

Show me your true colours

Jon Slater reports on the therapeutic benefits of an unusual primary project

Teachers feeling blue on account of pupils' poor behaviour should give them a dose of colour therapy, according to Anne Lubbock, head of Pepper Hill first school in Milton Keynes.

Truancy rates at the school have been reduced by a third while pupils' national test results have improved by a similar proportion in the year since Ms Lubbock introduced the innovative Kaleidoscope project.

She believes the techniques she learned while studying for a diploma in colour therapy can make a real difference to her pupils' self-confidence – and particularly if they have behavioural or attendance problems.

Pupils spend one-and-a-half-hour sessions together in a room with specially selected music, light, cushions and candles.

They are then invited to relax, visualise mental journeys and

express their emotions through a series of games and choices of colour.

Children who are worried are invited to tell their concerns quietly to a string of glass beads and then to place the beads in a bag in the centre of the group.

There is also a "wishing tree" around which children can tie a coloured ribbon and ask for what they want.

"We make children feel good about themselves by promoting calmness and positive affirmation, which are reflected in their behaviour," Ms Lubbock said.

The initiative has been so successful that from this term all pupils at the school will take part.

"It is not just for special needs children – it is for all, but particularly those with low self-esteem," she said. "When I first thought about running the Kaleidoscope scheme, I didn't think it would be



Only hue: Anne Lubbock, head of Pepper Hill first school, Milton Keynes, has made a big impact on children with a colour therapy scheme

acceptable in mainstream education, but parents have been asking when their child can start.

"One parent said, 'Since starting Kaleidoscope Ryan's attitude to school has changed and he's much happier and a lot more confident.' Previously he was tearful and didn't want to go to school, but now he leaves the house with a smile on his face."

Since Ms Lubbock gave a talk

about the project at a local special needs conference, Kaleidoscope has been extended to other schools in the area and she believes it would work equally well in secondary schools.

Alan Wells, chief executive of the Basic Skills Agency, was so impressed by the scheme on a recent visit to Pepper Hill that he has asked Ms Lubbock to write an article about it for the agency.

New light on pupil behaviour

- **Magenta** promotes forgiveness and helps us make new friends
- **Violet** helps us to like ourselves more and to feel special
- **Blue** helps us to feel calm and peaceful inside
- **Green** helps us to feel balanced – not too silly and not too serious
- **Yellow** aids concentration and makes reading and writing easier
- **Orange** joyful, helps us to dance and sing
- **Red** gives strength and energy