

How do two different local authorities (LAs) support pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and overcome problems with reintegrating into mainstream secondary school following permanent exclusion?

Cathryn Booth, Caroline Bond & Siobhan O'Hagan

To cite this article: Cathryn Booth, Caroline Bond & Siobhan O'Hagan (19 Dec 2025): How do two different local authorities (LAs) support pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and overcome problems with reintegrating into mainstream secondary school following permanent exclusion?, *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, DOI: [10.1080/13632752.2025.2584929](https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2025.2584929)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2025.2584929>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 19 Dec 2025.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 469



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

RESEARCH ARTICLE



How do two different local authorities (LAs) support pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and overcome problems with reintegrating into mainstream secondary school following permanent exclusion?

Cathryn Booth , Caroline Bond  and Siobhan O'Hagan 

Institute of Education, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

ABSTRACT

Permanent exclusion is one of the most serious punitive disciplinary measures enforced in response to a pupil's behaviour. The rate of school suspensions and permanent exclusions remains a growing concern in England. A case study design, utilising semi-structured interviews with local authority (LA) staff, school staff and pupils in two LAs, explored how LA and secondary school systems operate to support pupils who have experienced or are at risk of permanent exclusion. Findings demonstrated key areas of support for successful reintegration, including pupil-staff relationships, personalised support, staff approach and understanding of need. Cross-case analysis revealed differences in systemic approaches across the cases and highlighted current challenges within the UK context. The paper concludes by considering the findings in line with current research and implications for future practice.

KEYWORDS

Reintegration; exclusion; suspension; secondary school

Introduction

School suspension and permanent exclusion remain a growing concern in England, recently reaching their highest rate since 2006, with secondary school permanent exclusion rates markedly higher than primary (Adams 2024; DfE 2024a). Permanent exclusion is commonly understood as a disciplinary sanction enforced in response to a pupil's behaviour, typically used as a last resort. Pupils can either receive a suspension, previously referred to as fixed-term exclusion, which is time-limited or receive a permanent exclusion, which results in the pupil being removed from the school register and moved to another school or being educated outside the typical education system (Valdebenito et al. 2019).

Permanent exclusion and suspensions are associated with lifelong adverse outcomes for pupils, including mental health difficulties and youth offending (Cole et al. 2019). Pupils suspended or excluded have poorer educational outcomes and are less likely to achieve their core General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) (Allen and Whitney Crenna-Jennings, and Education Policy Institute 2024) and are more likely not to be in education or employment at age 18/19 years or unemployed and not actively seeking employment in adulthood (Madia et al. 2022). Longitudinal research has shown the impact of permanent exclusion on long-term health outcomes (Obsuth et al. 2023). Increases in zero-tolerance behaviour policies, the narrowing of the curriculum and reduced funding in schools (Ofori 2024), combined with wider societal challenges, continue to leave

CONTACT Cathryn Booth  C.booth1@wigan.gov.uk

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

vulnerable pupils at risk of permanent exclusion (Cole et al. 2019; House of Commons Education Committee 2018). There is also concern about how current policy and systemic structures are creating perverse incentives to exclude (Thompson, Tawell, and Daniels 2021) and the over-representation of certain groups in the permanent exclusion statistics, including pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs (DfE 2024a; McIntyre, Parveen, and Thomas 2021).

The most reported reason for suspension and permanent exclusion is persistent disruptive behaviour, making up 48% of suspensions and 39% of permanent exclusions (DfE 2024a). Mainstream teachers continue to struggle to manage challenging behaviour (Tanase 2021) and may not receive formal training to support behaviour during their initial teacher training. Recently, behaviourist approaches such as zero tolerance have been advocated despite limited impact (Mellor 2023). This is a challenge for many pupils, given that pupils' behaviour is often an indicator of underlying and unmet needs, including SEND (Murphy 2021) or SEMH (DfE 2018), and can reflect trauma occurring in their lives (King 2016). Pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream secondary school (MSS) also experience a higher rate of unmet neurodevelopmental and mental health difficulties (Lawson et al. 2022). In the UK context, stretched mental health (Children's Commissioner 2024) and SEND services (Whittaker 2023) make it challenging for pupils to receive proactive identification of need and support in MSS.

Secondary headteachers' strategies to avoid permanent exclusion include external agency support, inclusion bases, short-term placements at pupil referral units (PRU) and systems to monitor behaviour (Martin-Denham 2021). Managed moves are also used to prevent exclusion (DfE 2024b). These should be voluntary and can provide a fresh start in a new school if governed appropriately (OCC 2011), but practice may vary (Messeter and Soni 2017). Successful integration into a new MSS can be facilitated by proactive planning, having a clean slate, good home-school communication, pastoral support for transition, relationships with staff and peers and pupil involvement in decision-making (Bagley and Hallam 2015).

Following a permanent exclusion, the LA has a statutory responsibility to provide an appropriate full-time education placement (DfE 2024b), often at the local PRU. PRUs are not set up to provide long-term placements (Owen 2022), and while reintegration into MSS is advocated (Thomas 2014), barriers can make sustained reintegration difficult (Owen 2022). Successful reintegration is facilitated by a whole school nurturing environment, staff inclusivity and appropriate support (Thomas 2014). Additionally, trusting relationships, utilising reintegration as a fresh start and ensuring there is appropriate learning intervention and support in place have been identified as key facilitators for successful reintegration by pupils and school practitioners (Owen 2022).

Relational and trauma-informed approaches are encouraged as whole-school approaches to teaching and learning (Dodds 2023; Long 2022) and promoting positive mental health (DfE 2018). Trauma-informed practice focuses on the theory behind the impact of trauma, encouraging compassion and restorative approaches to behaviours (Long 2022). However, these approaches can be challenging to implement, requiring a culture shift from punitive practice (Long 2022) and support from school leadership and continuous professional development for staff (Coleman 2020). Positive relationships with staff remain one of the most influential factors in supporting pupils with SEMH needs, enabling them to feel secure and motivated to learn (Carroll and Hurry 2018).

A recent review of permanent exclusion concluded that schools are not solely responsible for helping pupils overcome wider challenges in their lives, and LAs and local partners should understand local needs to provide the right support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion (DfE 2018). Local factors to minimise permanent exclusions include LA officers promoting inclusive practice, funding for external professional support, staff training and work with parents (Cole et al. 2019). However, LA officers recognise that reduced funding and academisation of schools have contributed to a fragmented system (Cole et al. 2019), reducing the capacity of LAs to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The Timpson review (DfE 2019) highlighted significant differences in how LAs

were supporting schools, ranging from training for schools to oversight on the commissioning of interventions and alternative provision (AP). Similarities across LAs included local forums and systems to facilitate joint working (DfE 2019). The review advised that LA work across settings to support students should be funded to ensure joined-up support systems and support to ensure pupils at risk of permanent exclusion can remain in mainstream education.

Rationale and research questions

Research to date has focused on school-based interventions (Valdebenito et al. 2019), and little is known about initiatives that are adopted within different LAs to support schools to reduce permanent exclusion in the current UK context. Therefore, this research explores how two LAs, their schools and pupils perceive the support in place to reduce permanent exclusions and help pupils successfully reintegrate following permanent exclusion. The views of pupils who had achieved successful reintegration into MSS were sought to identify key factors in supporting the needs of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The research questions were:

- (1) How do LA leads and school staff perceive the support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusions or being reintegrated into MSS?
- (2) What factors do permanently excluded pupils highlight as being important to their successful reintegration?

