



VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS: PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY TEACHERS AND HEADTEACHERS OVER TIME

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ABSTRACT

Violence in schools is popularly depicted as an escalating problem of global proportions. Extreme incidents of school 'violence' have been a focus of media attention prompting renewed policy interest in the topic of indiscipline in British schools. This paper focuses on the Scottish context, drawing on survey data collected at three points during a fourteen year time frame (1990, 1996 and 2004). To date, over three thousand teachers have participated in this research. This paper maintains that there have been notable changes in teacher perceptions of the nature and frequency of pupils' disruptive behaviour in Scottish schools. Increasing numbers of teachers and headteachers report encountering both low level disruption and violent behaviours among pupils and towards themselves. However, they consistently report that it is a small minority of pupils who behave in these ways. The paper explores explanations for the trends in teachers' perceptions and the implications for policy and practice.

INTRODUCTION

A powerful message currently permeating public life is that violence in schools is on the increase and it is escalating rapidly. Media reports tend to convey an image of schools in which teachers are beleaguered and young people are out of control (MacMillan 2002). For example, the *Independent on Sunday* ran a special investigation on behaviour in schools in May and June 2005. On 18 May, the headline was, 'Mrs Greed teaches RE. In the past year she has been threatened, abused and had knives and a loaded gun pulled on her by pupils'. At the bottom of the same page, another headline proclaims, 'Bullies, brawls and truancy: diary of a week in Britain's schools'. On 11 June, the *Daily Express* ran a report on teachers' fears of brutal attacks from violent pupils under the headline, 'We want panic buttons'. There have also been 'under cover' series on television showing disruptive behaviour in schools (see *Guardian* July 5 2005). The 'crisis' in schools is not only attributed to the UK, but is reported to be a global phenomenon of considerable and growing proportions (Smith 2002; Debarbieux 2003; Infantino and Little 2005). Two international conferences on violence in schools have taken place, with a third planned for January 2006. The very fact of the conference and of the decision to create an international observatory on violence in schools is testimony to the increasing concern worldwide about this phenomenon. (www.iivs.org)

Violence in schools is not only worrying but intensely emotive and politically sensitive. This is so because safe schools are seen as fulfilling two separate, but related, functions. First, they are a means to an end, effective learning. Learning is a key purpose of schooling and an environment where everyone feels safe and a purposeful and orderly atmosphere prevails is clearly an important condition to enable learning to take place. Reports of disruption in classrooms, fights in the playground, and verbal and physical abuse towards teachers naturally create concerns about the lack of opportunity for learning, and thus for attainment in public examinations, and thus for life chances. Safe schools are also an end in themselves. Pupils behaving in an orderly and courteous manner to each other and to teachers are an important outcome of schooling. We expect schools, together with parents and others involved with children and young people, to promote kindness, tolerance and respect towards others. Schools play an important role in the socialization of young people. Tait, a philosopher of education, puts it this way:

... through constant and relentless surveillance, pupils learn to regulate their own conduct and, hopefully, become responsible citizens. Children learn to make appropriate, sanctioned decisions on the assumption that they will be held accountable for transgressions, transgressions now made visible through the disciplinary machinery of the mass school (Tait 2003: 429).

So reports of violent behaviour make us wonder about the kind of society we are becoming and whether the younger generation will subscribe to the same broad values concerning the characteristics of social interaction as ourselves. Concerns about the behaviour of young people are nothing new. Almost as soon as the state began to fund mass education in Britain, for instance, measures were put in place to monitor attendance. The payments by results system of accountability in the latter

part of the nineteenth century included an element for organisation and discipline (Munn 2000; Fenwick and McBride 1981). The teacher in Scotland was awarded 1s 6d per child if organisation and discipline were excellent; 1s if they were good, and the possibility of nothing at all if they were poor. What counted as bad discipline? Inspectors' reports suggest the following: scrambling out of seats, a rush to the door, the necessity of repeating every question, inattention during a lesson, or dishonesty during an examination (Bone 1968: 95). As we shall see below, this list of misdemeanours is not very far removed from the most frequently encountered behaviours today.

DEFINITIONS

Given the emotive and politically sensitive nature of the issue of violence in schools, it is important that good quality information is available to policy-makers and others as an aid to policy development. However, violence is an extremely difficult phenomenon to measure. This is because, like many other forms of behaviour, its meaning is heavily dependent on the context in which it occurs. Much depends on the tone, body language and the history of the relationship between individuals in order to distinguish verbal abuse from teasing or jokiness, for instance. While some discussions of violence in schools explicitly consider the problem of definition (eg Cremin 2003; Smith 2002), in others its meaning tends to be assumed or implicit (eg Smith and Thomas 2000). Yet, how violence is understood and conceptualised has implications for how incidents of violence are reported. For example, traditional definitions tend to emphasise extreme physical and interpersonal forms of violence (Bradby 1996), while broader definitions tend to encompass covert types of intimidation, such as verbal and psychological abuse, as well as harassment (James 1995; Debarbieux 2003). Some research evidence suggests that some forms of violence are regarded as normal and inevitable aspects of young people's everyday lives and thus go under-reported (Painter 1992; Mills 2001; Burman et al 2003; Philips 2003). Likewise, Stanko's (1990) work on violence suggests that much violence is mundane, emphasising the everyday and routine nature of violence.

The issue of definition is complicated further by the fact that particular categories of harm appear to be used interchangeably in discussions of school violence. On occasion, little distinction seems to be made between 'bullying' behaviour on the one hand and acts of violence on the other (Mills 2003; Devine and Lawson 2003). Osler and Starkey (2005) also identify the different 'vocabularies of violence in schools'. The French government uses the phrase *la violence a l'ecole* and the term 'school violence' is used widely in France (Hayden and Blaya 2005) whereas official documentation in England tends to adopt the terms 'disaffection' and 'indiscipline'.

A consistent theme in discussion of school violence relates to the interplay between extreme acts of violence taking place in and around schools (eg fatal accidents, physical assaults, extreme acts of vandalism, arson, etc) on the one hand and what might be termed relatively low grade misbehaviour on the other (Debarbieux 2003). What French studies have classified as 'incivility', pupils talking out of turn, impertinent remarks, pupils hindering others working, etc, can

nevertheless have a distressing impact on teachers because of the repetitious nature of such behaviours (Keane 2001; Wright and Keetley 2003).

