

Children's Services
222 Upper Street, N1 1XR

Report of: Corporate Director of Children's Services

Meeting of: Children's Services Scrutiny

Date: 20 March 2023

Ward(s): All

Subject: Update on impact of Children's Services Scrutiny on Exclusion (2019)

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 In June 2019, Executive received a report from the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee which examined the use and impact of fixed period and permanent exclusion from both primary and secondary schools in Islington. The report proposed fourteen recommendations to enable more children and young people to remain in mainstream education.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on action taken in response to the recommendations, and provides comparative data to show impact. It confirms that since 2018-19, permanent exclusion from Islington primary schools has remained low (although many LAs see no permanent exclusion of primary age children), while permanent exclusion from Islington secondary schools has reduced by 65%. Over the same period, suspension from primary from Islington primary schools has reduced by 43%. Suspension from secondary school has increased by 11% however. This is well above Inner London and National levels, with girls and those receiving SEND support significantly over-represented. Our data also shows the level of concern is different for different schools, with three academies accounting for almost 50% of all suspensions. The report also outlines further action planned.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made against the recommendations from the Review
- 2.2 To note the further work proposed to consolidate and build on the improvements to date.

3. Background

- 3.1 Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) [research](#) in 2017 (which prompted the Timpson Review) identified poor outcomes associated with exclusion. Less than 2% of excluded learners get a good pass in English and maths; 1 in 2 is immediately unemployed and out of education at age 16; and there is a strong link with criminal involvement – half of the prison population are estimated to have been excluded at school. IPPR calculated the lifetime cost to the state: over £2.9bn for last year's cohort of officially excluded young people
- 3.2 All state schools in England follow the same exclusions framework, yet there are differences in rates of exclusions between schools, type of pupils and areas of the country.
- 3.3 Exclusions disproportionately affect certain groups of young people. This includes those most vulnerable, such as pupils with a special educational need (SEND). Pupils from some ethnic groups are also more likely to be excluded, in particular Black Caribbean boys. The socio-economic background of pupils also plays a role in exclusion. Pupils eligible for free school meals are four times more likely to be excluded than pupils not eligible nationally.

4. Children's Services Scrutiny on Exclusion (2019): What did it say and what progress has been made?

- 4.1 Islington Children's Services Scrutiny Committee determined to focus on Exclusion from School in 2018-19. The final report from the chair of the committee included fourteen recommendations under four main headings:
 - Helping our schools to prevent exclusions and support young people at risk of exclusion
 - Developing best practice in our schools
 - Supporting children and young people excluded from school
 - Urging Central Government to act in the best interests of young people

- 4.2 The following describes action taken against the recommendations and impact where measurable:

Helping our schools to prevent exclusions and support young people at risk of exclusion

- 4.3 **Recommendation 1: Schools should be encouraged to make referrals at the earliest opportunity to support services such as Educational Psychology, CAMHS, the New River College outreach service and Early Help services.**

Improving the range of services to support children and young people, and in particular to support their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs was one of three priorities under Children's Services Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2018-22.

Consequently, the range of services available has developed considerably over the last 3 years as follows:

- An expanded SEMH emotional wellbeing pathway, including Barnardo's (new contractual relationship); Emotional Wellbeing Workers (new roles); Social Prescription (Third Sector / Universal Services pilot); online counselling (Kooth – new service)
- Full integration of CAMHS and the emotional wellbeing pathway within the Children's Services Contact Team (CSCT) (live from September 2019).
- Mental Health in Schools Teams (see recommendation 2 below)

- Review of Early Help Services and relaunch for September 2020 with a much sharper focus on pushing support 'in' to schools (rather than schools needing to refer 'out')
- A support and intervention protocol has been agreed with Early Help Services to prevent escalation of behaviours using a child and family approach (Think Family)
- SEN Behaviour Handbook has been relaunched which includes links to key resources and Islington's local offer

The new / reorganised Services and pathways have been promoted to schools through briefings, communications, and direct contact; schools are generally the highest referring agency.

