

Tackling School Exclusions

Good Practice



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Empirical evidence and policy makers concerns

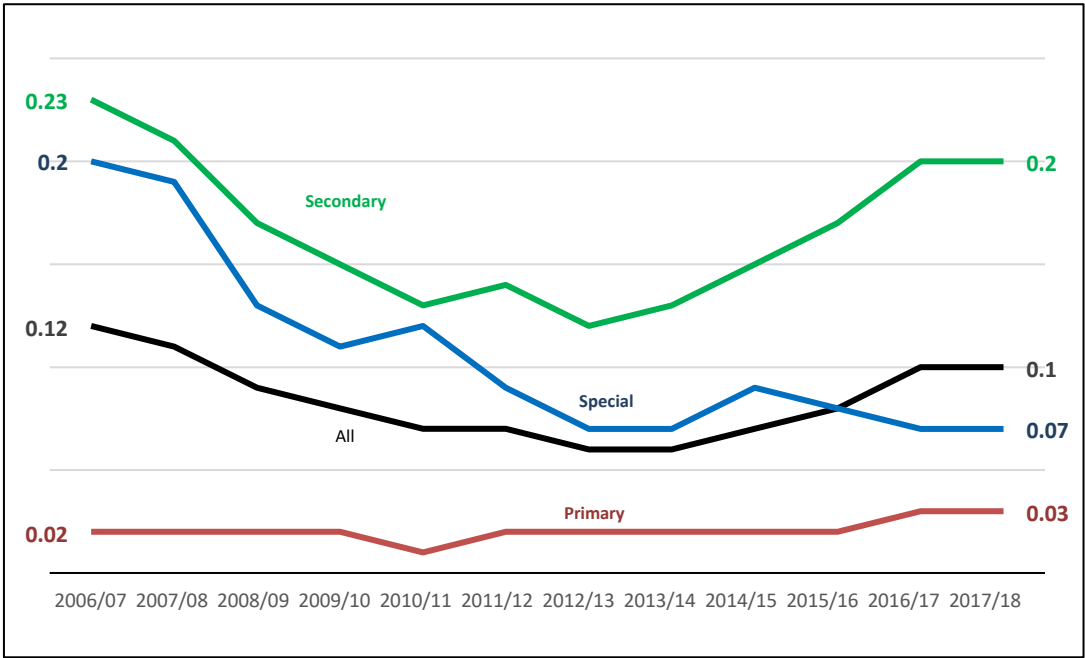
In recent years, there has been considerable concern among education policy makers, teachers, school leaders, parents and communities about the growing numbers of exclusions and off-rolling in schools in England. The Department for Education data shows that 7,905 pupils were permanently excluded from state funded primary, secondary and special schools in England. Furthermore, there were about 410,800 fixed term exclusions. The majority of permanent exclusions were found in the secondary sector, equating to 0.2% of the secondary school population compared to 0.03% of the primary school population (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1: Number of exclusions in England Schools

	All Schools				Pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools			
	Permanent		Fixed		Permanent		Fixed	
	No. of exclusions	Rate (%)	No. of exclusions	Rate (%)	No. of exclusions	Rate (%)	No. of exclusions	Rate (%)
2010/11	5,080	0.07	324,110	4.34	-	-	-	-
2011/12	5,170	0.07	304,370	4.05	-	-	-	-
2012/13	4,630	0.06	267,520	3.51	-	-	-	-
2013/14	4,949	0.06	269,475	3.5	13	0.10	15,536	120.50
2014/15	5,795	0.07	302,975	3.88	17	0.13	19,409	142.89
2015/16	6,684	0.08	339,362	4.29	21	0.14	23,399	155.84
2016/17	7,720	0.10	381,864	4.76	21	0.13	25,815	164.75
2017/18	7,905	0.10	410,753	5.08	27	0.16	26,504	158.40

As can be seen in Table 1, both the numbers and rates of permanent exclusions have generally increased since 2010/11 in all schools and PRUs and alternative provision. The peak number of permanent exclusions was recorded for the 2017/18 academic year, equating to 0.10% of the school population.

Figure 1: Rate of Permanent Exclusions in England by school type 2007-2018



Source: DfE (2019).

What is also of concern is that Black Caribbean, Gypsy/ Roma and SEN pupils are over-represented in both permanent and fixed term exclusions (DfE, 2019; Table 2). The empirical data also indicates that Black Caribbean pupils were more than three times as likely to be permanently excluded as pupils overall and were twice as likely to receive a fixed period exclusion (DfE 2019).

Exclusions are also associated with gender and poverty factors. The data shows pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were also more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion or to be permanently excluded during all phases of education (Table 2). Overall, pupils eligible for a free school meal were more than three times as likely as those not eligible to have a fixed term exclusion and about four times as likely to receive a permanent exclusion. In addition, the boys’ exclusion rate is about three times as high as that for girls. This rate was even higher for Mixed White/Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean pupils, suggesting that the high exclusion rate was partly due to boys of that ethnic group (DfE 2019).

Table 2: Exclusions by pupil characteristics in schools in England, 2018

Pupil characteristics	Cohort	Permanent Exclusions	Fixed term Exclusions
Number of exclusions	All Pupils	7,905	410,753
Ethnic Background	Gypsy/ Roma	0.36	16.52
	Traveller of Irish heritage	0.29	17.42
	Black Caribbean	0.28	10.46
	White & Black Caribbean	0.27	10.13
	Irish	0.15	5.0
	White and Black African	0.14	5.78
	Any other Mixed	0.13	4.52
	Any other Black	0.13	5.8
	White British	0.1	5.7
	White and Asian	0.09	3.41
	Black African	0.08	4.08
	Pakistani	0.06	2.52
	Any other group	0.06	3.16
	Any other White	0.05	2.74
	Bangladeshi	0.04	1.93
	Any other Asian	0.03	1.45
	Indian	0.02	0.75
	Chinese	0.01	0.5
Gender	Boys	0.15	7.23
	Girls	0.05	2.85
Free School Meal Status	FSM	0.28	13.65
	Non-FSM	0.07	3.73
Special Educational Needs	EHCP	0.16	15.95
	SEN Support	0.34	15.1
	No SEN	0.06	3.36
All Pupils	All	0.1	5.08

Source: DfE (2019)

Recent national debate also suggests that exclusions in English schools has been a 'hot topic' in the UK with some media highlighting the sharp rise in pupil exclusions from English state schools with the following headlines:

- *'Sharp rise in pupil exclusions from English state schools' Guardian 2018*
- *'Education Secretary orders DfE review into rising numbers of school exclusions' TES March 2018*
- *'Thousands of pupils missing from English school rolls- Informal exclusions cited as possible reason' Guardian, 21 Jun 2018*
- *'The schools regulator Ofsted has identified 300 schools with high levels of so-called off-rolling, where pupils disappear from the school register just before GCSEs' Guardian, June 2018*

Research has also highlighted off-rolling in English schools as one of the reasons for unofficial exclusions (House of Commons, 2018; Ofsted 2018; Timpson (2019)). This is supported by national data that shows Year 10 has the largest increase in the rate of permanent exclusions (House of Commons, 2018). The empirical evidence also shows that increasing numbers of children in England are being 'off-rolled' - being excluded or otherwise leaving school for other reasons, for example to 'game' the school performance system, or to relieve financial pressure on schools.

Recent analysis by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) claims these figures mask the true scale of the problem, with pupils forced out of mainstream schools by informal methods that are not captured in national exclusions data.

'Despite only 6,685 reported permanent exclusions last year, 48,000 of the most vulnerable pupils were educated in the AP sector which caters for excluded students, with tens of thousands more leaving school rolls in what appear to be illegal exclusions. Some are removed through "managed moves" between schools; in other cases children are transferred to off-site AP – some of which will be independent and unregistered – while others disappear into "elective" home education.' (IPPR, 2017:7)

Overall the data, and previous research, suggests a sharp rise in exclusion and that Black Caribbean and Gypsy/Roma represent the most excluded groups of pupils in British schools (Gillborn and Youdell 2000, EHRC 2015). Boys are also much more likely to be asked to leave their school, and Black Caribbean pupils are still significantly overrepresented in pupil referral units (DfE 2019).

There is also a widespread consensus in the research literature that young people who are excluded from school are at far greater risk of a variety of negative outcomes, including poor educational attainment, prolonged periods out of employment; poor mental and physical health; involvement in crime; and homelessness (Parsons 2009; Gazeley 2010; IPPR 2017; Demie and Mclean 2017; Demie 2019).

1.2 Research aims and methods

Research Questions

This research is a qualitative study of schools to explore what works in tackling school exclusions in schools. Three overarching questions will guide this research:

- What does the data tell us about exclusions in England?
- What are the success factors in tackling school exclusions?
- What are the implications for policy and practice?

This study provides evidence-based answers to these questions, drawing on the practice, experience and ambitions of schools in challenging circumstances.

Research Methods

The methodological approach to be used is mixed methods research that combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research for the purpose of increasing the breadth and depth of understanding of exclusions issues in schools. The research has two main strands, each contributing a particular set of complementary data to answer the research questions.

Firstly, focus groups were used to gather the views of headteachers, teachers, pupils, school staff, governors, parents and SENCOs on what works in tackling exclusions. Headteachers had been asked to select a mixed group of teachers, teaching assistants, SENCOs, parents, pupils, governors and school staff with a range of teaching experience, gender and ethnicity.

Secondly, case studies research was carried out to study school experiences with school exclusions and identifying good practice in this area. A structured questionnaire was used to interview headteachers, teachers, parents, governors and pupils to gather evidence on the rise of school exclusion and on what can be done to tackle exclusions from schools.

The key criteria for the selection of schools as case studies were those with a very high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, good Key Stage 2 (KS2) and General

Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results, positive Ofsted inspection reports, above average proportion of pupils with FSM, BAME, SEN and no record of school exclusions or at most one as a last resort over the last 5 years. 16 schools were used for the study of the causes and consequences of school exclusion (see Demie and Mclean 2020). Of these two primaries and two secondary schools that met our methodological approach were selected to look in detail what worked in tackling school exclusions in the schools. Each of the schools were visited in 2019 and 2020 and structured questionnaires were used to interview headteachers, staff, governors, grandparents, parents and pupils to gather evidence.

In all the case study schools we visited, we have carried out classroom observations with the main aim of developing understanding of how schools and teachers recognise and value diverse cultures/heritages and how children respond in lessons where this occurs. The classroom observations focused on teacher's interactions with all children, and interactions between diverse groups of children.

It is important here to note the case study and focus group approach of research used in this study is an established research design that is used extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences to provide a broader range of information and research evidence (see Carey and Asbury 2014; Bassey 1999; Stakes 1995). They are useful to obtain detailed in-depth information about personal and group feelings, perceptions and opinions in a way which would not be feasible using other methods such as observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys. It is also presented in a more accessible way than other forms of research. It can serve multiple audiences and in this particular instance, the audience is likely to be policy makers and schools.

The findings which emerged from the data analysis, focus groups and case studies are given in the chapters that follow.

1.3 Ethical considerations

The research into the tackling school exclusions in schools was conducted in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) and all the interviews and focus group participants were given assurances that their confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. However, it should be noted that some of the case respondents were concerned that their viewpoints might be identifiable. The extent of this concern was exemplified by some respondents who agreed to being interviewed with the proviso that their interview was not tape-recorded. Where staff did not want to be taped, one staff member with shorthand skills and a second person were used to take notes of the interview and answers. Both were carefully checked to ensure consistency during transcriptions of the record.

In recognition of the identification concerns expressed by some respondents the data discussed in this report is done so without any attribution being made to a particular school or person. Care has been taken with all stages of the research process therefore to not only ensure that participants and institutional names remain anonymous, but that the data is kept securely and individual digital recordings have been deleted or destroyed upon transcription. Pupils, parents and teachers were given an opportunity at the beginning of their interview to decline from participating, once a member of the research team explained the nature of the research.

Chapter 2: Case Studies of Schools

2.1 CASE STUDY: HIGHLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

Highlands is a larger than average primary school in the borough of Redbridge. 80% of pupils speak English as an additional language which is well above the national average. 33% of pupils are from an Asian or Asian British Pakistani heritage. Other pupils are from a variety of other ethnic heritages including Asian, or Asian British Indian (22%) Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi (17%).

The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or statement is around the national average as is the number of pupils who receive special needs support.

Highlands has gained the UNICEF Gold Level Rights Respecting Schools Award which puts children's rights at the heart of the school. The school has created a safe and inspiring place to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. The Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens. The RRSA programme unifies a range of educational priorities, including a global dimension, social and emotional aspects of learning, community cohesion and sustainable development. The Award is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation and has had a positive impact on relationships and wellbeing, leading to better learning and behaviour, and improved academic standards.

The school was judged to be outstanding in all areas when it was inspected by Ofsted inspectors in March 2019 who reported:

'Leaders at all levels, including governors, are highly ambitious for the school and are very keen to provide every pupil with the best education. All members of staff share in the ethos and values of the school, and they have common goals for success.'

Overall attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected of children of that age. Despite very low attainment on entry, evidence from value-added and pupils'

progress suggests that pupils do make good progress between key stages and the school is in the top league nationally in value-added. The key stage data also shows that the school's results have been consistently well above the national average with an impressive improvement rate in the last five years.

Central to its success in tackling the exclusion of pupils are the following:

- The vision, ethos and values of the school;
- The quality of Leadership;
- High expectations of what pupils and staff can achieve;
- Teachers' professional learning which has led to high quality teaching and outstanding progress of pupils;
- Effective inclusion strategy and practice that focus on pupils as individuals;
- Diversity of the school's workforce reflecting the local community it serves;
- Excellent care, guidance and targeted support for pupils;
- Close links with parents and increasing community support.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made here draws upon interviews with:

- The Head
- Deputy Head
- 2 classroom teachers
- 2 Inclusion managers
- 2 Learning mentors and teaching assistants
- SEN practitioner and HLTAS
- Governor
- 2 Parents

The evidence used for this report also includes scrutiny of relevant published documentation, previous inspection reports and performance data. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. Details of the findings are discussed below.

VISION, ETHOS AND VALUES

Highlands has embedded children and young people's rights in the school's practice and ethos. Actions and decisions affecting children are rooted in, reviewed and resolved through rights. Children and adults collaborate to develop and maintain a school community based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation; this includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and

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learners and promotes well-being. Children are empowered to enjoy and exercise their rights and to promote the rights of others.

The head explained how the first pillar of the school is the UN Convention:

'The second day I was here, we introduced it. It has to be a whole school philosophy "achievement for all". They gave us coaching to enable us to have "structured conversations" with parents. The other thing is about intrinsic behaviour, we do not believe in sanctions. Every opportunity where there is misbehaviour, we expect children to reflect.' (Head)

The head is passionate about the right of every child to have an education and he stated: 'We cannot remove that right...' During his leadership of the school over seven years, only one fixed term exclusion of a child and no permanent exclusions have occurred. When asked for his experience of exclusion, the head replied:

'In our school we would do whatever is possible to include every child. In seven years we only did one fixed term exclusion and we only did that because we wanted to send a message to the Local Authority that the child needed support.'

'We have spent a lot of time investing in our staff with regard to nurturing and attachment. We are looking at underlying issues, any barriers to learning.'

As a school, Highlands encourages children to think about personal and social values, to become aware of and involved in the life and concerns of their community and society and so develop their capacity to be active and effective future citizens. Their core 'rights respecting values' are Respect, Friendship, Responsibility, Perseverance and Kindness.

LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

Evidence suggests that the dimension of leadership which matters most for pupil outcomes is leaders' professional development of their staff. In this case study school the head is also attentive to his own learning: *'Shaping one's own professional vision and providing the leadership necessary to enrol others in the pursuit of a shared educational vision requires informed thought'*. (Stoll & Fink 1996). School leaders need to stay current in order to have credibility with their staff and to build up networks. The head's recently published book 'The Thinking School' points to teacher learning as key to school improvement and is based on the idea of an organisation that fosters challenge and trust

to enable all teachers to continuously improve their practice together by focusing on improving outcomes for children. The head has identified a model that encourages every sort of opportunity to support teachers in the classroom and develop their practice, from peer support, mentoring and engagement in research. At Highlands there is a very effective system of distributed leadership and every member of staff has been trained as a coach. It offers many opportunities for school leaders at all levels to further their leadership roles. The head stated that:

'One of our biggest investments is teachers' professional learning.'

