*

Clear communication, which could be described as the sharing of information to aid understanding among all the people involved is required, according to principals and teachers. This needs to include rules/consequences (P4L46-7, T1L58-60, T2L143-5), recordings of indisciplines and information on what drives behaviour communicated to school partners (P2L11-23).

*Recording of indisciplines.....behaviour can be highly driven and we just don't have enough information...information should be given to teachers, parents, and to the general educational body about why behaviours are as they are (P2L11-23)*

Communicating school rules to new staff was identified by teachers (T1L62-5) in the interest of consistency. Pupils and teachers need to understand that all pupils can be corrected by all teachers in the school (T6L98-100, T2L104-5).

*I think... all the children (should) understand that they can be corrected by all the teachers. Sometimes they think that they can be corrected only by their own teacher (T6L98-100).*

The right and authority of teachers to correct all pupils who misbehave is sometimes misunderstood by pupils especially if the teacher who tries to correct them teaches a younger age group. As well as having the right of correction, teachers also hold the responsibility for correction of all children and this third theme 'collective teacher responsibilities' is now examined.

#### 5.4.1.3 Collective teacher responsibilities

This could be explained as all teachers being held responsible for all behaviour within the school. While it is recognised that school management is ultimately responsible for behaviour at school level (T1L80, L65/7), they cannot do it single-handedly so it takes all the teachers collectively to ensure that rules are kept and put into practice (T1L113, 136-7). This includes the teaching of proper routines and respect (T1L61-2) and one current strategy utilised was a rota of teachers giving 10 minute scripted fortnightly talks to classes (T1L114-21) about school rules, values and systems followed in school.

*Teachers have to be constantly reminded that all teachers are responsible for all behaviours (T1L136-7)*

*Extremely important to teach proper routines ... and respect (T1L61-2)*

*We do 'rule mornings' a rota ... every month we have two mornings. Different teachers ... go into the class and we have a script, say this month, we are working on, ... 'manners' and 'going in and out of the school gate'... all teachers are working on the same rules (T1L114-21)*

Providing a rota of teachers to talk to various classes about the importance of school rules helps pupils to clarify school rules and what the rule means in different parts of the school. It also focuses their attention on the rights and responsibilities of teachers to correct all pupils where necessary.

While this section presented themes from principals' interviews and teachers' focus-group interview, the following section presents themes identified by pupils.

#### **5.4.2 Data analysis and presentation of themes from two focus-group interviews with pupils**

While principals and teachers in general identified similar themes, the two focus-groups of pupils identified a similar theme to principals and teachers, namely *co-operation between schools partners*, and two different themes which are: *outside school support* and *behaviour management tools*. These are displayed in Table 5.3. In explanation, exemplars from the pupil interviews are presented with the pupil (p) and line number (L) preceded by Focus Group (FG) 1 or 2.

**Table 5.3 Overview of themes identified in pupils' interviews**

<b>Themes 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding</b>	<b>Co-operation between school partners</b>	<b>Outside school su</b>	<b>Behaviour management tools</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> order coding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from school staff</li> <li>• Support from pupils</li> <li>• Support from parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour management</li> <li>• Rewards/consequences</li> </ul>

##### **5.4.2.1 Co-operation between school partners**

Described as good co-operation between home/school and within the school, pupils felt what was needed to manage behaviour at school level was support

from teachers, parents and their peers. Examples of teacher support included the need for more teachers on yard duty (p4L196-98) but patrolling the yard separately so that they could clearly see what was happening, (FG1p1L199-201)

*Maybe if there were more teachers, like on yard duty (FG1p4L196-97)*

*Even if there were two, they always walk together. Maybe if they were like that (pupil indicated teachers walking clockwise opposite each other), walking around the school separately, it would be better (FG1p1L199-201)*

Pupils themselves could lend their support by helping to make classroom rules (FG1p2L183-5) and act as prefects (FG1p1L193)

*If all classrooms had their own school rules... that would help to keep all the rules intact (FG1p1L183-5)...*

*Maybe if 6<sup>th</sup> class acts as prefects and stopped all the bullying (FG1p1L193)*

Parents also had their part to play by encouraging good behaviour in school (FG1p5L192)

*Maybe if the parents at home encouraged good behaviour (FG1p5L192).*

*Outside school supports* were also highlighted by pupils and this theme will now be examined.

#### 5.4.2.2 Outside school supports

Supports emanating from people outside the school were suggested, e.g. from people who knew about managing behaviour (FG1p3L188-9) as well as the services of a counsellor (L202-3).

*... get someone in to help the teachers deal with behaviour (FG1p3L188-9)*

*If the principal employed a counsellor to help the children with behaviour problems (FG1p3L202-3).*

Strategies in the management of behaviour require the use of behaviour management tools according to pupils. As indicated below, these include rewards/consequences which are very relevant to pupils in their daily lives and these are now examined.

#### 5.4.2.3 Behaviour management tools

These tools could be described as strategies and methods for managing behaviour in school. Pupils suggested ways for managing behaviour at school level, including enforcement of school rules (FG1p1L182), more rewards (FG1p1L205-7), and stricter rules and punishments (FG1p4L191, FG1p3L212).

*We should be rewarded more....if rewarded, we wouldn't get in as much trouble*  
(FG1p1L205-7)

While most pupils valued the strategies of rewards, equally punishment as a strategy was necessary. However, these strategies were not effective with some pupils who preferred the negative attention from their teachers by breaking rules, as it provided them with the name of being 'cool' by their peers (FG1p2L210-34).

*Some people get in trouble because it's risky ...they think they are funny.... some of them ... get in trouble .... to try to be cool*  
(FG1p2L210-34).

#### 5.4.3 **Summary and interpretation of themes from interview schedules on supports needed to manage behaviour at school level**

The supports needed to manage behaviour at school level according to principals and teachers include *in-school management responsibilities*, and *co-operation and clear communication between school partners*, while a further theme of *collective teacher responsibilities* was identified by teachers. In common with principals and teachers, *co-operation between school partners* was also identified by pupils along with *outside school support* and *behaviour management tools*.

*In-school management responsibilities* was the preserve of the principal and management, with overall responsibility and commitment to manage behaviour the responsibility of the principal, according to principals and

teachers. This suggests that principals alone have overall responsibility for the management of behaviour in their schools. This is not surprising as a principal is responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the school on behalf of the Board of Management.

Good co-operation/communication between school partners is necessary in the day-to-day management of the school according to principals and teachers. Accepting the value system within the school and involving parents in developing behaviour policies makes for ownership of it, especially when sanctions are involved. Principals and teachers identified that clear communication of rules/consequences to all school partners is necessary with the understanding that the rules can be applied by all school staff at all times. This suggests that clarity is needed between all partners - that school rules have universal application in all areas within the school. The interpretation here is that good communication and involvement of all parties including parents, in making school rules ensures that school values are shared by all, and brings ownership and a shared interest in maintaining them.

For a whole-school approach to behaviour, according to teachers, there must be collective teacher responsibility. The interpretation here is that while school management is responsible for policy decisions, policies are worthless unless they are put into practice daily, and this requires collective teacher responsibility to teach proper routines, expectations and respect.

Pupils suggested supports from teachers, parents and pupils themselves and their examples of more teachers on yard duty imply that this is seen as a flash point for misbehaviour. Equally their suggestion that parents co-operate with the school and encourage good behaviour may suggest that some parents are not supportive of school behaviour rules, e.g. when a pupil breaks the rules and parents side with their child rather than the class teacher. When pupils misbehave in class, valuable teaching time is wasted, and this affects all pupils in the class. It is suggested that because of different value systems, it is near impossible to have a code of behaviour that all school partners will agree on, and this divergence may be most evident in school populations of



mixed socio-economic groups and nationalities, where different value systems may apply. The pupils' suggestion that they themselves provide support, e.g. becoming prefects whereby their peers could look to them for guidance, a friendlier face for support or a place to take complaints.

The pupils' suggestion for outside behaviour support and the need for a counsellor suggest that pupils perceive that their teachers, although they possess teaching qualifications, do not necessarily have the qualities of providing guidance. Utilising outside professionals would bring confidentiality issues. However, with parental permission, this could be arranged. On the need for a counsellor, in contrast to primary schools, all second level schools have counsellors and it was interesting to note that in recent days a primary school in the researcher's caseload of schools made a request for the ongoing services of a counsellor because of continuing anxiety one year after the unexpected tragic death of a sixth class pupil.

Pupils' suggestions of strategies for managing behaviour at school level included enforcement of school rules, more rewards and stricter rules/punishments. The observation that some pupils break rules to be seen as 'cool' suggests a need for attention seeking among peers and perhaps more appropriate ways can be found to provide this attention. Getting to know pupils and understanding the reasons for misbehaviour often goes a long way toward solving the problem.

Having asked principals, teachers and pupils *what help/supports are needed to manage behaviour at school level* (research question 3), the researcher was then interested in ascertaining whether these needs could be met with a whole-school behaviour support programme. Answered quantitatively by principals and teachers in Chapter 4 (auxiliary Q2), it is now answered qualitatively by principals and teachers, and pupils (5.5.1 and 5.5.2) respectively (Q6 interview schedule)

## **5.5 Outcome on whether there is need for a whole-school behaviour support programme (Q6 interview schedule)**

### 5.5.1 Data analysis and presentation of themes identified from principals' interviews and focus-group interviews with teachers

*Need for whole-school behaviour programme* was identified in the data from principals and teachers and a second theme, *current practices in behaviour support* was also identified in the focus-group of teachers. See tables 5.4 and 5.5 for overview of these themes.

**Table 5.4 Overview of themes identified in principals' interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order coding)	<b>Need for whole-school behaviour programme</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> order coding	Vital/essential and usefulness of a whole-school programme

**Table 5.5 Overview of themes identified in focus-group interview with teachers**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order coding)	<b>Need for whole school behaviour programme</b>	<b>Current practices in behaviour support</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> order coding	Whole-school programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoral care</li> <li>• Behaviours noted in yard book</li> <li>• Red book</li> </ul>

#### 5.5.1.1 Need for a Whole-School Behaviour Support Programme

All principals and teachers agreed on the need and usefulness of having a whole-school behaviour support programme. One principal stated how vital a school approach to behaviour was, which in turn would help with consistency in the school:

*It would be absolutely vital, a whole-school approach to behaviour... every teacher ..... will deal with it similar to the other teacher... a whole-school approach based on a consistent, ongoing and similar treatment for everybody (P2L37-49)*

One principal stated that his school already had a behaviour programme, not only with rules laid down but also with processes of delivering those rules for the whole school (P1L12-21).

*We would have a set programme in place.... every teacher would know they have this support behind them if certain steps had to be taken. ... for example before a parent is called in...they get a letter home...letting the parent know that we are having a problem with behaviour, then a*

*letter goes home to come and talk to the teacher. The next stage is 'would you come in and talk to the principal*

(P1L23-35).

Another principal who thought it was essential to have a whole-school programme seemed to think that she might be left to put it together without assistance:

*I would have taken this on board myself but I would find the need there for another person to liaise with, who might be working more closely on the ground floor....*

(P3L50-60)

The principal who thought a whole-school behaviour programme would be 'useful' and 'effective' suggested that it would create awareness among staff of unacceptable behaviour filtering through. Having a leadership support team would be a great asset in helping to identify pupils with SEBD and maybe even devise a plan to support them. She also felt that parental involvement was important (P4L64-77).

Teachers were very positive about the need for a whole-school programme. Comments included *a whole-school programme would work better...would be consistent. We have nothing like that. Individual teachers are on their own* (T4L79-81). Another teacher who had experience of a whole-school behaviour support programme when teaching abroad added:

*Our school is similar. The principal.. says "we don't have behaviour problems"... you always feel you are on your own, and that's because they have no systems, you know the whole-school behaviour thing*

(T2L82-96).

Presumably principals like to think they do not have behaviour problems because it is a poor reflection on their leadership and management style as they are responsible for the day-to-day management of all aspects of running the school including behaviour management.

The following theme *current practices in behaviour support* identified by teachers is now discussed.

#### 5.5.1.2 Current practices in behaviour support

In identifying the need for whole-school behaviour support, teachers also identified current strategies utilised by them. These included a pastoral care system where a rota of teachers would give fortnightly 10-minute talks to pupils on school rules and behaviour. Yard books listing school rules were used during playtime and names taken of children who broke the rules. Once per month a teacher went through the yard book and names that appeared three times were transferred to a red book and parents were requested to attend to discuss the pupil's misbehaviour. The yard books were used as a tracking system for children who misbehaved in this large school.

Although yard books were seen as a sanction by teachers, one pupil did not seem to view it as such. On a comment from a teacher that there was a need for whole-school behaviour support because she felt unsupported at present (see Appendix 8, Q8 interview schedule), one pupil seemed to agree and stated that the sanction needs to be more than just the red book:

*..something more serious than the red book. That's just a book that they write your name in*

(FG2p1L206)

Data analysis from the pupils' focus group interviews is now examined in 5.5.2

### 5.5.2 Data analysis and presentation of themes from pupils' focus-group interviews

Three themes were identified from the two focus-groups of pupils and these are displayed in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Overview of themes identified in pupil interviews

*Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order)	Advantages of whole school rules/supp ort	Disadvantages of whole- school rules	Rewards and consequ ences
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\*Because 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding were similar, only 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding is displayed

Different themes were identified by pupils from those identified by principals and teachers. These were *advantages* and *disadvantages of whole-school rules*, and *rewards and consequences*.

#### 5.5.2.1 Advantages of whole school rules

All but one pupil thought it was a good idea to have whole-school rules. Comments made included the fact that because everybody would have the same rules, pupils would not have to learn new ones going into different classes (FG1p1L153-5). No class would be different and everybody would have to act the same (FG1p2L161-4).

*It would be good because everyone would have the same rules and pupils wouldn't have to learn new ones, like when they are going into different classes*

(FG1p1L153-5)

These pupils were suggesting that life would be simpler and easier for them if school rules remained the same throughout their period in primary school. However one pupil identified a disadvantage and this is now examined.

#### 5.5.2.2 Disadvantages of whole-school rules

This pupil suggested that having one set of rules for the whole school may not be so appropriate for younger pupils. He was worried for the infants who might get into trouble for breaking the rules and be punished when they might

not understand so he suggested two sets of rules: infants to 1<sup>st</sup> class, and 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

*I think it would be hard if all classes had the same rules - if 6<sup>th</sup> class and junior infants had the same rules. Junior Infants might break them and be punished - they don't know....well, infants up to 1<sup>st</sup> class could be the same rules, then maybe 2<sup>nd</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class, like they have more sense*

(F2p3L167-73).

This pupil showed that he was able to think laterally, and about people other than himself. In this case he showed a caring and protective attitude for the younger pupil who would not necessarily have the capacity to understand.

The 3rd theme identified by pupils: *rewards and consequences* is now examined.

#### 5.5.2.3 Rewards and consequences

*Rewards and consequences* was of great interest to pupils and suggestions made in each focus group highlighted the fact that they would be inclined to keep the rules if there were rewards (FG1p3L156-7; FG2p1L176-7). Pupils who spoke about rewards were very animated and interested in this topic. Penalties were also discussed and one pupil suggested that knowing there were penalties for breaking the rules was an incentive to keeping them - or suffer the consequences.

*It would be good to have penalties for breaking the rules because everyone would know if you break the rule, you get a penalty*  
(FG1p4L158-9)

It was not surprising that *rewards and consequences* was identified by pupils as it is very relevant in their daily lives. While rewards were commented on more often than penalties here, the fact that penalties were mentioned showed an understanding that there had to be rules and consequences for those who do not abide by them. A summary of themes and their interpretation follows.

### **5.5.3 Summary and interpretation of themes from interview schedules on whether there is need for a whole-school behaviour support programme**

There was an overwhelmingly positive response from principals and teachers on the common theme identified by both groups: *need and usefulness of a whole-school positive behaviour support programme*. *Current practices in behaviour management* were also referred to by teachers.

On the need for a whole-school behaviour programme, it is suggested that some principals may not have fully understood the concept. For instance, one principal stated that his school already had a behaviour programme in place but he seemed to be mixing up the process of applying the school's code of discipline with having a positive whole-school behaviour support programme. Another principal who thought it was essential to have a whole-school programme appeared to think that she might be left to put the programme together without assistance. This interpretation was reached because in a discussion afterwards, the researcher mentioned the programme being run by a management team in each school, and the principal thought that this referred to the school's Board of Management. Teachers felt that it would be useful because it would bring consistency and one teacher inferred that it would add a systems approach because at present *they have no system*. The teacher who made the comment on the lack of a system stayed behind to talk and expressed her disappointment at the lack of support around behaviour in her school in contrast to her previous school in another jurisdiction where there was a whole school behaviour support programme in place. Yet her principal (Principal 1) was interviewed as part of this research and stated that the school had a behaviour programme in place. In agreement with the teacher, the researcher found, of the sixteen schools visited by her when administering the questionnaires with pupils in Phase 2, the pupils from this school stood out as being the most difficult to handle and this was in spite of the researcher having twenty five years' experience as a teacher during which class control was never a difficulty. On leaving the school after administering the questionnaires to the pupils, the researcher felt she was losing her 'touch'.

In agreeing the need for a whole-school behaviour programme, teachers listed their *current practices* in the management of behaviour. These included a pastoral care system, teachers giving talks to pupils on school rules and behaviour, and the use of yard books. However, pupils did not agree that being listed in the red book was much of a penalty. What is evident from one pupil's comment is that sanctions were not always applied after being named in the red book. By way of explanation, from knowledge gathered during this research, there is a dilemma here at management level. In Phase 2 of this project (questionnaires), when replying to *what are the current practices in behaviour support at school level* (research question 1), of all the 16 principals, the principal in this school was the only one who stated that school rules were not fair and in answer to 'why' (Q1c), he stated that *it is difficult to legislate for individual differences*. In this statement, he was thinking about the many special needs pupils (e.g. Asperger's Syndrome) that were on roll and who tended to get into behavioural difficulties because they did not fully understand, or forgot rules and boundaries.

The principal of this school was one of the four principals interviewed in Phase 3, and in answer to the question: *What help would support teachers in the classroom to manage behaviour?* (Appendix 3, Q2 interview schedule), he stated that it was important to understand the behaviour, record it, and thus build up a body of knowledge so that some outside agencies could explain to school partners the reasons for the behaviour and design a suitable behaviour modification programme. He thought that pupils should be shown this pattern so they understood their difficulties and became involved in improving their behaviour. The principal pointed out that children's misbehaviour often *is being caused by something else besides themselves* (P2L35-6) and *they are punished further* (P2L33-4). After the interview, the principal told the researcher that many teachers did not allow any flexibility in dealing with these children so their names were constantly entered in the yard books and he was *sick to death* of looking at the same names entered daily. It is evident that a lot of time is spent on the management of behaviour in this school and further proof of this was the statement of a teacher in the focus group, in answer to *What are the needs to manage behaviour at school level* (Q1



interview schedule), remarked: *We put a lot of work into developing our code of discipline with parents... it's on-going, it took a lot of work* (T1L84-6).

Themes identified by pupils differed from those of principals and teachers and were: *advantages, disadvantages of whole-school rules, and rewards and consequences*. Advantages of school rules would be that pupils would be familiar with them, thereby bringing about ease of transfer and consistency between classes. Rules could be a disadvantage for the younger pupils who may not understand them and one pupil suggested two sets of rules, geared respectively to juniors and to seniors. As already observed, this pupil showed he was able to think laterally, and about people other than himself. Pupils identified *rewards and consequences* as a need and were very animated speaking about them, thus inferring the great importance placed on these supports by pupils.

This section provided data on whether there was need for a whole-school behaviour programme and the resounding answer was positive.

While the previous questions examined *needs* in relation to behaviour support, the following section sought to ascertain respondents' views on whether gender and location (urban/rural) were factors in behaviour problems generally. This question was qualitative only (Q10 interview schedule) and themes identified by principals and teachers, and pupils follow.

**5.6 Outcome on *Research* tells us that *boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls and town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools. What do you think?***  
(Q10 interview schedule)

While research question 2 examined whether there was a difference in current practices in relation to location (urban/rural) and school gender (boys/girls/mixed), these related questions sought the respondents' perceptions on whether differences exist depending on school gender and location.

### 5.6.1 Data analysis and presentation of themes identified from principals' interviews and focus-group interviews with teachers

Two common themes were identified by principals and teachers: *Agreement that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls and agreement that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools. A third theme was identified by principals - disagreement that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools (one dissenting principal).* See tables 5.7 and 5.8 for overview of these themes.

**Table 5.7 Overview of themes identified in principals' interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order coding)	Agree that boys cause more behaviour problems than girls	Agree that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools	Disagree that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools
2 <sup>nd</sup> order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour worse in all boys schools</li> <li>Boys push boundaries more</li> <li>60/40 divide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estates in towns with social problems not found in country areas</li> <li>Loss of extended family</li> <li>Children more streetwise in towns, more protected in country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour is the same in urban/rural areas</li> </ul>

**Table 5.8 Overview of themes identified in teachers' interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order coding)	Agree that boys cause more behaviour problems than girls	Agree that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools
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\*Because 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding were similar, only 3<sup>rd</sup> order coding is displayed

#### 5.6.1.1 Agree that boys cause more behaviour problems than girls

All four principals interviewed agreed that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls. However, the behaviour exhibited by boys and girls tended to be different, boys being more open and physical while girls' behaviours tended to be more hidden, and more time consuming. The middle years 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> class were mentioned as difficult years when girls tended to isolate their peers and cause anguish (P2L29-48).

*We are a mixed school.... half rural and half urban...Boys cause.... a set of problems that are very open ....whereas girls cause ....problems that are a lot more hidden...problems that go on in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class around girls, like leaving each other out...cause as much problems as ...boys' behaviour. If you were to itemise a list, there would be more boys involved in misbehaviours but very often, they're misbehaviours that are quite correctible and straightforward. ....girls' issues...can be*

*very deep seated...and often take up to 18 months to sort out...boys' issues can be sorted out in...maybe 2 or 3 weeks*

(P2L29-48)

One principal mentioned that research points to a 60/40 per cent divide of boys presenting with learning difficulties and behavioural issues, compared to girls. The respondent is principal of a disadvantaged urban boys' school, with a history of negative experiences, even to the death of many past pupils, consequently she feels that there should be more resources for boys' schools (P4L167-241).

*It's 60/40% .....as regards boys presenting with learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties....when you have that 60/40 divide, there definitely are more instances of behavioural issues ....I'm basically quoting my past principal when he said: 'just look at the graveyard and the prisons, ....those boys have come from this school, and they have died...these boys have fallen in with the drugs crowd and ended up, you know, as a mule, and carrying drugs for somebody or took their own life...very few beyond 30...they would be in their 20s....there is a desperate need to cater for the boys now*

(P4L169-241)

All teachers agreed with the statement that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls and comments made included the fact that boys had a lot of energy which needed to be channelled into games and similar activities (T6L361-4). Teachers echoed the statement made by a principal on the differences between boys' and girls' behaviour, with boys being more open and physical and girls, more introverted and difficult (T1L373-9).

