

Reducing inequalities in school exclusion: Learning from good practice

A report to the Office of the Children's
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and Research in Childhood and Youth

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Executive Summary

Background

The research reported here was commissioned by the Office of the Children's Commissioner's to inform the second year of their on-going School Exclusions Inquiry. The first year of the inquiry culminated in the publication of the report *They Never Give Up On You* which included an analysis of recent national data on recorded exclusions from school that provided stark evidence of inequality for particular groups. Concerns about the disproportionate impact of school exclusion on specific groups of young people are not new and there have previously been attempts at policy level to reduce inequalities. However, the relationship between exclusion and other educational and social processes is complex and these inequalities persist. The over-arching objective of the research was therefore to identify characteristics of good practice in addressing inequalities in school exclusions, with particular attention to the following factors: Free School Meals; gender; ethnicity; and Special Educational Needs (SEN).

To meet this broad objective, the study addressed the following core areas of work: initial teacher training (ITT); local authority systems; practice in schools; and workforce training and development.

Methods

The research comprised a small-scale, qualitative study, conducted with representatives of two ITT providers, four local authorities and six schools as part of a four stage process as detailed below:

Stage One involved focus groups with tutors in two ITT providers, identified as examples of good practice in addressing diversity and inclusion within their programmes.

Stage Two comprised telephone and face to face interviews with key professionals in four local authorities, including local authority officials and Behaviour Support staff. Interviewees were closely involved with school exclusion processes and working with schools located in areas covered by the ITT providers involved at Stage One.

Stage Three consisted of a documentary review designed to identify school case studies of good practice following recommendations made in interviews at Stages One and Two. This review encompassed school Ofsted reports, DfE performance data and school websites.

Stage Four involved interviews in six secondary schools, identified as having demonstrated aspects of good practice in relation to exclusion, equality and inclusion. Face to face interviews were conducted with staff and young people and policy documentation and data relating to the monitoring of disciplinary processes were reviewed.

Data were analysed at the end of each stage, in order to inform the development of the next phase of work. All data were also analysed thematically in relation to the specific research questions once final data collection was complete.

Case study characteristics

Three of the four local authorities were in urban areas with ethnically diverse populations. All four had evidence of having successfully reduced levels of permanent exclusion, two from a previously high level. One had a zero permanent exclusion aspiration.

All six of the participating schools had seen a reduction in permanent exclusions, in two cases to zero, and often through the use of managed moves. The position of the case study schools in relation to reductions in fixed term exclusions was more variable. The proportion of young people in receipt of Free Schools Meals was above the national average in five of the six schools.

Key findings

The research reported here was focused on learning from examples of well-developed practice in addressing inequalities in school exclusions in England. In considering findings from the study it is important to remember that we did not seek to evaluate practice in the schools or local authorities studied, but rather to learn from their experience. Equally, we do not claim that the case studies discussed here are representative of schools or local authorities across the country. Nevertheless, despite the diversity of case study schools – in size, structure and population – consistent common themes emerged across the study as a whole.

Understandings of exclusion and inequalities

A key challenge for the study was to isolate good practice in school exclusion generally, in order to provide insights into good practice in relation to reducing inequalities in exclusions specifically.

A focus on reducing permanent exclusion had led to a continuum of provision including: alternatives to exclusion *within* schools; providing alternative curricula; and alternatives to exclusion outside mainstream educational provision. Evidence of over-representation (e.g., for Free School Meals and SEN) in relation to fixed term exclusions, alternatives to exclusion and the wider disciplinary processes of schools suggested the importance of understanding this as a systemic issue.

Recognition of disproportionality in rates of recorded exclusion as an equity issue appeared to be strongest amongst local authority exclusion officers, who had oversight of local exclusions data and provided training to schools and governors. At school level, reductions in permanent exclusion had not necessarily been achieved through a focus on reducing inequalities. Rather the focus was very much on the individual and on developing personalised and flexible ways to support them.

Approaches to reducing exclusion

Local cross-school partnerships (encompassing schools of all types, including academies and local authority schools) were found to be effective and highly valued in the development and sharing of good practice, as well as being seen as influential in reducing permanent exclusions.

