

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**  
Date: **11 June 2012**  
By: **Chairman of the Review Board**  
Title of report: **Scrutiny Review of School Exclusions in East Sussex**  
Purpose of report: **To present the outcomes of the scrutiny review.**

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**RECOMMENDATION: that the Committee considers the report of the Review Board and makes recommendations to Cabinet for comment and County Council for approval.**

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**1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report at this stage.

**2. Summary**

2.1 The Project Board for this review comprised Councillors Martin Kenward (Chairman) and Michael Ensor.

2.2 The attached report contains the findings and recommendations of the Project Board. The supporting documentation listed in the final appendix to the report is available on request from the contact officer.

**3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Committee is recommended to receive the Review Board's report for submission to Cabinet on 3 July 2012 and County Council on 17 July 2012.

COUNCILLOR MARTIN KENWARD  
Chairman of Review Board

Contact Officer: Paul Dean Tel No. 01273 481751

Local Members: All

Background Documents

None

# Scrutiny review of school exclusions in East Sussex

## Report by the Project Board

Councillor Martin Kenward (Chairman)

Councillor Michael Ensor

June 2012

**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 11 June 2012**

Cabinet – 3 July 2012

Full Council – 17 July 2012



# The report of the Scrutiny Review of school exclusions in East Sussex

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## Recommendations

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<p>1 a) The Lead Members with responsibility for Children’s Services and Learning and School effectiveness, and the Director of Children’s Services, should promote a clear vision to leaders in all our schools setting out our expectation that every school should aim to be amongst the lowest pupil excluders.</p> <p>b) All Council Members should be encouraged to support and promote the vision when in conversation with their local schools and in their role as school governors.</p>	10
<p>2 East Sussex County Council should aim, when working with schools, to promote:</p> <p>a) improved, more inclusive, SEN assessment and support practices with greater emphasis on preventing school exclusion;</p> <p>b) good communication between schools: particularly between secondary schools and primary schools, and primary schools and children’s centres to enable schools to be better prepared to manage any children with behavioural or learning issues;</p> <p>c) a well developed offer of services and training, within the Services to Schools offer, to ensure schools are confident and better equipped to manage a wide range of pupil behaviour; and</p> <p>d) effective special provisions within mainstream schools for children who are less able to learn.</p>	11
<p>3 The support, training and communication with school governors should aim to promote an active governing body role in:</p> <p>a) endorsing policies that focus on supporting challenging pupils within the school;</p> <p>b) providing robust scrutiny and effective challenge of exclusion decisions by the headteacher;</p> <p>c) monitoring the use of mechanisms such as part time timetables to ensure they are not being used as a means to exclude pupils unofficially;</p> <p>d) monitoring Special educational Needs (SEN) practices and exploring any link with exclusions; and</p> <p>e) being open to the views and experiences of parents/carers of excluded children and the views of youngsters themselves.</p>	12
<p>4 The information provided by East Sussex for parents and carers of excluded children is good, but this is an opportune moment to review it to ensure that it:</p> <p>a) remains easily accessible and readily available;</p> <p>b) includes information on what ‘behaviour support’ and ‘Special Educational Needs (SEN) support’ in schools should look like, including information about the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS), Information for Families and any other relevant services;</p> <p>c) includes information that is ‘preventative’ rather than focused on the relatively limited options once a child has been excluded;</p>	13

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<p>d) states simply what children's 'entitlements' are so that parents and carers can understand whether part-time timetables or other mechanisms are being used to exclude their child inappropriately; and</p> <p>e) meets the needs of people with low levels of literacy, less confident communicators, people under severe stress and people with health problems: groups that are represented amongst excluded children's parents and carers.</p>	

## Introduction

1. Many people hold strong views about the value of excluding pupils from schools. Some see a period of exclusion for a *naughty child* as a good thing, something that will deter future bad behaviour and a means of minimising the class disruption for the benefit of the majority of pupils. On deeper analysis however, there is strong evidence that these perceptions are misplaced. Far from being beneficial, exclusions are rarely an effective punishment; they cause untold misery and grief for the child and family and invariably end up wasting scarce resources.