Referral routes to school support services, including New River College Outreach, have been streamlined and simplified to make access less bureaucratic for schools and therefore provide quicker access. From September 2020, Schools have used a single referral route, with a multi-disciplinary team determining the most appropriate response, meaning there can be no 'wrong' referral.

New River College Outreach Service remains very well-used by our schools to advise at the first signs of concern. They also collaborated closely with other Council and health services to help develop a [Recovery Curriculum](#) to support all schools in welcoming back all children to school in September 2020 following the COVID-19 disruption. They remain a strong and much valued partner.

Our schools continue to consult our Educational Psychology Service at a later stage of concern however, primarily for statutory assessment work as part of the Education, Health and Care needs assessment process. We will continue to encourage schools to make greater use of the early help advice that Educational Psychologists are able to offer on suitable interventions across a range of needs. The 'traded' model under which the service currently operates limits the extent to which this can be influenced (i.e. it is for the school that purchases the service to decide how to use it) although the service continues to promote a full offer.

4.4 Recommendation 2: Schools should be further encouraged to make best use of the whole-school transformation programmes offered by CAMHS, Educational Psychology, and the New River College outreach services.

Islington Trauma Informed Practices in Schools (iTIPS)

The [Islington Trauma Informed Practices in Schools \(iTIPS\)](#) project aims to help schools embed a whole-school trauma strategy. To date, 15 primary schools, three secondary schools and New River College have used the framework to support their work. A paper – [Developing trauma-informed practices in inner London schools – the iTIPS Pilot](#) - was published by *Research in Practice* 2021 positively evaluating the model. The model was also cited as good practice by Ofsted in their report [‘The multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment’](#) (para 82) published in February 2020 as follows:

‘Islington, through strong strategic commitment, has improved practice by creating a working environment in which children can build trusting relationships, across both universal and specialist provision... It has made a significant difference to the culture in schools...’

We are currently looking to consolidate funding to roll the programme out to more schools.

Mental Health Support Teams

In June 2019, Islington was successfully awarded 'Trailblazer' status as part of a national NHS initiative to provide trained mental health support in schools. Trailblazer sites will test how the

development of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) can work with schools, local authority and other services to improve earlier identification and intervention.

For the Islington pilot, we established two teams, North and South of the borough, so that every school, and therefore every child in an Islington school had access to a MHST.

The MHSTs are building on support already in place e.g., school counsellors, nurses, Educational Psychologists, voluntary sector, and programmes such as iTIPs to support children and young people with mild to moderate mental health issues e.g., exam stress, behavioural difficulties or friendship issues. They also help children and young people with more severe needs to access the right support, and provide a link to specialist NHS services

Staff have been appointed and trained. The project recommenced in September 2020 following COVID-19 disruption and will be fully and independently evaluated.

4.5 Recommendation 3: Officers in Pupil Services and School Improvement should encourage schools to closely link their Behaviour Management and Special Educational Needs functions.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is identified as one of four areas of need in the governments statutory SEN Code of Practice. It was also one of three priorities in the Council's [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Strategy 2018-22](#). Consequently, behaviour management in the context of SEND has been an area of focus for regular support and development forums, including the SEN Co-ordinators, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Deputy Head teachers and Head teachers.

Officers from Pupil Services and School Improvement have collaborated more closely to develop materials and approaches for schools, for example guidance on [Well-being and Recovery](#), and [Attendance and Behaviour](#).

In response to recommendations from the Scrutiny Review, Officers also developed an on-line interactive [SEND Support Behaviour Handbook](#) for Islington schools, to sit alongside [SEND Support handbooks](#) and other materials available through our mental health and well-being programmes.

The purpose of the Behaviour Handbook is to give information to assist with the early identification and planning of consistent support for children and young people with SEMH needs. It is informed by existing good practice in Islington as well as the latest DfE guidance on SEMH and SEND. It has a section on exclusion from school, including a protocol developed by a working group of Headteachers and Officers (see 5.4 below).