*Boys' behaviour is expressed more...in a physical way whereas girls can have very, very significant behaviour difficulties and it's kind of very introverted behaviour and it can be ..kind of ..damaging...bitching, and it can be a difficult buddying issue in girls...they can do a lot of harm with it and it kind of goes unnoticed*

(T1L373-9)

#### 5.6.1.2 Agree that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools

Three of the four principals and all teachers agreed that town schools had more behavioural problems than country schools. Principals cited social

problems and anti-social behaviour in urban estates which in turn were reflected in urban schools (P1L22-8, P4L149). Other points made regarding behaviour problems included: being street wise; one-parent families causing sadness and loss because fathers are not around (P4180-82); and loss of the extended family in towns (P3L87-8)

*Where people have moved into a locality for work...and in the country people tend to build houses close to grandparents and then you do get that extended family support*

(P3L87-8)

Country children were also said to be more protected, having more space to play, and were busier and *the busier children are, the less behaviour problems there are* (P3L90-1)

All teachers agreed that town schools had more behavioural problems than country schools but it was commented that the difference between the two was not as marked as previously, possibly because of TV and other media (T6L381-2). On a similar note, another teacher commented that although they were a rural school, the school was now part of the commuter belt and dynamics around behaviour had changed for the worse. She suggested that further out into the country there was possibly more of a difference (T1L398-401). Wistfully she commented:

*Ours was like that and parents would come in to you and ... they wouldn't be interested in the academic ..... they would say as long as his behaviour is good*

(T1L398-401)

#### 5.6.1.3 Disagree that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools

One principal agreed that the perception is there that town schools had more behaviour problems than country schools but he felt that behaviour was similar in both places.

*In the past, rural schools were smaller... I would say on a percentage basis that behaviour is the same across the urban/rural divide*

(P2L53-4).

## 5.6.2 Data analysis and presentation of themes from pupils' focus-group interviews

**Table 5.9 Overview of themes identified in pupil focus-group interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order coding)	Agree that boys cause more behaviour	Disagree that boys tend to cause	Agree that town schools have more behaviour problems than
2 <sup>nd</sup> order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys cause more problems</li> <li>Respect &amp; consistency needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not necessarily always so</li> <li>Girls in our class cause more behaviour problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the town schools, there are more criminals</li> <li>More bad stuff happening in estates</li> </ul>

Three themes were identified by pupils, *agreement* and *disagreement that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls*, and *agreement that town schools tend to have more behaviour problems than country schools*.

### 5.6.2.1 Agree that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls

Pupils from both focus-groups agreed that, on the whole, boys tend to cause more behaviour problems in school. Misbehaviours included talking non-stop in class, arguing over which football player is best, and *to do your work is very, very hard*. (FG1p1L424-5). One girl remarked *it's mostly boys, because girls keep to themselves and are quiet* (FG1p6L429) and the boys *just want attention* (FG1p6L431). A girl remarked that *boys tend to act out because they need to prove themselves. Girls don't need to... lads, they're more competitive* (FG1p3L433-5). A boy remarked that boys give out when a boy misses a ball (FG1p1L441-3):

*They take everything seriously...if someone says something hurtful, they can attack back, and if you say something back, they can bate (beat) you up for it*

(FG1p1L441-3).

### 5.6.2.2 Disagree that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems

The boys in both groups disagreed that boys *always* cause more behaviour problems. One pupil stated that *it really depends on the child* (FG1p3L404). Another pupil volunteered that in his class, girls cause more behaviour

problems than boys (FG2p4L471-2). However, his peer volunteered *in our class, boys are probably more misbehaved* (FG2p1L478). The boys in the group had a discussion about unequal treatment between boys and girls by the teacher and a girl pointed out that it only seemed that boys cause more behaviour problems because there were more boys than girls in that class (FG2pL487-8)

*I think it's like a stereotype, it's not always that boys are more misbehaved because we have about 21 boys in our class and we only have 11 girls so the boys are going to get noticed more than the girls*  
(FG2p2L487-8)

Both groups talked about the lack of consistency in schools (FG1p3L463, FG2p1L478-84) and one pupil commented that *respect and consistency (are) definitely needed in school* (FG1p3L463).

#### **5.6.2.3 Agree that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools**

All pupils who spoke were in agreement that town schools had more behaviour problems than country schools. The following comments were made: *In the town schools there's more criminals* (FG14L407-8). The pupil was of the opinion that they see misbehaviour on the streets in towns and on TV and *they may think that's the way they have to act....you never see anything bad happening in the country* (FG1p4L452-55). It could be said that this pupil was biased as her school was regarded as a rural school. Another comment was that *there is more bad stuff happening in estates, people throwing stones....and children come and do that to the school* (FG2p1L465-8).

#### **5.6.3 Summary and interpretation of themes on research tells us that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls and town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools. What do you think?**

All principals and teachers agreed that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls while this proved controversial for some pupils. Similarly,

all but one dissenting principal agreed that town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools.

Principals and teachers agreed that boys are more troublesome than girls and one principal described it in terms of a 60/40% divide. However comments made by both a principal and a teacher that boys and girls tend to exhibit different types of behaviour with boys' behaviour being more open and physical with more frequent misbehaviours, while girls' behaviour tends to be more hidden, more time consuming and more difficult to eradicate. A teacher remarked that boys have a lot of energy and this needed to be channelled into games and other physical activities. This outcome agrees with previous research (e.g. Dawn *et al.*, 2000) that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls. But because this interpretation is subjective and not based on any objective measure, another possible interpretation is that the statement could be seen as a leading question by the researcher and respondents found it easier to agree than disagree with the statement that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls.

While there were some dissenting voices from boys, the majority of pupils agreed that *boys tend to cause more behaviour problems* but one girl rightly pointed out the male/female imbalance of two-thirds boys in her class. Problems mentioned by pupils included non-stop talking during class, attention seeking and finding fault during sporting activities. It was interesting to note that the few pupils who disagreed that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems were all boys and this could be interpreted as bias.

All respondents except one principal agreed that *town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools*. Contributory factors included estates in town with social problems that are then brought into the schools; absent fathers and loss of extended family in the towns compared to the countryside where families tend to remain together with space to build homes beside parents; and children being more active and busier in the countryside. The dissenting principal commented on the perception in the past that there were more problems in urban schools and that rural schools were smaller, but

now he claimed that behaviour was similar across the urban/rural divide. It was interesting to note that this principal inferred that size of school rather than location may be a factor in behaviour difficulties: *in the past rural schools were smaller*. This suggests that size of school rather than location may be a factor in behaviour problems and this needs to be examined in future research.

While sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 examined themes on *needs*, and *location/gender* with regard to behaviour problems, the following section looks at the behaviour of pupils during the focus-group interviews.

### **5.7 Behaviour of students during focus-group interviews**

The two focus-groups of pupils were selected by the principals of the two schools in question. Both principals told the researcher that they had selected boys and girls of different temperaments (quiet/vocal pupils). One principal reported that he purposely picked a pupil who was inclined to find fault and therefore would have plenty to say.

The behaviour of the two groups was excellent. On being told by the researcher that what they said during the interviews would not be repeated to school staff, they had no problem in speaking their mind and were quite respectful in listening to each other and allowing each other to speak. This was after some hesitancy and apprehension at the beginning of the interviews, possibly due to a combination of being in the staff room for the first time, a tape recorder being used, and meeting the researcher whom they had met just once before during the administration of the questionnaires in Phase 2. The pupil from Focus-group 2 who was “inclined to complain” could be picked out as he complained about his teacher’s behaviour whenever he could bring this up. The fact that the subject was behaviour did not seem to deter the pupils from answering and they were quite mature in attempting to answer each question asked.



This chapter now concludes with a summary of the qualitative results from three questions on *needs* and *gender* from the respondents' interviews and focus-group interviews.

## **5.8 Summary of qualitative results**

This chapter presented results in the form of thematic analyses from four principals' interviews and three focus groups of teachers and pupils on three questions related to needs and gender in the context of behaviour.

In answer to *what supports are needed to manage behaviour at school level*, a common theme identified by all respondents was *co-operation between school partners*. Principals and teachers also suggested that *clear communication* was important in addition to *in-school management responsibilities* and *collective teacher responsibility*. Pupils further identified *outside school support* and *behaviour management tools*.

On *whether there is need for a whole-school behaviour support programme*, a common theme identified by principals and teachers was *need for a whole-school programme* while *current practices in behaviour management* was also identified by teachers. Pupils identified three themes, namely *advantages* and *disadvantages of whole-school rules*, and *rewards/consequences*.

On the statement: *Research tells us that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls* and *town schools more behaviour problems than country schools*, this proved controversial and four themes were identified: *agreement/disagreement that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls*, and *agreement/disagreement that town schools have more behaviour difficulties than country schools*.

While this chapter reported on themes identified during interviews and focus-group interviews conducted with principals, teachers and pupils on behaviour support needs, the following chapter discussed the findings in relation to the research questions and to previous research in the area.

## Chapter 6 - Discussion

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings based on the four research questions (Section 6.2) as well as four auxiliary questions Section 6.3) namely: (i) *Do school rules need to be improved?* (ii) *Is there need for a behaviour support programme in your school?* (iii) *Would you endorse such a programme should it be offered?* (iv) *Would you be interested in being included in the management of such a programme?* Findings in relation to previous literature will then be examined (Section 6.4). Strengths and weaknesses of the study will be presented in the shape of a critique of methodology, instruments, and processes utilised (Section 6.5). The relevance of the study and findings and contribution to educational policy and practice in Ireland and internationally will feature (Section 6.6) and the identification of further research questions will be included (Section 6.7). The chapter concludes with a summary (Section 6.8).

### 6.2 Findings in relation to the four research questions

#### 6.2.1 What are the current practices in relation to behaviour support at school level according to principals, teachers and pupils?

The majority of principals, teachers, and pupils agreed that current practices around behaviour support at school level included the following: *rules are enforced consistently, staff roles are clear, and school rules are fair. Other supports suggested by the respondents fell into three categories: supports from within the school, supports from school partners and outside supports.*

*In-school supports* included: policies and practices within the school such as the code of discipline, Stay Safe Programme, anti-bullying policy, discipline for learning behaviour policy, rewards/sanctions, setting targets, positive school environment, written rules, rules taught, rota for use of school resources, clear communication between staff, and teacher and pupil supports for pupils.

*Rewards and sanctions* were important to both teachers and pupils and presumably this is because they are useful strategies for both teachers and pupils in the daily management of the classroom. Interestingly pupils mentioned sanctions frequently, such as time-out, threats, detention, stamp deductions, missing school trips, notes home, listing in behaviour book and suspension. *Current practices in behaviour support* identified by teachers in their focus-group interview included a pastoral care system whereby teachers took it in turns to give fortnightly talks to pupils on school rules and behaviour; and yard behaviour books were used as a tracking system for misbehaviour. It was interesting that teachers saw yard books as a sanction but pupils did not always view it as such because school personnel were not consistent in sending for parents if a pupil's name was consistently entered there.

*School partnership support* was suggested by principals and teachers and included supports provided by parents, pupils and pupil/teacher supports. Examples included senior pupils practising self-regulated initiatives, pupil-teacher consensus and parental assistance. Pupils themselves thought giving pupils responsibility in school was a helpful strategy in managing behaviour.

*Outside support* was thought helpful by a principal who listed community based family support (provided by the Health Service Executive) to strengthen family relationships and well-being.

To summarise, current practices in relation to behaviour support at school level included the following: *behaviour rules enforced consistently, staff roles are clear, school rules are fair* and supports listed by the respondents included *in-school supports, partnership, and outside supports*.

## **6.2.2 Are current practices different depending on: location, school gender and perspective of respondents?**

### **6.2.2.1 Location**

No significant difference was found between urban and rural respondents on the three variables of *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *school behaviour rules are fair*. The majority of respondents from both settings were in agreement that each of these variables was currently practised in their school.

A related question was asked during interviews with principals and focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils on *whether town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools*. All but one principal agreed that town schools had more behaviour problems. The one dissenting principal stated that, in the past, the perception was that there were fewer behaviour problems *when rural school were smaller*. However, he now perceives behaviour to be the same across the urban/rural divide.

### **6.2.2.2 School gender**

No significant differences were reported by respondents from the three categories of schools on *behaviour rules enforced consistently* but significant differences were indicated on *staff roles are clear* and *school behaviour rules are fair*.

A large percentage in girls' and mixed schools agreed that *staff roles are clear* compared to a smaller percentage in boys' schools. A third of respondents in boys' schools did not endorse the statement that staff roles were clear and this response came mainly from pupils. In contrast, all principals, and most teachers in those schools, agreed that staff roles were clear. One suggestion for this difference was that in a large boys' urban school, there was a Board of Behaviour for serious misbehaviour and perhaps it was not clear to the pupils what behaviour was dealt with by the class teacher, the principal, or the Board. Another possible explanation was that in two boys' schools (urban and rural) the normal rule of being sent to the principal for serious

misbehaviour did not happen as the principals in those two schools were female. The misbehaving boys were sent, rather, to the only male teachers in the schools who also happened to teach 6<sup>th</sup> (final year) class. One of these principals was among the four principals interviewed for the study and she stated that sending boys to the male teacher was a big turn off for the pupils as the male teacher also chose the school football team and it was unlikely that misbehaving boys would be chosen for the much coveted places on the team. In other words, pupils were careful about misbehaving in school. A question here is whether pupils, especially male pupils, show more respect for teachers who have extra roles in non-academic areas considered of value to the pupil, e.g. choosing the school football team.

On whether *school behaviour rules are fair*, a significant difference was indicated between responses from girls' schools and from boys' and mixed schools. Respondents in girls' schools thought school rules were not fair in comparison to boys' and mixed schools who endorsed the statement. Again it was mostly pupils in the girls' schools who did not agree with this statement as all principals, and the vast majority of teachers, reported that the rules were fair. Why did pupils in girls' schools appear to be more critical of school rules than pupils in boys' or mixed schools? Is it because they feel a lack of control? Interestingly, research in Ireland appears to back this up. A study of twelve schools (Lynch, 1999) showed that girls appeared to be more stressed and concerned at the level of control to which they were subjected, and this appeared to be more pronounced in single-sex girls' schools. The author suggests, on the basis of earlier research (Lynch, 1989), that this may be because single-sex girls' schools usually have a strong academic ethos which may be a factor in inducing pressure and stress.

The researcher would like to add a piece of anecdotal information on the perceived level of control in girls' schools but which involved parents rather than pupils. The researcher taught in a convent school, which had boys and girls at infant level, but only girls from 2<sup>nd</sup> class (7 years) upwards. The number of boys enrolling decreased over the years and the school now remains a single sex girls' school. Anecdotal information from parents was

that the teachers, who were all female, did not 'understand' boys and were too 'hard' on them and consequently infant boys were enrolled by their parents in nearby boys' schools, where most teachers were male.

Unfair rules, according to pupils, included: lack of consistency and respect from teachers, blanket class punishment when only a few pupils misbehave, not allowing sweets (but teachers have them) or mobile phones, and wearing nail varnish. It is suggested by this researcher that a systems approach to behaviour would solve some of these problems. When all school partners, including principals and teachers work towards the same goals, they show leadership and respect by abiding by the same rules as pupils. Listening to pupils' perspectives is also important and allowing them to discuss/help devise rules would give them a sense of ownership, resulting in their empowerment and an incentive to keep school rules.

A related question on gender sought respondents' perceptions on *whether boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls*. There was general agreement from all principals, teachers and the majority of pupils that this was so but the few dissenting voices from the two pupil focus-groups were male. Since the endorsement of this statement shows male pupils in a negative light, this could be a case of bias on their part.

#### **6.2.2.3 Perspective of respondents**

There were significant differences between respondents on all three variables - *behaviour rules are enforced consistently, staff roles are clear and behaviour rules are fair*.

While the majority of principals and teachers agreed that *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, the majority of pupils did not endorse the statement, indicating inconsistencies by teachers in enforcing school rules. It is suggested by this researcher that sometimes because of favouritism, school rules are not enforced and this interpretation is based on a remark by a pupil, who stated that sometimes, the reason for misbehaviour was because a teacher was not consistent and favoured one pupil over another.

Unevenness was also reported on whether *staff roles are clear*. While a majority of principals, teachers and pupils agreed that staff roles are clear, all principals stated that they were clear, compared to a smaller percentage of teachers and an even smaller percentage of pupils. Because it is the brief of school staff, especially those in management positions, to ensure clarity of roles within the staff, it is likely that they would say that staff roles were clear. Pupils, on the other hand, could be viewed as more independent although they also have their own agenda and are likely to resist hierarchical forms of control and authority as found by Devine (2000). However, the fact that a large number of pupils did not endorse the statement that staff roles were clear indicates that more clarity is needed by pupils in their respective schools.

Differences were again evident on whether *behaviour rules are fair*. A greater percentage of principals and teachers agreed that behaviour rules were fair compared to a smaller percentage of pupils and as seen under *school gender*, it was pupils in girls' schools who perceived school rules to be unfair (lacking consistency and respect). While it is suggested that all pupils would relish the idea of being included in the formation of school/class rules, perhaps girls, because they mature earlier than boys, have greater need of being active participants in all aspects of their schooling, including rule-making. Put another way, girls, because of their maturity, may be leaving behind pedagogy and beginning to embrace andragogy. Pedagogy, defined as the art and science of teaching children (Mihall & Belletti, 1999) sees power emanating from the teacher. Teachers are seen as experts and seldom recognise any experiences or ideas that children have. Children are *clean slates* (ibid) and teachers decide *what* is taught, *how* it is taught and *what* is discussed in class. In other words, the environment is totally controlled by the teacher and pupils are seen as passive in their learning. In contrast, andragogy, defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Merriam, 2001) recognises that as people mature, they benefit from feeling accepted and respected and are provided with some independence. The recognition that learning is a process rather than a product, and shared between teachers and pupils, implies that pupils are recognised as active participants and have something to contribute

to their own learning. It accepts the notion that teachers do not know it all. Giving pupils that leeway could bring about *real education* and enthusiasm for life-long learning, which would correspond with W. B. Yeats' definition that *learning is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire* (Goldbeck-Wood, 2002).

As already highlighted under *school gender*, differences in perspective were noted on *whether boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls*. While all principals and teachers and most pupils in the focus-groups agreed with the statement, a few male pupils disagreed. As already noted, this could be suggestive of bias on their part.

In summary, a significant trend noticeable in this research question is that, in general, principals and teachers were in agreement that the following three variables were present in school: *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *behaviour rules are fair*. Pupils on the other hand did not agree that these practices were currently happening in schools. In other words, if they were happening, it was not transparent and clear to all pupils. A related question on *whether boys tend to cause more behaviour difficulties than girls and town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools*, found the majority of all respondents agreeing with both statements.

### **6.2.3 What are the needs, as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils in relation to behaviour support at whole-school level?**

Principals and teachers agreed that two of the most important needs were *consistency between staff*, and *rules systematically taught*. Principals also chose *behaviour management training for school personnel* while teachers chose *rewards and consequences* as important needs. It is presumed that these needs were chosen by the respondents because they are tools which each group could use in their day-to-day management of behaviour.

Some of these themes were also identified during interviews with principals and teachers. For example, both principals and teachers identified *in-school management responsibilities*, which included a whole-school policy on



behaviour where there was consistency and continuity between classes, co-operation between school partners on behaviour and clear communication between school partners on school rules. *Collective teacher responsibility* was also identified by teachers where rules needed to be systematically taught and all teachers were collectively responsible for the behaviour of all pupils.

In contrast to principals and teachers, the majority of pupils chose *respect between pupils and teachers* as an important need, followed by *rewards and consequences*, and of equal importance (chosen by an equal number of pupils) were: *consistency between school staff*, and *social skills taught*. *Consistency* and *social skills taught* could be said to be pupils' expectations on school supports, which were identified in pupils' focus-group interviews. These supports which were needed, included teachers and outside personnel in the guise of a counsellor and personnel who *understood* behaviour. Pupils also identified *pupil and parental responsibilities* whereby parents needed to encourage good behaviour, and pupils themselves could assist schools by being involved in rule-making and becoming prefects to support teachers. *Behaviour management tools* were also identified as a need, and the tools included *rewards and consequences* as one necessary element in the management of behaviour.

On the subject of *respect*, only one principal chose this as an important need, compared to a quarter of teachers, and this is in comparison to pupils where a majority chose it. Pupils for the most part complained about the lack of respect afforded to them by teachers. *Fairness* and *respect for pupils* was also highlighted by pupils in the open-ended question on *other needs*. However, pupils did not identify that respect is a two-way process. For example one pupil, after completing his questionnaire and complaining bitterly about being disrespected by teachers, remarked to the researcher *when are you coming back to sort this out?* This oversight and recognition by pupils that others, including teachers, also need respect was identified by them, however, in the focus-group interviews. On being asked: *What help would support teachers in the classrooms to manage behaviour so that the teacher*

*can carry on teaching?* (Q2 interview schedule, see Appendix 8 for themes identified by all respondents), both pupil focus-groups identified respect as a need and one pupil observed that if a teacher gave respect, they should also receive it. To enable pupils to learn in class, *respect and a quiet atmosphere with no interruptions is needed from peers* according to one pupil. Respect was identified in the teacher focus-group interviews with a comment made by one teacher that in order to manage behaviour at school level, pupils have to be taught respect. In other words, one cannot presume that showing respect comes naturally - it has to be taught.

While principals and teachers did not identify *respect* as one of the most important needs in phase 2 (questionnaires), it was identified during the interviews by them as an important need. Comments from principals included the following: *teachers have to earn respect by giving it; it is a two-way process whereby school personnel must respect pupils, and parents who equally must respect the education system; a teacher with 30 years' experience had perfected the art of respect by respecting pupils and they in turn respect him; including pupils in the running of the school would make them more cooperative; and in a busy school, pupils may not feel respected because they feel that they are not listened to*. Teachers also agreed that respect was a two-way process - *you get respect by giving it*. One teacher commented that *consistency* and *fairness* were important variables in getting respect from pupils. A pupil commented that her school was *going well* because *people were respecting each other*.

*Consistency between staff* was an important need identified by all groups of respondents while *rules systematically taught* was highlighted by principals and teachers and *rewards and consequences* by pupils and teachers as important needs.

Because respondents were asked to identify gaps/needs in what is currently happening in school (Q6/4 principals'/teachers' & pupils' questionnaires, see appendices 1 & 2), the needs chosen by each group and prioritised as the most important needs are perceived as gaps in what is happening now in

schools. For example, *behaviour rules enforced consistently* is currently practised in some schools, but if it is also a need, it is therefore suggested that rules are not enforced consistently.

#### **6.2.4 Are the needs different depending on: location, school gender and perspective of respondents?**

##### **6.2.4.1 Location**

No significant difference was noted by the respondents in urban or rural schools on any of the nine needs listed in the questionnaire. The three most important needs chosen by the respondents in both urban and rural areas were similar and these were: *consistency between school staff, rewards and consequences*, and *pupils and teachers respect each other*. *Pupils and teachers respect each other* was listed as one of the most important needs by all respondents, yet previously only pupils chose this as an important need. The fact that it is now chosen as an important need may be because pupils made up the largest sample and are equally divided in both urban and rural areas.

##### **6.2.4.2 School gender**

No significant difference was noted by respondents depending on school gender on eight of the nine variables, but a significant difference was noted in the *offer of a school behaviour programme*. Respondents from mixed schools saw less need to offer this facility in comparison to boys' or girls' schools. While it is not clear why this is so, it is suggested by the researcher that school gender is masking another important variable not taken into account in this research, vis. school size and/or the civilising influence of girls. More research would need to be carried out on this variable.

A commonality between all the schools was evident in that all boys', girls', and mixed schools listed *consistency between school staff* and *pupils and teachers respect each other* as among the most important needs.

