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NB SS Level 3 Support: The Principals' Viewpoint
Overview

"Innovation—any new idea—by definition will not be accepted at first...It takes repeated attempts, endless demonstrations, monotonous rehearsals before innovation can be accepted and internalized by an organization. This requires staying power and, yes, ‘courageous patience’." (Bennis & Nanus, 1985)

Innovation, the process of changing established practices, procedures, viewpoints and in some cases aspirations has been the subject of an extensive and diverse body of educational research. Studies have explored the effects of educational change on student learning (Hattie, 2009; Hofman, et al., 2012; Iverson, 2012; Iverson, et al., 2009; Lomos, et al., 2011; Slavin, et al., 2010; Wigfield & Wentzel, 2007); the critical role of teachers’ continuing professional development in order to implement and sustain pedagogic innovations (Geijsel, et al., 2001; Johnson, 2006; Vielf, et al., 2012) and the characteristics of educational organisations (schools, colleges, universities, etc.), referred to as “innovation environments” or “innovation climates” (Chang, Chung, & Bennington, 2011; Geijsel, et al., 2001; Moolenaar, et al., 2010; Van der Vegt, et al., 2005) in which conditions, attitudes and systems are conducive and receptive to change. In discussing the elements necessary to nurture educational innovation, Geijsel, Sleegers, van der Berg and Kelchtermans (2001) assert that “Not only the objective characteristics of the innovation but also the manner in which significance is attached to the innovation by those involved appear to be of particular importance for a successful innovation” (p. 133). Throughout the literature, the role of leadership is emphasised and reiterated as key to the acceptance, realisation and continuation of educational innovations and change (Holmes, et al., 2013; Ibrahim & Al-Mashhadani, 2012; Klingner, et al., 2013; Midthassel, et al., 2000; Onorato, 2013; MacRuairc, 2012; Wasserstein-Warnet & Klein, 2000).

This report is a component of continuing NBSS research on innovative Level 3 support programmes provided to partner schools with a particular focus on NBSS Behaviour Support Classrooms and the

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1The NBSS offers a systematic continuum of support that assists its partner schools in addressing behavioural issues on three levels: Level 1 – School-wide support (including systems, policies, rules and routines), Level 2 – Target Interventions (i.e. work with specific groups of students) and Level 3 – Intensive, individualised interventions (see www.nbss.ie).
NBSS Behaviour for Learning Programme. Previous studies have addressed the implementation of Level 3 Support (Henefer, 2010) as well as explored the experiences of the Level 3 teachers and the views of the students who have received this support (NBSS, 2014). The following documents the observations and opinions of the principals whose schools are currently providing Level 3 support either through Behaviour Support Classrooms or the Behaviour for Learning Programme.

BACKGROUND

The National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) was established in 2006 by the Department of Education and Skills in response to the recommendations of the Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools (Martin, 2006). The Task Force, proposing a continuum of provision for behavioural support for schools, recommended the establishment of Behaviour Support Classrooms (BSCs) “…in those schools that cater, on a regular basis, for numbers of students whose behaviour is unsupportable within the confines of a mainstream classroom” (p. 144). The authors emphasised that BSCs should only be provided to those schools with a “genuine need” (p. 102) and should be part of a school’s consistent, school-wide approach to positive behaviour for learning.

From the outset, the philosophy underpinning the NBSS BSC programme was that all young people can thrive in school if they are provided with the support(s) they need. Level 3 NBSS support is defined as “intensive, individualised intervention” in that the work undertaken is tailored specifically to the unique needs of the individual student. It is offered to those students who, despite receiving both School-wide Level 1 support with their peers as well as monitored, targeted interventions in groups at Level 2, continue to experience significant behavioural difficulties in school. At the time of this study Behaviour Support Classrooms are established in 22 NBSS partner schools. The NBSS advises that the BSC (implementing intensive, short-term individualised interventions) is an integral part of a school-wide approach to promoting positive behaviour and should be seen across the whole school community as a centre of “rigorous learning” (Sproson, 2004, p.169). As recommended by international best practice (Hayward, 2002), the classrooms are staffed by two full-time, qualified

2 The NBSS provides Level 3 support as well to partner schools that do not have Behaviour Support Classrooms or the Behaviour for Learning Programme.

3 Behaviour Support Classrooms were first introduced to NBSS partner schools in 2007/2008.
post primary teachers who develop, implement and monitor individualised student behaviour plans to help their students develop the skills needed for positive behaviour for learning.

In addition to the BSC programme, the Behaviour for Learning Programme (BfL) was introduced in 2009/2010. In 33 partner schools, each BfL teacher works full time with students (both individually and in small groups). The work is specifically designed to address the student’s social, emotional, behavioural and/or academic needs to help develop their behaviour for learning skills. At the time of this study in 2013, 4,363 students had received Level 3 support either through the BSC or the BfL programmes.

**Methodology**

The provision of these two Level 3 programmes offers school communities an opportunity to employ and develop innovative approaches and strategies to address the needs of those students who consistently struggle with the range of behavioural skills necessary to progress in mainstream classrooms. Because the ethos of the programmes are grounded in a school-wide approach to positive behaviour for learning, their functioning, their success and their sustainability are contingent upon the support of the whole school community. As leaders, the role of principals as critical agents in the embedding, promotion, cultivation and durability of these programmes is essential. Because principals are so central to the successful and productive functioning of these programmes, it was clear that the research on NBSS Level 3 supports required a forum for their opinions and views.