The Handbook was launched to schools in October 2019 and demonstrated at a SEND Exhibition of Good Practice for Islington Head teachers and SENCOs held at the Town Hall in November 2019. It is being well-used by schools in Islington and beyond. It is currently being updated to reflect the new DfE Behaviour Guidance.

The SEND Local Offer website has also been updated to include information about exclusion from school.

4.6 Recommendation 4: Officers in Pupil Services and School Improvement should encourage and support all schools to form Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships.

Officers from Pupil Services and School Improvement have further researched different Behaviour and Attendance Partnership models in operation across the country and their impact, and presented evidence to Head teachers for further consideration.

Islington Schools have already formed a number of collaborative education improvement partnerships (e.g. Future Zone, involving 22 schools who collaborated to provide a [protocol](#) for supporting children back into school following any fixed period exclusion – see 5.3 above). Attendance and behaviour are also standing agenda items for twice termly Headteacher briefings. We have a focus group with ten schools whose attendance gives most concern that meets monthly. In addition, the role of Securing Education Boards has been further developed (see Recommendation 7 below).

Our schools did not therefore consider that Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships would bring any additional value at that time.

In 2022, our new Director of Learning and Culture asked for a ‘deep dive’ on both attendance and behaviour issues that included data by school and by vulnerable group to be shared at a newly established Islington Secondary Headteacher network - this group includes all our Secondary Headteachers as well as Directors of Children’s Social Care and Youth Justice, to ensure a cross service response to these issues.

From this, all our Secondary schools have to committed to sharing and scrutinising this information and we will now regularly review this data to ensure it improves via the Secondary Headteacher network, co-chaired by two Headteachers (one maintained school and one Academy) established with Jamie Brownhill (head teacher at Central Foundation). One of the co-chairs will also represent Secondary Heads at the developing Education Board that will be chaired by the Lead Member for Children.

4.7 Recommendation 5: School governors should receive training on how they can help to shape their school’s culture and ethos, their role in the exclusion process, and how they can scrutinise school behaviour policies and practices.

Three presentations have taken place for all Chairs of Governors (May and September 2019. January 2020) on fixed term and permanent exclusion, the recommendations of the Scrutiny review and Governors role in developing an inclusive school ethos. Further sessions are planned for 2023 to consider updated Governments guidance on both Behaviour and Suspension / Exclusion. Both reflect the recommendations of the [Timpson Review](#) which ran in parallel with our local Scrutiny Committee Review, and made very similar conclusions / recommendations. Materials have been provided to Governors (e.g., questions to ask, a ‘pupil movement’ checklist) to assist. Unfortunately, training sessions for all Governors on this subject have not been well attended.

A number of further actions have been put in place to improve access and engagement for Governors (e.g., more ‘virtual’ training, recruiting more Governors from global majority groups).

4.8 Recommendation 6. To ensure that all school staff are well equipped to support young people at risk of exclusion, officers in the Children, Employment and Skills directorate should explore how information on pupil needs can be shared widely between support services and school staff whilst meeting confidentiality requirements.

An [Information Sharing Agreement](#) for children and young people with special needs has been developed, agreed and signed off by relevant services following approval by the Council and Health Authority's respective Information Governance processes in the context of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). It covers the purpose for sharing information, information that can be shared, the legal basis for sharing and a description of the arrangements for sharing information.

'Team Around the School' (TAS) is a partnership that enables schools and other family support services to meet on a regular basis and have a shared conversation about children they may be worried about. This means that early help and intervention can be put in place to stop concerns escalating.

We have further developed a local TAS model as an effective framework for enabling information-sharing, by setting out a local protocol and making better use of virtual platforms to improve sustainability. This is underpinned by each schools' data protection arrangements.

We have delivered training to practitioners in Targeted Youth Service and 'Bright Futures' so they have a clearer understanding of the exclusion process and are better able to support with negotiating alternative solutions to exclusion.