Method

This research was commissioned by an LA educational psychology service, in the North West of England and took place between August 2022 and November 2023. The research compares LA processes aimed at reducing permanent exclusion and their operationalisation in schools with illustrative case studies of successful pupil reintegration and support following permanent exclusion.

An exploratory multiple case study design (Yin 2018) was adopted to compare how two LAs supported pupils at risk of permanent exclusion and those reintegrating following a permanent exclusion. Both cases contained two embedded units of analysis (Yin 2009) that addressed the research questions (see Figure 1).

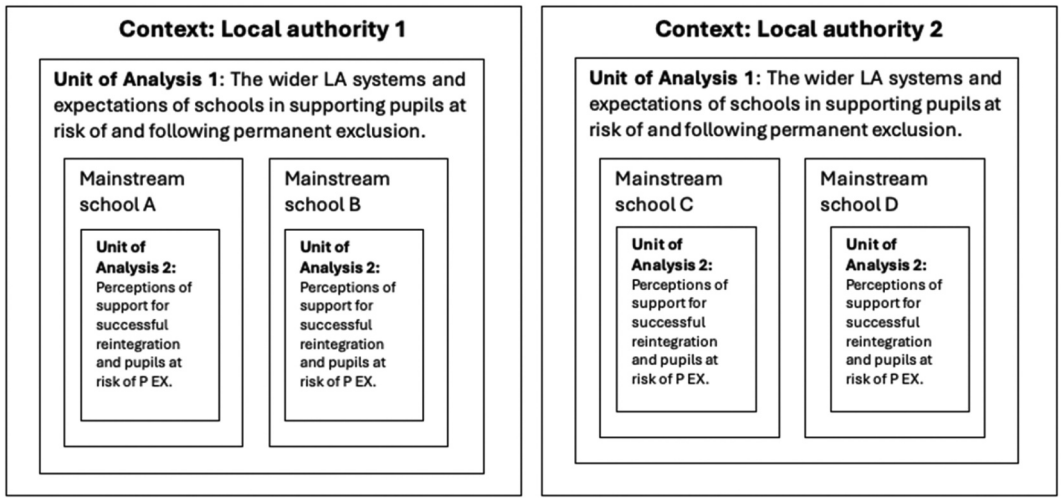


Figure 1. Multiple case study design.

This research adopted a critical realist epistemological stance, acknowledging the objective reality of permanent exclusions and reintegration across LAs while exploring the subjective interpretation of these and the different perceptions of the contextual factors and systems in place by key stakeholders.

Participants

Two LAs in the North West of England participated in the research. Participants were recruited through a purposive sampling approach. Tables 1, 2 and 3 below outline the sample and participant details. Pseudonyms were given to participants and schools to maintain anonymity.

The identified person within each LA contacted MSSs with information about the study. Participating schools were emailed a list of the inclusionary and exclusionary criteria to identify participants. Schools then approached eligible pupils to take part. Both LAs had high percentages of permanent exclusion and a priority to reduce permanent exclusions. Characteristics of the participating LAs and schools are provided below.

LA 1

A small, urban LA with less than 10 secondary schools, 90% of MSSs are academised and have almost double the amount of specialist provision settings for KS3 and KS4 pupils compared to LA 2. Approximately 30% of residents are living in high-deprivation areas.

Table 1. Overview of the sample.

	LA 1	LA 2
La lead	1	1
School staff	2	2
Pupils	2	1

Table 2. Overview of pupil participants.

Case	Name Gender	Year group at time of interview	AP accessed following exclusion	Time in current school (since reintegration)
LA 1 White Marsh	Delilah Female	Year 10	Short term LA PRU placement following a permanent exclusion	1 year, 1 term
LA 1 Eden Heights	Molly Female	Year 10	Short term 1:1 tuition in a library following a permanent exclusion	2.5 terms (Jan-Oct)
LA 2 Brimpton Boys School	James Male	Year 11	PRU (AP academy) placement following two permanent exclusions from different MSSs	2 years

Table 3. Overview of staff participants.

Case	Name Gender	Type of participant	Job role	Time in current role	Years in teaching
LA 1 White Marsh	John Male	LA representative	Headteacher at the virtual school and divisional manager for education	14–18 months	17 years
	Stephanie Female	Staff member	Leader of inclusive curriculums	2 years	14 years
Eden Heights	David Male	Staff member	Vice Principal	11 years	20 years
LA 2 Trinity High	Lee Male	LA representative	Executive headteacher at a PRU (AP academy)	3 years	26 years
	Phillip Male	Staff member	Principal	3.5 years	30 years
Brimpton Boys School	Joey Male	Staff member	Assistant Principal	6 years	14 years

Table 4. Categories and subcategories for LA 1 participant groups.

LA 1 Participants groups		
LA 1 – LA representative perspectives	LA 1 - School staff perspectives	LA 1 – Pupils perspectives
Coordinated support at the school level • Holding schools accountable • Capacity building • Improve accessibility of professionals • Multi-agency working	Pupil-Centred Practice • Holistic understanding of pupils • Personalised support and provision • Increasing pupil motivation	Relationships
Collaboration • Working 'with' not 'to' schools • Inter-school relationships	Influence of relationships • Building positive relationships • Breakdown in relationships • Engagement	Assessing and Understanding need
Competing demands • Constraints of resources to respond to need • External pressures as a challenge for schools	School Ethos • School and staff approach • Positive influence of majority • Leadership influence	Tailored Support (a) Individualised planning (b) Support for learning
Supporting Reintegration • Challenges • Expectations of schools • Strategic planning • Working together	Internal Systems • Sanctions • Clear graduated response of support • Reintegration package	Benefits of placement prior to reintegration
Strategic Oversight • Developing a support model that fits • Data monitoring systems • Need to develop the AP offer	LA Level of support • Former offer of support (PRU programme) • LA procedures • Wishes for LA support	Challenges with initial reintegration
	Challenges • External dominant systems • Staff's difficulties managing behaviour • Needs of pupils beyond MSS support • Lack of intervention	

White Marsh Academy has over 1,500 pupils on roll and is in an area ranked within the 6th most deprived decile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). *White Marsh* is an 'outstanding' school and has been commended for its pastoral support and outcomes for pupils with SEND.

Eden Heights Academy has just over 1,000 pupils on roll and situated in an area ranked between the 7th and 8th deprivation decile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). Although rated 'requires improvement', expectations of behaviour were assessed as high, and pupils behaved well.

LA 2

Almost double the population of LA 1 with a mix of urban and rural areas, and 56% of secondary schools are academised. It is higher on the deprivation index than LA 1 by 11 places and has a higher crime rate.

Trinity High Academy has just over 1,200 pupils on roll and is in an area ranked within the 1st and 2nd most deprived decile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). Although previously rated as 'requires improvement', the latest Ofsted report recognised significant improvement over a short time, particularly in pupils' pastoral support.