Flexibility in provision and the curriculum emerged as important strategies, both in terms of maintaining young people at school and as an alternative to both fixed term and permanent exclusion

School ethos was emphasised across the case study interviews, with common components of ethos seen as critically important. For example, schools' understandings of their relationships with their context and community emerged as an important theme. Relatedly, respondents highlighted the importance of accepting that young people at risk of permanent exclusion are a collective responsibility for stakeholders in the local area.

Variation in school practices around exclusion was a concern noted across all stakeholder groups and identified by interviewees as a major source of inequality. Several respondents suggested that less inclusive schools were sometimes located in more leafy areas and ITT tutors' noted that trainees' preconceptions about the relationship between schools and their contexts were sometimes wrong

A commitment to developing positive relationships – between staff and students, and with external stakeholders – emerged as a common emphasis across all of the case study schools. Interviewees emphasised that values were made explicit and staff were expected to model these values in their practice. Leadership was consistently seen as key.

There were strikingly similar emphases between schools in relation to behaviour management. All had developed whole-school approaches to behaviour that were:

- proactive;
- closely monitored;
- facilitated early intervention;
- provided consistency and clarity about consequences;
- had more focus on rewards than on punishment;
- were based on restorative principles; and
- provided opportunities to learn from mistakes.

These systems and principles were considered to be essential for the development and maintenance of positive relationships based on trust and to be integral to teaching and learning. They reflected a commitment to listen to and empower young people to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Addressing inequalities

The factors that are known to be associated with over-representation in rates of recorded exclusion – Free School Meals, gender, Special Educational Needs and ethnicity – are not exclusive categories. While it is important to recognise overlaps between specific groups (e.g., in the intersection between SEN and FSM) it is also important to think about differences relating to each group as different intervention strategies and policy approaches may be required.

The case study schools had developed strong processes for recording and monitoring the involvement of different groups in their disciplinary processes including, but not only, fixed term and permanent exclusion. Interviewees noted that these data needed to be

followed up by action, including addressing the training needs of staff. Equalities legislation could also be seen as a factor underpinning other school policies.

Policy level interventions on issues of exclusion and equality appeared to have had a positive impact on practice in the case study schools and local authorities. This was reflected in the focus on zero exclusions in some areas, and the attention to young people with statements of SEN and Looked After Children as groups for whom alternatives to permanent exclusion should be found. Our research highlighted a particular need to support young people with SEN through Primary to Secondary transition

Further evidence of the value of top down approaches could be seen in the focus within the case study schools on the Pupil Premium although the potential to use this as means of addressing disproportionality in fixed term exclusions for Free School Meals was implicit rather than explicit.

Training

There were strong synergies between what the ITT tutors said about their approach to issues relating to diversity, inclusion and exclusion and the insights provided by staff in the case study schools into the characteristics of good practice in this regard. Most importantly, training on exclusions was seen to be a philosophy or attitude rather than a strategy, developed through an on-going, collaborative process of self-development.

The research highlighted the importance of whole school approaches to training relating to exclusion and behaviour management, in part because behaviour and inclusion staff may *not* have come through ITT. There is also some scope to address exclusion, and understandings of inequalities in recorded exclusion, more directly within ITT.

Changes to the delivery of ITT emerged as a significant concern. In particular, respondents observed that trainees might be placed in schools that were not models of good practice in relation to exclusions, with no opportunity to contextualise these experiences through exposure to values and practices that are more inclusive.

Key recommendations

- 1. Promoting partnership approaches:** The re-structuring of the relationships between local authorities and schools, specialist support services and schools and between ITT providers and schools could adversely affect the support provided to more vulnerable young people. Case studies of good practice showed that inter-professional collaboration can work well and support consistency in developing good practice, even in this changed context. However, to protect and maintain such partnerships in times of restructuring and economic constraint is challenging. It is critical that policy priority (at national and local authority level) is given to the development and maintenance of systems that support collaboration, consistency and the sharing of good practice.
- 2. Addressing variable practice:** Whilst focused on examples of good practice, the research identified clear concerns about variations in exclusion practices. Stronger mechanisms are needed to ensure consistency of practice across schools. This issue should also be approached in training for school leaders.

