

Tom Bennett, Independent Review of Behaviour in Schools. March 2017

The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers.

Socrates 469-399 BC.

Well I would wouldn't I...

In a recent discussion in the Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties¹ some serious and experienced experts have a crack at understanding the disparate aetiological underpinnings of young people's behaviours in educational settings. Haunting the whole issue is that we have been tackling behaviour in schools since Socrates and we still can't get it right for everyone and in particular those whose behaviour in atomised forms never conforms to prevailing educational or learning settings. Perhaps it's got nothing to do with schools.

To that end **Tom Bennett's, Creating a Culture: How school leaders can optimise behaviour. Independent Review of Behaviour in Schools. (March 2017) DFE**, does what it says and rounds up all that is sensible, obvious (to you and me of course) and insightful, about establishing optimal learning cultures. Most importantly it is a review, an essay of what is good out in the educational world, and importantly a searchlight into what works. If any of the exemplar schools or services are near you and you are regularly locking and unlocking the school toilets, then make a visit to your local karma culture. In particular, as he is a member of *engage in their future*, but also a good person (the most important factor in getting your culture right!) go and visit John d'Abbro's New Rush Hall and he will let you have all of his secrets. <http://www.newrushhallschool.co.uk/page/?title=Home&pid=1>

Having read the review there wasn't a single thing I disagreed with and indeed most of what Tom Bennett has produced I would thoroughly endorse. Within school communities and learning cultures Mr Bennett has carefully, sensitively and with clear evidence provided a very good handbook for leaders to use in the face of 'anti learning behaviour'.

"Thus the task is not so much to see what no one has yet seen, but to think what nobody yet has thought about that which everybody sees" Schopenhauer

Mr. Bennett is rightly sceptical of the perception that our schools are overrun with hordes of uncivilised louts but sanguine enough to know that disruption to learning is also anti-social and (should be) anti the culture set by leaders of schools. In particular sections on '**commonly found features of the most successful schools**' and the core of the review '**recommendations for school leaders**', is a valuable and clear and leads on to **culture building**, with evidenced based scaffolding and some pertinent drawings and diagrams by Oliver Caviglioli.

Tom Bennet has to write about behaviour as the new DfE behaviour 'guru', 'Czar', 'Tsar', or whatever and having seen him in public and in print he doesn't seem the autocrat he is declaimed. This current review supports what we would all agree is good practice, not least in emphasising staff wellbeing and staff training, but overall about building relationships and leaders modelling a positive learning culture.

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¹ Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. Volume 20. No 1. MARCH 2015