In the cross-sectional study of secondary school teachers' and headteachers' perceptions of indiscipline reported below, a very wide range of behaviours in the classroom and around the school was included from extreme acts of violence to lower level misbehaviour. Furthermore, the study represents one of the few to compare teachers' perceptions over time. The USA has been conducting a Safe School Study at regular intervals since 1976 and the National Crime Victimization Survey now includes a section devoted specifically to schools (DeVoe et al 2003). Generally, however, there seems to be very little good quality information on school violence which permits comparison over time. Before turning to the study in detail, it is necessary to say a brief word about the context, because it has implications for policy and practice which are discussed later.

CONTEXT

Writing on the causes of and hence, by implication, the 'cures' for misbehaviour in schools falls into three main categories: neuro-biological/psychological explanations, explanations which explore the role of the school in promoting or inhibiting behaviour, and more general theorising about the nature of society and the role which deviance or disaffection plays. The suggestion in giving a brief overview of research here is not to suggest that one category of explanation is right and the others wrong. Rather, it is to acknowledge the complicated and multi-faceted nature of pupils' behaviour in schools and to caution against quick fix uni-dimensional cures for problems.

The field is dominated by explanations which tend to view misbehaviour as inherently a within child or a within child in family problem (see Parsons 2005:188). The example of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a particular illustration of a more general trend. ADHD is diagnosed with symptoms of fidgeting, excitability, impulsivity, immaturity, and lack of self-control. While a range of treatments for young people diagnosed is available, including counselling and cognitive therapy, the prescription of Ritalin is widely regarded as the most significant (Tait 2005; Lloyd 2003; Lloyd 2005a). A fierce debate exists about the existence of and objective criteria for assessing this condition (Rafalovich 2005). However, as Lloyd and others have noted, the diagnosis absolves not only the pupil but the parents and teachers from responsibility for their actions in relation to behaviour. It is therefore in the interests of both home and school, as well as drug companies, to identify certain behaviours as indicative of a neurobiological condition. Tait (2005: 442) observes that 'such differences in behaviour are no longer regarded as being below the threshold of intervention, or simply part of the human condition, but are now objective pathologies to be identified, categorised and normalised'. Examples of conditions now recognised by the American Psychiatric Association include Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Generalized Social Phobia, and Avoidant Personality Disorder. There has been a massive increase in the number

of pupils diagnosed as having ADHD in the UK (Lloyd 2005a). A related phenomenon is the increase in the numbers of children and young people identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) in Scotland, and emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) in England and Wales (Dockrell et al 2002; Scottish Executive 2000; 2005c). However, it is generally recognised that government statistics under-estimate incidence (see Macleod 2005).

The second category of writing analyses the influence that schools as social institutions have on pupils' behaviour. The work of Rutter et al (1979) identified school ethos or climate as an important influence on discipline and a number of smaller scale quantitative and qualitative studies have continued to explore the issue, highlighting the importance of curriculum organisation, flexible curriculum provision, distributed leadership, shared beliefs, positive relations with the world outside schools, and good relationships between teachers and pupils based on mutual respect, as key features of schools likely to have few behavioural problems (e.g. Mortimore et al 1988; Myers 1996; Munn et al 2000; and Kane et al 2004). Research has also suggested that the participation of pupils in decision-making processes in schools can mitigate violent and aggressive behaviour in pupils (Carter and Osler 2000). A sub-set of studies has focused on particular strategies to promote positive behaviour, including praise and reward systems, peer support (Naylor and Cowie 1999)), assertive discipline (Kavanagh 2000; Swinson and Cording 2002), Framework for Intervention (Ffi), (Daniels and Williams 2000), and restorative practices (McCold and Wachtel 2003; Hopkins 2004).

The third category focuses on systems level and use social theory to examine the benefit to society of having some members labelled as deviant. As Macleod (2005: 74) points out, 'the particular function being served and which behaviours or groups of pupils attract the label will vary according to which social theory is favoured'. Garland (1990) gives an overview of the functions served by deviance and punishment and there are classic analyses by Merton, Durkheim, Marx (Craib 1997) and Foucault (1991).

In legislative terms, there has been a long standing tension between legislation which promotes child welfare in education and in youth justice and that which seeks to control and punish (Parsons 2005). A contemporary example of this phenomenon is evident in Scotland, a country often seen to favour a welfare approach. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 is intended to embrace all children experiencing difficulties in learning, including those with behaviour problems. The intention of the Act is to ensure that a wider range of children than hitherto is eligible for a Co-ordinated Support Plan, including those whose difficulties may be transient rather than enduring. At the same time, the Anti-Social Behaviour, etc (Scotland) Act 2004 restricts the liberty of 12-16 year olds to congregate. Such tensions can be traced to the earliest provision of state education, where debates about the causes of disruptive behaviour tended to classify pupils as victims or as authors of their own destiny, rather as distinctions were made between the deserving and undeserving poor (Lloyd 2000). The legislation thus reflects the tensions among the different kinds of explanation of behaviour problems, individual, institutional, societal, referred to above.

A final feature of the context is the wide range of initiatives which has taken place to promote positive behaviour and to share good practice. A flavour of these in Scotland is given below:

- The Scottish Schools Ethos Network (1994-2005) to share experience and ideas among schools about developing and sustaining a positive ethos.
- The Anti-Bullying Network (1998 -) to raise awareness and promote good practice in tackling bullying.
- Promoting Positive Behaviour (1999).
- Alternatives to Exclusion from School (2002).
- Better Behaviour - Better Learning (2003 -) a wide-ranging national intervention programme, which includes funding to support home-school link workers and classroom assistants.
- A number of developments initiated by the voluntary sector (often in collaboration with local authorities), designed to sustain pupils in mainstream education or to provide innovative alternatives to mainstream schooling.

In addition to these national initiatives, a wide range of books and other resources on promoting good discipline has been produced which can be used in in-service training at school or local authority level. This, then, gives a flavour of the background against which the study took place. The study provides information on teachers' and headteachers' perceptions of indiscipline in schools, including the prevalence of violent behaviours, in 1990, 1996 and 2004, in Scotland.

SAMPLE AND METHOD

In 1990, 112 secondary schools were contacted by the Scottish Office and asked to pass on to designated but randomly selected teachers a sealed envelope which contained a fairly extensive questionnaire about their perceptions of indiscipline in their schools. The schools were a stratified sample of all 431 secondary schools in Scotland. A total of 1011 teachers were contacted and some 883 replied, a response rate of 87%. Some eight months after the survey, a similar questionnaire was sent to all secondary school headteachers in the state sector. The response rate was, again, very high, 386 out of 431, 90%.