He described himself as 'Head Learning Leader' rather than headteacher:

'We underestimate the power of language, so that's why I do not use the words headteacher. Our teachers are called "class leaders" because they are leaders of learning.' (Head)

The school is generous in sharing its ways of working with a wide range of colleagues at home and abroad, but not all are ready to receive as the head explained:

'I work with other schools who are nowhere near where we are. We have had 200 people from Oslo and 25 senior leaders from Sutton, 21 Principals from Australia visited us, but the school down the road doesn't want to know.'

'I was executive head of two schools last year. Even leading two schools I still taught every day. I still teach 40% per day. I teach because I enjoy it. If you are to engage in collaborative pupil learning you need to be part of the dialogue. In other industries you need to be an expert in your field. If you are going to go into a class and say you need to do things differently you need to be able to show them.' (Head)

A review carried out by Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) identified eight dimensions of leadership practices and activities linked to student outcomes. Of all the activities identified, heads' leading and actively participating in professional learning and development had the largest impact on student outcomes: an effect size twice that of the next most important contributory factor - planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum.

Governors recognise the outstanding leadership of the Head and the dramatic improvements made since his appointment:

'Since 2012 we have had a complete change of leadership. What Kulvarn has done over the years has brought leadership through to everybody. There is a trust from the top to class teachers.' **(Governor)**

The head described how the staff work in teams to support each other and the children:

'No teacher works in isolation, we work in teams. We have such a level of expertise in the school. Every member of staff is trained as a coach. There is a whole school philosophy. We recognise that every person has emotional needs but it's a question of how they have learned to regulate. If they have a lack of attachment between 0-3 years, then we have to step in and provide that. If we spent more money on children aged 0-5 years then we wouldn't have so many children in prison later! Inclusion is about recognising that this child has needs when they are displaying anger. They have rights too.' **(Head)**

All of this has been achieved during his seven years of leading the school but the head recalled that the school was identified as requiring improvement by Ofsted, weeks into his headship:

'When I came here we went into a category. I was four years through my doctorate at this stage. I said, I am not going to do judgmental lessons and I am going to focus on action research and enable more children to participate during carpet sessions and give teachers more time and space to reflect.' **(Head)**

This approach did not sit well with the Local Authority's Adviser who cautioned there would be consequences:

'If Ofsted come back and you haven't improved things....'

Nevertheless, the head stuck to his approach which has worked out extremely well as a recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to be outstanding in all areas. The Ofsted report stated that:

'Leaders at all levels, including governors, are highly ambitious for the school and are very keen to provide every pupil with the best education. All members of staff share in the ethos and values of the school and they have common goals for success.' (Ofsted March 2019)

INCLUSION: PUPILS AS INDIVIDUALS

We asked the school leadership how they had managed to make such a significant difference in terms of inclusion and the head replied:

'When I came to this school the outcomes were so low and 22% of pupils were classified as SEND. I realised we had hardworking teachers with no time to collaborate; enthusiastic teachers who were inexperienced and had no good role models. I met Sandeep (deputy) in my first week, with a background in EAL and with a passion for pupils with ADHD.' **(Head)**

The deputy head then took up the story:

'I set up a Nurture Group at the school being the lead teacher and saw the impact of building attachments. I asked to go back into class so others could share the practice more widely and lead learning.' **(Deputy Head)**

As Black Caribbean heritage pupils are over-represented in exclusion in schools in England, we asked the head for his views as to the reasons why this might be the case. He responded:

'My first school in Stratford was predominantly Black Caribbean pupils. Everything I learned there I put into practice here. It's about a sense of belonging – they want their teacher to like them. It's the way a teacher reacts to a child's emotional behaviour. Why do adults often see pupils' behaviour as a challenge? Why?' **(Head)**

The deputy head believed that it is about the school leadership's values and what they promote that can lead to the disengagement of pupils; she argued:

'You need a curriculum that reflects the reality of pupils' lives. One of the problems is it tends to be within a Eurocentric lens. When we were discussing the war, children opened up and talked about their own families' involvement in the war; they have an emotional response to this. It means something to them as it reflects their own lives. It creates greater empathy and unity when children can see how the world truly came together.' **(Deputy Head)**

'You don't have to do Saxons and Vikings, whatever you do it has to be relevant.' **(Head)**

'What school leaders need to know is the factors that make a difference to a child's learning are the quality of teaching and leadership. Relationships are so important so that pupils know that they belong. It's all about relationships.' **(Head)**

The head's passion for inclusion began when he did his PGCE at the University of East London (UEL) and this was, as he described:

'Strong on inclusion and I began working in a resource provision school. I started my Masters in my first year as an NQT. I looked at nurture groups and children with social, emotional, behavioural issues. Then I worked on a curriculum with this as a focus. I was building up my philosophy that 'if any child is not learning in a school, even if it is graded as 'outstanding', that isn't good enough.'

In a school where fifty languages are spoken, the Head gave an example of how the school responded to the needs of a child from Russia who joined the school in Year 4:

'His first week in school we gave him a Russian book to read and I asked how he was getting on. He looked at me angrily as if I was interrupting him so I said, "OK I'll see you next week". He would do things like coming down the stairs backwards. I asked him why and he said "because there's no sign that says I can't". I pointed out the rights of other children to be safe and that he might hurt someone else. His mother wrote me a letter thanking me for what the school had done for her child. Apparently in Russia they said he was unteachable. He was definitely a child who had done things that would have led to an exclusion in some schools.' **(Head)**

The school's behaviour policy is clearly linked to the articles in the UNICEF Rights of the Child. A longstanding governor at the school recognised the difference this has made to relationships during his tenure as governor and gave his reasons why the school doesn't exclude pupils:

'I think one of the major things is the UNICEF Rights agenda. The idea is that you show respect to each other, not only the staff but each other as well. On the final page of our behaviour policy it has consequences and only at the very end you see some action.' **(Governor)**

We sought the views of members of the Inclusion Team and asked them for their views on the reasons why the school has been successful in managing to avoid excluding pupils. A senior leader who leads on mental health felt that:

'The biggest thing is how we value behaviour and recognising that behaviour is a part of communication. Behaviour should be taught such as maths and English is taught. We empower our teachers to understand behaviour in that way.'

The Ofsted report lavished praise on the outstanding behaviour of pupils:

'The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite, articulate and welcoming. Exemplary attitudes and behaviour for learning are the accepted order. Staff are highly effective in managing children's and pupils' behaviour. Staff communicate high expectations across the school. Pupils are taught how to manage their feelings and apply themselves to their learning. Without any prompting or correction, they line up and enter the building, quietly. When moving around the site, pupils maintain good self-control. Exceptionally good behaviour means that pupils are ready to learn.' **(Ofsted March 2019)**

This exemplary behaviour is about teachers' knowledge of the children and the excellent relationships that exist within the school. The SENCo elaborated on this:

'There may be a need for a child to have the space to calm down. It's about the teachers knowing the children well and what they need to do to help them to relax. It takes a while for children to learn those strategies or to indicate their feelings even if they don't have the language.'

She continued...

'We also look at the child as an individual even if a child has a diagnosis of ADHD we still look at the child as an individual. A child who came in with challenging behaviour, we did a staggered entry approach. I did the interview with the parents and I could see he had needs but as soon as he started he wanted to leave and run around. We worked closely with the family and we did home visits. The relationship with parents is very important. He was in Year 1 and stayed for a couple of years and then he moved to another school.' **(SENCo)**

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The school puts great emphasis on developing positive relationships so that children have at least one adult who they can trust and a person who understands them, someone to listen to them and help them. A Year 2 teacher and team leader stressed this point:

'Relationships with the child, the parent and the class teacher are vital. We had a looked after child in foster care. A lot of his behaviour was around everyone had left him. His behaviour was to do with his fear that people would leave him. As staff we look at how we can continue to support the child and reassure him no matter what he does we are not going to leave.' (Year 2 class leader)

At Key Stage 1 pupils who need additional emotional/behavioural support have access to a Nurture Group. A Teaching Assistant explained how a small group of children spend their morning sessions there:

'In the Nurture Group they all have targets which are hung up and we quite often refer to them. They come to us in the mornings after registration. We have breakfast together and chat. Most of the children have stayed for four terms. These are children who probably don't have friends and it helps their social skills and develops confidence which is extremely low. We do a lot of talking which is led by them.' (TA)

The TA works in the class that the four children from the Nurture Group return to in the afternoon and she continues to keep an eye on them, letting them know that

'We are all on the same page. We want the children to know we are there for them.' (TA)

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

As mentioned earlier, teachers' professional learning is one of the school's biggest investments with a significant proportion of its budget spent on CPD. To date twenty teachers have studied for a MA with 60% of the UEL course fees paid for by Highlands. Teachers have to finance the remaining 40% themselves. The Head explained that his aim is to develop critical thinkers:

'Anything I want for children, I must do the same for the adults so they can enable children to do that'

He continued:

'These teachers need to understand their craft. I had to get teachers to adapt their teaching and develop dialogic teaching.' **(Head)**

Dialogic teaching harnesses the power of talk to stimulate and extend pupils' thinking, to advance their learning and understanding. It helps the teacher more precisely to understand pupils' needs, frame their learning tasks and assess their progress. It is distinct from question and answer and listen-tell routines of traditional teaching as it requires interactions which encourage pupils to think in different ways.

The school has provided 'emotion coaching' for all teachers so that they are better able to understand the root causes of negative behaviour.

'There is a team approach and teachers know if they need help they can call on someone. Relationships in all of this are crucial.'

A 'learning leader' described her role in supporting teachers in Years 5 and 6:

'There are six classes in this year and we are available to assist a teacher if needed. We have a flat leadership style and it's a matter of what you value how you spend money. There might be one or two of us to support other teachers. If the teacher has a better relationship with the child then we would take the class or the other way round (if a child is disruptive) depending on the circumstances'

She continued...

'Here we don't spend money on recruitment, on staff sickness because we are well-supported and that's why we can make it work.' **(Learning Leader)**

We asked about the training teachers have received to enable them to deal with pupils' emotional needs and the learning learner responded:

'As a headteacher you need to look out for staff who share your values when you are employing new staff. I have always had a passion for pastoral support. We have a sense of wanting to make a difference to that child... that child is just having difficulty in accessing life. Staff have been

trained in attachment, emotion coaching and values-based learning to support children's needs. We currently have our DHT and LL being accredited as National Leaders for SEMH.'

'Everyone is a lead learner... everybody has the same values.' (SENCo)

'We challenge each other. We constantly try to review our practice. Communicating with each other but not judging. We go to the teacher and find out why a child might be sitting outside a class. We do not do that here, but we could jump to conclusions. We need to find out but not judge.' (Learning Leader)

'Everyone has a thirst for learning. It has taken time. It's really working.' (SENCo)

A Year 2 teacher studying for a MA carried out a case study on a child in her class with challenging behaviour which is typical of the action research that is carried out by staff in the school. An EYFS/KS1 leader's dissertation was on "Leading Change" and a Year 6 leader is looking at pedagogy – all of this feeds back into whole school development.

'When I first did my MA there were a group of us doing it and we went together. What we were doing was shared. It also comes up in conversations informally.' (Year 2 class leader)

The quality of professional learning which takes place at Highlands is a key factor in the success of the school in recruiting and retaining staff, as the Year 6 class leader observed:

'Our staff retention is very good and people only leave if they move out of London.'

This statement is endorsed by the Year 2 class leader:

'Our staffing is very stable; you rarely go into class and there is a completely new adult there, which is supportive of pupils and of relationships. Shared values are very important. A child would not get away with something in one class and be shouted at in another.' (Year 2 leader)

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

The commitment of staff to their own development, which has a direct link to their effectiveness in the classroom and to pupil outcomes, was judged as outstanding by Ofsted:

‘Teachers are fully committed to providing pupils with the best education, and they have high expectations of pupils. Pupils’ positive values and attitudes to learning ensure that they are eager to do their best and are prepared to challenge themselves. Because teaching is supportive and builds resilience, pupils feel safe to make contributions and their peers value this.’ (Ofsted March 2019)

EFFECTIVE USE OF DIVERSE MULTI-ETHNIC WORKFORCE

Highlands School prides itself on the diversity of its workforce. Table 3 shows the percentage of BAME staff in the school workforce which illustrates their inclusivity compared to schools nationally. The school has recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflects the languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and faiths of the pupils in the school. The school also prides itself on recruiting from the local community and this has sent a strong message to the community that they are valued. This has helped the school to become a central point of the wider community and has built trust. Teaching assistants are greatly valued in the school. They play a key role in communicating with parents and supporting pupils.

Table 3. Percentage of BAME Staff in School Workforce

School Workforce		Highlands Primary		NATIONAL %
		Number	%	
Leadership	White British	4	57	91.3%
	Ethnic Minority	3	43	8.6%
Teachers	White British	12	46	86.3%
	Ethnic Minority	14	54	13.6%
Teaching Assistants	White British	6	19	86.4%
	Ethnic Minority	26	81	13.5%
Other staff	White British	6	25	86.5%
	Ethnic Minority	18	75	13.4%
ALL	White British	28	31	86.5%
	Ethnic Minority	61	69	13.4%

Source: DfE School Workforce Census

The evidence from the data suggests that in England, 86% of teachers, 91% of the leadership, 87% of teaching assistants and all school staff are White British. This national data shows a worrying picture in its lack of diversity and raises a question about the prospects of BAME teachers attaining senior leadership roles. It also limits an understanding of diversity by pupils by hindering their aspirations. However,

- 54% of teachers in the Highlands school are BAME staff compared to 14% nationally.
- The percentage of leadership staff in Highlands recorded as BAME is 43% compared to 9% nationally. In England, 91% of the school leadership are White British.
- The percentage of teaching assistants recorded as BAME is 81% compared to 14% nationally.
- 69% of all staff in Highlands are BAME compared 13% nationally.

There is a great diversity in the workforce in the case study school in terms of the range of roles, skills and ethnicity.

Furthermore, because of the school's close links with UEL, local schools have influenced the PGCE course in terms of the recruitment of students who reflect the diversity of the local community. Highlands is a model in this regard with its very diverse workforce and the head explained why this is important:

'In our teaching group we have a wide range of teachers from around the world but the furthest they live is Dalston; when we have local people working in our schools that is aspirational for our children to see.' **(Head)**

'There are nearly fifty languages spoken in our school. We as a team speak a range of languages. We can speak with parents in their home language. I can speak Punjabi.' **(Head)**

'Parents value that there is someone on the staff who can speak their languages, they feel they can share their concerns with us.' **(Deputy Head)**

Students who come to Highlands on a placement from UEL are chosen for their particular interest in inclusion and their understanding of the local community. The head attended Highlands School as a child and does not equate disadvantage with underachievement: The school has recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflects the languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and faiths of the pupils in the school. The school

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

also prides itself on recruiting from the local community and this has sent a strong message to the community that they are valued. This has helped the school to become a central point of the wider community and has built trust. Teaching assistants are greatly valued in the school. They play a key role in communicating with parents and supporting pupils.

'I was free school meals, from an over-crowded household and there was no-one in my family with higher education. Mum left school at fifteen and my grandparents were illiterate. My expectation of our teachers is that they know the area and everyone coming into the school gets a home visit.' (Head)

PARENTAL/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Highlands has excellent relationships with parents and the local community. Ofsted inspectors noted:

'Parents are very positive about the school and typically made comments such as, "The school is very good at letting parents know what the children are learning", and "There has been a vast improvement over the years". Parents of children at the early stages of learning to speak English are appreciative of the support their children receive.'

