

Part 3

Read the following newspaper article and then answer questions 24–29 on page 78. Indicate the letter A, B, C or D against the number of each question 24–29. Give only one answer to each question.

Classrooms with the writing on the wall

Maintaining classroom discipline is a growing problem for many schools. Some children seem incapable of following the rules, perhaps because they feel they are unreasonable or unclear.

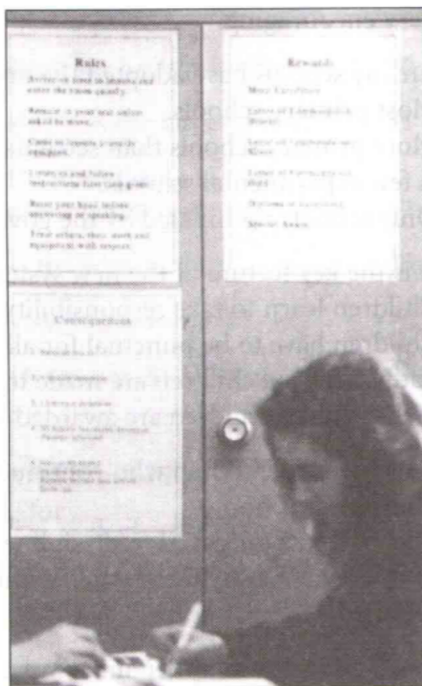
There can be no such excuses at Bebington High School on the Wirral. When children misbehave at Bebington, the teacher immediately writes their names on the classroom blackboard. They know they are in trouble and they know what the penalty is likely to be. Their classmates know too that the choice to break the rules was their own.

The effect, claim the proponents of this American system of discipline, has been to improve behaviour, allowing more time to be spent on teaching. "Assertive discipline" was introduced into Bebington last September and Margaret Hodson, a science teacher, says the results are "little short of a miracle".

Since the programme was introduced into England two years ago, 450 schools, 80 per cent of them primary have adopted the scheme. Whether the programme spreads more widely depends to some extent on the government's attitude. Adrian Smith, of Behaviour Management, the Bristol-based company marketing the scheme in Britain, will this week meet Eric Forth, the Junior Schools Minister, to tell him of the benefits achieved by schools using the programme.

Bebington, a 1,000-pupil 11-to-18 secondary modern school, was always considered good for a school of its type, but staff claim that standards of behaviour increased dramatically last term, with an improvement in the work rate of the children and less stress on the teachers.

The basis of the programme, which costs schools £22 a day for each person trained, is that all children have a right to choose how they behave but they must face the consequences of that choice. A set of straightforward rules is displayed on a wall in each classroom, together with a set of rewards and consequences.



No excuses: Lesley Ann McFeat at work at Bebington

The rules at Bebington are: arrive on time to lessons and enter the room quietly; remain in your seat unless asked to move; come to lessons properly equipped; listen to and follow instructions the first time they are given; raise your hand before answering or speaking; and treat others, their work and equipment with respect.

Pupils who behave well during a lesson are rewarded with an "R" mark in the teacher's record book. Six Rs win them a "bronze" letter of commendation to take home to their parents. Twelve "Rs" bring a silver letter, 18 a gold, and 24 a diploma of excellence presented by the head teacher at assembly. Diploma winners are then able to choose a special award in negotiation with staff, such as a non-uniform day or a trip out.

Teachers can also award a certificate of merit for individual pieces of good work or

behaviour or for long-term excellent punctuality or attendance. All letters and certificates earned by the pupils are eventually kept in their record of achievement, available to potential employers.

The sanctions open to teachers for pupils who break the rules are: detention of five minutes, 15 minutes or 30 minutes at lunchtime with the parents informed. The ultimate sanction before being excluded is being sent to the academic remove, where children are isolated from the rest of the school for periods ranging from one lesson to a whole day. They are continually supervised by a member of the staff and their parents are invited to the school to discuss their child's behaviour.

Assertive discipline allows the staff to deal quickly with disruptive pupils: children can see the consequence of their action on the wall. As a result, the time spent on teaching in the classroom is up substantially, says John Adamson, a modern languages teacher at the school.

In adapting the scheme for British use, the Bebington staff, who all agreed that it was the right move for their school, had to revise the rewards system, which in American schools tends to be material. Offers of sweets or gifts for good behaviour were deemed inappropriate.

Paul Shryane, the deputy head at Bebington, says: "Much assertive discipline is based on sound traditional educational practice. What is new is the formalised consistency of a whole school approach, and the consistent rewarding of those who achieve the standards asked of them."

Put rather more controversially, society has moved on, it seems, from the time where the teacher could expect good behaviour from the majority of pupils as a matter of course. Now they have to reward it.

DAVID TYTLER

24 What are the results of the new system at Bebington High School?

- A It's too early to say.
- B Disappointing so far.
- C Fairly promising.
- D Very encouraging.

25 How many schools have adopted the new scheme?

- A Most primary schools.
- B More primary schools than secondary schools.
- C A few experimental schools.
- D Only schools nominated by the government.

► **Question 26**

Option D: Beware of options which contain words which are the same as, or similar to, words in the text. They may not mean exactly the same thing.

26 What is the key feature of the new system?

- A Children learn to take responsibility for their actions.
- B Children have to be punctual for all their lessons.
- C Badly-behaved children are made to feel ashamed.
- D Well-behaved children are awarded with medals.

27 What happens to children who continue to behave badly?

- A They are sent home.
- B Their parents are asked to discipline them.
- C They are kept away from other pupils for a time.
- D They have to miss lunch.

► **Question 28**

Option D: Beware of 'all-or-nothing' options which may say more than is actually true.

28 How does the scheme in Britain compare with the American one?

- A The rules are stricter.
- B The punishments are less severe.
- C The rewards are different.
- D It's exactly the same.

29 What seems to be the writer's view of the subject?

- A The system is more suitable for America than Britain.
- B It's a pity good behaviour can't be taken for granted any more.
- C Children who behave badly should be helped, not punished.
- D It's a controversial idea and only time will tell if it's successful.