In June 2013, the NBSS requested principals in the 50 participating schools to complete a questionnaire reviewing the Level 3 programme within their schools (22 BSCs and 28 BfLs). The questionnaire (Appendix A), comprised of a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions, sought their opinions on a range of areas related to the programmes. These included their views on the effect of the programmes on students, the strengths and challenges of the programmes, parental responses as well as their impressions of the possible effect(s) of the programme across the whole school community. By September 2013, 49 completed questionnaires were returned to the NBSS. Analysis of the quantitative data was provided by Survey Monkey in the form of frequency analyses presenting both totals and percentages for each question. The principals’ open-ended responses were entered into NVivo9 qualitative analysis software whereupon data were coded initially according to the general themes of the questionnaire and then further in relation to emerging categories within these themes.
Findings

This section will present the findings from the analyses of the principals’ quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. While 98.0% (N=49) of the principals returned questionnaires, in some instances a minority of respondents did not complete all questions. This is indicated in the presentation of the findings below. Findings were classified and are reported according to three broad themes: (1) The effect of the programmes on students; (2) The programmes within the whole school environment; (3) The perceived strengths and challenges of the programmes.

The Effect of the Programmes on Students

The majority of questions contained in the principals’ questionnaire were in relation to the effect that they thought the particular Level 3 programme had on the students who had received this support during the year. Their responses were comprised of quantitative and qualitative data and are reported in order of general sequence on the questionnaire.

Firstly, the principals were asked to measure the effectiveness of the programmes in teaching and supporting the students’ positive learning behaviours. As set out in the NBSS curricular framework, positive learning behaviours would encompass the development of Behaviour for Learning Skills, Social and Emotional Literacy Skills, Academic Literacy, Learning and Study Skills and Positive Health and Wellbeing Skills. Table 1 and Figure 1 present the findings from 48 principals.

Table 1: How effective is the programme in teaching and supporting students' positive learning behaviours?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Effective</td>
<td>72.9% (N=35)</td>
<td>66.7% (N=14)</td>
<td>77.8% (N=21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>22.9% (N=11)</td>
<td>33.3% (N=7)</td>
<td>14.8% (N=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>4.2% (N=2)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>7.4% (N=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Effective</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Effective</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=48)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=21)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over two thirds of the principals reported that the Level 3 programmes were extremely effective in both teaching and supporting their students’ positive behaviours for learning with nearly all of the respondents (95.8%) stating that the programmes have been extremely or very effective in this respect.

Following this general assessment of the work overall, the principals were asked to consider students’ learning needs more specifically. Question 3 asked the respondents to assess how effective the programmes were in terms of supporting the learning needs of their students.

Table 2: How effective is the programme in supporting the learning needs of students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Effective</td>
<td>58.3% (N=28)</td>
<td>57.1% (N=12)</td>
<td>59.3% (N=16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>37.5% (N=18)</td>
<td>38.1% (N=8)</td>
<td>37.0% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>4.2% (N=2)</td>
<td>4.8% (N=1)</td>
<td>3.7% (N=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Effective</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Effective</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=48)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=21)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of principals reported that the Level 3 programmes had been extremely effective in providing support for the learning needs of their students with 95.8% indicating that this support had been extremely or very effective.

The principals were also asked to comment upon the overall success of the programmes in terms of the numbers of students who had received the support during the year. Table 3 and Figure 3 present the findings from 47 principals’ responses to the question: In your view, the programme has been successful for...

Table 3: The programme has been successful for...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>23.4% (N=11)</td>
<td>33.3% (N=7)</td>
<td>15.4% (N=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many students</td>
<td>72.3% (N=34)</td>
<td>66.7% (N=14)</td>
<td>76.9% (N=20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students</td>
<td>4.3% (N=2)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>7.7% (N=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few students</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No students</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=47)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=21)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, the majority of principals (95.7%) thought that the interventions had been successful for all or many of the students who had received Level 3 support. In order to gain more in-depth insights not only into how and why the programmes had been successful for students but also the reasons why some students did not benefit to the same degree from the interventions, principals were asked to describe in what ways the interventions were successful or not successful for their students.

Many of the principals wrote of the ways in which the work done at Level 3 had been successful in terms of the benefits many students accrued from the interventions. These would include improved academic skills/results (completion of the Junior Certificate), development of behaviour for learning skills, students’ retention in school, their ability to reflect upon and self-regulate their behaviours as well as the opportunity to work on social and emotional literacy skills (particularly with regard to relationship building, anger management and self-esteem).

“There have been fantastic successes with most of the other students referred to the BSC. The students have come full circle and are encouraged to reflect themselves on their behaviour and to decide on their own behaviour targets.”

“For most students in our BSC the interventions have been really helpful. It gives students another ‘way of life’ in school - not an alternative to the regular classroom but a way of dealing with regular classroom situations. It gave students a voice to express their concerns, frustrations and indeed their strengths. It helps them re-enter as it were regular classes knowing that they have a back-up from the BSC. There is positive security and caring in the BSC that makes a huge difference to students’ lives.”

“Due to BfL Teacher Programme we have managed to keep very disruptive students in school. These students have managed to learn and do well in examinations. Without the extra support we would have had students dropping out of school. Students who are supported by the
scheme are now able to understand and verbalise how they are feeling which prevents them from getting into confrontations with teachers and other students. Students who are getting support are better able to manage their own behaviour.”

“The work done by the BSC has been instrumental in the success achieved by some of our students. The BSC ensured that some students get to the JC [Junior Certificate]. Without the BSC intervention this would not be possible.”

