

TEACHER HANDBOOK

B2 | BEHAVIOUR: ROUTINES

WATCH



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READ | EVIDENCE SUMMARY

TEACHING CHALLENGE

Mr Price wants to have a classroom where pupils enter quietly and begin their learning promptly. However, only about half of his pupils are starting the lesson in this way. Some pupils are taking up to ten minutes to settle and are slow to start tasks during the early part of the lesson. What might Mr Price do to tackle this challenge?

KEY IDEA

Establishing and maintaining routines can increase both the amount of time that pupils spend learning, and the quality of that learning.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Mr Price can use routines to establish positive behaviour for learning by understanding that:

- > Routines can create a positive and motivating climate in the classroom.
- > High expectations can improve pupil behaviour at both a classroom and school level.
- > For routines to take hold expectations must be clearly communicated and modelled.
- > For routines to stick they need to be revised, re-practised and reinforced.

THE POWER OF ROUTINES

Routines are just any aspect of the classroom that have a repeating and familiar pattern. There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that establishing and maintaining routines leads to positive, predictable and motivating classrooms (Kern & Clemens, 2007).

When pupils are able to predict the events that happen during their school day, they are more likely to be engaged and less likely to exhibit undesirable behaviours. Routines are great ways to increase the predictability of the classroom, particularly at the start of the school year.

Aspects of the lesson that are ripe for building strong routines include:

- > How pupils enter the classroom and start the lesson.
- > How pupils finish the lesson and exit the classroom.
- > What pupils do when they complete activities or get stuck.
- > How pupils engage in classroom discussion.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

To set up routines in ways that work and last, teachers need to communicate and reinforce expectations of what should happen. If pupils are not clear about what they are expected to do, routines are unlikely to take hold and remain.

Research has demonstrated that the higher the expectations that teachers have of their pupils, the better the behaviour will end up being. And if multiple teachers are able to set and maintain expectations, then behaviour will be better across the school as a whole (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Mr Price should recognise his responsibilities as part of a wider system of behaviour management, but also understand that he has the right to support and training from senior colleagues.

Communicating expectations around routines are most effective when they are:

- > **Concise:** Communicate the routine using a few clear steps. Complexity can be added as routines get embedded.
- > **Positively framed:** Say what you want pupils to do rather than what you don't want them to do.
- > **Modelled:** Regularly show your pupils what you want them to do, particularly when you are in the early stages of establishing a routine.

GETTING ROUTINES TO STICK

As well as setting clear expectations for a routine, we also have to think carefully about how we make that routine last. Routines will simply dissipate as pupils forget and other things interfere, unless we take intentional steps to make them stick. To maintain routines, we can (IES, 2008):

- > **Revise:** Continually repeat our expectations of what we think the routine should be like and why, even after pupils have 'got it'.
- > **Re-practise:** Keep getting pupils to do the routine. In the early days, you can even get them to do a 'rehearsal' or two.
- > **Reinforce:** Use the school behaviour system (e.g. praise, rewards and sanctions) to help pupils keep to the routine. To be effective, reinforcement should be mostly positive and consistently applied. Nuances and caveats

When routines are established, not only do they create more time and a better environment for learning, but they can help teachers see and deal with undesirable behaviour as soon as it arises. Routines create predictable patterns of classroom activity and so make it easy to spot when behaviour deviates from what is expected. Catching and correcting challenging behaviour early can make pupils feel safer and creates a warmer classroom environment where learning is more likely to occur (Kern & Clemens, 2007).

NUANCES AND CAVEATS

Is it realistic for Mr Price to expect all the pupils he teaches to meet his high expectations and adopt routines? Research suggests that clear expectations and predictable consequences are beneficial to both pupils with and without special educational needs, and especially useful for younger pupils (DfE, 2017; Gathercole et al., 2006).

CHECK

Answer the questions below to check your understanding of the evidence summary. Answers are available at the bottom of the 'Reflect' section.

1. Why are routines important for pupils?

- a.) Routines create a positive and motivating classroom climate.
- b.) Routines create a predictable learning environment.
- c.) Unpredictable routines keep pupils on their toes and ready to learn.
- d.) Pupils only need routines for arrival and dismissal to class.

2. What impact do teacher high expectations have on pupil behaviour?

- a.) Pupil behaviour improves in the classroom.
- b.) Pupil behaviour improves beyond the classroom.
- c.) Teacher expectations have limited impact on pupil behaviour.
- d.) High expectations support positive behaviour for pupils with special educational needs.
- e.) High expectations support positive behaviour for younger pupils.

3. How do teachers convey their expectations?

- a.) Teachers do not need to convey their expectations.
- b.) Teachers should only convey their expectations at the beginning of the year.
- c.) Ensure they are covered in a few clear steps.
- d.) Frame them positively by saying what teachers want rather than what they don't want.
- e.) Teacher should model routines, with pupils rehearsing them.

4. How can teachers turn expectations into routines?

- a.) Revise routines – say them again to make them memorable and important.
- b.) Repractise – repeat routines with pupils to help make them automatic and effortless.
- c.) Briefly and clearly state expectations at the start of the year.
- d.) Reinforce – praise and sanction in line with routines.
- e.) Making a public example by sanctioning pupils not following a routine.

FURTHER READING

IES. (2008). Reducing behavior problems in the elementary school classroom. bit.ly/ecf-ies

REFLECT

A REMINDER OF THE KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Mr Price can use routines to begin to establish positive behaviour for learning by understanding:

- > Routines can create a positive and motivating climate in her classroom
- > High expectations make a difference to pupil behaviour at a classroom and school level
- > For routines to take hold expectations must be clearly communicated and modelled.
- > For routines to stick they need to be revised, re-practised and reinforced.

1. What did you see in this module that you already do or have seen in other classrooms?

2. What do you feel is the gap between your current practice and what you have seen in this module?

3. Which of the 'key takeaways' do you need to focus on? Where and when might you try to apply them to your teaching?

REFERENCES

Department for Education. (2017). SEN support: A rapid evidence assessment. bit.ly/ecf-dfe

IES. (2008). Reducing behavior problems in the elementary school classroom. bit.ly/ecf-ies

Gathercole, S., Lamont, E., & Alloway, T. (2006) Working memory in the classroom. *Working memory and education*, 219-240.

Kern, L. & Clemens, N.H. (2007). Antecedent strategies to promote appropriate classroom behavior. *Psychology in Schools*, 44, 65-75.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. a, b

2. a, b, d, e

3. c, d, e

4. a, b, d