3. **Enforcement/sanctioning of breaches of exclusion guidance:** It is recommended that consequences be established to provide a more effective deterrent for breaches of the national guidance on exclusion.
4. **Key areas for training and practice development in schools**
 - a. **Understandings of equalities issues:** The research identified a tendency to focus on individualised approaches to exclusion and alternatives to exclusion rather than on over-representation in these processes as an equity issue for schools. This indicates that this is an area of professional understanding that needs to be explicitly addressed in training and continuing professional development.
 - b. **Training on behaviour management:** Training on restorative approaches to behaviour management is important to improve school staff practice with young people at risk of exclusion.
 - c. **Primary to Secondary transition:** Support for young people through transition emerged as a critical issue, particularly in relation to young people with additional or previously unidentified educational needs. More should be done to foster pro-active and collaborative practices in relation to Primary to Secondary transfer, with a particular emphasis on support for children with Special Educational Needs.
5. **Delivery of Initial Teacher Training:** ITT currently provides a space in which professional values are shaped and practice contextualised. To achieve the qualities of positive ethos and inclusive practice highlighted consistently across case study schools, especially in a context of change in ITT structure and delivery, it is necessary to develop robust systems to ensure that where ITT is delivered exclusively at school level, it is undertaken within a context that models good practice in relation to exclusion.
6. **Development of monitoring systems**
 - a. **Monitoring the use of the Pupil Premium to reduce inequalities in exclusions:** Central policy drivers have clearly helped in setting priorities for the development of good practice in relation to reducing exclusion. In this context, it is recommended that schools monitor the use of Pupil Premium spending to address disproportionality in exclusions relating to Free School Meals.
 - b. **Providing information about schools' success with exclusion:** Data on a school's record on the exclusion of young people with SEN in particular should be made more readily available to parents and carers as a means of providing greater transparency and accountability but also to inform decision making around transition.
 - c. **Modelling the monitoring of policy to assess its impact on specific groups:** Equalities legislation dictates that all decisions made by schools are informed by an understanding of their impact on specific groups and this is

also a duty on government. Given the over-representation of specific groups in recorded exclusion, national policy ought to be informed by consideration of the potential impact on young people involved in the disciplinary processes of schools.

7. Attention to the perspectives and experiences of young people

- a. **Building positive relationships:** Young people who contributed to this study were very clear that positive relationships with adults were important and needed to be based on trust and respect. There is a need for school systems to take account of young people's views and experiences across the spectrum that relates to exclusion, ranging from behaviour management policy, to alternative approaches within schools, to managed moves and exclusion.
- b. **The rights of young people and parents/carers in exclusion processes:** Policy change relating to exclusions appeals processes limit the likelihood of re-instatement following appeal against permanent exclusion. At the same time, there is no legislative requirement for an appeals process for managed moves. Schools and local authorities need to address the implications of these frameworks for the balance between the rights of head teachers and of young people and families.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and focus of the research

The research reported here aims to contribute to the Office of the Children's Commissioner's on-going School Exclusions Inquiry. The first year of the inquiry culminated in the publication of the report in March 2012, *They Never Give Up On You*, which highlighted concerns about inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion (Office of the Children's Commissioner 2012). That first phase of work included an analysis of recent national exclusions data, including the following stark example of inequality:

If you were a Black African-Caribbean boy with special needs and eligible for free school meals you were 168 times more likely to be permanently excluded from a state-funded school than a White girl without special needs from a middle class family.

(Office of the Children's Commissioner 2012, p9)

Concerns about the disproportionate impact of school exclusion on specific groups of young people are not new and there have previously been attempts at policy level to reduce inequalities. However, the relationship between disciplinary exclusion and other educational and social processes is complex and these inequalities persist. The present study was commissioned by the Office of the Children's Commissioner in this context. The over-arching aim was to identify and learn from examples of recognised good practice, in order to provide insights into how inequalities in school exclusion might be addressed.