2. There have been some recent positive trends, but East Sussex remains a 'high excluding' local authority area compared to the UK average, especially in our primary schools. Worryingly, exclusions are also weighted heavily towards pupils with special educational needs.

3. Surprisingly perhaps, there is little or no correlation between schools' rate of exclusions and local levels of deprivation. In addition, a high rate of exclusion for a particular school does not signify high academic attainment, as might be expected if a school was systematically excluding pupils considered to be disruptive to the education of others. Broadly speaking, levels of bad behaviour amongst East Sussex pupils are comparable to the rest of the UK so this is not a factor either that can be used to explain the relatively high rates of exclusions here. Overall, the majority of exclusions in East Sussex appear to be for 'defiance'.

4. Surveys have shown that children in East Sussex schools say that exclusions are generally ineffective at addressing behaviour issues; they see the primary underlying cause of many exclusions as poor communication between teachers and pupils. For exclusions to be effective, a sanction needs to be *unwanted*. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that some children see a period of exclusion as a welcome 'holiday', and actively behave in a manner to bring about their exclusion.

5. Both nationally and locally there is evidence of the use of unofficial or 'back door' exclusions where parents and carers are persuaded to remove their child from the school voluntarily, bypassing the formal exclusion process. These children affected are often lost to the system and there is little official data available on why and how these measures are used. The ways schools achieve this include the use of part-time timetables; informal 'sending home'; repeat fixed-term exclusions, and managed transfers.

6. Numbers of pupils educated in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) almost doubled nationally between 1997 and 2007. The referral process is subject to very little regulation or guidance which means that there is hardly any information available about why pupils are referred to PRUs or on the full extent of the use of these services. Yet it is clear that reducing the demand on PRUs will save resources that could be better used to support schools in managing behaviour problems or to provide short-term placements. At present, this rarely happens because of the high demand from 'priority' cases.

7. The evidence suggests that if high excluding schools were to take more responsibility for managing a wider range of behaviours than they do currently, then many pupil exclusions would be avoided. Schools do have the resources to do this, especially secondary schools. But these resources are sometimes underused or can be wasted by, for example, engaging unsuitable support staff.

8. Eliminating preventable exclusions should be a priority because of the problems they create for schools, the local authority, parents/carers and the children directly affected. The human cost of pupil exclusion is high, often being associated with poor future academic underachievement, offending behaviour, limited ambition, homelessness and mental ill-health.

9. We consider that, when they are used, pupil exclusions must be carried out fairly and transparently, and only after listening to the views of the parents and the children themselves. High quality alternative provision must be incorporated into any plan to exclude a child. After all, there would be a justifiable outcry if a school failed to enable a child with a physical disability to access the school, and yet some children with manageable behavioural problems appear to be denied their right to full participation in education.

10. In the wider context, it is important to note that school exclusions are predominantly a British phenomenon. In most of mainland Europe for example, no provision is made for schools to exclude their pupils.

## Why schools exclude pupils

### *What this review did*

11. A school can exclude pupils provided that it acts within the law which is explained to schools through statutory guidance. Only the headteacher of a school can exclude a pupil and this must be on disciplinary grounds. Exclusions can be permanent, where a child is removed from the school's roll, or for a fixed term where the child remains on the roll but is not allowed to enter the premises.

12. In 2008/09 East Sussex was the 19<sup>th</sup> highest excluding authority (out of 150) for fixed term exclusions and 56<sup>th</sup> highest for permanent. Of particular concern were the relatively high levels of exclusions from primary schools and of children with special education needs (SEN). These facts prompted the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to undertake this review.

13. East Sussex schools vary considerably in the extent to which they exclude pupils. Some schools exclude few, if any, whereas others appear to exclude a significant proportion of the school roll. We set out to understand the reasons for these differences and to identify the good practices amongst low excluding schools that could be used to help the high excluding schools.