“BSC has enabled students with learning and behavioral difficulties to deal with school life more easily and certainly address issues such as Literacy and Numeracy. These are often the root cause of behavioral problems. The positive reassurances given by the BSC team on so many issues gives a confidence and support to these students.”

“The work of the BfL has led to improved punctuality, attendance and attitude among the students. The students who attend the BfL are more willing now to attempt the work that is assigned to them. It has also reduced the number of outbursts in class as the students now have techniques to enable them to control their temper.”

“The successes related to attendance, behaviour, motivation, social skills and school work. Obviously the level of success varied from student to student but all, including some very challenging students experienced some level of success due to the programme.”

“The students were given strategies designed to enable them to cope in certain classroom situations. The programme also addressed self esteem issues which has had a positive impact.”

“Successful in that it kept some students in school all year. Without the BfL support some students would simply not have lasted the year. BfL acted as a safety valve for some students as they could go to the BfL teacher before issues got worse.”

“For most students who avail of the service the intervention offers the space for them to examine their behaviours and the impact it can have on them and others and leads to positive developments in terms of behaviour and learning.”

While the principals articulated fully the ways in which the majority of students had benefitted from the Level 3 work, they were forthright and specific about the reasons why they thought successful outcomes were not universal. Rather than due to any limitations of the programmes themselves, these seemed to be related to characteristics of individual students or their circumstances including the profundity of their needs, low engagement with the work, parental apathy and in one case an indication that there was, from a systems perspective, a need in the school for improvement in the procedures for reintegration.

“For a small minority they may not be in the space where they open to what the intervention can offer them.”

“Interventions have been successful for all students to varying degrees. Some students for whom interventions were not as successful belong to families involved with many outside agencies. Some need additional support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.”

“Successful for the majority of students. One student did not engage with the programme this year due to lack of parental support and encouragement.”
“Success with students is slow and gradual and they like attending the behaviour for learning classroom. Reintegrating them back in to class is challenging with no improvement in 1 or 2 students. - more intensive work needed for these students. - more regular communication and consultation for all staff needed regarding students in behaviour for learning classroom. - staff training on linking behaviour and learning needed.”

“...for those that engaged it was a success. These students could be found gravitating towards the class early and wanting to stay longer. Some however struggled with it or just did not want to be there and showed little or no improvement.”

“Many students never need to return to the BSC which is a big indicator of its success. Check and connect is a major success as these students always enter mainstream classes prepared. Occasionally a student has to be taken back into the BSC for a second term which is disappointing for all concerned.”

“Successful for most students who attended as they engaged positively. Unfortunately, a number presented with extreme issues, there is reasonable success but it will take a longer period of time to address their issues.”

“The intervention has not been successful for one student in particular ...mental health problems. Her mother has not engaged with the various school interventions either, so success has been very limited in this case.”

“Some students have problems (be they psychiatric or psychological problems) way beyond the scope of the school to manage.”

“Gave a sense of belonging-students felt someone really cared-real problems being addressed with real solutions. Not successful for one or maybe two students and reason was parent did not engage.”

The NBSS stresses the importance of regular communication with the parents/guardians of all students who receive NBSS Level 3 support. As a means of capturing the degree and nature of parent/guardian feedback, the principals were asked to indicate whether the students’ parents/guardians had contacted the school about the programmes and if so, the nature of their comments. Of the 48 principals who responded to this question only 3 (6.2%) stated that they had not received feedback from parents/guardians. For those who had received comments, these were all described as being positive. Many of the principals relayed comments from parents/guardians who were pleased because of their children’s improved behaviour both in school and outside of school.

“(parents) have said that the support has made a difference not only in school but also at home. Parents believe that the BfL teacher is ‘working flat out’ to improve teaching and learning. We have received no negative comments from parents.”

"... (parents) reported that they found the Behaviour for Learning Programme to be a positive experience for them and their children, some reported behaviour and motivation had improved at home also.”

“Parents have expressed their absolute support for the work of the BSC as they have seen the positive impact on their daughters' behaviour inside and outside school.”
Parents have been very appreciative of the work done for their daughters in BSC. Some parents have requested BSC help. Parents have said that their daughters are still in mainstream education because of the supports they have got in BSC. Parents have particularly emphasised the teachers in the BSC and the work they have done with their daughters, that they are better able to cope with their school work, that they settle in mainstream classes better. They have found the ‘check and connect’ to be very helpful in settling their daughters for the school day.”

In the principals’ experience, the majority of parents/guardians were very supportive of the work being done at Level 3 with their children. Some parents commented that the intervention has led to changes in their children’s attitudes, academic skills, health and wellbeing skills, social and emotional skills and relationships with others. Others highlighted the difference having a supportive relationship with a Level 3 teacher made to their children’s experience of school.

Parents of students who have accessed BSC are very grateful for the support their sons receive. Over the last few years the main comment is that it reduces stress levels in the student. (“They seem a lot calmer”) - I have heard this over and over again. Students have the opportunity to get some individual attention and they thrive in this setting. They can begin the work of building up more positive relationships with their teachers and peers.”

“The feedback from parents/guardians has been one hundred percent positive. Parents believe that through working with the BfL their sons have re-engaged with school and learning. They have a more positive outlook in relation to themselves and their future. It has helped their sons deal with issues ranging from anger-management to anxiety.”

“Positive comments and appreciation for the support of BfL teacher for their daughters. Grateful for keeping them focused and improving their learning skills. The BfL teacher was someone 'to keep an eye on their daughters while in school' and keeping them out of trouble.”