The school does not set homework, the school consulted with staff and families and felt that the impact did not justify the efforts.

'We do not give homework as this is inequitable – your homework is dependent upon the extent to which you have adults to help you. Adults would find it difficult to do homework.' (Head)

He mentioned an Italian speaking Bengali father who doesn't speak English: *"all he wants to do is hold my hand for a few minutes"*. This is the school's form of communication to acknowledge presence and participation, and of feeling included and valued.

There is a Parent Forum and they set the agenda and any teacher who can speak on that specific topic is present at the meeting to answer any questions. The school holds "structured conversations" with individual parents every term and any specific issues are dealt with then.

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

When a child joins the school, a home visit takes place sometimes revealing the desperate circumstances families are in as the deputy head recalled in this case study of a child who joined the school in Year 3:

'The child had mental health issues and a symptom was that she was pulling her hair out, with large sections of her hair missing. We went to her home and she was living in difficult, overcrowded conditions. The child had also had physical health issues and we supported the family by writing a letter to her GP. Families need help. We fight for every child, CAMHS, Social Services at every level.' **(Deputy Head)**

We asked a parent why she thought Highlands was so successful in working with children and parents and she replied:

'I think the teacher to parent to child relationship is quite strong. We all know what is happening. They feed information through parent mail or an App. I think there is very strong leadership and excellent teachers. They have a way of communicating with the children, even in my son's class there is a disruptive child but they know how to handle him. Every day my son comes home he wants to read. When a child wants to learn rather than has to learn that must be because of the school!' **(Parent)**

Parents are appreciative of the Head's availability to speak directly to them rather than communicating through other staff:

'The headteacher will always make time for you as parents; he will always communicate directly with us rather than going through someone else.' **(Parent)**

'School is like a family. We have a solid relationship with teachers. High degree of trust.' **(Parent)**

Teaching assistants and the learning mentor also have excellent relationships with parents, living in the local community and having sent their own children to the school, they are able to relate well, especially when discussing sensitive issues concerning a child.

'We are trying to understand where the behaviour is coming from and telling parents what we think. Parents want to know how they can help, what they can do. We communicate regularly with parents in a friendly way. We invite them for breakfast at least once a term. We focus on the positive behaviour; you notice what they are doing well and make a deal of it.' (TA)

The TAs would like to do more home visits because of the bond it creates with parents:

'We try to make ourselves available to parents, perhaps more so than teachers because it's a different relationship. My involvement as a parent over thirty years has helped me a lot as I know the parents outside of school over all that time. The point is having a rapport with them, someone they can trust. We like to say "Hi, how are things going..?"' (TA)

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, Highlands' success in not excluding pupils stems from the passion that the Head and his staff have in developing and maintaining a school community based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. By embedding the UNICEF Rights of the Child in daily school life it has given children the best possible chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.

Significant strengths of the school include:

- A powerful ethos and strong core values of respect, friendship, responsibility, perseverance and kindness;
- Respectful relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils;
- Highly inclusive practices where every child's needs and well-being are carefully considered and effective strategies are put in place to support them;
- Staff at all levels view themselves as learners and constantly reflect on their practice to the benefit of pupils and colleagues;
- Outstanding distributed leadership which has created a distinctive culture, and seeks to identify and remove any barriers to learning;
- Excellent relationships with parents to ensure that all pupils make the best progress they can.

As a concluding remark we would argue this is a truly inclusive school and it is no wonder that the school has not excluded any child. It is an outstanding school. What is even more important is that its teaching and learning practice is based on evidence of what works. The head has identified a model that encourages every sort of opportunity to support teachers in the classroom and develop their practice, from peer support, mentoring and engagement in research. The school invests in teachers' professional development. Its CPD MA programme focuses on leadership, reading, assessment and pedagogy, and makes a difference in improving teaching and learning and managing school exclusion issues.

As argued by teachers and the Inclusion Manager, the school uses research evidence for improving teaching and tackling exclusion:

'We are consistent in our practice. We challenge each other. We review our practice from time to time and we read latest research to improve our classroom practice.' **(Teacher A)**

'There is a trust. We see children as an individual. Everyone wants to learn. Excellent relationship with child family.' **(Inclusion Manager)**

'We share our CPD MA research findings with colleagues and this is also used in classroom teaching.' **(Teacher B)**

2.2 CASE STUDY: KINGSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

Kingswood is a much larger than average-sized primary school, with four classes in each year group. This school is part of the Gipsy Hill Federation, a hard federation of six primary schools overseen by two executive headteachers and one governing body. Kingswood is split across two sites, a lower site (EYFS and KS1) and an upper site (KS2), a short distance apart on the same road. The two co-headteachers work across both sites and Kingswood is managed as a whole school.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those with education, health and care plans (EHCPs), is higher than average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is double the national average, and a number of these pupils are at the very early stages of English acquisition. The school represents a very diverse community, with almost four fifths of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is a much higher proportion than average. Kingswood runs a breakfast and after-school club on both of its sites.

Central to its success in preventing the exclusion of pupils is the following:

- The vision, ethos and values of the school
- Effective inclusion strategy with a child-centred approach
- Excellent training and professional development of staff which has led to strong teaching and well-sequenced learning in subjects across the curriculum.
- A stimulating, vibrant and well-planned curriculum
- Outstanding provision for pupils' personal development and welfare
- Targeted support and interventions
- A diverse workforce which reflects the community the school serves

The evidence used to inform the judgements made here draws upon interviews with:

- Co-headteacher
- Head of Inclusion
- Deputy headteacher (Inclusion)
- SENCo
- 2 Family Services Officers
- 2 Teachers
- 1 SEN Practitioner/Communication Support Team lead
- 1 HLTA
- 1 Governor

The evidence used for this report also includes scrutiny of relevant published documentation, previous inspection reports and performance data. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. Details of the findings are discussed below.

VISION, ETHOS AND VALUES

Kingswood is an exceptional school community, full of creativity, ambition and drive. The school seeks to provide the very best education possible for the children. Adults are excellent role models both as learners for life and as members of the local community. There is a 'no excuses' culture, and an aim that every single child will succeed and staff embody this ethos through their determination, resilience and perseverance. At the heart of this is a rigorous and fully comprehensive inclusion system. In the belief that there are no barriers to learning that cannot be overcome, leaders identify any potential obstacles and remove them through supporting children and their families both in and out of school. The school aims to ensure that each child in each class continues to make progress day after day, striving for educational excellence in their everyday practice.

Kingswood has a 'family ethos' and wants all pupils, staff, parents and the local community to feel that they are an important part of the school. All these stakeholders have been involved in identifying the school's four core values which are respect, kindness, resilience and empathy. In order to create values that are meaningful to children, a focus group of pupils were selected to drive the process in the belief that it would empower them by building self-esteem, confidence and increase their trust in the leadership.

LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

The school's leadership structure is clear with lines of accountability well-defined. Kingswood plays a key role in the Gipsy Hill Federation of schools which has two Executive Heads who lead the federation. Kingswood has two co-headteachers and there are four deputy headteachers who oversee phases within the different year groups in the school as well as one deputy headteacher who oversees inclusion provision. Leaders hold regular senior leader meetings. This disseminates information so that there is consistency across and through the school.

Kingswood capitalises on the economies of scale that being part of a federation provides; not only in the quality of education provided but also on staff development opportunities. It combines with other schools in the federation to undertake whole federation moderation of writing and mathematics. Teachers engage in full dialogue to understand movement forwards from pupils' initial starting points. The school was inspected by Ofsted in 2019 and inspectors made the following comments:

'Leaders take a research-based approach to developing practice. Staff are encouraged to engage in training and study that expands their understanding. For example, several members of staff have pursued postgraduate qualifications in childhood development and have used this knowledge to adapt the curriculum in Year 1. This has had an immediate impact on the quality of pupils' writing for the better.' (Ofsted 2019)

INCLUSION: A CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH

The Head of Inclusion leads a large team not only at Kingswood but across the Federation. The team at Kingswood includes a deputy head, two SENCOs, two family service officers, 2.5 SEN practitioners, HLTAs trained to support children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties and a HLTA trained in EAL. The federation employs a Speech and Language Therapist and 4 Creative Art Therapists. The headteacher reminded us that:

'Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do, ensuring that pupils feel they are included academically and socially.'

Early intervention is key to the school's approach in preventing the exclusion of pupils. The Head of Inclusion explained:

'We are focused on trying to be preventative from the start. Our behaviour policy states that if there are three significant incidents within half a term, the senior leadership team (SLT) arranges a meeting with parents so that the behaviours are addressed in partnership together with the parents before the behaviours escalate. For every significant incident, class teachers will try to speak to parents face to face or will call the parent.'

When there are repeated incidents, the SLT, in partnership with the class teacher, will meet with the parents to discuss supportive strategies, e.g. the parent to collect the child at least once a week from school to ensure effective home-school communication; specific support with an 'emotionally available adult'; opportunities for positive check-ins with a member of SLT etc. Where parents express that the triggers might be coming from events outside school, we may set up parent/child support. If there is an exclusion, there is a reintegration meeting involving key professionals in school. We will look at triggers as well as consider any underlying SEND. It is rare that we would get to the point of exclusion

without a SEND being identified. We carry out a pupil risk assessment and set up an individual plan with proactive strategies to be used. All our staff know that negative behaviour is a symptom, that behaviour is a communication and there is a reason for all behaviours. There has been a lot of training for staff, formal training that we top up every year, for example, on the effects of trauma. Fourteen members of staff across the federation have attended a ten day Diploma course accredited by a charity: Trauma Informed Schools. Trauma is defined as any event that a child might consider traumatic; it can also be intergenerational trauma, or events in the community such as knife crime. We have two family service officers who do a fantastic job working with families. They are part of the safeguarding team. They are a bridge between us and the family and have a different relationship with parents than the teachers. We have developed a proactive 'case management model' with them to support a child-centred focus to our practice. They are not social workers but they can take on a similar role. We also have an external person who comes in for their supervision to further support this child-centred practice. We join everything together in our wider inclusion-focused leadership meetings twice a half-term.' **(Head of Inclusion)**

'The vast majority of parents want to be involved. Our Family Services Officers can help the parents to have a voice and feel confident; making them aware of what is available to them - sometimes parents are not aware of the support they can access and it is our role to work in partnership to build up the support network around the a child and therefore also the family.' **(Head of Inclusion)**

Family support officers (FSO) play a key role in their work with parents and pupils, and we asked the two FSOs about their roles:

'We work with children and families, universal services, lower level child protection and safeguarding, early help services. We make referrals to external agencies, e.g. CAMHS; we may consult with PRUs for consultation or advice about a child at risk of exclusion; bereavement services – broad spectrum – playgrounds, holiday camps, wrap around care at school, difficulties with attendance. We might be able to subsidise places at after school activities if parents are having difficulties. It's about ensuring we are able to provide the best for each child on an individual and personal basis. We are a proactive service!' **(FSO 1)**

'I like to meet with parents. We do gate duty at the beginning and end of the day. If we notice a parent that we have built a relationship with is looking stressed, we bring them in and have a cup of tea and a chat. They can come and let off steam - sometimes they just need someone to listen to them.' (FSO 2)

The deputy head for inclusion summed up the FSOs role with parents:

'The FSOs are the emotionally available people for parents – they fulfil that role for parents.'

We asked the FSOs and the deputy head to identify the most important things they do that makes a difference in preventing exclusion and they responded as follows:

'We have an open-door policy, we provide early help.' (FSO1)

'Working with parents. When the children see that the school and home are singing from the same hymn sheet, it has a big effect. It also helps us understand what the parents are going through.' (FSO 2)

'Early intervention. We wouldn't wait to make a referral to various agencies. We always try to intervene very early before self-esteem gets damaged. That's the bit that is really important and us being able to have the in-house extra levels of inclusion support is central to this.'
(Deputy Head)

Kingswood's partnership with parents is central to its success in preventing the exclusion of pupils, as the Head of Inclusion illustrated:

'Our partnership with parents is developed well before there is a crisis.... It is part of our ethos.'

Further examples of preventative work were given by the SEN Practitioner who also leads the Communication Support Team:

'I take children out of class and work 1:1, occasionally may be with a child on an internal exclusion. My work therefore is to underpin our approach which is prevention.'

Teachers are well-aware of the need to look beyond the behaviour externalised by vulnerable pupils, to get to the root of the difficulties they are experiencing:

'As a class teacher I have probably had children who you know are vulnerable to exclusion and therefore for me part of my role is to have everyday routines that avoid exclusion. I have some experience of PRUs where I'd discuss how to manage challenging behaviour to avoid exclusion or pupils going to the PRU. In my role as Behaviour/PSHE/Philosophy lead, a lot of the work I have done is in training other teachers about understanding your own feelings and opening up ways of communicating those feelings. I have done work recently where we have looked at our exclusion data thinking about unconscious bias and doing some training for teachers about this. This will have a big impact on exclusion consequences. Also, to make teachers aware of their own responses, teacher and child are both experiencing that fight or flight emotion. The more you are aware the better you will be at de-escalating behaviour.' **(Year 6 teacher)**

A Year 2 teacher concurred with the above statement and added:

'It's about knowing the children who could be vulnerable. If we are aware of them and keep up to date with what is happening in a child's life. A child's well-being should be at the fore. We are becoming more aware of the importance of mental health. There are a lot of pressures on teachers but there is a balance, knowing how to conquer both; keeping good relationships with parents, teaching children to self-regulate, to recognise emotions that you are unfamiliar with. If we can do this in Year 2, they will be able to use them higher up the school.' **(Year 2 teacher)**

There has been only one permanent exclusion which was in 2017/18. The co-headteacher explained how this was a last resort:

'It was a complex situation, involving a number of agencies. A wide range of reasonable adjustments were in place in response to identified triggers and school worked hard to work in partnership with home. In spite of a wide range of child-centred adjustments in place, significant and extreme violent behaviour was taking place regularly and was putting the child themselves, other children in the school as well as members of staff in danger. The relationship with the family broke down. The situation unfortunately escalated to a point where it was putting the welfare of other pupils at risk and all other avenues had been exhausted. It was an absolute last resort.'

TARGETED SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS

'The school provides for pupils' emotional wellbeing exceptionally well. Access to a range of bespoke therapy interventions and support from well-trained staff ensure that pupils get the help they need.'...

'The school has invested in training mental health first aiders who look out for, and respond to, early signs of distress. There is a range of bespoke therapy available to support pupils. Staff are developing an in-depth understanding of the effects of early trauma and how to minimise these. In this way, pupils' emotional and psychological well-being is exceptionally well catered for.' **(Ofsted 2019)**

Kingswood School is committed to providing opportunities for all children to achieve their best. Children's strengths are promoted and they are challenged accordingly. The needs of children are identified early in their educational career and appropriate support is provided. At all times the school aims to remove barriers to learning and ensure equality of opportunity for all. Support for children with SEND includes: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; physical and sensory; social, emotional and mental health needs.

The FSOs, the SENCO and the deputy head have weekly meetings to share information and Team-around-the-Child meetings, where appropriate together with parents, take place regularly to determine what kind of support the school will put in place for identified children. The deputy head described this process:

'We have frequent meetings with parents. When we are setting up our interventions at the start of a term, we notify parents to come in and talk with us and always ask how they feel about what we have put in place. We invite them to come in and observe interventions so they know how to follow up at home.' **(Deputy Head)**

An excellent range of interventions to break down barriers for children with SEND and support them to be able to access the curriculum within their classroom are available at the school. These might include differentiation within the lesson or through specific interventions to help them develop skills that they can then generalise back to the classroom. Where interventions take place outside the classroom, they are carefully tracked to ensure that they do impact on a child's access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Some of the interventions put in place to prevent exclusion of some of the most

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

vulnerable pupils include a project entitled “Future Men” which is targeted at Year 6 boys and deals with conflict resolution and 1:1 mentoring. A “Head First” small group session which focuses on social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) relationships and anxiety encourage pupils to self-regulate their behaviour.