We have run workshops for parents to ensure they are aware of the rules around exclusion, their rights and responsibilities, and where to seek support.

Developing best practice in our schools

4.9 Recommendation 7: The Securing Education Boards should consider if any of their processes can be amended to offer additional support to pupils at risk of exclusion.

All local authorities must have a Fair Access Protocol to ensure that any unplaced children are allocated a suitable school place as quickly as possible. This includes children permanently excluded from school. Islington's Fair Access arrangements are overseen by a primary and a secondary Securing Education Board. Each has multi-agency membership, including Head teachers.

The Boards have reviewed their role following recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee and now include as part of routine consideration:

- Data on exclusion and children who leave school to ensure an understanding of how such activity feeds into local trends
- Notification to the allocated social worker of any child referred to the Boards
- Follow up by an identified lead professional, as agreed by the Board, for any requests for alternative placement not agreed by the Boards
- Chair's action to expedite any urgent matters
- An annual report from each Board is now circulated to all schools

Examples of good practice are shared by Board members e.g., through briefings, professional networks and education partnership networks with all schools, so that all of Islington's pupils can benefit from good models in preventative and restorative work.

4.10 Recommendation 8: Officers in Pupil Services and School Improvement should use the Committee's findings to produce a Good Practice Guide for schools.

See 'Behaviour Handbook', as detailed in Recommendation 3 above.

4.11 Recommendation 9: A 'Charter for Inclusion' should be developed with Islington Schools and New River College to affirm their commitment to supporting Islington's young people to stay mainstream education.

In researching successful approaches to inclusion to respond to this recommendation, we identified a body of research on '[Belonging and Place](#)', led by Kathryn Riley, Professor of Urban Education at UCL

The research suggests that one in four children report a feeling that they don't belong¹. It is also suggested that children from disadvantaged communities are twice as likely as their more advantaged peers to feel that they don't belong², and four times more likely to be excluded³.

For some children, if they don't belong in school, they don't belong anywhere.

Schools come into their own when they recognise that each child, each young person, each adult who passes through the school gates brings their own story into the life of the school.

The research evidence also shows that a sense of belonging in school leads to improved academic outcomes and has a strong association with positive social outcomes such as health and wellbeing, increased student motivation and reductions in absenteeism⁴.

Recent evidence from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 2019) also shows a strong link between children's sense of physical and emotional 'safety' in school and their academic performance in maths and science.

It is also suggested that an impact of exclusion and a sense of not belonging can mean that disaffected or excluded children and young people therefore search for a sense of belonging elsewhere, and may find it in extremism, self-harming, or gang membership. The research also recognises the key role of schools as one of the very few shared social institutions that can create a sense of belonging or exclusion.

This work reflects Islington's 'Fairer Together' approach, the Islington Parents SEND Charter (see below) and the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee to develop inclusion and address the underachievement of some groups. Based on a strong starting position, Professor Riley kindly agreed to work with us in Islington to develop belonging in Islington as an Inclusion Imperative, with the aim of ensuring that all our schools become places of belonging for all of our children.

In January 2020, Professor Riley hosted a conference for all our schools to consider inclusion, belonging and place. Further workshops have taken place with Headteachers to introduce the concepts, give tools and consider what schools can recommend to take forward?

Focused work is also taking place with children in one of our primary schools – what does it look like when I feel I belong? What does it look like when I feel I don't belong?

¹ OECD (2017). PISA Results 2015 (Volume III).

² OECD (2013). PISA 2012 Results in focus. What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know. Paris, France: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development..