Brimpton Boys Academy is a same sex school with just under 1150 pupils on roll and situated in an area with the 1st and 5th crime deciles and between 2nd and 3rd deprivation deciles (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). *Brimpton* is rated a 'good' school and commended on its strong relationships with pupils, and that pupils feel well cared for.

Table 5. Categories and subcategories for LA 2 participant groups.

LA 2 Participant groups		
LA 2 – LA representative perspectives	LA 2 - School staff perspectives	LA 2 – Pupil perspectives
Working systemically with schools • Instilling a relational inclusion approach • Building capacity in schools to change the culture • Influences of leadership ‘Together’ approach • Creating a shared responsibility • Working with schools Accessible support for pupils • Options of support available • Bespoke direct intervention Expectations for reintegration • School and staff approaches • Support around pupils Contextual challenges • Difficulties in implementing approaches • Wider systems • Reintegration challenges Reducing permanent exclusion as LA priority • Keeping it high on the agenda • Preventive approach • Future developments	Whole-school approach • Creating a culture • Influence of leadership • School wide practices Individual approach • Understanding and knowing the pupil • Tailored Support Responding to emerging SEMH needs • Identifying and understanding SEMH needs • Internal systems in place for support • Flexible provision offer Operating within wider systems • Challenges within wider systems • Working together • Complexities of exclusion Reintegration • Barriers to reintegration • Conditions for successful reintegration	Flexible Support Relationships Staff approach and interpersonal skills Individual Factors

LA leads and four staff members from different schools were interviewed across both LAs. All schools were from different academy trusts. All adult participants had qualifications related to leadership, apart from Stephanie, who had qualifications related to her SEN role. Additionally, Lee had a qualification in trauma-informed, attachment-aware practice. Three pupils from three of the schools participated, and one school was unable to recruit a pupil to represent their school. The LA leads roles are detailed within Table 3. John’s position as the LA lead involved a strategic oversight of coordinating support for schools. Lee’s position as LA lead involved being funded by the LA to reduce permanent exclusion as head teacher of the PRU, chairing a head teacher’s group and leading on a relational inclusion pilot.

Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was gained through the host institution. Given the potential vulnerability of child participants, the author implemented several measures to reduce the risk of harm, including developing an inclusion criterion. Within this criterion, pupils could only participate if they had experienced a successful reintegration, which was determined by the following:

- The pupil has maintained regular attendance at their mainstream school since reintegrating (70% and above),
- The pupil has not received any fixed-term suspensions in the last month,
- The pupil was not currently at risk of permanent exclusion as determined by school staff.

Participants gave informed consent and the researcher completed one rapport-building session with the pupil before the interview.

Data collection and analysis

Nine individual semi-structured interviews (SSIs) were conducted; five were completed in person, and four were completed virtually as per participant preference. All pupil interviews were conducted in person. SSIs were utilised due to their flexibility and ability to investigate individual perspectives in greater depth (Horton, Macve, and Struyven 2004).

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Conventional content analysis was used to capture the factual details and subtleties within the data set, and codes were derived directly from the data (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Data from each participant group and case study were analysed separately to adhere to the boundaries of the case studies. The researcher immersed themselves in the data by listening to the audio recordings and re-reading the transcripts of each interview before using the software NVivo (Version 12) to code the data line by line. Once all the data were coded within each participant group, the author refined the codes and then organised them meaningfully into groups, which allowed for inductive development of categories and subcategories.

A data sample was inter-rater coded with the second author to ensure consistent codes and increase reliability, 81% inter-rater reliability was reached following independent coding. Contextual information about each school, such as Ofsted reports and school policies, was sought from publicly available sources to form pen portraits (see Appendix 1). The DfE (2024a) suspension and permanent exclusion statistics for both LAs are compared with the North West average in Figures 2 and 3 below.

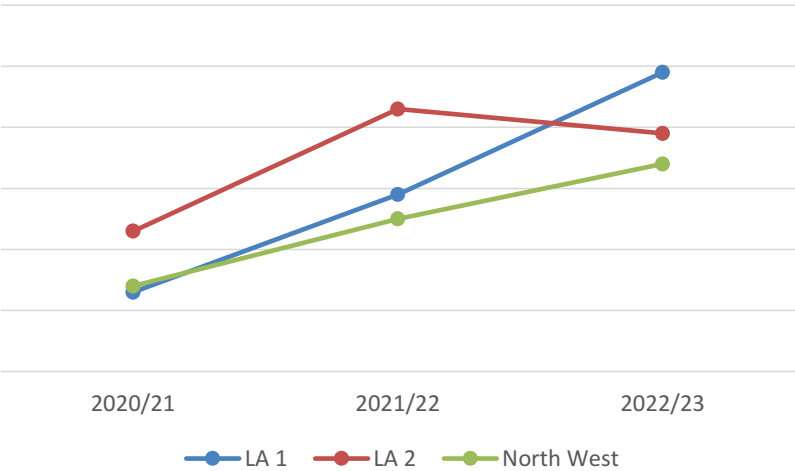


Figure 2. Permanent exclusion rates for secondary pupils between academic years 2020/21 and 2022/23.

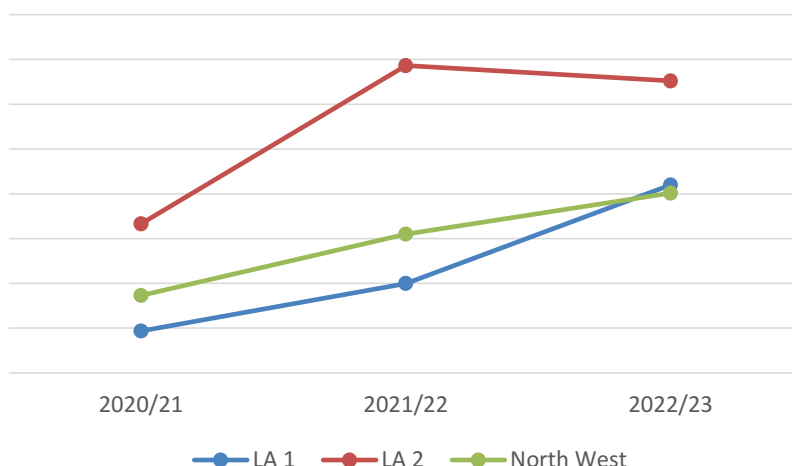


Figure 3. Suspension rates for secondary pupils between academic years 2020/21 and 2022/23.

Findings

The main findings are presented by participant group within each case, followed by a cross-case analysis. Categories are shown in bold text and subcategories in underlined text. An overview of categories and subcategories are presented in the tables below. [Table 4](#) represents participants from LA 1 and [Table 5](#) represents participants from LA 2.

Case study one: LA 1

LA lead perspectives

Co-ordinated support at the school level

John aimed to help schools increase their ability to meet the needs of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion offering MSSs Team Around the School (TAS) meetings, holding schools accountable for their provision for pupils, “tell us what actions you took ... Have you actioned it? What could we have done differently here?”. The TAS model supported capacity building by increasing staff knowledge through commissioning training, encouraging departments to work together, and shifting mindsets around inclusive practice. The model improved accessibility of professionals and services were held accountable for the delivery of their services. The TAS model enabled multi-agency working through services, such as educational psychology, youth justice and drug and alcohol services being at the meeting. John felt keeping all services engaged with the TAS was an ongoing challenge.

