

The inspector or observer who grades your lesson will make a decision about the standard of your teaching in the opening minutes. Of course, no inspector worth her Armani suit would admit to such a thing – grading judgements are arrived at once all the evidence has been collated, at the end of the observation, with careful deliberation...blah, blah, blah. To judge quickly is human, natural and instinctive. When you have just 30 minutes for an observation, it's also essential.

Being observed requires a teacher to sustain an apparently serene performance, even if they are silently imploring the gods to stop Ryan from kicking off. Observers and inspectors change the dynamic in the room. They change the behaviour of the children; don't let them change yours. An outstanding behaviour performance requires you to play many roles and characters with different motivations. From quizzical disappointment ("This is not like you! Did you really pour paint into the computer / wash the iPad in the sink / give Chelsea an uninvited haircut?") to assertive certainty ("Your mother would not like that") to faux empathy ("Yes, it was a special rubber, and now it has gone. Poor rubber.").

### **The five minute rule**

Outstanding behaviour management starts at the door of the classroom with an Oscar-winning performance. You must play a high energy, infectious and irresistible character who interests, provokes and engages.

The first five minutes is critical, so plan and rehearse this well. Use short bursts of highly engaging performance to inject eagerness into every child; your enthusiasm must be infectious and your direction unstoppable. In the first five minutes you are meeting, greeting, smiling, shaking hands and handing out responsibilities. Children should be made to feel important, or better still, irreplaceable: "Thank goodness you have arrived! Your time keeping / negotiation / drama skills are much needed today."

From the moment they arrive, catch children who are following

# Be quick about it

You have five minutes to impress the Ofsted inspector, says Paul Dix, so make your first impression count...

the routine and reinforce their behaviour by marking tallies on the chart, putting marbles in the jar or adding leaves to the tree. Children who are doing the right thing are deliberately acknowledged first, those wobbling are spoken to quietly. It is your performance that breaks the children out of their morning torpor and prepares them to learn. If you can convince pupils that you do indeed live in the cupboard and have no time for anybody else but them, you're on the right track.

Don't forget to consider the stage design for your performance. When children walk into your classroom, what are the visual cues that you can use to adjust and refocus behaviour? How are the boundaries made clear? Do rules, routines and expectations exist only in your head or are they shared with the children? What is your mechanism for reinforcing good behaviour, where is your ladder of consequences? Does the entrance to your room scream good order and personal discipline or is it a cacophony of different messages?

### **Stop talking about behaviour**

For outstanding behaviour management, substitute 'the behaviour conversation' for one that focuses on the learning. Teachers who get caught up in conversations that are just

about behaviour find themselves going round and round in ever decreasing circles. The plea to 'behave better' or to 'stop being naughty' has little effect, other than to confirm to the child that some types of conduct attract more attention than others. The 'Why can't you behave?' talk or the 'Will you please behave nicely!' appeal is similarly ineffective in moving children back to the task at hand. The problem with poor behaviour is that it stops children learning. This should be echoed in every conversation. The problem is not the child, or the behaviour. The problem is that learning has stopped.

### **When things go wrong**

If an incident occurs in an observed lesson, it does not mean that your outstanding grade is automatically in jeopardy. In fact, it will be an opportunity for you to show your emotional resilience, fairness and consistency as you apply the plan for behaviour. In SEBD schools, Pupil Referral Units and Special Schools there are plenty of outstanding lessons and teachers are not able to avoid a series of difficult and potentially explosive situations. Ryan's 'accidental' falling off the chair routine might seem disastrous, but the behaviour does not mean failure. How you deal with it is what's assessed.

**Sign up for CPD**

Paul Dix is touring the UK with his practical and theatrical INSET. To book Paul, call Ellie on 020 7000 1735 or go to [pivotal education.com](http://pivotaleducation.com)

Make your intervention for deliberately obstructive behaviour no more than 30 seconds. Stop improvising and go to your safe and predictable intervention script. Offer clear choices, remind the students of their previous good behaviour and withdraw, leaving the child feeling like they could and should take control of their behaviour and turn it round. Leave the intervention with the child feeling angry at you and it will take much longer to get back on the good foot.

Don't try to turn Ryan into an outstanding human being by lunchtime. Don't loom or hover, but give him time for the message to sink in.

### **New style Ofsted inspections**

Ofsted inspectors have been told to try and uncover the one off 'show lessons'. They will ask children if lessons are usually like this. They will ask any children they choose and not just the ones that you try to put in front of them. If the inspectors feel they are watching a 'one

## Stagecraft

### Essential props for the finest performance...

1. Certificates, stickers and positive notes (to waft as you tour the class)
2. A tally chart to signal when children have earned a point towards the class reward
3. Post-it notes for discreet communication and encouragement
4. A corridor pass for essential trips to the toilet
5. A private list to note down children issued with sanctions
6. A red card - or simple mechanism to call for support
7. Music to change the pace / atmosphere / intensity

night only' show, they will dive deeper into the children's opinions. Remember all those, 'How to teach an Ofsted lesson' books? They will need to be rewritten. Inspectors are looking for evidence of patterns of teaching and learning. They are looking for performances that are honed and rehearsed over time. Teaching the ideal Ofsted lesson can no longer be blagged like last minute homework.

While I was working with staff at a special school on 'The Outstanding Teaching Performance', a teacher reflected that the first five minutes of her lessons had been the same for the last 15 years: get them in, take the register, do the starter and introduce the objectives. Predictable but dull, safe but not engaging. If she wants to shift to Good and Outstanding then it must be time for a change. Time to try some new beginnings, new roles and take some risks.

When the stage door closes and you are once again in the spotlight, make sure that you don't just know your lines but you have a performance that will make children, observers and inspectors sit up and listen.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Dix is lead trainer at Pivotal Education and author of *Taking Care of Behaviour*. For free tips and resources, visit [pivotaleducation.com](http://pivotaleducation.com)