14. To do this we studied the exclusion statistics from all East Sussex schools for the last two years. We gained the perspectives of the Head of the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service, the Council's Principal Educational Psychologist, the Head of Inclusion Support and a senior officer from Parent Link and Family Information Service who provided a parent and carer perspective.

15. We did not directly gain pupils' perspectives during this review. Instead, we were able to use earlier research that had gleaned the views of pupils on the effectiveness of the use of exclusions and their impact on individual children.

16. From the data, we identified four East Sussex schools to visit to discuss a range of questions about pupil exclusions with their headteachers. Two schools were selected from the 'high excluders' group and two from the 'low excluders' group. Individual members of the review board visited each school and was struck by the warmth of the welcome, and the openness and willingness to discuss these sensitive issues. The picture that emerged from all the evidence provided some clues as to what practical next steps could be taken in East Sussex.

17. Firstly however, we had to understand the reasons why schools exclude pupils and decide if and why avoidable exclusions are happening. The reasons why schools exclude individual pupils are indeed complex, but here are the main factors involved:

### **Government guidance and legislation**

18. The Education Act 2002 is the key piece of legislation affecting exclusions. New regulations come into force in September 2012. Related legislation also includes the Education Act 1996 regarding SEN and the Equalities Act 2010 regarding disabilities discrimination.

19. Headteachers of maintained schools have the power to exclude a pupil from school for a fixed period or permanently<sup>1</sup>. Headteachers are required to demonstrate that they have exhausted all other strategies before excluding. There is no provision to send pupils home in response to a breach of discipline other than through exclusion.

20. An exclusion can be permanent if the child has seriously or persistently breached the school's behaviour policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in the school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school. Local authorities have a duty to arrange full-time education for permanently excluded children from the sixth school day after exclusion<sup>2</sup>.

21. When a headteacher has excluded a child permanently, the school's governing body then meets to reconsider the decision. They have the power to support the original decision or reinstate the child into the school.

22. Fixed term exclusions cannot add up to more than 45 days in any school year for a child. Temporarily excluded children become the responsibility of the *school* from the sixth day in any single exclusion period; this relatively recently introduced measure has virtually halted single temporary exclusions of more than five days.

23. 'Unofficial' exclusions contravene good practice and government guidance. In these circumstances a pupil remains absent, at the request of the school, but is not recorded as having been excluded. The ways in which this can happen include:

- persuading a parent/carer to educate their child at home or the child would face permanent exclusion;
- using repeated fixed-term exclusions as an alternative to an official permanent exclusion;
- sending pupils home to 'cool off';
- using part time timetables as an alternative sanction to exclusion, rather than as a means to reintegrate a child back into the school following a long absence;
- engineering a voluntary 'managed transfer' to cover an exclusion; and
- excluding a child from school trips.

### ***Failure of leadership***

24. In practice, the pressure to exclude a child typically starts with a class teacher who makes a case to the headteacher. The trigger may be the visible effect of a child's behaviour on class peers or on the wider school community. However, parents of other children, other staff and even governors sometimes exert pressure on the headteacher to remove *disruptive* children.

25. Many schools have policies that provide for the use of exclusion as a last resort, when all other strategies have been tried and have failed. When children with challenging behaviour are excluded, it is often because staff face difficulties coping with behaviour, or the incidents are considered too serious for alternative sanctions. The effort and type of support the school puts into resolving the problems, rather than resorting to exclusion, varies considerably.

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<sup>1</sup> Similar provisions apply to principals of Academies

<sup>2</sup> This duty has been extended by the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010 to include all children who, for reasons which relate to illness, exclusion or otherwise, would not receive suitable education unless arrangements are made for them.