On the variable *rewards and consequences*, some commonality was noted between boys' and mixed schools in that this variable was chosen by them as one of their most important needs. One wonders if this is a gender issue, i.e. while boys were obviously in the majority in boys' schools, were they in the majority in mixed schools? As the study was not primarily focused on gender issues, this information was not sought in the questionnaires. However, during the focus group pupil interviews, a girl from a rural mixed school commented that boys made up two thirds of that class, so it is possible that boys predominate in mixed schools and that *rewards and consequences* could be seen as an important need by them. Teachers in those schools may also choose this element if they perceive rewards and consequences to be of value in the management of behaviour. It is possible that girls do not place the same value on the importance of *rewards and consequences*. Why might this be so? As they mature earlier than boys, they may not need extrinsic rewards and may be content with that achieved intrinsically, such as the feel-good factor of achievement alone. One example of perceived maturity was noted, when asked whether boys tend to cause more behaviour problem than girls (question 10, see appendix 8 for themes identified by pupils) a girl commented that *boys tend to act out because they need to prove themselves, girls don't need to*. On the other hand, they may feel that they have no other option but to abide by the rules as, generally, girls in co-ed classes receive less attention than boys (Drudy & Uí Chatháin, 1998). If there is a difference in values between boys and girls, understanding this difference would be an important element in the management of behaviour in the various schools.

#### **6.2.4.3 Perspective of respondents**

Significant differences were found in four of the nine suggested variables, which were: *rules systematically taught*, *consistency between school staff*, *rewards and consequences* and *respect between pupils and teachers*.

Although *consistency between school staff* was chosen as one of the three most important needs by all respondents, more teachers chose this variable compared to principals and pupils. *Rewards and consequences* were less important to principals than to teachers and pupils while *respect between*

*pupils and teachers* was seen by pupils as one of their most important needs compared to a minority of principals and teachers.

### **6.3 Auxiliary research questions**

#### **6.3.1 Do school rules need to be improved?**

Not all principals answered whether school rules needed to be improved but of those who answered, the majority stated *no*, school rules did not need to be improved, in comparison to a majority of teachers and pupils who stated, *yes*, school rules needed improvement.

The following questions were asked of principals and teachers.

#### **6.3.2 Is there need for a behaviour support programme in your school?**

Principals and teachers were asked if they perceived the need for a behaviour support programme in their school (described as setting targets, teaching social skills, etc.). Of those who answered, the majority of principals and teachers agreed that *yes*, there was a need. However nearly as many teachers were undecided and answered *don't know*.

There seems to be some discrepancy between answers given by principals on the two questions above. The majority reported *no*, school rules do not need to be improved, yet answered *yes* to the need for a school behaviour programme. One explanation is that principals are responsible for behaviour policy at macro level and do not like to admit that school rules need to be improved. However, should a programme be offered, it would be welcomed by them as they recognise the need for all staff to work at systems level in order to improve the behaviour of all pupils.

### **6.3.3 Would you endorse a behaviour support programme should it be offered to your school?**

The vast majority of principals and teachers agreed that they would endorse a behaviour support programme. Such endorsement would be important for its successful implementation.

### **6.3.4 Would you be interested in being included in the management of a whole-school behaviour programme?**

While a majority of principals and teachers said *yes*, a large number of teachers answered *don't know*. This researcher suggests that many teachers would answer *don't know* rather than a categorical *no* because of the power imbalance between principals and teachers and negativity might affect their future prospects of promotion. This interpretation was based on the researcher's experience while conducting the pilot study where the school principal offered to collect the completed questionnaires from teachers. This was accepted unthinkingly by the researcher and although anonymous, some teachers did not hand their completed questionnaires to the principal for these reasons (as explained to the researcher by respondents in the pilot study). Consequently, they were posted separately to the researcher. In hindsight, stamped addressed envelopes should have been provided by the researcher to respondents in the pilot study. Learning from this experience, envelopes were provided by the researcher for all principal and teacher respondents in the completion of questionnaires but for various reasons they were not always used - one reason being that teachers chose not to use them and in another case, the secretary chose to 'save' them for the researcher as she considered it a 'waste'.

A second reason for teachers to state that they were not sure whether they wished to be involved in the management of a whole-school behaviour programme may be that teachers feel it is not their brief, but rather that of principals and teachers at management level, to manage behaviour within the school.

While this section provided research findings on the four auxiliary research questions on the need to improve schools rules, whether there should be a whole-school behaviour programme, endorsement of and inclusion in the management of behaviour, the following section will examine the findings of this study in relation to previous literature on the subject of behaviour and behaviour support.

## **6.4 Findings in relation to previous literature on behaviour and behaviour support**

### **6.4.1 Findings in relation to current practices in behaviour support**

Previous literature (Watkins & Wagner, 2000) demonstrated a shift in emphasis from *within* child factors (pre-1970's), to an ecological model from 1970 onwards where environment was important in the cause of misbehaviour.

The processes utilised by schools in making a difference were not a focus in earlier studies (ibid) but Wayson *et al.* (1982, in Watkins & Wagner, ibid) surveyed people in over 1,000 schools reputed for having good discipline to ascertain characteristics in those schools. Common characteristics were that they worked hard, with active involvement of principals and staff, but teachers handled most discipline problems themselves; they were pupil-centred schools with a belief in, and expectations for, pupil success; they had a whole-school environment conducive to good discipline by emphasising the positive with a focus on causes of misbehaviour rather than symptoms; and the schools had strong ties with parents. Lewin's (1946, in Watkins & Wagner, 2000) formula for understanding behaviour, ' $B=f(P.S)$ ', shows that it is a function of person and situation. The Elton Report (DfES, 1989) also focused on the importance of context. The above studies, therefore, highlight the importance of environment, and in particular of establishing a positive cohesive school environment, in seeking to improve behaviour in schools.

Research (Sugai & Horner, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2008) on alternative policies to the negatively focused *within* pupil, zero tolerance programmes, were examined and the outcome was policies/programmes (focusing at various levels, from individual, group and school level) with a positive and preventive outlook and where context was important. One such programme - Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), defined as *the application of positive behavioural intervention and systems to achieve socially important behaviour change* (Sugai *et al.*, 2000, p.133) is an effective intervention (Luiselli & Diamant, 2002). Rather than looking *at* the pupil, there is an emphasis on contexts and situations that impinge *on* the pupil. Behaviour support is provided at *school, group* and *individual* levels by setting expectations and teaching social skills. It is underpinned by the Behaviourist and Systems Change theories and together they ensure co-operation of all school partners, including school staff to ensure school rules are taught and consistently applied and that staff roles are clear.

In this research study, in answer to *what are the current practices in relation to behaviour support at whole-school level*, the majority of principals, teachers and pupils agreed with the statements that *rules are enforced consistently, staff roles are clear* and *school behaviour rules are fair*. Perspectives differed on what are perceived to be current practices in relation to behaviour support. Generally speaking, a trend noticed was that a higher number of principals endorsed the statements, followed by teachers, with less agreement among pupils. One possible interpretation of this finding is that because school management is responsible for the daily management of schools, they see themselves as good managers and that these practices consistently happen rather than are supposed to happen. In other words, to ensure positive behaviour support, current practices need to be re-examined at school level in the interests of consistency, fairness and clarity of roles.



## **6.4.2 Findings in relation to the literature on whether location, school gender and perspective make a difference in behaviour and behaviour support**

### **6.4.2.1 Location**

Previous research in the U.K. and Ireland indicated that location was a factor in different prevalence rates in behavioural difficulties. In the U.K., Rutter (1989) examined behavioural disorders in primary age pupils in a rural setting (Isle of Wight) and found prevalence rates of 7 per cent. Yet an urban study of young children (Freeman, 1991, in Parry-Jones & Queloz, 1991) found prevalence rates of 22 per cent and this increased to 25 per cent in middle childhood (Richman *et al.*, 1982, in Parry-Jones & Queloz, *ibid*). There were similar findings in Ireland, where the Porteous study (1991) found prevalence rates of 15 per cent in a study that drew groups from both urban and rural settings, in contrast to a study undertaken in an urban disadvantaged area where the prevalence rate was approximately 17 per cent (Fitzgerald, 1991).

In this research, responses from urban and rural respondents were sought on current practices and needs in relation to behaviour support. No significant difference was noted between them on the three current practices of *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *school behaviour rules are fair*, with the majority from both settings in agreement that each of these was currently practised in their school. Similarly, no significant difference was noted by the respondents on any of the nine needs listed in the questionnaire and the three most important needs chosen by the respondents in both urban and rural areas were similar. These were: *consistency between school staff*, *rewards and consequences*, and *pupils and teachers respect each other*.

However, one is not comparing like with like when comparing previous research to this research. The present research looks at process rather than product. For instance, previous research indicates that the product of living in specific locations is a difference in prevalence rates of behavioural difficulties. This is in contrast to this research where the process is examined on whether

current practices and needs differ in relation to behaviour support in urban and rural locations. While process is important in the management of behaviour support, examining whether the product of living in urban or rural locations results in increased risk of behavioural difficulties was not the primary focus of this research.

Whether the product of living in an urban or rural environment brought increased behavioural difficulties was asked in the interview phase of this research when respondents were asked *whether town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools*. All respondents apart from one principal agreed that this was so, thereby agreeing with previous research that location appeared to be a factor in differing prevalence rates of behavioural difficulties. However, it must be pointed out that these were respondents' perceptions and were not objective measures as in previously mentioned research. The one dissenting principal remarked that in the past, when rural schools were smaller, the perception was there of fewer behaviour problems. He inferred that size of school was important in this regard. While the four principals and the focus-group of teachers were equally divided between urban and rural areas, the two focus-groups of pupils came from rural areas. However, the dissenting principal pointed out that although termed a rural school, this large school was situated within the commuter belt, with pupil numbers equally divided between rural and urban areas. As this principal highlighted, size of school is an important element in the management of behavioural difficulties. Therefore, whether there is a connection between location, size of school and prevalence rates of behavioural difficulties needs to be the subject of future research.

#### **6.4.2.2 School gender**

Previous research (Beaman *et al.*, 2007; Dawn *et al.*, 2000) indicated a gender difference between boys and girls, with behavioural difficulties more prevalent in boys. The (U.K.) Dawn *et al.* (2000) study indicated that less than 20 per cent of girls are reported to have behavioural problems and suggested the ratio of boys to girls with such problems could be as high as 6 or 8:1. Beaman *et al.* (2007), an Australian study, concurred with the Dawn *et*

al. study and found that although the prevalence rates of troublesome pupils varied across school classes, misbehaviour increased with age, and boys were consistently identified as more troublesome than girls. In Ireland, the ratio of boys/girls with behavioural difficulties is 4:1 (Department of Education & Science, Special Education Review Committee, 1993).

In this research, in relation to school gender, no significant differences were reported by respondents from the three categories of school on the *current practice of behaviour rules enforced consistently* but significant differences were indicated on *staff roles are clear* and *school behaviour rules are fair*. A large majority of all respondents in girls' and mixed schools endorsed the statement that *staff roles are clear*, while only a small majority in boys' schools endorsed it. On whether *school behaviour rules are fair*, a significant difference was indicated between responses from girls' schools and those from boys' and mixed schools, with respondents in girls' schools not endorsing the statement, thereby implying that school rules were unfair.

No significant difference was noted by respondents on *needs* in relation to behaviour support, with agreement between schools on eight of the nine variables. A significant difference was noted in the *offer of a school behaviour programme*. Mixed school respondents saw less need to offer this facility in comparison to boys' and girls' schools.

While gender was a focus in this research, the focus was on *school* gender (boys/girls/mixed) but whether boys are more troublesome than girls was a question asked in the interview schedule (Q10, Appendix 3): *Research tells us that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls ..... What do you think...?* The responses are now discussed below.

All four principals who were interviewed agreed that boys cause more behaviour problems than girls but one principal made the point that the behaviours exhibited were different, with boys displaying more open (physical) and more frequent misbehaviour, in contrast to girls whose behaviour was more hidden, more time consuming, and more difficult to eradicate, e.g.

isolation of peers, often taking up to 18 months. Another principal pointed to a 60/40% divide of boys causing more problems. She remarked that her previous principal referred her to the graveyards and prisons where many past pupils ended up although most of them were only in their 20s when they took their own lives or got involved with drugs. She made the point that because of the gender imbalance displaying such behaviours, more resources should be available to boys' schools in disadvantaged areas such as hers but this was not current policy.

Teachers concurred with the principals that boys were more troublesome and one suggestion was that boys' energy needed to be channelled into games and activities. Another teacher argued that because girls' behaviour tended to be more introverted compared to boys', it often went unnoticed although it could do a lot of harm.

While there was controversy among boys and girls in the pupil focus-groups on whether boys were more troublesome, generally speaking, it was agreed that this was the case. Some remarks by girls were: *it's mostly boys because girls keep to themselves and are quiet and the boys just want attention; boys tend to act out because they need to prove themselves*. A girl made the following suggestion: *I think it's like a stereotype, it's not always that boys are more misbehaved because we have about 21 boys in our class and we only have 11 girls so boys are going to get noticed more than girls*. A boy concurred with the statement that boys are more trouble with his remark that *boys give out when somebody misses a ball, they take everything seriously... if somebody says something hurtful, they can attack back and if you say something, they can bate (beat) you up*.

The arguments from principals, teachers and pupils in this study concurred with previous research that boys cause more trouble in school than girls. This researcher suggests that knowing and understanding the different types of misbehaviour exhibited by boys and girls gives school staff a head-start in implementing suitable interventions for both genders in the context of behaviour support.

#### 6.4.2.3 Perspective of respondents

Previous research (Essen *et al.*, 2002; Galloway *et al.*, 1994, as cited in Watkins & Wagner, 2000; Miller, 2003) has shown that perspective is an important element in the perception of behaviour. The Essen *et al.* (ibid) study examined over 2,000 public schools in New South Wales and found that while parents, teachers and pupils complained of misbehaving pupils in the schools, few schools reported serious misbehaviour to be over 5 per cent. Yet teachers reported being stressed because of the misbehaviour of pupils in class and this problem was believed to be the single most important reason for parents to remove their children from public schools and send them to private schools. The Galloway study (ibid) interviewed principals, educational psychologists and parents on whether the causes of misbehaviour were within the child, the family or school. The majority of principals and psychologists argued for *within* child factors while parents claimed the problem lay with the school. Miller (2003) reported on a study carried out with teachers that the majority perceived causes of misbehaviour to be home based while pupils and parents agreed that the main cause of misbehaviour was school based because of teacher injustice. According to pupils, teacher injustice/unfairness included teachers: shouting, not listening, picking on pupils, showing favouritism, being rude, moody, being too soft, and giving too many detentions.

In this current research, principals', teachers' and pupils' views were ascertained on current practices and needs in relation to behaviour/behaviour support. Concerning practices utilised to support behaviour, results indicated that there were significant differences between respondents on all three variables of *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *behaviour rules are fair*. While in general, principals and teachers were in agreement that *behaviour rules are enforced consistently*, *staff roles are clear* and *behaviour rules are fair*, pupils were not in agreement that these strategies were currently happening.

In relation to needs, significant differences were found between all respondents in three of the nine suggested variables, which were: *consistency between school staff, rewards and consequences* and *respect between pupils and teachers*. While *consistency between school staff* was chosen as one of the three most important needs by all respondents, a greater number of teachers saw more need of this compared to principals and pupils. Principals, on the other hand, saw less need for *rewards and consequences* than teachers and pupils, while *respect between pupils and teachers* was chosen by pupils as their most important need, compared to a very small number of principals and teachers.

Because the perspective of pupils is of the utmost importance in the management of behaviour in school, pupils need to feel that they are being listened to. Findings in this research indicate some overlap between the amount of respect shown to pupils as perceived by them and unfairness in school. For example, on *current practices*, pupils did not agree with principals and teachers that behaviour rules are fair. Unfairness/inequality highlighted by them included the fact that on a chart for good behaviour only some pupils get ticks when others do not receive them for doing the same thing. Also unfair is when extra homework is given to the whole class when one person misbehaves. In answering the question *what are the most important needs in school*, only pupils answered that the most important need was respect. In answering those two questions, pupils are saying that they feel that they are currently treated unfairly when it comes to school rules and there is a need for more respect from teachers. Showing respect is also about being fair, therefore a lack of respect, or as found by Miller (2003) *unfairness of teachers' actions*, was perceived by pupils and parents to be the main cause of behavioural difficulties. Fairness and consistency are part and parcel of respect, and showing respect in the classroom would ensure that teachers are listening to pupils, praising their efforts and are consistent in their class management.

The findings in this research concur with previous literature that the perspective of respondents is a very important element when examining

behaviour, behaviour management and support and this needs to be considered, as pupils must feel that their voices are also heard along with school personnel. The researcher suggests that adopting a systems approach to behaviour management, e.g. PBS, would go some way towards all school partners working together in devising and maintaining school rules and in breaking down power structures within schools and listening to all perspectives.

#### **6.4.3 Findings in relation to the literature on behaviour management and support**

According to previous research (Corso, 2007; Ellis & Tod, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2002); good relationships are needed and are fundamental to effective teaching and management of behaviour. This includes getting to know and understand the pupil (Watkins & Wagner, 2000), a shift towards partnership instead of control, showing respect (Rowe, 2006) and giving praise (Gable *et al.*, 2009). Mutual respect is recognised as a very important element according to the Steer Report (DfES, 2005) where it is suggested that all school partners need to operate in a culture of mutual respect.

According to Rogers (2007), the management of behaviour is a fine balancing act between fundamental rights and responsibilities, where pupils and teachers have the right to respect but equally they have responsibilities in providing respect to others. Rogers (*ibid*) argued for a supportive workplace for both pupils and teachers, resulting in a more productive, happy and relaxed environment. Dreikers (1972, as cited in Blamires, 2006) argued for pupil involvement in the process of improving behaviour, which would bring about pupil understanding of how their behaviour can impinge on others. Devine (1998) concurred and suggested that showing respect and giving some control to pupils would improve pupil/teacher relationships.

Seminal studies by Mortimore *et al.* (1988), Rutter *et al.* (1979), and Sammons *et al.* (1995) pointed out that effective schools had clearly stated rules consistently applied, firm leadership, shared staff vision, high

expectations, a positive climate where learning and positive behaviour outcomes can occur, monitoring progress, strong home-school links and staff development.

Behavioural difficulties are related to differing disciplinary climates of schools (Hallam 2007) and a method of improving school climate is focused on proactive/preventative approaches, establishing clear behavioural expectations (Dwyer, 1998, as cited in Lissan *et al.*, 2006; Sugai *et al.*, 2000). The Sugai *et al.* study (ibid) argues for PBS where a continuum of support is provided for pupils, social skills are taught, and there is regular acknowledgement of positive behaviour (respect/praise). Corso (2007) concurs on the importance of social and emotional development as a preventative measure against problem behaviour in young children and argues that developing a good relationship is the first step in this regard. The philosophy of PBS is that respect and understanding are the cornerstones of successful outcomes.

Any change in a system has to include support for those who need it (Lines, 2003) and without support from people in key positions (e.g. management/teachers) the result is likely to be failure (Stoller *et al.*, 2006). The Elton Report (DfES, 1989) argued that there was no single solution to problem behaviour but two critical elements needed are respect and the support of school partners. Lack of support services is a significant stressor in staff burn-out (Kelly *et al.*, 2007). With that in mind, to ensure continued success of PBS, outside supports are critical for the school leadership team (e.g. behaviour management training) who in turn support staff with training.

In this research, the most important needs highlighted by respondents in questionnaires and interviews (including *consistency between staff, rules systematically taught, behaviour management training, rewards and consequences, respect, social skills taught, support from within and outside of school as well as from parents and pupils*), have all been highlighted as important needs by previous research (e.g. Devine, 1998; Elton Report, DfES, 1989; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Sammons *et al.*, 1995).



They are, additionally, important ingredients of Positive Behaviour Support (Sugai & Horner, 2002). It is, therefore, suggested that by implementing PBS, a positive response will be made to all the needs as highlighted by principals, teachers and pupils in the Abbey Region of Ireland.

### **6.5 Strengths and weaknesses of the study**

This study had a number of strengths including the large number of participants from the 16 stratified randomly selected schools that took part (434 in total), representing 87 per cent of those invited. This high return rate is in part due to the fact that the researcher was one of a team of educational psychologists providing services to those schools in this region of Ireland. Because some of the schools were within the researcher's workload and the remainder were schools serviced by colleagues, school personnel were more than willing to co-operate. Another reason for the high return rate was the fact that the researcher delivered and collected the questionnaires from teachers and pupils, and also collected the principals' questionnaires, which had been previously sent by post. The study was further enhanced by the various forms of data collection used, which included quantitative and qualitative data where both open and closed questions were featured. This triangulation brings reliability, validity, and in-depth insight to the project. *Triangulation ..... is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent reliability* (Campbell & Fiske, 1959, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p.112) and explains more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one viewpoint. Data was collected from three different groups of school partners (principals, teachers and pupils) and this also added value to this research, especially the inclusion of pupils who hold least power among the three groups. The researcher suggests that, because their voices are not as often heard as those of principals and teachers, their perceptions on needs concerning behaviour and behaviour support strengthens the body of research in Ireland and farther afield.

Notwithstanding these strengths, a number of limitations were noted, specifically in the areas of categorisation, differences in school size, design,

methodology and instruments, processes utilised, and in my role as researcher. For instance, primary schools that were mixed at infant level but single sex (girls) at senior level were categorised as girls' schools, which was not entirely accurate. Another limitation was that differences in school size between urban/rural schools showed that one was not comparing like with like (i.e. rural schools were generally smaller). A further limitation was that the questionnaire was manufactured by the researcher and consequently may not have been as professional as an 'off the shelf' model where many researchers/research assistants may have been involved. There were problems with the design of the questionnaire in that some questions had to be moved from one section to another and some had to be flagged as to whether they were to be completed by principals and/or teachers. On reflection, another improvement would have been if information had been sought only at whole-school level rather than including the other levels of corridor/playground, classroom and individual levels as the question was whether a whole-school behaviour support programme would be a suitable support for the needs at school level. Additionally, seeking information at this level would have reduced the number of questions in the questionnaires, doing away with repetition of questions at each level. That would have produced a much more succinct research study. Parents' voices were also missing in the design of this study and although school personnel voiced their opinions of parents in both positive and negative ways, this researcher suggests that since school personnel are partly dependent on parental behaviour support, parents' opinions should be incorporated into future research.

The methodology of collecting quantitative data might also have been improved if the researcher had administered questionnaires to school staff in the same way as to pupils. For example, instead of just dropping in the questionnaires to the staff, the researcher could have made arrangements to attend staff meetings, explain the research to staff and invite them to take part. In administering the questionnaires, the researcher could have gone through each question with the staff and allowed time for completion. This method would also have had the potential to increase teacher numbers as

they would be a captive audience. The process of delivering pupil questionnaires at the same time as teacher questionnaires could also have been improved. If the link person was absent, the pupil questionnaires could not always be found on the researcher's return visit to administer them. Consequently, the researcher amended this practice and brought pupil questionnaires with her on the date of administration of those questionnaires. Because the researcher was meeting pupils face-to-face, she had to be mindful of possible leading questions which would have included an element of researcher bias. The researcher also had to reflect on the impact of her presence and to counteract this, she explained that there was no one right answer for all respondents as everyone had different experiences and their own point of view, therefore in view of this, the respondents were asked to reflect on the answers and pick the one that was correct for them. Finally, it is possible that there is a lack of generalisability of findings as each research study is unique in its own way.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the researcher feels that this novel study was a vital area for examination as it has the capacity to highlight, inform and influence policy makers by advocating and providing behaviour support at systems level in Ireland. This topic is also addressed in Section 6.6 below.

