



Click and tick

New software to help teachers tackle bad behaviour - and praise the good - is having a positive effect on pupil discipline

By **Julie Nightingale** Illustration **Pablo Bisoglio**

King's Hedges, a large two-form entry primary school, has had problems managing behaviour, but the cause was unwieldy documentation rather than disruptive pupils. Headteacher Jo Angel says: "The behaviour policy was generating vast amounts of paperwork. While teachers were noting good and bad behaviour in the classroom, managers weren't getting the information." In April, the Cambridge school introduced i-Behave, a software package developed at nearby Chesterton Community College, which enables them to instantly log good and bad behaviour, share the information across the school electronically, and identify behaviour trends.

Reporting or tracking incidents on the new system is simple. Once loaded, the programme presents a list to all of the teachers in the school. The user selects their name, bringing up a list of groups they teach, then selects an individual pupil from within a group. Clicking on 'good' or 'bad' opens a drop-down menu of incidents



compiled in line with the school's behaviour policy, such as 'good piece of work achieved' or 'low-level defiance'. Teachers can also record an event for a group of pupils – for example, if they have all listened consistently in a lesson.

Jo, who also teaches, says: "The screen layout is straightforward, and it takes just seconds to click on an incident. I wait until the end of the lesson and record all incidents together, rather than do them as I go along. I had children whistling in my class this morning and if I'd stopped each time, it would have held things up. It was easier to log them all at the end. Previously, I'd have had to go and find each child's file, make out an action report and probably search for a pen, so it's a real timesaver."

Reception class teacher Sarah Merritt agrees that the software has helped cut paperwork and save time.

"The action records we had before were on paper, and sometimes they had to be copied more than once to give the information to different people. This is obviously much quicker.

"I record the information at the end of a session, although others log the incident with the child present. That can work well with older children, because the pupil sees then that it's a permanent record."

The school has few problems with bad behaviour, and it is too soon to determine whether i-Behave has helped reduce the low-level problems that do exist, says Jo. But the software is enabling them to pick up on those that do occur and to celebrate good behaviour.

"It's a powerful way to highlight not just good work, but also things such as motivation, engagement and good effort." Children who rack up several positive incidents are also rewarded with recognition in a weekly 'merit assembly'.

At parents' evening, mothers and fathers are shown a summary of their child's good and bad behaviour, on screen, by the teacher. The school is also trialling an i-Behave facility that automatically generates letters home when an incident of particularly good or bad behaviour is logged. Jo says: "For parents who don't engage much with us, it will be another way of starting a dialogue."

The software can collate data across classes or year groups and present it as graphical data, so Key Stage co-ordinators and year heads can see patterns – for example, if a group of children is persistently disruptive at certain times of day.

i-Behave is designed for behaviour management, but it can also record concerns about a child's welfare. Sarah, who is also Foundation Stage team leader, says: "I noticed, for example, that one child was cropping up for both poor behaviour and concerns about not being clean. When we discussed this at the team meeting, we decided to ask the parents in to make sure everything was fine at home."

This aspect of i-Behave is proving a useful tool at strategic level. Jo says: "I make on average two referrals to social care a week. With i-Behave, I just click on a child's name and bring up any cause for concern. It's a very easy way of getting information about the whole dynamic."

ABOUT i-BEHAVE

i-Behave was developed by 3C, the enterprise arm of Chesterton Community College in Cambridge, in partnership with software company Isis. Annual cost to primary schools is £399, including service and upgrades. Behaviour categories can be tailored to suit an individual school's behaviour management policy. Information: www.improvebehaviour.co.uk