26. The kind of leadership within the school largely determines the robustness, fairness and clarity of how such school policies are implemented in practice. Low excluding school headteachers, with their positive leadership, motivated and alert staff, spot signs of problems early and deal with them well before they reach the point at which exclusion is needed. Headteachers in this category said to us:

*“Our responsibility is for the child. If we exclude, the child loses out”*

*“Excluding a child from education is a sign of failure by the school”*

*“If, say, a child is tapping with a pencil one minute, if left, the pencil will be flying through the air the next! Better to take the child out to a quiet area for a while and give them something to do”*

27. Where significant numbers of exclusions result from failing to manage behaviour in the classroom, this could also indicate a failure *by the school* to meet the learning needs of its pupils. The symptoms of these failures take several forms:

- Some teachers think that behaviour management does not lie within their responsibility and either fail to take steps to manage bad behaviour or resort too readily to sending children out of the classroom.
- Individual Needs Assistants or Special Needs Teaching Assistants are sometimes unable to cope with challenging behaviours and often lack the skills to undertake this complex role<sup>3</sup>; ironically these posts often are the lowest paid of all teaching staff but are expected to handle the most challenging behaviour.
- Exclusions have been used to emphasise the unacceptability of a child’s behaviour to a parent or carer, particularly when the school feels that the parent or carer is not being supportive.
- Problems arise when school policies are applied too rigidly, say, where there is a tendency for a school to resort to exclusion as an explicit sanction irrespective of the age of the child, or where it fails to give proper consideration to the individual circumstances of a transgression.

### ***Disproportionate numbers of Special Educational Needs (SEN) exclusions***

28. Of particular concern are the relatively high numbers of SEN pupil exclusions representing some 23% of all permanent exclusions in East Sussex compared to 8% nationally (2008/09). Schools make adequate provision for pupils with physical disabilities but sometimes appear to have problems making a comparable level of provision for children with SEN related to behaviour. Whilst schools undoubtedly could cope relatively easily with a small number of pupils with challenging behavioural problems, what happens if the number increases to an unmanageable level? Will external support be available and will schools use it?

29. The East Sussex Therapeutic Intervention Service has responded to the needs of headteachers and has satisfactorily dealt with severe cases where mainstream school provision is not appropriate at Key Stage 1. East Sussex provides high level of good quality special needs places but these services are consistently over subscribed. The increasing demand reflects a national trend of increasing numbers of children being diagnosed with a wide range of disorders. Referrals to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) remain very high despite a reduction in referrals from Academies.

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<sup>3</sup> Changes to teaching assistant support work with a child triggered the escalation of the child’s behaviour in three cases referred to the Therapeutic Intervention Service in its first year of operation.

30. The high quality and availability of special school provision is almost certainly creating a misperception amongst some school staff that special schools provide the best option for a wide range of less serious behavioural problems. Indeed, national evidence indicates that schools sometimes wrongly identify pupils as having SEN when the real problem lies with poor day-to-day teaching and inadequate pastoral support. That has the effect of diverting attention and resources away from those who genuinely need specialist support. In many cases, an exclusion or a threat of exclusion is seen to help demonstrate that a child has needs for which non mainstream provision is required.

31. Once established in a special school for a long period, it is often difficult to persuade a child and their parent/carer to return to a mainstream school even after the behaviour issues have been addressed. But if the demand for these services could be reduced by more effective SEN assessments and reduced numbers of avoidable exclusions, then more resources would be available to schools, for example short term Pupil Referral Units (PRU) places.

## **What can be done to reduce the rate of pupil exclusions?**

32. The higher than average levels of pupil exclusions in East Sussex suggests that many of them are preventable. Any reduction in the number of exclusions is desirable because of the problems and challenges each one creates for schools, the local authority, parents/carers and the children directly affected.

33. An excluded child faces significantly increased risks when it comes to safeguarding; when in school, a child is in a safe environment but once excluded faces substantially increased levels of risk. The human cost of pupil exclusion is demonstrably high, often being associated with poor future academic underachievement, offending behaviour, limited ambition, homelessness and mental ill-health. Excluded children often miss out on education; the longer they remain away from school the longer it takes them to catch up when they return.