## **6.6 Relevance of the study and findings and contribution to educational policy and practice in Ireland as well as internationally**

The results and findings of this study are very relevant to policy and practice in a number of ways. Firstly, the difficulty experienced by teachers concerning misbehaviour comes up annually at teachers' conferences because of the major difficulties encountered daily by them and who are sometimes prevented from teaching because of the behavioural difficulties. Pupils themselves who exhibit behavioural difficulties are not available for learning, resulting in reduced academic success for them (National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education, 2004). Their peers also suffer the consequences of reduced instruction, because the teacher is otherwise engaged. This results in many pupils not achieving to

their potential. In examining misbehaviour in Ireland, the research highlights misbehaviour in other countries and the methods used by them in addressing the problem.

While positive behaviour support at whole-school level in the U.S. (Horner & Sugai, 2003) and Australia (Yeung *et al.*, 2009) is successful and is now part of policy, it is original and unique in Ireland. This research was undertaken to ascertain the current practices and behavioural support needs in primary schools as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils and to ascertain further whether a positive behaviour support programme at systems level would be useful and suitable for the Irish primary school system. In relation to policy, the research has highlighted that a whole-school positive behaviour support programme on the U.S. model would be a good fit for Irish primary schools because it is more about process than a specific programme. Management personnel in each school would be able to tailor it to make it fit for purpose by deciding what the needs of their particular school are, taking into account the school's unique ethos and culture. However, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or another body may have to make a policy decision to train psychologists in this programme in order to acquire the necessary funding.

The research has implications for practice, for example educational psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) who provide a service to primary (as well as to second level schools), could offer whole-school positive behaviour support to schools as additional support and development work, provided training in PBS was given by NEPS. With the downturn in the economy, there is a possibility that funding would not be available at present. Self-funding (school, Board of Management, parents) would also be a worthwhile investment as the researcher is of the opinion that there is a definite need for this service, and this is borne out by the many requests for behaviour support over the years from both primary and second level schools in her catchment area.

There is no doubt that this research was worth doing because it has potential as a way forward to provide for whole-school behaviour support to all schools at national level. It is theorised by this researcher that such an intervention would make good use of resources - it would put forward a proactive approach to behaviour, in contrast to the present reactive approach where pupils have to wait to fail. It would result in improved behaviour, which in turn should positively affect academic results, as found by Luiselli *et al.* (2005), thus enabling each pupil to achieve at his or her optimum level. Consequently, this intervention has the potential to make a unique contribution to educational psychology in Ireland by informing policy and practice in behaviour management at macro as well as micro level. It can also add to the knowledge base at international level as the success of the positive behaviour support programme at systems level in Ireland would show that such a programme, although having its roots in the U.S., can transcend culture and boundaries as is evidenced already in Australia and Norway.

In the examination of this topic, further research questions came to light and although they are not material to the research, they could be included in future research. These are now stated below.

### **6.7 Identification of further research questions**

Research (Beaman *et al.*, 2007) suggests that behavioural difficulties increase with age. Future research could be carried out to ascertain if this is indeed so, as it could have implications for policy and best practice, e.g. the most appropriate policy to be adopted and best practice for the age group in question.

It would be interesting to know what percentage, on average, of pupils exhibit behavioural difficulties, to name the most frequent behavioural difficulties (in boys and girls), and the management strategies utilised by teachers. These strategies could then be available to other education practitioners.

A related question is whether boys and girls value rewards differently. Pupils could be asked what strategies would assist them to be better behaved in school and whether giving responsibility/providing incentives to pupils impacts on their behaviours?

The present research did not examine whether school size has a bearing on behaviour. This could be investigated in future research. Similarly, future research could look at the question of a connection between location (urban/rural) and prevalence rates of behavioural difficulties.

Since research (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003) highlighted that behavioural difficulties in childhood were associated with poor outcomes in later life, it would be beneficial to carry out a longitudinal study in schools where behaviour is a problem and ascertain the percentage of pupils that enters employment successfully and the percentage that does not.

In this research, separate interviews were conducted with principals and focus-group interviews with teachers. It would be of interest to have joint focus-group interviews with the principal and the teachers from each school on needs in relation to behaviour support. This might have the effect of identifying needs in relation to behaviour support and the servicing of these needs could be included as support and development work by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

It would be of interest to investigate if there is a relationship between teacher gender, behaviour management and extra-curricular activities. Are pupils more respectful towards male and female teachers who manage valued extra-curricular activities, such as the school football team?

## **6.8 Summary**

This chapter provided a summary of the findings in relation to the four research questions on current practices, needs and perceived differences in current practices and needs in relation to behaviour support. Four auxiliary questions were also summarised. Findings in relation to previous literature

were then discussed, followed by a critique of the study in relation to methodology, instruments and processes undertaken. The relevance of the study and findings to educational policy and practice, and its contribution to educational psychology in Ireland and internationally, was highlighted. Further research questions, which arose during the research, were identified.

## Chapter 7 - Summary, recommendations and concluding remarks

### 7.1 Summary

This study explored current practices and needs and associated questions in relation to behaviour support and ascertained if these differed in terms of school location, school gender and perspective of respondents. The theories that underpinned the study included Behaviourism and Systems Change.

In summary, information gathered from the three phases of this research study indicated that, in relation to current practices, the majority of respondents agreed that *rules are enforced consistently, staff roles are clear and school behaviour rules are fair*. These practices did not differ in terms of location but significant differences were noted in relation to school gender on *staff roles are clear and school behaviour rules are fair*. The perspective of respondents also indicated significant differences on *behaviour rules are enforced consistently, staff roles are clear and school behaviour rules are fair*.

The most important needs in relation to behaviour support were *consistency between staff* (principals, teachers, pupils), *rules systematically taught* (principals/teachers), *behaviour management training for school personnel* (principals), *rewards and consequences* (teachers/pupils), and *respect between pupils and teachers* (pupils).

No significant differences were noted on needs in relation to *location* but significant differences were noted in relation to *school gender* on the need to *offer a school behaviour support programme*. In relation to *perspective*, significant differences were noted on *rules systematically taught, consistency between school staff, rewards and consequences, and pupils and teachers respect each other*.

There was a difference of opinion on the *need to improve school rules* with the majority of principals who answered stating *no*, in contrast to the majority



of teachers and pupils who stated *yes*. Yet, *on the need for a behaviour support programme*, the majority of principals and teachers who answered stated *yes*, there was such a need. The majority of principals and teachers agreed to endorse such a programme and would be interested in being included in its management if offered to their school.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

### **7.2.1 What NEPS can do**

- NEPS to provide training in PBS to educational psychologists who would then be available to provide positive behaviour support to their schools at systems level
- Each NEPS office to offer an assigned one hour per week telephone service whereby a psychologist is available to teachers for advice and information on any behavioural issue.

### **7.2.2 What psychologists can do**

- Implement the PBS programme in a single school to ascertain its merits and evaluate whether it transcends boundaries and cultures
- Evaluate PBS in a selection of schools with varying levels of behavioural difficulties to ascertain if there is a relationship between bigger improvements in schools with most difficulty. If greater improvements are made in those schools, this finding could have implications for the future, as such schools could then be targeted and offered a whole-school PBS programme
- Provide behaviour support and training to school staff
- Run cluster meetings for Special Education Teachers (SETs) so that they can learn behaviour strategies from each other and from talks on related topics of interest
- Provide talks to whole-school staff on behaviour management strategies.

### **7.2.3 What schools can do**

#### **Schools and teachers provide pupil support**

- Set up student councils to increase pupils' voices and rights
- Improve/develop pastoral care system
- Appoint a number of pupils (e.g. prefects) to provide support to teachers and pupils in the management of behaviour within the class and within the school

#### **School management provide teacher support**

- Provide lead professionals for behaviour management in each school (school leadership team)
- Provide staff training in behaviour management
- Improve/develop pastoral care system for teachers (e.g. provide supports for those struggling to be effective teachers) and acknowledge that teachers are not expected to be experts in the management of behaviour

#### **Pupils provide support**

- Pupils provide support to school staff
- Pupils support peers

### **7.2.4 What parents can do**

- Become involved in the life of the school through helping out and joining various parent organisations and working groups
- Support schools in relation to behaviour management

## **7.3 Concluding remarks**

Psychologists are agents of systems change and are viewed as leaders in the implementation of targeted interventions (Hawken, 2006). Changing systems and implementing interventions fits in with the NEPS model of service where NEPS already provides a service to schools and where psychologists and

school management meet annually at the commencement of the school year to discuss school needs and concerns and agree service delivery for the forthcoming year. The suggested service delivery framework is a balance between consultation/casework about individual children and work of a more preventive nature (support and development work). The benefit of support and development work is that support can be provided to all school staff and, in this way, up-skill teachers so that all pupils in the school benefit.

Providing behaviour support is not new to NEPS, in that it currently provides such training in classroom management (Incredible Years Programme) to some psychologists who in turn provide training to some classroom teachers. The focus of this programme is at classroom level and it is suitable for children up to approximately 7/8 years of age. It is suggested that where the school's philosophy is to work at *school* level rather than at *class/individual* level, what better way to help solve behavioural difficulties and provide value for money by working 'smarter' than to implement a proactive and preventive programme such as PBS at systems level.

The introduction of a systemic programme such as PBS is timely as it provides a balance for the recent NEPS publication *Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties* (NEPS, 2010) which focuses on behaviour strategies at class/individual level. By highlighting behaviour and behaviour support in schools, NEPS is also supporting the recommended guidelines of the National Education (Welfare) Board (NEWB) in their publication *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (2008) of undertaking an audit and on-going review of the school Code of Behaviour. As pointed out by Elton (DfES, 1989:65), *reducing bad behaviour is a realistic aim, eliminating it completely is not*. It is suggested that a behaviour support programme managed by each school, taking account of its own philosophy and values, with the support of the NEPS psychologist, would go a long way towards reducing bad behaviour.

Ellis and Tod (2009) pointed out that improving behaviour and improving learning are two sides of the same coin. With that in mind, and as suggested by Mortimore and Whitty (1997), a well-planned intervention (such as PBS)

can provide a protective environment and prevent social disadvantage becoming educational disadvantage.

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## **Appendices**

### **Summary of appendices**

Appendix 1 Principals and teachers questionnaire

Appendix 2 Questionnaire to 6<sup>th</sup> class primary pupils

Appendix 3 Semi-structured Interview schedule with principals/focus-group  
interview with teachers

Appendix 4 Focus-group interview with 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils

Appendix 5 Summary of letters

5i Letter to principal teachers

5ii Letter to teachers (phase 2)

5iii Letter to parents

5iv Letter to link person

5v Letter 2 to principal teachers (phase 3)

5vi Letter 2 to parents (phase 3)

Appendix 6 Current practices

‘Other’ current practices at school level identified by principals  
(Table 4.1), teachers (Table 4.2 and pupils (Table 4.3)

Current practices at the levels of corridor/playground (Table  
4.4), classroom (Table 4.5) and individual levels (Table 4.6)

Appendix 7 Needs

‘Other’ needs at whole-school level (Table 4.7)

Needs at corridor/playground level (Table 4.8)

Needs at classroom level (Table 4.9)

Needs at Individual level (Table 4.10)

Appendix 8 Themes identified by respondents in principals' interviews and teacher and pupils' focus-group interviews

Appendix 9 Time line for the research project

## Appendix 1 Principals' and teachers' questionnaires

To primary school principals and teachers

This study seeks to find out a) what happens at present and b) what needs to happen (if anything) in relation to behaviour support in your school.

While some of the questions appear to be similar, the research is attempting to find out if there are gaps/needs in what happens at present and whether these gaps/needs can be supported with a whole school positive behaviour support programme.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10/15 minutes to complete and is divided into the following sections:

### Section A - **whole-school level** (general school rules)

What are the current practices in relation to behaviour support at whole school level?

What are the gaps/needs (if any) in relation to behaviour support at whole school level?

### Section B - **corridor/yard Level** (non-teaching level)

What are the current practises in relation to behaviour support in corridors/yards

What are the gaps/needs (if any) in relation to behaviour support in corridors/yards?

### Section C - **classroom level**

What are the current practises in relation to behaviour support at classroom level?

What are the gaps/needs (if any) in relation to behaviour support at classroom level?

## Section D - individual level

What are the current practises in relation to behaviour support at individual level?

What are the gaps/needs (if any) in relation to behaviour support at individual level?

Questionnaire to primary school principals and teachers

### A Current practice concerning behaviour- whole-school level

(general school rules)

- 1 These supports are used **at present** to support behaviour in school (tick if true)

a) ☐ Behaviour rules are enforced consistently by you and all school staff (teaching/non-teaching staff)

b) ☐ Staff roles/responsibilities are clear (e.g. low level behaviour dealt with by teachers, serious misbehaviour dealt with by principal/management)

c) ☐ School Behaviour rules are fair

i) If no, what is not fair and why?

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d) Other school practices/strategies in place that helps with behaviour?

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- 2 In general, on a scale of 1-5, rate how much respect is shown by:

i) Pupils in your school towards teachers? (1=no respect, 5 = very respectful)

☐ 1                      ☐ 2                      ☐ 3                      ☐ 4                      ☐ 5

ii) Teachers towards pupils?

☐ 1                      ☐ 2                      ☐ 3                      ☐ 4                      ☐ 5

- 3 In the event of a child displaying problem behaviour, on average, at what age would you refer him/her to outside professional agencies?

☐ 4 - 5 years    ☐ 6 - 7 years    ☐ 8 - 9 years    ☐ 10 - 12 years

For principal only

**4a** On average, how many pupils are sent to you per week on behavioural grounds?

- ☐ 0                      ☐ 1 – 5                      ☐ 6 - 10                      ☐ 11 – 20                      ☐ 21+

**4b** On average, how much time is spent by you per week on dealing with problem student behaviour?

- ☐ 0-1 hour                      ☐ 2-3 hours                      ☐ 4-5 hours                      ☐ 6+ hours

**A      What are the needs concerning behaviour at whole school level  
(general support around behaviour)**

5 Do school rules around behaviour need to be improved in your school?

- ☐ Yes                      ☐ No                      ☐ Don't know

6 In your opinion, what supports are needed (if any - i.e. not already happening and that you think are needed) to improve behaviour in your school?  
(prioritise 1=most important)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a) <input type="checkbox"/> Social skills taught  | b) <input type="checkbox"/> Written rules                             |
| c) <input type="checkbox"/> Rules systematically taught   | d) <input type="checkbox"/> Consistency between school staff          |
| e) <input type="checkbox"/> Rewards/consequences for behaviour  | f) <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils and teachers respecting each other |
| g) <input type="checkbox"/> Offer a School Behaviour Support programme (set targets, teach social skills, etc.) |   |
| h) <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Behaviour Support Service (Outside professionals provide support)         |   |
| i) <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour management training for school personnel                                  |   |
| j) <input type="checkbox"/> Any other suggestions _____   |   |
- 

That is the end of the whole-school section (A).

Turn over to look at current practices and needs at the **corridors/yards** level  
(non-teaching, section B)

**B**     **Current practice** concerning behaviour support in **corridors/yards**

7     Does the following happen **at present** in your school to help pupils behave well in corridors/yards? (Tick any relevant)

a) ☐ Rules are taught (e.g. quiet when walking in corridor, line up when first bell rings in yard etc.)

b) ☐ Consistency between school staff

c) ☐ Rewards for expected behaviour & consequences for problem behaviour

d) ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**B**     What are the **needs** in relation to behaviour support in **corridors/yards**

8     In your opinion, does behaviour in corridors/yard **need** to be improved in your school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

9     Prioritise the supports that are **needed** (if any - i.e. not already happening and that you think are needed) to improve behaviour in corridors/yards?  
(1=most important)

a) ☐ Written rules

b) ☐ Rules systematically taught/practiced

c) ☐ Consistency between school staff

d) ☐ Rewards for expected behaviour (e.g. praise) and consequences for problem behaviour

e) ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

That is the end of the corridors/yards section (B).

Turn over to look at current practices and needs at the **classroom** level (section C)

**C**     **Current practices** in relation to **behaviour** at **classroom** Level-  
(Classroom management behaviour support systems)

**10**     For **teachers** only

Does the following happen **at present** to support you towards eliminating misbehaviour in your classroom? (tick all that happen at present)

- a) ☐ There are written rules
- b) ☐ Rewards (e.g. praise etc.) for expected behaviour/consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- c) ☐ You can refer difficult behaviour to Principal/management
- d) ☐ Pupils are included in devising classroom rules
- e) Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

For **teachers** only

**11**     On average, how much time is spent by you per week in your classroom on disruptive student behaviour?

- ☐ 0-1 hour    ☐ 2 – 3 hours    ☐ 4 - 5 hours    ☐ 6+ hours

What are the classroom management behaviour support needs?

For **principals & teachers**

**12**     In your opinion, do classroom management supports need to be improved in your school?

- ☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ Don't know

**13**     Prioritise what classroom management behaviour supports are needed (if any - i.e. not already happening and that you think are needed) to improve behaviour? (1=most important)

- a) ☐ Explicitly stated rules,                      b) ☐ Rules systematically taught
- c) ☐ Displayed rules positively stated    d) ☐ Teachers get to know pupils
- e) ☐ Rewards and consequences for behaviour
- f) ☐ Pupils are included in devising classroom rules
- g) ☐ Behaviour management training
- h) ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

That is the end of the classroom section (C). Turn over to look at current practices and needs at the **individual** level (section D)

**D Current practices** in relation to **individual** behaviour support systems

**14** What support does the **individual** pupil who consistently misbehaves get **at present**?

(Tick **all** relevant)

- a) ☐ Pupils with behavioural needs are positively targeted for support
- b) ☐ Extra resources are made available in school (such as Learning Support)
- c) ☐ Rewards for expected behaviour and consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- d) ☐ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Behaviour support systems that are **needed** for the **individual** pupil

**15** Do **individual** behaviour supports **need** to be improved in your school?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Don't know

**16** Prioritise what supports are **needed** (if any - i.e. not already happening and that you think are needed) to help the **individual** pupil who consistently misbehaves

(1=most important)

- a) ☐ Pupils with behavioural needs are identified for support
- b) ☐ Extra resources are made available in school (e.g. learning support)
- c) ☐ Expected behaviour is taught and practiced
- d) ☐ Rewards for expected behaviour and consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- e) ☐ Access to outside support professionals
- f) ☐ Staff training around behaviour
- g) ☐ Other specify)\_\_\_\_\_

That is the end of the individual section (D).

Turn over to answer two general questions on behaviour support



**17** Do you routinely use a screening instrument to detect pupils with behavioural difficulties?

i) If yes, please name it \_\_\_\_\_

ii) If no, would a behaviour screening instrument be a useful item in your school?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

**18** In your opinion, is there **need** for a behaviour support programme in your school?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

**i)** If offered to your school, would you agree to a School Behaviour Support Programme (set targets, teach social skills, receive behaviour support)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

**ii)** Would you be interested in being included in the management of a whole school behaviour system (be part of a formal structure called a leadership team)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

**19** Any other comments about behaviour support?

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Thank you for your assistance with this questionnaire. It is greatly appreciated.

Catherine McKiernan,  
National Educational Psychological Service,  
Block A,  
Maudlins Hall,  
Naas,  
Co. Kildare

## Appendix 2      Pupil questionnaires

### Questionnaire to 6<sup>th</sup> class (final year) primary pupils

1      Tick only if you know that these statements are true

- a) ☐ All teachers make us obey the rules on behaviour  
b) ☐ My teacher deals with minor rule breaking and the Principal deals with serious rule breaking  
c) ☐ School rules are fair to me  
i) If no, what is not fair, and why? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

2      On a scale of 1-5, rate how much respect is shown by:

i) Pupils towards the teachers in your school?

(1 = no respect, 5 = very respectful)

☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4      ☐ 5

ii) Teachers towards pupils?

☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4      ☐ 5

3      Do you think that rules about behaviour need to be improved in your school?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Don't know

4      If you were principal, place in order of importance what **needs** to be done (if anything - i.e. not already happening and that you think is needed) to help improve behaviour in your school? (1=most important)

- a) ☐ Teach social skills (how best to behave)      b) ☐ Written school rules  
c) ☐ Rules are taught      d) ☐ All teachers make sure rules are kept  
e) ☐ Reward good behaviour/penalise problem behaviour  
f) ☐ Pupils and teachers respect each other  
g) ☐ Principal/teachers make a behaviour programme to suit school  
(set behaviour targets, teach skills, include all groups in making decisions etc.)  
h) ☐ Professionals from outside the school help with managing behaviour  
i) ☐ Teachers go on a course to learn more about managing behaviour  
j) ☐ Any other suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

- 5** Do these happen **now** to help you behave well in **corridors and playgrounds**?  
(Tick all that happen at present)
- a) ☐ Rules are taught  
b) ☐ All teachers apply rules  
c) ☐ There are rewards for good behaviour and penalties for problem behaviour  
d) Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6** Do you think that rules about behaviour, for **corridors, and playgrounds** **need** to be improved in your school?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Don't know
- 7** Place in order of importance what you think **needs** to be done (if anything - i.e. not already happening and that you think is needed) to improve behaviour in **corridors, and playgrounds**? (1=most important)
- a) ☐ Have written rules      b) ☐ Rules are taught and practiced  
c) ☐ All teachers apply rules  
d) ☐ Reward good behaviour and penalise problem behaviour  
e) ☐ Any other suggestions \_\_\_\_\_
- 8** Tick all behaviour rules that are used in your **classroom at present**
- a) ☐ Class rules are written  
b) ☐ We are rewarded (e.g. praise) for good behaviour but sanctions for poor behaviour  
c) ☐ In my classroom, pupils with very difficult behaviour are sent to the Principal  
d) ☐ Pupils in my classroom helped make the classroom rules  
e) ☐ Any other rule? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9** About how much time do you think is spent by your teacher per week on correcting behaviour in your class?  
☐ 0-1 hour      ☐ 2-3 hours      ☐ 4-5 hours      ☐ 6+ hours

- 10 Do you think that the behaviour of pupils **needs** to be improved in your classroom?  
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
- 11 If you were the teacher, place in order of importance what **needs** to be done (if anything - i.e. not already happening and that you think is needed) to help pupils behave well so that you could carry on teaching? (1=most important)
- a) ☐ Clearly stated rules
  - b) ☐ Teach pupils the rules
  - c) ☐ Rules are displayed and stated in a positive way (e.g. pupils will raise hand to answer)
  - d) ☐ Teachers get to know pupils
  - e) ☐ Rewards and consequences for behaviour
  - f) ☐ Pupils included in devising classroom rules
  - g) ☐ Teacher needs to learn more about helping pupils to behave well (e.g. Behaviour training)
  - h) ☐ Any other suggestions?
- 
- 12 What help does a pupil with difficult behaviour get from your teacher **now** to help manage their behaviour? (Tick what is happening in your school now)
- a) ☐ Teachers know the pupils who need help on behaviour
  - b) ☐ Extra help is given (e.g. the learning support teacher gives help)
  - c) ☐ Rewards and consequences for behaviour
  - d) ☐ Any other help given that helps with behaviour?
- 
- 13 Does more support **need** to be given to pupils who constantly misbehave?  
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

- 14** Place in order of importance what help is **needed** (if anything - i.e. not already happening and that you think is needed) for a pupil who has problems behaving well (1=most important)
- a) ☐ Pupils who need help need to be identified by the teacher
  - b) ☐ Extra help is given (e.g. help from another teacher outside class)
  - c) ☐ Expected behaviour is taught and practiced
  - d) ☐ Reward good behaviour and penalise bad behaviour
  - e) ☐ When needed, pupils get help for their behaviour from professionals outside school
  - f) ☐ Teachers learn how best to manage behaviour
  - g) ☐ Any other suggestions?
- 

- 15** Is it a good idea for teachers to fill in a checklist for infant pupils to find out who **need** extra help around behaviour?
- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Don't know

- 16** Any other comments on how best to give support around behaviour?