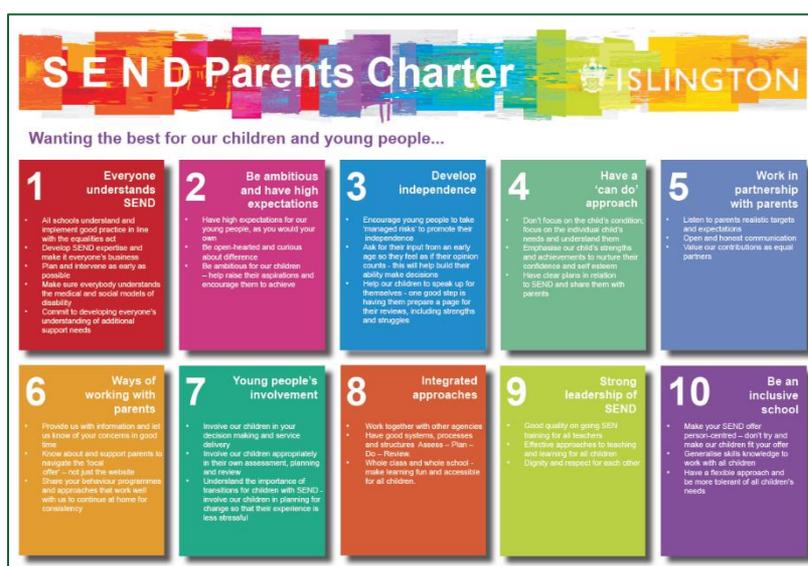
³ The Fair Education Alliance (2017). Report Card 2016–2017.

⁴ Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(1), 60–71.; Louis, K. S., Smylie, M., & Murphy, J. (2016). Caring leadership for schools:

Unfortunately, this work was interrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak. However, workshops with a group of Headteachers continued with support from Prof Riley to consider leadership in the new era, considering some of the issues emerging from COVID-19 about equality - in particular the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign.

This work resulted in a publication - [Leading in a New Era: Compassionate Leadership for Place & Belonging](#) and a further study [Place and Belonging in School: Why it matters today](#) which involved Hargrave Park School.

Alongside this, we worked with the Islington SEND Parent Carers Forum, to support them in producing the **Islington SEND Parents Charter**:



We have more recently been in discussion with Southwark Council who are developing a local Inclusion Charter for their schools for lessons learned.

The Government's SEND Green Paper [Right support; Right place; Right time](#) is proposing that every Local Authority must establish new local SEND partnerships, bringing together education, health, and care partners with local government to produce a local inclusion plan setting out how each area will meet the national standards. We expect the Government to produce a delivery plan with timelines later this year.

Supporting children and young people excluded from school

4.12 Recommendation 10: Officers in the Children, Employment and Skills directorate should review the feasibility of attaching a named social worker to New River College.

As part of Early Help Review outlined in paragraph 1, officers have consulted with New River College on the best model of delivering support to children and young people who attend the College and their families. Two dedicated workers from the new service will continue to work exclusively with children at the College and their families.

Because of the statutory framework, case supervision and professional development requirements for Social Workers it was not considered operationally viable to attach a named Social Worker directly to the College. However, the Assistant Director, Children in Need now links regularly with the College and provides a direct point of contact where any concerns need to be escalated. The College is also supported by other teams including Targeted Youth Support, Integrated Gangs, Exploitation and Missing Children.

4.13 Recommendation 11: To remove the stigma associated with attending a pupil referral unit, officers in the Children, Employment and Skills directorate should work with New River College to widely promote the successes of its pupils.

New River College (NRC) remains is a successful and well-run school, which Ofsted judged to be 'Good' overall (2018), securing good and sometimes outstanding progress for all learners, with the school's work to promote personal development and welfare also judged as outstanding.

New River College Medical was inspected in June 2021 and rated outstanding: the following is an extract from the report:

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils appreciate being in this small and nurturing school environment. They feel safe and value the positive difference it makes to them. Pupils spoke confidently about the school being a safe space for all. Bullying is not tolerated.

Each pupil has an individual plan which supports them to attend well. Attendance at 'The Lodge' provision has improved significantly. Very strong professional relationships exist between staff, pupils, and parents and carers. These are based on trust and clear communication. Staff at the hospital build a rapport with pupils very quickly.