Another excellent intervention is Creative Arts Therapy as the deputy head described:

‘We also have creative arts therapy which we can refer our children to; the most vulnerable pupils attend a programme of up to twenty weeks, with a minimum of fourteen children involved in music, art and drama therapy over the year. We encourage parents to meet with the Creative Arts Therapists or with any other type of support.’ (Deputy Head)

‘We have no stigma attached to any type of therapy and we explain it to parents and children or we wouldn’t get the engagement of parents.’ (Deputy Head)

Where a child with complex SEND requires an individualised curriculum, the SENCO and the class teachers will work together in partnership with specialist agencies to ensure that this is appropriately tailored whilst remaining ambitious and broad. This will be linked to outcomes as identified in the child’s EHCP with a clear focus on supporting the child through the school into adulthood. Ofsted noted that:

‘Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points as a result of the tailored interventions in place for them. These are delivered effectively and therefore meet their needs well.’ (Ofsted 2019)

A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Kingswood Primary School is a designated Teaching School and leads the Gipsy Hill Federation Teaching School, working with other schools to provide high-quality training and development to new and experienced school staff. The schools work closely with a range of partners including: universities, health professionals and charities, all offering collaborative working to enhance educational opportunity for pupils.

The Teaching School operates from the Leadership Centre at Kingswood. The Centre hosts a range of visitors each year and provides courses and workshops that develop subject knowledge, pedagogy and leadership together with evidence of outstanding practice.

Ofsted inspectors reported that:

'Training and professional development opportunities are a strength across the federation. Leaders provide a combination of whole-school mandatory training and a bespoke menu from which staff can self-select. This means staff can access the training they need to meet their appraisal targets as well as to pursue specialisms needed for their roles. The staff who spoke to inspectors were highly complimentary about the development they receive. Staff at the earliest stage of their careers say that they receive excellent support and guidance to shape their practice.'
(Ofsted 2019)

As a professional learning community, all members of staff benefit from the high-quality training and development opportunities the school and the federation provide. For example, teaching assistants (at all levels) have weekly training alongside teacher colleagues. We observed an HLTA covering PPA time for a teacher and were told that if there is short term teacher absence, two TAs cover a class. This is monitored closely through drop-in visits, book-looks and learning walks to ensure standards are maintained. As the TAs know the children well, leaders feel this is preferable to supply cover and having consistency across the school supports timetabling and interventions.

The school provides core training on parental engagement every September and it is a key part of the NQT programme. Teachers adopt an 'open door' policy with parents.

To ensure that teachers new to the profession understand how to implement the curriculum the leadership team provide and robustly plan important and helpful support for teachers just out of their NQT year. Consequently, there is a range of support for different staff, including middle leaders, (according to their needs). This was appreciated greatly by teachers as the following comment by a Year 6 teacher illustrated:

'Having meetings with the SLT at pupil progress meetings we discuss what are the barriers, if you don't have those meetings you feel the pressure as a class teacher more. It's a chance to gain experience from other practitioners. You need confidence to be able to say "we are not doing adverbs because this child needs help with their emotions before they can cope with adverbs."' (Year 6 teacher)

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

A HLTA praised the self-selecting CPD programme which offers federation-wide training and development for all levels of staff. Leaders have ensured that a programme of teaching assistant training has been implemented. This is enabling a greater focus on staff supporting pupils' learning more effectively during lessons and in small groups.

'These are areas you feel you might like to develop further, e.g. trauma. TAs also receive this as a trickledown effect. Some core things everyone needs to have.' (HLTA)

STIMULATING AND ENGAGING CURRICULUM

'The curriculum is a strength of the school. Engaging cross-curricular topics, with well-chosen books at the heart of them, spark pupils' interest.' (Ofsted 2019)

The curriculum is highly stimulating and engaging; is topic-based and creative. Meaningful links are made between subjects so that children develop a broad and coherent understanding of a topic. The school promotes the highest quality, cross-curricular learning as a vehicle for pupils making accelerated progress.

Literacy and topic are taught through high quality texts with children able to immerse themselves in knowledge of the topic area, leading to outstanding writing outcomes. Prior to the start of each topic, children's understanding and aspiration for their learning are collected and used to develop the new medium and short-term planning. This makes sure that the interests of individual classes are fully catered for to enable the best possible opportunities for each child to learn and develop. Grammar, phonics, handwriting and reading skills are taught systematically and discretely; although there are frequent opportunities within the topic lessons to introduce or consolidate these skills.

As part of the Lambeth Schools' Partnership, Kingswood is involved in a project to raise the achievement of Black Caribbean heritage pupils. There are various strands to the project such as parental engagement and developing a curriculum which explicitly identifies key people of Caribbean and African heritage such as authors, artists, and those who have made a significant contribution to society. The headteacher explained why this is important:

'The curriculum allows pupils of Caribbean heritage to feel they are part of the Kingswood family. The Family Service Officers work closely with these families who may have had a negative experience themselves at school. They can provide that additional support and explain in different terms that parents can identify with.' (Headteacher)

Maths is taught daily and informed by the mastery approach with opportunities to build fluency and confidence with varied representations of number. Science may be linked to the topic but where it is not meaningfully linked, it is taught discretely.

Music is taught by specialist teachers and high-quality teaching results in high attainment in musical skills. The curriculum is enriched with an extensive range of enjoyable and exciting activities for pupils with visits to theatres, museums, galleries, nature areas; local historical and geographical walks; visiting artists and performers; focus days for arts, ecology, literacy, PE, health, STEAM or SMSC work. In Year 4 and 6, there are residential visits that all children are encouraged to participate in, with careful personalised work carried out with families to try and ensure these are accessible to all.

Kingswood seeks to develop the highest levels of oracy and critical thinking; philosophical skills are planned for and taught throughout the curriculum. Oracy is scaffolded using speaking frames and subject-specific prompts.

EFFECTIVE USE OF DIVERSE MULTI-ETHNIC WORKFORCE

Kingwood primary school serves some of the most deprived wards in the local authority. Many pupils come from disadvantaged economic home circumstances. The school population mirrors the community in which the school sits. Most pupils come from African, Caribbean, and White British ethnic backgrounds. A significant proportion of pupils have a mixed heritage. Through the school curriculum, pupils explore the representation of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in the local authority and in the UK.

Senior managers provide strong leadership in ensuring the schools provide an inclusive organisation. The ethos that is developed is based on a commitment to a vision of the school that serves its pupil community in the context of diversity. The school prides itself on the diversity of the workforce as the headteacher explained:

‘We pride ourselves that we have representation of the local community on our staff team. One of our teachers was an ex-Kingswood pupil. We have TAs who have been to Kingswood or live in the area. With PGCE students and those who have completed Schools Direct who apply to us externally, we look at their background to see if they could be of benefit to our school. Obviously we wouldn’t exclude any staff who are not. Lots of our staff who applied have links to the community and have decided this is a school they want to be a part of. They want to work in a diverse community. We also have a number of male members of staff which is unusual for a primary school. We see this as a benefit to pupils. We use our male members of staff to target pupils who do not have that representation in their families.’ (Headteacher)

Table 4: Kingswood primary school - workforce diversity

	Kingswood 2019			Lambeth 2019	National 2018
	Total Workforce	BAME*		BAME %	BAME %
		No.	%		
Leadership	8	4	50%	34%	9%
Teacher	39	33	85%	51%	15%
Teaching Assistant	54	37	69%	72%	15%
Other Support Staff	38	25	66%	63%	12%
Grand Total	139	99	71%	59%	15%

* BAME relates to all staff whose ethnic background is not White British

Source: Kingswood School Workforce Census, November 2019.

Table 4 also shows the percentage of BAME staff in the case study schools’ workforce to demonstrate how they are more inclusive compared to schools nationally. The schools have recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflect the languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and faiths of the pupils in the school. The staff are mainly from the local community and this has helped the school to build trust in the community they serve. There is a great diversity in the workforce in the case study schools in terms of range of roles, skills and ethnicity. There are also significant numbers of White British, Black African, White Other, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black African, Other Mixed Race, and Other Black staff in the school. Overall, over 84% of teachers and 50% of the leadership and 71% of the school workforce are of ethnic minority origin and many of the languages, cultures and faiths of the pupils are reflected in the workforce.

PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE

Ofsted judged pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare as 'outstanding' and reported that:

'The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are very confident learners. The pupils who spoke to inspectors could explain clearly what they were learning about. Pupils have ample opportunities to listen to each other. The curriculum supports and encourages pupils to listen to and challenge each other's views respectfully, for example through regular philosophical debates. Pupils take tremendous pride in their work. The books inspectors saw showed consistently high standards of presentation. Relationships across the school are very strong. Pupils and adults co-exist harmoniously in a culture of mutual respect that is palpable. Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of bullying, including how it may manifest itself online. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are trained in being able to mediate situations so that they do not escalate. Consequently, pupils state that incidents of bullying are extremely infrequent.' (Ofsted 2019)

The school very effectively develops pupils' leadership skills through the Pupil Leadership Team (PLT) which is made up of peer mediators, key pupils identified by staff who work on anti-bullying, social and emotional development and make parents aware of the school's curriculum and work in the community. The PLT worked with "We London" on a homelessness project. The school had a food bank and a sponsored sleep out in the playground. Pupils brought in their sleeping bags and spent an hour outside on a damp and wet day from 3:30-4:30pm. 200 pupils took part and over £1300 was raised for the charity 'Shelter'. The twelve pupils from the PLT presented an assembly explaining their vision and why they had decided on homelessness. They wrote letters to parents and invited them to an assembly afterwards to let them know how much they had raised and how it went. They also organised a sponsored walk around Norwood Park for children in countries without water. The PLT asked pupils to design an anti-bullying symbol for the school's letterheads. The headteacher is clearly proud of their achievements and explained the importance of what they are doing:

'This is so important that we make them feel included not only in the school but outside the school too, so they become good citizens and become life-long learners.' (Headteacher)

CONCLUSIONS

Kingswood is an exceptional school community, full of creativity, ambition and drive. At the heart of this is a rigorous and fully comprehensive inclusion system. They believe that there are no barriers to learning that cannot be overcome. One of the keys to Kingswood's success in preventing the exclusion of pupils is because every single member of staff is committed to the inclusion of all children. This commitment to inclusion permeates systems and processes: every teacher is a teacher of SEND; every leader a leader of SEND.

Features of Kingswood's inclusion provision include:

- Strong leadership on diversity and equality
- Effective use of diverse multi-ethnic work force
- Joined-up systems – SEND support features in everyone's activity
- SEND/Inclusion CPD – part of core offer and self-directed offer
- High expectations
- Team approach – peer support structures in place
- Pupils with SEND have a 'seat at the table' e.g. school council, peer mediation
- Whole class approaches
- Enabling learning environments

2.3 CASE STUDY: THE NORWOOD SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

The Norwood School is a lively co-educational community school which has 892 pupils on roll aged 11-18 years. The large majority of students at the school come from a range of ethnic heritages including Black Caribbean and Black African. Recently there has been a significant increase in the percentage of White British and White Other pupils. About a third of students speak English as an additional language. 49% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding. There has also been a slight increase in the proportion of pupils with an EHCP.

As a Performing and Visual Arts School, Norwood is passionate about a commitment to the Arts. The school's specialist status enhances teaching and learning across the curriculum and provides exciting, innovative and engaging learning opportunities which convince pupils that learning can be fun and memorable. The school ensures that they make the most of the world class arts opportunities on their doorstep in London. There are well-established, flourishing working relationships with a number of world renowned organisations including The English National Opera, The Old Vic, The Donmar Warehouse, The Young Vic, Rambert, Laban, The Dulwich Picture Gallery, The Hayward Gallery, Shakespeare's Globe, The National Theatre, UAL, BIMM London, Ravensbourne Art College and FAD Fashion Futures.

Factors central for success in tackling the exclusion of pupils are identified as:

- The vision, ethos and values of the school
- Inspirational leadership and management at all levels
- Effective links with the community
- Establishing disciplined learning and consistent staff behaviour
- Effective Inclusion Depts: students as individuals
- Effective governing body
- Innovative curriculum
- diverse workforce

The evidence used to inform the judgements made here draws upon interviews with:

- The headteacher of the school
- 2 deputy headteachers
- 4 teachers
- 2 inclusion and learning mentors
- 6 pupils

The evidence used for this report also includes scrutiny of relevant exclusion policy, previous inspection reports and school data. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. Details of the findings are discussed below.

VISION, ETHOS AND VALUES

Norwood's ethos is child centred and staff are dedicated to ensuring that pupils are happy, secure and achieve their full potential. It is a forward-thinking school; optimistic and ambitious for all. The outstanding achievement of pupils is testament to this. Norwood consistently outperforms other schools in terms of pupils' progress whatever their starting points. They achieve this by a commitment to a personalised approach and a focus on the individual.

Determined to nurture and encourage the interests, abilities and unique talents of all pupils, Norwood's curriculum is broad, bespoke and with personalised pathways, ensuring that pupils experience learning that is challenging, stimulating and well suited to individual needs. The school's commitment to the Arts helps foster creative, curious and confident learners who have an active voice in their own learning and the life of the school, they leave school well rounded and well prepared for adult life.

As an inclusive school, permanent exclusion is seen as a last resort, but very occasionally there has been a need to make that decision. While it has had as much reason as any to permanently exclude students, it always seeks and finds alternative solutions.

Lambeth schools, as a whole, have had to change a culture in which exclusion remains as one of the sanctions. The view is that it is far better – and more consistent with the Local Authority's culture – to use an investment in pastoral support, with many skilled non-teaching support staff, and for schools to work in partnership to find ways of having 'no permanent exclusions' and this is spreading as a local-authority-wide objective.

EFFECTIVE LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

As The Norwood School was selected as a case study school to disseminate its outstanding inclusion provision, we asked two of its deputy headteachers for their views as to the reasons why pupils are being excluded from schools nationally. Getting off to the right start in secondary school was seen as a key success factor and, at Norwood, they put much energy and time into getting to know pupils and their parents:

'One thing to start with is the importance of induction and integration into secondary school. When pupils start they will have visited us three or four times. The leadership team meet with all Year 7 parents.'

(Deputy Headteacher A)

Effective links with primary feeder schools aims to ensure that important information regarding pupils' individual needs and the expectations secondary schools have of pupils, especially in terms of behaviour, are made explicit:

'Over the last couple of years there has been a problem with Year 7 girls and social media. They have been used to setting up WhatsApp groups and it becomes a real problem when somebody is removed. We treat this very seriously. We feed this back to Primary Schools if we get an understanding that this has happened there. In Primary Schools parents have knowledge of who their children are friendly with but at Secondary they don't know. We get support from parents who support this stance but that doesn't necessarily mean that it will happen. This can lead to problems re exclusions.' **(Deputy Headteacher A)**

Despite the effective links with primary feeder schools, there are a significant number of pupils entering Year 7 with undiagnosed social, emotional and mental health needs which have not been addressed in primary schools:

'A pupil has been in the primary school for 6/7 years and the needs of those children have not been picked up. When they arrive at secondary school, you quickly see these children cannot manage it. When we say the needs of the child the school cannot meet them, a PRU most of the time is not the place for a child. They may not be behavioural needs. There seems to be an increase in the number of pupils with undiagnosed needs.' **(Head of Year 11)**

Norwood staff have a clear understanding of the context in which pupils are living and they go the extra mile to provide a safe place for pupils not only in school but in making them aware of the dangers of loitering in the local area:

'We make our expectations clear, especially with regard to pupils going home straight from school and not loitering. Perhaps one of the things we need to explore is that some children don't want to go home.'

(Deputy Headteacher A)

The school works closely with local shopkeepers to make them aware of this and there has been a forum with shopkeepers, parents and children and the message seems to be getting through that children should not be loitering on the streets for their own safety.