34. The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has previously considered the challenges faced by the Targeted Youth Support Service (TYS) and noted the high caseloads that arise from school referrals. Anything schools can do to limit the threat and reality of exclusions can only assist services such as the YYS, and also ESBAS and the Therapeutic Intervention Service, to focus on those most in need.

35. Evidence suggests that young people themselves do not regard exclusions as an effective punishment or a deterrent to bad behaviour; in fact quite the reverse. Research carried out by the Children's Commissioner for England (2010) also found that 90% of children (in representative sample of 2,000) insisted that schools should never exclude a child but should help them deal with their problems. That is despite a majority having experienced disruption caused by the behaviour of a minority.

36. A review of the actions taken by low excluding local authorities (2010) identified some common approaches:

- Political and senior management commitment to reduce exclusions
- Early intervention and prevention
- Collective working by headteachers to prevent exclusions and handle complex cases
- Managed transfers being used appropriately and not as 'unofficial' exclusions.

37. Since 2010 many of these positive approaches have become increasingly visible in East Sussex. In this review, we viewed exclusions from the point of view of the key parties involved to see whether more could be done: the leaders, headteachers and staff, governing body, parents and carers, and the pupils themselves.

### ***Promote a leadership vision***

38. Pupil behaviour cannot normally be addressed in isolation from engagement in learning. If problems of engagement in learning are addressed, then behaviour is likely to take care of itself. Achieving this requires schools to have good leadership, effective and high quality, motivated staff and back up and support from outside when required.

39. In some local authority areas a clear, focussed political steer has been successful in setting out the authority's aspirations for young people. A key element of the message is that schools have a fundamental responsibility to manage pupils' learning and behaviour *within the school* wherever feasible. Good performing schools use exclusions sparingly and recognise the ineffectiveness of exclusions as a means of punishment or as a deterrent to bad behaviour.

40. In East Sussex, we do not set out the authority's *expectations* of schools' exclusion practices. We consider that it would be a good idea to promote a *conversation* aimed at assisting and encouraging high excluding schools to reduce their exclusion rates. All elected Members can assist when talking to their local schools, and especially in their role as school governors.

#### **Recommendation 1.**

**a) The Lead Members with responsibility for Children's Services and Learning and School effectiveness, and the Director of Children's Services, should promote a clear vision to leaders in all our schools setting out our expectation that every school should aim to be amongst the lowest pupil excluders.**

**b) All Council Members should be encouraged to support and promote the vision when in conversation with their local schools and in their role as school governors.**

### ***Promote good leadership and collective working by headteachers***

41. An important challenge is to demonstrate that it is desirable for schools to take responsibility for retaining and managing the problems of behaviour and exclusion themselves, either individually or collectively.

42. A school *loses* approximately £4,000 per year (pro rata) for a child that is permanently excluded. The annual cost of provision for a child outside mainstream education averages £12,000. This cost typically falls upon the local authority. Trials have been undertaken in some local authority areas where these monies have been devolved entirely to schools along with the responsibility to retain and manage problem pupils.

43. From 1 April 2012 East Sussex began taking part in a national trial whereby groups of secondary headteachers retain the responsibility to make alternative provision for *any* child they exclude. Three school behaviour and attendance partnerships have been formed. Practical elements include:

- College Central allocates a number of places to each partnership (eg. 37 to the Hastings and Rother partnership); the partnership schools then agree amongst themselves how to allocate these places to their excluded pupils.
- For every additional exclusion above the agreed limit, a school is required to pay significantly more: some £12,000 plus a £4,000 capitation fee per pupil.

44. This approach will promote collective working by groups of schools in tackling a common problem more effectively and efficiently. It might lead to a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions and greater focus on managing less serious behavioural problems within the school. We are interested to see how well this initiative works and, if successful, we would expect to see it extended county wide.

45. There remains the problem of inappropriate use of fixed term and unofficial exclusions and the high levels of SEN pupil exclusions. These are more difficult problems for the local authority to solve directly, but it can try to use its influence to tackle the underlying issues.

