

Institute for Public Policy Research



# **MAKING THE DIFFERENCE**

**BREAKING THE LINK BETWEEN  
SCHOOL EXCLUSION AND  
SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

**Kiran Gill, with  
Harry Quilter-Pinner  
and Danny Swift**

October 2017

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**Kiran Gill** began her career in inner-city London, as a teacher and leader in schools serving the most deprived postcodes in the country. After five years on the frontline, Kiran left to work in education policy, searching for solutions to the rising number of vulnerable children who fall through the gaps. Kiran has been developing the idea for The Difference, alongside a network of supporters, since Summer 2016.

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# PREFACE

## THE BEST IN EDUCATION, FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

*Edward Timpson, Former Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families, 2012-17*

Growing up in a family who fostered taught me many things about the children we cared for. I saw first-hand that the educational underperformance of children who are vulnerable – those involved with the care system, poorer pupils and those with special needs – is a complex and enduring challenge. Yet this is also where stakes are highest, and where successful innovations can truly change lives.

For education to transform the life chances of vulnerable children, new solutions must be evidence-informed, ambitious and willing to evolve beyond a siloed system of public service delivery.

That is why I welcome this report, which calls for new expertise in the teaching workforce. The programme it outlines, *The Difference*, seeks to raise the status of and evidence-base for teaching the most vulnerable learners, and to improve capacity for collaboration between schools and other agencies so troubled young people get the right support at the right time.

When in government, I ensured the targeting of funding at vulnerable children, and helped prioritise their admission to the best schools. *The Difference* sets out how the best in teaching practice can be directed at the children who need it most.

# KEY TERMS

TERM	EXPLANATION
<b>AP</b>	Alternative provision is a catch-all term which describes all educational provision outside of mainstream and special needs schools. It includes state maintained PRUs as well as independent and non-registered schools.
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, run by the NHS.
<b>Child in need</b>	Child interacting with social care services who does not meet the threshold for being 'looked-after' but who is nonetheless receiving intervention from social care services.
<b>Child protection plan</b>	A plan drawn up by social care services to protect a child who they feel is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing professional development for teachers.
<b>EHCP</b>	Education, Health and Care Plan. details extra support required for a child with formally diagnosed special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). These replaced statements of special educational needs in 2015.
<b>FSM</b>	Free school meals eligibility is a proxy for poverty in the UK: schools with higher proportions of FSM-eligibility serve more disadvantaged communities.
<b>LA</b>	The Local Authority.
<b>LAC</b>	A looked after child (also 'child in care') is a child who is living with foster parents; at home under social services supervision; or in residential homes or units – formally under the care of the local authority.
<b>Ofsted</b>	The government watchdog responsible for inspecting schools and other educational institutions. Ofsted inspects and rates schools' effectiveness as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.
<b>PRU</b>	Pupil Referral Unit. A type of alternative provision, maintained by the local authority.
<b>Pupil Premium</b>	A fixed quantity of extra funding paid every year to schools for each disadvantaged pupil they teach.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	The act and responsibility of protecting children from abuse and neglect. Every school has a Safeguarding Officer, who works with teachers and external services to ensure the safety of all pupils.
<b>SEMH</b>	Social, emotional and mental health needs; a type of SEND.
<b>SENCO</b>	Special educational needs coordinator. Every school has a designated SENCO, who is responsible for the support and provision for all students with special educational needs and disability (SEND).
<b>SEND</b>	Special educational needs and disabilities – this term refers to pupils who have had their needs formally recognised by the school.
<b>Unqualified</b>	Refers to teachers who do not have Qualified Teacher Status.

# SUMMARY

## 60-SECOND SUMMARY

Nowhere is Britain's social mobility failure more obvious than in the example of school exclusion in England. Excluded children are the most vulnerable: twice as likely to be in the care of the state, four times more likely to have grown up in poverty, seven times more likely to have a special educational need and 10 times more likely to suffer recognised mental health problems. Yet our education system is profoundly ill-equipped to break a cycle of disadvantage for these young people.

This problem is much bigger than previously recognised. As mental ill health in young people rises, and more children are subject to interaction with social care services each year, more vulnerable children spill into the alternative provision (AP) sector. Too often this path leads them straight from school exclusion to social exclusion. Excluded young people are more likely to be unemployed, develop severe mental health problems and go to prison.

The cost to society of failing excluded young people is staggering. It is an economic, as well as social imperative that action is taken to upskill the teaching workforce, improve outcomes for multiply disadvantaged pupils and to stem the tide of exclusions. IPPR is advocating a new programme – The Difference – to develop expertise in the teaching profession, connect exceptional teachers to schools for excluded children, and create a community of leaders to drive positive and lasting change throughout England's education system.

IPPR finds significant demand for such a programme. More than one in three teachers is interested in the proposed training and career development offered by The Difference. Networks of alternative provision schools have welcomed the programme and several of England's biggest mainstream multi-academy trusts have already expressed interest in recruiting specialist senior leaders through this pathway.

## KEY FINDINGS

**This report reveals the cost to the state of failing our most vulnerable children at school.**

- Every cohort of permanently excluded pupils will go on to cost the state an extra £2.1 billion in education, health, benefits and criminal justice costs. Yet more pupils are being excluded, year on year.

**New analysis reveals that official data is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the full extent of exclusion.**

- 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. We reveal that still more pupils are not captured in any government data, yet are functionally excluded from mainstream school.

**We identify key factors in rising exclusion rates.**

- There are increasing numbers of children with complex needs – where mental ill health, unstable or unsafe family environments and learning needs combine. Yet a lack of workforce development in schools compounds the challenge students face. Half of school leaders say their teachers cannot

recognise mental ill health, and three in four say they cannot refer effectively to external services.

**As more pupils are excluded close to their exams, the capacity of the staff who work with excluded students is diminishing.**

- New data analysis shows once a child is excluded, they are twice as likely to be taught by an unqualified teacher and twice as likely to have a supply teacher. Meanwhile, a leadership recruitment crisis in schools for excluded pupils has seen leader vacancies double between 2011 and 2016.

**Poor staffing can lead to dangerous environments in schools for excluded pupils, particularly in 'cold spot' regions.**

- A child excluded from school in the North East is around eight times more likely to attend an alternative provision rated 'Inadequate' by Ofsted. In some local authorities with the highest levels of exclusion, 100 per cent of pupils are in settings graded 'Inadequate'.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

A new programme should be established, which develops expertise in the profession, connects exceptional teachers to schools for excluded children, and creates a community of leaders to drive increasing inclusion throughout our education system. Leaders graduating from this new programme – The Difference – would be the catalyst for change throughout the school system, working to break the link between school exclusion and social exclusion.

**Research set out in this report points to four priorities for workforce development:**

- improving preventative support for young people with complex needs in mainstream schools
- improving the commissioning and oversight of alternative provision (AP) for excluded pupils
- increasing and then maintaining the supply of exceptional teachers and leaders into AP
- developing an understanding of 'what works' in improving trajectories for excluded young people.

**IPPR is calling for a new programme to develop specialist school leadership. Led by a dedicated charity named The Difference, this programme would be designed to address these problems by:**

- **recruiting exceptional early career teachers** with leadership experience
- **placing them in leadership positions in an AP school**, and upskilling them through a two-year bespoke programme of on-the-job training accredited at Master's level
- **developing a route back to mainstream leadership**, through a careers programme which matches alumni with senior leadership vacancies leading inclusion
- **pioneering evidence-led practice** by using its own programme and partnership with existing research organisations to develop and disseminate a better understanding of 'what works' to support vulnerable and disengaged young people.

# INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the outcry against Britain's low social mobility has become louder and louder. Half of Britons believe it is becoming harder for people from less advantaged backgrounds to move up in society, with younger people the most disillusioned (SMC 2017). They are not wrong: Britain ranks as one of the worst among developed nations for both intergenerational and intragenerational social mobility (OECD 2017). Nothing illustrates this social mobility failure more starkly than school exclusion in England.

Education should be the means to break the link between demographics and destiny. Yet official figures suggest that every day, 35 of the most disadvantaged children – equivalent to a full classroom of pupils – are permanently excluded from school, with disastrous personal and societal consequences. In fact, our research reveals that official figures significantly underestimate the actual number of children in this position.

This report examines the cost of school exclusion, its causes and, importantly, the role that workforce development can play in addressing this growing national problem. New research into the causes of exclusion suggests that there are increasing numbers of children with complex and acute needs. These young people face challenges in accessing specialist services beyond their school, and the environments they learn in may be exacerbating their mental ill health. Often these pupils are excluded late in their school career, when much damage to their learning has already been done. Once they are excluded, often close to their exams, the teachers they work with are increasingly likely to be unqualified and only temporary.

Our research identifies urgent priorities for workforce development. Currently only 1 per cent of excluded pupils get the five good GCSEs they need to access the workforce. The alternative provision (AP) workforce requires the teaching and learning expertise more commonly found in mainstream schools. Furthermore, in order to improve universal support of mental health, and early intervention, the mainstream workforce would benefit from the expertise more commonly found in AP schools.

Meanwhile, the entire profession needs a more determined focus on better research, greater innovation and more substantial evidence to discover what really works in educating those most vulnerable pupils and radically improving their trajectories.

In response, a new programme should be established, committed to delivering the best in education to the most vulnerable children. Run by a dedicated education charity, this programme would develop new expertise in the teaching profession, connect exceptional teachers to schools for excluded children, and create a community of leaders to drive change in England's schools. Leaders graduating from this new programme – The Difference – would be a catalyst for change throughout the education system, working to develop and spread best practice in breaking the link between school exclusion and social exclusion.

# 1. WHAT IS EXCLUSION AND HOW MANY CHILDREN DOES IT AFFECT?

## 1.1 WHAT IS EXCLUSION?

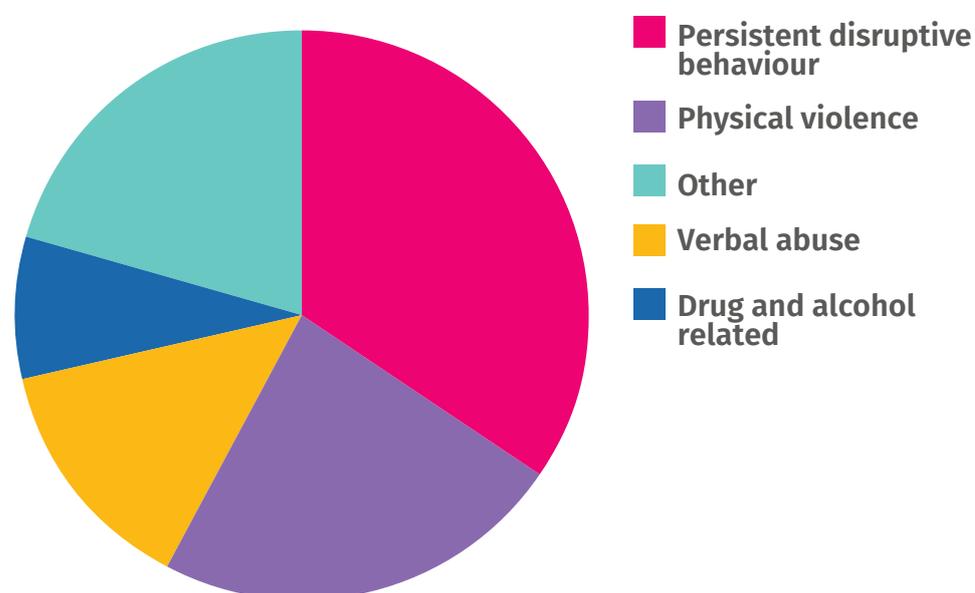
Exclusion in its broadest form is the removal of a child from their existing educational establishment due to their behaviour. Sometimes this exclusion can be *preventative*: an attempt to access therapeutic or specialist education for a student which will improve their behaviour. Sometimes this exclusion can be *punitive*: an attempt to punish a pupil to disincentivise repeated bad behaviour.

There are a range of reasons why a pupil might be excluded, including disrupting other students, being aggressive, or using drugs or alcohol (see figure 1.1).

**FIGURE 1.1**

**Persistent disruptive behaviour is the most common reason given for permanent exclusions in England**

*Reported reasons for permanent exclusions in England in 2015/16*



Source: Department for Education 2017 'Table 4 : Permanent and fixed period exclusions by reason for exclusion', *Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016*

Once the decision is made that a child needs to be educated somewhere other than their school, there are a number of options open to their headteacher and governing body. These can be divided into official and unofficial exclusions.

- *Official exclusions* are recorded with central or local government and include temporary fixed-period exclusions or permanent exclusions.
- *Unofficial exclusions* are those that are not recorded as exclusions in the national data. These include a managed move to another school; a move into some form of alternative provision offsite; or illegal exclusions.