Collaboration

John was working ‘with’ not ‘to’ schools as part of the LA support offer, adopting a bespoke approach and considering their behaviour thresholds and internal challenges. He positioned TAS meetings as collaborative, ‘we’ve really tried to avoid ... dictating ... we’ve tried to come up with the solutions together.’ Organising transition meetings to support information sharing for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion had encouraged inter-school relationships and John perceived that secondary headteachers were working much more closely.

Competing demands

John highlighted constraints of resources to respond to LA need, including school budget constraints, lack of specialist provision and registered AP providers, staffing difficulties and

limited specialist support. These factors could result in pupils remaining in MSS and not receiving timely or appropriate support. As a result, several MSSs in the LA had set up their own onsite AP to better meet the needs of their pupils, with positive outcomes. Additionally, John acknowledged external pressures as a challenge for schools, such as Ofsted outcomes, parental pressure to permanently exclude pupils, and academy trusts regarding standards of behaviour.

Supporting reintegration

Supporting reintegration presented challenges, including pupil readiness for reintegration and systems not allowing for longer placements or ongoing PRU support. Tensions included pupils wanting to remain at the PRU and managing parental expectations regarding reintegration to MSS 'without setting them [the pupils] up to fail'. The expectations of schools to adopt a relational approach and the opportunity for a fresh start at the receiving MSS was important. John supported reintegration through individualised strategic planning, as 'one size does not fit all'. John spoke about his responsibility for ensuring managed moves are used preventively and how reintegration is more likely to be successful when everyone is working together for the pupil with family engagement, clear information sharing and collaboration across settings.

Strategic oversight

John had strategic oversight for reducing permanent exclusions, which included developing a support model that fits and is responsive to the LA's needs. Previous models did not meet the school's needs, and LA data guided the new model. Support was provided for primary to secondary transition, and data monitoring systems were used to track pupils discussed at TAS meetings, and specific cohorts of pupils. John highlighted the need to develop the AP offer, including building AP capacity and options responsive to pupil need.

Staff perspectives

Pupil-centred practice

Pupil-centred practice was a substantial category. Staff needed a holistic understanding of pupils, informed by listening to pupils, collaborating with parents and having an accurate assessment of pupils' needs. Staff placed importance on all staff knowing the pupils and information sharing upon reintegration. Stephanie (Leader of inclusive curriculums, White Marsh School) explained her advocacy role:

with all the help of the professionals, we could stand up to staff and say, '... She's got a lot against her ... and if you understand her and think actually when she's shouting in class, it's because we think she's got a hearing loss or ...'

Personalised support and provision were influential factors in supporting pupil success in MSS, this included personalising timetables and education offers linked to future career aspirations. Personalised provision included the use of AP, adjustment in class sizes, consideration of pupil-teacher dynamics and wellbeing support. Staff identified the benefits of increasing pupil motivation by building on their strengths, investing in their hobbies and encouraging extra-curricular activities.

Influence of relationships

Building positive relationships was identified as important for all pupils, especially those reintegrating into a new school. Stephanie highlighted this, 'the main thing is like ... positive relationships ... that's the base of everything.' Key adults facilitated relationships, and needed to be persistent in relationship-building, but finding time could be a challenge during initial reintegration. Concerns about breakdowns in relationships could also result in pupil and staff reluctance. Participants identified the level of engagement from pupils and families as essential for student receptiveness

to working with staff, 'he's causing us no end of problems ... but because he's working with us, we're trying our best to work with him' (David, Vice Principal, Eden Heights).

School ethos

Participants highlighted the importance of the school and staff approach. Staff who were relational, supportive, and willing to try alternatives were recognised as facilitators. David (Vice Principal, Eden Heights) highlighted how staff approaches could change the narrative for a pupil, 'stop talking to them about their behaviour and talk to them about ... "What was your drum lesson like?"'. Participants felt that the positive influence of the majority set the standards for behaviour and contributed to pupils' success. Stephanie (Leader of inclusive curriculums, White Marsh School) spoke about the leadership influence at White Marsh, 'I think that very much comes from the culture that [headteacher] is trying to push ... we need to be supporting these pupils'.

Internal systems

Participants highlighted internal systems to respond to behaviour and prevent permanent exclusion. Sanctions provided a break in the cycle of behaviour for all parties to reflect and reset, including PRU placements, suspensions and managed moves. Managed moves were reported to be successful for pupils who requested a move; however, for some, they had a negative impact. Permanent exclusion was seen as a last resort, and suspension as a behaviour management tool, 'if they're verbally abusive to a member of staff, it's really hard to not suspend' (David, Vice Principal, Eden Heights). Both schools had a clear graduated response, with different intensities of support in response to a pupil's needs. Stephanie's SEN background enabled staff to follow the LA guidance prior to permanent exclusion and preventative systems, which included an SEN assessment. Eden Heights had developed their own flowchart for staff, encouraging alternative measures to investigate and support behaviour. Both participants highlighted support options, including direct interventions, behaviour strategies, and AP, with White Marsh developing its own onsite AP. Reintegration packages were offered to pupils, including a phased reintegration, key workers and time-out passes. Stephanie (Leader of inclusive curriculums, White Marsh) highlighted that 'having more people involved in that reintegration process' enabled greater success.

LA Level support

Several benefits of the previous LA offer (a PRU reintegration programme) were identified, including respite, assessment work and identification of strategies. However, this did not work for all pupils, and transferring strategies into MSS was difficult. Participants spoke about LA procedures, requiring schools to follow a graduated response before permanent exclusion. Participants wished for LA support, including front-facing services and a package of support following a permanent exclusion before reintegration,

It'd be really helpful ... that if a student's permanently excluded that ... they're going to get an EP referral, they're going to get an ADHD diagnosis ... so that when they come back out you've got something ... (David, Vice Principal, Eden Heights)

Challenges

Several challenges contributed to the ongoing permanent exclusion problem in MSSs. External dominant systems included wider societal and familial influences, lack of resources and frustrations with wider systems. Lack of specialist setting placements, and the limited support service availability resulted in challenges such as staff difficulties managing behaviour. Participants acknowledged challenges when the needs of pupils are beyond MSS support. David (Vice Principal, Eden Heights) commented, 'It's hard when ... you're almost looking at everything you've got at your disposal ...

and you're still going, "I just don't think it's going to work." Challenges also arose when there had been a lack of intervention, such as permanent exclusion following a one-off incident.

Pupil perspectives

Relationships

Both pupils talked about relationships supporting their successful reintegration, often seeking out key adults as a behaviour strategy. Molly (pupil, Eden Heights) shared that her key adult 'shows that she cares' and Delilah (pupil, White Marsh) spoke positively about regular opportunities to 'talk' with her key adult. Molly also spoke about the positive impact of having more friends in her current school.

Assessing and understanding need

Delilah's successful reintegration journey was heavily influenced by her assessment and ADHD diagnosis and the positive impact of her diagnosis and medication on her behaviour. Both pupils spoke about how this process had facilitated a greater understanding among staff, 'so like now because the teachers know who I am, like they know how to help' (Delilah, pupil, White Marsh).