The 1996 survey was funded not by the Scottish Office but by the Educational Institute of Scotland, the largest teacher union in Scotland. The same schools as in 1990 were used, although the attrition of closure and amalgamation reduced the overall number to 101. A further two schools declined to participate. We contacted ten teachers in each school, selected by post held rather than name and covering a range of teaching subjects. For the smaller schools in the sample fewer teachers were approached. This gave 909 teachers, of whom 561 replied, giving a response rate of 62%. Of these 561, only 7% were certain they had participated in the earlier survey; 21% were unsure; and the remaining 72% were certain they had not participated earlier. There was no survey of headteachers.

In 2004, funded by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), we again contacted as many of the original sample schools as still existed. As might be expected, there were amalgamations and closures. In one inner city area, 7 secondary schools were 'lost'. Rather than leave this area under-represented, we selected a replacement school where possible. This was either a new amalgamated school or the school now attended by pupils from the catchment area of the closed school. This gave us a list of 104 schools, each being sent 10 questionnaires on the same basis as in 1996. The overall number of questionnaires distributed was 1040 and we had replies from 528, a response rate of 53%. We also surveyed all secondary school headteachers and had a response rate of 71% (275/392).

The first administration of the questionnaire in 1990 was to named teachers in the sample schools. Successive administrations were via headteachers, and this perhaps accounts for some of the decline in the response rate. Some headteachers may not have passed on the questionnaires, for instance. However, it is noteworthy that the direct mailing to all headteachers in both 1990 and 2004 also revealed declining, although still highly satisfactory, response rates. It may be that schools are suffering 'survey fatigue', or that staff are increasingly sceptical about the impact of survey information on policy, or that current curriculum and assessment pressure means that teachers have higher priorities than completing questionnaires. Whatever the reasons, the response rates are robust enough to enable us to compare teachers' perceptions over time and to note statistically significant changes in these perceptions. We should stress that we are not reporting objective measures of indiscipline or violence. It is possible that we are reporting a decline in teachers' morale, for example, so that they perceive indiscipline or violent behaviour more readily than in the past. The data reflect how frequently teachers report encountering a particular behaviour in the classroom or around the school. The surveys do not allow us to make general statements about the volume of particular kinds of misbehaviour or violence in Scottish schools. The emphasis is on behaviour, not on the number of pupils behaving in particular ways. Indeed, by and large, teachers said that the majority of their pupils were well behaved.

The original questionnaire used in 1990 was taken from a version used in a major survey of teachers in England and Wales by Gray and Sime for the Elton Committee (DES 1989). This questionnaire was derived from teacher statements about the behaviours they encountered in the classroom and around the school and what they considered to be problematic, using earlier work by Wheldall and Merrett (1988) as a starting point. In the various administrations in Scotland some new items were added to the pupil behaviour list, largely reflecting changing sensibilities and/or new technology. For example, racist and sexist abuse to pupils or teachers were new categories in 1996, and the use of mobile 'phones was added in 2004. Most questions were closed with a 1 to 5 scale of frequency from several times daily - not at all, and there were some multiple choice questions. There was an opportunity for an open response on any issue of concern at the end of the questionnaire, and 40% of secondary teachers and 60% of secondary headteachers took advantage of this. These are used to provide illustrative quotations below.

The questions asked teachers and headteachers to indicate :

- whether they had encountered specific behaviours in the classroom or around the school in a specific week
- whether they found these behaviours difficult to deal with
- which strategies they used to promote good behaviour
- which strategies they used to punish poor behaviour
- which pupils they found most troublesome
- how serious a problem indiscipline was
- time spent on indiscipline
- their views on violent behaviour
- their priorities for improving discipline.ⁱ

The sample was broadly representative of the secondary teacher workforce, although the 2004 sample was slightly older than the 1990 or 1996 samples, reflecting the 'greying' of the teacher workforce in Scotland. Similarly, the headteacher sample was slightly older in proportional terms than that surveyed in 1990 and with similar percentages, 77% having experience of only one school as headteacher.

FINDINGS

In this section, we present four main sets of findings with comparisons over time. These are :

- the kinds of behaviours which teachers reported as occurring in their classrooms during the survey week; and the sorts of classroom behaviours which headteachers reported being referred to them;
- the strategies used for dealing with disruptive behaviour;
- perceptions of how serious a problem indiscipline is;
- priorities for improving behaviour in schools.

Type of Pupil Behaviour	% Secondary School Teachers			% Secondary Headteachers	
	1990	1996	2004	1990	2004
	N= 883	N=561	N=528	N=386	N=275
					†
1 Talking out of turn 5 4 3 2 1	98	99	99	26	55
2 Making unnecessary (non-verbal) noise	80	80	88**	7	33
3 Hindering other pupils	90	90	95**	19	65
4 Getting out of seat without permission	71	71	81**	4	27
5 Not being punctual	83	85	94**	27	56
6 Persistently infringing class rules	72	72	84**	17	73
7 Eating/chewing in class	85	85	94**	6	29
8 Calculated idleness or work avoidance	90	92	94	18	56
9 Cheeky or impertinent remarks or responses	71	72	87**	21	75
10 General rowdiness, horseplay or mucking about	67	65	82**	17	68
11 Use of mobile phones/texting	-	-	58	-	41
12 Physical destructiveness	18	18	39**	4	38
13 Racist abuse towards other pupils	-	6	11**	-	11
14 Sexist abuse or harassment of other pupils	-	17	33**	-	30
15 General verbal abuse towards other pupils	66	69	79**	22	74
16 Racist abuse towards you	-	0.5	2*	-	3
17 Sexist abuse or harassment towards you	-	3	5	-	16
18 General verbal abuse towards you	21	27	45**	21	67
19 Physical aggression towards other pupils	50	50	56	21	83
20 Physical aggression towards you	2	1	8*	2	17
* indicates significant at the 5% level between the 1996 and 2004 rates.					
** indicates significant at the 1% level between the 1996 and 2004 rates.					
† all items are statistically significant at the 1% level.					