A small-scale and predominantly qualitative study, the research gathered perspectives from Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers, local authority professional stakeholders with expertise in the area of exclusion, and staff and young people in six secondary schools, identified through scoping as having well-developed practice in relation to exclusion, equality and/or inclusion.

The report begins with an overview of policy and research relevant to our discussion of exclusion as an equalities issue. Chapter Two provides a brief overview of the research methods, before the main themes emerging from the research are presented. Chapter Three addresses understandings of i) school exclusion, in relation to a continuum of provision and prevention and ii) inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion. Chapter Four turns to practice, examining approaches associated with reducing exclusions. Chapter Five focuses specifically on groups that are disproportionately represented in national data on school exclusion, considering also the impact of equalities duties and of training. Finally, Chapter Six draws together key conclusions to emerge from the research, along with a series of recommendations for future development of policy, training and practice.

1.2 School exclusion

The Department for Education's national guidance on school exclusions (DfE, 2012a) makes it clear that young people should only be excluded from school as a last resort, on the grounds of behaviour, in cases where remaining in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the young person or others in the school. This has led to an increase in the use of alternatives to exclusion that makes it necessary to consider where recorded exclusion sits within a school's wider disciplinary practices. The national guidance also specifies that it is illegal to exclude a young person from school unofficially, and while illegal exclusions are not the focus of this study, it is important to note that this practice forms part of the context in which the research was undertaken.

National data on recorded exclusions from schools in England indicate that these have reduced in recent years (see Table 1.1). However, these data also show that while permanent exclusions have declined by 41% between 2006 and 2010, fixed term exclusions have only fallen by 24% in the same period.

Table 1.1 Reductions in rates of recorded exclusions in England¹

Year	Trends in permanent exclusions	Tends in fixed term exclusions
2010/11	5,080	324,110
2009/10	5,740	331,380
2008/09	6,550	363,280
2007/08	8,130	383,830
2006/07	8,680	425,600

Reductions in rates of permanent exclusion are in part a response to a focus on this issue at national and local government level that has encouraged the use of a range of alternatives to recorded exclusion. Initiatives that have explored this work include:

- *Promoting strategic alternatives to exclusions* was funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation in conjunction with five high excluding local authorities. This project ran from September 2006 to March 2008 and highlighted the importance of local authority political involvement and commitment. It also identified the importance of a strong guiding and coordinating role for local authority personnel.
- *Not present and not correct: Understanding and preventing school exclusions* was funded by Barnados (2010). This project concluded that the key features of effective practice were as follows:
 - (i) intervening before problems become entrenched;
 - (ii) working with parents and families;
 - (iii) small group work;
 - (iv) vocational options;
 - (v) a youth work approach; and
 - (vi) persistence and belief.

More recently, in 2011, the DfE announced trials in six local authorities across England, based on a model in which schools retain responsibility for ensuring that education

¹ Primary, Secondary, and Special Schools combined data. Source: DfE: Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England 2010/11

continues following exclusion, with funding for post-exclusion provision devolved to the school. Importantly, the young person's attendance and academic performance continue to count towards the school's performance data, aiming to address the risk that schools might exclude students who could adversely affect their performance.

1.3 Groups over-represented in exclusions

1. Children who are eligible for Free School Meals

Exclusion statistics for 2010/11 issued by the DfE in July 2012 showed that young people who are eligible for free school meals were nearly four times more likely to be permanently excluded from school. These young people are also approximately three times more likely to be excluded for a fixed period (DfE, 2012b). A government statistical review carried out in 2004 (DfES, 2004) further noted that the relationship between school context and rates of recorded exclusion amongst young people eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is not straightforward. A quarter of *low-excluding* schools had Free School Meal eligibility rates over the national average, suggesting that higher rates of exclusion are not inevitably associated with higher rates of Free School Meals.

