

# Hope for classroom rebels

Children who misbehave are not bad but are potential entrepreneurs, research is claiming. **KAREN ALLAN** examines if this is an exception to the rule

**M**OIR Lockhead was 15 when he left school with, some would say, limited prospects.

He left the institution as soon as he could to be a mechanic.

Now, several decades later, he is the chief executive of multi-million pound bus business First, with employees all over Scotland.

Moir understands why organisation Mindscreen is so keen to act on research it undertook and launched yesterday, in which it claims it has uncovered attitudes and behaviours shared in under-achieving young adults with some of Scotland's most influential entrepreneurs.

Although he was not a "bad" boy at school, Moir knew the all-day education system was not for him.

"My experience was that I did not want to carry on with school at 15 - I wanted to work," he said. "I started work as an apprentice mechanic and for one day and two nights a week, I went to night school to do the theoretical stuff."

"I would not say I did not like school, it was just I wanted to go out and work. I wanted to do something I enjoyed and had reached a point where I wanted to do something else other than be in school."

Mindscreen's research was conducted in 2000 and since then, its results have been developed by a spin-off venture, TTI Mindscreen, into an intervention programme which helps disenfranchised pupils reconnect with classroom activity.

from attending an Entrepreneurial Spirit programme are those who are more likely to be excluded from school, such as students who are non-compliant in the classroom environment, and those who are under performing through learning or behavioural difficulties.

The research found that more than 38% of founding entrepreneurs who left school early, described school as "less than enjoyable" and departed with little in the way of formal qualifications.

This particular finding certainly strikes a bell with Moir.

"I didn't pass my 11-plus to get to grammar school, but I did all right but I think my experience of school was relatively short," he said. "I would suspect it was the right thing for a lot of people to do, but not for others."

"In our company, we have a balance between people who did what I did and people who did degrees, and we work very well together."

"I can understand behavioural problems causing difficulty if these people are not allowed to go into industry to do the things they are good at. Once you find something, you enjoy and do better than other people."

"It's very difficult to find something you want to do if you've never done before. At school, I liked metalwork and doing things with my hands so kind of had an idea I would enjoy being a mechanic."

"I went on to engineering which I stayed with until I came to Aberdeen in 1985, which was the first time I got into general



Moir Lockhead was never a 'bad boy' at school but left at 15 and went on to develop the bus company First. He believes more links between schools and industry would motivate young people

behavioural patterns of entrepreneurs and those under-performing at school, and found characteristics such as hierarchies of behaviour and personal attitudes and values similar to both.

**W**HETHER there are enough similarities to make the leap that under-achievers are naturally included to be entrepreneurs is

into the classroom, where they can see the relevance of education to their future livelihoods, was praised by Aberdeen City Council educational psychologist Ewen Rennie.

"I think the success of most youngsters with motivational or self-esteem issues is having a more adult relationship, and being treated as an equal by teachers or social workers."

"Someone who gives them

doing the same thing, we would act in a similar way."

Mr Rennie, who works with youngsters with behavioural problems every day, pointed out: "For a lot of youngsters, their behaviour is a natural reaction to the circumstances they are in and we would probably all react in the same way, if we had not had a chance to escape out of the situation."

It would figure then, that if

could be created, helping with social and economic problems everywhere.

However, it is not that simple.

There are hundreds of reasons why children become disruptive, although they can be put into three broad categories - short-term, where, for example, a relative has been ill and the child's behaviour will generally go back to normal after a while; those who do not conform to the

have physiological or psychological problems.

David Eaglesham, Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association general secretary, said: "I do not think that behaviour is much to do with entrepreneurial spirit, but there may well be truth in it."

He explained the educational system is set up to cater for a standard pupil, and any deviation from this norm, whether a disruptive or a gifted pupil, is

to focus on one group, although there is capacity to do that for some pupils. Sometimes a disruptive pupil needs only a small change to conform, but it's finding that change that can be difficult.

"I do not see how to develop a system which gives the best for budding entrepreneurs without taking resources away from somewhere else."

"Our contention is that edu-