'Crown Point is a hot spot for us, where there are a lot of fast food joints. We put staff on duty in those areas; it is now easier as children have got the message. We don't want children hanging around on the streets and therefore potentially getting into bother.' **(Deputy Headteacher B)**

Working hard with the local community to raise their hopes and aspirations along with the achievements of their young people, the school refuses to accept a challenging context as a barrier to success; indeed, it gives staff additional motivation and purpose. Although it serves a local community where a significant proportion of the population have not had an education beyond school; many remember their school days without much affection and there are often low parental aspirations. The exceptions tend to be in some, but not all, minority ethnic groups within communities who place a higher value on education, particularly those immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers who may have come to Britain to seek a better life for their families.

While the school has very strong links with the community, it also works hard to create a safe, harmonious school environment that leaves the community's problems and tensions outside. The culture and norms inside the school can often be very different to those outside. It has very clear policies for pupil behaviour and conduct and these are consistently applied. In 2018 Ofsted noted:

'Throughout the school, it was evident that pupils behave respectfully and conduct themselves well. You and your team have worked hard to ensure that all staff and pupils take personal responsibility for improving pupils' behaviour, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Pupils like the emphasis you have placed on rewards and the focus that is placed on pupils 'doing the right thing'. As a result, in most lessons, pupils work in a calm and purposeful learning environment.' **(Ofsted 2018)**

ESTABLISHING DISCIPLINED LEARNING AND CONSISTENT STAFF BEHAVIOUR

Norwood is highly inclusive, having complete regard for the educational progress, personal development and well-being of every student and has put in place the staff and the structures to support this. It's joined-up approach to behaviour management and pastoral care has been a significant factor in preventing the exclusion of pupils with the creation of important senior leadership roles which ensure that these priorities are delivered: a deputy head with responsibility for behaviour and transition and a manager of the 'Greenhouse' (an internal unit for pupils who have been excluded from other schools in the partnership for 1 or 2 days).

The Greenhouse Manager is also pastoral lead, and has safeguarding, attendance, transition and external placements as part of her role. In addition, she has developed excellent relationships with parents, who turn to her for advice regarding their children:

'The majority of parents turn to us because of all our experience of working with their children. The parents in the end respect us because they can see we are working for the betterment of their child. They come in and seek our advice. Pupils will also talk about us at school.' **(Greenhouse Manager)**

'I have children who were sent back home to boarding schools in West Africa and the Caribbean (because their parents were worried they might be drawn into County lines) and so they were sent away for their own safety) and a parent wanted advice from me about how his son could come back to do GCSEs. We have that dialogue.' **(Greenhouse Manager)**

The Greenhouse Manager sometimes maintains a relationship with pupils who have moved abroad and says the outcomes of these moves are positive:

'Some are prefects abroad; the manner and tone of voice when she speaks to me on the 'phone.... The mum wanted advice on what to do when she comes back home and I told the mother she will have to move house because of those influences. The daughter now realises that she was being groomed here and people were giving her money to go shopping.'

From time to time parents need help in disciplining their children, especially those without extended families to support them in this country:

'Sometimes parents need reinforcement – parents may want to get their children off their telephone. They will ring me for advice. I tell them just give them a basic phone. Sometimes parents do not feel empowered to discipline their children – it is a problem. Sometimes parents don't want to work with services as they believe they are too intrusive. Sometimes I have had to challenge Social Services in meetings because of their attitude towards parents.' **(Greenhouse Manager)**

'It's all of them involved, unfortunately children of Black Caribbean and Asian heritages are not being given pride in their history, so their identity is lost. Because they are lost that's why they get into gangs. Parents may be working 24/7 and a lot of children are going home to empty houses, or they are carers to parents with mental health issues. Parenting goes by the board; parents may have immigration issues and so on. We have parents who are afraid of their children and ask their children for the telephone and they want us to tell them. I don't know what it is, whether they are over-busy.. they don't know how to relate to their children. A Year 11 parent said "I texted her to tell her to come down for her tea". I said "why"? and she said "that's how we communicate"! I told her that's ludicrous.' **(Greenhouse Manager)**

'It's about building trusting relationships and us taking on surrogate roles within the family.' **(Deputy Head C)**

INCLUSION: STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS

Outstanding pastoral care and support for pupils is a notable feature of the school's ethos. A deputy head emphasises the importance of being child-centred in their approach:

'We try to work within the context of the child. We now have a school-based social worker and part of the reason for having this is because the LA had data which showed that we have made the most referrals to multi-agencies in Lambeth. We try to piece together the fragmented world of students whilst at the same time we are facing cuts to our budget. It is always important for us to build that picture, when a child comes to us from primary school; we meet with families before they come in. They are interviewed by senior managers and staff make contact with primary schools before they come to get further information. We insist on staff reading primary school files, often finding gaps in terms of information.' **(Deputy Head C)**

The school's willingness to persist in trying to provide every opportunity for students and families to work with the school to overcome difficulties can be hard on classroom teachers who are at the coal face as the following example illustrated:

'We have another boy in Year 8 whose persistent disruptive behaviour in the school should have led to a permanent exclusion by now. This is hard on the average class teacher while I and the Greenhouse Manager are trying to work with the context. I have tried to get help for the father who has EAL and the mother who has mental health issues, trying to get them housing. We know all this and are trying to work with the family, but its understanding and identifying what the issues are and the determination to get it sorted!'

'We have a number of families here alone.... but in the last couple of years when we have meetings it is so interesting to see the additional involvement of grandparents who come into the meetings with the parent in terms of their roles in supporting the family. There's an increased need as they are involved. One of the reasons for taking a child back to Nigeria is because their family is there, whether it's wisdom, experience or status.'
(Deputy Head C)

'One of the ways in which we work as a school is that Edith will often tell me "enough with your nice approach"...one of the things we do positively is our understanding and concern for the child. If you think of everything in the Press about exclusions, we would make a rod for our own backs.'
(Deputy Head C)

'Sometimes we have to take a firm stance with the child.'
(Greenhouse Manager)

Only on rare occasions would a permanent exclusion take place and then it is often based on banned substances, offensive weapons or banned materials:

'We are open with parents. If a child is excluded, their life chances have been cut by ¾. So these are the options which are available. At that stage the parents would have been in many meetings they would have seen behaviour logs, been involved with us for years. If we say permanent exclusion is likely, this is what you can do as a parent. What you need to do and explain their rights legally.' **(Head of Year 11)**

However, the Head of Year 11 explained the lengths the school goes to prevent permanent exclusion taking place:

'Where there is abusive behaviour towards staff, students may be sent to a partnership school. Greenhouse works in two ways: we internally exclude them here for one or two days. If it's serious enough they are sent to a partnership school for 2/3 days. Other schools will send kids to us. Over time there are different levels, where we try to prevent exclusions. We will see parents and put in place three or four week plans to turn the behaviour around. Governors arrange a meeting with parents and governors put them on a pathway for six weeks with a signed agreement and targets set. They then meet with governors again to see if the behaviour has improved. If it hasn't then we begin to think about exclusion or going to another school.'
(Head of Year 11)

Norwood is in partnership with twelve other schools (including schools from neighbouring boroughs) and each school has a similar 'greenhouse' unit which takes in pupils with fixed term exclusions (usually one or two days) from a partner school. On re-integration, a senior leader will meet the parents and the excluded pupil and targets are set relating to what led to the exclusion. After a number of internal or external exclusions, a pupil may be sent to a partner school for a longer period. The Greenhouse Manager explained this process:

'Any child that has been to the Greenhouse more than four times within a term would go to a partner school. When they send a child to us, we email the partner school and tell them their child is on the premises.'

We asked the Heads of Years 7 and 11 what type of change of behaviour did they expect to get from pupils as a result of attending a partnership school and how did the school decide which partnership school a child should move to?

'Sometimes the relationships they get involved in with staff or their peers - sometimes relieving them of that relationship will work.' **(Head of Year 11)**

'They work very closely with a mentor from the Greenhouse. I feel it's about building relationships with students and them trusting you.' **(Head of Year 7)**

'Schools have come together to look at reducing exclusions in Lambeth. You will find that it is predominantly Black Caribbean pupils because it is based on socio-economic issues. It is easy to say they are disengaged in Year 7, they are disengaged already.' **(Head of Year 11)**

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

The efforts that the staff make to support students and their families is exemplary but needless to say it takes its toll on their emotional well-being, as they deal with the plethora of social, emotional and other issues displayed by some students:

'As a senior member of staff, when a child comes back from exclusion for integration, I form very good relationships with the child and they realise there is someone they can turn to. Sometimes I feel quite over-loaded because of the information I have to deal with. I think we as a school need someone to talk to.' **(Greenhouse Manager)**

'I have trained as a supervisor as a Creative Arts Therapist. There is a need for school personnel to have somewhere to take all this – as a space to discuss what's going on.' **(Deputy Head C)**

EFFECTUAL GOVERNING BODY

Governors' put their focus on ensuring that pupils' well-being and safety are paramount and are actively involved in meeting with the parents of pupils in danger of exclusion:

'One of the things we have in place is when we have a pupil with a number of exclusions, we have a Governors Behaviour Panel, where the governor with responsibility for behaviour and two other governors will meet with parents and talk about managed moves etc. This has had an impact and the message hits home and we have seen a shift.'
(Deputy Head C)

'This is because governors wanted not to see parents just when the pupil is being excluded; they wanted an opportunity to meet with parents and try and intervene. They will meet with pupils afterwards and see how things are going and will see parents and reiterate that exclusion will happen if this behaviour continues. They also hear if things are going well.'
(Greenhouse Manager)

'It is trying different levels and governors having that positive role in intervention.' **(Deputy Head C)**

INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

Norwood's curriculum is enriched by its specialist Performing and Visual Arts status which offers students the opportunity to be creative, gain confidence and develop their self-esteem. This specialism also means students enjoy visits to museums, galleries, theatres and visits from well-known artists and performing companies.

Whilst the specialism is an important part of the school's curriculum, equal emphasis is placed on all subjects across the curriculum ensuring students leave with the foundations to succeed in all areas.

Sport plays an important role in the curriculum and the Norwood School Greenhouse Sports basketball team have the opportunity to develop not only their ball skills but Greenhouse Sports coaches work to facilitate through the STEP framework, the empowerment of young people to lead happy and healthy lives.

Ofsted inspectors were complimentary about the school's curriculum in their letter to the headteacher in 2018, which stated:

'You offer a broad and balanced curriculum that is strengthened by links with colleges, businesses and arts organisations. Pupils are aware that leaders plan the curriculum carefully to take account of their specific interests and needs. Pupils speak confidently about their school and talk with a sense of pride. Others agreed when one pupil said "I just wish others knew how good this school is!"

DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Norwood gives high priority and is rigorous in the recruitment of the right staff. It bucks the national trend in secondary schools in terms of diversity and has a very diverse workforce reflected at all levels of its staffing structure. Learning mentors play a key role in preventing exclusions whilst developing the character of students through team sports. The school uses the Greenhouse Sports charity to work with pupils using, inspirational sports coaching and mentoring to engage young people and improve their life chances. Greenhouse Sports partner with schools to provide opportunities for young people who may be disengaged, vulnerable or facing disadvantage to develop the social, thinking, emotional and physical skills that help them thrive. Learning mentors explained their roles to us:

'This school has a basketball programme run by myself and two other coaches. We start at 6.30 a.m. with about 20 students. They bring their own breakfast or can have it at school. We have sessions at break time, lunchtime and after school. The kids have to register with Greenhouse. Twice a year we do observations of the kids and the impact the programme is having on them. We are developing the STEP capabilities and supporting the kids with them. We feedback this information to teachers by email via Behaviour Watch and SIMS.' **(Learning Mentor A)**

'Mr Harvey sends us emails with updates on particular pupils each day so we know what's happening with them and we can pick them up. Basketball is used as a carrot and a stick. It's about staying up to date and putting in a plan of action.' **(Learning Mentor B)**

'Sometimes we will mentor pupils outside of basketball and we also do the Homework Club, before or after school finishes. We focus on Years 7-9 homework and we might help them, sometimes a teacher might come in.' **(Learning Mentor A)**

'Another way we work in partnership is if a pupil ends up being excluded we discover that they are not doing any physical activity. This gives us the opportunity to talk with them. We spend more time with some of these kids, than they spend with their parents. Kids come into school and they haven't done any sport in primary schools. Kids who have been involved in sport outside school they can get on and adapt straight away. When they are older they have to work through this winning and losing.' **(Learning Mentor A)**

'A lot of pupils we work with have to develop emotional resilience. It may mean us making referrals to other agencies, e.g. CAMHS. We liaise with the SENCo.' **(Learning Mentor B)**

'When I think about this school, the difference is I feel this school really embraces culture in assemblies. It is a melting pot and with a melting pot comes challenges.' **(Learning Mentor A)**

'This school is one that gives many chances. The steps taken not to permanently exclude... the opportunities given and support put in place. It's a school of many chances.' **(Learning Mentor B)**

‘Consistency is very important. They know I am here every single day. Parents like it, I don’t just make it about sport or academics, and it is also about behaviour.’ (Learning Mentor A)

‘During the summer holidays most of our pupils have nothing in place. Camps are available to parents. We have taken pupils to Bosnia to basketball camp and we are taking around ten pupils to Madrid. It is funded by the Greenhouse Sports Charity.’ (Learning Mentor B)

CONCLUSIONS

Norwood has been so successful in preventing the exclusion of pupils because their staff show an exceptional understanding and sensitivity to the contexts in which many pupils are living. For this reason, they try everything possible to support pupils and their families by providing a very broad package of interventions to address diverse needs and ensure that any social, emotional or other barriers to learning are alleviated.

One of the main reasons for the excellence in performance and tackling school exclusions is strong leadership on equality and diversity. Our research and observations suggest evidence of excellent distributed management in the school. The headteacher, together with senior leaders and managers provide outstanding leadership and have been instrumental in establishing a successful drive in improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, behaviour and safety of students and tackling school exclusions. Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted and the school ensures that every pupil has an equal chance of success. Systematic, thorough monitoring of pupils’ progress and attendance underpins the school’s continued success in raising achievement and tackling school exclusions.

The school tracks the progress of pupils carefully and analyse the often complex reasons behind any underachievement or challenging behaviour before identifying the appropriate intervention. Close partnership with parents and the community has been a vital feature of their success.

A characteristic of Norwood is a willingness to go the extra mile in providing opportunities for all to succeed. They never give up on individual students as Ofsted noted in 2018:

‘Central to your school’s work is the determination to ensure that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged background, succeed academically.’ (Ofsted 2018)

2.4 CASE STUDY – DUNRAVEN SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

Dunraven is a high-performing all-through school educating children from age 4 to 18. It has 1310 pupils on roll. The proportion (44%) known to be eligible for the pupil premium, is well above average. 15% of pupils receive SEND support and 3% have a statement/EHCP. A third of pupils are White British, and with the largest proportions from minority ethnic groups being of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is above average.

Dunraven became an all-through school in 2012 and this year's Year 6 cohort will be moving into Year 7 in September 2019. The school has heads of primary and secondary and a director of sixth form. Children joining the school in the primary phase have an automatic right to continue to secondary school. This structure offers children and families a unique continuous educational opportunity with which to develop a long-term relationship with the school.

The school was judged by Ofsted to be outstanding in all areas in 2014 and was designated as a Teaching School in 2016 in recognition of its highly successful strategies for teaching and learning. The school data also shows that no one of Dunraven's pupils have been permanently excluded in the past four years.

Central to its success in not excluding pupils:

- Inspirational leadership and management at all levels, led by an outstanding Principal and CEO and Head of School
- School vision, ethos and values including the school's code of conduct and exclusion policy
- Effective teaching and learning
- Effective inclusion strategy and inclusion department
- Excellent care, guidance and targeted support for students

The evidence used to inform the judgements made here draws upon interviews with:

- The Principal of the School and CEO
- The Head of secondary school,
- Director of Teaching School and behaviour
- Referral Centre Manager
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (**DSL**) Team and Student Engagement

- Base lead teacher
- Four students focus group (from the Base)
- Transitions mentor
- Two Teachers from Year 10

The evidence used for this report also includes scrutiny of relevant School Recognition and Conduct Policy, Exclusion policy, previous inspection reports and School data. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. Details of the findings are discussed below.