Table 1 Percentages of secondary teachers and headteachers reporting different pupil behaviours as occurring/referred in the classroom at least once during a week, in 1990, 1996 and 2004

For the secondary school teacher data in Table 1, the prevalence of asterisks indicating a statistically significant change over time is very striking. There were 20 possible classroom behaviours listed in the 2004 version of the questionnaire. Of the 19 behaviours which were listed in 1996, 15 had shown an increase significant at the 5% level at least. We should, however, draw attention to the small numbers involved in some cases. Physical aggression towards the teacher rose from 1% (6 people) reporting this in 1996 to 8% (40 people) in 2004.

The increase in reporting of a wide range of behaviours potentially disruptive to teaching and learning is marked. So called 'low level' behaviours, such as talking out of turn, pupils being hindered in their work by other pupils, lack of punctuality, and eating in class were reported by over 90% of teachers at least once a week. Looking at behaviours which teachers perceived as occurring several times daily in 2004, the same pattern of low level behaviours emerges. For example, talking out of turn was reported by 58% of secondary teachers, eating/chewing in class by 44%, calculated idleness/work avoidance by 36%, and pupils hindering other pupils working by 33%. Across the three surveys, teachers report that it is the 'drip, drip' effect of continually having to deal with such behaviour that is wearisome.

The majority of incidents are not serious [but] the constant, repeated minor interruptions are the greatest problem. (1990)

It's the repeated dealing with these things [low level behaviour] which is so wearisome and soul-destroying. (1996)

The daily verbal abuse and tiring continual poor behaviour is demanding for staff and good pupils. (2004)

It is also worth stressing that, at a daily level, no teachers reported physical aggression, sexist or racist abuse towards them or racist abuse towards other pupils.

The data present a picture of increasing numbers of teachers reporting misbehaviour in their classrooms. While we would need to know much more about the classroom context and pupils' perceptions to build up a more nuanced and complete picture, the statistically significant increases on most items are noteworthy. Looking at pupil behaviour around the school (data not shown), 13 of the 17 behaviour items had increased in a statistically significant way. Over 9 in 10 teachers reported on a weekly basis that they encountered pupils' persistent infringement of rules, unruliness while waiting, and general rowdiness. As with classroom misbehaviour, teachers stressed that it was a small minority of pupils who behaved in these ways.

For headteachers, all the increases are significant at 1%, giving a seemingly more emphatic picture of change for the worse. We can speculate that policies on pupils being referred to the headteacher for misbehaviour may have changed in the intervening fourteen years of the two surveys, or that teachers are more likely to refer pupils to higher authority. The top three behaviours being referred to headteachers in 1990 were: unpunctuality, pupils talking out of turn, and pupil to

pupil verbal abuse. In 2004, these were: pupil to pupil physical aggression, cheeky or impertinent remarks, and pupil to pupil verbal abuse. Referral of pupils for physical aggression towards staff, while a small percentage in comparison to other behaviours, represents an increase in real numbers from 7 headteachers reporting this in 1990 to 47 in 2004. The nature of this aggression was not described, therefore it should not be assumed that outright violence occurred. Looking at the kinds of behaviours which were being referred to headteachers several times daily, it is the low level behaviours which predominate: talking out of turn, 12%; pupils hindering other pupils, 10%; cheeky or impertinent remarks, 10%; persistently infringing class rules, 9%.

Rowdiness, pupil to pupil aggression and persistently infringing school rules remained the issues most often referred to headteachers in terms of around the school behaviour. As with Table 1, all eighteen around the school behaviours referred to or encountered by headteachers showed a statistically significant increase at the 1% level.

In general, headteacher data suggest that 2004 pupil behaviour is worse. The type of pupil behaviour referred at least once a week seems more serious, and the percentages of headteachers reporting dealing with the behaviours is much higher. Once again, we emphasise that this was pupil behaviour referred to the headteacher at least once a week. At the more frequent daily or several times daily level, no headteacher reported physical aggression.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

The prevalence of pupil behaviours does not mean that teachers find them problematic. It may be that teachers have built up expertise and experience and see tackling these behaviours as part of the job. We therefore explored teachers' and headteachers' views on whether behaviours were difficult to deal with, and on the strategies used to deal with actual or potentially disruptive behaviour.

In the classroom, a higher proportion of secondary school teachers in 2004 found some pupil behaviour difficult to deal with. In 1996, about 4 in 10 people reported this; in 2004, it was 5 in 10. In 1990, it had been midway between these figures. The range of behaviours considered difficult to deal with was as wide in 2004 as in earlier surveys. This is perhaps indicative of the importance of the context of pupil behaviour. Much depends on the history of relations between pupil and teacher and the particular situation in which behaviour occurs. Equally, 'dealing with' a behaviour did not necessarily eradicate it, as the references above to the wearying effect of constantly dealing with low level disruption made clear. Pupil behaviours reported as difficult to deal with in 1990, 1996 and 2004 were much the same. It was the very common behaviour of talking out of turn which was reported by most secondary teachers to be difficult to deal with, that is, by 3 in 10 of those who encountered this behaviour in 2004.

In 1990, 2 in 10 headteachers had found some difficulty in dealing with behaviour, although no single behaviour was unanimously seen as difficult. In 2004, the figure increased to 4 in 10. No particular pupil behaviour stood out as significantly more difficult to deal with than others.

We presented teachers and headteachers with a checklist of 18 potential strategies and sanctions ranging from verbal rebukes to punishment exercises, from using humour to defuse the situation to deliberately ignoring minor disruption. The lists differed slightly in that some sanctions were available only to the headteacher. We asked which strategies were perceived as most and least effective.

For secondary teachers, the most commonly used strategies were verbal rebukes (98%), using humour (96%), and reasoning with pupils (94%). Views on the effectiveness of the various strategies and sanctions were rather less unified. The teachers could only choose one strategy as most effective and the response was scattered across all listed with no major agreement on effectiveness. For example, although the use of humour was common, only 19% of teachers noted this as the most effective strategy. As for the most ineffective approach, again the response was scattered over the possibilities, with about a quarter of respondents omitting this question. Punishment exercises topped the ranking of ineffective strategies, however, at 16%.

The picture presented in earlier surveys and in 2004 is of a kind of carrot and stick approach to managing classroom behaviour. Humour, use of praise, and reasoning with pupils seem counter-balanced by rebukes, withdrawal of privileges, and other sanctions. It is interesting, too, that a substantial percentage of teachers chose not to answer the effectiveness questions. This may be because of the context dependent nature of indiscipline. What works in one situation may be ineffective in another. Much depends on the age and stage of pupils and the history of their relationship with the teacher. Indeed, every strategy which was listed was seen as both effective and ineffective.