**TABLE 1.1**

TYPES OF EXCLUSION		
TYPE OF EXCLUSION	DESCRIPTION	WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
<b>OFFICIAL EXCLUSION</b>		
<b>PERMANENT EXCLUSION</b>	The pupil must permanently leave the school. This can only be used as a 'last resort in response to a serious breach ... of the school's behaviour policy' and where the pupil is putting others at risk (DfE 2012).	The pupil usually becomes the responsibility of the local authority with education provided by a pupil referral unit (PRU) or another type of alternative provision (AP). This is supposed to be a temporary situation while the student waits to find a new place in a mainstream school or specialist provision. However, in practice permanently excluded pupils often remain in their PRU or other AP provider until they finish their GCSE exams.
<b>FIXED-PERIOD EXCLUSION</b>	The pupil's school attendance is temporarily suspended. This can occur on several occasions across the school year, for a maximum of 45 days within one year (DfE 2012).	A pupil can have a fixed period exclusion for five days with no alternative education arranged, but on the sixth day their school must find alternative education for them. This may be in a PRU or another type of AP.  Repeated fixed-period exclusions are often a precursor to permanent exclusion.
<b>UNOFFICIAL EXCLUSION</b>		
<b>MANAGED MOVE</b>	Instead of a permanent exclusion, headteachers mutually agree to move the pupil from one school roll to another.	The pupil is taken off the roll of their original schools, and becomes a pupil of the new school, which may be a mainstream school, or a PRU.
<b>OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION</b>	The school directs the pupil to be educated somewhere other than the school, full-time or part-time, if they believe it will 'improve his or her behaviour' or because, for 'illness or other reasons', they would 'not receive suitable education without such provision' (DfE 2013). <sup>1</sup>	The school will choose somewhere for the pupil to be educated offsite, in agreement with parents. This may be a PRU, independent school or unregistered provision. The school will remain legally responsible for the pupil's education and safety.
<b>ILLEGAL EXCLUSION</b>	The school encourages parents to take their child out of school. This is illegal.	The parent may sign paperwork to home educate their child, or they may enrol their child in another school, as though they have moved house or made an independent decision to change local school.

Source: Author's own analysis

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## What is alternative provision?

Alternative provision (AP) is a catch-all term which describes all educational provision outside of mainstream and special needs schools. Some of this provision is *state-maintained*, which means the government is responsible for this provision.<sup>1</sup> However, most children not in mainstream or special schools are in *non-maintained* provision, which is commissioned by maintained settings. For examples of the different types of provision, see Annex I.

### *State-maintained alternative provision*

- Pupil referral units (PRUs)
- AP academies (academised PRUs)<sup>2</sup>
- AP free schools (PRU alternatives)<sup>3</sup>

These default providers of education for permanently excluded pupils sometimes also offer places for pupils who have been fixed-period excluded or are being educated offsite by their mainstream school.

PRUs may commission offsite AP for their pupils, meaning that the student is registered at the PRU but receives full-time or part-time education in another provision (often a non-maintained provision).

### *Non-maintained alternative provision<sup>4</sup>*

- Independent schools
- Unregistered schools
- Illegal schools

Many independent schools provide alternative provision. However, if an alternative provider offers only part-time education, or if it educates five or fewer full-time students, then it need not register as an independent school.<sup>5</sup> In a recent survey of use of AP, Ofsted found 14 instances where schools ought to be registered but were not (Ofsted 2016b). This is illegal.

Local authorities may choose to place permanently excluded pupils in non-maintained provision if there are insufficient spaces or only poor-quality places in local PRUs. PRUs and mainstream schools may also choose to place pupils in non-maintained provision, as part of a fixed-period exclusion or as offsite AP (see table 1.1 for fuller explanations of these types of exclusion).

---

## 1.2 HOW MANY CHILDREN DOES EXCLUSION AFFECT?

Each school day 35 children are told to leave their school permanently. After a positive story in the last decade, exclusions are again on the rise (DfE 2017a). Permanent exclusions nearly halved between 2006/7 and 2012/13, but have risen

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1 Academies and free schools are technically categorised as ‘state-funded non-maintained’, as they are free from local authority control, as with other types of academy. However, national government remains meaningfully responsible for these schools, through regional schools commissioners, and so for the purpose of categorising AP schooling it makes sense to distinguish between these types of schools, and those which are not maintained by any part of the state.

2 See above

3 See above

4 These schools are sometimes categorised as ‘non-state-funded’; however, this description is misleading as the education of excluded pupils in these settings is paid for by the state. So for the purpose of categorising schooling for excluded pupils, we use governmental responsibility as the key distinction between types of AP.

5 Providing that none of these pupils is recognised as having a special educational need through an education, health and care (EHC) plan or is registered as a looked-after child (LAC).

year on year since then, representing a 40 per cent increase over the past three years. Last year 6,685 pupils were reported as permanently excluded (ibid).

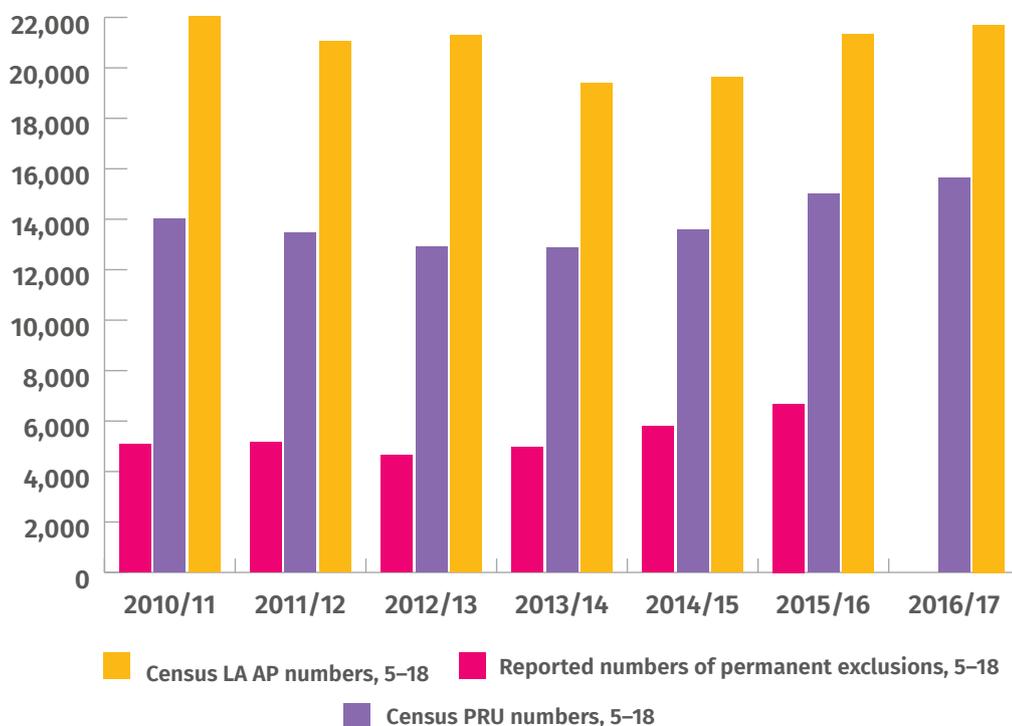
However, these figures significantly underestimate the scale of the problem. There are a number of ways in which a pupil can be functionally excluded from their school, aside from official exclusions (see table 1.1 above). Census data reveals that there are 15,669 pupils solely registered in England’s pupil referral units (PRUs), a further 10,152 dual registered in PRUs and mainstream schools (which is likely due to use of offsite alternative provision into a PRU) (DfE 2017c). Another 22,212 pupils are registered in alternative provision paid for by the local authority (likely to be non-maintained provision including one-to-one tutoring and hospital schools).

This total of 48,000 pupils is equivalent to one in every 200 pupils in the country being educated outside of mainstream education or in special schools at some point in the academic year. When compared to the official figure of 6,685 permanent exclusions, it is clear that official statistics grossly underestimate the scale of the challenge of exclusion (see figure 2.1). There are more than five times the numbers of pupils educated in schools for excluded pupils than the number officially reported as permanently excluded each year. A part of the education system which was initially intended to provide temporary schooling for a few students is in reality being asked to provide longer-term care and education of a much larger group of pupils.

**FIGURE 1.2**

**The number of pupils educated in schools for excluded pupils is five times higher than the number of officially permanently excluded pupils**

*Exclusions data vs alternative provision populations, 2013/14 to 2016/17*



Source: Department for Education (2017), *Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016*, and Department for Education (2017), *Schools, pupils and their characteristics*

Note: There is a lag in the publishing of reported exclusions, so this data is not yet available for 2016/17.

## How are exclusions hidden?

There are a number of ways in which children who are meaningfully excluded from their school on the grounds of behaviour are hidden from exclusions data.

**TABLE 1.2**

EFFECTIVE EXCLUSIONS HIDDEN FROM DATA		
	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF PUPILS
<b>MANAGED MOVES INTO PRUS</b>	If a pupil is put on a PRU's role as part of a managed move, this is not counted as a permanent exclusion. However, often this pupil will complete their education in the PRU: they have therefore functionally been permanently excluded.	IPPR calculates that 1,570 extra pupils sat their final exams in PRUs, though they were not reported as having been permanently excluded. This is equivalent to 23 per cent of last year's entire reported permanent exclusions (IPPR 2017).
<b>OFFSITE AP</b>	If schools and PRUs use offsite AP, this is not counted as an official exclusion. For almost a quarter of schools (23 per cent) offsite AP is used for full-time education of pupils for an entire academic year or longer (Smith et al 2017). Functionally, these pupils have been excluded from their schools and are at school in another institution.	A recent survey found use of offsite AP is very widespread: 4 in 5 secondary schools use it (Smith et al 2017). However, as schools are not obliged to report pupils in offsite AP, we have no way of knowing exactly how many pupils are excluded in this way.  If we assume each secondary school only uses offsite AP for one child, even this most conservative estimate would leave 2,556 pupils temporarily excluded in this way – 784 of them for a full academic year or longer. <sup>2</sup> However, Ofsted's three-year survey found huge variety in the numbers of pupils placed in offsite AP: in one mainstream school they found 426 places in Years 9 to 11, where 98 pupils regularly attended offsite AP (Ofsted 2016b).
<b>OFF-ROLLING</b>	If a school uses offsite AP, a pupil is supposed to remain on the school's register. However, there is nothing to stop a school from removing a child's name from their register. This is illegal.	Ofsted has warned inspectors that 'large numbers of pupils' are being off-rolled before they sit their GCSEs, to game performance tables (Ofsted 2017a). Analysis by Education Datalab found 20,000 pupils close to sitting their GCSEs had disappeared from secondary school rolls in 2016 and did not appear again on the rolls of other state-funded secondary institutions (Thomson 2016). These pupils can be lost to national statistics, unless they sit national examinations. There is no oversight of their safety or quality of education.
<b>ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION</b>	A parent can choose to electively home educate their child. If a school wants to avoid recording a permanent exclusion, they can encourage a parent to register their child as home-educated. This is illegal.  In response to a freedom of information (FOI) request, North-East Lincolnshire council said that the primary reason for home education in their local authority had 'changed from ideological or religious reasons, to concern for their child's welfare or unresolved difficulties relating to behaviour or attendance'. A third of councils in the same FOI request similarly cited behaviour, threat of prosecution and risk of exclusion as reasons for home education (Staufenberg 2017).	In 2015/16, a total of 37,500 pupils were estimated to be off school rolls as part of elective home education (ADCS 2016). We have no way of knowing how many of these were illegal exclusions. These pupils are lost to national statistics, and there is no oversight of their safety or quality of education.

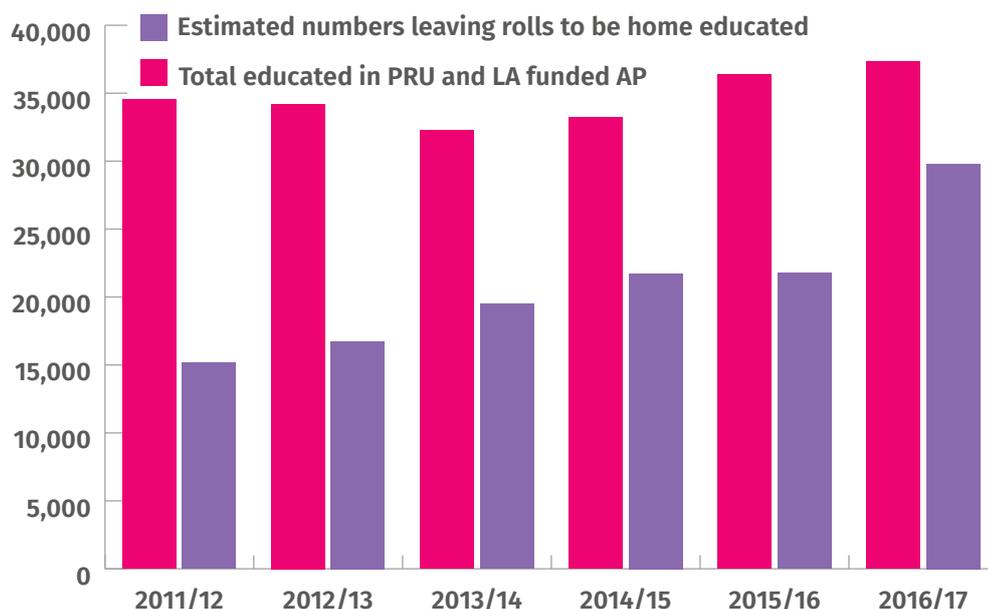
Source: Author's own analysis of various sources (see citations in box)

By its nature it is difficult to capture data on illegal exclusion. However, in 2013, the Children’s Commissioner for England found that 1.8 per cent of schools admitted to ‘encouraging parents to take their children out of school and educate them at home’ as an illegal method of exclusion (OCC 2013). Since then, there has been a rapid rise in the number of children home schooled, up 78 per cent since 2013 (see figure 1.3). Illegal exclusions may account for some of this rise.