The Pupil Premium is a recent policy initiative which has been explicitly designed to redress educational inequalities by allocating funding to schools according to the number of students who have been registered for Free School Meals at any point in the last six years². The intent is that schools themselves can determine how to use Pupil Premium funds, to allow them flexibility according to their needs and contexts. In one local authority area – Derbyshire County Council – a 2012 publication, *Changing Life Chances: practical projects and endeavours in schools*, illustrates how Pupil Premium funding can be used, giving examples of projects designed to focus on teachers' expectations and beliefs; gender differences; monitoring and tracking progress; primary-secondary transfer; and cultural and ethnic diversity. Ofsted's (2013) analysis of schools' spending on the Pupil Premium makes some reference to addressing high rates of exclusion, noting that schools who were successfully using these funds to improve achievement 'provided well-targeted support to improve attendance, behaviour or links with families where these were barriers to a pupil's learning' (op. cit. p3).

2. Children with Special Educational Needs

Statutory guidance on exclusion notes that:

As well as having disproportionately high rates of exclusion, there are certain groups of pupils with additional needs who are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of exclusion. This includes pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) and looked after children. Head teachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding permanently any pupil with a statement of SEN or a looked after child.

(DfE 2012, p7)

² Schools also receive Pupil Premium funding for children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months, and for children of service personnel.

Despite this clear emphasis, national statistics on exclusions for 2010/11 show that young people with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) are approximately nine times more likely to be permanently excluded than students with no SEN (DfE, 2012b). At the time of writing, the incoming Children and Families Act 2013 looks likely to change the arrangements for young people with SEN, and it remains to be seen how these changes will impact on the disproportionate exclusion of children with SEN. The SEN system is to be extended from birth to 25, statements and learning difficulty assessments will be replaced with a new birth- to-25 Education, Health and Care Plan. Local authorities will be required to involve young people and parents in reviewing and developing provision for those with special educational needs and to publish a 'local offer' of support.

3. Gender

Exclusion statistics for 2010/11 (DfE 2012b) showed that both the permanent and fixed term exclusion rate for boys was approximately three times higher than that for girls. (DfE, 2012b). Previous academic research suggests that boys and girls who are having difficulties at school may manifest their difficulties in different ways. Osler and Vincent (2003), for example, suggest that girls are more likely to develop patterns of non-attendance, and also raise concerns about a shortage of appropriate alternative provision for girls. Holta and colleagues' (2008) study of young people's responses to domestic violence indicated that, for boys, anxiety and distress tended to manifest more in externalising behaviours such as hostility and aggression; girls were more likely to internalise their responses through anxiety, depression and somatic complaints that are perhaps more readily identified as rooted in problematic experiences. As these examples suggest, gender differences in exclusion may reflect different presentations of difficulty, and different understandings of presenting difficulties, for boys and for girls.

4. Ethnicity

In 2006, DfES published a Priority Review on the exclusion of black students. This report, *Getting it, Getting it Right*, noted that:

Even with the best efforts to improve provision for excluded pupils, the continued existence of the exclusion gap means that Black pupils are disproportionately denied mainstream education and the improved life chances that go with it.

(DfES, 2006, p15)

However, five years later, national exclusions data indicate that this inequality has not been resolved: in 2011, Black Caribbean students were almost four times more likely to be permanently excluded from school, compared with the school population as a whole (DfE, 2011b).

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students have, for many years, been over-represented within national statistics on both permanent and fixed term exclusion (e.g. Lloyd and Norris 1998). Wilkin et al. (2010) cite DfES data from 2007 which demonstrate that this risk interacts with gender: Gypsy/Roma boys and boys of Irish Traveller heritage were the ethnic groups most likely to experience exclusion from school, and boys in these groups were more than twice as likely as girls to be excluded.

1.4 Key legislation

1. The Equalities Act 2010

The Equalities Act, which became law in October 2010, was designed to codify the Acts and Regulations which had previously formed the basis of anti-discrimination law in Great Britain, including the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Equalities Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual accessing education provision, and a school must not discriminate against a pupil with regards to: admissions; provision of education; access to any benefit, facility or service; or exclusions. Within this legislative framework, schools are required to monitor the effect that their policies and practices have had in relation to exclusions, attendance, bullying and prejudice related incidents.