Tailored support

Both pupils spoke about the importance of individualised planning. Delilah's personalised timetable included matching her to staff she had a relationship with, removing lessons she disliked and additional core subject lessons. Support for learning was also important, with Molly (pupil, Eden Heights) highlighting, '... over time, it's got better since I've been having intervention and ... more support in lessons.'

Benefits of placement

Both pupils spoke positively about their placement outside of MSS, which led to more support. Molly identified the benefits of one-to-one tuition for her learning, 'I'd say it helped me a little bit more' (pupil, Eden Heights) and Delilah shared fun memories she had of the PRU activities.

Challenges with initial reintegration

Initial reintegration was challenging for both pupils, particularly staff not knowing them and their needs. Delilah initially had several behavioural sanctions that caused her not to want to attend school, and Molly identified that things only improved after she had been receiving intervention for a while. Molly initially worried that she was 'going to struggle in certain lessons ... not make friends, like that sort of stuff' (pupil, Eden Heights).

Case study two: LA 2

LA lead perspectives

Working systemically with schools

LA2's support focused on working systemically by instilling a relational inclusion approach in schools. Relational inclusion (RI) had been piloted across the LA, focusing on embedding whole school trauma-informed practice, encouraging schools to move towards relational policies, and creating a shared language:

one of the biggest reasons for permanent exclusion is persistent disruptive behaviour and ... if we called that consistent emotional dysregulation ... what I'm talking about is reframing ... this idea of bad behaviour. (Lee, LA representative, LA 2)

Lee aimed to build capacity in schools to change the culture of permanently excluding pupils. He talked about shifting mindsets, upskilling staff and encouraging schools to develop identification systems. Lee had established the role of relational inclusion champion in all schools to support cascading training and delivering direct work. Lee recognised the importance of sustainability of these approaches in the long term and the influence of leadership was a facilitator in implementing such approaches.

Together approach

Lee was creating a shared responsibility across the LA with MSS headteachers. Pupils were seen as a community responsibility, emphasising that schools should treat in-year transfers or reintegrating pupils as their own responsibility from the outset. Lee's approach encapsulated working with schools, including a heads group to problem solve and develop support. Lee provided ad-hoc support for headteachers before a permanent exclusion 'So, it was ... , "talk me through what's happened. Is there anything we can do together?"' (Lee, LA representative, LA 2)

Accessible support for pupils

There were different options of support available for schools and pupils. Lee was trying to create an LA support team including trauma therapists, EPs, outreach support and PRU placements to work with identified pupils and families. Outreach support offered bespoke direct intervention tailored to pupils' needs and Lee offered support, 'so heads can ring me and say, 'Is there anything else?' And then we just work bespoke with that."

Expectations for reintegration

School and staff approaches contributed to successful reintegration. Lee identified success when staff gave pupils a fresh start, praised them for their efforts and were understanding of their circumstances. Challenges arose when staff made presumptions about pupils following their permanent exclusion, 'So, ... they're very stern and it's like, "We know about you, and we know what you've done"'. Lee emphasised the need for clear and robust packages offering support around pupils including managing the uncertainty of reintegration through a support network of adults offering, regular check-ins, continuity of staff, work with families and regular reviews.

Contextual challenges

Lee experienced difficulties in implementing approaches consistently across all schools due to differences in culture and thresholds for permanent exclusion, 'I think the biggest challenge for me, are schools that have zero tolerance behaviour policies ... ' Wider systems created barriers, including pressures on schools, challenges with academisation, political influences and resource constraints. Lee emphasised the need for sufficient funding and training in MSSs to overcome the reintegration challenges of '... them going back into a different school with different people with different peers with different routines and just expecting that to work without any problems'.

Reducing permanent exclusion as a priority

Lee was committed to keeping reducing permanent exclusion high on the agenda with headteachers. He adopted a preventative approach, encouraging MSSs to identify pupils early and preempting difficulties before they arise and he was working with primary settings on early intervention. 'What I thought was instead of waiting for them to get in bother, let's identify them and try and do some work with them, and hopefully that might prevent it happening.' Lee highlighted future developments needed within this area, including more training for staff, particularly during teacher training and the potential for more PRU support if permanent exclusions are reduced.

Staff perspectives

Whole-school approach

Staff emphasised creating a culture that enables pupils to feel valued and belong through staff interactions with pupils, a culture of relationships and upholding core values. Joey explained, 'as a school, all you can do is try and create a culture ... where children feel relentlessly safe ... relentlessly positive about learning, and ... they're valued' (Assistant Principal, Brimpton Boys). Phillip discussed how the value-based culture of his school played a massive part in improving behaviour. The influence of leadership was crucial in prioritising budgets for SEMH, moving towards a relational approach and challenging staff practice. School wide practices were adopted by both schools and seen to be effective, including relational inclusion, whole-school training and a behavioural curriculum.

Individualised approach

Understanding and knowing the pupil through information sharing across settings was important during reintegration, but participants felt this could be improved. Tailored support ensured pupils received support to meet their needs, with Phillip's school using an internal team around the student (ITAS) model to 'triage' individual support. Pupils benefitted from tailored timetables and the use of AP when required. Decisions regarding permanent exclusion were similarly made on a case-by-case basis.

Responding to emerging SEMH needs

Identifying and understanding SEMH needs was key for Trinity High, where pre-admission tools to identify SEMH needs, included an adverse childhood experiences screener and 'welfare and behavioural analysis'. Phillip explained that ITAS facilitated the identification of needs, and behavioural presentation was understood as a need for support through a trauma-informed approach. Both schools had internal systems in place for support, including clear roles and a graduated response to behaviour. Direct support for pupils included outreach from the PRU, counselling, pastoral support and access to EPs. Participants used off-site directions and behaviour placements as alternatives to permanent exclusion and identified that a flexible provision offer can help in preventing permanent exclusion. Trinity High had its own on-site AP, which provided a bespoke curriculum, smaller class sizes, and short-term placements. Brimpton Boys used external AP providers to offer a hybrid approach to MSS education, in which the MSS had regular contact and oversight. Joey explained, 'it works because it keeps them in school, it keeps them on roll, and it means that they're not going to a PRU.' (Assistant Principal, Brimpton Boys)

Reintegration

Participants reported barriers to reintegration, including pupils reintegrating when MSS staff did not feel they were ready and reintegrating KS4 pupils could be difficult due to GCSE options having been chosen. Further challenges were attributed to the lack of internal systems to support learning alongside SEMH needs. Conditions for successful reintegration included constant communication, family support, visits to school prior to reintegrating and personalised reintegration packages. Pupil motivation to be at school also contributed bi-directionally to whether reintegration was successful or not.