**FIGURE 1.3**

**Numbers of home educated pupils have been rising alongside populations of pupil referral units and other local authority-funded alternative provision**

*Total number of pupils educated outside mainstream and special schools*



Source: Department for Education (2017), *Schools, pupils and their characteristics*, and author’s estimations from freedom of information requests obtained by Schools Week as part of Staufenberg (2017)

### 1.3 CONCLUSIONS

- Official exclusions are rising, and have been year on year for the past three years; 35 pupils a day are permanently excluded from school.
- Exclusions data is a serious underestimation of the school exclusion challenge. A total of 48,000 children are being educated in alternative provision for excluded pupils – 5 times the yearly official exclusion statistics. These AP populations have also been rising year on year.
- Still more exclusions are being hidden, and children are lost from government oversight. Tens of thousands of pupils leave school rolls in what appear to be instances of illegal exclusion. The numbers of pupils becoming electively home educated have more than doubled over the past four years; some local authorities attribute this to illegal exclusion.

## 2. WHO GETS EXCLUDED AND WHY?

### 2.1 THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF EXCLUSION

Our research has highlighted that there are several vulnerabilities – or risk factors – that increase the likelihood of a child being excluded. These include living in poverty; experiencing abuse and neglect at home; having a learning difficulty; having low attainment in school; and suffering from a mental health condition.

#### *Poverty*

Overwhelmingly, excluded children are poorer children. For example, 55 per cent of 5–10-year-olds and 40 per cent of 11–15-year-olds in schools for excluded pupils<sup>6</sup> are eligible for free school meals<sup>7</sup> compared to 14 per cent of the pupil population at large (DfE 2017c). On average, poorer young people are four times more likely to be excluded than their wealthier peers (DfE 2017a).

#### *Unsafe family environment*

Children who have been taken into care are twice as likely to be excluded as those who have not (DfE 2017d). Moreover, ‘children in need’ – whose home lives have prompted interaction with social services but who remain in their home environment – fare even worse: they are three times more likely to be excluded from their school than other pupils.

#### *Special educational needs*

Nearly eight in ten children (77 per cent) in schools for excluded children have recognised special educational needs or disability (SEND) (DfE 2017c). Those with a recognised need are seven times more likely to be excluded than their peers without SEND, suggesting that their needs may be a causal factor in exclusion (DfE 2017a).

#### *Poor mental health*

In 2015/16, one in fifty children in the general population was recognised as having a social, emotional and mental health need (SEMH) (DfE 2017e). In schools for excluded pupils this rose to one in two.<sup>8</sup> Yet the incidence of mental ill health among excluded pupils is likely to be much higher than these figures suggest. Only half of children with clinically diagnosed conduct disorders and a third of children with similarly diagnosed emotional disorders are recognised in their schools as having special educational needs (ONS 2005).<sup>9</sup> This means the proportion of excluded children with mental health problems is likely closer to 100 per cent.

#### *Low prior attainment*

Pupils who leave primary schools with the lowest skill levels are most likely to be excluded from school. The most recent data available on this is a 2011 longitudinal analysis of exclusions in England, using the National Pupil Database (Strand and

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6 Schools for excluded pupils in this section refers to pupil referral units only.

7 Eligibility for free school meals is the standard poverty measure in schools.

8 IPPR calculations based on DfE 2017e and 2017c

9 There has been an absence of official data on child and adolescent mental health. Prevalence data used to be collected every five years, but the last study was published in 2005. NatCen and ONS, on behalf of NHS Digital, have launched a new national study of health and wellbeing to update this data, the findings of which are expected to be published in 2018.

Fletcher 2011). This showed a strong relationship between a pupil’s Key Stage 2 score, and the average number of fixed-period exclusions across their secondary school career; with the average number of exclusions for the lowest-attaining pupils 15 times that of the highest-attaining pupils (ibid).

## 2.2 COMPLEX NEEDS

The vulnerabilities – or risk factors – set out above are often closely linked to one another and are therefore mutually reinforcing (see table 2.1). We think of children with one or more of these intersecting vulnerabilities as having ‘complex needs’ which raise challenges in supporting them to succeed in education.

TABLE 2.1

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VULNERABILITIES				
	POVERTY	FAMILY PROBLEMS	SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	POOR MENTAL HEALTH
FAMILY PROBLEMS	There is a causal link between family poverty, parental mental ill health, and negative and damaging parenting behaviour (Cooper and Stewart 2013). Children in the most deprived neighbourhoods are 11 times more likely to be subject to a child protection plan than those in the most affluent neighbourhoods (Bywaters et al 2017).			
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	The above impact of poverty can affect a child’s social, emotional and cognitive development (Cooper and Stewart 2013). One in four pupils on free school meals also has special educational needs; at twice the rate of wealthier peers (DfE 2017e).	Abuse and neglect damage children’s behavioural and cognitive development. Looked-after children (LAC) are 10 times more likely to have a recognised special educational needs (DfE 2017d).		
POOR MENTAL HEALTH	Mental ill health among children is strongly linked to familial mental health, which is in turn linked to family poverty. In families with weekly incomes of less than £200, 20 per cent of young people have a mental disorder, compared with just 6 per cent of children from families with incomes over £600 a week (ONS 2005).	Maternal mental health and major adverse life effects (such as bereavement, serious illness and injury) are significant predictors of mental ill health (Johnston et al 2014). Almost 40 per cent of looked-after children and those on child protection and safeguarding registers have a conduct disorder mental health problem.	Pupils with special needs are unhappier at school, and at greater risk of conduct problems, hyperactivity problems, struggles with peer relationships and mental ill health (Barnes and Harrison 2017).	
LOW PRIOR ATTAINMENT	Family poverty has a knock-on impact on attainment (Cooper and Stewart 2013): 65 per cent of pupils with free school meals do not achieve the expected standards aged 11, compared to 43 per cent of other children (DfE 2017f).	Children who experience neglect or abuse can struggle to learn at the same rate as peers: 75 per cent of children in care or classified as ‘in need’ by social services do not achieve the expected standards aged 11, compared to 46 per cent of other children (DfE 2017d).	Children with learning needs can fall behind their peers: 86 per cent of children with special educational needs do not meet attainment expectations aged 11, compared to 38 per cent of other children (DfE 2017f).	Child mental health has a large effect on educational progress (Johnston et al 2014). The more abnormal a child’s mental health state, the greater the predicted losses in educational progress.

Source: Author’s own analysis

Not all pupils with complex needs are easily identified by teachers, or captured in official statistics. Table 2.1 uses data on pupils whose vulnerabilities have been formally recognised; however, qualitative research for this report suggested that many young people who are excluded often fall below thresholds of certain classifications, or do not have these needs formally recognised. For instance, school leaders identified pupils facing safeguarding concerns but who did not meet social care thresholds to be designated 'in need'. Many PRU leaders identified speech, language and communication needs in excluded pupils, which had gone unrecognised by mainstream schools, so that pupils with these needs did not have a formal designation of special needs (SEND).

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## Gender, ethnicity and discrimination

Disproportionate exclusions for certain groups suggest that either schools may be failing to adequately support certain learners, or that school behaviour systems inadvertently discriminate against some pupils.

### *Gender*

Last year for every one girl permanently excluded, three boys were in the same position (DfE 2017a). This may be linked to the way in which mental ill health presents differently in boys and girls. Boys are much more likely to have a mental health disorder with externalising symptoms including aggression, making up two-thirds of all young people with conduct disorder (ONS 2005). Girls with mental health problems are more likely to have emotional disorders, whose symptoms can include internalising behaviours, such as being withdrawn and self-harming (ibid).

### *Ethnicity*

Though most pupils in PRUs are white British (70 per cent), certain ethnic groups are disproportionately represented in PRU populations. Black Caribbean pupils are educated in PRUs at nearly four times (3.9) the rate we would expect, given the proportion they make of the national pupil population (DfE 2017c). Mixed ethnicity Black Caribbean and white pupils are also more than twice as likely (2.5) to be educated in a PRU than they should be (ibid).

Gypsy Roma heritage pupils appear in PRU populations at almost three times the expected rate (3.2), and Irish traveller heritage pupils at seventeen times the rate (16.5) (though this is a small population size and so cohort effects lead to large changes in this disproportion) (ibid).

As with the other vulnerabilities discussed in this chapter, there is an interactive effect between ethnicity and other vulnerabilities. For instance, black pupils are the ethnic group most likely to live in poverty – with more than one in four children eligible for free school meals (Shaw et al 2016).

Teacher behaviour plays an important role in the intersection of ethnicity and other vulnerabilities. Racist stereotypes have been shown to unconsciously bias teachers' perceptions of behaviour and pupils' personalities, particularly with black students (Okonofua and Eberhardt 2015). Experiences of racist discrimination are known to have a long-term negative impact on mental health (Wallace et al 2016). This in turn is connected to self-perception, aspiration and attainment. Recent research shows that though black children begin school with similar attainment to their peers, on average they fall behind drastically through secondary school (Shaw et al 2016).

## 2.3 EXPLAINING THE RISE IN EXCLUSIONS

As set out in Chapter 1, the number of exclusions has risen in recent years. This rise is explained by several factors. Notably, there is growing evidence that the number of children experiencing the intersecting vulnerabilities described in section 2.2 above is increasing. Put simply: rising exclusions could be partially explained by rising numbers of children with complex needs.

Child poverty is rising. Between 2010 and 2015, half a million more children fell into absolute poverty (DWP 2015). This has been driven by stagnant incomes due to the slow economic recovery – with median real wages falling between 8 and 9 per cent from 2008 to 2014 (Machin 2015) – and accentuated by welfare policy.

Meanwhile, the number of children identified as requiring a social services assessment more than doubled from 2010 to 2016, to over 170,000 children (DfE 2016a).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the proportion of these cases that have been escalated from being a ‘child in need’ to being subject to a child protection plan has also increased year on year; rising from around 44,000 in 2009/10 to just over 50,000 in 2015/16 (ibid). This may be partly explained by earlier and more effective interventions by children’s services but the figures are striking nonetheless.

Finally, children and young people’s mental ill health appears to be worsening. For example, the number of 0–17-year-olds admitted to A&E with a diagnosed psychiatric condition more than doubled between 2010/11 and 2014/15 (Burt 2016). In 2016, 80 per cent of school leaders were concerned about pupils’ mental health, up from 67 per cent in 2015 (The Key 2016).

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### Case study: Khadija/Jenni’s story

Khadija was asked to leave her mainstream school in Year 9. She arrived at her AP school with no records. Throughout her first year there, she was known as Khadija. Her mother had converted her to Islam and changed her birth name, after a new boyfriend had moved in with the family.

Khadija did not smile, make eye contact or engage in class. On her first day at the AP school, teachers noticed signs of self-harm and prompted an urgent referral to social care and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). An investigation into the family produced evidence that both Khadija and her brother were subject to child protection orders in two boroughs and her mother had a history of moving them with no forwarding address to avoid agency involvement. Khadija and her brother were witness to domestic violence at home.

Although her home life was not improving, Khadija began to settle in and enjoy her new school. Her attendance gradually improved and she developed relationships first with staff, and eventually with other students. After a year at the AP school, Khadija gradually became less aggressive and started to engage in her CAMHS sessions. At this point Khadija asked staff at the academy to start calling her by her original name, Jenni, which they did. Jenni opened up to staff about being bisexual and wanting to ‘come out’. At home, her mother said that homosexuality was disgusting and she was banned from talking about it.

Jenni was particularly vulnerable at this point. She started missing school and engaging in risky, self-destructive behaviours – the school alerted social services when Jenni was seen by another student getting into a car with some older men. One day Jenni came in and had a knife in her bag, which was discovered by staff. She said that she had forgotten the knife was in there

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<sup>10</sup> Rounded to the nearest thousand

but that she had hidden it from her step-father, who had threatened to stab her and her brother. The school asked for an urgent referral from the local authority, saying that they believed Jenni's life was in danger.