1. Their children wanted to attend school 2. The children were less negative 3. Children felt if they had difficulty in different classes they had someone who was non-judgemental and for them. 4. Parents felt that students had a better understanding of their own behaviour. Students would use phrases like: 'I knew I was losing it', 'my head was in a spin and I knew I needed to leave the room before I got into more trouble'. 'When I am losing it in class she (the BfL teacher) gave me ways of coping'.”

“I would regularly receive feedback. Parents are delighted that their son is receiving help. In some cases where we felt a student could move (from the programme), parent and student felt the loss of the contact. It has been said the relationship with the BfL teacher was the most positive one for their son.”

“Noticeable change in behaviour / mood of their child. More able to cope with mood swings.”

An integral part of NBSS Level 3 planning and implementation is the involvement of parents/guardians in the development and monitoring of their children’s individual behaviour plans. Principals noted that this level of participation and mutual communication from the school’s point of view was encouraging because of the work being done at Level 3. Comments they have received affirms that this aspect of the programmes has been a positive and appreciated outcome of the work for the parents/guardians concerned.
“Very positive feedback from parents. Strategies provided were used by parents. Very good relationships school & home - the visits to the school were mostly very positive.”

“Very positive towards BfL as the teacher involved communicated with the parents on an almost daily basis. Kept the link open between home and school.”

“Parents expressed appreciation for the additional support for their child. Psychological and OT and SLT assessments liked by parents...meeting parents re behaviour plans is seen by parents as very good along with ongoing communication by the BfL teacher.”

“Parents were always supportive of the work done in the BSC classroom and feel that their sons are being supported during their formative years in the school. They are delighted with the ongoing reporting of their sons’ behaviour.”

“Parents felt that involvement in the programme has enabled their child to access the curriculum more effectively. Many parents found that the interaction between the BfLT and the individual parent to be of significant benefit.”

A number of principals reported that parents/guardians thought that the Level 3 work had a significant role in their children’s ability to stay in school. This would have been in terms of their increased ability to access mainstream classes and curriculum as well as reducing their risk of being suspended or ultimately excluded from school.

“Parents have indicated that they would have had to seek alternative education programs (outside mainstream) without the BSC.”

“Feedback has been very positive as they have seen the improvements made with the students in terms of reduction of discipline issues and reduced suspensions. Feedback from parents where the students are still struggling is also very positive and they are appreciative of all the work that is being done to change bad habits and bad behaviour.”

“A number of parents have said that the support has ‘kept my son/daughter in school’.”

“They acknowledged the work of the BSC teachers in enabling their son to survive the year in school and avoid being expelled.”

‘Our son would not be in school were it not from the care of the teachers involved in the BSC.’ Positive comments throughout as they are so grateful with the support we offer through NBSS - so often the parents are not coping at all at home with the students.”

This finding, i.e. the role of the Level 3 intervention in educational sustainability, was reiterated in the principals’ responses to questions related to the students’ attendance and full participation in the curriculum. For example, the respondents were asked whether the intervention had decreased the number of students in their school who were on reduced daily timetables.
Table 4: Decreased number of students on reduced daily timetables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83.0% (N=39)</td>
<td>95.0% (N=19)</td>
<td>74.1% (N=20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6.4% (N=3)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>11.1% (N=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>10.6% (N=5)</td>
<td>5.0% (N=1)</td>
<td>14.8% (N=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=47)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=20)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Decreased number of students on reduced daily timetable

While there is a difference (20.9%) in principals from BSC and BfL schools reporting that the interventions had affected the number of students on reduced daily timetables, the majority of respondents indicated that this was one of the outcomes of the Level 3 programmes. More consistently, the principals from all schools reported positive effects of the intervention with regard to reducing the number of suspensions in their schools as well as helping to retain students who would be at risk of early school leaving.

Table 5: Has the intervention reduced the number of suspensions in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89.1% (N=41)</td>
<td>89.5% (N=17)</td>
<td>88.9% (N=24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.2% (N=1)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>3.7% (N=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>8.7% (N=4)</td>
<td>10.5% (N=2)</td>
<td>7.4% (N=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=46)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=19)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5: Has the intervention reduced the number of suspensions in your school?

![Graph showing the percentage of principals who reduced suspensions.]

Table 6: Has the intervention helped to retain students at risk of early school leaving?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95.7% (N=45)</td>
<td>95.0% (N=19)</td>
<td>96.3% (N=26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>4.3% (N=2)</td>
<td>5.0% (N=1)</td>
<td>3.7% (N=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=47)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=20)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Has the intervention helped to retain students at risk of early school leaving?

![Graph showing the percentage of principals who helped to retain students.]

These findings support the views of parents/guardians that the interventions have made a positive contribution to ensuring the sustainability of students’ educational experience. The principals report that the interventions have had a tangible effect on those students who would be seen as at risk of leaving school early. Additionally in the majority of schools, the Level 3 support has allowed students to achieve more consistency in their education through the reduction in suspensions as reported.

**THE PROGRAMME WITHIN THE WHOLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

Because Level 3 is identified as individual, intensive support it is clear that any assessment of the programmes in place will concentrate on the effect of the work on individual students. However, because it is an integral part of the NBSS Model of Support and therefore a critical, contributing element to the overall aim of developing and maintaining positive behaviour for learning in partner schools, it is important to identify whether it has a bearing on the whole school environment and if it does so, the nature and extent of that impact. The principals were asked whether they thought that the Level 3 programmes had an effect on behaviour issues generally in the school including whether the work had led to a reduction in the number of students brought before their Boards of Management with regard to behaviour issues.