Local authorities have issued guidance for schools on the implications of this relatively new legislation. Leicester City Council, for example, has published an 'Equality Toolkit for Schools' and 'Self Evaluation Resource', which detail how schools might utilise monitoring data on attendance, exclusion and bullying to examine key trends. As well as guidance, this local authority toolkit also provides a template equality policy, a school self-evaluation resource and a disability identification toolkit, in addition to resources for use with parents and carers, school governing bodies and school councils and/or pupils.

Where a parent alleges discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to a fixed period or permanent exclusion, they can make a claim to the First-Tier Tribunal for disability discrimination or to a County Court for other forms of discrimination.

2. Exclusion appeals: The Education Act 2011

Under the Education Act 2011, a parent has the right of appeal to an Independent Review Panel following a permanent exclusion. The Independent Review Panel can uphold the decision to permanently exclude a pupil; recommend that the governing body reconsider its decision; or direct the governing body to reconsider its decision. Where requested by a parent, a SEN expert can be appointed by the local authority or Academy Trust to advise the independent review panel. Review panels are not, however, able to require a school to reinstate a pupil that they judge was unfairly excluded.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012, p19) has argued that Independent Review Panels are inconsistent with Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights:

Where panels do not have the ability to insist on reinstatement, [this] does not offer sufficient safeguards against schools acting unreasonably or unlawfully.

1.5 Initial Teacher Training

ITT has been identified in the academic literature as an important space in which to develop trainees' understandings of issues around inclusion, diversity and equality (see Allard and Santoro, 2006; Gazeley and Dunne, 2007). But questions have also been raised as to whether ITT providers need to do more to ensure that trainees develop

understandings of systemic issues such as institutional racism (e.g., Lander 2012) and exclusion in particular (DfE, 2006).

Results from the 2012 survey of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) suggest the situation may be improving, showing small increases in the proportion feeling equipped to teach learners from minority groups. Among those with secondary school training, 52 per cent rated their preparation to teach learners from minority ethnic backgrounds as very good or good, compared with 47% in 2011. The proportion who said their preparation to teach learners with English as an additional language was very good or good had also increased, by five per cent to 49 per cent in the 2012 survey. Sixty-five per cent of secondary-trained NQTs in 2012 rated their training as very good or good in helping them to teach pupils with Special Educational Needs, compared with 59 per cent in 2011.

Teacher training is also undergoing a period of change related to national policy developments, with the introduction of the Schools Direct model. This enables schools to recruit and train their own staff, shifting the base of training from higher education to schools. Importantly, schools negotiate how they want their teacher training programme to be delivered, in partnership with an accredited initial teacher training (ITT) provider – for example, deciding whether postgraduate academic qualifications such as PGCE will be offered in addition to qualified teacher status (QTS). Schools also have an increased role in determining the content of ITT.

1.6 Objectives

The over-arching objective of the research was to identify characteristics of good practice in addressing inequalities in school exclusions for different groups of children, to inform the wider aims of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s School Exclusions Inquiry. To meet this broad objective, the study addressed the following core areas of work: practice in schools; initial teacher training; local authority systems; and workforce training and development. Specific objectives were as follows:

- (i) To identify key features of good practice in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and workforce training and continuing professional development;
- (ii) To gain an in-depth view of the characteristics and development of good practice in a small number of schools, by analysing multiple perspectives from key stakeholders in schools (young people and professionals) and other relevant professionals within the local authority area, and addressing:
 - key characteristics, and barriers and facilitators, in relation to inclusion, diversity and equality; and
 - the intersection between approaches to inclusion, diversity and equality and school-level policies and systems in relation to behaviour management and exclusion; and
- (iii) To identify recommendations for policy, training and practice development.