Jenni was taken into care and was placed with a foster carer with whom she could build a supportive relationship, and begin to process some of the abuse she had suffered in her birth family. At school, Jenni's attendance returned to normal and she began to become more confident. She got a new haircut and some piercings, and became open and more comfortable about her sexual orientation, talking with other students about it. She stopped self-harming, and her attainment increased. Jenni did so well on her coursework that she was entered for higher papers at GCSE.

During her year and a half at the AP school, Jenni's transformation was stark. Through a turbulent and complex time in her life, the AP school provided a safe and stable environment which supported her to achieve. Its staff were equipped to work collaboratively with other services, to help Jenni navigate the challenges she faced, and finish her education with a happier, healthier life ahead of her.

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## 2.4 CONCLUSIONS

- Excluded pupils are likely to have complex needs, where different vulnerabilities intersect and compound one another. These include: child poverty; family problems including parental mental ill health, abuse and neglect; learning needs; mental ill health; and poor educational progress.
- There are increasing numbers of children with these complex needs, and this may be a key driver in rising exclusion rates.

# 3.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO EXCLUDED CHILDREN AND WHAT IS THE COST TO SOCIETY?

### 3.1 THE SOCIAL COST OF EXCLUSION

School exclusion too often results in social exclusion; a cycle of social immobility. The complex combination of personal disadvantages often faced by excluded pupils is likely to be compounded by the exclusion process. Poor outcomes for excluded pupils stretch across a range of social dimensions including:

- health
- qualifications
- employment
- criminality.

#### *Health*

Researchers at the University of Exeter found evidence of a two-way relationship between child and adolescent mental illness and exclusion from school (Parker et al 2016). They found that exclusion could trigger long-term psychiatric illness, exacerbating existing mental ill health.

Some of this seems to happen via parents: the stress and practical challenges of having a child regularly sent home from school, and of the formal process of school exclusion, can impact parental mental health, known in turn to affect child mental health (ibid).

But exclusion can also radically affect a child's social and emotional world. Being excluded from school can abruptly end friendships and trusting teacher-pupil relationships. In addition, the experience of rejection from school can reinforce a negative self-image. Exeter university researchers found a particularly high incidence of deliberate self-harm among excluded young people in their sample (ibid).

#### *Qualifications*

Exclusion blights educational opportunities and can stall or halt altogether the transition from school to further study and the world of work. Only 1 per cent of excluded young people achieve five good GCSEs including English and maths (DfE 2017g). Last year, the average Attainment 8 score of pupils in England was 48.5; for excluded pupils it was less than a seventh of that: an average score of 7.8. This measure is calculated based on an assumption that a student has taken eight subjects at GCSE; the majority of excluded children are not even enrolled in the two core GCSEs of English and maths (ibid).

Basic levels of literacy and numeracy are a bar for entering semi-skilled employment, and often even low-skilled apprenticeships and training (SMC 2016). A significant proportion of young people nationally who do not achieve English and maths at grade C or above (level 2) at 16 go on to achieve these or equivalent

qualifications through FE and apprenticeships after leaving school (ibid). Yet this is not the case with excluded young people. Among the sample in the longitudinal 2010 Youth Cohort Study, nearly 9 in 10 (87 per cent) young people who had never been excluded from school had achieved their level 2 qualification by the age of 20 (DfE 2011). By contrast, only 3 in 10 (30 per cent) excluded young people had achieved these qualifications by the same age.

#### *Employment*

Without the qualifications they need to enter and thrive in the workplace, many young people inevitably struggle to access or stay in work. The latest government destinations data, focusing on pupils finishing their GCSEs in 2012/13, shows that nearly half (45 per cent) of young people leaving PRUs were not in a 'sustained' employment, education or training destination six months after their GCSEs, compared to only 6 per cent leaving mainstream schools, and 11 per cent leaving special schools (DfE 2016b).

Long-term unemployment at a young age has a significantly detrimental impact on mental health, future employment and risk of criminal activity (PHE 2014). Excluded young people are very likely to experience long-term unemployment. The Youth Cohort Study showed that more than one in four (27 per cent) excluded young people were not in education, employment or training (NEET) for between one and two years by the time they were 19, compared to one in 10 young people who had never been excluded. Fifteen per cent were NEET for more than two years, compared with only 3 per cent of those who had never been excluded (DfE 2011).

#### *Criminality*

The majority of UK prisoners were excluded from school. A longitudinal study of prisoners found that 63 per cent of prisoners reported being temporarily excluded when at school (MoJ 2012). Forty-two per cent had been permanently excluded, and these excluded prisoners were more likely to be repeat offenders than other prisoners (ibid).

### **3.2 THE ECONOMIC COST OF EXCLUSION**

The personal cost of exclusion is tragic and incalculable. There is clearly a strong moral case for more and better interventions to divert children from the outcomes described above.

However, there is also a strong economic imperative to address this sharp end of the social mobility challenge. IPPR research estimates that the cost of exclusion is around £370,000 per young person in lifetime education, benefits, healthcare and criminal justice costs.

This calculation reflects the costs of: education in the alternative provision sector; lost taxation from lower future earnings; associated benefits payments (excluding housing); higher likelihood of entry into the criminal justice system; higher likelihood of social security involvement; and increased average healthcare costs. Using the official figure of 6,685 children permanently excluded from school last year, this amounts to £2.1 billion for the cohort.

However, the true cost is likely to greatly exceed this figure. As explored in the Chapter 2, more than five times the number of pupils permanently excluded last year were known to be being educated full-time in schools for excluded pupils, and there is evidence that a further unknown number of pupils are functionally excluded through methods which elude government data. The true cost of exclusion is an unknown number, likely many multiples of this conservative estimate.

### 3.3 CONCLUSIONS

- Excluded pupils are likely to suffer long-term mental health problems, fail to achieve basic levels of literacy and numeracy, struggle to gain qualifications needed to access work, to be long-term unemployed, and to be repeatedly involved in crime.
- As well as an incalculable personal cost, this has a huge societal cost. The cost to the state of failing each pupil is an estimated £370,000 in additional education, benefits, healthcare and criminal justice costs across a lifetime.
- We calculate on official estimations of numbers of exclusion, that this is a £2.1 billion cost for every year's cohort of permanently excluded young people. Yet, given that the full extent of exclusion greatly exceeds official figures, the true cost of exclusion is likely to be many multiples of this estimate.

# 4.

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

### 4.1 BREAKING THE LINK BETWEEN SCHOOL EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The social mobility story of exclusion does not have to be dictated by personal circumstance. Many individuals with complex needs succeed despite these disadvantages. Put more simply: exclusion is not inevitable.

Breaking the links between multiple disadvantage, school exclusion and social exclusion requires the support of effective teachers and other public services (alongside family and friends). Unfortunately, not all children get the support they need. In some instances, schools and statutory services can even exacerbate, rather than negate, the vulnerabilities set out in the previous chapters.

This chapter lays out the current situation in both the mainstream and alternative provision (AP) sectors, which may be contributing to rising exclusions and poor outcomes for excluded children. In doing so, it points to priorities in workforce development to help break the link between school exclusion and social exclusion.

Our analysis highlights two key areas where reform is urgent if we want to rewrite the story of worsening school exclusion:

- the **capacity to prevent exclusion** from mainstream education
- the **capacity to improve trajectories for excluded children** once they enter the AP sector.

### 4.2 CAPACITY TO PREVENT EXCLUSION

#### *Diminishing preventative services*

Since the financial crisis, there has been increasing fiscal pressure on public services. Successive governments have aimed to deliver a fiscal surplus and reduce public expenditure as a share of GDP. The squeeze in public funding has also led to reductions to preventative services and out-of-school support that could help prevent exclusion. Higher demand is leading to higher referral thresholds and more children and families being turned away from support.

For example, up to 75 per cent of children who need treatment for ill health do not receive this treatment, according to Public Health England (2016). Analysis by CentreForum estimated that a quarter of children referred to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) were turned away in 2016 (Frith 2016).

#### *Challenges in supporting vulnerable learners*

Unlike other areas of the public sector, schools have been largely protected from measures to reduce the deficit, with funding increasing by 7 per cent in real terms between 2009/10 and 2014/15 (IfG 2017). However, the rise in pupil numbers means spending per pupil is set to fall by 8 per cent between 2014 and 2020, taking school-specific inflation into account.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, new demands on school

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11 <https://fullfact.org/education/spending-schools-2020/>

budgets, such as higher teacher pension contributions and the apprenticeship levy, are adding further pressure.

Many schools are responding to the squeeze in funding by reducing the number of support staff, who work with vulnerable pupils and often staff pastoral elements of the school. For example, a 2017 survey of educational leaders found that 69 per cent of primary school leaders and 68 per cent of secondary school leaders expected to reduce numbers of support staff to make savings in the academic year 2017/18 (The Key 2017). This is of particular concern if such support staff are responsible for identifying and supporting pupils with mental ill health and other vulnerabilities, as indicated by the qualitative research for this report.

The Department for Education is now prioritising mental health support in schools. Research to understand the current position of schools in supporting mental health revealed that 71 per cent of education institutions felt lack of funding was one of the biggest barriers to developing their internal mental health provision (Marshall et al 2017).

National curriculum reforms and new examination specifications have raised the bar in terms of the content schools need to teach across subjects. However, there are indications that these new curricula are not meeting the needs of all learners. For example, one in two (48 per cent) said curriculum changes were having a negative effect on the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in their schools (The Key 2017). Research commissioned by the Department for Education this year showed that secondary school pupils with SEND have much higher levels of unhappiness regarding their school work and school (Barnes and Harrison 2017). These children with SEND were also much more likely to have conduct problems, hyperactivity problems, to struggle with peer relationships and be at risk of mental health problems.

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### **Case study: Variation in exclusions by local authority**

Some areas struggle with inclusion much more than others. For instance, in Blackpool, one of the Department for Education's new Opportunity Areas, the population of local pupils educated in pupil referral units (PRUs) is seven times the national average.

Local levels of poverty are a factor in this national variation. One in four pupils in Blackpool, for instance, is eligible for free school meals (FSM – the poverty measure in schooling). Among the 20 local authorities with the largest proportion of pupils educated in PRUs, seven local authorities are in the top decile for deprivation; a further three in the top quintile. Only one local authority, Reading, has an FSM rate below the national average (see table A1 in Annex II).

There is interesting variation in the quality of local mainstream schooling in the areas with high PRU populations. In Blackpool, Gateshead and Knowsley, the overwhelming majority of students attend secondary schools rated poorly by Ofsted (in Knowsley 100 per cent of school places are in schools graded 'Inadequate' or 'Requires Improvement'). In these places, high rates of exclusion may be a symptom of dysfunction in local schooling. However, some local authorities with large PRU populations have many secondary schools rated 'Good' and better. In Harringey, Slough and Tower Hamlets a tiny minority of secondary school places are in schools rated 'Inadequate' or 'Requires Improvement'. In these areas, school exclusion may be artificially improving local school standards, as large numbers of the most vulnerable pupils are educated and sitting examinations in alternative provision. (For the full data see table A1 in Annex II.)

It is very worrying that among the top 20 local authorities for large PRU populations, there are several where quality of provision is particularly poor. In Gateshead, Barking and Dagenham, and Reading, 100 per cent of places for excluded pupils are in less than 'Good' provision. Islington and Nottingham also stand out as having poor provision for the vast majority of excluded pupils (for full data see table A1 in Annex II.)

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#### *Incentives for schools to exclude*

The decision to exclude a child is a difficult one for a leader to make and not one most headteachers take lightly. However, there is growing evidence that the system within which schools operate may be incentivising the exclusion of students with complex needs.

Since the onset of new public management, schools operate in a system that rewards them primarily on students' academic outcomes. Over the past three decades, expectations on schools have been incrementally raised. Yet in recent years, schools have had less external resource to help them deliver higher standards. Though school funding has been protected from reductions in public expenditure, there are other areas of the education budget that have not, such as the education services grant. This means that school improvement services provided by local authorities have been pared back. Alternative school improvement services are often traded, meaning struggling schools must budget to pay for them (Gu et al 2015). There is increasing incentive, therefore, for schools to choose cheap and short-term measures to improve results, over resource-intensive methods of improving pupil outcomes (Gill 2016).

Within this system, schools that are failing – and under pressure to improve rapidly – can use exclusion to deliver improvements in key metrics. In a study of 411 academy leaders published in the *Harvard Business Review*, researchers identified a group of school leaders whose approach to rapid turnaround often involved high numbers of exclusions (Hill et al 2016). In their sample, they found an average of a quarter of the entire GCSE cohort was excluded in this type of school turnaround strategy (Cook 2016).

The high-profile cases of exclusion from St Olave's Grammar School suggests that it is not just low-performing schools who use exclusion to boost their results, but high-performing schools too.

Recent data analysis by Education Datalab corroborated this. It identified a small number of outlier schools whose GCSE scores substantially benefited from pupil mobility, where pupils left school rolls (in this study formal exclusion was grouped with all instances where a pupil left the school roll) (Allen 2016). Ofsted has recently criticised gaming behaviours among schools, including 'off-rolling' to remove underperforming students from a school's roll before they affect GCSE results (Ofsted 2017a).