Operating with wider systems

Participants highlighted challenges within wider systems. Within the LA, there were increasing levels of deprivation and wider societal issues, including domestic violence and drug use, which were a challenge for pupils and their families. School resources and limited affordable quality AP were also challenges. The MSS environment, transition from primary school and inflexible curricula were perceived as challenges for some pupils, 'you have these kids ... with real tough backgrounds

with a lot going on and a lot of trauma ... and you know, you're making them do Pythagoras ... it's nonsense ... quite frankly' (Joey, Assistant Principal, Brimpton Boys). Headteachers and Lee were working together to reduce permanent exclusion. Participants felt that there was a good level of support, but challenges arose when schools did not cooperate or were less inclusive. The complexities of permanent exclusion continued to pose difficulties. Phillip highlighted this:

there's a gap ... it's not alternative provision. It's not sending them to the college for three days of construction because, let's just be brutal, half the time that's out of sight, out of mind. It's that what can we do here ... to ... change those behaviours ... and it's ... before the PRU but after the school. (Principal, Trinity High)

Pupil perspectives

Flexible support

James spoke positively about the flexibility around the support at his MSS, such as 'step out' and access to a quiet space. James discussed receiving support for learning and being able to drop lessons he disliked, comparing this to a lack of support in his previous schools, which negatively impacted his schooling experience.

Relationships

Relationships were a key factor for James, including relationships with staff and peers which were established quickly. This was facilitated by having pre-existing relationships with some of his peers and meeting key adults before starting. James often sought out key adults for support, 'I just feel like ... before I ... do anything like majorly big to get me kicked out of school, he just stops me or takes me out or something.' The positive influence of peers appeared to greatly influence James's behaviour and success, with peers encouraging him to comply with school rules and sanctions. James also referred to the influence of positive teacher relationships on his classroom behaviour and compliance.

Staff approach and interpersonal skills

James spoke about teachers who demonstrate they care, 'the ones that actually treat you like an actual person are alright.' Comparing this to disinterested teachers at his previous schools: 'Most schools just can't be bothered putting up with it, can they? So, they just kick you out'. James valued staff who demonstrated patience, understanding and had good behaviour management in class.

Individual factors

Factors supporting James' reintegration, included his motivation to attend the current MSS and his learning. James recognised that one of the things going well for him was 'work, I'm doing alright in it'. He recognised his longer commute and work not being challenging enough could potentially have a negative impact on his school experiences if they were not managed.

Cross-case analysis

A cross-case analysis revealed similarities in the reported perspectives of key stakeholders across both LAs regarding support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion or being reintegrated into MSS. Pupil and staff relationships were highlighted across the three different respondent groups as influencing pupil success. All pupils spoke about having key adults and seeking these adults out as a behaviour strategy. Interestingly, pupils from LA 1 benefited from SEN identification and support for learning, whereas the pupil from LA 2 had learning as a supportive factor to his reintegration and support was required primarily for SEMH needs. Staff across both cases acknowledged that

personalised support was influential, and support and/or sanctions have to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

At a systemic level, both authorities had the same intentions of reducing permanent exclusion, with evolving shared expectations within each LA, but their models varied. Case study two adopted a trauma-informed approach, which utilised psychological theory as the vehicle for change, while case study one embodied a team around the school, creating a multi-disciplinary model for school-coordinated support. LA-level support had aspects of capacity building and collaboration with MSS staff in both cases. Alongside this, case study two offered direct support as part of their offer, whilst case study one did not. Staff in case study one discussed a need for direct support within the LA. Data highlighted permanent exclusions and suspensions had risen in LA 1 since the removal of their previous direct support in 2022 and had decreased over the past academic year for LA 2. Within case study two, there was evidence of the LA level of support being enacted in schools, with the impact of relational inclusion appearing at the staff and pupil level. Staff acknowledged the influence of their approach within their school culture, and it was experienced first-hand by the pupil as an important aspect of his successful reintegration. Both case studies were impacted by the ongoing challenges within the wider systems, particularly the constraints of resources, external pressures and limited specialist provision within the LAs. As a result of these challenges, two schools across both authorities had set up their own AP onsite, which had seen a decrease in permanent exclusion.

Discussion

The research aims were twofold: to explore how LA leads, and school staff perceive the support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion or being reintegrated into MSS and to explore the reintegration experiences of permanently excluded pupils to identify key factors in successful reintegration. The research highlights how two authorities were attempting to develop a consistent and coordinated multi-level approach to permanent exclusion and reintegration whilst managing contradictions and challenges at the LA level. The two authorities were at different stages in their implementation, with LA 1 in its early stages of development, which is reflected in the findings. LA leads sought to create the foundations for effective work with pupils by using non-directive approaches and building capacity in MSS. They had expectations of schools for reintegration, including adopting relational approaches, having a team of adults around a pupil and giving pupils a fresh start (Bagley and Hallam 2015). At the staff level, relational approaches, school ethos and culture, and individualised practice were highlighted as key factors across both cases. Pupil data reflected these themes but also focused more on their direct experiences, highlighting how the process of permanent exclusion and reintegration is experienced as a continuous process for them.

Both LAs developed a strategy offering support to schools beyond their core offer. LA 1 adopted a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach to reducing permanent exclusion, focusing on the importance of coordinated support at MSSs (Children's Commissioner 2024) to ensure the identification of needs (Lawson et al. 2022). This model focussed on holding schools accountable for school-level support, including making reasonable adjustments and acting as advocates (DfE 2019, 2022). Strategic oversight from John and data monitoring systems was utilised to respond to local needs, as per recommendations from the Timpson review (DfE 2019). It is not possible to infer the impact of this model due to the stage of implementation, however, at a pupil level, assessment and identification of needs contributed to positive integration in MSS (Owen 2022). LA 1 highlighted a lack of resources within their LA, and school staff expressed wishes for front-facing support and more robust systems following permanent exclusion.

LA 2 adopted a preventative, relationally based approach to inclusion that incorporated multi-level support, including, direct assignment of PRU outreach staff in MSSs, and broader systemic support. This was influenced by Lee's positioning and PRU resources enabling him

to offer AP resources, which school staff valued and concurs with the latest Timpson review (DfE 2019). Alongside this, there was also a forum to allow for the LA and schools to work together (DfE 2019). The use of trauma-informed practice appeared to be the main driving force around LA 2's model of support, which transferred down into school staff practice and pupils' experiences. LA 2's TI practice was referred to as relational inclusion and was embedded into whole-school systemic work. Lee discussed how a culture shift was needed to adopt these practices (Long 2022), and his role in maintaining this. Coleman (2020) highlighted the importance of committed leadership. At a pupil level, it was evident that influential aspects of the pupil's successful reintegration were attributed to the school staff TI approach, including their interpersonal skills and their nurturing relationships, concurring with previous literature (Carroll and Hurry 2018). In line with the Timpson review, it is apparent that both models developed in response to local needs and were shaped by the strategic leads (DfE 2019).

At the school level, both LAs identified internal systems that were in place to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion and respond to emerging SEMH needs. Pupils benefited from schools having a wide range of options available, including external professionals, extra-curricular activities and the use of sanctions such as managed moves. Reintegration in these instances was more successful when pupils were given a fresh start and it was instigated by pupils, as identified in the literature (OCC 2011; Owen 2022). Within LA 1, the graduated response overlapped with SEN assessment and within LA 2 systems supported the understanding of pupils' SEMH needs. Given that a high proportion of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion have SEND needs (DfE 2024a; McIntyre, Parveen, and Thomas 2021), these systems are imperative to receiving timely individualised support (Hulme, Adamson, and Griffiths 2023).