2. Methods

2.1 Design

The research comprised a small-scale, qualitative study, conducted over seven months from August 2012. Individual and group interviews were conducted with representatives of two ITT providers, four local authorities and six schools. Internal school documents relating to the monitoring of exclusions were also reviewed as well as school policies relating to behaviour, inclusion and equalities. Publicly available data from DfE and Ofsted, relating to school demographics, attainment, exclusion and inclusion were also reviewed. The research followed a four stage design as outlined in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 The stages in the research process

Stage One	Focus groups with tutors in two ITT providers identified as examples of good practice in addressing diversity and inclusion within their programmes
Stage Two	Telephone interviews and face to face interviews in four local authorities with local authority officials and Behaviour Support staff closely involved with school exclusion processes and working with schools in areas covered by the ITT providers involved at Stage One
Stage Three	Review of School Ofsted reports, DfE performance data, school websites and recommendations from Stages One and Two before making approaches to schools as possible sites for case studies
Stage Four	Interviews conducted with staff and young people in the six secondary schools identified as having demonstrated aspects of good practice in relation to exclusion, equality and inclusion.

2.2 Sampling and interviews

1. ITT providers

The two ITT providers that were approached were well-regarded institutions located in large urban areas with ethnically diverse populations. They were also known to have well-developed practices in the areas of diversity and inclusion, based on knowledge drawn from previous research³. In each ITT provider, a single group interview was conducted with a group of four tutors, who volunteered to participate following a request from a key contact in the ITT setting. These interviews focused on:

- how trainees are prepared to address issues of diversity and inclusion, including how the programme addresses concerns about exclusion as an equity issue;
- the characteristics of good quality ITT provision in this regard and any barriers to its implementation and effectiveness;
- recommendations for future policy and practice; and

³ Research report available as a Teacher Education Advancement Network (TEAN) diversity resource, University of Cumbria: Gazeley, L. and Dunne, M. (2008) *Reducing the disciplinary exclusion of Black pupils: an exploration of perceptions and practices within Initial Teacher Training programmes.*

- identification of partner schools considered to have systems in place that promote diversity and inclusive practice, as possible sites for the case studies to be carried out at Stage Four.

2. Local authority stakeholders

Following the ITT focus groups, six local authorities were approached and invited to participate in Stage Two of the research. Local authorities were selected on the basis of recommendations made at Stage One, ie as having a school located in the authority identified as an example of good practice in relation to diversity and inclusion by tutors in one or other of the ITT providers. This stage of work led to interviews with seven professional stakeholders across four local authorities. All four Local authorities were found to have a focus on reducing permanent exclusions, providing examples of success. Two were said to have had histories of high rates of permanent exclusion in the past and one had a zero permanent exclusion aspiration.

Interviewees were either Exclusions Officers or staff working for the local authority Behaviour Support Service. Four were interviewed by telephone and three were interviewed in person during visits to the local authority area. These interviews served to gather additional information to support and triangulate the selection of good practice case studies, and to facilitate access to the case study schools. Moreover, interviews explored:

- factors considered to be effective in reducing the exclusion of young people from the specified four groups, and barriers to and facilitators of good practice;
- the characteristics of schools considered to have been particularly successful in this regard;
- training for school staff (including governors, teaching staff and school leaders) in the locality that addresses issues of diversity, equity and inclusion and in relation to exclusion and the Public Sector Equality Duty; and
- frameworks for interprofessional working and local services to support schools in addressing risk of exclusion.

3. School case studies

Stage One and Stage Two interviews led to the identification of 29 schools as possible case studies. The first stage of school case study selection was based on a review of the publically available data relating to school demographics and attainment⁴ and of the Ofsted inspection reports for each of these schools. However, given that Ofsted inspection data ranged in recency from 2009 to 2012, the nature and scope of what was reported varied and some reports made no reference to exclusion specifically. Nonetheless, it was possible to find evidence within Ofsted reports of good practice in areas relating to exclusion, equality and the outcomes experienced by the different subgroups identified as over-represented in exclusions from school in each of the six schools (see Table 2.2). School websites were also consulted to access additional documentary resources such as the behaviour and equalities policies. Following a review

⁴ Source of data: DfE performance tables.

of all of the available data and of local stakeholder recommendations, 12 schools were identified as possible case studies. Of these, six agreed to participate, one on a reduced basis. The schools were located in four local authorities, three of which were urban and ethnically diverse (one large city and two smaller metropolitan authorities), and one rural county council.