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**Thanks for helping me with this questionnaire. It is greatly appreciated.**

### **Appendix 3 - Semi-structured interview schedule with principals/focus group interview with teachers**

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this follow-up interview to the previous survey on whole-school positive behaviour support. Can I first of all assure you that you will remain completely anonymous and no records of the interview will be kept with your name on it. Can I get your permission to tape the interview? Thank you.

Behaviour support **needs** at school-level

- 1 What help/supports are needed to manage behaviour at school level? (Prompt: School rules/staff training/behaviour management support team/behaviour management support programme).

Behaviour Support **needs** at **classroom/group** level

- 2 What help would support teachers in the classroom to manage behaviour so that the teacher can carry on teaching (class rules, respect).
- 3 What help would support pupils in the classroom so that they can learn? (prompt: class rules, respect, well-planned lessons).

Behaviour support **needs** at **individual** level

- 4 What help would support individual pupils with behavioural difficulties in school to enable them learn? (prompt: teach social skills, individual teaching by special education teacher).

5 **Principals** said what was needed most in school was

- a. **Consistency** among teachers, and **Behaviour Training** for teachers.

**Teachers** said what was needed most was:

- b. **Consistency.**

**Pupils** said the most important thing was:

- d) **Respect.** What do you think of these comments and what are your thoughts?

### **Need for a Whole-School Behaviour Support Programme?**

- 6 When asked if there was a need for a Whole-School Behaviour Support Programme in their school (supports management, teachers and pupils on behaviour, managed by a Leadership Team in each school who decide on rules, emphasis is on the positive with rewards & consequences), the majority of principals and teachers answered 'yes'. What are your views on such a programme?

### **Comments made about behaviour support**

- 7 On the topic of behaviour support, a **principal** wrote:  
*"In my experience, any case of serious misbehaviour was directly related to poor parenting skills. Such a pupil places massive stress on a school's resources. Smaller classes and one-to-one withdrawal are the only solutions".*

What is your view on this statement?

- 8 A **teacher** made the following comment on behaviour support:  
*"There is a need for whole-school behaviour support as the only support now is for juniors, and senior pupils who go to learning support. This leaves senior teachers isolated, stressed/overwhelmed".* Can you comment?

- 9 A **pupil** made the following comment on behaviour support:  
*"Our school should have a special teacher on behaviour".*  
Can you comment (prompt: should behaviour support be part of the brief of Learning Support/Resource teachers, and if so, how would you prioritise between pupils who need 'academic' support and pupils who need 'behaviour' support? Alternatively, should it be a separate post)?

### **Gender**

- 10 Research tells us that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls, and town schools tend to have more behaviour problems than country schools. What do you think?

Thank you very much for helping and giving up your time. It is much appreciated.

## Appendix 4 Focus group interviews with 6th class pupils

Behaviour support **needs** at **school** level

- 1 If you were the principal, what do you think is needed in the school to make sure everyone behaves well? (prompt: school rules, respect, training for teachers on behaviour, rewards & penalties).

Behaviour Support **Needs** at **Classroom/Group** Level

- 2 If you were the class teacher, what help would you need from your pupils and from others on behaviour so you can carry on teaching? (Prompt: Class rules, show respect).
- 3 As pupils, what do you need from the teacher and from others so that you can learn? (prompt: respect, teacher teaching interesting & well-planned lessons, pupils keeping the class rules).

Behaviour Support **Needs** at **Individual** Level

- 4 What help does a pupil who is inclined to misbehave in school need so that they can learn? (prompt: teach them how to behave, social skills, class teacher or learning support teacher give them help).

- 5 **Principals** said that the number 1 **need** in school was

- c. **Consistency** among teachers - (all teachers always doing the same thing e.g. making sure that children were always corrected if they broke the rules), and
- d. **Behaviour training** for teachers so that teachers can help pupils.

**Teachers** said what was needed most in school was:

- e. **Consistency** (all teachers always doing the same thing)

**Pupils** said the number 1 need in school was:

- f. **Respect**. What do you think of each of these?



### **Need for a school programme on behaviour?**

- 6 Principals and teachers thought it was a good idea to have a programme on behaviour for the whole school. All classes would have the same rules. Rules would be taught and practiced and pupils would be rewarded for keeping the rules and penalised for breaking the rules.

**How** do you think this would be useful and

**why** do you think it would be needed? (prompt: everyone better behaved, the teacher would have more time to teach and pupils would learn more).

### **Comments made about behaviour support**

- 7 A **principal** in another school thought that when pupils misbehave, it is because their parents did not teach them how to behave well. Why do you think pupils misbehave sometimes and what is the best way they can be helped?

- 8 A **teacher** wrote about the need for a school programme on behaviour because she says that right now, help on **behaviour** is only given by the learning support teacher to infants and to those who already go to learning support for English/maths. No help is given to older pupils who have problems with behaviour. The teacher feels that a school programme on behaviour would help her. What do you think?

- 9 A **pupil** wrote:

*"Our school should have a special teacher on behaviour".*

Do you think Learning Support teachers should help pupils with behaviour problems or should there be a special behaviour teacher?

### **Gender**

- 10 Studies carried out tell us that boys cause more behaviour problems than girls, and town schools have more behaviour problems than country schools. What do you think?

Thank you very much for helping and giving up your time. It is much appreciated.

## **Appendix 5 Letters**

Appendix 5i - Letter to principal (Phase 2)

Appendix 5ii - Letter to teachers

Appendix 5iii - Letter to parents (Phase 2)

Appendix 5iv - Letter to school link person

Appendix 5v - Letter 2 to principal (Phase 3 of study)

Appendix 5vi - Letter 2 to parents (Phase 3 of study)

## Appendix 5i - Letter to principal

48 Merrion Rd.,  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4

Dear Principal,

I am a student undertaking a Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology at the University of East London, Romford Road, Stratford, London, E15 4LZ.

I am also a primary and resource teacher with over twenty five years practical experience and a practising educational psychologist for the past three years, currently employed by the National Educational Psychological Service in Co. -----. Presently I am completing a research study on behaviour support in primary schools in Co. ----- in order to ascertain if a behaviour programme entitled 'Whole School Positive Behaviour Support' would be a suitable programme for Irish primary schools. This programme is said to improve social skills, behaviour management, and academic achievement.

From the total number of eligible mainstream primary schools in Co. ----- (95), your school was one of the 18 schools that were randomly selected to take part. I am therefore inviting you to contribute to this research.

The study is in three phases with Phase 2 and 3 involving schools.

Phase 2 will consist of three stages, with questionnaires to the following:

- All participating primary principals in Co. ----- (Stage 1), and with the assistance of a link person in each school (possibly a special education teacher),
- All teachers who accept an invitation to take part (Stage 2) - and
- 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in each school (Stage 3). Where there are more than one class, one class will be selected.

Questions are on current practices, and if there are any gaps or 'felt' needs which may provide more support to school personnel and pupils.

Only a small number will be involved in Phase 2, which includes interviews with 4 principals, and focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils on current practices and needs around behaviour support.

I would like to emphasise that all participants will be guaranteed anonymity and all information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

I will telephone you shortly to discuss the research further and to address any concerns that you might have.

Yours sincerely,

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Catherine McKiernan, NT; B. Ed; B. Sc; H. Dip. Special Educational Needs; M.Ed; M.A. (Ed. Psych).

## Appendix 5ii - Letter to teachers

48 Merrion Rd.,  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4

**Dear Teacher,**

I am a student undertaking a Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology at the University of East London, Romford Road, Stratford, London, E15 4LZ.

I am also a primary and resource teacher with over twenty five years practical experience and a practising educational psychologist for the past three years, currently employed by the National Educational Psychological Service in the Co. ----- region. Presently I am completing a research study on behaviour support in primary schools in Co. ----- in order to ascertain if a behaviour programme entitled 'Whole School Positive Behaviour Support' would be a suitable programme for Irish primary schools. This programme is said to improve social skills, behaviour management, and academic achievement. From the 95 eligible mainstream primary schools in Co. -----, your school was one of the 18 schools randomly selected to take part and although participation is voluntary, your contribution is much needed and valued, therefore I enclose a questionnaire.

The research will be in three phases with Phase 2 and 3 involving schools.

Phase 2 will consist of questionnaires to all 18 primary principals, all teachers and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils.

Later in the study (Phase 3) I will run focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils who volunteer to take part. It is important to state that all the participants will be guaranteed anonymity and all information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

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**Catherine McKiernan**, NT; B. Ed; B. Sc; H. Dip. Special Educational Needs; M.Ed; M.A. (Ed. Psych).

### Appendix 5iii - Letter to parents

**Dear Parent,**

This school is currently cooperating in a research study with Ms. Catherine McKiernan, who is an educational psychologist working with the National Educational Psychological Service. She is completing the study as part of a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London, Romford Road, Stratford, London.

The topic of the study is behaviour support. The study seeks to examine current practice and 'felt' needs around behaviour support in order to establish if there is a need for a 'Whole School Positive Behaviour Support Programme'

From the 95 eligible primary schools in Co. -----, your school was one of the 18 primary schools randomly selected to take part in this research and you are now invited to contribute to this study, which is in three phases with two involving schools. Phase 2 will include questionnaires to all 18 principals, all teachers and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils while Phase 3 will include focus-group interviews with a very small number of participants. Your child has been randomly selected in Phase 2 to complete a questionnaire on current practices, and needs in order to improve behaviour support in schools. No pupil will be individually identified and all participants will be guaranteed anonymity, with all information treated in the strictest confidence.

The results will be used to ascertain if the programme 'Whole-School Positive Behaviour Support' would be suitable for primary schools in Co. ----- . This programme, which would be available to all pupils, is said to improve social skills, behaviour, and academic achievement.

Participation by students in the study is voluntary and your child may withdraw at any time. If you consent to your child taking part, please sign the consent slip, tick the relevant box, and return it to the school.

Yours sincerely,

**Catherine McKiernan**, NT, B. Ed., B. Sc., H. Dip. Special Educational Needs,  
M.Ed., M. A. (Ed. Psych)

☐ I consent to my child taking part in this phase of the research study

☐ I do not consent to my child taking part in this phase of the research study

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian

## **Appendix 5iv - Letter to school link person**

48 Merrion Rd.,  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4

**Dear Special Education Teacher/Link Assistant/Teacher,**

I am a student undertaking a Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology at the University of East London, Romford Road, Stratford, London, E15 4LZ. Currently I am completing a research study on behaviour support in primary schools in Co. ----- in order to ascertain if a behaviour programme entitled 'Whole School Positive Behaviour Support' would be a suitable programme for Irish primary schools. This programme is said to improve social skills, behaviour management, and academic achievement. Your school was one of the 18 schools that were randomly selected from a total of 95 eligible mainstream primary schools in Co. -----.

I would be very grateful for your assistance within your school to assist me with the following:

- To distribute questionnaires to teachers,
- To collect questionnaires when completed for collection by the researcher
- To distribute letters to parents of pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> class seeking permission for their child to take part in a questionnaire on behaviour support.

At a later stage, this researcher will run focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils and you may be asked to assist in the organisation of these i.e. distribute letters to 6<sup>th</sup> class parents seeking permission for their child to take part (see Appendix 5vi), collect slips, and liaise with researcher for a suitable time to interview pupils.

Taking on this position would be much appreciated as it would greatly facilitate the collection of data within your school.

Please feel free to contact me at 087 9336573

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

---

**Catherine McKiernan**, NT, B. Ed., B. Sc., H. Dip. Special Educational Needs, M. Ed., M. A. (Ed. Psych)

## **Appendix 5v - Letter to principal**

### **Phase 3 of the study**

48 Merrion Rd.,  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4

**Dear Principal,**

With reference to the research project, which I am undertaking as part of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London, I wish to inform you that you have been selected to partake in Phase 3 of the study. This entails a semi-structured interview, which will last for approximately 45 minutes. The topics will be on behaviour support in school. I enclose a copy of the interview schedule (see Appendix 3)

Interviews will be recorded for the purpose of research data analysis. Information recorded will subsequently be destroyed and the school or participant will not be identified. Participation in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

I will telephone you shortly to discuss this matter and hopefully to allocate a provisional date and time slot for me to visit your school to administer the semi-structured interview.

Please feel free to contact me at 087 9336573

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

---

**Catherine McKiernan**, NT, B. Ed., B. Sc., H. Dip. Special Educational Needs, M. Ed., M. A. (Ed. Psych)

## Appendix 5vi - Letter to parent

### Phase 3

**Dear Parent,**

This school has been selected to contribute further to a research study currently being undertaken by Ms. Catherine McKiernan, who is an educational psychologist working with the National Educational Psychological Service. She is currently completing the study as part of a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London, Stratford, London.

In this phase (Phase 3) of the study, a focus group of six 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils will be invited to give their views on current practices, and identify if there are any gaps or needs in providing more support around behaviour.

If you consent to your child taking part in a small group discussion, please sign the consent slip and tick the relevant box and return it to the school. Focus group interviews will be recorded for the purpose of research data analysis. Information recorded will subsequently be destroyed and the school and participants will not be identified. Participation by students in the study is voluntary and your child may withdraw at any time.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

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**Catherine McKiernan**, NT, B. Ed., B. Sc., H. Dip. Special Educational Needs, M. Ed., M. A. (Ed. Psych).

- 
- ☐ I consent to my child taking part in this phase of the research study  
☐ I do not consent to my child taking part in this phase of the research study

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian



## Appendix 6 Current practices

*Other* current practices at whole-school level

(Themes identified by principals (Table 4.1), teachers (Table 4.2), and pupils (Table 4.3))

Current practices at the levels of corridor/playground (Table 4.4), classroom (Table 4.5) and individual levels (Table 4.6)

### ‘Other’ current practices concerning behaviour - whole-school level

**Table 4.1 Themes identified in principals questionnaire**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> Order coding)	In-school support	School partnership support	Outside support
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff support</li> <li>• School programmes</li> <li>• School strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/teacher support</li> <li>• Pupil support</li> <li>• Pupil/teacher support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside support</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> Order Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time out (P1)</li> <li>• Positive attitude (P5)</li> <li>• Reward system (P6,P11)</li> <li>• Individual sports (P6)</li> <li>• Telling school (P6)</li> <li>• Rules reiterated at assembly (P6)</li> <li>• Target cards (P8)</li> <li>• Drums for peace (P10)</li> <li>• Cube of love (P10)</li> <li>• Stay safe programme (P10)</li> <li>• Anti-bullying policy (P12)</li> <li>• Discipline for Learning Programme in place (P13)</li> <li>• Code of Behaviour (P14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with parents (P1, P8)</li> <li>• Pupil/teacher consensus (P16)</li> <li>• A lot of self regulated initiatives in most senior classes (P14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naas Child &amp; Family Project (P1)</li> </ul>

When principals were asked about ‘other’ practices currently used in their schools, three themes were identified, namely *in-school support*, *school partnership support*, and *outside support*.

### In-school support

Programmes and policies in force *in the schools* included the Stay Safe Programme (principal 10), Anti-bullying policy (principal 12), Discipline for Learning and a Code of behaviour (principal 13). Strategies used by school staff included having high expectations of pupils by all staff (principal 2), time-out (principal 1), having a positive attitude (principal 5), a reward system (principals 6 & 13), instilling in pupils the policy of a telling school, and reiterating school rules at assembly (principal 6). Other strategies included Drums for peace, and Cube of love (principal 10) and target cards (principal 8).

### School partnership support

The *school partnership* theme included school supports emanating from both parents, and pupils. Most senior pupils practice self-regulated initiatives according to principal 4, while pupil/teacher consensus is used in school 16 (principal 16). Principals 1 and 8 engaged with parents when necessary.

### Outside supports

*Outside supports* was mentioned by principal 1 who used a community based family support project, which is funded by the Department of Health to strengthen family relationship and well-being.

**Table 4.2 Themes identified in teachers questionnaire**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> Order coding)	In-school support	Rewards & sanctions	School  partnership support
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School programmes</li> <li>• School strategies</li> <li>• Staff support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards</li> <li>• Sanctions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil/teacher support</li> <li>• Pupil support</li> <li>• Parent/teacher support</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> Order Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of discipline(S2/T10 (School 2/Teacher10)</li> <li>• School policy (S15/T6)</li> <li>• Discipline For Learning (DFL) (S4/T1, S4/T3)</li> <li>• Positive school environment (S4/T1)</li> <li>• Positive language policy (S9/T4)</li> <li>• Emphasis on positive behaviour (S15/5)</li> <li>• Pastoral care (S7/T12)</li> <li>• Calm talk (S7/T2)</li> <li>• Restorative justice (S9/T4)</li> <li>• Assembly (S16/8)</li> <li>• Pledge 'kind hands, kind feet, kind words' said daily (S12/T2)</li> <li>• Written rules (S3/T5)</li> <li>• Social skills training (S15/T2)</li> <li>• Principal visit to class each September to go through school rules in children's diaries (S10/T1)</li> <li>• Liaising with principal to promote good behaviour (S10/T12)</li> <li>• Principal availability for problem behaviour (S15/T21)</li> <li>• Communication between staff (S15/T11)</li> <li>• Resource teachers reinforce rules on 1-2-1 if requested (S7/T7)</li> <li>• Rota for senior classes for use of basketball court/football pitch to avoid arguments (S14/5)</li> <li>• Rules consistently enforced (unfair to some) (S6/T4)</li> <li>• Rules of week emphasised in school/home (S8/T1, S8/T3)</li> <li>• Tidy classroom (S8/3)</li> <li>• Behaviour chart on yard (S9/T4, S15/T14)</li> <li>• Drums for peace (S10/T1)</li> <li>• Circle time (S15/T2, S15/T3)</li> <li>• Target cards (S15/T2)</li> <li>• Behaviour plans (S15/T2)</li> <li>• Rules mornings-teachers visit other classes for 10 minute to revise school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reward system (S2/T12, S6/T3,S7/T10, S8/T6, S10/T17 ,S15/T3,S16/T1)</li> <li>• Rewards system at class level (S2/T5)</li> <li>• a) Reward system for good yard behaviour (S11/T3)</li> <li>• Best line (S8/T1)</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement (S2/T13,S5/T11, S7/T10,S8/T2,S9/T4, S10/T6,S10/T10, S16/T1), Praise 16/T1,'catch them being good'(S12/T3), affirmation (S16/T1)</li> <li>• Merit awards (S3/T5,good chart(S3/T5)</li> <li>• Certs (S5/T9), at end of month (S11/T3),</li> <li>• Golden book raffle (S8/T's 1,2,3.)</li> <li>• Star chart (S10/6)</li> <li>• Star pupil (Ss/T's 1,3)</li> <li>• Star of week (S8/T's 1,3,6,8)</li> <li>• Golden time (S9/T4, S11/T2)</li> <li>• Board of discipline (S1/T7, S1/T9,S1/T1, S1/18)</li> <li>• 3 step consequence for ongoing misbehaviour a)Name written in book in Principal's office, b)Letter sent home, c)Parents brought in and possible suspension (S10/T11)</li> <li>• Class measures (S11/T1),</li> <li>• Tick against name in yard book (S6/T8),</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect between teachers /pupils - a happy atmosphere leads to good positive behaviour (S10/T2)</li> <li>• Give children responsibility (S5/T13,)</li> <li>• Self-discipline strategies in place in a lot of classes (S14/T4)</li> <li>• Contracts with parents (S3/T5,</li> <li>• Parental involvement (S15/T6)</li> </ul>

	rules (S15/T16, S15/T22) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand up for silence in hall (S16/T3)</li> <li>• Children taken out for play to burn off energy (S16/T4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing out at yard time (S6/T8),</li> </ul>	
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Teacher responses to the questionnaires on other practices used in their schools identified three themes, which were *in-school support, rewards and sanctions, and school partnership support*.

### In school supports

*In school supports* included school programmes, policies and strategies utilised as well as the support of school staff. The schools Code of Discipline and school policy were identified as school supports as was the Discipline for Learning programme (school 4/T's 1, & 3). Having a positive school environment (s4/T1), with emphasis on positive behaviour and using positive language were identified. Written rules, consistently enforced were mentioned as was social skills training and calm talk. Supports from school staff included good communication between staff (s15/T11). The principal was seen as important in providing support e.g. the principal visiting each classroom each September to go through rules in children's diaries (s10/T1), and being available to deal with problem behaviour.

### Rewards and sanctions

*Rewards and sanctions* were mentioned most often by teachers. Reward systems at school level, class level and for good yard behaviour were identified. Positive reinforcement, praise and 'catch them being good' were used as well as the use of merit awards, star charts, star pupil, certificates and golden time. Sanctions such as having a Board of Discipline was utilised in one school (school 1) where the principal and three teachers sat to deal with discipline problems. Other sanctions that were used included having the pupil's name recorded in a yard book and onward referral if repeated three times.

### School partnership supports

*School partnership supports* included pupil/teacher supports, pupil supports and parent/teacher supports. Respect between pupil and teacher was used

resulting in a happy atmosphere and good positive behaviour (s10/T2). Giving the children responsibility and their use of self-discipline strategies were also used. Parental involvement and having a contract with parents were supports used.

**Table 4.3 Themes identified in pupils' questionnaire**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> Order coding)	In-school support	Rewards & sanctions	Other comments made
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School systems</li> <li>• School strategies</li> <li>• Staff support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards</li> <li>• Sanctions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inequality</li> <li>• Unfairness</li> <li>• More fun needed in school</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> Order Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules written in homework journals reminds us of school rules(S1/P2(school 1 pupil 2)</li> <li>• Card system (S1/21)</li> <li>• Bully week; anti-bullying policy &amp; posters (S10/P7,S12/P4)</li> <li>• Buddy system (S10/P17)</li> <li>• Pre-school unit (S10/P17)</li> <li>• Teachers on watch at break (S10/P1)</li> <li>• Behaviour chart (S14/P1) is very fair(S14/P12)</li> <li>• Tick system (S14/P16)</li> <li>• Teach social skills (S14/P2)</li> <li>• Yard book (14/P's 5,9,15)</li> <li>• Red/yellow book system (S15/P's 3,8,19)</li> <li>• Red/black book system (S5/P23)</li> <li>• Rule 'be gentle, be nice, be happy'(S10/P3)</li> <li>• Taught good &amp; bad choices (S4/T2)</li> <li>• Everyone treated the same (S5/P3)</li> <li>• Teachers encourage pupils behave properly (S5/P's 7,13,20)</li> <li>• Teachers are friendly &amp; try to help (S5/P10)</li> <li>• Golden rules on behaviour (S7/P8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards (S8/P3)</li> <li>• Rewards &amp; consequences (S4/P11,S6/P14)</li> <li>• Homework passes (tick when good)(S2/P14)</li> <li>• Golden book raffle S8/P's3,4)</li> <li>• Stamp book (S4/P8)</li> <li>• Class awards ((S4/P8)</li> <li>• Individual awards (S4/P8)</li> <li>• Tick for good behaviour on chart (S6/P2)</li> <li>• DVD's (S7/P8)</li> <li>• Punishments (S10/P2)</li> <li>• Extra homework (S3/P1, S10/P2, S15/P's24,25)</li> <li>• Time out (S9/P's1,2,3,4)</li> <li>• Detention (S10/P's8,15)</li> <li>• Suspension (S10/P2)</li> <li>• Notes home (S3/P2, S10/P8)</li> <li>• You get 3 chances, if you do something serious, on your last chance, most likely suspended (S10/P's2,7)</li> <li>• Yellow card a warning (S1/P1)</li> <li>• Stamp deducted from stamp book (S4/P3)</li> <li>• If bold in playground, you stand at rails &amp; name in black book (S5/P's 15,16)</li> <li>• Sent to Vice Principal (S6/P17)</li> <li>• Warning 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; telling off next (S5/P8)</li> <li>• Threats (S2/P1)</li> <li>• If something serious, miss school trips (S10/P6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people are given ticks &amp; others don't get them for doing the same thing (S2/P15)</li> <li>• Chart for good behaviour - only some get ticks, others deserve ticks too (S2/P16)</li> <li>• Extra homework for whole class if 1 person is bold (S3/P1)</li> <li>• If we had more fun in school, we would want to go (S4/P14)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If someone keeps talking after correction, have to stand up (S3/P5)</li> </ul>	
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Two themes were evident from the pupil questionnaires on 'other' practices in school and these were *in-school support*, and *rewards and sanctions*. The third theme was made up of general comments or complaints rather than other practices in school.