VISION, VALUES AND ETHOS

The school's code of conduct has one main expectation: that you treat everyone with courtesy and consideration at all times. The quality of relationships at Dunraven underpins all that they do. Put simply the ethos is 'work hard - be nice'.

Enriched by its diversity, Dunraven is an inclusive community with a firm anti-bullying culture. It defies the association of poverty with outcomes and enables young people to succeed and reduce their disadvantage. To a visitor, this outstanding school may not appear to be challenging; it runs like clockwork and is an oasis of calm purpose, highly focused on learning, with well-turned-out students and staff. It is because the school is so well-led and managed that the complex backgrounds of students and their families could be overlooked.

A significant proportion of students come from low income or disturbed home backgrounds, where support for their learning and expectations of their achievement can be low. Many students are subject to social and emotional tensions, owing to their circumstances. The areas in which they live are subject to some of the urban ills that often characterise poorer communities. These come not only from the ready availability of drugs and alcohol, but the peer pressures of gangs and fashions, and overt racism, all of which tend to attract behaviour which can range from antisocial to violent. Getting some of its students ready and willing to learn can be a challenge, which the school strives to meet by providing a caring, supportive ethos and a stimulating curriculum.

As Dunraven was selected as a case study school to disseminate its outstanding inclusion provision, we asked the Principal for his views on why so many pupils are being excluded from schools across the country:

'Lack of experience and confidence in knowledge of the school and community.....'

'Fixed term exclusions do not work – that used to be the system. Mostly what happened was the children who were excluded got nothing from it. Pupils didn't mind they were free. There had to be an answer that says 'stay here' it's about feeling safe and known.' **(Principal)**

This case study sets out to portray the reasons for the school's success in that it rarely excludes pupils, which defies the circumstances of the vulnerable students and families they serve.

Students are typically very positive about their relationships with teachers and with each other. The head of the secondary school commented:

'We did a survey recently and it was rewarding to see how positive students were about the school. They like the school. Can they like it more? Yes!'

ESTABLISHING DISCIPLINED LEARNING AND CONSISTENT STAFF BEHAVIOUR

Dunraven sees permanent exclusions as a last resort. It has robust systems in place to prevent permanent exclusion through its internal processes and always seeks and finds alternative solutions. It has changed the culture in which exclusion remains as one of the sanctions. The leadership has developed policy statements on Recognition and Behaviour, with guidelines on exclusion to secure Dunraven's positive learning environment. Its policy states that:

'All staff will apply this policy across the school day and will seek ways to sustain positive and constructive dialogue with colleagues, students and families that ensure maximum engagement.'

Clear expectations are matched by highly-structured interventions and sanctions for any behaviour that falls below the school's expectations.

High standards abound in all areas because senior and middle leaders model the very best practice and are excellent communicators, adept at sharing information with each other about pupils' academic and personal progress. Without exception, all are committed to involving pupils in their own learning.

The Director of the Teaching School, (who is also Behaviour Lead), has been in this post for four years. Prior to this he was the Director of Sixth Form which was graded outstanding by Ofsted in 2016. As Behaviour Lead he began a review of the school's systems with regard to conduct and he explored with staff what were their expectations of students, standards etc:

'We identified a core group and they were tasked with finding out the views of stakeholders and it emerged that staff were 'sanction heavy.'

He drew on educational research to explain the importance of building relationships:

'John Hattie's (2009) ground-breaking study identified four types of relationships, (e.g. aloof, casual) with students and the problem we had was that all our relationships were 'productive relationships.'

Removing a child from a classroom has a psychological impact. It has all the negative connotations of rejection which say 'you are not wanted.'

Instead, the focus turned to recognition – the moment when a child shines and this is celebrated. This process wasn't easy as some long serving members of staff were very sanction oriented. As Behaviour Lead he developed a system where a senior member of staff has to agree that a child should be removed from the classroom, through the following stages:

- A warning
- Breach of Code of Conduct
- Breach of Code of Conduct again
- Breach of Code of Conduct for a final time – (i.e. we are considering removing you from the classroom)

'We had to consider the impact of students not learning so you are moving them from a situation where they are not able to work well and making it difficult for teachers to teach and others to learn, by putting them in a parallel lesson. If they misbehave in that class then they are removed immediately. We then consider the Referral Centre. We put them in Referral only after Saturday 8.30 am detention hasn't worked.' (Behaviour Lead)

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

The head of secondary described the Referral Centre as having a ‘more therapeutic’ approach:

‘It is smaller than most with a ceiling of eight students at any one time with a learning mentor who will talk to them about the build-up of matters, or specific incidents.’

The importance of consistency in terms of staffing and procedures in the Referral Centre were stressed:

‘You have to get it right there with consistent staffing or it could go wrong - a rota and changes of staff would be very difficult’.... ‘Our challenge about the Referral Centre is how do you replicate the person that makes it work?’ (Head of Secondary School)

Consistency of procedures and approach were also mentioned by the Referral Centre Manager. His commitment to the pupils in ensuring that they do not miss out on their learning while they are in the Centre is reflected in his account below of the clear lines of communication and co-operation necessary between members of staff:

‘Before students are referred, say the day before, I email teachers to ask them for work for the student. I get in at 7.30am just in case a student is referred that day and I ask teachers for lesson plans. I have schemes of work anyway so I know what they are working at and if necessary I prepare the work myself. They have to work hard and have five topics to complete with impeccable behaviour that day. They know I am here to help. We have some interesting discussions when they have finished their work. They might also get a 20 minute mentoring session with the Learning mentor. At the end of the day I send off an e-report to their teachers, the leadership team and Head of Year, so everyone is in the loop.’ (Referral Centre Manager)

Data on pupils who have been to the Referral Centre is collected every term and this is passed to the senior leadership team and later to the middle leaders. This information provokes debate about how and why pupils have been referred. The Referral Centre Manager commented:

‘There tends to be a lot of pupil premium pupils and 60% of pupils have SEND. We have our own Speech and Language Therapist and we are aware of their needs and she works closely with the learning mentor.’

We asked whether pupils felt there was any stigma associated with spending time in the Referral Centre. The Centre Manager responded:

'There is a stigma. For some pupils it's an experience they do not want to repeat. Others enjoy it because it's quiet and they can work. Others have been before and they know what to expect. It is an opportunity for reflection although it is also punitive. We also have an opportunity to identify undiagnosed SEND or specific challenges pupils are facing. We are generally trying to prevent students from coming back into the Referral Centre.'

The Referral Centre Manager was a former pupil in a Lambeth secondary school which had the reputation at the time of being very challenging. He believed his own school experiences have given him the ability to understand and relate to students in his current role:

'I find it very easy to relate to these pupils and to help them. My own home life was stable so I could cope well with disturbances in school. Other pupils' home background lacked structure and discipline, whereas my parents taught me this and it helped me at school. I am motivated to engender self-discipline in pupils. The language I use and positivity in the language I use with students helps to build relationships. I have also been on courses with regard to mental health and I can apply these in the Referral Centre.' **(Centre Manager)**

Another aspect of provision is 'The Base'. Sixty plus students may experience The Base over a given year. Some might go there because they might struggle in a particular lesson or for re-positioning. It is based on individual needs. The manager of The Base has been in post for seven years and she states that *'pupils here get taught to work'*. Pupils spend time in the Base if they are school phobic, for medical or mental health reasons, or because otherwise they might be excluded:

'The ones we have at the moment are students who would otherwise be permanently excluded... the aim is to not permanently exclude'.... 'We have had a Year 11 pupil from another school who sat his exams here although it will go on their results. Another out-borough school have referred a child to us who has been excluded – he is on a managed move. We had a student excluded from another school and he went to a PRU then he came here in Year 10 for quite a few months and he got into our A Levels. He will probably do very well. The biggest factor in the success of this Base is that students are not 'thrown away', you keep them within the school.'

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

There are two experienced teachers (including the manager) who between them teach almost all subjects. In addition, the Centre Manager teaches A Level History in the school as she explains:

'Occasionally we have to ask someone to drop a subject like music which we cannot teach..... Last year 70-odd children passed through. It would be the norm for them to get their GCSEs. The exception would be the rule. Schools should be accountable for all their students....

However, there might be a need to permanently exclude pupils at times. With this system we have not had to do that with any student over years.'
(The Base Manager)

There have been many success stories of students from the Base who have succeeded against all odds:

'One particular student made it through her education and went on to college. There were all sorts of issues around her... she wouldn't communicate with people only with animals. She had two days out at Capel Manor and this is where she flourished. She was an exceptional case.' **(The Base Manager)**

Another example of success:

'A student just finishing Year 13 was referred at the end of Year 9 and he got a very good set of GCSEs. Very often the needs are social and emotional not necessarily learning. Of course, this is what impacts on their learning.'

Having a sense of where a good education might lead them in terms of a future career is important according to the Base Manager:

'The important thing is, do they have a path forward. Where will they be in five years' time? Hopefully they will have self-esteem and a sense of purpose.'

Pupils from The Base have many opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem by helping out in the primary department, listening to children read, serving food and helping in the dining hall or sharing a particular expertise.

What the Referral Centre and the Base provide is the chance for students to develop a relationship with a member of staff who acts as a coach to help them to understand what they have done wrong and coach them how to avoid difficulties and behave appropriately.

'It's about relationship, commitment, being consistent and persistent. It's a combination of strategy and philosophy and where the leadership has the heart to make it work.' **(Head of Secondary)**

The Behaviour Lead records the numbers of sanctions issued by teachers and this is fed back to heads of departments. Teachers are self-critical and they ask for advice when they are experiencing difficulties in lessons. He has noted however that:

'There are a disproportionate number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) pupils who are sanctioned in this school. I want our teachers to consider why is it that Black Caribbean and African pupils in this school as a group are significantly underachieving in our school. I am not thinking nationally, or Lambeth, why in our school are they over-represented in the sanction system. I want middle leaders to untangle it. I am not scared of it and some middle leaders think it can be very divisive. Leaders have to face up to the challenge. Unless all pupils can say our school has no bias, there is not equal opportunity for all.' **(Behaviour Lead)**

Having the backing of the Head is very important in challenging the status quo and the Behaviour Lead, as a member of the senior leadership team, feels supported in this, as he explained:

'One of the main things is that you have a Head that supports it. I cannot just say this is okay (the issue that some teachers can sanction some pupils). We have recidivists who go into detention week after week. I fundamentally disagree with exclusions. Resources are thin, but you cannot just put a child out there. A managed move has another psychological impact on that child. You have to ask those burning questions.' **(Behaviour Lead)**

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

The Behaviour Lead is in a unique position to influence and challenge behaviours which can have major impact on the lives of pupils. Being of Caribbean heritage himself, pupils have told him that they do not feel there are enough BAME teachers/senior leadership positions in the school. During the Windrush scandal he reflects that he brought the Principal's attention to the need to address the issue with the school community:

'I advised the Principal to make a statement about this as a large number of pupils and staff are affected by this. "I do not think it is for me to write it," I said "you should ". We want others to recognise that it is something horrible. People who are able to should challenge and critique. I am able to do this.' (Behaviour Lead)

INCLUSION: STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS

Consistent with Dunraven's culture – a huge investment is made in pastoral support, with many skilled non-teaching support staff, and their ability to personalise learning, to address the issue of exclusion. Many problems of extreme behaviour arise because of students' difficulty in accessing the curriculum which, in turn, can be linked to inadequate literacy and lack of success. It has responded with a focus on relationships, providing early interventions, restorative justice and support for learning.

The school has a very strong commitment to being there to support students and families and to this end the outstanding Inclusion Department (which has 50 staff members) has developed an 'asset based approach'. The department's aim is to raise students' motivation, commitment to learning and engagement in education.

One of the two Lead Practitioners explained how the Inclusion department functions:

'My role is lead practitioner for Student Welfare and Engagement. We have brought everything together under the 'Inclusion' banner. The Base, the Referral Centre, Early Intervention Team (learning mentors) and Restorative approaches, EAL, attendance, and Outreach Worker. The Referral Centre was initially a punitive centre. It now comes under inclusion. Many of the pupils going in were known to our team. We put in a learning mentor in the Referral Centre to join up communication. We looked at changing from a punitive approach to looking at the needs and concerns that may have contributed to students' behaviour. The main aim of this was that we reduce exclusion and that we meet the social and emotional needs of our pupils and look at the underlying issue of the

behaviour. As a department we work with five main principles: collaborative, learning, asset-based, solution focused, sustainable (CLASS). We have developed a reflective approach. At the end of every half term the Student Engagement Team, gets feedback from families as well as students. Their feedback feeds into our practices.

We have already begun to identify pupils where we have got it wrong, e.g. students whose ASD needs were only diagnosed in Year 11.

We will look at measures needed to be put in place to ensure it doesn't happen again.' (Lead Practitioner, Student Welfare and Engagement)

The Lead Practitioner explained what an 'asset based' approach is:

'We genuinely believe that all pupils have something to offer and if we exclude them we have lost an asset. This is based on my work with Lambeth CCG. We have looked at other disciplines with regard to this approach and see how this can be incorporated into our school. We have to get to a point where pupils are self-managing. The aim is that all pupils can regulate their behaviour. If by Year 11 they haven't learnt this then we have failed.'

Effective communication, consistency and being 'joined-up' in approaches to provision are major strengths at Dunraven. The Lead Practitioner works closely with the LA and is involved in most of the policies that are developed with an inclusion eye and a safeguarding eye. He said:

'I ensure that staff are being updated with new tools to implement in the classroom and around the school.'

He meets with Heads of Year on a weekly basis to discuss safeguarding of pupils and to share good practice. There are also weekly student/inclusion review meetings with the speech and language therapist, the SENDCo, family support worker, and learning mentor to discuss students to agree actions of how to move forward and hold each other to account. To put this into context, the Lead Practitioner gave an example of a typical situation when a student is referred to The Base:

'It is mandatory that the student does one session per week in the primary school. For example one student did a PE lesson for primary pupils. This gave him an opportunity see himself as a success. What can you do in your own community that gives you a sense of value or significance? We know these emotional anchors to these people have an impact on their physical well-being. It's about their social and emotional needs. We do this through collaboration with others, for example Lambeth Health Watch and then deliver training across the school. We say here is the data, it is not a blaming issue, but there is something going on. What can we do to make a difference in our school?'

Overall, our observations and evidence from the interviews confirm that the school has a well-integrated Inclusion department that works closely with the other heads of department. It is, therefore, not a surprise to see that the school is managing exclusion issues well within the school with excellent care and targeted support for students.

CONTINUALLY DEVELOPING TEACHING AND LEARNING

As a Teaching School in the 'Sharing Excellence' Partnership the aim is to provide an outstanding education for pupils and students. They offer a range of opportunities for the development of teaching and support staff including Initial Teacher Training (ITT) across PGCE, School Direct and Teach First routes. There is well established and successful practice in ensuring that trainees develop a full understanding of the knowledge and skills required to become an effective teacher within primary or secondary phases.

We asked for their views on why so many pupils are being excluded from schools in England.

'I think personally generally there is a particular type of student that would be excluded – Black Caribbean pupils. I feel what they should do in schools is to put systems in place to help families and students remain in school. The onus is not just on the school but other outside agencies.'
(Year 10 DOLY, Tutor)

'I was formerly PRU Manager in Croydon. They offered lots of vocational activities like hair dressing and mechanics. It can hinder them by putting all the children misbehaving altogether – it rubs off on them.' **(Yr 10 Tutor)**

Nationally there is an issue where schools have 'off-rolled' students in Year 10 if students are deemed unlikely to achieve good GCSE results. Why doesn't this happen at Dunraven?