Incentives to exclude could get stronger, due to recent accountability changes. In the research for this report, experts and practitioners interviewed were supportive of a move to Progress 8, which will hold schools to account on *progress* of pupils, alongside accountability for attainment. However, these experts raised several concerns about perverse incentives affecting children with complex needs. For example, the Progress 8 measure means that outliers who severely under-attain could have a disproportionately damaging effect on schools' performance data. This might create a penalty for inclusive schools, and incentivise the exclusion of very low-performing pupils; or lead schools to avoid taking such pupils on initially through formal and informal admissions processes. Another challenge

is a 'multiplier effect' of disruptive pupils on other students' progress, which is better recognised under Progress 8 than under old attainment metrics. One leader described this in the following way:

***'The impact of a distressed and distressing child on the learning of others is now even more calculable. You now have to think about that when you're deciding whether to exclude.'***

This trade-off is made more challenging because there is an argument that in some respects exclusion may benefit a child, as it may increase their access to more small-group learning and external support services (Menzies and Baars 2015). One leader said:

***'You can't get away from the economic logic that says "Right, if I permanently exclude this challenging young person who smashes things up, then they'll go to the PRU and get extra funding for their needs and will finally meet thresholds for other services. But if I keep them in my academy I'll only get £4,500 [the age-weighted pupil average] and it doesn't cover the costs of working with them.'"***

#### *Workforce challenges*

Teachers' insufficient training and knowledge can compound the challenges faced by children with complex needs. Addressing this is key to preventing exclusion. In particular, teachers have little access to training on child development and mental health, which results in teachers having difficulty recognising behaviour linked to mental ill health. Instead, challenging behaviour can often be construed as a moral choice and punished without appropriate intervention. A government-commissioned survey of teachers published last year found that one in two senior leaders felt their staff could not recognise behaviour linked to mental health and were not equipped to teach pupils with mental health issues (Smith et al 2017).

This is concerning because research has shown a clear association between teacher-pupil relationships and psychiatric disorders. This research suggests both that poor teacher-pupil relationships can worsen child and adolescent mental health (and are a factor in likelihood of exclusion), but also that positive relationships can mediate the effects of poor mental health (Lang et al 2013).

The need for more and better teacher education in this area has been recognised. The latest government review on Initial Teacher Training called for education on child and adolescent development, special educational needs and mental health to be part of a universal framework for new entrants to the profession (Carter 2015). However, this approach to training will take a long time to permeate through the system. There is an agreement that more is needed to be done to reach the majority of in-service teachers and the young people that they work with.

Alongside a skill gap in supporting universal mental health, schools also require further training and expertise in identifying pupils in need of further intervention. Interestingly, this expertise seems better developed in the AP sector for excluded pupils. A recent government-commissioned survey found less than half of mainstream schools collected data to inform themselves of pupils' specific mental health needs (44 per cent of maintained schools and 49 per cent of academies), compared with more than three-quarters of AP settings (77 per cent) (Marshall et al 2017).

Finally, our research identified a demand for further training for schools in working across agencies and non-statutory services to ensure vulnerable children get the right support outside the school gates. This includes an understanding of what non-statutory services and interventions can be delivered onsite for pupils who do not meet referral thresholds for statutory services. Currently, three in four school

leaders say their staff cannot signpost pupils to appropriate external mental health support (Smith et al 2017).

Qualitative research for this report heard many accounts of school leaders making unsuccessful referrals to social care and CAMHS, and receiving no feedback on why these referrals were unsuccessful. CAMHS data reports that between 21 and 29 per cent of referrals nationally are ‘inappropriately referred’.<sup>12</sup> In some instances, leaders we spoke to reported simply making the same referral again and again. This volume of ultimately unsuccessful referrals can delay the process of referral for cases which do meet thresholds. One leader described the challenge:

*‘Social care and schools are basically at war. [Schools] are over-referring; social care doesn’t have the capacity to do all of these. Now there is one point of access to request early help, family support worker, acute help – it isn’t clear what you can ask for and why. [There needs to be explanation] why things are taken up, or not taken up – coaching on effective referrals, what to include and what not to, and on what can be done by the school themselves when something doesn’t meet the threshold for local authority services.’*

#### **4.3 CAPACITY TO IMPROVE TRAJECTORIES FOR EXCLUDED PUPILS**

The quality of education on offer once a child is excluded from school can make the difference between hope and hopelessness, a job and prison, and in the worst cases, life and death. But too often, the damage done to a child’s development and opportunities by the time they have been excluded from school is not mitigated after the event. As explored in Chapter 3, the trajectories for the vast majority of excluded pupils are personally tragic and very costly to society in general.

##### *Insufficient evidence base of ‘what works’*

In recent decades there has been a focus on improving teaching practice, based on evidence. This has included government investment in a new body to develop and disseminate evidence of ‘what works’ in education: the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF); reform of initial teacher training to emphasise research literacy; and mechanisms to increase practitioners’ knowledge of research such as the new Chartered College of Teaching and the Research Schools programme (DfE and NCTL 2016). These initiatives are explicitly about improving school quality through the use of continuous professional development to upskill teachers in selecting evidence-based tools to improve pupil outcomes.

However, there has been very little research into what works in engaging and improving the trajectories for excluded pupils. In fact, there is no consensus over what ‘success’ looks like in AP. The most recent government-commissioned review of alternative provision called for ‘further research on evaluating attainment and progression ... to identify tools that can be used to ascertain the effectiveness of AP and related interventions’ (Tate and Greatbatch 2017). Put simply: we don’t even know how to measure success in AP, let alone what works in helping more pupils achieve that success.

Meanwhile, the sector has very little access to an understanding of the knowledge base that does exist in the mainstream sector. Experts and practitioners interviewed for this research agreed that professional development in AP rarely focuses on teaching, assessment or pedagogy; the most common training in AP schools covers ‘positive handling’ to reduce behaviour escalation, and safe ways to physically restrain pupils. There were similar findings from a review of quality in alternative provision by researchers from the University of Nottingham. They

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12 See Frith 2016 and Children’s Commissioner 2016

found that ‘in England in particular ... we saw very few people with formal special education qualifications’ and that although bigger AP organisations were able to offer training ‘there was almost no specific training in literacy and numeracy. Staff had largely taught themselves what to do’ (Thomson and Pennacchia 2016).

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### Case study: Transforming Lincolnshire’s PRU

In 2015 Lincolnshire’s pupil referral unit (PRU) was in special measures. Ofsted had found that basic safety procedures were not in place, and young people were at risk. Fire risk assessments were not up to date and in one site fire extinguishers had been taken from their mounting points around the building because staff were ‘afraid the pupils will use [them] inappropriately’. The sites were often staffed by temporary employees without ‘the required skills and experience to ... manage [pupils’] behaviour effectively’. Most worryingly, school leaders had not ensured that all staff working with the vulnerable pupils in the unit had undergone the legally required criminal history checks (Ofsted 2015).

Learning and pupil progress was poor. Ofsted noted that senior leaders had not created policies to check and improve teaching and learning across the school, which was particularly problematic as there were so many supply staff who had ‘an adverse impact on the quality of teaching’ (ibid). Too often teachers’ expectations of pupils were low and the work of strong teachers was ‘hampered by a lack of strategic oversight, resources and staffing’ (ibid).

Lincolnshire county council worked in partnership with Wellspring Academy Trust to turn around the PRU. Wellspring run a group of successful schools for students with social, emotional and mental health needs, excluded pupils and primary pupils. This work was led by Dave Whitaker, executive principal of Springwell Learning Community in Barnsley, Mark Wilson, CEO of the Wellspring Trust, and Josh Greaves, the trust’s chief operating officer.

‘Recruitment was key to the turnaround process,’ says Dave, ‘and recruiting the right senior leaders was vital.’ Gill Kelly, deployed as the interim executive principal, came on board and immediately got to work hiring and galvanising a new team. But it was tough. The majority of teachers aren’t familiar with PRUs and don’t think to apply for jobs there. As well as adverts appealing to mainstream teachers, Dave and other colleagues within the trust used their personal contacts and online presence through the Headteachers’ Roundtable to help recruit leaders outside the normal pool.

Dave and Gill recruited a team of excellent leaders from mainstream schools, travelling from nearby cities to transform the PRU sites in this isolated rural and coastal area. ‘Phil was an assistant head in a mainstream school in Nottingham, and had exactly what we were looking for,’ recalls Dave. ‘Coming from mainstream, Phil could bring the rigour, systems and standards which were sorely needed in the PRU.’

Lisa was a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) in a secondary school before joining the PRU’s senior leadership team. ‘She had great leadership skills and extensive special educational needs and disability (SEND) experience and knowledge. We knew she would be an asset,’ says Dave. On her first week in the role she realised that education, health and care plans (EHCs) for pupils hadn’t been updated; in some cases not for several years. ‘Crucial information about what these children needed to support their learning was missing,’ explains Dave. Lisa led a team to get the EHC plans in order and begin tracking interventions for pupils with SEND. ‘Lisa’s monitoring systems for SEND and Pupil Premium interventions,

as well as tracking of admissions and reintegration, meant we could set meaningful targets for the pupils' success. The staff knew what young people needed, and the steps to get them there.'

The third executive vice principal, Amy, joined the team with leadership experience in primary mainstream and in another PRU. She brought with her a wealth of expertise in quality assurance and set about designing systems to develop teaching and learning, implement effective CPD and raise professional standards and expectations. 'With the right team, we could really start rewriting the story for these young people, who had been so failed by their PRU,' says Dave.

From 1 April 2017, Lincolnshire Teaching & Learning Centre reopened as Springwell, Lincoln City Academy and the process had begun to create four purpose-built free school sites. The new school has a new purpose: 'unlocking potential of the most vulnerable young people'. With the proper training, oversight, systems and support, staff in the PRU are now learning, developing and thriving – and so are the students.

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#### *Staff shortages and vacancies*

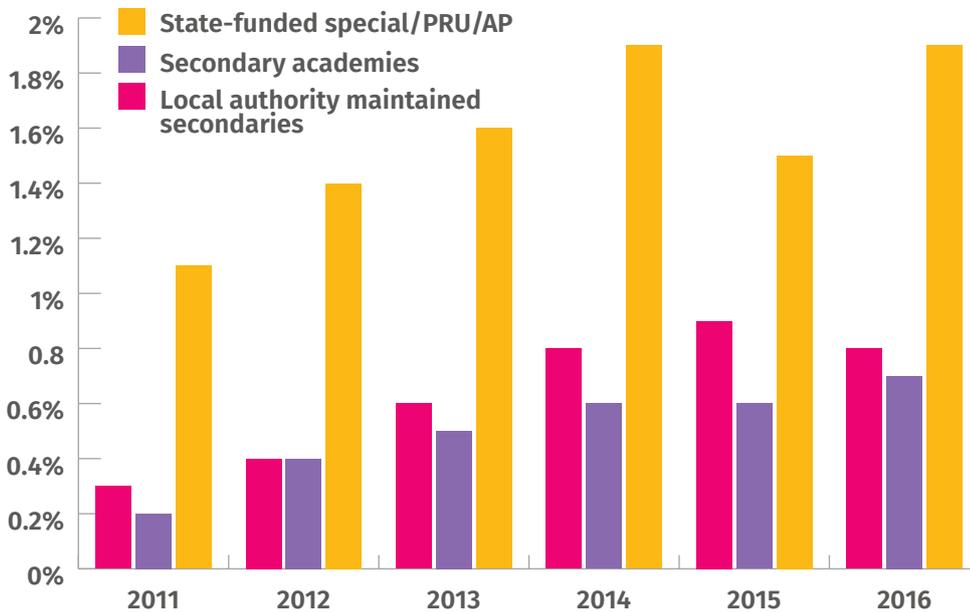
Staff shortages are an issue in all types of school in England. However, in the AP sector they are particularly acute. Numbers of vacancies in the maintained AP and special sector have nearly tripled since 2011 (2.6 times higher by 2016). As a proportion of all teaching posts in the sector, the numbers of vacancies in special and AP schools are 100–150 per cent higher than in mainstream secondary schools.<sup>13</sup> Teaching in AP has suffered from a poor reputation, which has been linked to recruitment challenges (Thomson and Pennacchia 2017).

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<sup>13</sup> We compared the proportion of vacancies in secondary maintained schools and academies, which are 0.2 per cent and 0.3 per cent of the workforce respectively, compared to 0.6 per cent in the special and AP workforce.

