

Committee	Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
Date	11 November 2013
Report By	Interim Director of Children's Services
Title of Report	Scrutiny Review of School Exclusions in East Sussex (Twelve Month Monitoring Report)
Purpose of Report	To report on progress against the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on School Exclusions, following the Scrutiny Review.

RECOMMENDATION: The Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the progress made in delivering the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of School Exclusions in East Sussex.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 Appendix 1 outlines the progress made against the action plan in place following the recommendations of the scrutiny review of School Exclusions in East Sussex. For clarity, each recommendation has been given a RAG rating to denote level of completion (green showing recommendations that are complete and amber those which are partially complete); in the majority of cases we are on target to meet the recommendations, or have already met them.

2.2 Appendix 2 is a statistical report, which includes data on fixed term and permanent exclusions across East Sussex with comparisons to our Statistical Neighbours. These data show the numbers of permanent and fixed term exclusions to the end of last academic year; national and statistical neighbour comparisons are shown for the 11/12 academic year (the most recent available data). Despite some significant reductions in overall numbers of exclusion since 2005/6, levels across East Sussex remain disproportionately high. Of particular concern are the numbers of permanent exclusions across both primary and secondary schools, and the levels of fixed term exclusion in primary schools (the latter equating to an exclusion rate of almost 1 in 10 children).

2.3 As previously reported, whereas the updates refer to developments in schools and academies, the committee should be aware of the implications for this area of work when a school converts to an academy. As independent bodies from the Local Authority, there is no requirement for academies to provide timely data on exclusions nor is there any automatic access to a number of central support services (e.g. Behaviour Support Service) as the funding previously held by the LA to deliver this service on behalf of schools has been delegated to the academy. The Children's Services Department (CSD) continues to work with academies to ensure a good transfer of information and buy-in of support appropriate to needs of students, but this is dependent on the decision-making of individual institutions.

2.4 To support our ongoing aspirations to challenge poor practice and improve performance in relation to exclusions across East Sussex (following on from the initial work undertaken as part of this review), East Sussex is engaging in a Peer Challenge of exclusions and attendance. This process will involve a team of officers from outside of East Sussex engaged on a two day review of practice, including interviews and focus groups from all key stakeholders. It is hoped that this will generate some practical solutions which include good practice examples from other Local Authorities.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny consider the progress made on the recommendations contained in the review, which we continue to hope will lead to a reduction in school exclusions and improvements in outcomes for children and young people.

3.2 Despite the best efforts of support services, and greater engagement with schools over the past twelve months, it is evident that some schools continue to use exclusion too frequently as a measure to remedy poor behaviour, which can only have a detrimental impact on the educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in East Sussex. This emphasises the ongoing need to focus on reducing exclusions and ensure that the CSD is able to continue to provide high quality support services to schools, academies and free schools as part of the wider Local Offer for children and young people with SEND.

GED ROWNEY
Interim Director of Children's Services

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Local Member: All

Background Documents

None

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Review of School Exclusions (twelve month monitoring)

	Recommendation	RAG	Progress to date – October 2013	Timescale
R1	<p>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>	<p>G</p> <p>A</p>	<p>Presentations were held in the autumn of 2012, by officers from Inclusion Support Services, to groups of heads to outline the current picture of exclusions and to reaffirm the aspirations of the Local Authority with regard to reducing exclusions. This coincided with the review of Primary Behaviour Support Services where the CSD is engaging with schools to develop a revised model for service delivery based upon the need to reduce exclusions particularly in primary schools (see R2 below).</p> <p>The Education Standards Panel Received a report considering school attainment and the link with exclusion. No pattern emerged but the strength of the link between exclusion and SEN was noted.</p> <p>A full report into exclusion statistics, along with national comparisons, will be published to schools this month. This will include a covering statement from both the Director of Children’s Services and the Lead Member to state, again, the vision for East Sussex schools. This will be circulated in the VSB to all headteachers and governors (see Appendix 2).</p>	Oct 2012
R2	<p>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</p>	<p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>Through the work that East Sussex has been undertaking, as part of the SEND pathfinder alongside SE7 partner Local Authorities, we have been able to have significant input into the development of the new code of practice for SEND (legislation due to take effect in September 2014). Part of this work, within the county, has been to work with schools and support services to draw up our Local Offer and processes in schools aimed to better support children and young people with SEND. Over the coming months, the CSD will be aligning it’s assessment, planning, implementation and support for children aged 0 to 25 to fit alongside new requirements within the Code of Practice.</p> <p>In addition to the SEN assessment and support practices, the Education Support Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) have continued to</p>	Jan 2013