For the secondary headteachers, a similar picture emerged both in respect of the use of particular strategies and views on effectiveness of them. Verbal rebukes and humour were reported by 96%, followed by reasoning with pupils (84%). Headteachers do not see an obvious response to problematic pupil behaviour beyond whole school developments, such as promoting a positive school ethos, greater flexibility in the curriculum, and in teaching methods and staff development. A typical comment on improvement strategies was:

Changing the ethos of the school has helped us to improve behaviour and take in children who have been a serious problem elsewhere, and experienced no difficulty. (2004)

HOW SERIOUS A PROBLEM IS INDISCIPLINE?

We sought to answer this question by asking a number of different questions. First, as seen in Table 2, we asked, 'Discipline problems vary from school to school in

their seriousness. Looking at your own school as a whole, how serious is the problem of indiscipline in your opinion?'

How serious a problem?	% Secondary School Teachers			% Secondary School Heads	
	1990	1996	2004	1990	2004
	N=883	N=561	N=538	N=379	N=275
Very serious	5	4	10	1	3
Serious	31	30	49	13	23
Not very serious	46	51	32	54	54
Minor	16	15	8	28	19
No problem at all	2	1	0.4	4	1

Table 2 Historical comparison of secondary teachers'/headteachers' views on the seriousness of the discipline problem

As Table 2 shows, the percentage of teachers who saw the situation as either very serious or serious changed over the years from 36% in 1990, to 34% in 1996, and 59% in 2004. The marked rise in 2004 is statistically significant at the 1% level. As the teacher sample was fairly evenly divided in terms of gender (53% male and 47% female) we were able to compare their views statistically. We found that men were more inclined to see the discipline situation as serious than were women.

Headteachers appeared less concerned about the seriousness of the situation than teachers, although over 1 in 4 headteachers perceiving the situation as very serious or serious gives no cause for complacency. Headteachers may have a broader view of the school than classroom teachers and may also be concerned to portray their schools more positively. The headteacher sample, moreover, was drawn from all Scottish state secondary schools while the teacher sample was from a sub-set of these. HM Inspectors noted that 'there was significant scope for improvement in climate and relationships and in the management of behaviour, in just over half of secondary schools. . . . In a small minority of this group, roughly one in 12 secondary schools overall, HMIE found important weaknesses in the quality of relationships and behaviour by some pupils which was disrupting the learning of others.' (HMIE 2005: 5-6)

Secondly, we asked about time spent on discipline and whether violence was a problem in the school. A cautionary note is to repeat that we are dealing with perception here. We have comparative data only for 1996 and 2004 teachers. The question was not asked in 1990.

	Secondary school teachers in 1996 (N=561)	Secondary school teachers in 2004 (N=528)	Secondary Head teachers in 2004 (N=275)
	%	%	%
(a) time spent on discipline ...			
has increased	51	69	53
stayed the same	34	25	35
decreased	15	6	12
(b) pupil violence in the school ...			
is a problem	29	43	40
is not a problem	71	57	60
(c) pupil violence is ...	N=163	N=224	N=108
verbal aggression between pupils	96	96	97
physical aggression between pupils	87	79*	87
verbal aggression to teachers	69	87**	79
physical aggression to teachers	14	18	6
* indicates significant at the 5% level			
** indicates significant at the 1% level			

Table 3 Secondary teachers'/headteachers' further comments on discipline: time spent, violence

In 2004, more secondary school teachers felt that they were spending more time on discipline and the difference between the first and second columns in part (a) of Table 3 is statistically significant at the 1% level. Of course, more time spent on discipline could mean that any problem took longer than anticipated to move through the system, or be effectively dealt with, rather than imply more problems. As one teacher put it:

It's low level indiscipline, [but] chasing up detentions, etc, is tiring and time-consuming. (Teacher: 2004)

Although both sexes felt that they were currently spending more time on discipline than before, more men reported this than did women. This was statistically significant at the 1% level.

Interestingly, among a general picture of increasing numbers of teachers perceiving violent behaviour, physical aggression among pupils appears to have declined in a statistically significant way in schools seen as violent. In 1996, almost 9 in 10 teachers who saw their school as violent noted pupil to pupil physical

aggression as a characteristic; in 2004, it was almost 8 in 10. In Table 1, reporting the views of the total sample of teachers, pupil to pupil physical aggression had increased in 2004. The increase was not statistically significant at the 5% level. One possible explanation for this apparent decline in pupil to pupil physical aggression in schools seen as violent may be that in those schools great effort has been put into tackling pupil aggression.

Thirdly, we asked teachers and headteachers about the numbers of pupils causing problems. The focus on behaviour in Table 1 did not tell us anything about the extent of the behaviour among pupils and classes. About 60% of teachers found one or two classes difficult and 19% found none of their classes difficult. Small percentages found less than half (9%) and half (8%) or over half (4%) of the classes difficult. We cannot tell just how difficult these classes were, nor whether a minority or majority of pupils in the class caused difficulties. Although a few secondary teachers appeared to find the majority of their classes difficult, even a relatively well behaved class might contain one or two difficult pupils. When asked specifically about the number and characteristics of pupils who caused problems, both headteachers and teachers emphasised that the majority of pupils were well behaved. As in earlier surveys, they identified lower attaining boys in their last compulsory year of schooling as particularly difficult.

We asked teachers to think specifically about a pupil whom they found difficult to deal with and offered a list of possible characteristics of this pupil. In keeping with other studies on exclusion (Osler and Sarkey 2005) and violence in schools (Mills 2001) the overwhelming majority of pupils identified were male (79%). Other characteristics of note were that such pupils were not from an ethnic minority (0.8% of teachers identified this characteristic); about a third of teachers (32%) said that the particularly difficult pupil had special provision or support, and 57% of teachers said the particularly difficult pupil had recently been excluded from school. Only 10% of teachers identifying a particularly difficult pupil said that the pupil had a record of need. The identification of male pupils as being difficult to deal with emerged in very similar proportions of teachers in 1990 and 1996. The comparative data on other characteristics of pupils is more comprehensive for 1996. Here we see a very similar picture to that of 2004. Ethnic minority pupils hardly feature (1%), and about 8% of teachers identified a particularly difficult pupil as having a record of need. A statistically significant higher proportion (at the 1% level) of teachers in 2004 reported that the difficult pupil was receiving special provision or support (32% in 2004 and 22% in 1996). Similarly, a statistically significant higher proportion (also at the 1% level) of teachers in 2004 reported a recent history of exclusion (57% in 2004 and 48% in 1996). We can speculate that the increasing concern about behaviour has been accompanied by a greater investment in both welfare approaches (special provision and support) and in the use of exclusion as a sanction. National statistics on exclusion in Scotland began to be collected only in 1999.