### In school supports

In common with principals and teachers, pupils identified *in school supports* which included school programmes/strategies, teacher supports, and supports from pupils themselves. School systems include the use of a homework journal with rules listed, anti-bullying policy and an anti-bullying week, buddy system, pre-school unit supporting young children, and a colour coded book system (red/yellow/black) whereby repeated misbehaviours result in parental contact. Other strategies include rules, e.g. be gentle, be nice, be happy, and golden rules. Teachers lend their support by being friendly and supportive to pupils and encouraging them to behave properly, being on the watch-out at break-times, highlighting good and bad choices, being fair, teaching social skills, and treating everyone the same.

### Rewards and sanctions

Rewards and sanctions were reported most often by the students and sanctions were listed more often than rewards. Rewards included homework passes, use of stamps and charts for good behaviour, class, and individual awards, golden book raffle, and use of a DVD. Sanctions included time out, threats, detention, stamp deductions, name listed in behaviour books, sent to vice principal, missing school trip, notes home, and suspension.

### Other school practices

Although Question 1d asked for 'other' school practices at present carried out in their schools, some pupils just added comments which showed some unhappiness with their current school practices. Comments about the lack of consistency were made e.g. some pupils getting ticks and others not receiving

them for the same deed (s2/p15) and suggesting that they too deserve ticks (s2/p16). Extra homework for the whole-class if one person misbehaved was seen as unfair (s3/p1) and a final remark by a pupil stated *if we had more fun in school, we would want to go* (s4/p14).

### Current practices at the corridor/playground level

**Table 4.4** Current practices at corridor/playground level

Category	Current practices				Cumulative percent
	Rules are taught (% & no)	School staff consistent % & no)	Rewards & consequence (% & no)	'Other' rules (% & no)	
Principal true	100 (n=16)	81 (n=13)	81 (n=13)	19 (n=3)	100.0
Teacher true	95 (n=149)	48 (n=75)	68 (n=107)	12 (n=19)	100.0
Pupil true	80 (n=190)	54 (n=128)	55 (n=131)	5 (n=11)	100.0
Total	100 (n=410)	100 (n=410)	100 (n=410)	100 (n=410)	100.0

While the majority of principals, teachers and pupils agreed that *rules are taught, school staff is consistent*, and there is a system of *rewards and consequences*, principals tended to return a higher rating than teachers or pupils. It was interesting to note that only 48% of teachers agreed that school staff were consistent compared to 81% of principals, a difference of nearly 50%. In the open-ended sections (Q7d/5d of principals and teachers questionnaire/pupils questionnaire) respondents listed 'other' supports used included: Board of Discipline, walking to left of corridor to regulate traffic, behaviour charts, stamps, homework passes, praise, yard book to identify bad behaviour, assembly).

### Current practices at the classroom level (Table 4.5)

**Table 4.5** Current practice at classroom level (completed by teachers/pupils)

Category	Current Practices					Cumulative Percent
	Written rules	Rewards & consequences	Refer difficult behaviour to Principal	Pupils included in making rules	Other rules	
	(% & no)	% & no)	(% & no)	(% & no)	(% & no)	
Teacher true	88 (n=139)	94 (n=147)	90 (n=142)	77 (n=121)	9 (n=14)	100.0
Pupil true	69(n=164)	69 (n=163)	59 (n=139)	46 (n=109)	12 (n=29)	100.0
Total	100(n=394)	100 (n=394)	100 (n=394)	100 (n=394)	100(n=394)	100.0

While the majority of teachers and pupils agreed that *current classroom practices* included written rules, a system of rewards & consequences, onward referral of pupils with difficult behaviour to principal and pupils included in making the rules for the classroom, a much higher percentage of teachers returned these practices than pupils. Perhaps because teachers are the locus of control in their classrooms, they like to think they are fair but while the majority of pupils agree, less pupils than teachers perceive this to be true. Other rules listed by teachers and pupils include Discipline for Learning, behaviour charts, circle time etc.



## Current practices at individual level (Table 4.6)

**Table 4.6 Current practices at individual level**

Category	Current practices				Cumulative percent
	Pupils with behavioural difficulties targeted for support (% & no)	Resources made available % & no)	Rewards & consequences (% & no)	'Other' practices (% & no)	
Principal true	81 (n=13)	81 (n=13)	88 (n=14)	25 (n=4)	100
Teacher true	55 (n=87)	63 (n=99)	81 (n=127)	10 (n=15)	100
Pupil true	81(n=192)	57(n=136)	62 (n=146)	9 (n=21)	100
Total	100 (n=410)	100 (n=410)	100 (n=410)	100(n=410)	100

The majority of respondents agree that *current practices* at individual level includes the fact that pupils with behavioural difficulties are targeted for support and this support is made available to them. However, only 57% of pupils agree with this statement compared to 81% of principals and 63% of teachers. Rewards and consequences are also available according to a majority of respondents but less pupils agree with this claim, 62% compared to 88% of principals and 81% of teachers. On this topic, pupils made verbal complaints when completing their questionnaires i.e. pupils tended to get the consequences but were not rewarded for doing well. 'Other' practices listed by respondents included constant home/school communication, pupil signs contract, pupil reporting directly to principal, increased involvement in jobs in school & classroom.

## Appendix 7 Needs

### ‘Other’ needs at whole-school level as perceived by principals, teachers and pupils

**Table 4.7** *Other needs at school level as perceived by principals, teachers and pupils*

Category	<b>Other needs at school level</b>	% & No
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for practical input for younger school staff</li> </ul>	6% (n=1)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for a whole-school approach to behaviour</li> <li>Pupils respect pupils</li> <li>Clarity around priorities</li> <li>Emphasis on positive ethos</li> <li>More support from Department of Education &amp; Science</li> </ul>	1% (n=1) 1% (n=1) 1% (n=1) 1% (n=1) 1% (n=1)
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairness/respect for all pupils</li> <li>More fun/sports/breaks</li> <li>Older pupils give talks on behaviour to younger pupils</li> <li>Pupils be allowed a vote</li> </ul>	4.5%(n=11) 2% (n=4) .5% (n=1) .5% (n=1)

Needs at the levels of corridor/playground, (table 4.8), classroom (table 4.9) and individual levels (table 4.10)

**Table 4.8** *The three most important needs at corridor/playground level as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils*

Category	<b>The 3 most important needs at corridor/playground level</b>	% & No
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Rules systematically taught &amp; practiced</b></li> <li><b>Consistency</b></li> <li><b>Rewards &amp; Consequences</b></li> </ul>	50% (n=8) 44% (n=7) 19% (n=3)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency</li> <li>Rules systematically taught &amp; practiced</li> <li>Rewards &amp; consequences</li> </ul>	71% (n=111) 55% (n=86) 48% (n=76)
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rewards &amp; consequences</li> <li>Rules systematically taught &amp; practiced</li> <li>Consistency</li> </ul>	58%(n=137) 57%(n=136) 46% (n=110)

**Table 4.9      The three most important needs at classroom level as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils**

Category	The 3 most important needs at class level	% & No
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules systematically taught</li> <li>• Explicitly stated rules</li> <li>• Pupils included in devising classroom rules</li> </ul>	31% (n=5) 31% (n=5) 31% (n=5)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils included in devising classroom rules</li> <li>• Rewards &amp; consequences</li> <li>• Behaviour management training</li> </ul>	31% (n=49) 29% (n=46) 28% (n=44)
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers get to know pupils</li> <li>• Rules positively stated</li> <li>• Rewards &amp; consequences</li> </ul>	57%(n=136) 44%(n=105) 34% (n=81)

**Table 4.10    The three most important needs at individual level as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils**

Category	The 3 most important needs at individual level	% & No
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to outside support professionals</li> <li>• Expected behaviour is taught &amp; practiced</li> <li>• Staff training around behaviour</li> <li>• Rewards &amp; consequences</li> </ul>	38% (n=6) 38% (n=6) 31% (n=5) 31% (n=5)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils with behavioural needs identified for support</li> <li>• Staff training around behaviour</li> <li>• Expected behaviour is taught &amp; practiced</li> </ul>	43% (n=68) 43%(n=68)33 8% (n=60)
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils with behavioural needs identified for support</li> <li>• Staff training around behaviour</li> <li>• Extra resources are made available in school</li> </ul>	48%(n=114) 47%(n=112) 44%(n=105)

**Appendix 8 (1) Themes identified in principals interviews and teachers and pupils' focus-group interviews for Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9**

**Appendix 8 (2) CD Rom of 10 Interview questions and answers from principals', teachers and pupils, from which themes were identified in appendix 8 (1)**

**Q2** (Behaviour support **needs** at **classroom/group** level)

I What help would support **teachers** in the classroom to manage behaviour so that the teacher can carry on teaching

**Table 5.1 Themes identified in principals interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order)	Within-school support	Within-class support	Outside support
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour support teacher</li> <li>Children withdrawn</li> <li>Build information to understand behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand behaviour</li> <li>Build information about the behaviour</li> <li>Teach class rules</li> <li>Use emotions</li> <li>Consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outside agency support</li> <li>School staff attend a behaviour course</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where serious misbehaviour, a behaviour support teacher (P1L6-7)</li> <li>Children withdrawn because of misbehaviour... (especially in urban &amp; disadvantaged areas) (P1L21-2)</li> <li>Building information about the behaviour to understand it (P2L27-31)</li> <li>To be an effective organisation, discipline &amp; a programme of rules must be part of everyday school life (P3L55-61)</li> <li>Reward 4 commitment to rules (P4L67-70)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher uses behaviour as learning process (P1L8-12)</li> <li>Building information about the behaviour to understand it (P2L27-30)</li> <li>Class rules drawn up in conjunction with children (P3L50-2)</li> <li>Class rules posted up (P3L56-7)</li> <li>Class rules examined daily (P3L57-8)</li> <li>Discipline &amp; programme part of everyday school life (P3L60-1)</li> <li>Establish class rules early (P4L64-5)</li> <li>Reward 4 commitment to rules (P4L67-70)</li> <li>Tapping into emotions on acceptable/unacceptable behaviour (P4L71-5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outside agency deal with reasons for behaviour (P2L31)</li> <li>Teachers do a course to assist/intervene/ counsel pupil (P2L38)</li> <li>Outside agency interpret behaviour &amp; provide behaviour modification programme/ behaviour analysis (P2L44-47)</li> </ul>

Three themes were identified in the principals' interviews, namely, *within-school supports, within-class supports, and outside supports.*

#### Within-school support

To be an effective organisation, there needs to be discipline and a programme of school rules which are posted up in each classroom and are part and parcel of school life (P3L55-61). There needs to be rewards for commitment to school life (P4L67-70). Where there is serious misbehaviour, a behaviour support teacher is needed although most schools do not need this amount of support because there is not that amount of serious misbehaviour (P1L6-9). One principal thought it important to understand the behaviour and build up information about it, record it, and get outside assistance to support the child and school (P2L27-31)

*essential I think that every class would have a list of class rules...drawn up in conjunction with the children...for the protection and welfare of everybody... so that the school can be an effective organisation...when rules are drawn up and posted in the room, that every day, the attention of the children would be brought to them and...the discipline and programme would be part of school life*  
(P3L50-60)...

*in schools where there is serious misbehaviour, they have a behaviour support teacher...some schools don't need that though and misbehaviour is easily dealt with*  
(P1L6-9).

*understanding the behaviour itself would be the first great help...then...recording it and building a body of information about the behaviour and ...that some outside agency could deal with the reasons for the behaviour...*  
(P2L27-31)....

#### Within-class support

One principal felt that the child who is misbehaving does not need to be eliminated from class as the teacher could use this as a learning process (P1L11-12).

*You don't have to eliminate the child who is misbehaving, you can use it as a learning process*  
(P1L11-12).

Establishing classroom rules early, drawn up in conjunction with the pupils (P3L50-2) is important but when drawn up and posted up, attention must be drawn to them and in this way, discipline and the programme become part of everyday school life (P3L60-1). Continuity is important (P4L66) and a reward system for commitment to the school rules (P4L70). Another strategy used by a teaching principal was to tap into the emotions of the pupils of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (P4L73-5).

### Outside supports

It was suggested that an outside agency who had an understanding of behaviour would interpret the behaviour and assist the school in designing a behaviour support programme (P2 44-7).

*People from outside could come in and interpret the behaviour and give us a plan to deal with it whether it is behaviour modification programmes or behaviour analysis to understand it, modification to change it and also behaviour support*

(P2L44-7)

### **Teachers focus-group interview**

**Table 5.2 Overview of themes identified in teachers interviews**

Themes 3rd order	Within- class support	Rewards/ Consequences
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class rules</li> <li>• Teach rules</li> <li>• Consistency</li> </ul>	Rewards/ consequences
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class rules</li> <li>• drawn up in conjunction with children (T1L77-8)</li> <li>• T/Pupils</li> <li>• make class rules early (T1L77-8)</li> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• on class rules &amp; consequences (T1L79,T1L83)</li> <li>• Teach routines (T1L84-91)</li> <li>• Teach behaviour policy with responsibilities/sanctions (T2L117-20)</li> <li>• Put them on a level like an adult (T2L123-4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils understand consequences for misbehaviour</li> <li>• (T1L82-3)</li> <li>• Loss of what they enjoy (T6L95-6)</li> <li>• Golden time/homework passes (T1L100-6)</li> <li>• Teach the behaviour policy -rewards/ consequences (T2L116-18)</li> <li>• Jenny Moseley Card system (T2L109-12)</li> </ul>

In the teacher focus group interview, two themes were identified, namely *within class support* and *rewards & consequences*.

#### Within-class support

Teachers tended to talk about rules and rewards within the classroom rather than within the school. Within class supports includes the teacher in conjunction with children making up class rules at the beginning of the school year (T1L77-8). The teaching of routines and consistently enforcing those especially at the beginning of the year was very important (T1L84-91).

*At the very start of the year, the children and yourself make up the rules*

(T1L77-8).

*The teaching of routine is very old fashioned but it has stood the test of time. If you actually teach your children on how you want to manage your classroom...what happens when the bell rings, what happens when they get their coat, what happens on a wet day, and if you teach it and consistently enforce it for the month of September, the room operates in an organised way. I think though that it has to be taught, you can't presume that it's going to happen*

(T1L84-91).

#### Rewards and consequences

Reward good behaviour e.g. golden time, and homework passes. List the rewards and consequences and be consistent in enforcing and keeping them. Sanctions include losing what they enjoy (T6L95-6).

*I think if the carrot is big enough, you don't need the stick at all.....if what they're deprived of is really what they'd like to have...e.g. fun and games...that really gets to them*

(T6L93-96).

## Pupils focus-group interviews

**Table 5.3 Overview of themes identified in pupil interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Pupil support for teacher	Respect
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	Pupil support	Respect
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peers ignore pupils who misbehave (FG1p1L134-8)</li> <li>• Peers encourage good behaviour (FG1p3L141-2)</li> <li>• All pupils participate in all classes (FG1p3L144-5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect (FG1p1L141)</li> <li>• Respect for teacher (FG1p4L157)</li> </ul>

Two themes were identified in the pupils' interviews namely *pupil support for teacher* and *respect*.

### Pupil support for teacher

Pupils thought they should support their teachers by ignoring their peers who misbehave (FG1p1L134-8).

*you need other pupils, like not to encourage them by laughing.....don't give them praise, don't notice it, like, just ignore it.....like, if they were trying to look for attention, just ignore them*  
(FG1p1L134-8)

### Respect

Respect was identified as a theme by pupils but not by principals and teachers. Pupils felt what teachers need is more respect from their pupils (FG1p3L141-2,FG2p4L157). Respect is shown by participating in all school activities FG1pL144-8). However one pupil recognised that respect is a two-way thing, if you give respect you should get it back (FG2p4L159).

*You'd need respect from your pupils and they should encourage good behaviour too*  
(FG1p3L141-2).

*...every pupil would participate in all the work, in the games and everything...it would give the teacher an easier time if every pupil like, participated in like, science and P.E. and everything*  
(FG1pL144-8).

*.if a teacher gives respect to you, you should give respect back*  
(FG2p4L159).



**Q3** (Behaviour support **needs** at **classroom/group** level for pupils)

**Interviewer:** What help would support **pupils** in the classroom so that they can learn?

**Table 5.4 Overview of themes identified in principals interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order)	Support needs from school personnel	Support needs from pupils	Support needs from parents
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear understanding, communication of school &amp; class rules</li> <li>• Structured classroom &amp; timetable</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Differentiation</li> <li>• Rewards</li> <li>• IEP for pupils with behaviour difficulties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils included in creating classroom rules</li> <li>• Behaviour modification programme</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with parents</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taught rulesP1L6-7</li> <li>• Rules explained regularlyP1L7-8</li> <li>• Pupils helped understand rulesP1L8</li> <li>• When pupils misbehave, explained to them how they misbehaved and consequences so there is clear understanding &amp; clear communicationP1L10-12</li> <li>• Communication with parentP4L60</li> <li>• Behaviour modification programme with input from pupil and in looking back over a week's behaviour, an analysis, so the child gets an understanding of the behaviourP2L14-21</li> <li>• Structured classroom P2L29</li> <li>• Structured time-table for routine &amp; continuityP4L70-78</li> <li>• Differentiation for children at opposite ends of the scaleP4L81-88</li> <li>• Working quietly rule P3L32-35</li> <li>• Pupils with behaviour difficulties carefully taught the rules, why they are there and supportedP3L36-40</li> <li>• Reward system, catch them being good P3L41-2, P4L58-9</li> <li>• Class teacher well prepared for the day's workP3L47-51</li> <li>• IEP working on one unacceptable behaviour exhibited P4L55-8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils create classroom rules P1L9</li> <li>• Behaviour modification programme with input from pupil and in looking back over a week's behaviour, an analysis, so the child gets an understanding of the behaviour P2L14-21</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with parent identifying the happenings in the class P4L60-65</li> </ul>

Three themes were identified in the principals' interviews: *supports from school personnel, supports from pupils, and supports from parents.*

#### Support needs from school personnel

The supports needed from school personnel included the need for clarity around school rules and the rules to be communicated and taught to pupils. When pupils broke the rules, how they broke the rules and the consequences needed to be clearly stated (P1L10-11) *when they do misbehave, it has to be explained how they misbehaved and the consequences"*(P1L10-11).

According to the principals, the class teacher has the responsibility of having a structured classroom and timetable (P2L29, P470-8) as routine and continuity are important variables for pupils. Teachers need to come in to school well-prepared for the school day as boredom can be an excuse to misbehave (P3L47-51). An IEP is also suggested for those pupils with behaviour difficulties highlighting one unacceptable behaviour that requires modification (P4L54-7). Differentiation is also important for pupils at both ends of the spectrum P4L81-88).

#### Support needs from pupils

Pupils need to help create rules for their classroom and have a clear understanding of them (P1L9). For pupils who misbehave, a behaviour modification programme with input from the pupil is suggested, with analysis of the behaviour by the student in order for them to gain some understanding of their difficulty (P2L14-21).

#### Support needs from parents

Parents also need to lend their support when school staff communicate problems to them which is interfering with the child's and their peers learning in class (P4L60-5)

*..a meeting with the mum...to identify what is happening in the class that is upsetting the rule of things, that is interfering with his learning and perhaps distracting others in the class*

(P4L60-5)

## Teachers focus-group interview

**Table 5.5 Overview of themes identified in teachers Interviews**

Themes 3 <sup>rd</sup> order	Class teacher supports
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher support</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach social skills because it is what children are lacking T2L92-3</li> <li>Teach group work where everybody has a role in problem solving &amp; so they have a sense of responsibility T2L95-9,</li> <li>Teach co-operative work throughout school T1L109, T4118-119</li> <li>Differentiation T1L116</li> <li>A facility to withdraw the child when they don't want to work T6L123-6</li> <li>Where teachers need support from colleagues in their attempts at supporting pupils, that colleagues be non-judgemental of their teaching skills T1L127-134.</li> </ul>

One theme was identified by the teachers' focus-group, namely class teacher support.

### Class teacher support

Teachers felt that they needed to teach social skills to pupils because it is what they are lacking (T2L92-3). Group work and co-operative work were important skills to teach students so they had a sense of responsibility (T2L95-9, T1109, T4118-119). Differentiation was also necessary in the classroom as a lot of the behaviour comes when children are bored (T1L112-16).

*I think differentiated work.....a lot of the misbehaviour comes from children who are bored. Some of the work put in front of them is either too hard or too easy and they are looking for a challenge*

(T1L112-16).

Teachers also felt that in their management of behaviour difficulties sometimes they need the support of their colleagues and they need their colleagues to be non-judgemental of their teaching skills when they seek assistance around behaviour (T1L127-34).

*I think that teachers need to feel supported (when a child has) extreme behaviour I felt vulnerable really and would hate if my colleagues had judged me.....you really need to feel supported and non-judgemental of your teaching skills or your management skills*

(T1L127-134).

Teachers also felt that there should be supported by having a facility in school whereby a child who doesn't want to work on a particular day could be withdrawn (T6L123-6)

## Pupils' focus-group interviews

**Table 5.6 Overview of themes identified in pupil interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order)	Supports needs from teachers & colleagues	Support needs from peers
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good class management by teacher</li> <li>• Teacher support</li> <li>• Colleagues support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer support</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good class management in having a quiet atmosphere p4L143, FG2p5169-70</li> <li>• The teacher is not interrupted when teaching, FG1p4L143-4</li> <li>• if someone is misbehaving in the class and you cant get on with your work tell the teacher so the teacher can deal with it FG1p3L150</li> <li>• someone to watch the class when teacher is not there FG1p1L161-2</li> <li>• we get away with too much in the classroom so more discipline so pupils can learn moreFG2p4L165-7</li> <li>• if a child keeps misbehaving, they should be sent to a different room so there's no one to mess with FG2p6L176-7, FG1p1L188, FG1p3L190</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect from your friends and in class them not interrupting when the teacher is trying to explain something FG1p5L147-8</li> <li>• Tell someone in the classroom your problem FG1p4L157, like a year head in secondary school FG1p1L159-60</li> </ul>

Two themes were identified in the pupils' focus groups. These were: support *needs from teachers & colleagues*, and *support needs from peers*.