Adults working in the schools highlighted conditions for successful reintegration, including a team of adults around pupils, regular communication, phased reintegration and staff understanding, which concurs with previous research (Bagley and Hallam 2015; Owen 2022). As previously found (Lawrence 2011), a lack of readiness for reintegration was noted as a barrier to successful reintegration. Pupil responses suggested that previous schooling experiences, contextual factors and initial integration also warrant careful consideration. Pupils required personalised approaches and flexibility in support offered, while staff and peer relationships contributed to their successful reintegration, especially having at least one key adult they could seek support from (Carroll and Hurry 2018; Owen 2022). The pupil data highlighted the importance of understanding the pupils in the broader context of their experiences of reintegration.

Findings demonstrate the wider challenges faced by LAs and schools, especially constraints of resources, external pressures and academisation. Societal issues such as poverty and inflexible zero-tolerance policies also contribute to the challenge of reducing permanent exclusions. Interestingly, findings highlight that although all staff participants discussed their desire to move away from using permanent exclusions as a disciplinary measure, they felt there was still a place for permanent exclusion, which was also found by Garbett (2022). In LA 2, school staff acknowledged how permanent exclusion enables some pupils to gain access to the next tier of support, such as access to specialist resources. Thus, contributing to the narrative that the system is creating perverse incentives to exclude pupils (Thompson, Tawell, and Daniels 2021). In relation to perceived gaps in provision, schools in both LAs had created their onsite APs to help facilitate pupil support which has been found to improve pupils' behaviour in previous research (Reynolds 2021).

Implications for practice

It is acknowledged that these systems are contextually dependent. However, given the limited research around LA models to reduce permanent exclusions, it provides valuable principles that can be adapted to other LA contexts. Findings confirm the importance of relational factors at the

school level and, additionally, highlight the importance of a shared vision across the LA with an integrated approach that includes an offer of support alongside wider systemic work. Opportunities for joint working and a forum that allows LA representatives and schools to work together to address permanent exclusion are likely to benefit work in this area. The positioning of the LA lead is important, as this is likely to impact the delivery of such approaches. Pupil reintegration experiences also emphasise the need for schools and LAs to understand the whole reintegration experience to establish what support pupils require, particularly during initial reintegration. There are real strengths of both models with areas for development, it is likely that a model that encompasses both established SEN and SEMH systems will provide the best package of support.

Limitations and future research

Differences in the quantity of data between the cases was a limitation of this study, with only one pupil's perspective gathered for case two due to difficulties in recruiting participants. Further case studies of successful reintegration into different contexts are warranted. Despite adaptations to the interviews, all pupils demonstrated some difficulties articulating their experiences, which concurs with previous research highlighting the language difficulties of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion (Clegg et al. 2009). Further research that utilises alternative methods, such as Q methodology (Hulme, Adamson, and Griffiths 2023) might capture a more in-depth understanding of their overall experiences. Further case study research that captures longitudinal data of current practices and systems would be beneficial to the research field within this area.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our special gratitude to the pupils who shared their experiences with us and to the school staff and local authorities for their participation in this research.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was carried out as part of a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at The University of Manchester. This project was funded through the Department for Education National College for Teaching and Learning ITEP award 2020–2022.

Notes on contributors

Cathryn Booth is an Educational Psychologist. She completed her doctoral training at the University of Manchester, UK. Her research interests include social, emotional and mental health, and reducing school exclusions.

Caroline Bond is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Manchester, where she is placement and selection lead for the initial EP training programme. Her research interests include developmental differences, school attendance and professional supervision.

Siobhan O'Hagan is an Educational Psychologist. She completed her doctoral thesis at The University of Manchester entitled 'Autism, Anxiety and Enabling Access to Education'. Siobhan's previous research has explored the role and nature of friendships for children with autism; Educational Psychologists' experiences of assessing girls with autism; and the experiences of parents who home educate autistic children.

ORCID

Cathryn Booth  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1492-8593>
 Caroline Bond  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6960-605X>
 Siobhan O'Hagan  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7202-4181>

References

- Adams, R. 2024. "Sharp Increase in Pupils Suspended or Excluded from Schools in England." *The Guardian*, August 23, 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/jul/18/sharp-increase-in-pupils-suspended-or-excluded-from-schools-in-england>.
- Allen, J., and Whitney Crenna-Jennings, and Education Policy Institute. 2024. "Early Adult Outcomes for Suspended and Excluded Pupils." <https://epi.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2024/08/Early-adult-outcomes-for-suspendedpupils-FINAL.pdf>.
- Bagley, C., and S. Hallam. 2015. "Managed Moves: School and Local Authority Staff Perceptions of Processes, Success and Challenges." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 20 (4): 432–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2015.1053700>.
- Carroll, C., and J. Hurry. 2018. "Supporting Pupils in School with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs: A Scoping Review of the Literature." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 23 (3): 310–325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2018.1452590>.
- Children's Commissioner. 2024. "Press Notice: Over a Quarter of a Million Children Still Waiting for Mental Health Support, Children's Commissioner Warns." Children's Commissioner (Blog). March 15, 2024. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/blog/over-a-quarter-of-a-million-children-still-waiting-for-mental-health-support/>.
- Clegg, J., J. Stackhouse, K. Finch, C. Murphy, and S. Nicholls. 2009. "Language Abilities of Secondary Age Pupils at Risk of School Exclusion: A Preliminary Report." *Child Language Teaching & Therapy* 25 (1): 123–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265659008098664>.
- Cole, T., G. McCluskey, H. Daniels, I. Thompson, and A. Tawell. 2019. "Factors Associated With High and Low Levels of School Exclusions: Comparing the English and Wider UK Experience." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 24 (4): 374–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2019.1628340>.
- Coleman, M. 2020. "Leading the Change to Establish a Whole-School Nurturing Culture." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 25 (1): 68–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2019.1682244>.
- Department for Education. 2024b. *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement*. London: DfE.
- DfE (Department for Education). 2018. *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools*. London.
- DfE (Department for Education). 2019. *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*. London.
- DfE (Department for Education). 2022. *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Movement*. London.
- DfE (Department for Education). 2024a. *Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions in England: Academic Year 2022/23*. London.
- Dodds, J. 2023. "The Views and Experiences of School Leaders Implementing Whole School Relational Approaches in a Single Secondary School: A Reflexive Thematic Analysis." Thesis, University of Nottingham.
- Garbett, P. 2022. "Out of Sight, Out of Mind: A Q-Methodological Study of Viewpoints of Inclusion and Inclusive Practice Held by Staff Who Have Worked with Permanently Excluded Children." Thesis, University of Birmingham.
- Horton, J., R. Macve, and G. Struyven. 2004. "Qualitative Research: Experiences in Using Semi-Structured Interviews." *Elsevier eBooks*: 339–357. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-008043972-3/50022-0>.
- House of Commons Education Committee. 2018. "Forgotten Children: Alternative Provision and the Scandal of Ever Increasing Exclusions."
- Hsieh, H.-F., and S. E. Shannon. 2005. "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis." *The Qualitative Health Research* 15 (9): 1277–1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>.
- Hulme, M., C. Adamson, and D. Griffiths. 2023. "What Helps Young People at Risk of Exclusion to Remain in High School? Using Q Methodology to Hear Student Voices." *Pastoral Care in Education* 42 (2): 1–21. July. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2023.2232363>.
- Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service. n.d. "Index Multiple Deprivation 2019." <https://data.geods.ac.uk/dataset/index-of-multiple-deprivation-imd>
- King, H. 2016. "The Connection Between Personal Traumas and Educational Exclusion in Young People's Lives." *Young* 24 (4): 342–358. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308815627752>.
- Lawrence, N. 2011. "What Makes for a Successful Re-Integration from a Pupil Referral Unit to Mainstream Education? An Applied Research Project." *Educational Psychology in Practice* 27 (3): 213–226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2011.603530>.

