

through voluntary responses controlled by their consequences (Woollard, 2010). The theory also places emphasis on the belief that individuals learn behaviours by being rewarded for their actions or 'right responses' (positive reinforcement), and is often witnessed in schools, as pupils may learn to replicate certain behaviours when associating them with praise or rewards. Similarly, it is insisted that removing an unpleasant reinforcer can also strengthen behaviour (negative reinforcement) as it removes an unpleasant experience (Moore, 2012). For example, as DfES (2006) asserted, disruptive and inappropriate behaviour may limit children's learning, and so by removing this, it may create an environment that allows learning to be maximised. Skinner also asserts that when unwanted behaviours are followed by punishments or a negative response, the behaviour is weakened – for example School A's Card system.

Conversely, Skinner's research for this theory was predominantly carried out on animals, and so its ability to be generalised within children and schools is questionable. Staats (2006), however, highlights the extensive research carried out on humans to investigate behaviour and reveals that results corresponded with those of Skinner's, and as discussed by Moore (2012), it can also be *witnessed in schools*.

Furthermore, upon observations within a year 6 class (Class 6) in school A, it was discovered that as stated in the policy, four large and clear classroom rules were displayed at the front of the classroom (*Be Kind and think of others; Listen to others; Sit properly and face the front; Always try hard*). At most points, children would be verbally notified if they were misbehaving or not complying with class rules, and only in extreme cases would they be given a 'warning' card. In terms of praise, children were rewarded with 'merits' when producing outstanding work or achieving high

demonstrating my ability to meet teaching standards (TS7), and reinforce appropriate behaviours.

Furthermore, as stated in School A's behaviour policy, when a child reaches 50/100/200 merits, they are given a certificate during a 'merit' assembly. Parents are invited to join these assemblies; recognising and celebrating their child's success and achievements. Children are given praise/social rewards during these assemblies - which can often be a very effective strategy to promote positive behaviour (Bear, 2010). Consequently, Henderlog & Lepper (2002) insist that offering praise to children is extremely beneficial for their self-esteem and motivation; encouraging to perform at their best and exceed their expectations - providing that the praise is perceived as sincere. As Kohn (2011, cited in Robins 2012 p62 ) states,

'to the extent we as educators want to help children feel good about themselves, we would do better to treat them with respect than to shower them with praise'.

Essentially, it is advised that praise should be given to children when it is evident that they have worked hard as opposed to little effort being given, as there is a risk praise may lose its impact (Johnson, 2012). Such advice is put into practice in School A, as praise is given when efforts are evident and when a reasonable amount of 'merits' have received as a result of 'excellent' work being completed.

Furthermore, not issuing enough praise can be very damaging for children's self-esteem and confidence (Johnson, 2012), which is crucial when maximising pupil learning (National College, 2010). The confidence and self-esteem of pupils in School A, nevertheless, is not only increased through rewards/social rewards, but through parental involvement being encouraged - which produces positive outcomes for their academic achievements (Anderson & Minke (2007), Driessen et al. (2007)).

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