### Support needs from teachers & colleagues

Good class management is needed where there should be a quiet atmosphere in order to learn and where teachers should not be interrupted (p4L143). More discipline was called for in class (F2p4L165) and when someone misbehaves, a pupil should be able to tell the teacher who would deal with it by sending the pupil to the corner to think about what they had done and apologise for it after reflecting on it (p3L150-3). If a pupil kept on misbehaving there should be a facility where the pupil can be removed from the classroom to another class or staff room where there is nobody to mess

with (F2p6L176-7, F2p1L188, F2p3L190). To cut down on misbehaviours, someone to watch over the class when the teacher was not there was another suggestion made (p1L161-2).

*You need a quiet atmosphere ....and you need the teacher not to be interrupted....when she is interrupted, she loses her train of thought*  
(FG1p4L143-4).

*If there is someone misbehaving in the class and you can't get on with your work....just tell the teacher (who will) maybe send them to the corner where they can think about what they have done wrong and come back and say sorry*

(FG1p3L150-3).

*If a child like keeps misbehaving, they should be sent to a different room*

(FG2p6L176).

#### Support needs from peers

The need for a quiet atmosphere is also the responsibility of peers (FG1p4L143-4). Respect from peers while in the classroom was needed and in this case respect is shown in peers not interrupting when the teacher is teaching (FG2p5L147-8).

*Respect from your friends and that in the class, and them not to be interrupting when the teacher is trying to explain something*  
(FG2p5L147-8).

Another suggestion made was that if a pupil had a problem, they could tell someone in the class (like a year head in secondary school) and in this way feel supported so they can carry on with their learning (FG1p4L157, FG1p1L159-60).

*Maybe tell someone in the classroom a problem*

(FG1p4L157)....

*Yea, there is something like that in secondary, yea, like a year head, like 6<sup>th</sup> year*

(FG1p1L159-60).

**Q4** (Behaviour support **needs** at **individual** level for pupils with behaviour difficulties)

**I:** What help would support **individual** pupils with behavioural difficulties in school to enable them learn?

**Table 5.7 Overview of themes identified in principals Interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order)	Support needs from school personnel	Support from outside professionals	Support needs from parents
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class supports</li> <li>School supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide outside school support on behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involving parents</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Withdrawn for a chat with Learning Support Teacher (P1L4-6),</li> <li>Individual support from class teacher P2L10</li> <li>Individual support from principal P2L11</li> <li>L S teacher Counsels/listens to pupils P1L5</li> <li>Principal/another teacher/secretary/helper has individual sessions/quiet time out with pupils who continually misbehave to build confidence, address key learning issues P1L7-8, P481-8)</li> <li>Pupils work with resource/LS teacher in understanding behaviour rules P3L31-2</li> <li>Tailored programme built around existing school rules programme P3L36</li> <li>A pupil may not need to behave as well as others but they need support and demand that they behave well P3L30-41</li> <li>Programme whereby child focuses on positives P4L68-73</li> <li>Computer/crafts/cookery club weekly after school targeting vulnerable pupils with involvement from parents P4L124-137</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual support from outside agency P2L11</li> <li>Information dissemination on how/why behaviour is driven P2L26-9</li> <li>Provide programmes for recurring misbehaviours, with assistance in a holistic way P2L15-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support pupils in the home P2L21</li> <li>Home-school link important to understand root cause of misbehaviour P4L44-6</li> <li>Finding out root cause of behaviour gives child opportunity to achieve P4L44-64</li> <li>Involving parents in after schools computer club for vulnerable pupils P4L136-9</li> </ul>

Three themes were identified in the principals' interviews: *support needs from school personnel*, *from outside professionals*, and *support needs from parents*.

### Support needs from school personnel

Class supports include individual support from class teacher (P2L10), a tailored programme build around existing school rules (P3L36), and focusing on the positive (e.g. their strengths P4L68-73).

School supports include withdrawal from the class for a chat with Learning support teacher (P1L4-6), work with learning support/resource teacher on understanding the school rules (P3L31-2), a chat with principal (P2L11), support from principal and demand that pupils obey the rules (P3L30-41), a quiet time-out with helper to build confidence and address key learning issues missed during non-attendance (P4L81-88) and after school clubs, targeting vulnerable pupils and their families (P4L124-137).

### Support from outside professionals

Support from outside professionals include individual support where needed (P2L11), information dissemination on how/why behaviour is driven (P2L26-9), and provide programmes for recurring misbehaviours (P2L15-19).

### Support needs from parents

Support from parents included providing support to pupils at home (P2L21), understanding the root cause of behaviour so pupils have a chance to achieve and succeed (P4L44-64), and involving parents in after school clubs for vulnerable pupils (P4L136-9).

## Teachers focus-group Interview

**Table 5.8 Overview of themes identified in teachers' interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Support needs from school personnel	Support from outside professionals	Parental cooperation & consistency
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School supports</li> <li>Good relations/consistency between home and school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outside supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental supports</li> <li>Consistency between home/school</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of the behaviour (T1L164)</li> <li>Take pupil out of the classroom for those times when they misbehave T5L185-6</li> <li>Need a good relationship with parents in order to work together T2L191-2), as sometimes there is open conflict between home/schoolT6L196-7</li> <li>Consistency at home and school T2L194-5</li> <li>A phone call homeT2L195</li> <li>Principal or SNA support in removing the pupil from the classroomT1L202</li> <li>Removal of pupil to school garden to digT1L203</li> <li>Use of sensory room to calm downT1L204-5</li> <li>A support person to do behaviour-related self-esteem work with pupils who have behaviour difficultiesT2L214-18_</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of behaviour to aid understanding T1L164</li> <li>School access outside support if ADHD/aspergers syndrome T1L175-80</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>parents/school need a good relationship in order to work togetherT2L191-2</li> <li>Consistency at home and schoolT2L194-5</li> </ul>

Three themes were identified by the teachers' focus-group, namely *support needs from school personnel*, from *outside professionals* and *parents*.

### Support needs from school personnel

School supports includes the support of somebody to remove the pupil from the classroom when they misbehave (T5L185-6). Suggestions of taking them to the school garden to dig (T1L203), or taking them to the sensory room to calm down were made (T1L204-5).

*..analysing their behaviour, it could be the time of the day, they could be fine in the morning, and then in the afternoon, they just go....mad....well, you need to take them out for those times they are not able to be in the classroom...*

(T5L181-186)



In one school, it was reported that a support person ran weekly support classes in order to build self-esteem for pupils with behaviour problems but other children in the classroom who behaved complained that these children were being rewarded by being taken out (T2L214-18).

*We did have a support person in one school that I worked in and.....she would go to specific classes and take a group, a mixture of all the classes and she would do some type of behaviour -related self-esteem kind of work and .....then the other kids see them taken away and say 'that's not fair, they are getting rewarded*

(T2L214-22)

### Support from outside professionals

Support from outside professionals was needed for behaviour analysis and support provided for pupils with clinical issues like ADHD and Asperger's syndrome (T1L175-80).

### Parental cooperation & consistency

There needs to be a good relationship between home and school so school partners can work together (T2192-3) and in that case all you need is a quick phone call home (T2L195). There needs to be consistency in both places (T2194-5), however, sometimes, where there is open conflict, it is the staff at the school that parents are in conflict with (T6L196-7).

*Sometimes, the parents are in open conflict and it is the staff at the school that they are in open conflict with*

(T6L196-7).

## Pupils focus-group interviews

**Table 5.9 Overview of themes identified in pupil interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	School & teacher support	Outside support	Parental support
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher support</li> <li>School support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counsellor</li> <li>Psychologist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents encourage good behaviour</li> <li>Parents provide one-to-one attention at home</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils who misbehave crave attention and while class is working, the teacher chats with pupil to ask what is going on FG1p3L228-30</li> <li>Support from someone other than the class teacher because they don't have time FG1p3L242, FG1p7272-3,</li> <li>Support from someone other than the class teacher as it could make things awkward in class FG1p3L256-7</li> <li>Support from one who is experienced in behaviour p1L246</li> <li>Support from helper or another teacher to calm pupil down FG2p7L264-5</li> <li>The principal chat to pupils who misbehave by telling them they can't keep doing it or they'll be in serious trouble when older G2p8L279-83)</li> <li>Principal informs parents FG1p2L232-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A counsellor FG1p6L227, FG1p5L244, FG2p5L276</li> <li>Someone who deals with behaviour FG1p5L247</li> <li>Maybe a psychologist FG1p3L249</li> <li>Someone coming in one/twice weekly to talk to pupil FG1p3L252</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should encourage good behaviour at home FG1p2L232-3</li> <li>Pupils who misbehave need one-to-one attention at home so they don't crave it in school FG1p6L235-37</li> </ul>

Three themes were identified in the pupils' focus groups. These were: *school and teacher supports*, *outside supports* and *parental support*.

### School & teacher supports

Pupils suggested that pupils misbehave to crave attention and teachers could provide support to those pupils who misbehave by chatting to them while the class is working and asking them what was going on (FG1p3L228-30). However, someone other than the class teacher was suggested for two reasons, one being the class teacher is too busy teaching the class, and the other was that it could be awkward because the teacher may give out to the

pupil in public in class (FG1p3L256-7). Someone who is misbehaving could be helped to calm down (FG2p7L264-7).

*They should have someone to help them calm down...and get help if they get in trouble.....maybe someone like a helper or a teacher*  
(FG2p7L264-9).

The Principal could provide support by chatting to pupils who misbehave by telling them they cannot keep doing it or they will be in serious trouble when older (FG2p8L279-83).

### Outside support

Outside support was suggested by a number of pupils who mentioned a counsellor, or a psychologist, or someone experienced in behaviour.

*A counsellor* (FG1p6L227, FG1p5L244, FG2p5L276)  
*Someone who deals with behaviour* (FG1 p5L247)  
*Maybe a psychologist* (FG1p3L249)  
*Someone coming in one/twice weekly to talk to pupils* (FG1p3L252)

### Parental support

Parents need to lend their support by giving enough attention to their child at home so they don't seek it in school (p6L235-37) and also encourage good behaviour at home (FG1p2L232-3)

*Pupils who misbehave need one-to-one attention at home so they don't crave it in school*  
(FG1p6L235-37)

*Maybe if the principal informs the parents, the parents should encourage good behaviour at home*  
(FG1p2L232-3)

## Q5 (What is needed most according to principals, teachers and pupils

**I:** Results from the questionnaires in Phase 1 showed that **principals** said what was needed most in school was consistency among teachers, and Behaviour Training for teachers. **Teachers** said what was needed most in school was consistency among teachers. However, **pupils** said the most important thing was respect. What do you think of these comments?

**Table 5.10 Overview of themes identified in principals Interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Consistency	Behaviour training	Respect
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency vital in school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour training</li> <li>Training for newly qualified teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect for teachers</li> <li>Respect for pupils</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree with all 3 perspectives P1L10</li> <li>There has to be school consistency and for that to happen, there has to be a bit of training for teachers P1L20-22</li> <li>We have consistency, a code of discipline and record indisciplines and as they accumulate, we look at why. Consistency works for less significant indisciplines P2L25-31</li> <li>Consistency is vital and the system has to be brought to the attention of new staff, essential everybody on board P3L63-70</li> <li>I definitely agree with consistency among teachers P4L94-5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree with all 3 perspectives P1L10</li> <li>Behaviour training would be higher for me P2L25</li> <li>Behaviour training- I suppose for newly qualified teachers, that they would be given some training and implementation of a school policy P4L95-7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree with all 3 perspectives P1L10</li> <li>Teachers have to earn respect and they do that by giving the children respect P1L11-14</li> <li>Important that all people in the education system have respect for each other P2L36-44</li> <li>Agree about respect.. children need to be part of setting up the system. If brought on board, they're more inclined to cooperate...because they are part of process P3L73-82</li> <li>One of our teachers has 30 years experience...he's perfected the art of respect...he is respecting them and he is getting respect P4L105-10</li> <li>Respect tied up fear and gender P4L112-18</li> <li>Respect - the fact that they wouldn't feel it...In busy schools, children may feel they are not listened to P4L167-73</li> </ul>

The three topics identified as most important include *consistency, behaviour training and respect*.

### Consistency

All principals interviewed agreed that consistency was vital and it was essential that new staff were made aware of the systems in place in schools

(P3L63-70) and for schools to be consistent in their rules, there needed to be some training for teachers (P1L20-22).

*There has to be school consistency, among rules and such, and for that to happen...I suppose there has to be a lot of training for teachers*  
(P1L21-2)

*Consistency is vital...and where we have had changes in staff, unless the system is brought to the attention of the new teacher and absolutely gone through...it can go awry...*  
(P3L63-7).

### Behaviour training

One principal commented that of the three topics identified, that behaviour training was more important in his view, and while his school was consistent in their code of discipline, he finds that consistency works for the less significant disciplines but there needs to be behaviour training for persistent misbehaviours and problems (P2L25-32)

*I think that the behaviour training would be higher for me...we have probably a lot of consistency in that we have a code of discipline and indisciplines are recorded and then as they accumulate, we get a look at why, to try to find an underlying reason for indiscipline....Consistency always works....for the less significant indisciplines....but what I am talking about is persistent misbehaviour and problems*  
(P2L25-32)

Another principal seemed to suggest that behaviour training for just for newly qualified teachers to get acquainted with school rules and policy.

*Behaviour training, I suppose, that's no harm ...for newly qualified teachers, that they would be given some training and the implementation of a school policy, where it would allow role play or a course where they would have to physically act out the school policy as opposed to a policy that's up on the shelf*  
(P4L95-9).

### Respect

On being told that pupils chose respect as the most important variable, all principals agreed that respect was important. One principal stated that teachers have to earn respect and they do that by giving the children respect (P1L11-14). It is a two-way system (P4L105-10) and school personnel must

respect pupils and parents but equally they must respect the education system.

*Respect as the pupils say is important. Teachers have to respect the pupils and sometimes teachers have to earn respect. They can't just control the class just because they are the teacher. They earn children's respect and they earn respect by giving the children respect*  
(P1L10-14).

*It's very important that all people involved in the education system have respect for the children themselves, for their families....Respect goes the other way as well. A family must have respect for the education system, for the school and the management system in the school, respect for the policies of the school*

(P2L36-42).

In talking about respect, one comment made was that pupils need to be part of the process of putting a system in place, as then they are more inclined to co-operate with sanctions and feel pride when rewarded.

*...about respect....I think children need to be part of the setting up of the system. They need to be part of the agreement about...rules, why we have them...I think if they are brought on board, when a rule is broken, they're more inclined to co-operate with a sanction that's put in place...and inclined to feel pride when they're rewarded because they have been part of the process and the setting up*

(P3L73-82).

One teaching (female) principal in an all boys school linked 'respect' with 'fear' and 'gender'. On being told by the principal that the only male teacher in the school had perfected the art of respect in his class with his pupils, this interviewer asked if, in her view was that male teacher getting respect because he was male, she answered *I feel he is* (P4LL112). She commented that she threatens her class in the following manner:

*If this (misbehaviour) continues, you will spend lunchtime in the male teacher's room... and there is a fear there*

(P4L117-18).

The connection between discipline and gender was also noted by this interviewer in another all boys school where there was a female principal and only one male teacher, the pupils reported that the pupils from all the classes

were sent to be disciplined to their class teacher who was the only male teacher in the school rather than to the principal who was female.

### Teachers focus-group interview

**Table 5.11 Overview of themes identified in teachers interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Respect
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School supports</li> <li>• Good relations/consistency between home and school</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All 3 are correct T6L185</li> <li>• Respect works both ways, if you don't give pupils respect, they are not going to give you respect T2L186-8</li> <li>• Consistency and fairness brings respect (T6L190)</li> <li>• Respect has to permeate the whole school system. All people working in the school, from the caretaker to the principal, there should be respect shown to everyone (T1L191-4)...</li> </ul>

While one teacher mentioned that all three variables - consistency, behaviour training and respect are correct in that they are all needed, yet, only *respect* was commented on by the group.

### Respect

Similar to comments made by principals, teachers quoted that respect was two-way, you need to give respect to get respect (T2L186-8) and consistency and fairness brings respect (T6L190). Also respect has to permeate the whole school system, adults giving respect to adults:

*respect....works both ways. If you do not give the pupils respect, they are not going to give you respect"*

(T2L186-8)

*if you are consistent ands fair, they will respect you*

(T6L190)

*I think even the adults in the school need to respect one another. I think respect has to permeate the whole school system. All people working in the school, from the caretaker to the principal - there should be respect shown to everyone*

(T1L191-4)

## Pupils focus-group interviews

**Table 5.12 Overview of themes identified in pupil interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Respect	Behaviour training	Consistency
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect in school</li> <li>• Respect at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour training</li> <li>• Course on behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• Age &amp; consistency</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect is well needed FG1p1L200</li> <li>• Without respect, you are not going to learn FG1p3L236-239</li> <li>• Respect is about treating everyone the same FG1p7L243-256</li> <li>• People with behaviour problems do not show respect FG1p3L260-61</li> <li>• The school is going well because everyone is respecting each other FG1p3L266-7</li> <li>• Most people have respect in school but not at home FG1p7L268-69</li> <li>• If you follow people who are disrespectful, this can lead you down a very bad path FG1p4L273-4</li> <li>• If we give teacher respect, she should give us respect FG2p1L359</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour training would be very good for teachers FG1p1L203-4,</li> <li>• Need a course from experienced people FG1p1L210</li> <li>• Need a course for teachers who don't know how to handle behaviour FG1p4L219-20, FG2p1L320-22, FG2p1L325</li> <li>• Some teachers are not good at teaching children how to behave so maybe they should go on a course to help FG2p4L361-4</li> <li>• Need someone to help pupil with behaviour problems instead of the teacher shouting at you FG2p2L292-5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All teachers should have the same rules, starting with Junior Infants, otherwise confusion for pupils FG1p3L212-15, FG1P5L227-30</li> <li>• You need to be tougher on older classes FG1p4L222-3</li> <li>• Older teachers are more consistent than younger teachers FG2p3L27 6-7, FG2p5L310-12</li> </ul>

While the three topics of *respect*, *behaviour training*, and *consistency* were commented on in the pupils' focus-groups, respect and behaviour training got most comments (8 and 7 respectively).

### Respect

Pupils felt that respect was well needed (FG1p1L200) but that this should be two-way, if they respected teachers, teachers should also respect them (FG2p1L359). While some pupils felt they were not always shown respect by teachers, others felt the school was running well because people were respectful towards each other (FG2p1L266-7).

*The teacher roars at us and we get in really big trouble if we even go near to roaring at her.....if we are not allowed say something to her,*



*she shouldn't be allowed say stuff to us....if we give her respect, she should give us respect*

(FG2p1L345-59)

*The school is going well because everyone is respecting each other*  
(FG1p3L266-7).

### Behaviour training

Interestingly, behaviour training for teachers was an important need according to the focus-group of pupils and while they recognised that teachers were good at teaching academic subjects, they were not necessarily good at managing behaviour (FG2p4L361-4).

*Some teachers are like, good for teaching like, maths and Irish but they are not very good at teaching children how to behave, so maybe they should go on a course to help them*

(FG2p4L361-4).

*Behaviour training...would be very good for teachers because not all of them know how to handle pupils that are so bold and unmannerly...they need behaviour teaching, a course from experienced people*

(FG1p1L203-10).

*Yea, if they got help instead of shouting at them(pupils) at the door....putting people on the black line and shouting at them outside the door doesn't make a difference*

(FG2p1L325-29).

One pupil suggested a course on behaviour could be done during the summer holidays for those teachers who don't know how to handle behaviour (p4L219-20). Another pupil felt somebody other than the class teacher should help the pupil with behavioural problems because bringing the pupil to the classroom door and raising the teacher's voice is not helpful to the pupil and only disturbs the pupils in class (p2L292-7).

*There should be someone to help you with behaviour, to go off somewhere, because some teachers, when you are like misbehaving in the classroom, they bring you outside the classroom and they start shouting at you, in the hall and that kind of disturbs the other classrooms from working and kind of puts you off*

(FG2p2L292-7)

### Consistency

On the topic *consistency*, pupils felt that all teachers should have the same rules, otherwise it is confusing for pupils (FG1p3L212-15) and rules should be the same from junior infants up (FG1p5L227-30). Two separate comments were made about consistency and age. Pupils felt that older teachers were more consistent than younger teachers.

*Older teachers in the school are more consistent than the younger teachers. The younger teachers lets us away with nearly everything and the older ones just let their presence be known*

(FG2p3L276-8),

*... the older teachers might put you in the yard book ...but the younger teachers might say: 'oh look, I'll put you in if you do it again' but if you did, they still wouldn't put you in and they'd say the same thing*

(FG2p5L310-13).

The link between consistency and age was also pointed out to this researcher when completing the questionnaires with pupils in Phase 2 of the research. When asked why this was so, pupils retorted that younger teachers wanted to be seen as 'cool' by the pupils.

**Q7 (Comments made about behaviour support)**

**I:** On the topic of behaviour support, a principal wrote:

*"In my experience, any case of serious misbehaviour was directly related to poor parenting skills. Such a pupil places massive stress on a school's resources. Smaller classes and one-to-one withdrawal are the only solutions".*

What is your view on this statement?

**Table 5.13 Overview of themes identified in principals interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Agreement with principal's statement - serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting	Disagreement that serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Agreement that serious misbehaviour is related to poor parenting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Disagreement that serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting</li><li>Not always related</li></ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Yes...serious misbehaviour directly related to poor parenting skills, needs work done around parents with poor parenting skills, extended family who may impart skills not a feature of society today, in past, were a controlled society with religion, politics, now needs a support system to guide schools, &amp; teachers where serious misbehaviour from poor parenting P3L31-80</li><li>Realistically, &amp; what I observed, we suffer consequences of unsettled backgrounds, agree about stress on school resources P4L81-86</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not always related to poor parenting, could be trauma, child born, could be poor teaching/ management P1L8-16</li><li>Disagreement it is poor parenting but system breaks down, e.g. illness, marriage break-up P2L21-6</li><li>Child may have disorder so parent cannot take responsibility for that P4L105-6</li></ul>

Two themes were identified - *agreement that serious misbehaviour is directly related to poor parenting skills* and *disagreement with the statement*.

Of the four principals interviewed, two principals agreed and two disagreed with the statement.

Agreement with principal's statement - serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting

One principal who agreed with the statement is principal of a school where parents are financially very well off and are seen as quite powerful. She commented that '*yes, a lot of serious misbehaviour is directly related to poor parenting skills*' (P3L31-2). She made the point that previously the extended family might be able to pass on these skills but because this is not a feature of

society now, it is not happening. She also stated that previously, 'we were a very controlled society whether through religion or politics and now we have moved away from that' (P3L71-3). She advocates the need for a system to be put in place to guide schools and teachers where there is serious misbehaviour (P3L77-9).

The second principal who agreed that misbehaviour is related to poor parenting, when pressed by the researcher on whether it is always the case that poor parenting is responsible then made the point that if the child has a disorder, the parents cannot take responsibility for that.

*Well, I suppose realistically, and what I have observed here, we definitely suffer the consequences of unsettled backgrounds, disorganised homes etc...there's definitely truth in the statement about the massive stress placed on the school resources as a result...well, there is always the chance that the child may have a disorder so the parent cannot take responsibility for that*

(P4L81-106)

#### Disagreement that serious misbehaviour is related to poor parenting skills

The principals that disagreed with the statement stated that it is not always related to parenting skills. One commented that some families have fantastic parenting skills but something goes awry in the system for them e.g. "through illness, through marriage break-ups or things like that" (P2L26). The second principal agreed that it is not always related to poor parenting skills and he included the school itself in reasons why there could be misbehaviour.