	<p>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>	<p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>develop the Behaviour & Attendance partnerships across the county for the secondary phase. ESBAS Behaviour and Attendance Officers and Advisers along with anti bullying and parenting support colleagues worked with 1269 pupils during 2012/13. Partnership meetings take place monthly with representation from all secondary schools and academies in the county to discuss pupils at risk of exclusion and share good practice to support complex cases.</p> <p>The DfE Exclusion Trial which commenced in April 2012 in three of the four partnerships has seen an increase in the number of pupils supported by short term placements in College Central (Pupil Referral Unit) or by agreement in partnership schools to support an improvement in behaviour alongside tier 3 support by ESBAS and other services and agencies. 90 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion were referred between April 2012 and July 2013 of these, 49% returned successfully to their home school, 10% made a fresh start in an alternative mainstream school and 36% remained at College Central to complete their education. 4 pupils returned to their home schools but were permanently excluded following persistent disruptive behaviour.</p> <p>An evaluation of exclusion statistics shows that permanent exclusions were decreasing during the academic year 2012/13 but despite positive influences through partnership working, term six saw a significant rise with 18 secondary aged pupils permanently excluded compared to 10 for the same period 2011/12.</p> <p>In order to support further development of the behaviour support services, primary and secondary teams were amalgamated into the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service – for children aged five to 16 from 1st March, 2013. This has allowed greater flexibility of support to be delivered across all phases. The impact of decision by the Schools' Forum taken in October 2013 for the LA not to continue to retain the budgets for secondary behaviour support (the retention of primary budgets was agreed) will need to be considered. ESBAS will provide a comprehensive charged service to schools which includes</p>	
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		<p>options for schools/academies to purchase additional, high-quality support, where this is required. It is hoped that this will expand to those schools who will receive delegated BSS funds from April 2014. ESBAS Advisers (qualified teachers) have been proactive in supporting strategic behaviour management work in a number of schools and this is likely to develop as more schools opt to buy-in additional ESBAS services. The implementation of 'unit allocation' for work to maintained schools has enabled greater focus on preventative interventions including the development of a comprehensive training directory and small group interventions.</p> <p>As part of the overall changes to behaviour support services, 14 primary behaviour and attendance partnerships have been identified and dates to meet prior to December 2013 have been set. The partnerships will help schools and services work together to find creative ways to reduce exclusions and improve attendance across a given geographical area. This will encourage primary schools to share good practice already in place alongside support from specialist services. Additionally, we hope these will serve as a forum for detailed discussions around disproportionate levels of permanent exclusions.