Pupils are rightly proud of how well they learn. They know that teachers help them do their best. Adults have very high expectations of all pupils. They organise work to ensure that pupils are successful in their learning. Each pupil has a timetable tailored to their specific interests and needs.

Leaders provide individualised support and guidance for pupils when they leave the school. For example, pupils have transition plans to help them get off to a strong start at the colleges they go on to attend.

Adults confidently use personalised strategies to help pupils to manage their own behaviour. Careful planning helps pupils to feel safe and secure, and make the most of the curriculum on offer.

Staff across the College continue to work hard to provide educational and emotional support so that their young people can prosper. Up to 75% of students in some year groups continued to attend the College during the COVID-19 period, with daily contact and home learning support for those who felt safer at home. The college remained open to students throughout the pandemic and during the Easter and half-term breaks.

During the 2018/19 academic year, 23 pupils returned to mainstream education. The College also have a very high rate of children leaving with a firm education, employment, or training offer, with no young people not in education, employment or training for the last four years. Several young people are also supported to successfully move on to, as well as step down from, specialist settings. Students at the college and their families overwhelmingly report on the life-changing impact of the care and support they receive from the college community.

Plans are in place to further strengthen the education, employment and training offer to the College via iWork and the Council's HR team. As mentioned in paragraph 1 above, the Outreach Team from NRC have also collaborated with Officers to provide emotion health and well-being support guidance for all Islington schools during the COVID-19 disruption

A good example of the work of the college is a video produced by the students – Stress on the Brain – which can be viewed [here](#).

Officers have continued to promote the successes of pupils at NRC, overseen by the Director of Learning and Culture Management Team.

Nationally, the important role that Alternative Provision (including PRUs) plays in meeting children's additional needs has at last been recognised, first through the Timpson Review (May 2019) and further elaborated by the SEND Green Paper (April 2022), which looked at the specific challenges facing the alternative provision sector as part of this Review.

The SEND Green paper consequently proposes a reformed and integrated role for alternative provision that will:

- Make alternative provision an integral part of local SEND systems by requiring the new local SEND partnerships to plan and deliver an alternative provision service focused on early intervention
- Give alternative provision schools the funding stability to deliver a service focused on early intervention by requiring local authorities to create and distribute an alternative provision-specific budget
- Develop a bespoke performance framework for alternative provision which sets robust standards focused on progress, re-integration into mainstream education or sustainable post-16 destinations - deliver greater oversight and transparency of pupil movements including placements into and out of alternative provision 16
- Launch a call for evidence, before the summer, on the use of unregistered provision to investigate existing practice

A Project Group has been established and a Business Case is being developed to further extend the New River College offer in line with the above to broaden our local offer.

4.14 Recommendation 12: Officers in the Children, Employment and Skills directorate should engage with neighbouring authorities and schools in neighbouring boroughs close to the borough boundary, making them aware of this review and the support that is expected for pupils who are Islington residents.

A copy of the Review was shared with neighbouring Local Authorities at an operational level, alongside an extract from Islington's local 'advice, support and expectations' document and contact details of our Pupil Services and School Improvement Services, should they have any concerns about an Islington resident that cannot be addressed through services normally available to all children and young people at that school.

At a strategic level, the need for a cross-borough protocol for vulnerable children has been discussed by Service Directors across the North Central London area (Hackney, Camden, Barnet, Enfield, Barnet and Islington) at Islington's request and added to the work programme.

Urging Central Government to act in the best interests of young people

4.15 Recommendation 13: Islington Council should lobby for national policy changes that would support children to remain in mainstream education

We have responded in detail to the SEND Green Paper consultation, identifying areas where we think we can particularly assist in piloting new approaches.

4.16 Recommendation 14: Officers in the Children, Employment and Skills directorate should report back to the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee on the findings of the national School Exclusions Review led by Edward Timpson CBE, and detail if it is possible to implement its recommendations locally.