### **Recommendation 2.**

**East Sussex County Council should aim, when working with schools, to promote:**

- a) improved, more inclusive, SEN assessment and support practices with greater emphasis on preventing school exclusion;**
- b) good communication between schools: particularly between secondary schools and primary schools, and primary schools and children's centres to enable schools to be better prepared to manage any children with behavioural or learning issues;**
- c) a well developed offer of services and training, within the *Services to Schools* offer, to ensure schools are confident and better equipped to manage a wide range of pupil behaviour; and**
- d) effective special provisions within mainstream schools for children who are less able to learn.**

### ***Promote challenge by governing bodies***

46. Governors may be unaware of levels of parent dissatisfaction with their schools generally, or of parent/carer and pupil experiences of the exclusion *journey* through the school's procedures. This is probably because parents rarely complain formally, or when they do, often do not do so effectively.

47. For many governing body members, the only insight they have into their school's exclusion policy is when undertaking their legal duty of reviewing a headteacher's decision to exclude. Evidence suggests that, by and large, governors support headteachers' decisions, and sometimes without adequate scrutiny or challenge<sup>4</sup>.

48. However, in schools where governing bodies occasionally overturn exclusion decisions, there is often a long-term beneficial effect with fewer exclusions subsequently. This probably indicates a healthy willingness on the part of headteachers to adapt their approach in the aftermath of an overturned exclusion decision.

49. We consider that governing bodies ought to be aware of the kinds of plans the school puts in place for *all* children who are not engaged in learning. In particular, local authority appointed governors should be actively encouraged to endorse and promote the County Council's vision from the outset. Parent governors represent the voice of the community and are ideally placed to gain first hand experiences from parents and carers directly affected by the school's behavioural and exclusion policies.

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<sup>4</sup> In East Sussex (academic year 2010/11) of 109 permanent exclusions, only 11 were overturned by the governing body (all in secondary schools).

### **Recommendation 3.**

**The support, training and communication with school governors should aim to promote an active governing body role in:**

- a) endorsing policies that focus on supporting challenging pupils *within* the school;**
- b) providing robust scrutiny and effective challenge of exclusion decisions by the headteacher;**
- c) monitoring the use of mechanisms such as part time timetables to ensure they are not being used as a means to exclude pupils unofficially;**
- d) monitoring Special educational Needs (SEN) practices and exploring any link with exclusions; and**
- e) being open to the views and experiences of parents/carers of excluded children and the views of youngsters themselves.**

### ***Develop better awareness amongst parents and carers***

50. When a child has a problem at school, any concerned parent would wish to engage actively with the staff to resolve it at an early stage and certainly well before the prospect of exclusion is on the horizon. Yet the *Information for Families* team suggests that parents sometimes feel they get incomplete or confusing messages from schools, and often feel deterred from challenging a schools decision. Parents describe being pushed from 'pillar to post' as they seek help from the various agencies. By the time a child is excluded, some parents and carers feel so 'disempowered' by the process that they do not exercise their right to appeal.

51. The low excluding schools who spoke to us recognise this problem and have set about building positive relationships with parents and carers of pupils with behaviour difficulties. These schools positively encourage parental involvement and communication. Ensuring parents and carers understand the schools' approach to exclusions and the events that follow a decision to exclude is essential. Whilst remedies such as formal complaints and even legal redress exist, most parents are reluctant to use them; this is understandable because of the stress and conflict such processes entail.

52. It is far better to find informal ways to form an effective partnership between school and parent. Producing a written plan is perhaps one way to enable school staff to engage practically with parents over a child's lack of engagement in learning, or to deal with behavioural problems. The aim would be to resolve the concerns, prevent deterioration in the child's circumstances and, essentially, prevent an exclusion further down the line. Such pastoral support plans would not be static documents, but would need to be reviewed over time; they would help schools to become more open and transparent about how they work.