In the open response, the majority of teachers and headteachers who wrote about the issue saw the inclusion of a difficult minority as detrimental to good discipline in general.

Social inclusion is having a severe effect on the notion of indiscipline with more serious, threatening and complicated incidents. This has a serious effect on other pupils. (Teacher 2004)

Data from Tables 1 and 2 and on the characteristics of difficult pupils suggest, however, that there is also a generalised problem about pupil behaviour and that the cause does not only lie in social inclusion policies. This interpretation is further supported when we consider data about priorities for improvement and compare these over time.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING DISCIPLINE

As mentioned above, a number of policies have been introduced over the past fifteen years to support improvements in behaviour in schools. Current initiatives include the provision of more support staff, reduction in class sizes, funding for in-school support bases for pupils displaying problem behaviour, and the development of welfare and support services for parents and pupils. It was therefore of particular interest to analyse teachers' perceptions of priority actions to improve discipline.

		2004 (N = 528)		
		Yes this is needed	No, it is in place already	No, it is ineffective
		%	%	%
• offering more places in special units outside the school for pupils with behaviour difficulties	**	92	5	2
• establishing smaller classes	**	90	9	1
• more guidance or support from the local authority for teachers facing problems with discipline	**	71	12	17
• more guidance and support from colleagues for teachers facing problems of indiscipline		64	31	5
• firmer communication by senior staff about rules		64	35	1
• greater use of exclusion		64	30	7
• team teaching		64	19	18
• more parental involvement		62	33	5
• More home-school workers		59	19	22
• establishing special units in the school for children displaying behavioural difficulties	**	58	36	6
• more discussion among staff		57	35	8
• more in-service training focusing on discipline problems and strategies	**	57	32	11
• more classroom assistants		57	26	17
• more counselling for pupils whose behaviour is often difficult		54	37	9
• changing climate of school		54	37	9
• building more respect for the school in the local community		54	42	4
• more coherent policy from the board of studies		53	39	8
• changing content of curriculum		52	24	24
• opportunities to see other teachers teaching		50	36	14
• more pupil involvement		50	41	9
• changing teaching styles		39	50	11

¹ For those actions marked with an asterisk, the profile of opinion in 2004 was significantly increased from that in 1996. One asterisk denotes significance at the 5% level, two at the 1% level.

Table 4 Secondary teachers' choice of priority actions to improve school discipline, 2004

Table 4 shows the distribution of response over the priorities offered and shows a mixture of responses which focus on structures, for example, special units and smaller classes and those which focus on teacher knowledge and skills, e.g. in-service training and support from local authorities, and more opportunities for team teaching. Column three, showing teachers' perceptions of ineffective strategies, is interesting. We can infer from these that there are strategies within the school's control which teachers believe could improve pupil behaviour, including:

- firmer communication by senior staff
- more coherent policy from the 'board of studies'
- more discussion among staff about discipline issues
- changing the climate of the school
- more parental involvement
- more pupil involvement
- building more respect for the school in the community
- more guidance and support from colleagues for teachers facing problems of indiscipline.

Nevertheless, such strategies need to be seen alongside the overwhelming perception of the need for smaller classes and more off-site units, which are largely outside a school's control. These top two priorities remained the same in 1996 and 2004.

It is noteworthy that the need for more home-school workers and classroom assistants was identified by over 50% of the sample as these provisions are part of the *Better Behaviour, Better Learning* intervention programme mentioned above. The data suggest that either more resource is needed for this staffing and/or that available resource has not yet found its way into the classroom.

The table can be interpreted as further evidence of the complexity of the causes of misbehaviour. Some pupils are seen as requiring special provision, some as requiring clear communication about rules and sanctions, and some require a better skilled and knowledgeable teaching force. Whether there are three distinct pupil populations is a matter for debate. McCluskey (2005), for example, illustrates how slippery such categories are and how the same pupils move up and down layers of disciplinary exclusion. Many commentators would argue that building a positive disciplinary climate in the school using the kind of strategies just described as effective benefits all pupils not just those perceived as having problem behaviour. As might be expected, there was no single action deemed most important by a majority of teachers. The top three actions chosen were firmer communication by senior staff about rules (20%); smaller classes (18%); and offering more places in special units outside school (10%).

Headteacher perceptions were similar with one notable exception. The majority of headteachers (77%) noted that a change in teaching style would improve discipline in their specific school. When asked, like the teachers, to choose only one

option for improving discipline, the top priorities were: smaller classes (21%); more places in special units outside school (18%); and changing teacher styles (10%).

Perhaps, inevitably, teachers and headteachers tended not to identify specific actions for which they had responsibility. Thus, teachers looked to senior staff to set firmer boundaries for behaviour; headteachers looked to teachers to change their teaching style, and both look to SEED to reduce class sizes and to create more special provision.

In this context, it is noteworthy that very similar comments emerge from an analysis of the open response across the surveys. A major theme is rapidly changing societal norms and values with schools being a bastion of traditional values. The following are typical:

In my fifteen years of teaching I have noticed a gradual deterioration in the behaviour of pupils of all ages. (1990: Teacher)

Pupils always have to answer back, or have the last word. (1996: Teacher)

I have seen the gradual and systematic erosion of discipline over the years. This is not really of the very violent type - it would be unusual for me to witness a violently aggressive incident. However, the daily verbal abuse and tiring continual poor behaviour is demanding for staff and good pupils. (2004: Teacher)

Poor parenting and the acceptance of lower standards of behaviour in the home compared to school was part of this theme. Presumably, not all teachers and headteachers agreed with these negative views, but very few people in any of the surveys wrote positively about parental and home influence.

At home, children expect to come first in the life of the family, and in school many of them behave in a selfish, uncaring way, with no idea of consideration for others. (1990: Teacher)

We draw a large proportion of our pupils (25%) from an area of multiple deprivation. Many families . . . do not or cannot place a high value on education. (1996: Teacher)

Pupils appear to arrive in secondary school with little control over their behaviour. (2004: Teacher)

There also seemed to be limited awareness among staff, in contrast to headteachers, about national policy on behaviour management.