**Table 7: Has the intervention had an effect on behaviour issues generally?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97.9% (N=27)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=21)</td>
<td>96.3% (N=26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2.1% (N=1)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>3.7% (N=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=48)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=21)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7: Has the intervention had an effect on behaviour issues generally?**

![Bar chart showing responses to the question: Has the intervention had an effect on behaviour issues generally? Responses include Yes (97.9%), No (0%), and Not Sure (2.1%).]
Table 8: Has the intervention led to a reduction in referrals to the BOM?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84.8% (N=39)</td>
<td>84.2% (N=16)</td>
<td>85.2% (N=23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6.5% (N=3)</td>
<td>5.3% (N=1)</td>
<td>7.4% (N=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>8.7% (N=4)</td>
<td>10.5% (N=2)</td>
<td>7.4% (N=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=46)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=19)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Has the intervention led to a reduction in referrals to the BOM?

Generally speaking, the principals were in agreement that whether it was a BSC or a BfL, the Level 3 intervention has had a positive effect on behaviour generally across the whole school environment. The respondents were asked to elaborate further about the ways in which the programmes had contributed to more positive behaviour for learning within their schools. Many wrote about the changes that have occurred in terms of the overall climate or culture in their schools.

“The culture of behaviour has changed in the school and there is a better attitude towards learning.”

“Children with challenging behaviour are no longer seen as BAD. The behaviour is now separated from the student. This allows staff to engage in a positive way with even the most challenging student.”

“As our SEN report states – ‘good quality NBSS behaviour plans have been drawn up for students…and are understood and conscientiously followed by staff’. In other words, the work of BfL is embedded in the school.”
“It has made a huge contribution to this school. A lot of students may not attend as often, may be suspended more if we did not have a BSC. It is a real focus for students, a positive force in the school.”

“Since we have had the BSC in our school the whole culture of the school has changed. There has been a total transformation in the way we deal with young people who are experiencing difficulties. We have received excellent training which has helped us to understand the causes of poor behaviour and develop more successful strategies for dealing with them. I can honestly say that all staff members respond to students in a more positive and understanding way and this means relationships in the school are very positive and healthy.”

“Prior to the BSC the atmosphere did not lend itself towards a positive teaching and learning environment. The college is a calmer place where shouting is not acceptable, where students are eager to attend, where students wish to excel. On the teaching side the staff are more compassionate, understanding and willing to accept that the students are children and we need to work with them.”

“The fact that the behaviour of the supported students has improved has had a ripple effect in the school.”

“Over the past number of years the programme has contributed to the raising of standards and expectations in the school especially in relation to behaviour within classrooms and on the corridors, attendance and quality of work.”

“A new language is being used in relation to behaviour.”

“School is becoming a more positive place to be for all. Learning is higher on the school agenda now than managing challenging behaviour.”

“Looking at the programme on its own, it has helped students address the behaviour issues with the understanding that this must change – this has a positive influence on behaviour expectations for all students. Where it has been successful is in the whole school approach to positive behaviour where behaviour issues are addressed by all students. It has given the opportunity for changes in behaviour to occur.”

The findings demonstrate that for many of the principals the Level 3 programmes have been significant in terms of changing or improving the climate of the school learning environment. However this is an on-going process with one respondent commenting that it “…needs more time to bed in; is gradually becoming recognised as a resource and a provider of expertise to the rest of the school”.

The degree to which a Level 3 programme can impact across a whole school environment is contingent not only upon the individuals who are implementing the interventions but also upon the extent to which their colleagues not only support but also benefit in some way(s) from the innovation. With regard to the programmes and other teachers within their schools, the principals were asked for their views concerning the extent to which they thought their staff supported the Level 3 work being done as well as if the programmes’ presence in their schools had contributed to teachers’ professional development as a whole.
Table 9: Support across the whole school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All members of staff support the work</td>
<td>45.8% (N=22)</td>
<td>42.9% (N=9)</td>
<td>48.2% (N=13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most members of staff support the work</td>
<td>50.0% (N=24)</td>
<td>52.4% (N=11)</td>
<td>48.2% (N=13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some members of staff support the work</td>
<td>2.1% (N=1)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>3.7% (N=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few members of staff support the work</td>
<td>2.1% (N=1)</td>
<td>4.8% (N=1)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No members of staff support the work</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=48)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=21)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9: Support across the whole school

Over 90.0% of the principals in both BSC and BfL schools thought that the Level 3 work being done was supported by all or most of the members of staff. Only two principals reported that in their view this was not the case in their respective schools. No additional information was provided by the latter to explain the reasons for the lack of support across their staffs. With regard to whether the programmes have in some way contributed to effective professional practice across their schools, the principals responded as follows:

Table 10: Has the intervention contributed to on-going effective professional practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>BSC &amp; BfL Principals</th>
<th>BSC Principals</th>
<th>BfL Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95.8% (N=46)</td>
<td>95.2% (N=20)</td>
<td>96.3% (N=26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
<td>0.0% (N=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>4.2% (N=2)</td>
<td>4.8% (N=1)</td>
<td>3.7% (N=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (N=48)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=21)</td>
<td>100.0% (N=27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was clear that the majority of principals thought that a benefit of the Level 3 programmes was their impact on professional practice across the school community. The respondents remarked that the programmes, while supporting selected students, had additionally provided support to teachers across the schools in a variety of ways. This ranged from sharing of in-service training and information to collegial discussion and reflection on teaching practice. As a result, principals felt that there had been positive changes in teaching practice across the school environment since the introduction of the programmes.