</p> <p>With the advent of Primary Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships there is an opportunity to review processes for access to the Flexible Learning Provision (FLP) for preventative dual role placements for primary aged pupils that allow schools alternative routes, other than permanent exclusion, and maintain their responsibility for students whilst gaining valuable support. A new process has been identified and shared with schools that will enable schools to refer to the FLP and a regular review of places so that we can enable more children to access the provision.</p> <p>The Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) have worked with 56 primary schools on a Behaviour and Attendance project which was completed in March 2013. The project involved a SLES consultant working in each school to complete an audit of the schools current behaviour and attendance management policy and practice using a self</p>	
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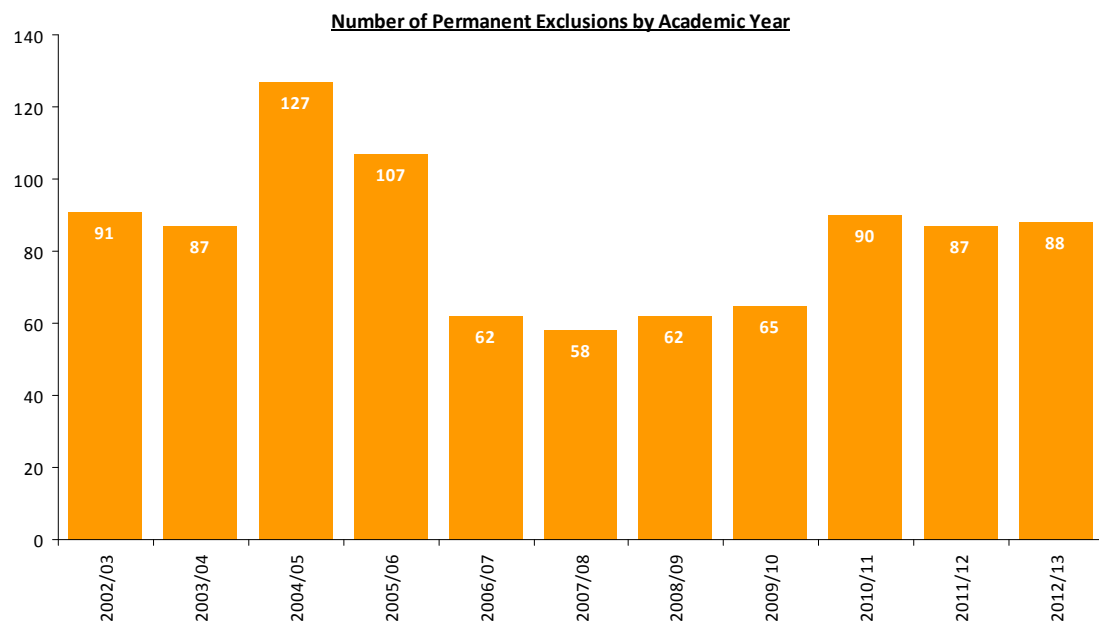
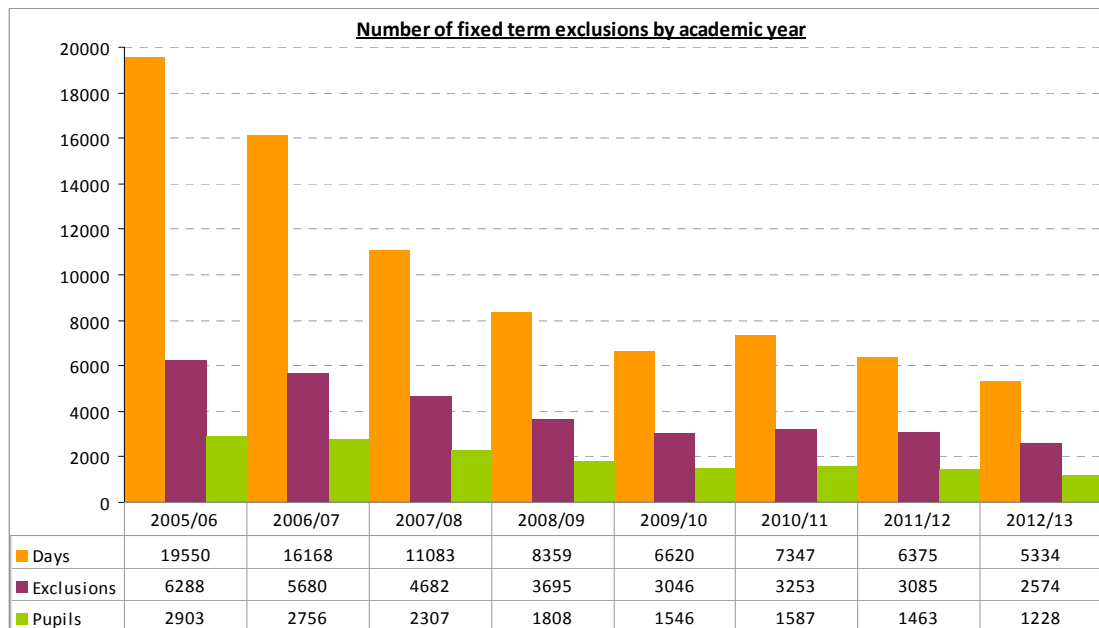
			<p>Nurture Network has been set up to support schools in developing good quality nurture provision. Schools and representative from ESBAS and EPS meet regularly to disseminate good practice.</p> <p>22 CSD staff across 3 services has undertaken Thrive ftc training. This is an accredited course which equips practitioners to undertake detailed assessment of young people's emotional development and indentify appropriate interventions to support the young person and school staff.</p>	
R3	<p>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>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>Following legislative changes in September 2012, the ESBAS Governor training was updated. A programme of governor training is in place to encourage all governors involved in exclusion matters within a school setting to access quality training in order to develop their skills in effectively challenging headteachers, particularly for permanent exclusions. This message has also been supported through the SLES Governor training programme which has focused on Closing the Gap for Vulnerable Learners.</p> <p>Part Time Timetables continue to be monitored and challenged for pupils referred to ESBAS. Where any concerns are raised in relation to these, they are followed up with the school directly. The CSD continues to be concerned at the frequency of the use of these, particularly where guidance has not been followed, involving some of the most vulnerable children in the county. This is an issue that will be picked up in the review of primary BSS and primary behaviour and attendance partnerships.</p> <p>There continue to be concerns with regard to the disproportionate level of exclusions for children with SEN. Whereas there is evidence of good practice in some areas, SEN can be used as a reason for exclusion by some schools and the requirement under equalities legislation to make reasonable adjustments is often ignored. This is a risk for the pupil, school and Local Authority. Again, we hope that greater partnerships with schools will allow for more discussion in this area; this will be accompanied by a training programme for school staff (as well as governors) in statutory regulations for supporting children with SEN. This</p>	Nov 2012