**FIGURE 4.1**

**Excluded children are twice as likely to be taught by a supply teacher**  
Percentage of full-time posts not filled by a permanent member of staff



Source: Department for Education (2017), 'Table 14: Full-time teacher vacancies, temporarily filled posts and rates in state funded schools by sector and grade', *School workforce in England: November 2016*

Note: Government data aggregates teacher qualification data by sector, grouping AP with special schools

The recruitment challenge in AP results in a dependence on supply teachers. Our analysis shows that the use of temporary staff has nearly doubled in the special and AP sector over the past six years, as shown in figure 4.1. A child educated in a special or AP school is twice as likely to have a supply teacher, compared to a mainstream student. This is concerning because the temporary nature of supply work can hamper the trust and relationships with pupils, necessary for effective behaviour management and teaching and learning, as seen in the case study of Lincolnshire's failing PRU (see box above).

The quality and commitment of supply staff can be lower than that of permanent teachers. School leaders referred to this as a challenge in raising the quality of teaching and learning in AP. One leader facing recruitment challenges said:

*'The majority [of candidates] were failed teachers who hadn't managed to put down a successful career in mainstream.'*

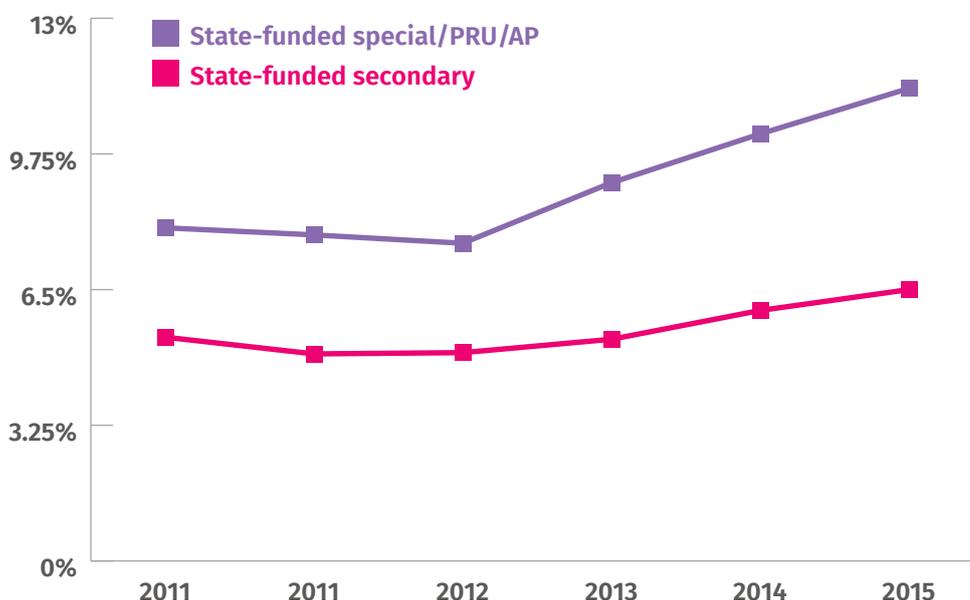
#### *The rise in unqualified staff*

For a long time, trainee teachers were prohibited from training in PRUs, exacerbating recruitment challenges. Now this is no longer the case, and many PRUs train their own teachers, often using training to develop talent internally and upskill teaching assistants. However, this reform has seen levels of unqualified staff increase at an alarming rate. Figure 4.2 shows how the proportion of unqualified teachers in mainstream schools has risen by one and a half percentage points in the past four years, while in AP and special schools it has increased by nearly four percentage points over the same period. Nearly one in eight teachers in the sector is now unqualified.

**FIGURE 4.2**

**The proportion of unqualified teachers in AP and special schools has increased far faster than in mainstream schools**

*Percentage of unqualified teachers in state-funded secondary and special schools in England*



Source: Department for Education (2017), 'Table 2a: Head count of full-time, part-time and full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in state funded schools by sector and grade1 or post', *School workforce in England: November 2016*  
Note: Government data aggregates teacher qualification data by sector, grouping AP with special schools

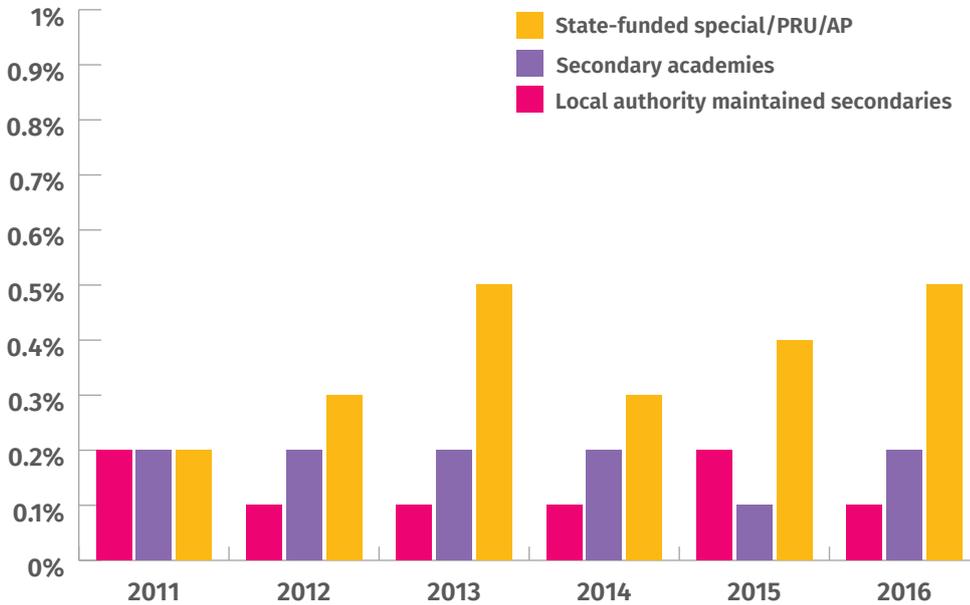
*Leadership*

If a large proportion of the workforce in the AP sector is unqualified and temporary, leadership is more important than ever in steering a school's course to success. Yet vacancies in leadership roles have leapt in recent years, more than doubling in the AP and special sector between 2011 and 2016. Figure 4.3 shows that this problem is specific to the AP and special school sector; vacancies in leadership positions have remained fairly stable in mainstream schools over the same period.

**FIGURE 4.3**

Vacancies in leadership roles more than doubled in the AP and special sector between 2011 and 2016 but remained stable in mainstream schools

*Leadership vacancies in mainstream and alternative schools*



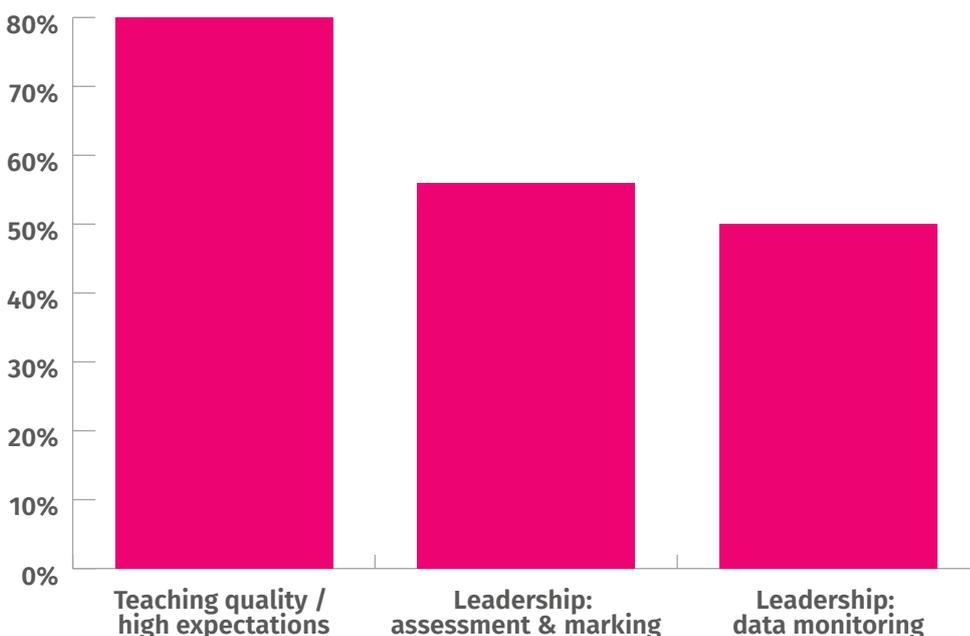
Source: Department for Education (2017), 'Table 14: Full-time teacher vacancies temporarily filled posts and rates in state funded schools by sector and grade', *School workforce in England: November 2016*

Note: Government data aggregates teacher qualification data by sector, grouping AP with special schools

**FIGURE 4.4**

Improving the basics of teaching and learning is a priority in the majority of pupil referral units

*Percentage of Ofsted inspections listing teaching quality and associated factors as priorities for improvement*



Source: IPPR analysis of Ofsted inspection reports 2015-2017

Not only is AP grappling with leadership vacancies, but the standard of leadership is not good enough across the sector. Even in Ofsted-rated 'Good' AP provision, leadership of learning is a key barrier to pupils making the progress they ought to. IPPR analysed a sample of the most recent Ofsted inspections of PRUs and AP schools (sample size 50). We found that 80 per cent of the school's Ofsted reports mentioned teachers' low expectations or the broader quality of teaching and learning as a point for improvement. More than half of the Ofsted reports specifically referenced the leadership of assessment processes, marking and feedback; and half mentioned data monitoring as a point for improvement (see figure 4.4).

In other parts of the UK, secondment models have been used to try to bring norms and expectations in teaching, learning, assessment and data monitoring from mainstream into AP schools. In North Lanarkshire in Scotland, teachers are regularly seconded to work in AP for several years. Researchers from the University of Nottingham pointed to this process as key in transferring best practice between the two different sectors, bringing 'knowledge of the academic norms of regular schools' from mainstream to AP, and bringing 'additional expertise' from AP to mainstream, to support children vulnerable to exclusion (Thomson and Pennacchia 2017). Rates of school exclusion in Scotland and Northern Ireland, which also use teacher secondments, are much lower than in England.

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### **Current quality of alternative provision**

The challenge facing an AP school when it takes on an excluded child is far from easy. As set out in Chapter 3, excluded children often have a background of neglect and abuse, poor mental health, and learning difficulties. They are likely to have been failed by their previous schools – often multiple times – and have spent large chunks of their educational career outside the classroom. Unsurprisingly, they often feel rejected by and disengaged with school.

The work of an AP school, then, is much more complex than simply imparting knowledge. It involves rebuilding the emotional damage of exclusion; developing trusting relationships often with young people who have had few trusted adults in their lives; and attempting to catch up learners who are often far behind their peers.

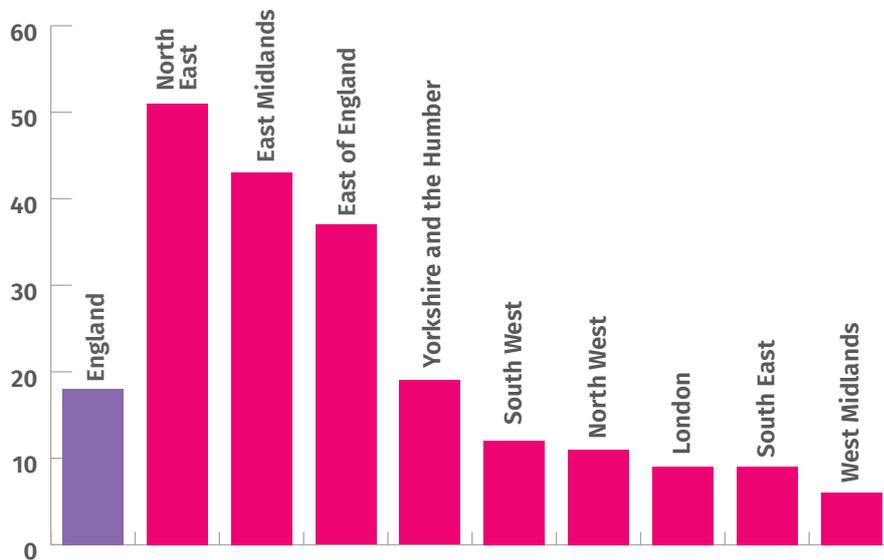
#### *Maintained provision*

Given this challenging context, the quality of provision in many maintained AP schools is strong: the vast majority of schools for excluded pupils are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted (Ofsted 2017c). London offers the best provision for officially excluded young people, with 91 per cent of excluded children attending a provision deemed 'Good' or better. The South East, West Midlands, North West and East of England also cater well for students in AP according to Ofsted (ibid).

**FIGURE 4.5**

**An excluded child in the North East is more than five times more likely to attend a less than good school than a child excluded in London, the West Midlands or the South East**

*Percentage of places rated 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'*



Source: Ofsted (2016), *Maintained schools and academies inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2016*

Note: Ofsted releases national data for its inspection outcomes on a termly basis. In this analysis we used data for the end of the academic year 2015/16. Data for the end of 2016/17 is available from November 2017.

However, nationally almost one in five places in maintained schools for excluded pupils (18 per cent) are in a 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' provision.