“Professional practice has changed dramatically. 1. Staff have become accustomed with researching to find baseline data rather than going on instinct and perceptions. 2. Staff discuss solutions to behaviours rather than securing exclusions. 3. Staff see the positive outcomes of the interventions and have participated in many CPD courses organised/promoted by the NBSS.”

“Teachers are more aware of the complexities surrounding poor behaviour and are applying strategies to students other than those in the BSC. They are adopting a more nuanced approach to problems and basing their responses on accepted good practice.”

“Greater understanding among staff of the many issues affecting our students. Staff are now willing to discuss these issues in a proactive manner.”

“Teachers put much more thought into the way they approach students identified with behavioural problems.”

“Collaboration between BfL teacher and subject teachers/class tutors/year heads in developing and implementing strategies for students has supported teachers in dealing with challenging students in the classroom. This has provided options to teachers as an alternative to sanctions and suspensions. Overall, the BfL teacher is a support for colleagues as well as students.”

“Teachers have become more reflective practitioners.”
“Teachers are more aware of the complexities surrounding poor behaviour and are applying strategies to students other than those in the BSC.”

“Our BfL teacher started the practise of facilitating workshops among our staff. This has now become commonplace in the staffroom. Staff now share their expertise with one another and if they participate in in-service they automatically feedback to all staff.”

**STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAMMES**

Towards the end of the questionnaire, the principals were asked to identify and reflect upon those aspects of the programmes that they would define as “strengths” as well as those that they consider to be “challenges”. With regard to strengths, many of their responses reiterated points they had raised in previous answers. For example, the effect that the programmes have had on students’ academic and behavioural skills, attendance, increasing parental involvement, contributing to the school culture as well as fostering reflective practice were highlighted as strengths. Additional common themes arose when the principals described the strengths of the programmes. For example, many of the principals identified the process of work or procedures inherent in the interventions as a strength.

“The continuous evaluation, monitoring and review of each students profile and plan.”

“Always starts from where student is at. Sets goals and targets. Continuous review of progress. Connection with parents.”


“Flexibility of BfL teacher and constant review of programme - timetables can be adjusted to maximise support for students. Collaborative approach and support for teachers. Students have access to BfL support within school and disruption to normal student timetable is kept to a minimum. Relevant training for BfL teacher”.

“The ability for the BSC teachers to put a behaviour plan in place for students is a great resource for the school.”

Some respondents broadened this theme to refer to the quality of the programmes generally. This included references to specific initiatives undertaken (for example, FRIENDS for Life, Parents Plus, First Year Induction, literacy and speech and language work) as well as the methodologies and philosophy inherent in NBSS Level 3 support.

“Knowledge of positive discipline techniques, flexibility to address changing concerns, induction programmes for first-year students, whole school feedback on positive techniques to re-engage students, motivating students, gathering data to enable the school to prioritise areas that need improving.”

“Focus on strengths of students giving a platform to work on behaviour issues; individualised programmes according to needs of students; a structure for the students to make changes; addressing the many serious challenges that are present for the students in a way that focusses on the student and should improve their lives through the social skills programmes
and approach.

“The NBSS support to the school and to the BSC staff. The research carried out by the NBSS is second to none. It gives a scientific basis to the work of the BSC. This provides a degree of comfort for me as Principal that we reach the national norms/international norms or not. The individual interventions for difficult students by NBSS. The support given to the Principal and Deputy Principal in talking through strategies of very difficult cases. The flexibility afforded to the school to try new ways of organising the BSC and student interventions and the analysis of this afterwards. The BSC is not a dumping ground for any student or for any teacher to pass off their difficulties! It represents a process of self reflection and change/hope for all students. Dignity is maintained for all involved. There are no pariahs in the process...It has changed the culture of the school from the inside out!”

Many of the principals wrote that a strength of the programmes was the way in which they provided a vehicle for professional collaboration and support. This included references to the nature and extent of continuing professional development received by both the teachers working at Level 3 and their colleagues.

“The programme reaches out in some form to every member of the school community and is now a central and important element of the school and its development.”


“Staff Training both in-school and guest presenters has been excellent.”

“...conviction/belief in the effectiveness of positive discipline and directed interventions, calmness of delivery and influence on teacher individually and in groups.”

A number of the principals stated that a strength of the programmes was that it provided advocacy for vulnerable young people. They viewed the one to one relationship between teacher and student established through the programmes as critical in enabling students to address the challenges they encountered in school.

“...students identify with a teacher. A teacher identifies with a specific child to assist in their remaining in education and achieving the very best they can.”

“Having a member of staff who doesn’t teach automatically gives the student an non-judgemental advocate who isn’t comprised. The in-services and support given to our Behavioural Teacher have been excellent. Sometimes taking a student with behavioural problems out of a certain class situation can help the student survey the rest of the day. The major strength is that students who get this support become very good at managing their own behaviour. In many cases they can read their own behaviour and make decisions about the best way to stay out of trouble.”

“1. At risk students having someone to go to when things are difficult for them both in the classroom and at times at home. 2. At risk students having someone who they saw could understand and support them.”
Resoundingly, when identifying the strengths of the Level 3 programmes, the principals cited the quality of the teachers providing the Level 3 support. They described the teachers’ professionalism, dedication and skills as being critical in the success of the programmes.

“All work carried out in our Learning Centre demonstrates the strengths of the programme. If I were to choose just one strength it would be the skills set of the teacher there.”

“Two teachers have a great understanding of students and are willing to try any new strategies with the students. Also, the staff acknowledge their interventions even when students remain challenging!”

“Professional staff with unlimited patience and positivity.”