*Well, it is not always related to poor parenting skills. Behaviour might be directly related to maybe a trauma in the family, it might be the parents split-up, it could be a child being born...sometimes it could be poor teaching skills as well*

(P1L8-13)

## Teachers focus-group interview

**Table 5.14 Overview of themes identified in teachers interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Agreement with principal's statement - serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting	Disagreement that serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting	Parental expectations & parent/teacher relations
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement that serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disagreement that misbehaviour related to poor parenting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental expectations</li> <li>Children's wishes of central importance to parents</li> <li>When there are difficulties, parents blame teachers</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are coming out of the time of plenty, children benefited with gadgetry, less conversation reflecting in a lesser quality of parenting, dread meeting infants in the yard T6L117-22</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't know would I agree with that...it's a bit extreme T4L108-9</li> <li>Inconsistency between parents could be an issue T6L110</li> <li>Behaviour could be driven by ADHD T1L112</li> <li>Some children attention seeking at home and sometimes in school T2L114-16</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents put children's wishes central to everything T1L124</li> <li>Expect their child to be top of the class T1L131</li> <li>Anything goes wrong, parents tend to blame teacher not themselves T2L136</li> <li>If you tell a child off today, you think will I have parent in tomorrow T5L138-9</li> <li>In past, if you got in trouble, parents would say you deserved it T2L143</li> <li>Must keep parents informed of discipline practices in schools T1L147-8</li> </ul>

The three themes in the teachers' interviews were: *agreement with principal's statement that serious misbehaviour is directly related to poor parenting skills, disagreement that serious misbehaviour was directly related to poor parenting skills, and parental expectations & parent/teacher relations.*

### Disagreement with statement that serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting

Most teachers disagreed with the statement that serious misbehaviour was directly related to poor parenting skills. Comments made by teachers were that the statement was too extreme and other reasons were volunteered e.g. inconsistencies between parents, ADHD, children getting attention at home and not in school etc. (T4L108-16).

### Agreement with principal's statement - serious misbehaviour related to poor parenting

One teacher appear to agree with the statement by commenting that we are coming out of the 'time of plenty' where children benefited with gadgetry and where there was less conversation and.... *children are reflecting now a lesser quality of parenting. I find that 6<sup>th</sup> class.....they have quietened down and it's infants that you dread to meet in the yard*

(T6117-122).

### Parental expectations & parent/teacher relations

In this vane, there were many comments made about the expectations of parents today compared to previously where now they see their child's wishes central to everything, they expect them to be top of the class and in any blame game it is the teacher who suffers. Teachers feel *you give out to a child now and you kind of think, what's her parent going to say? Am I going to have her tomorrow morning?* (T5138-40). In the past the parent would say *you must have deserved it* (T2L143). In spit of this change in attitudes, all teachers agreed that *it's imperative that we keep parents informed of the discipline practices in the school* (T1L147-8).

### **Pupils focus-group interviews**

**Table 5.15 Overview of themes identified in pupil interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Pupils thoughts on reasons for misbehaviour	Home/school strategies
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasons for misbehaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School help strategies</li> <li>Parental strategies</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour not corrected at home .&amp; it gets worse FG1p1L158-9</li> <li>Not getting attention and seeking it FG1p3L161-3, FG1p5L171-2</li> <li>He might think it's cool FG1p2L167</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents encourage good behaviour FG1p5L178</li> <li>Principal gets help in to talk to pupil FG1p5 L178-9</li> <li>Tape misbehaviour &amp; bring in parents FG1p4L180-1 &amp; L186-7,</li> <li>Inform parents who will deal with consequences FG2p4L191-2, FG2p2L198-9</li> <li>If parents responsible, they fix it FG2p5L195-6</li> <li>Parents may be better than teachers to help solve difficulty FG2p1L204-6</li> </ul>

On the statement made that serious misbehaviour was directly related to poor parenting skills, two themes were identified: *pupils' thoughts on reasons for misbehaviour* and *home/school strategies*.

#### Pupils thoughts on reasons for misbehaviour

Answers to the reasons for misbehaviour included the following: maybe behaviour not corrected at home and it gets worse over time (FG1p1L158-9), the child is looking for attention and because he is not getting it, he gets bad mannered and shows no respect (FG1p3L161-3, FG1p5L171-2) and pupils misbehave because it is cool (FG1p2L167).

*From a young age, maybe behaviour not being corrected at home and it just leads on to school and it just gets worse and worse*  
(FG1p1L158-9)

*Maybe the child is not getting enough attention...and when he doesn't get it he's starting to get bad mannered and shows no respect for anyone*

(FG1p3L161-3)

*it's probably fun to be talked about at break*

(FG1p2L166-7)

One comment from a pupil stated that if the behaviour was not coming from the home and was being picked up in school (FG1p1L180-84) that:

*'....the principal couldn't be blaming the home*

(FG1p1L180-84).

#### Home/school strategies

The pupils made many comments on home and school strategies to help with misbehaviour. e.g. inform parents (FG1p1L180) who would then encourage good behaviour (FG1p5L178), where parents are thought to be responsible, they should fix it (FG2pL195-6). Teachers could tape the behaviour and let parents view it (FG1p4L186-9). One pupil thought that parents would be better able to handle the misbehaviour because parents would talk to their child whereas teachers would shout at them and maybe upset them:

*Like if you shout at one child, they may get upset whereas the parents won't shout at them, they'll just talk to them and they'll know how they are going to react to it*

(FG2p1L204-6).

A school strategy was suggested by one pupil who thought that help and understanding was important.

*Maybe....the principal get somebody in to talk to them to understand them*

(FG2p5L178-9).



## Q8

I: A teacher made the following comment on behaviour support:  
*“There is a need for whole-school behaviour support as the only support now is for juniors, and senior pupils who go to learning support. This leaves senior teachers isolated, stressed/overwhelmed”.* Can you comment?

**Table 5.16 Overview of themes identified in principals interviews**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order)	Agreement of the need for a whole-school behaviour support programme & lack of support in senior classes	Disagreement on the lack of whole-school support at present
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	Agreement on lack of support at present	Disagreement on comment of the lack of support at present
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, whole-school behaviour programmes work beautifully at the junior end...greatest need at senior level ...not enough support for teachers P3L35-40</li> <li>• Agree...if whole-school behaviour support in place, teacher would feel supported P4L53-8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In our school, support for all classes...sometimes if child is older, less easy to bully by the teacher...so if difficulty around behaviour...it's because child is growing into an adult, not because of less support P1L7-16</li> <li>• I wouldn't agree....codes of disciplines are geared to middle and senior classes...senior classes aren't too difficult anymore P2L20-33</li> </ul>

On the comment made by a teacher that whole-school behaviour support is needed because support is not there at present for senior pupils thus leaving teachers of senior classes stressed, two themes were identified: *agreement on the need for a whole-school behaviour programme because of lack of support for some senior pupils* and *disagreement on the comment that there is a lack of whole-school support at present*.

Of the four principals interviewed, two principals agreed and two disagreed with the teacher's statement that there is need for a whole-school behaviour support programme because senior pupils and teachers are unsupported unless they are attending learning support for academic difficulties.

Agreement of the need for a school behaviour programme because senior classes and their teachers are unsupported at present

Principals who agreed with the teacher's statement felt that whole school programmes would provide more support for teachers where it is lacking at present.

*I suppose there is a focus on children who need support for learning but the ones who are in need of additional support for behaviour don't get the attention...so you can see that it is a serious issue, yea, because it leaves those children unsupported. If there were a whole-school programme in the school, she (teacher) would feel supported (P4L53-8).*

One of the two principals who agreed with the need for a whole-school programme behaviour programme stated that, even with a school behaviour programme, senior pupils and teachers are unsupported because it is mostly geared to the junior end of the school. The principal brought in a whole-school programme (Discipline for Learning) four years ago to Junior Infants and as those children move up through the school, the programme will be gradually introduced. Those pupils are now in 2<sup>nd</sup> class and although there has been improvement in behaviour in those classes, she feels that because the programme does not adequately cover the older pupils, it will have to be redesigned for the top end of the school. It seems to this researcher that the whole-school positive behaviour support programme at present utilised in many states in the US including Illinois and Florida and also in Australia (Queensland), differs fundamentally from the programme utilised in this school as the US and Australian programmes are active processes rather than set programmes, designed to fit the school rather the school try to fit the programme. In other words, the school leadership team would decide where their priorities lay in terms of behaviour and take from the programme as necessary for their particular needs in their school and as this is seen as an active process, as the needs emerge, so also does the programme change to fit those needs.

Disagreement on the lack of support in school

The two principals that disagreed stated that they did not understand the comment made about the lack of support for senior teachers. One principal

stated in his school there is support for all. He stated that the problem was not a lack of support around behaviour in the school but because children are growing into adulthood and less easy to bully (P1L7-16).

*I don't really understand the comment. In our school, I think there would be support for junior classes, middle classes, and senior classes.....sometimes because the child is older and maybe less easy to bully by the teacher and they are now becoming young adolescents earlier, teachers in senior classes sometimes find behaviour difficult but it's just because a child is growing into a young adult, not because there is not support there...you have to be more skilled in dealing with them*

(P1L7-16).

The second principal that disagreed stated that school codes of discipline are actually geared towards the middle and senior classes and stated that *senior classes are not too difficult anymore as regards discipline*. He felt that the difficult years now are the middle classes namely 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes (P2L19-33).

*I don't fully understand.....Codes of discipline are structured more to deal with children in the middle school and senior school...I find the main focus is on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class. It used to be 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class years ago but most of the problems seem to arise around 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes and by the time they have got into 5<sup>th</sup> class, they have settled down and seemed to have matured...I mean senior classes are not too difficult anymore as regards discipline whereas 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes are*

(P2L19-33)

## Teachers focus-group interview

**Table 5.17 Overview of themes identified in teachers' focus-group interview**

Themes (3 <sup>rd</sup> order)	Agreement on the need for a school behaviour programme and lack of support in senior classes	Methods of behaviour support/control
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement on need for a school behaviour support programme</li> <li>• Difficulty getting a teacher take 6<sup>th</sup> class where there are middle-class parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social skills taught</li> <li>• Activities such as gardening</li> <li>• SALT programme</li> <li>• Circle time</li> <li>• 6<sup>th</sup> class help run the school</li> <li>• included in school trip provided well-behaved during year</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree with statement...I am in senior end and have no support...nobody wants 6<sup>th</sup> class T4L91-4</li> <li>• Yes, in a neighbouring school with middle-class parents, difficulty getting anybody take 6<sup>th</sup> class T6L102-4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social group taught social skills/conflict resolution... &amp; activities e.g. circle time, gardening T1L60-5 &amp; L78</li> <li>• In ours...totally different..6<sup>th</sup> class helps run the school. bell... junior yard. ..rewarded with trip to Holland for 2 weeks T1L108-15</li> </ul>

There was disagreement on the comment made by a teacher that there is a need for school behaviour support as most senior pupils and teachers unsupported at present, and two themes were identified: *agreement on the need for a school behaviour programme and the lack of support in senior classes* and *methods of behaviour support/control*.

### Agreement on the need for a school behaviour programme and the lack of support in senior classes

Just one teacher agreed on the need for a school behaviour support programme and two teachers agreed on the need for support in relation to senior classes. The most vocal of the two teachers stated:

*I have to agree with what the teacher said in this statement. I myself feel overwhelmed sometimes being in the senior end of the school and having no support. The problem in our school is that nobody wants to come in to 6<sup>th</sup> class. Everybody in our school dreads the senior end - 6<sup>th</sup> class, because of the behaviours, and younger teachers don't want to go in there. Every year for the last 5 years we had a different teacher going in*

(T4L91-8)

*You go and say now look, now is the time we need support up here.....it's just not addressed*

(T4L126-8)

The second teacher agreed on the lack of support in some schools for teachers of 6<sup>th</sup> class and stated:

*In an adjoining school to me now, where the parents are in the majority middle-class well-to-do parents and it was very difficult to get anybody to take on 6<sup>th</sup> class*

(T6L102-4).

The first teacher again stated “ a lot of the time, those parents cause problems” (T4L105).

#### Methods of behaviour support/control

A contrasting view from another teacher said it was totally different in her school and the conversation turned to methods used in schools to support pupils and teachers. This teacher stated that 6<sup>th</sup> class were given ‘huge responsibility’ (T1L107) almost running the school. They do the bell in the morning and help out in the junior yard (T1L109). Their reward is a school trip to Holland for two weeks.

*We have just come back from a trip to Holland. We just took 63 children to Holland two weeks ago and we didn't have one issue of behaviour the whole time...that trip is going on for the past 15 years. They know that that's their reward if they behave maturely and responsibly...it takes a huge amount of responsibility but the Principal takes that on as his responsibility*

(T1L108-15).

Other strategies mentioned by the teachers to provide behaviour support include setting up a social group for those who needed it and the group engaged in various activities weekly including gardening (T1L60-5 & L78), the ‘Talk About’ programme to teacher social skills, and to resolve conflicts, the conflict resolution programme SALT (stop, ask, listen, talk), as well as Circle Time.

## Pupils focus-group interviews

**Table 5.18 Overview of themes identified in pupils focus-group interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Agreement on need for behaviour support	Reasons for misbehaviour	Strategies to combat misbehaviour
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement on need for support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention seeking</li> <li>inconsistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>someone to come into school to deal with behaviour</li> <li>someone specific for behaviour</li> </ul>
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree... should get help or have programme FG1p3L137-9</li> <li>Learning support person trying to deal with behaviour...not their job</li> <li>If programme, teacher would know what to do FG2p1L156-7</li> <li>Need behaviour support for older classes because they do more serious stuff FG1p1L191</li> <li>Something needed more serious than the Red Book FG2p1L206</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not giving enough attention FG1p3L137-9</li> <li>Favouritism by teacher FG1p4L151-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If they got someone proper in to school to help with behaviour...someone experienced FG2p6L201-2</li> <li>Should be 1 specific person in to deal with behaviour alone FG1p3L141-5, FG1p2L147-9</li> </ul>

Three themes were identified: *agreement on the need for school behaviour support*, *reasons for misbehaviour*, and *strategies to combat misbehaviour*.

### Agreement on the need for school behaviour support

All pupils were all in agreement that support was needed by both teachers and pupils around behaviour.

*I agree with the teacher...I think they should get help or have a programme*

(FG1p3L137-9).

*I think it would be a good idea (to have a programme) because if someone was misbehaving, the teacher would know what to do with them*

(FG1p1L156-7).

One pupil felt something more serious than the red book was needed:

*Something more serious than the red book. That's just a book that they write your name in*

(FG1p1L206-7).

### Reasons for misbehaviour

Pupils mentioned reasons for misbehaviour, which included the following:

*Maybe the teacher is not giving him enough attention and like, the learning support teacher won't take him. I think they should get help or have a programme*

(FG1p3L137-9).

Another reason for misbehaviour according to a pupil is if the teacher is not consistent and favours one pupil over another when it comes to behavioural issues:

*Some teachers have like, a favourite. But if the person who is misbehaving is not the favourite and he or she is not getting attention and the other is.... that would make the behaviour worse*

(FG1p4L151-3)

### Strategies to combat misbehaviour

Strategies suggested by pupils included having a specific experienced person to deal with behaviour to talk to the pupil and ask what is the problem; behaviour training for the older classes; behaviour talks; and rewards.

Pupils felt that it is not the Learning support teacher's job to deal with behaviour as they are responsible for children falling behind academically so *they should have one specific person in to deal with behaviour alone* (FG1p3L144-5). Some children who stated that behaviour support was needed by the pupils remarked:

*I think they should get in a special person and ask (children) what is going on at home in case they are being abused and in school in case they are being bullied*

(FG1p2L147-9).

One pupil felt that behaviour training was more necessary for older classes:

*Behaviour training for the older classes because ....6<sup>th</sup> class might do something serious like fight or start cursing, ....more serious stuff and maybe if they got behaviour support, they wouldn't do more serious stuff. 1<sup>st</sup> class, they don't really need it that much*

(FG1p1L186-93).

Another pupil thought that behaviour talks would be a helpful support:

*I think every week or every two weeks, if a teacher comes in and tells them about behaviour support and that, ...what could happen if they carried on like this...where they would end up...if they got someone proper in school who knew about behaviour, someone experienced*  
(FG1p6L197-202).

Two pupils mentioned rewards as a strategy which was used at the lower end of the school but which is not used but would be welcomed in the senior end:

*We used to have like a tree...in our class and ..if you did something good, you got a golden leaf and you could put the leaf on the tree and everybody used to be really happy, like when we were in junior and like senior infants*

(FG1p1L160-63).

*Like a reward for doing something good, and if you behaved properly, you used to get a reward and they should still do that*

(FG1p3L166-7)

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**Q9 A pupil made the following comment on behaviour support:**  
***“Our school should have a special teacher on behaviour”.***  
**Can you comment on that?**

**Table 5.19 Overview of themes identified in principals interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Agreement -schools should have a behaviour teacher	Disagreement -schools should not have a behaviour teacher
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	Agreement - there should be a behaviour teacher	Disagreement- there should not be a behaviour teacher
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fantastic idea...someone highly skilled...to guide pupils and staff and support them P2L46-8</li> <li>• Would require training in behaviour P2L55</li> <li>• Yes, should be post of responsibility to manage a behaviour support programme.. training essential P3L59-89</li> <li>• Would be of benefit to children...should be a separate post ...training needed P4L92-106</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources would not be there for that nowadays....in our school there is no need of them P1L4-12</li> </ul>

There was *agreement* and *disagreement* on having a behaviour teacher.

#### Agreement -schools should have a behaviour teacher

Of the four principals interviewed, three principals were in agreement that there should be a separate teacher on behaviour. They felt it could be a separate post of responsibility and a separate post from the present posts of learning support, and resource teaching who provide support to special needs pupils who are falling behind academically. All three principals were in agreement that extra training would be needed on how to manage behaviour to enable them provide the necessary support.

*I think it is a fantastic idea if there is somebody highly skilled in issues around backgrounds to misbehaviours and indisciplines to guide both the pupils and the staff and support them*

(P2L46-8)

*I think there should be ....a post of responsibility...and funds to manage a behaviour support programme...but actually I think at National level we need to look at behaviour.....(it would be) money well spent to have a post in a school where behaviour is managed.....there needs to be a post*

(P3L59-73).

### Disagreement -schools should not have a behaviour teacher

The principal who disagreed felt that the resources wouldn't be available in the country and even if there was, there was no need of them in his school.

*If we were offered a .....special teacher on behaviour, we would use it elsewhere because the teacher would be idle most of the day....in our school there is no need of them*

(P1L6-8)

Interestingly, of the sixteen schools visited by the researcher to complete the questionnaires with 6<sup>th</sup> class in Phase 2, in this school she felt there was a lack of respect shown from the pupils. Additionally the teacher from this school who took part in the teachers' focus group and who remained behind to talk to the researcher complained that teaching was difficult because of behaviour problems in school.

### **Teachers focus-group interview**

**Table 5.20 Overview of themes identified in teachers interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	Agreement -schools should have a behaviour teacher	Disagreement -schools should not have a behaviour teacher
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	Agreement that schools should have a behaviour teacher	Disagreement - schools should not have a behaviour teacher
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree but part of brief of learning support and resource teachers T5L112-16, T1L117 &amp; L169-78</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I would rather they accepted that everyone is responsible for behaviour management T6L119-20</li></ul>

There was *agreement* and *disagreement* among teachers on whether schools should have a behaviour teacher.

### Agreement -schools should have a behaviour teacher

Some teachers felt that behaviour support is needed but could be part of the brief of learning support or resource teachers as well as principals as they had more time available and therefore could remove the pupil when necessary, also they have built up a rapport with the pupil over time and are well placed to talk to them about their behaviour.

*I think the academic end and the behaviour end go together*

(T1L117)

*There has to be a kind of organised support and that's what we miss in Irish schools in that there is nobody free to lend that support...I'm a resource teacher and I try and leave myself free as well as the principal ... what we really need is somebody with that little bit of free time and I think that is where learning support and resource teachers are needed*  
(T1L169-78).

On the issue of training, the resource teacher mentioned above stated that her Board of Management funded three special education teachers including her-self to go on a 'Therapeutic Crisis Management' course so that they could deal with behaviour problems. Strategies included watching out for triggers to the behaviour, removing the child, and using manual handling techniques if necessary.

#### Disagreement -schools should not have a behaviour teacher

Of the teachers who voiced their opinion, one teacher disagreed with the notion of a separate teacher to deal with behaviour issues. He felt that it was every teacher's job and not down to either a behaviour teacher or part of the brief of learning support or resource teachers (T6L119-120).

*I would rather they accepted that everybody is responsible for behaviour management*

(T6L119-120)

### **Pupils' focus-group interviews**

**Table 5.21 Overview of themes identified in pupil interviews**

Themes (3rd order)	<b>Agreement -schools should have a behaviour teacher</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> order	Agree that there should be a special behaviour teacher Should be a behaviour teacher coming in to school
1st order coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be a special behaviour teacher FG1p3L205-8</li> <li>• Need a different person come in and deal with behaviour...learning support teachers only help with Maths and English...they're not qualified to help...with behaviour FG1p1L211-14</li> <li>• It only takes one teacher to go on a course and they know about behaviour. If you were misbehaving, the teacher could go to the (behaviour) teacher and say 'what do I do?' and get advice FG2p1L224-7</li> </ul>

There was complete *agreement* among pupils on the need for a behaviour support teacher.

Agreement on the need for a behaviour support teacher

The four pupils who spoke on this topic all agreed that there should be a special teacher on behaviour to support teachers and pupils and while three suggested it should be someone outside of the school one pupil felt it could be someone in the school who was trained in behaviour and this person would be a support for teachers as well as pupils.

*I think there should be a special behaviour teacher because a learning support teacher only teaches English or Maths...they should have a person who comes in and talks to them and helps them*

(p3L205-8)

*We need a different person to come in and help with behaviour because learning support teachers ...they're not qualified to help them with their behaviour....*

(p1L211-14)

*It only takes one teacher to go on a behaviour course and they know about behaviour..... if you were misbehaving, the (class) teacher could go to the other teacher and say 'what do I do?*

(p1L224-27)

## Appendix 9 Time line of research project including Phases 2 and 3

Table 3.16 shows the time line for the whole research project while tables 3.17 and 3.18 show timelines for phases 2 and 3.

**Table 3.16 Time line of the research project**

Stages	Time line
Pre-Planning/Investigation	January-June2008
Research proposal	June 2008
Ethics proposal	December 2008
Piloting	February 2009
Investigating eligible schools (phase 1)	March 2009
Questionnaire distribution & collection (phase 2)	March - April 2009
Interview schedules (phase 3)	May - June 2009
Coding and analysis	May – February 2010
Write-up	March 2010 - June 2011

**Table 3.17 Timeline of phase 2 -questionnaires to principals and teachers, and pupils**

Activity	Date/Time line
Letter of invitation to principals	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2009
Follow-up phone calls	11 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> March
Delivery of questionnaires to schools (Visit 1)	12 <sup>th</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup> March
Administer questionnaires to 6 <sup>th</sup> class and collect principal & teacher questionnaires as well as pupil questionnaires (Visits 2, 3, & 4)	19 <sup>th</sup> March-24 <sup>th</sup> April 2009

The time line for phases 2 and 3 of the study took approximately two and three weeks respectively.

**Table 3.18 Time line of phase 3 interview schedules**

Activity	Date/time line
Interview with principal 1	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
Interview with principal 2	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
Interview with principal 3	9 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
Interview with principal 4	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
Focus-group interview with pupils (1)	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
Focus-group interview with pupils (2)	9 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
Focus-group interview with teachers	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2009