There is a frightening postcode lottery in the quality of provision: an excluded child in the North East is around eight times as likely to attend an 'Inadequate' provision (46 per cent) as the national average (6 per cent). Were they excluded instead in the neighbouring North West, or Yorkshire and the Humber, they would have a far greater chance of a place in 'Good' alternative provision.

Even more shockingly, there are local authorities with no 'Good' places whatsoever: Barking and Dagenham, Cheshire East, Dudley, Gateshead, Lincolnshire, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norfolk, Reading, Sheffield, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thurrock all effectively guarantee that a child's alternative provision will be 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'. Worse still, across Dudley, Gateshead, Newcastle and Thurrock, all 659 PRU places are 'Inadequate'.

However, most excluded pupils are not educated in maintained provision for which we have data on quality. Increasing demand has seen increasing use of Independent AP, where quality cannot easily be compared across the country; and unregistered AP schools, where there is no national oversight of quality.

#### *Non-maintained provision*

The oversight of independent and unregistered AP is the responsibility of whoever is commissioning it. Most commonly this is the PRU on behalf of a local authority, or mainstream schools which use the provision for Offsite AP. However the two comprehensive reports on this type of AP – that of

government behaviour tsar Charlie Taylor in 2012, and Ofsted's three-year review published in 2016 – point to damning weaknesses in commissioning expertise, and worrying variability in quality.

For example, Ofsted found that less than a third of commissioning schools in their sample 'carried out any systematic evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning at the placements they were using'. The Taylor review found that some alternative providers which had been commissioned were of very high quality, yet others seemed to do 'little more than keep their pupils off the streets' (Taylor 2012). Ofsted reported that the majority of alternative providers in their sample had been given no child protection training by the school which commissioned them, despite working with the most vulnerable young people (Ofsted 2016b).

It is worrying that more and more children are being educated in non-maintained settings, where procedures for oversight are so flawed. It is also concerning that so many of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised children are being educated in settings with the least quality assurance, and fewest mechanisms for quality improvement.

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#### 4.4 CONCLUSIONS

- There are two key areas where reform is pressing if we are to rewrite the story of worsening school exclusion: the *capacity to prevent exclusion* and the *capacity to improve trajectories for excluded pupils*.

##### *Capacity to prevent exclusion*

- There are fewer preventative services whose work supports children with complex needs. Meanwhile there are increasing accountability and financial pressures on schools, which heighten the risk of exclusion for pupils, whose complex needs require extra resources to assure their achievement.
- Workforce development is key to preventing rising exclusion. As resources outside schools diminish, capacity inside the workforce to deal with complex needs is more and more pressing.

##### *Capacity to improve trajectories for excluded pupils*

- There has been virtually no research into 'what works' to change the trajectories for children who have been excluded.
- Nationally, the sector is struggling to recruit quality staff. A large and growing proportion of the AP workforce is unqualified and temporary. Meanwhile, leadership vacancies in the sector have more than doubled since 2011.
- Despite 80 per cent of maintained AP being good or better according to Ofsted, there is a shocking postcode lottery in the quality of provision. A child excluded from school in the North East is more than five times more likely to attend an alternative provision rated less than 'Good' by Ofsted, than a child living in London, the West Midlands or the South East. In some local authorities with the highest levels of exclusion, 100 per cent of pupils are in settings graded 'Inadequate'.
- Finally, and most worryingly, the majority of excluded pupils are being educated in settings with little accountability and oversight. The government does not collate, and often does not even collect, data on the quality of provision or teacher qualifications in this part of the sector. Ofsted has raised concerns that this can leave some of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised children working with ill-equipped or even unsafe staff.

# 5.

## THE RIGHT TO A DIFFERENT STORY

### 5.1 MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

In this report we have set out the significant social mobility failure associated with exclusion. All too often excluded children face a life of poor health, unemployment and even imprisonment, because of a sad combination of personal circumstance and a school system which isn't working for the most vulnerable. But it shouldn't be this way. And it doesn't have to be.

This report has so far outlined the challenges in capacity of the teaching workforce to both reduce exclusions and improve trajectories for pupils. This chapter turns to the workforce development which holds the key to breaking the links between disadvantage, school exclusion and social exclusion. Our analysis is synthesised in a provisional framework for the design of a new programme to develop new expertise in the teaching profession. This will recruit and train specialist teachers, who will go on to become the inclusive school leaders of tomorrow.

This new programme – provisionally known as 'The Difference' – aims to:

1. improve outcomes for those already studying and sitting exams in the AP sector
2. reduce the number of students excluded from the mainstream sector in the long term.

In order to achieve this, the programme will:

1. **recruit exceptional teachers to work in AP schools**
2. **upskill these teachers through a two-year bespoke multi-disciplinary programme**, including on-the-job training in a school leadership position at Master's level
3. **develop a route back into mainstream leadership** through an alumni careers programme to match programme alumni with senior leadership vacancies leading whole-school inclusion.

**FIGURE 5.1**

**The Difference model and objectives**



**5.2 STEP 1: RECRUIT EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS INTO THE AP SECTOR**

This report has set out the evidence that AP schools face significant workforce challenges, including an increasing proportion of classes taught by unqualified teachers and supply teachers, and rising vacancies among the leaders who quality-assure and improve their work. It also uncovered the patterns in Ofsted reports, which found that the quality of teaching and learning is a barrier to overall school improvement in the AP sector. The Difference programme will address these problems by attracting exceptional teachers to take on leadership roles in PRUs and other maintained AP schools.

The sector has signalled that this would be welcome: researchers interviewed and visited leaders working across 40 PRUs, AP academies and free schools – representing a sample of roughly 10 per cent of the entire maintained AP sector. All participants were supportive of the development of such a programme, including some of the largest networks of providers in the sector.

*Recruiting the right teachers and future leaders*

The Difference will recruit ambitious teachers with strong emotional literacy, high expectations and evidenced skill in leading others. These teachers must have a minimum of three years' teaching experience and evidence of a whole-school or middle leadership role in their former school.

Careful candidate selection is vital to improving pupil outcomes. The Difference's recruitment strategy and process will be informed by best current practice in assessment centres. For example:

- Teach First's competitive teacher selection process has been credited for the programme's impact on grades in schools serving disadvantaged communities (Allen and Alnutt 2013). The charity's two-stage selection process involves assessing prospective teachers through an online application and an assessment centre which assesses candidates' competencies through an interview, group problem-solving and a lesson role play.

- Think Ahead, the programme for mental health social workers, uses a rigorous selection process to assess aptitude for working with vulnerable people. This involves a situational judgment test in the initial application stage, and interviews with mental health service users, alongside more traditional assessment centre activities of role play, group problem solving and interviews.
- Future Teaching Scholars recruits maths and physics teachers to a six-year training programme, delivered in collaboration with Teaching School Alliances (TSAs) across the country. Assessment centres are held onsite in the partner Teaching Schools and use the expertise of TSA practitioners, alongside external assessors, to select the candidates who will thrive in school-led training.

### *Connecting teachers with the AP sector*

This report has outlined both the rise in vacancies in leadership positions in the AP sector; and the decreasing expertise in the frontline teaching workforce. The Difference programme will help address this by recruiting mainstream teachers to their first leadership post in AP, where these exceptional teachers will contribute to rising standards of teaching and learning.

As with successful secondment models in Scotland and Northern Ireland, The Difference programme will allow its teachers to bring expertise in mainstream curriculum design and delivery; data monitoring; and assessment and feedback into the AP schools they work in. Their leadership role will involve improving practice in these areas, with a particular focus on improving literacy and numeracy.

Informed by successful programme models with fixed-term contracts, such as Frontline or Unlocked Graduates, The Difference programme will agree a two-year contract for its teachers in their AP school. Difference Teachers will only be placed in 'Good' or 'Outstanding' providers for their two-year placement, and their training will involve visits to sites of best practice in the country. This will ensure that Difference Teachers' first experience of AP would allow them to learn from best practice.

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## **Demand for The Difference**

There is demand for this career route among teachers. As part of our research, IPPR commissioned YouGov to carry out a survey in summer 2017. This tested appetite among a representative sample of 750 teachers in England for The Difference programme. One in four said they were interested in exploring the outlined career route. One in ten teachers said that they were definitely interested in enrolling in the programme. In total, 36 per cent of surveyed teachers – a pool of 93,000 teachers nationally – would be interested in becoming specialist leaders through The Difference.

Teachers want to be upskilled in supporting the most vulnerable young people. Our YouGov teacher survey found that 'social justice – a desire to work with the children most in need' was the strongest pull-factor in joining a programme like The Difference. Sixty-three per cent of those interested in the programme ranked this as one of their top three motivations of 11 potential motivations to join the programme. Developing expertise was the second-strongest pull-factor, with 58 per cent of those interested in the programme ranking 'expertise in working with children with complex needs' as one of their top three motivations.

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### 5.3 STEP 2: UPSKILL THESE TEACHERS AS MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEADERS

The teaching profession has insufficient expertise and access to training in supporting the most vulnerable children and young people. Addressing this problem requires a pipeline of specialist leaders who can cascade this knowledge across the workforce. The Difference will create this expertise by providing a two-year leadership position in the AP sector, and delivering a bespoke training programme to upskill these teachers to become future headteachers.

#### *Providing a bespoke Master's-level training programme*

Borrowing from the success of predecessor models Frontline, Teach First and Think Ahead, The Difference programme will provide high-quality on-the-job professional learning, accredited at Master's level. This will combine an understanding of theory, existing national and international best practice in education of vulnerable learners, and – uniquely – how other statutory agencies and non-statutory organisations work with young people and their families. A provisional overview of this comprehensive curriculum – covering strands in improving low literacy, low numeracy, mental health, safeguarding, and pupils' post-16 destinations – is demonstrated in figure 5.2 (see box below). Knowledge of the latest evidence-based practice will be combined with the on-the-job training support provided by practitioner tutors and clinical supervisors, borrowing a model successful in social care and mental health services.

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#### Developing an evidence base

This report has highlighted that insufficient evidence of what works is one of the key barriers to improving quality in the AP sector. In developing the curriculum for the programme, the dedicated charity The Difference will find and synthesise existing best practice in supporting vulnerable young people, and improving their outcomes against a range of metrics. The programme itself will then be used to help develop and disseminate best practice further.

Through collaboration with existing partnership organisations, The Difference will seek to build a more robust evidence base in what works to support vulnerable young people with complex needs. Difference Teachers will have the option of completing a dissertation, focusing on replicating existing interventions and exploring their impact, or on pioneering new ways of collaborating with other agencies to support young people. The Difference would partner with bodies such as the Chartered College of Teaching, the Education Endowment Foundation and the Teacher Development Trust in this endeavour to raise the evidence-base for working with vulnerable young people.

Each Difference Teacher will use their training to inform their leadership in their AP school. This might include a number of projects across the two-year placement, leading staff training to improve low literacy, low numeracy, pupils' self-regulation and pro-social behaviour. As with Teach First, The Difference will also create a network of practitioners and schools, able to share best practice with one another and to access elements of continuous professional development through the charity.

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**TABLE 5.1**

**Provisional curriculum outline**

STRAND OF LEARNING	LOW LITERACY / LOW NUMERACY	CHILD DEVELOPMENT & MENTAL HEALTH	FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS & SAFEGUARDING	SELF-EFFICACY, AGENCY AND EMPOWERMENT
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	Difference Teachers will be equipped to lead improved outcomes in literacy or numeracy.  Teachers will specialise in low literacy or low numeracy – depending on their initial teacher training specialism.	Difference Teachers will be equipped to lead improved pupil self-regulation and wellbeing.	Difference Teachers will be equipped to support pupil safety and lead reduced risk of involvement in risky and criminal activity.	Difference Teachers will be equipped to lead pupils' increased motivation and engagement with learning as a means to achieving personal citizenship and career goals.
<b>THEORY CONTENT</b>	Typical and atypical development of literacy and communication skills, including types of language-related special educational needs (SEND).  Typical and atypical development of numeracy skills, including types of number-related SEND.	Typical and atypical social and emotional development, including types of social, emotional and mental health-related SEND.	Prevalent safeguarding issues and their risk factors including: neglect; domestic violence and abuse; child sexual exploitation; gang involvement and knife crime; drug-taking and addiction.	The role of active citizenship and careers education in developing intrinsic learning motivation.
<b>CLASSROOM PRACTICE CONTENT</b>	Evidence-based pedagogies and interventions to rapidly improve literacy and numeracy skills.	Pedagogies and interventions with indicative evidence of success in improving self-regulation, wellbeing and mental health.	Pedagogies and interventions with indicative evidence of success in reducing risk-taking and criminal behaviours.	Pedagogies and interventions with indicative evidence of improving pupil engagement in learning and post-16 destinations.
<b>MULTI-AGENCY CONTENT</b>	The work and referral processes of services to support literacy and numeracy-related learning needs – statutory and non-statutory, including educational psychologists; speech and language therapists.	The work and referral processes of local child, adolescent and young people's mental health services – statutory and non-statutory.	The work and referral processes of social work, policing and youth offending teams, as well as relevant local youth work organisations.	The work of and access routes to relevant youth organisations including the National Citizenship Service, the Reclaim Project, and the Careers and Enterprise Company.
<b>ORIGINAL RESEARCH: DISSERTATION (OPTIONAL)</b>	<p>Participants may choose to write a dissertation, which would comprise original research. This would add to the existing evidence base for supporting vulnerable learners, with a focus on either an area of classroom practice or multi-agency collaboration. The research would be conducted and disseminated in collaboration with universities or existing research bodies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom practice – focus on a particular intervention with indicative evidence of success, its replication, and data analysis of its impact.</li> <li>Multi-agency collaboration – focus on a particular multi-agency approach or specific cross-service collaboration. Original research would involve an implementation analysis of this way of working, highlighting factors in and barriers to wider implementation.</li> </ul>			

Source: Author's model

### 5.4 STEP 3: DEVELOP A ROUTE BACK INTO LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THE MAINSTREAM SECTOR

Steps 1 and 2 are intended to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes in the AP sector. However, this is only half of the challenge. To really address the problem of exclusions, we need to reduce the number of young people with complex needs who are told to leave their schools each year. This will require – among other things – teachers and leaders in the mainstream sector who understand the needs of, and provisions available to their most vulnerable students. The Difference will help to ensure that this happens by creating a pool of specialist leadership talent for the mainstream sector.