“The dedication and professionalism of our BfL teacher; the capacity to offer students a meaningful productive ‘time out’ for examination of and reflection upon their behaviour; the resource that it is for teachers as we learn about the content that underpins the programme.”

“The excellent BSC teachers we have in the school.”

“We have two excellent teachers who are very committed to helping young people and with the right support from the NBSS staff they have gained great skills in managing challenging behaviour. They are also hugely supported by the rest of the staff who give them both practical help and encouragement.”

Alongside the many strengths of the programmes, the principals identified aspects of them that they viewed as challenges. While responses varied, there were common themes that arose. For example, several respondents wrote that while referral procedures were in place in their schools, attention needs to be paid to ensure that these are followed consistently. In relation to procedures, some principals recognised that the completion of paperwork required both during referral and throughout the intervention was a challenge both for the teachers working at Level 3 and for their colleagues. A number of the respondents referred to the frustration felt when the work that was done was undermined by influences outside the school environment or more commonly when not supported by the students’ parents/guardians.

“... the difficulty in impacting on some of their lives due to negative influences outside of school and that we cannot change.”

“Number of students who need full care and attention. To lose students despite best efforts. Lack of parental support.”

“Time away on training even though it is so important!! Parents not fulfilling certain school conditions regarding our expectations of students.”

“Parental involvement seems to be a challenge over the last couple of years.”

“The sense of frustration when there is a withdrawal of parental support as happened once this year. The student’s behaviour did not improve...”

In some cases, the principals identified changing perceptions of the programmes within the schools
themselves as a particular challenge. This would concur with the earlier finding whereby half of the respondents reported that most but not all of the staff supported the work.

“We still have to try and convince some staff about the merits of the programme.”

“Yes - integrating practice into school processes. Also winning over reluctant teachers.”

“Some teachers expect miracles and set the bar too high for students. Convincing everybody is the challenge.”

“Some teachers may view it as a ‘fixer’ and don’t always see their role in the programme.”

“Maintaining teachers who are trained and committed to working in a specialised field. Also, trying to influence other teachers to reflect on their practice and help to be part of a solution rather than be part of the problem for the student”.

Translating the theoretical concept of Level 3 work as part of a school-wide approach to positive behaviour for learning into a dynamic, daily practice involving, to varying degrees, all members of staff is undoubtedly a challenge. In considering this hurdle one principal mused “Full immersion for staff, possibly?”. There was a recognition amongst the respondents that altering perceptions can be a long-term, time intensive endeavour. Time, as a challenge generally, arose in many of the principals’ reflections about implementing the programmes. These comments referred both to time constrictions they felt in their roles as leaders in implementing this innovation as well as those experienced by the teachers because of the nature of their Level 3 work and the number of students in need of support.

“Time; finding time for planning and training to support teachers with busy timetables is a significant challenge but worth it.”

“Demands on BfL teacher - not enough time to accommodate all students in need of support, hence support is diluted. Paperwork (for subject teachers and BfL teacher).”

“Time issues - not enough time to reach all the students who need support with only one BfL teacher in the school.”

“The two teachers have a very demanding workload and at times are overstretched.”

Related to the challenge of time, several principals described their concerns regarding the effect of the work on the teachers involved. In reflecting upon the programmes, they described the strain that teachers can experience in this role as a challenge in maintaining the support over time.

“Very hard on the one teacher, on some weeks I can clearly see the stress on the teacher.”

“For the teachers involved the work is very challenging because most of the day they are dealing with the negative side of human behaviour.”

“The main one for me is the well-being of BSC staff who are dealing with negative behaviour on a regular basis.”

“All students who need access to the BSC need serious work and this can be hard going for BSC teachers as students can make some progress and then fall back and need a lot more
individual work again. Working with students in such small numbers is similar to the role of a therapist of counsellor but teachers do not have supervision etc.”

In thinking about the challenges in implementing the programmes, several principals referred to their worries about their schools’ ability to cope should they not have the resources to maintain the Level 3 work. These included concerns about continuing to meaningfully address the extensive needs of their students as well as the impact the absence of the programmes would have on the whole school environment.

“The most obvious challenge facing us would be if it is removed - we would not be able to support these children if it was gone.”

“Any reduction in the future - we cannot imagine a school without this support. All teachers would agree with this. When you have a high concentration of disadvantage and behaviour issues a school must be provided with the resources to manage same. Otherwise a huge increase in expulsions would result. I know resources are more for junior cycle but some students take a while to mature (boys) and often need the continued support in order to make it to the end.”
Discussion & Conclusion

“...the most important thing a principal can do to make a school innovative is to foster a culture for change...in order to commit teachers to change activity it is most important for principals to signal that change activity is important. The best way of signalling importance is to take an active part in the process” (Midthassel, et al., 2000, p. 256).

NBSS Level 3 programmes such as Behaviour Support Classrooms and Behaviour for Learning programmes can be characterised as innovative not only in terms of introducing new methods and approaches for supporting students whose behaviour hinders their ability to fully engage in their education but also in respect of contributing to positive change across the whole school environment. The degree to which the innovation is successful is dependent to a large extent upon the individuals who inhabit that environment. This study sought the views of the principals of schools that have been provided with either Behaviour Support Classrooms or a Behaviour for Learning programme. In their role as leaders of their school communities, it was thought that they would be in a position to accurately assess the scope of these innovatory programmes both in terms of their effect on individual students as well as on the whole school community.

With regard to the primary aim of these Level 3 programmes (i.e. individual, intensive intervention), the findings from this study demonstrate that the BSCs and the BfL have succeeded in meaningfully supporting individual students whose profound needs make their daily engagement in education challenging and at times unfeasible. The principals reported that as a result of the programmes fewer students were on reduced daily timetables (83.0%), fewer students were suspended (89.1%) and the programmes have helped to support those students who would be at risk of early school leaving (95.7%).