	Found helpful	Unhelpful	Unaware of BBBL
Teachers (N=528)	52%	11%	37%
Headteachers (N=275)	93%	5%	2%

Table 5 Views of secondary teachers and headteachers of Better Behaviour, Better Learning recommendations

Perhaps it is not unexpected that headteachers were more aware than teachers of this strategic initiative which has brought welcome if modest additional resources to local authorities, £13m in 2001/02; £10m in 2002/03; and £10m in 2003/04. Some of this resource has been spent on classroom assistants and home-school link workers, and there has been investment in in-service training and policy review (Munn et al 2005). It may be that some teachers are unaware of the specific policy initiative under which these developments have occurred. Alternatively, ignorance on the part of over a third of the teacher sample raises questions about within school communication, given the headteacher data, and could contribute to a sense of being beleaguered in upholding traditional values and standards evident in some comments above.

DISCUSSION

The data suggest that it is the low level behaviours, such as talking out of turn, work avoidance, pupils hindering others from working, and so on, that teachers perceive most frequently in their classrooms, rather than the extreme behaviour reported in the media, and that this dominance of low level behaviour features over time. Around the school a similar picture emerges, with pupils' persistent infringement of rules, unruliness while waiting, and general rowdiness, being reported by over 9 in 10 secondary teachers. Although seemingly trivial and perhaps even an inevitable part of schooling where young people are present in large numbers, teachers consistently report the wearying effect of constantly having to deal with such behaviour. Thus, the impact on them and on the majority of pupils seen as well-behaved should not be minimised, especially given the large percentage of teachers perceiving difficulty in dealing effectively with these behaviours. The prevalence of low level behaviour is a continuing theme in research and was found in England and Wales by the Elton Committee in 1988, and more recently in Australia (Infantino and Little 2005). In this context, the request for more guidance and

support from local authorities and from colleagues for teachers facing problems with indiscipline and more in-service training can be seen as an acceptance by teachers of responsibility for managing behaviour in schools and classrooms. These priorities sit alongside broader structural priorities, such as offering more places in special units and establishing smaller classes. The need for the majority of schools to disseminate good practice in promoting positive behaviour more effectively was highlighted by HMIE in its review of the implementation of *Better Behaviour, Better Learning* (HMIE 2005: 28), although the review acknowledged that 'most [local] authorities had provided some appropriate staff development for teachers in promoting positive behaviour' (HMIE 2005: 17). The Inspectors, however, drew attention to the lack of focus on the links between effective teaching and learning and behaviour management in some authority programmes. As indicated above, there is no shortage of books, video resources, and inter-active materials on behaviour management. The emphasis of many of these on behaviourist or quasi-behaviourist approaches can discourage teachers from making connections between curriculum content and teaching methods on the one hand, and pupils' behaviour on the other. It will be recalled that 77% of headteachers believed that a change in teaching styles would improve discipline in their specific school, and over 50% of teachers identified changing the content of the curriculum as a priority.

As far as violent behaviour is concerned, the data present no grounds for complacency. Physical aggression on a weekly basis towards teachers shows a statistically significant increase over time, although absolute numbers are small. Verbal aggression on a weekly basis likewise shows a statistically significant increase over time, although there is no significant increase in the daily or several times daily reports across the three surveys. The implication is that the majority of secondary teachers encounter such behaviour from a small minority of pupils or classes whom they teach infrequently. A similar picture is presented when considering verbal and physical aggression among pupils, again suggesting particularly difficult pupils or classes encountered once a week. While the data does not give us any information about the contexts in which pupil to pupil aggression takes place, it raises questions about the possibility of physical or verbal bullying, as distinct from the routine rough and tumble and 'teasing' that takes place among pupils. Debarbieux (2003: 584-585) reports that '6.3% of the individuals in a representative sample of 3,265 pupils in colleges (12-16 year olds) declare they have been victims of extortion, 73.2% that they have been insulted, 16.7% that they have suffered from racism, and 24.2% that they have been hit'. Again, context is important to give meaning to these statistics from French pupils, but enough is known about bullying among pupils in school systems around the world to infer that some of what Scottish teachers and headteachers were perceiving were forms of bullying (eg Rigby 2002; Smith 2002). It is impossible to tell from our data whether the same pupils and classes are the regular perpetrators of physical and verbal violence reported by teachers, but, if they are, the implications for at least some of the pupils who are on the receiving end could be very serious.

Teachers and headteachers identified lower attaining 15-16 year old boys as the most troublesome, and this is reflected in exclusion statistics where boys are four times as likely to be excluded on a fixed term than girls (SEED 2005d). Similarly, boys

outnumber girls in special schools for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Lloyd 2005b). It is interesting that male teachers were significantly more inclined than female teachers to see the discipline situation in schools as serious and to be more likely to be spending more time on discipline issues. Recent research on gender has suggested that problem behaviour by girls is often unrecognised and thus unreported by teachers and that girls exclude themselves from schooling either via parentally condoned absence or by withdrawing more subtly from classroom learning (Osler and Vincent 2003; Lloyd 2005b; McCluskey 2005). Little is known about the perceptions of teachers in terms of gender, in relation to disruption and violence.

As mentioned above, it is commonplace to distinguish welfare and punitive approaches to managing pupil behaviour and for teachers to assert that it is the minority of pupils who cause problems. There is a more recent tendency to see educational inclusion as creating problems in behaviour management as pupils who would, in the past, have been educated in special schools are now being educated in mainstream, or so the argument goes. It is noteworthy that the creation of more places in special schools has remained consistently among the top three priorities for secondary teachers in 1990, 1996 and 2004. This period spans Conservative and Labour governments, the establishment of a Scottish Parliament, and major changes in education policy, including those on curriculum, assessment, teacher pay and working conditions, and in 1990 and 1996 educational inclusion did not feature on the policy landscape.