#### *Careers brokering service*

The Difference will offer an alumni service for Difference Leaders who have completed the programme and are ready for a new challenge. For the majority, this new challenge will be to return to the mainstream and spread their skills and insight across the system. Relationships with multi-academy trusts could help The Difference to broker interviews for Difference Leaders for existing vacancies in senior leadership teams.

#### *Demand among mainstream schools*

In research for this report, we held roundtables and interviews with a range of mainstream headteachers and executive headteachers, and surveyed 120 heads working across the country. These research participants showed an interest in recruiting Difference Leaders in their schools to:

- improve universal provision
  - line manage pastoral work across a school, improving whole school knowledge of mental health, and linking more effectively a school's behaviour and SEND strategies (particularly in secondary schools)
- improve targeted and preventative support
  - line manage the SEND team to identify undiagnosed social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and speech language communication needs (SLCN); lead effective interventions to address low literacy and numeracy; and intervene to support wellbeing and self-regulation amongst pupils with SEMH
  - use insight into external organisations to broker preventative support for vulnerable students including effective commissioning of offsite AP.
- improve support for pupils with acute needs
  - line manage the SEND team to improve referral processes for Education and Health Care Plans
  - use insight into multi-agency expertise to improve effective referrals and multi-agency working
- improve specialist capacity for groups of schools
  - run internal exclusion provision, including offering more preventative work and traded places in offsite AP to other local schools
  - quality assure local offsite AP, and offer this service to other local schools on a traded basis.

More than half of surveyed leaders said they would be interested in hiring The Difference leaders. Ninety-five per cent of these said they would particularly value this leader's knowledge of complex needs and behaviour; 84 per cent said they would value their knowledge about mental health; and 51 per cent said they would value their expertise in working with external agencies.

Eighty-nine per cent of respondents said their motivation for hiring such a leader would be improved mental health for all pupils; 66 per cent were motivated by

the opportunity to boost CPD for all their staff on mental health; 62 per cent were motivated by the opportunity to improve pastoral support and pupil behaviour across the school. More than half (54 per cent) said that they would be motivated by a desire to reduce their fixed-period exclusion rates, and nearly half said they would particularly like to hire such a leader to improve attainment for their pupils making the least progress in literacy and numeracy.

Some of England's largest multi-academy trusts have already endorsed the development of The Difference and expressed a desire to partner with the programme to hire its graduates as senior leaders, including Oasis Learning Community, Ormiston Academies Trust and Ark Schools..

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### **Case study: A whole-school approach to inclusion**

Shaun is deputy headteacher for inclusion at Thomas Tallis School. He was an attractive hire to his mainstream school because of his MA in inclusion, SENCO qualification and experience working in a PRU. 'In the PRU, I learnt to speak CAMHS and I learnt to speak social care,' he says, describing his close relationships with colleagues working around vulnerable pupils and their families. These experiences influenced Shaun's three-tiered, whole-school approach to leading learning, wellbeing and safeguarding.

#### *Tier 1 – Supporting universal needs*

Before Shaun arrived, behaviour, special educational needs and pastoral staff teams sat separately in the school's structure. A new inclusion framework now unites the teams, formalised in a line management structure under Shaun's deputy headship. This framework involves goals and training for all staff skills in 'tier 1' – universal support of students' learning, wellbeing and safeguarding needs.

#### *Tier 2 – Intervening preventatively*

Shaun's tiered model involves providing preventative interventions, often with the help of external organisations. 'This year I brought in Chelsea's Choice, a child sexual exploitation awareness charity; the Amy Winehouse Foundation, which focuses on self-esteem and substance misuse; and have lined up Growing Against Gang Violence and Yinka Williams, whose work focuses on online abuse. In each instance, the organisation delivered to the whole year group about the safeguarding risk. We don't assume that a particular issue is/isn't affecting students – we allow them all to learn about and understand the issue, and equip them with the skills to recognise it in the future. Next, students reflected on the content in pastoral groups. From there, we moved on to targeted work with students who were identified through the process as particularly at risk.'

#### *Tier 3 – Addressing acute need*

Shaun holds relationships with key local authority agencies, which has enabled him to improve referrals and support for vulnerable children. 'In one instance, our concerns weren't being recognised by social care, because interactions with parents were positive even though the child was in serious risk of harm. I did something really unorthodox and called an Initial Child Protection Conference myself – normally this is called by social care. If I hadn't worked so much with other agencies, I wouldn't have necessarily known that schools have that power too. But they do, and I did, and it led to much better support from social care for that vulnerable young person.'

## 5.5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **A new programme to develop specialist leadership capacity in the teaching profession should be created to improve outcomes for those pupils who have been excluded in the short term, and reduce the numbers of pupils excluded from school in the longer term.**
- This programme, provisionally called The Difference, could:
  - **recruit exceptional early career teachers** with evidenced leadership experience
  - **place them in leadership positions in an AP school**
  - **upskill them through a bespoke programme** of two-year on-the-job professional learning at Master's level
  - **develop a route back to mainstream leadership** through an alumni careers programme to match alumni with senior leadership vacancies leading inclusion
  - **increase evidence-led practice** by using its own programme and the research skills of existing organisations, to develop and disseminate a better understanding of 'what works' to support children with complex needs.
- There is demand for such a programme among teachers, PRUs and other AP schools, mainstream multi-academy trusts, and professional bodies working to improve evidence-led practice in schools.

# ANNEX I.

## EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

### THE LIMES COLLEGE

The Limes College is a pupil referral unit (PRU) for 8–16-year-olds, catering predominantly to pupils who have been permanently excluded, are at risk of permanent exclusion, or are in short-term respite places. However, the PRU also provides education to young girls who are pregnant, students who cannot attend school for medical reasons, and unaccompanied minors who are new migrants to the area and are not yet enrolled in a mainstream school. The Limes has capacity for 120 pupils at any one time.

A continuum of education and support is on offer to the varied young people who the Limes College supports. Pupils come with a wide range of learning needs and current attainment. The Limes aims to reintegrate as many pupils as possible into mainstream school, and to ensure that those who sit exams with them leave with qualifications and go on to further education, apprenticeships or employment. Ofsted recognises their strength in achieving these outcomes with young people, and judged the PRU ‘Outstanding’ in all areas in its last inspection (Ofsted 2015).

### THE FAMILY SCHOOL

The Family School is a state-maintained AP school, run by the mental health and children’s charity the Anna Freud Centre. The school works exclusively with pupils who have been excluded in Key Stages 2 and 3, and aims to reintegrate them into mainstream school with the confidence, educational progress and ambition they need to succeed. The Family School’s innovative model works with families and pupils, integrating CAMHS practice into the school’s work. At any one time, 12 pupils and their parent or significant adult carer work together as a ‘multi-family group’. The families are supported to help one another, learn about their child’s learning and development, and create the conditions and changes necessary so that their children can resolve their problems and return to school better equipped as learners. In 2017, Ofsted judged the school ‘Outstanding’ in all areas (Ofsted 2017b).

### THE BOXING ACADEMY

The Boxing Academy is an AP free school which began its life as a charity in Tottenham, but has been in its Hackney home since 2010, under the headship of Anna Cain. Its unique approach balances academic learning with the discipline of a boxing gym, and currently serves 40 pupils. The model provides intense mentoring and support for the young people in its care, placing them in a class of eight students with a dedicated boxer who acts as mentor, teacher support and coach throughout their time at the academy. Pupils develop a strong relationship with their ‘pod leader’. This relationship provides a foundation for students’ effort and pride in their achievement.

The school caters to pupils in Years 10 and 11 and sees them through to their GCSEs, with pupils sitting a minimum of five subjects including English and maths. All teaching staff at the academy are trained, and Ofsted judged that pupils have

well-targeted support to make good progress, judging the school 'Good' in all areas (Ofsted 2016c). This year, the Boxing Academy won the TES School Awards in the category of alternative provision school (Bloom 2017).

### **JAMIE'S FARM**

Jamie's Farm offers an intensive residential experience, to help re-engage vulnerable learners with education. The week-long residential visit focuses on developing pupils' resilience, self-esteem and discipline through a combination of 'farming, family and therapy'. While staying at the farm, pupils have a routine of preparing meals for each other and eating around a family table, and experience farming activities like lambing, log-chopping, horse-whispering and harvesting in the garden. While inner-city pupils have the opportunity to engage in these new and often calming activities, Farm staff engage the students in reflective conversations about emotions and behaviour, encouraging self-awareness about interactions with others. Last year, 82 per cent of the pupils deemed at risk of exclusion before their visit to the farm moved out of that category within just six weeks of their visit in the 2015–16 academic year.

Jamie's Farm is not a full-time school provision; instead the work of the farm complements the work of mainstream schools or PRUs. In partnership with its commissioning schools, the work of Jamie's Farm has begun to evolve, now offering exam revision residential trips for vulnerable students, which combine the farm's traditional therapeutic approach with revision for core subjects at a time of anxiety for students.

# ANNEX II.

## VARIATION IN EXCLUSION BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

**TABLE A1**

Local authorities with the highest population of pupils in schools for excluded students (as a proportion of total local pupil population)

LOCAL AUTHORITY	% PUPILS EDUCATED IN A PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT (PRU)  (BRACKETED NUMBER: THIS IS A MULTIPLE OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE)	% FREE SCHOOL MEAL (FSM) ELIGIBILITY	% PLACES IN LOCAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHICH ARE RATED 'REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT' (RI) OR 'INADEQUATE' (I)	% PLACES IN LOCAL PRUS WHICH ARE RI OR I
England average	0.18 (1x)	14.7	18%	18%
Blackpool, North West	1.18 (7x)	25.5	79%	0%
York, Yorkshire & Humber	0.72 (4x)	8.2	13%	0%
Islington, London	0.72 (4x)	27.5	24%	71%
Blackburn with Darwen, North West	0.64 (4x)	15.4	11%	0%
Kingston Upon Hull, Yorkshire & Humber	0.64 (4x)	24.1	34%	17%
Nottingham, East Midlands	0.51 (3x)	25.1	11%	87%
Peterborough, East of England	0.50 (3x)	15.9	8%	0%
Slough, South East	0.49 (3x)	11.3	8%	0%
Gateshead, North East	0.44 (2x)	17.2	70%	100%
St Helens, North West	0.44 (2x)	18.3	24%	0%
Barking and Dagenham, London	0.43 (2x)	16.7	7%	100%
Plymouth, South West	0.42 (2x)	16.9	26%	0%
Hammersmith and Fulham, London	0.40 (2x)	22.4	11%	0%
Reading, South East	0.40 (2x)	14.1	41%	100%
Haringey, London	0.39 (2x)	17.0	0%	0%
Poole, South West	0.38 (2x)	11.6	15%	0%
North East Lincolnshire, Yorkshire & Humber	0.37 (2x)	17.3	23%	0%
Tower Hamlets, London	0.35 (2x)	32.9	5%	0%
Knowsley, North West	0.34 (2x)	29.0	100%	0%
Manchester, North West	0.34 (2x)	25.8	38%	0%

Source: IPPR analysis of Department for Education (2017) Schools, pupils and their characteristics and Ofsted (2017), 'Maintained schools and academies inspections and outcomes as at March 2017'

Note: The rate is the number of excluded pupils expressed as a percentage of the number of students studying in the local authority.

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(Footnotes)

- 1 This guidance references section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996, as amended by section 3 of the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010.
- 2 IPPR calculations, based on the number of state-funded secondary schools, see DfE 2017c

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