'Looking at it from a pastoral perspective, we are looking at the behaviour. If behaviour logs show particular students flagged up we get to know them, their characters and we will support other teachers to manage them. Tutors work with tutees on a day to day basis on teambuilding and consistency. Year 7s always have the same Head of Year. There is good handover. The culture is about relationships.' **(Year 10 Tutor)**

Many schools are let down by a lack of consistency by staff. This can show itself in the way staff speak to students, their response to behaviours which some tolerate while others turn a blind eye, speed of response to situations, dealing with an issue that has arisen or not dealing with it 'because it is not my responsibility'; the examples are numerous. One of the hallmarks of very good or outstanding schools such as Dunraven is a high degree of consistency in approaches and responses, regardless of which staff member is involved.

There is a truly corporate culture at Dunraven, with staff and usually students working for each other sensitively and cooperatively. Students do not receive mixed messages or perceive staff to have vastly different values. They see common purpose: adults who are working in students' interests, who like being in the school, who care for it and are ambitious for its future.

'Key to success is relationships and consistency. It is clear. You buy-in to the culture of the school. The amount of teachers who have left this school but come back. If you go into the staffroom it is a family culture, you support each other. Teachers will always check whether they are in need of support...'. She continues... 'It's amazing how students will stick up for staff as well. Parents telephone me at any time. They can see how much time I invest in their children. They know who cares about their children....'

What I notice here is that pupils are comfortable they are not afraid of not getting it right. We learn from our mistakes.' **(Year 10 Tutor)**

Her colleague supported this statement:

'If they do get it wrong there is support to get it right again. Yes there might be a sanction but there is a holistic approach to give them the steps to make sure it doesn't happen again.' (Year 10 DOLY, Tutor)

'I had a child earlier on who said 'Miss, I got it wrong, I won't do it again, can I go and apologise?'' (Year 10 Tutor)

Teachers are reluctant to leave Dunraven because teaching is enjoyable, the ethos is positive and interesting things happen and there are constant opportunities for professional development.

The Director of Learning Year 10 has herself been a product of 'in-house' training and development having started her career as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), then completing her ITT at Dunraven and working her way up to her current role, in her third year as Director of Learning.

The Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) is also a Year 10 Tutor and was an NQT at Dunraven, moving on to become Head of PE and then an SLE, working with other primary and secondary schools on teaching and learning, as a coach.

'We are very open with each other as staff. We ask each other to come and observe other teachers.' (Year 10 Tutor)

As a National Teaching School there are established links with external colleges and opportunities abound to engage in action research and further study. However, there is a view that Teaching Schools are better placed to provide initial teacher training because of the 'hands on' experience students gain:

'Where the Universities go wrong is they only know from pedagogy and they are not on the ground. Students need to have experience in at least two contrasting types of schools.' (Year 10 DOLY, Tutor)

Ofsted inspectors summed up the outstanding teaching and learning at Dunraven as follows:

'School leaders have placed a strong emphasis on raising the quality of teaching in all areas of the school and are passionate about involving the pupils in their learning. This is one of the main reasons why the quality of teaching has improved and is now outstanding

Teachers and supporting adults unanimously encourage, support and express their very high expectations for every pupil, and the pupils equally expect the very best of themselves. Excellent support for pupils who have special educational needs is provided in class and within the resource base. This high-quality support is mirrored for those who speak English as an additional language, where needed. They learn in line with their peers and make excellent gains.' **(Ofsted 2014)**

STUDENT WELFARE, ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSITION

Dunraven gives high priority and puts a great deal of energy into recruitment of staff with the right backgrounds and experience, as well as a commitment to the vision and ethos of the school. The appointment of a former pupil, who went on to do a degree in psychology and worked in supported housing for women and men with mental health issues prior to becoming a 'Transitions mentor' is a case in point. We asked what prompted her to apply for this post.

'I left Dunraven in 2010 but when I was at school Mo (the Lead Practitioner for Student Welfare and Engagement) was my mentor. I am of that generation that didn't have social media and the challenges they have now. They get into problems with Snapchat and Instagram. They (social media) give values and expectations of how to be so it's important to explain that it's not necessarily like that'.....

'I work with engagement and transition. I had a student start today from a managed move. I meet them, give them a tour of the school and assess the risk. I find out why they were excluded from school and understand what they have done. I will strategise with them so they don't end up in the same situation. I try and settle them in. If there are problems, Mo will give me a call. I will sit and chat with them and find out how their week is going and gradually they will open up.' **(Transitions Mentor)**

TACKLING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

We asked whether her age, ethnicity and experience of being a former pupil at the school was helpful in her role:

'It makes me more relatable. Generally the students are open to me as I grew up in this area and went to this school.' **(Transitions Mentor)**

Another aspect of her work is supporting students in the Referral Centre:

'I will follow up with students I know and the Centre Manager will give me an update. Some students like the Referral Centre because they prefer it to being in lessons.'

The school accommodates excluded pupils from other schools as 'managed moves' and the Transitions Mentor described her role with these students:

'We have had quite a few managed moves from other schools – about ten. We take on pupils we think we can work with. We will discuss whether we feel we can do something with them. In terms of managed moves, we don't have a formal process but are developing this i.e. targets for students and families and collection of information and data. Often we find out there is a SEND need.'

'A couple of weeks ago we received a Year 9 pupil from another school outside of this LA. We have received pages of information including Educational Psychologist's (EP) reports which is helpful to us. We rarely receive good practice of this sort.' **(Transitions Mentor)**

As Transitions Mentor she also has a role in transitions between Key Stages 2 and 3 and visits local feeder primary schools to meet with pupils and liaises with learning mentors to discuss individual needs of pupils who are transferring to Dunraven. When asked what challenges she anticipates in the future, she replied:

'Paperwork from other schools and no EP reports; also problems knowing what is going on outside of school. So far though all the transitions have gone well.'

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, Dunraven's achievements did not happen by chance, but by highly reflective, carefully planned and implemented strategies which serve them well in meeting the many challenges which can obstruct the path to success. Specific reasons for the school's success in not excluding pupils are:

- Strong values and high expectations that are applied consistently and communicated effectively
- A focus on building sound relationships with students and families
- Highly inclusive practice: having complete regard for the educational progress, personal development and well-being of every student
- Constant reflection and identifying ways of improving
- Outstanding well-distributed leadership
- Encouragement and support for each student
- Outstanding teaching and rich opportunities for learning.
- A very high degree of internal consistency

Chapter 3: Summary and Conclusions

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research has been to identify what works in tackling pupil exclusion by highlighting successful inclusive practice in four inner city schools. These schools have bucked the national trend by rarely, if ever, excluding pupils. Education policy makers, teachers, school leaders, parents and communities have expressed alarm about the growing numbers of exclusions and off-rolling in schools in England. The Department for Education data shows that 7,905 pupils were permanently excluded from state funded primary, secondary and special schools in England. A major concern is the disproportionate number of Caribbean heritage pupils (boys in particular) that have been excluded.

As detailed previously, this research combined focus groups and more detailed case study research. Case study interview and focus groups were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including headteachers, teachers, school staff, pupils, governors, parents and SENCOs. Case study schools were selected on the basis of positive OFSTED inspections, good KS2/GCSE results, above average proportion of pupils with SEN, BAME, FSM and critically, low or no school exclusions over the last five years. A structured questionnaire was used to gather evidence on what can be done to tackle school exclusions, as well as classroom observations.

The key findings of the research identify some significant themes which were evident in each of the case study schools which made them successful in preventing the exclusion of pupils. These were almost universal and included a powerful ethos and strong core values, clear routines, consistently administered, a culture of high expectations and a focus on building excellent, supportive relationships where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive.

The research identified specific successful practices which were common to the case study schools that are explored in greater detail below.

3.2 SUCCESS FACTORS TO TACKLE SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

A STRONG LEADERSHIP TEAM

The outstanding leaders of the case study schools adopt many of the strategies described in literature on leadership as ‘inspirational’ or ‘transformational’ leadership and, by these methods unite staff, pupils, parents and the community in their vision for the school.

During our visits to the case study schools, leaders demonstrated an acute awareness of the challenging circumstances many pupils experience and they have endeavoured to create safe and secure environments, where pupils are regarded as assets, and are shown respect. Pupils have at least one named member of staff that they can go to when they are experiencing difficulties that might get out of hand and lead to more serious consequences. Tight planning and communication systems have been established to ensure that there is consistency in approach – thus minimising confusion or misunderstanding.

As leaders of Teaching Schools, they actively participate in professional learning and development which research indicates has the largest impact on student outcomes: an effect size twice that of the next most important contributory factor - planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. Teachers' professional learning is a feature of these schools' investments with a significant proportion of the budget in one school spent on CPD. Post-graduate qualifications are pursued by teachers and they take a research-based approach to developing practice.

As large schools, leadership structures are clear with lines of accountability well-defined. They are able to capitalise on the economies of scale that their size provides; not only in the quality of education provided but also on staff development opportunities. As a result of this, staff recruitment and retention is not an issue for these schools, as they not only have opportunities to 'grow their own teachers', but staff are reluctant to leave because of the professional development opportunities available.

We asked one school leader about the training teachers have received to enable them to deal with pupils' social and emotional needs, which if left unaddressed, could lead to exclusion:

'As a headteacher you need to look out for staff who share your values when you are employing new staff. I have always had a passion for pastoral support. We have a sense of wanting to make a difference to that child... that child is just having difficulty in accessing life. Staff have been trained in attachment, emotion coaching and values-based learning to support children's needs. We currently have our DHT and LL being accredited as National Leaders for SEMH.'

Another case study school has been designated as a "Trauma Informed School" and staff have been trained to recognise symptoms of childhood trauma, for example as a result of challenging home environments, knife crime, gangs etc., within their students' neighbourhood.

School leaders are passionate about every child's sense of 'being known' and of being valued as a member of the 'school family'.

SHARED VISION, ETHOS AND VALUES

Many students are struggling with social and emotional tensions, owing to the challenging circumstances of their lives. The areas in which they live are subject to some of the urban ills that often characterise poorer communities. Therefore, the development of a clear vision of where the school is going has been central to the transformational approach adopted by the leadership in these schools – that is, shared vision rather than supervision, which provides for the coordination of individual efforts.

These schools have a 'no excuses' culture, and an aim that every single child will succeed and staff embody this ethos through their determination, resilience and perseverance. At the heart of this is a rigorous and fully comprehensive inclusion system. In the belief that there are no barriers to learning that cannot be overcome, leaders identify any potential obstacles and remove them through supporting children and their families both in and out of school. Enriched by the diversity of its staff and pupils, each school has built a culture in which individuals at all levels enjoy a degree of autonomy in relation to their roles, and are bringing their own knowledge, skills and creativity to bear in resolving problems and pursuing opportunities.

The case study schools underline the importance of vision building and communication as a basis for the empowerment and as a stimulus for participation at all levels. Each school stressed the importance of relationship building – the mutual trust which is needed for genuine empowerment to occur hinges on the quality of relationships that exist between staff and pupils – and also shows how trust builds when relationships are right. Pupils are encouraged to think about personal and social values, to become aware of and involved in the life and concerns of their local community and wider society and so develop their capacity to be active and effective future citizens.

EFFECTIVE INCLUSION STRATEGY AND PRACTICE

As fully inclusive schools, staff are wholly committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. They are also committed to overcoming barriers to learning and meeting any special educational need to ensure that all pupils make good progress. They recognise that negative behaviour is often a consequence of social, emotional, mental health issues or trauma, which pupils find difficult to communicate. Considerable investment is made in pastoral support, with many skilled non-teaching support staff, with their ability to personalise learning, to address the issue of exclusion. Many problems of extreme behaviour arise because of students' difficulty in accessing the

curriculum which, in turn, can be linked to inadequate literacy and lack of success. Schools have responded with a focus on relationships, providing early interventions, restorative justice and support for learning.

Dunraven's pioneering Inclusion Department (which has 50 staff members) aims to raise students' motivation, commitment to learning and engagement in education. One of the two Lead Practitioners explained the various teams that are part of the Inclusion department:

'My role is lead practitioner for Student Welfare and Engagement. We have brought everything together under the 'Inclusion' banner. The Base, the Referral Centre, Early Intervention Team (learning mentors) and Restorative approaches, EAL, attendance, and Outreach Worker. The Referral Centre was initially a punitive centre. It now comes under inclusion. Many of the pupils going in were known to our team. We put in a learning mentor in the Referral Centre to join up communication. We looked at changing from a punitive approach to looking at the needs and concerns that may have contributed to students' behaviour. The main aim of this was that we reduce exclusion and that we meet the social and emotional needs of our pupils and look at the underlying issue of the behaviour. As a department we work with five main principles: collaborative, learning, asset-based, solution focused, sustainable (CLASS). We have developed a reflective approach. At the end of every half term the Student Engagement Team, gets feedback from families as well as students. Their feedback feeds into our practices.

We have already begun to identify pupils where we have got it wrong, e.g. students whose ASD needs were only diagnosed in Year 11.

We will look at measures needed to be put in place to ensure it doesn't happen again.' **(Lead Practitioner, Student Welfare and Engagement)**

Kingswood Primary school, which is part of a large federation of schools is another example of how inclusion is at the fore and the Head of Inclusion leads a very large team which includes a deputy head, two SENCOs, two family service officers, 2.5 SEN practitioners, HLTAs trained to support children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties and a HLTA trained in EAL. The federation employs a Speech and Language Therapist and 4 Creative Art Therapists. We were reminded by the Head that:

'Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do, ensuring that pupils feel they are included academically and socially'.

Early intervention is key to the school's approach in preventing the exclusion of pupils. The Head of Inclusion explained how:

'We are focused on trying to be preventative from the start. Our behaviour policy states that if there are three significant incidents within half a term, the senior leadership team (SLT) arranges a meeting with parents so that the behaviours are addressed in partnership together with the parents before the behaviours escalate. For every significant incident, class teachers will try to speak to parents face to face or will call the parent. When there are repeated incidents, the SLT, in partnership with the class teacher, will meet with the parents to discuss supportive strategies, e.g. the parent to collect the child at least once a week from school to ensure effective home-school communication; specific support with an 'emotionally available adult'; opportunities for positive check-ins with a member of SLT etc. Where parents express that the triggers might be coming from events outside school, we may set up parent/child support.'

Outstanding pastoral care and support for pupils is a notable feature of Norwood Secondary school's inclusive approach. A deputy head emphasised the importance of being child-centred:

'We try to work within the context of the child. We now have a school-based social worker and part of the reason for having this is because the LA had data which showed that we have made the most referrals to multi-agencies in Lambeth. We try to piece together the fragmented world of students whilst at the same time we are facing cuts to our budget. It is always important for us to build that picture, when a child comes to us from primary school; we meet with families before they come in. They are interviewed by senior managers and staff make contact with primary schools before they come to get further information. We insist on staff reading primary school files, often finding gaps in terms of information.'
(Deputy Head C)

Only on rare occasions would a permanent exclusion take place and then it is often based on banned substances, offensive weapons or banned materials:

'We are open with parents. If a child is excluded their life chances have been cut by ¾. So these are the options which are available. At that stage the parents would have been in many meetings they would have seen behaviour logs, been involved with us for years. If we say permanent exclusion is likely, this is what you can do as a parent. What you need to do and explain their rights legally.' **(Head of Year 11)**

The Head of Year 11 explained the lengths the school goes to prevent permanent exclusion taking place:

'Where there is abusive behaviour towards staff, students may be sent to a partnership school. Greenhouse works in two ways: we internally exclude them here for one or two days. If it's serious enough they are sent to a partnership school for 2/3 days. Other schools will send kids to us. Over time there are different levels, where we try to prevent exclusions. We will see parents and put in place three or four week plans to turn the behaviour around. Governors arrange a meeting with parents and governors put them on a pathway for six weeks with a signed agreement and targets set. They then meet with governors again to see if the behaviour has improved. If it hasn't then we begin to think about exclusion or going to another school.' **(Head of Year 11)**

Collaboration and supportive relationships between staff at Highlands Primary enable the needs of pupils to be met. The head describes how the staff work in teams to support each other and the children:

'No teacher works in isolation, we work in teams. We have such a level of expertise in the school. Every member of staff is trained as a coach. There is a whole school philosophy. We recognise that every person has emotional needs but it's a question of how they have learned to regulate. If they (children) have a lack of attachment between 0-3 years, then we have to step in and provide that. If we spent more money on children aged 0-5 years then we wouldn't have so many children in prison later! Inclusion is about recognising that this child has needs when they are displaying anger. They have rights too.' **(Head)**

INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

An exciting and highly stimulating curriculum is the aim of all the case study schools. These schools have developed innovative and engaging learning opportunities which convince pupils that learning can be fun and memorable. Above all it has relevance to the lives of pupils. Enriched by opportunities to be creative, gain confidence and develop their self-esteem, pupils enjoy visits to museums, galleries, theatres and visits from well-known artists and performing companies. In addition, equal emphasis is placed on all subjects across the curriculum ensuring students leave with the foundations to succeed in all areas. In the case study primary schools, meaningful links are made between subjects so that children develop a broad and coherent understanding of a topic. The schools promote the highest quality, cross-curricular learning as a vehicle for pupils making accelerated progress.