	e) seeking and responding to the views and experiences of parents/carers of excluded children, and of the youngsters themselves.	G	<p>is particularly pertinent with the forthcoming changes to SEND legislation.</p> <p>ESBAS undertakes a quarterly monitoring assessment to review outcomes of young people that have been referred to the service and this includes children at risk of permanent exclusion. The evaluations include questionnaires to both children and their parents/carers and cover a range of areas that a young person may need support with to improve their behaviour and attendance. During the academic year 2012/13, the total number of children supported by ESBAS across all service areas was 4,279 (an increase of 34 on the previous year). Of these children, 1,311 were provided with a range of one-to-one or small group work support. (An increase of 28% on the last academic year). The overwhelming majority of children were positive about all aspects of the support received from ESBAS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 62% said that things had changed for the better as a result of the support; o 72% of parents/carers who responded said that things had changed for the better as a result of the support their child received from ESBAS o Just over three quarters of schools who responded (78%) were positive with the overall support, with 75% stating that the interventions used addressed the needs of the child. Issues raised inform service development plans. 	
R4	<p>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</p>	G	<p>ESBAS have updated the web pages on exclusions following legislative changes in September 2012 to ensure parents have access to information on exclusions and links to the Coram Children's Legal Centre. The School Appeals Service have updated the information guide for parents on Independent Review Panels following a permanent exclusion and a copy is sent out by ESBAS to all parents of permanently excluded pupils,</p> <p>Information for Families has published web pages on exclusion and SEN</p>	Dec 2012

	<p>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> <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>	<p>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>on parentlinksussex.gov.uk. Positive feedback has been received from parents with evaluation of feedback taking place again in January 2013. Information for families will be reviewing the eastsussex.gov information focusing on behaviour/SEN support in schools and link to the SEN Pathfinder Local Offer)</p> <p>ESBAS have published an information guide for parents on the support available by ESBAS to support an improvement in a pupil's behaviour and attendance. The information guide is currently being sent to all schools and will be accessible to parents in the school reception. ESBAS are currently producing a leaflet for young people and have additional leaflets about the services it offers e.g. e-learning.</p> <p>In addition, the Information for Families service will be able to distribute the guide to all parents who make contact with them on matters relating to attendance and behaviour.</p> <p>ESBAS has developed a comprehensive service specification via the Local Offer, as part of the SEND reforms. When published, this will provide families with a comprehensive overview of what is on offer from the service, both in terms of help to them and in terms of what can be accessed through schools. Eventually, the Local Offer will provide this high level of information across all services within East Sussex.</p>	
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APPENDIX 2

East Sussex Exclusion Profile – 2005/6 to 2012/13 (all schools)



Statistical Neighbour Comparisons 2011/12 (by phase)