53. Various nationally published booklets and an exclusions telephone 'helpline' exist to help parents/carers handle the exclusion of their child. These are designed to be used alongside practical support provided by local services such as the Council's *Information for Families* service (previously called *Parent Link and Family Information Service*) and ESBAS. One problem with the variety of support being available is that some schools then have less incentive to 'own' the information or the problem. They sometimes appear not to be fully aware of good practice guidance, or seem unable or unwilling to communicate effectively, or take the time to understand family pressures. This can lead to parents losing confidence in their child's school.

54. We consider that any exclusion should automatically trigger the production of a shared plan if there isn't one already in place. The aim at that stage would be to prevent repeat exclusions and promote an effective working partnership between the school and parent/carer. At the point of an unexpected and sudden exclusion, parents often need immediate access to good information, an information pack perhaps, and in many cases help with navigating the way forward.

**Recommendation 4.**

**The information provided by East Sussex for parents and carers of excluded children is good, but this is an opportune moment to review it to ensure that it:**

- a) remains easily accessible and readily available;**
- b) includes information on what 'behaviour support' and 'Special Educational Needs (SEN) support' in schools should look like, including information about the *Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS), Information for Families* and any other relevant services;**
- c) includes information that is 'preventative' rather than focused on the relatively limited options once a child has been excluded;**
- d) states simply what children's 'entitlements' are so that parents and carers can understand whether part-time timetables or other mechanisms are being used to exclude their child inappropriately; and**
- e) meets the needs of people with low levels of literacy, less confident communicators, people under severe stress and people with health problems: groups that are represented amongst excluded children's parents and carers.**

## Appendix: Terms of reference, board membership and evidence

### Scope and terms of reference

This scrutiny review was established by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on 14 June 2011 to review the questions and issues outlined below and make appropriate recommendations:

- Despite positive trends, the number of exclusions in East Sussex schools remains relatively high.
- The distribution of permanent exclusions appears excessively weighted towards primary compared to the national picture (27% in East Sussex compared to 11% nationally) and towards children with a statement for SEN (23% in East Sussex compared to 8% nationally).
- Schools vary considerably in their readiness to exclude for reasons which appear to relate to the style of leadership in the school.
- Parenting appears to be an issue that requires greater emphasis in the reduction of school exclusions; this requires further investigation as to how in practice this might be achieved.
- It is unclear whether Common Assessment Framework (CAF) interventions are playing an optimum role in reducing exclusions.
- It is unclear whether earlier or more effective referral mechanisms (to social care or other services) would reduce the likelihood of exclusions occurring further down the line.

### Board Membership and project support

**Review Board Members:** Councillors Kenward (Chairman) and Ensor.

**Scrutiny Support:** Paul Dean, Scrutiny Manager

**Review Board meeting dates:** 16 January 2012 and 9 May 2012.

### Witnesses providing evidence

The review board wish to thank the four East Sussex headteachers who gave an honest and frank appraisal of how they use exclusions in their schools, and the following for the information and insights they provided:

Nathan Caine, Head of Service, Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Service

Denise Ford, Principal Educational Psychologist/Head of Early Years Teaching and Support Service

Jenny Clench, Head of Inclusion Support

Helen Frederick, Information for Families (formerly Parent Link and Family Information Service).

## Evidence papers

Item	Date
East Sussex Children's Services Scrutiny Committee: Overview of the Behaviour and Attendance Service including the impact of legislation, trends in fixed and permanent exclusions at both primary and secondary level and the development of the service in future.	14 June 2011
Annual report on exclusions and attendance for the East Sussex County Council Behaviour Board	June 2010
East Sussex Therapeutic Intervention Service 2010 – 2011: evaluation and findings one year on	2011
DfE statistical release: permanent and fixed period exclusions from schools and exclusion appeals in England 2009/10	July 2011
"Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units in England: A DfE guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion (draft)	2011
Improving behaviour and attendance: guidance on exclusion from schools and pupil referral units	2008
"They never give up on you" – Office of the Children's Commissioner School Exclusions Inquiry	March 2012

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11 June 2012