The need to develop a curriculum that reflects the reality of pupils' lives was stressed by the deputy head of one primary school, who said:

'One of the problems is it tends to be within a Eurocentric lens. When we were discussing the war, children opened up and talked about their own families' involvement in the war; they have an emotional response to this. It means something to them as it reflects their own lives. It creates greater empathy and unity when children can see how the world truly came together.' (Deputy Head)

This approach allows the flexibility to respond to pupils' interests within a topic and to incorporate current events and local community projects that provide relevance and real-life contexts. Kingswood's Pupil Leadership Team worked with "We London" on a homelessness project. The school had a food bank and a sponsored sleep out in the playground. Pupils brought in their sleeping bags and spent an hour outside on a damp and wet day from 3:30-4:30pm. 200 pupils took part and over £1300 was raised for the charity 'Shelter'. They also organised a sponsored walk around Norwood Park for children in countries without water.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The case study school leaders have played a significant role in the successful transformation of their schools and in the recruitment and development of the most talented and gifted teachers.

As mentioned above, a focus on the continuing professional development of staff from initial teacher training through to undertaking post-graduate qualifications, has equipped them to become experts in their field. Understanding the challenges of raising standards in inner city schools, leaders are rigorous in the appointment of their teaching staff and keep an eye out for talented NQTs.

Ofsted inspectors have commented on the outstanding teaching observed in case study schools. For example, at Highlands, inspectors identified the commitment of staff to their own development, which has a direct link to their effectiveness in the classroom and to pupil outcomes:

'Teachers are fully committed to providing pupils with the best education, and they have high expectations of pupils. Pupils' positive values and attitudes to learning ensure that they are eager to do their best and are prepared to challenge themselves. Because teaching is supportive and builds resilience, pupils feel safe to make contributions and their peers value this.' (Ofsted March 2019)

Ofsted inspectors summed up the outstanding teaching and learning at Dunraven as follows:

'School leaders have placed a strong emphasis on raising the quality of teaching in all areas of the school and are passionate about involving the pupils in their learning. This is one of the main reasons why the quality of teaching has improved and is now outstanding

Teachers and supporting adults unanimously encourage, support and express their very high expectations for every pupil, and the pupils equally expect the very best of themselves. Excellent support for pupils who have special educational needs is provided in class and within the resource base. This high quality support is mirrored for those who speak English as an additional language, where needed. They learn in line with their peers and make excellent gains.' (Ofsted 2014)

Teachers are reluctant to leave Dunraven because teaching is enjoyable, the ethos is positive and interesting things happen and there are constant opportunities for professional development. This view is stressed by the Year 10 Tutor:

'Key to success is relationships and consistency. It is clear. You buy-in to the culture of the school. The amount of teachers who have left this school but come back. If you go into the staffroom it is a family culture, you support each other. Teachers will always check whether they are in need of support...'

She continues... 'It's amazing how students will stick up for staff as well. Parents telephone me at any time. They can see how much time I invest in their children. They know who cares about their children'

The Director of Learning Year 10 has herself been a product of 'in-house' training and development having started her career as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), then completing her ITT at Dunraven and working her way up to her current role, in her third year as Director of Learning.

The Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) is also a Year 10 Tutor and was an NQT at Dunraven, moving on to become Head of PE and then an SLE, working with other primary and secondary schools on teaching and learning, as a coach.

Teachers are constantly trying to make lessons exciting and relevant to their pupils at all stages of their development, drawing on a wide range of resources and materials to support learning.

DIVERSE WORKFORCE

The evidence from the data suggests that in England, 86% of teachers, 91% of the leadership, 87% of teaching assistants and all school staff are White British. This national data shows a worrying picture in its lack of diversity and raises a question about the prospects of BAME teachers attaining senior leadership roles. It also limits an understanding of diversity by pupils by hindering their aspirations. There is a great diversity in the workforce in the case study school in terms of the range of roles, skills and ethnicity. Highlands is a model in this regard with its very diverse workforce and has recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflect the languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and faiths of the pupils in the school. The school also prides itself on recruiting from the local community and this has sent a strong message to the community that they are valued and has helped the school to become a central point of the wider community and has built trust. Teaching assistants are greatly valued in the school. They play a key role in communicating with parents and supporting pupils.

'In our teaching group we have a wide range of teachers from around the world but the furthest they live is Dalston; when we have local people working in our schools that is aspirational for our children to see.' **(Head)**

'There are nearly fifty languages spoken in our school. We as a team speak a range of languages. We can speak with parents in their home language. I can speak Punjabi.' **(Head)**

'Parents value that there is someone on the staff who can speak their languages, they feel they can share their concerns with us.' **(Deputy Head)**

Students who come to Highlands on a placement from University of East London are chosen for their particular interest in Inclusion and their understanding of the local community.

Likewise, at Kingswood, the ethos that has developed is based on a commitment to a vision of the school that serves its pupil community in the context of diversity. The school prides itself on the diversity of the workforce as the headteacher explained:

'We pride ourselves that we have representation of the local community on our staff team. One of our teachers was an ex-Kingswood pupil. We have TAs who have been to Kingswood or live in the area. With PGCE students and those who have completed Schools Direct who apply to us externally, we look at their background to see if they could be of benefit to our school. Obviously we wouldn't exclude any staff who are not. Lots of our staff who applied have links to the community and have decided this is a school they want to be a part of. They want to work in a diverse community.'

Similarly, the case study secondary schools have ensured that staff at all levels reflect the ethnic composition of the local community, providing excellent role models for the future aspirations of students.

EXCELLENT CARE AND GUIDANCE OF PUPILS

All the case study schools provide exceptional care and guidance for pupils and the following is just one example of Highfield School's efforts to meet the individual and often complex needs of children when they enter school:

'We also look at the child as an individual even if a child has a diagnosis of ADHD we still look at the child as an individual. A child who came in with challenging behaviour, we did a staggered entry approach. I did the interview with the parents and I could see he had needs but as soon as he started he wanted to leave and run around. We worked closely with the family and we did home visits. The relationship with parents is very important. He was in Year 1 and stayed for a couple of years and then he moved to another school.' (SENCo)

Home visits are made to every new entrant to the school and sometimes they reveal the desperate circumstances families are in, as the deputy head recalls in the case of a child who joined the school in Year 3:

'The child had mental health issues and a symptom was that she was pulling her hair out, with large sections of her hair missing. We went to her home and she was living in difficult, overcrowded conditions. The child had also had physical health issues and we supported the family by writing a letter to her GP. Families need help. We fight for every child, CAMHS, Social Services at every level.' (Deputy Head)

Key Stage 1 pupils who need additional emotional/behavioural support have access to a Nurture Group. A Teaching Assistant explained how a small group of children spend their morning sessions there:

'In the Nurture Group they all have targets which are hung up and we quite often refer to them. They come to us in the mornings after registration. We have breakfast together and chat. Most of the children have stayed for four terms. These are children who probably don't have friends and it helps their social skills and develops confidence which is extremely low. We do a lot of talking which is led by them.' (TA)

In a school where fifty languages are spoken, the Head gave an example of how the school responded to the needs of a child from Russia who joined the school in Year 4:

'His first week in school we gave him a Russian book to read and I asked how he was getting on. He looked at me angrily as if I was interrupting him so I said, "OK I'll see you next week". He would do things like coming down the stairs backwards. I asked him why and he said "because there's no sign that says I can't". I pointed out the rights of other children to be safe and that he might hurt someone else. His mother wrote me a letter thanking me for what the school had done for her child. Apparently in Russia they said he was unteachable. He was definitely a child who had done things that would have led to an exclusion in some schools.' **(Head)**

TARGETED INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

The evidence suggests that carefully targeted support has a significant impact in preventing the exclusion of pupils. The case study schools' intervention and targeted support strategies are effective because they are driven by pupils' academic, emotional and social needs.

An excellent range of interventions to break down barriers for children with SEND and support them to be able to access the curriculum within their classroom are available at Kingswood school. These might include differentiation within the lesson or through specific interventions to help them develop skills that they can then generalise back to the classroom. Where interventions take place outside the classroom, they are carefully tracked to ensure that they do impact on a child's access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Some of the interventions put in place to prevent exclusion of some of the most vulnerable pupils include a project entitled "Future Men" which is targeted at Year 6 boys and deals with conflict resolution and 1:1 mentoring. A "Head First" small group session which focuses on social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) relationships and anxiety encourage pupils to self-regulate their behaviour. Another excellent intervention is Creative Arts Therapy as the deputy head illustrated:

'We also have creative arts therapy which we can refer our children to; the most vulnerable pupils attend a programme of up to twenty weeks, with a minimum of fourteen children involved in music, art and drama therapy over the year. We encourage parents to meet with the Creative Arts Therapists or with any other type of support.' **(Deputy Head)**

'We have no stigma attached to any type of therapy and we explain it to parents and children or we wouldn't get the engagement of parents.'
(Deputy Head)

Where a child with complex SEND requires an individualised curriculum, the SENCO and the class teachers will work together in partnership with specialist agencies to ensure that this is appropriately tailored whilst remaining ambitious and broad. This will be linked to outcomes as identified in the child's EHCP with a clear focus on supporting the child through the school into adulthood.

Clear expectations are matched by highly-structured interventions and sanctions for any behaviour that falls below the school's expectations at Dunraven. High standards abound in all areas because senior and middle leaders model the very best practice and are excellent communicators, adept at sharing information with each other about pupils' academic and personal progress. Without exception, all are committed to involving pupils in their own learning.

'We had to consider the impact of students not learning so you are moving them from a situation where they are not able to work well and making it difficult for teachers to teach and others to learn, by putting them in a parallel lesson. If they misbehave in that class then they are removed immediately. We then consider the Referral Centre. We put them in Referral only after Saturday 8.30 am detention hasn't worked.' **(Behaviour Lead)**

The Head of Secondary described the Referral Centre as having a 'more therapeutic' approach:

'It is smaller than most with a ceiling of eight students at any one time with a learning mentor who will talk to them about the build-up of matters, or specific incidents.'

The importance of consistency in terms of staffing and procedures in the Referral Centre were stressed:

'You have to get it right there with consistent staffing or it could go wrong - a rota and changes of staff would be very difficult'.... 'Our challenge about the Referral Centre is how do you replicate the person that makes it work?'
(Head of Secondary School)

Consistency of procedures and approach were also mentioned by the Referral Centre Manager. His commitment to the pupils in ensuring that they do not miss out on their learning while they are in the Centre is reflected in his account below of the clear lines of communication and co-operation necessary between members of staff:

'Before students are referred, say the day before, I email teachers to ask them for work for the student. I get in at 7.30am just in case a student is referred that day and I ask teachers for lesson plans. I have schemes of work anyway so I know what they are working at and if necessary I prepare the work myself. They have to work hard and have five topics to complete with impeccable behaviour that day. They know I am here to help. We have some interesting discussions when they have finished their work. They might also get a 20 minute mentoring session with the learning mentor. At the end of the day I send off an e-report to their teachers, the leadership team and Head of Year, so everyone is in the loop.' (Referral Centre Manager)

The reason why Norwood has been so successful in preventing the exclusion of pupils is that its staff show an exceptional understanding and sensitivity to the contexts in which many pupils are living. For this reason, they try everything possible to support pupils and their families by providing a very broad package of interventions to address diverse needs and ensure that any social, emotional or other barriers to learning are alleviated.

They track the progress of pupils carefully and analyse the often complex reasons behind any underachievement or challenging behaviour before identifying the appropriate intervention. Close partnership with parents and the community has been a vital feature of their success. Another characteristic of Norwood is a willingness to go the extra mile in providing opportunities for all to succeed. They never give up on individual students as Ofsted noted in 2018:

'Central to your school's work is the determination to ensure that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged background, succeed academically.'

Norwood School's joined-up approach to behaviour management and pastoral care has been a significant factor in preventing the exclusion of pupils with the creation of important senior leadership roles which ensure that these priorities are delivered: a deputy head with responsibility for behaviour and transition and a manager of the 'Greenhouse' (an internal unit for pupils who have been excluded from other schools in the partnership for 1 or 2 days).

CLOSE LINKS WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

Overcoming the emotional and social barriers that not only pupils but parents sometimes experience is one of the reasons why the case study schools employ various staff members to work with parents. They may have different names, for example, Family Service Officers or Learning Mentors, but they fulfil a very important function in their support for parents and pupils. Norwood School's Greenhouse Manager, has, in addition to her pastoral and various other roles, developed excellent relationships with parents who turn to her for advice.

'The majority of parents turn to us because of all our experience of working with their children. The parents in the end respect us because they can see we are working for the betterment of their child. They come in and seek our advice. Pupils will also talk about us at school.' **(Greenhouse Manager)**

'I have children who were sent back home to boarding schools in West Africa and the Caribbean (because their parents were worried they might be drawn into County lines) and so they were sent away for their own safety) and a parent wanted advice from me about how his son could come back to do GCSEs. We have that dialogue.' **(Greenhouse Manager)**

Norwood staff have a clear understanding of the context in which pupils are living and they go the extra mile to provide a safe place for pupils not only in school but in making them aware of the dangers of loitering in the local area:

'We make our expectations clear, especially with regard to pupils going home straight from school and not loitering. Perhaps one of the things we need to explore is that some children don't want to go home.' **(Deputy Headteacher A)**

The school works closely with local shopkeepers to make them aware of this and there has been a forum with shopkeepers, parents and children and the message seems to be getting through that children should not be loitering on the streets for their own safety.

'Crown Point is a hot spot for us, where there are a lot of fast food joints. We put staff on duty in those areas; it is now easier as children have got the message. We don't want children hanging around on the streets and therefore potentially getting into bother.' **(Deputy Headteacher B)**

While the school has very strong links with the community, it also works hard to create a safe, harmonious school environment that leaves the community's problems and tensions outside. The culture and norms inside the school can often be very different to those outside.

At Highlands Teaching assistants and the learning mentor also have excellent relationships with parents, living in the local community and having sent their own children to the school, they are able to relate well, especially when discussing sensitive issues concerning a child.

The Head mentions an Italian speaking Bengali father who doesn't speak English: "*all he wants to do is hold my hand for a few minutes*". This is the school's form of communication to acknowledge presence and participation, and of enabling parents to feel included and valued.

Finally, the case study schools' success in preventing the exclusion of pupils, did not happen by chance, but by highly reflective, carefully planned and implemented strategies which serve them well in meeting the many challenges which can obstruct the path to success.

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GLOSSARY – A GUIDE TO ACRONYMS

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
BAME	Black Asian and Minority Ethnic
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
DfE	Department for Education
EAL	English as an Additional language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FSM	Free school meals
FSP	Foundation Stage Profile
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INSET	In Service Educational Training
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
KS3	Key Stage 3
KS4	Key Stage 4
LA	Local Authority
LM	Learning Mentors
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PP	Pupil Premium
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENCOs	Special Educational Needs Coordinators
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SMT	Senior Management Team
TA	Teaching Assistant

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