A report on the findings of the Timpson Review was presented to Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee in June 2019.

4.17 Additional Actions have included:

- A Black and minority ethnic action plan involving a wide programme of work
- Supporting the delivery of a Recovery Curriculum (which includes mental health and wellbeing) and encourage schools to offer a broad, inclusive curriculum for all pupils up to Year 11, including the arts and digital and other technologies as more children return to school
- Ensuring support for disadvantaged pupils transitioning to new provision in September, including progression post-16 and EET opportunities
- Promoting equality training in Continuous Professional Development (e.g., having challenging conversations) – including for Governors
- Reviewing school websites to ensure communication is positive and welcoming

5. Impact

Year	No of fixed period exclusions (suspensions) (Primary)	Number of permanent exclusions (Primary)	No of fixed period exclusions (suspensions) (Secondary)	Number of permanent exclusions (Secondary)
2018-19 <i>Published</i>	253	3	1,641	20
2021-22 <i>*Provisional local data</i>	146	4	1,820	7

5.1 The above table confirms that since 2018-19, permanent exclusion from Islington primary schools has remained low (although many LAs see no permanent exclusion of primary age children), while permanent exclusion from Islington secondary schools has reduced by 65%. Over the same period, suspension from primary from Islington primary schools has reduced by 43%. For Secondary Suspension (fixed period exclusion), we are well above Inner London and national levels, with girls and those receiving SEND support significantly over-represented. Our data also shows the level of concern is different for different schools, with three academies accounting for almost 50% of all suspensions.

What can we learn from others? Examples of effective practice from across the school system (Youth Endowment Trust)

5.2 The Youth Endowment Fund produced a report in June 2021 describing the impact of interventions which aim to prevent children being excluded or suspended from school. The report concludes ‘The best available estimate suggests the impact is likely to be low.’

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON VIOLENT CRIME: LOW ⓘ	PREVENTION TYPE: Primary Secondary
EVIDENCE QUALITY: 🔍🔍🔍🔍🔍 ⓘ	SETTING: School and college
COST: £ £ £ ⓘ	THEMES: A safe, positive place to learn
OTHER OUTCOMES: LOW reduction in Suspensions	EVIDENCE QUALITY: 🔍🔍🔍🔍🔍
HIGH reduction in Exclusions	🔍🔍🔍🔍🔍

5.3 They identified a range of different interventions to keep children safe by supporting them to stay in school. Some work directly with individual children. They could include:

- Counselling or specialist therapy from community mental health services.
- Activities to develop social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, relationship and communication skills, and decision-making.
- Therapeutic techniques to help students regulate their behaviour and develop appropriate coping strategies.
- Mentoring which pairs students with a mentor who can provide pastoral or academic support.
- Academic tutoring

5.4 Other approaches work across the whole school, and aim to create positive school environments, with clear rules that promote good behaviour, learning, and safety. They might also have a specific focus on restorative practices.

5.5 One review contributing to the report found that, on average, interventions which aim to reduce school suspension reduce both arrests and suspensions by a very small amount. Another review focused on a broader range of outcomes including in-school exclusion, out-of-school exclusion, and permanent exclusion, but did not look at the impact on any crime or violence outcomes. This review found that interventions that were much more successful at reducing exclusion.

5.6 The largest available study in the UK is an evaluation of the Engage in Education programme, delivered by Catch22. In this programme, youth workers worked with children in years 9 and 10 on topics such as effective communication, anger management, and de-escalation. One-to-one support was provided by a keyworker in areas of identified need. This study found no evidence that the Engage in Education intervention reduced exclusions.

Further action planned

5.7 Narrowing attainment gaps and securing equality in outcomes for all pupils remain central to our work and have been reflect in the development of our Education Plan. There is concern that the COVID-19 disruption has exacerbated existing inequalities and / or created new ones, as we now know that the pandemic has impact more heavily on disadvantaged communities. We will also need to support families and schools in responding to the cost-of-living crisis, which will inevitably hit hardest on our most vulnerable families. Promoting inclusion and reducing exclusion therefore retains the highest priority.