These years, however, did see the development and implementation of policies designed to include children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, following the recommendations of the Warnock Committee (DES 1978) and embedded in the Education (Scotland) Act 1981. The Warnock Committee stated that up to 20% of children would be in need of some form of special provision during their school career, and that such provision should take place, wherever possible, in a mainstream school. In 1990 and 1996 increasing numbers of children with special needs were being educated in mainstream classrooms among whom were some pupils categorised as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Thus, teachers' views on the need for more specialist provision may have been a reaction to changes in the pupil populations in their classrooms, with which they felt unable to cope. Munn et al (1992), writing about the practice of teachers identified by pupils as 'getting the class to work well', described teachers as having a 'normal desirable state' in their classrooms and taking actions and selecting goals which interacted with classroom conditions. They demonstrated that the teachers' perception of their pupils in terms of abilities, interests and behaviour, is a key condition affecting practice. The presence of different kinds of pupils in teachers' classrooms thus can have a major impact on teachers' normal desirable state in the classroom and lead to teachers feeling de-skilled or inadequate and/or redefining their notion of professionalism. On the other hand, the lack of sufficient places in special provision for children categorised as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties has been a major theme in Scottish committees of enquiry since the 1950s (MacLeod 2005). Whatever the reason for the persistence of the demand for more special provision, we can be confident that the supply of places will be insufficient to

meet demand and that additional places would quickly be filled. Scotland has never experienced a surfeit of special places over demand since the special sector was created for maladjusted pupils in the 1930s. Moreover, a study by McCluskey (2004) challenged the notion of a fixed population of problem pupils in classrooms and revealed that there was no clear cut distinction between 'disruptive' and 'disrupted' pupils. The same pupil can sometimes be disruptive and other times disrupted by the behaviour of others. Similarly writing on social, emotional and behavioural difficulties reveals that it is a slippery concept whose boundaries are unclear (e.g. Lloyd and Munn 1998; Macleod, 2005, Cooper, 2001).

The wide range of strategies identified for dealing with disruptive behaviour, and the failure of any single strategy to emerge convincingly as the most effective, should come as no surprise. Given the context dependent nature of indiscipline, it would have been remarkable if a particular strategy emerged as significant. We know from research that a wide range of pro-active and pre-emptive strategies are used by teachers to minimise the opportunities for disruption and that a similarly wide range is used to react to indiscipline (Kounin 1970; Munn et al 1992).

The most extreme strategy of exclusion tended to be seen as giving much needed respite for staff and pupils and to send a signal to all parents about pupil behaviour. However, only 18% of teachers and 23% of headteachers considered exclusion to have a good effect on the excluded pupil.

Perceptions of the seriousness of the problem of indiscipline show a marked change over time and are consistent with the significant increases in the numbers of teachers and headteachers reporting encountering the behaviours listed in Table 1. It is also worth speculating that media reports consistently highlighting bad behaviour in schools, and anti-social behaviour of young people in general, encourage a blacker view of discipline and help to construct a picture of modern Scotland and Britain where young people are out of control. To date, this potential effect has not discouraged applications to initial teacher education in Scotland in general, although there is a shortage of applicants for mathematics and physics.

CONCLUSION

The most striking findings of the data presented here are the increasing numbers of secondary school teachers and headteachers reporting a wide range of potentially disruptive behaviours in the classroom and around the school. As well as presenting a challenging environment for learning and teaching for some of the time, the percentages reporting pupil to pupil verbal and physical aggression are troubling. Relations among pupils are an undoubted cause for concern, given the important socialising role which schools play. It is important, however, to remember that teachers and headteachers consistently over time identify a small number of pupils as causing problems and stress that the vast majority of their pupils are well behaved.

What, then, are the conclusions in terms of policy and practice from the data reported here and taking into account the extensive literature on school discipline mentioned in the introduction?

In national policy terms, the data suggest that SEED is correct to focus on ways of equipping teachers to deal effectively with low level behaviours, albeit within a wider range of interventions specified in *Better Behaviour, Better Learning* (Scottish Executive 2001). A recent review of initial teacher education has highlighted the need for more provision and practice on behaviour management for beginning teachers (Scottish Executive 2005b). Other current policy interventions, such as the reduction of class sizes in primary 1 and in secondary, English and mathematics are congruent with a key priority identified by teachers and headteachers. Similarly, the implementation of the recommendations of a national review of the school curriculum 3-18 (Scottish Executive 2005a) suggest greater flexibility in curriculum planning and provision and greater autonomy for schools and teachers. The provision of more specialist off-side units is an ideological question, which is unlikely to be resolved by research evidence. What is clear is the need for classroom assistants, home-school link workers, and more multi-agency working to support children and young people in need. New legislation on additional support needs may be helpful here, but it is too early to tell.

At local authority level the move away from education department to departments of children and families, encompassing former education, social work and, sometimes, community and leisure services under one Director, should, in the fullness of time, encourage a more holistic view of a young person's needs and, thus, of provision to support these at home and in school. The recruitment and training of specialist behaviour support staff to work in individual schools and across the authority will help to supply the expert advice and discussion which a majority of teachers say they would welcome, as would more in-service training.

Teachers' views on what schools could do to promote good discipline have already been reported. When faced with disruptive behaviour in the classroom, teachers are unlikely to consider the range of theoretical explanations for the causes of such behaviour but need a repertoire of skills and knowledge upon which they can draw to act effectively. The identification of team teaching and more opportunities for discussion suggest coaching and mentoring as important strategies for schools to adopt. These strategies are widely used in masters degree programmes for teachers and aspiring headteachers. Schools could develop their own structures and frameworks to encourage such approaches for all staff, not just those doing higher degrees. Many schools no doubt already have such strategies in place and opportunities for sharing experience would be valuable.

Above all, however, in our view, we need to create a climate in which problems about behaviour are discussed in a way that is solution focussed rather than seeking to apportion blame or to demonise young people, parents or teachers. To that end, more inter-disciplinary research which tested theories about causes and cures about problem behaviour would be helpful by revealing both the complex and multi-faceted causes and the explanations of successful practice. Until now, the tendency has been for psychologists, sociologists, social theorists and educationalists to work

in relative isolation. The more we are beginning to understand about classroom behaviour, the more evident is the need for inter-disciplinary research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to SEED who funded the study reported here and to the teachers and headteachers who took part in the surveys. We acknowledge the contributions of colleagues in the School of Education to this paper through informal discussion and debate. We are particularly grateful to Professor Sheila Riddell, Dr Gwynedd Lloyd, Dr Joan Stead, Dr Gale Macleod and Dr Gillian McCluskey.

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ⁱ The teacher response rate in 1990 meant that we were able to describe within school variation in perceptions. This was not possible in 1996 and 2004.