- Lawson, C., K. Prentice, J. Jennings, and K. Johnston. 2022. "First Steps Towards a Mental Health and Neurodevelopmental Screening of Secondary School Children Following Two Fixed-Term School Exclusions in the UK." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 27 (4): 280–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2022.2141871>.
- Long, E. 2022. "The Future of Pastoral Care in Schools: Exploring Whole-School Trauma-Informed Approaches." *Pastoral Care in Education* 40 (3): 342–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2022.2093958>.
- Madia, J. E., I. Obsuth, I. Thompson, H. Daniels, and A. L. Murray. 2022. "Long-Term Labour Market and Economic Consequences of School Exclusions in England: Evidence from Two Counterfactual Approaches." *The British Journal of Educational Psychology* 92 (3): 801–816. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12487>.
- Martin-Denham, S. 2021. "Alternatives to School Exclusion: Interviews with Headteachers in England." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 26 (4): 375–393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2021.1983326>.
- McIntyre, N., N. Parveen, and T. Thomas. 2021. "Exclusion Rates Five Times Higher for Black Caribbean Pupils in Parts of England." *The Guardian*, March 24, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/24/exclusion-rates-black-caribbean-pupils-england>.
- Mellor, S. 2023. "It Ripples Down': Exploring Personal and Professional Experiences of Primary School Staff Implementing a Trauma Informed Approach" Thesis, University of East Anglia.
- Messeter, T., and A. Soni. 2017. "A Systematic Literature Review of the 'Managed Move' Process as an Alternative to Exclusion in UK Schools." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 23 (2): 169–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2017.1383676>.
- Murphy, R. 2021. "How Children Make Sense of Their Permanent Exclusion: A Thematic Analysis from Semi-Structured Interviews." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 27 (1): 43–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2021.2012962>.
- Obsuth, I., J. E. Madia, A. L. Murray, I. Thompson, and H. Daniels. 2023. "The Impact of School Exclusion in Childhood on Health and Well-Being Outcomes in Adulthood: Estimating Causal Effects Using Inverse Probability of Treatment Weighting." *The British Journal of Educational Psychology* 94 (2): 460–473. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12656>.
- OCC (Office of the Children's Commissioner). 2011. "They Never Give Up on You" Office of the Children's Commissioner School Exclusions Inquiry. London: OCC.
- Ofori, M. 2024. "Most Schools in England Facing Real-Terms Cuts Since 2010 Thanks to Tories, Analysis Shows." *The Guardian*. February 24, 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/feb/24/schools-england-real-terms-cuts-since-2010-tories>.
- Owen, C. 2022. "Exploring the Journey of Young Persons (YPs) from Permanent Exclusion to Reintegration Through a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Thesis, University of Manchester.
- Reynolds, A. 2021. "A Mixed Methods Study Exploring Whether Referral to the Internal Inclusion Unit Results in Change to Pupil Behaviour and Exploring the Student's Perceptions of Facility Thesis, University of Essex & Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.
- Tanase, M. 2021. "Addressing Challenging Behaviours in Urban High School Classrooms Through Building Relationships With Students." *Educational Studies* 47 (3): 312–327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2019.1701992>.
- Thomas, D. V. 2014. "Factors Affecting Successful Reintegration." *Educational Studies* 41 (1–2): 188–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2015.955749>.
- Thompson, I., A. Tawell, and H. Daniels. 2021. "Conflicts in Professional Concern and the Exclusion of Pupils with SEMH in England." *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties* 26 (1): 31–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2021.1898769>.
- Valdebenito, S., M. Eisner, D. P. Farrington, M. M. Ttofi, and A. Sutherland. 2019. "What Can We Do to Reduce Disciplinary School Exclusion? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 15 (3): 253–287. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-018-09351-0>.
- Whittaker, F. 2023. "Half of SEND Children Now Waiting Beyond Legal Limit for Support." *Schools Week*. June 8, 2023. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/half-of-send-children-now-waiting-beyond-legal-limit-for-support/>.
- Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Vol. 5. CA: SAGE.
- Yin, R. K. 2018. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th ed. CA: SAGE.

Appendix 1

School A: White Marsh (Academy)

White Marsh has 26% of pupils eligible for free school meals and has over 1,500 pupils on roll. White Marsh is situated in an area ranked within the 6th deprived decile and has a catchment area with coverage between the 3rd–6th deprived decile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). White Marsh is an ‘outstanding’ school and Ofsted highlighted the quality of pastoral support available to pupils and the outcomes for pupils with SEND. White Marsh’s SEND policy sets out a clear graduated response to provision for children with SEND, and within the behaviour policy, there are several stages of support identified in responding to behavioural concerns (including SEND assessments and involvement of external professionals such as an EP).

School B: Eden Heights (Academy)

Thirty per cent of pupils at Eden Heights are eligible for free school meals. Eden is situated in an area ranked between the 7th–8th deprivation decile, with the catchment area covering an area within the most deprived decile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). Eden Heights’ latest Ofsted inspection rated the school as ‘requires improvement’; however, behaviour and attitudes were assessed as ‘good’. It was highlighted that expectations of behaviour were high, and pupils behaved well. The behaviour for learning policy is based on sanctions and rewards but does outline a wealth of support and intervention for approaching a student’s behaviour, including EP assessments and pastoral plans. The SEND policy outlines support available for pupils with SEND, which includes behaviour mentors and counsellors; however, there is limited overlap between SEND and behaviour acknowledged in the policies.

School C: Trinity High (Academy)

Forty per cent of Trinity High Pupils are eligible for free school meals, and the school is situated in an area that is ranked within the 1st and 2nd most deprived decile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). Trinity High’s Ofsted reports have indicated the school ‘requires improvement’ for the last 10 years. However, in the latest report by Ofsted, it was recognised that there have been significant improvements over a short time in facilitating pupils’ access to a wealth of pastoral support and guidance. Trinity High’s exclusions policy outlines several interventions and levels of support that are available to a pupil before permanent exclusion, and the policy recognises the overlap between behaviour and underlying SEND needs. The school’s values and overarching philosophies are consistent across the two policies.

School D: Brimpton School (Academy)

Nineteen per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, and the school is situated in an area considered within the 1st and 5th crime deciles and 2nd–3rd deprivation decile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographic Data Service [n.d.](#)). Brimpton Boys School is a same-sex school. Brimpton is rated a ‘good’ school by the latest two Ofsted inspections. Ofsted highlighted the strong relationships that pupils have with staff and that pupils feel well cared for. The school’s behaviour policy outlines the sanctions and behaviour management systems in place in response to negative behaviour. The school operates on a reward and sanctions model. SEND pupils are considered within the behaviour policy and the SEND policy outlines a clear approach to assessing and identifying SEND amongst pupils.