5.8 Our Education Plan and SEND Strategy, approved by Council Executive in 13 October 2022 place inclusion at the heart; both are supported by a detailed delivery plan involving collaborative working across all, as well as the support of elected members.

- 5.9. Our approach is system led, which means all schools regardless of their status (academy, maintained) working together with a shared ambition to improve outcomes for ALL children. It reflects the priority for Islington to become an exclusion-free borough by taking a 'no need to exclude' stance and promoting the 'Islington approach to Inclusion' as set out in our Education Plan / SEND Strategy.
- 5.10 In October 2022, Islington was successful in bidding to participate in the London Mayor Violence Reduction Unit's 'Inclusive and Nurturing Schools' programme, a £1.75m scheme that will run over the next three years. The programme sits as part of the Mayor's wider strategy to help reduce youth violence. It involves developing a whole-school approach across two strands – Inclusion, and Healthy Relationships – and will lead to two accreditations for participating schools; 'National Nurturing School' and 'Healthy Relationships Champion'. Islington has been allocated places for ten schools on the programme, targeting our highest excluding schools. [Here](#) is a link to a short explanatory video. There is no cost to schools, and many benefits in terms of materials and resources e.g., free online subscription to the Boxall Profile and tools, mentoring etc. All targeted School have signed up and Islington will be the first Borough to participate in the programme, commencing in January 2023.
- 5.11 Other action planned includes:
- Promoting inclusion and belonging through our direct and targeted work with schools e.g., through School Attendance Support termly Targeting meetings
 - Capturing and sharing best practice (e.g., schools that have shown a significant improvement) through the Education Board
 - Supporting schools towards earlier intervention through better use of data
 - Making best use of whole school transformation (e.g., trauma informed practice)
 - Updating of our behaviour handbook to reflect new DfE guidance
 - Training for Governors on shaping school culture and ethos
 - Developing locality-based networks to share good practice

6. Implications

6.1 Financial implications:

All the recommendations have so far been implemented within existing budgets with the exception of part of recommendation 2 (Mental Health Support Teams), where in June 2019 Islington was successfully awarded 'Trailblazer' status as part of a national NHS and schools in England initiative to provide trained mental health support with attached funding in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Moving forward, the preferred operating model for the Education Psychology Service (recommendation 1) remains a challenge under the current funding arrangements; particularly with regard to the traded element of the service, where schools buy-back Education Psychology time for specific services. The funding model is being reviewed to establish what changes are possible to better align funding with the preferred operating model, however this may require additional investment by the Council.

Similarly the level of funding required (and potential sources) to roll out the iTIPS offer more widely (recommendation 2) is being reviewed.

6.2 Legal Implications:

Governing bodies must have regard to Statutory guidance on the exclusion of pupils from local-authority-maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units and the principal legislation to which this Guidance relates to is:

- The Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011;
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education Act 1996; and
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by the Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

The guidance makes clear that only the head teacher of a school can exclude a pupil and this must be on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently. A fixed-period exclusion does not have to be for a continuous period.

Any decision of a school, including exclusion, must be made in line with the principles of administrative law, i.e. that it is: lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to exclusions and a school's wider legal duties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the Equality Act 2010); rational; reasonable; fair; and proportionate.

Governing Bodies must also have regard to 'Behaviour and discipline in schools' as stipulated in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and acknowledge the school's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and pupils with SEN

7.3 Environmental Implications

The actions proposed in this report do not have any environmental implications beyond those associated with standard office usage and are unlikely to significantly change the existing impacts of the services.

7.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

Resident Impact Assessments have been undertaken as part of the process of developing and implementing policies and actions arising from this report.

8. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 8.1 This report details the response to recommendations from the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Final report clearance:

Signed by: **Corporate Director of Children's Services**

Date: Date the report received final approval

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