“... as a result of the programmes fewer students were on reduced daily timetables (83.0%), fewer students were suspended (89.1%) and the programmes have helped to support those students who would be at risk of early school leaving (95.7%).”

...
principals identified what could be defined as tangible benefits such as improvements in students’ academic work, their attendance, punctuality, the development of social and emotional literacy skills as well as their behaviour for learning skills. However, they emphasised additionally the more intangible outcomes of the programmes. These included students learning to recognise, understand, manage and take responsibility for their own behaviour. The students gained not only space but also the means to reflect which was facilitated by the building of relationships with their BSC/BFL teachers that were based on trust and acceptance. The programmes were successful in giving individual students security and acceptance as well as a means and a forum to articulate their views and feelings. The principals commented that through working in the programmes, the students gained confidence, their motivation improved and their attitudes changed.

“...principals commented that through working in the programmes, the students gained confidence, their motivation improved and their attitudes changed.”

While documenting the very positive effects the programmes have had for individual students, the principals were candid in their admission that the programmes have not been successful for some students. This recognition that the programmes are not a universal panacea attests to the complexity of the issues they aim to resolve and verifies that success or lack of success is attributable to a range of factors as opposed to the influence of a single programme or intervention. The principals felt that some students had not benefitted as much from the programmes for a range of reasons. These included individual students not being receptive to the work, the breadth of the students’ difficulties exceeding the scope of what the programmes could realistically address and parental apathy. While a lack of parental involvement and/or support for the work was highlighted as a reason why some students did not benefit from the programmes, the majority of principals (all but 3) reported that they had received responses and comments from parents/guardians that they would characterise as positive. The feedback they obtained seemed to confirm their own views about the impact of the programmes, for example, students benefitting from the one to one relationship, learning to manage their own behaviour, improved attendance, academic achievement and attitude. Additionally, some parents/guardians reported that the work their children had done through the programmes had made a difference to their behaviour outside the school environment both in the home and in the wider community.

“Significantly, many principals wrote of the programmes’ effect on the school culture or climate...”

The findings discussed above relate to the impact of the programmes on the individual students. However, the principals additionally were asked to consider the extent to which the programmes had an effect on the whole school environments. Their responses indicated that to varying degrees, the programmes are not isolated, added on elements of the schools’ programme for learning. Rather they
appear to be an integral component of a school-wide approach to positive behaviours for learning effecting attitudes, behaviours and practices of both students and teachers across the school community. Significantly, many principals wrote of the programmes’ effect on the school culture or climate, one principal stating that it has led to a “total transformation” in the school, another writing that because of the programme “A new language is being used in relation to behaviour”. The majority of principals (97.9%) reported that the programmes had an effect on behaviour issues generally in their schools with 84.8% ascribing a reduction in behaviour referrals to their Boards of Management to the Level 3 programmes.

Considering the programmes’ place and influence within the whole school environment, the attitude of teachers across subject areas would be critical. The principals were asked to assess the extent of support for the programmes from the members of staff. The majority (95.8%) reported that the programmes were supported by all or most members of staff. While this is a positive finding, the difference between “all” and “most” was approximately half. In terms of gaining insights into why in some schools there was not universal support for the work being done, no specific question was posed in the questionnaire to tease out the possible reasons. However, a number of principals did elucidate the situation in their schools in their description of the challenges facing the programmes. In terms of staff support, these included individuals’ reluctance to adapt, erroneous interpretations of the work being done as well as unrealistic expectations of both students and possible outcomes. These were seen as challenges that could be addressed with an additional investment of time and communication.

Despite these challenges, a common theme through the data identifying the strengths of the programmes, was, according to the principals, their effect on professional practice across the school community with 95.8% stating that the programmes have contributed to on-going effective professional practice. The respondents described this in terms of increased collaboration and reflection, sharing of methodologies and approaches and the significant role of training and dissemination of information and skills.

Finally, the principals were asked to identify what they perceived to be the strengths and the challenges of the programmes. In some ways their responses not only clearly painted a picture of the day to day realities of implementing these innovative programmes, but also reflected the principals’ own commitment to and involvement with, the programme. In providing a forthright analysis not only of what is working well but also the elements of the programmes within their schools that require attention and possibly adjustment, the respondents are shown to have engaged fully with the idea of implementing a school-wide approach to positive behaviour for learning of which Level 3 programmes are an integral, critical part.
CONCLUSION

In accepting that the principals are individuals who are in a position to know, then the findings from this study show that the Behaviour Support Classrooms and Behaviour for Learning programmes are effectively supporting their students and in most cases are enabling them to more meaningfully engage with their education. In other words, the programmes are fulfilling their primary aim to provide intensive, individual intervention and are doing so with consistent success. However, in a wider sense, the measure of the successful adoption of this innovation is the degree to which the programmes are not perceived as an isolated, added-on resource or support but whether they are realised and recognised as an integral component of a school-wide approach to positive behaviour for learning that, in varying degrees, effects all members of the school community. Herein lies the critical nature of the principal’s role in ensuring that the innovation is not only implemented but also that it is both meaningful and sustainable. It is clear from the nature of their responses that those principals who participated in this study share a strong commitment and belief not only in the change that these programmes make in the lives of individual students but also in their potential for contributing to their schools’ continuing evolution and positive growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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References


NBS Level 3 Support: The Principals' Viewpoint
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