Table 2.2 Examples of good practice noted by Ofsted in each of the case study schools⁵

Declining exclusions. Good use of external support agencies. SEN students are well supported and make better progress than they do nationally. This is also the case for students from some Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and those eligible for the Pupil Premium although White British boys make less progress than expected.
Good use of managed moves as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Careful use of data to support young people coming in on managed moves. Takes in more young people on managed moves than it excludes. SEN students in specialist unit make more progress than those in mainstream classes.
Extremely effective care, support and pastoral guidance. Students' personal development is outstanding. Track record of successful interventions with low-attaining students. Those with a variety of SEN make outstanding progress.
Students make good progress from low starting points. SEN and FSM students make similarly good progress to that of their peers. Students and teachers show each other exemplary levels of tolerance and respect.
Exclusions have fallen significantly and are now low. Makes good use of local cross-school partnership to support a minority of students in managing their own behaviour. Additional adults provide good support for SEN students and their attainment matches that of other groups.
Outstanding approach to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. The leadership has developed strategies effective in reducing exclusions. No significant variation in progress between groups of students (BME, gender and SEN).

Each of the six school case studies incorporated a review of available exclusions data, along with a documentary review of relevant school policies (e.g., equality and diversity; behaviour; SEN). Interviews were conducted with school staff and included: senior staff responsible for inclusion and exclusion; staff involved in provision for SEN students; pastoral staff such as heads of house and heads of year; specialist behavior staff. These interviews addressed: school approaches to diversity, behaviour management and inclusion, including barriers to and facilitators of that work; training – including ITT and ongoing workforce training – in relation to diversity, behaviour management and inclusion; understandings of exclusion as an equity issue and perspectives on whether and how a reduction in exclusion for disproportionately affected groups has been achieved; and recommendations for the development of policy, training and practice in this area. Group interviews were also conducted with young people in five schools, including elected representatives from the student council or equivalent forum and a group that more closely represents the interests of young people at greater risk of

⁵ The six schools have not been identified by number in order to protect their anonymity.

exclusion (e.g., older pupils in Key Stage Four who are accessing some form of alternative provision alongside their schooling or receiving some form of additional support). Student interviewees were not asked to draw on their own experiences but to discuss: school ethos; school support systems; and school approaches to behaviour management, equality and diversity, and student involvement in these areas of work.

4. Overview of the case study schools

Two of the case study schools catered for young people aged between 11 and 16, and four were 11-18 schools. One school was a teacher training provider and one school was an academy. All six schools were co-educational in intake. The number of young people in each school ranged from just above 700 to just below 1400. Four had specialist units for young people with statements of SEN. Table 2.3 below provides additional contextual information about the six participating schools.

Table 2.3 Overview of the characteristics of the case study schools⁶

	National average %	Case study range: lowest	Case study range: highest	Number of case study schools above the national average
Percentage Free School Meals	16	13	39.5	5
Percentage Free School Meals at any time in last 6 years	26.7	25.4	62.3	5
Percentage SEN (with Statement or School Action plus)	8.1	6.9	14.7	5
Percentage English not first language	12.9	0.6	69.4	5
Percentage 5A*-C GCSE including English and Maths, ALL pupils (state funded schools only)	58.8	41	72	1
Percentage 5A*-C GCSE including English & Maths, disadvantaged pupils (state funded schools only)	38.5	14	63	4
Percentage difference 5A*-C GCSE including English and Maths disadvantaged ⁷ and other	26.5	4	36	1

The DfE's Narrowing the Gap data for 2012 data indicates that the percentage point gap in the case study schools ranged from 4% - 36% (4%; 7%; 15%; 15%; 18% 36%). The school where the gap was largest was also the school with the smallest percentage of

⁶ Note: Detailed data about individual schools are not presented here, as disaggregated data in relation to a range of key characteristics could render schools identifiable and jeopardise the anonymity promised to participants. Source of data: DfE performance tables.

⁷ For the purposes of the table Disadvantaged pupils are considered as those eligible for Free School Meals and children looked after (ie, in the care of the Local Authority for at least 6 months)

young people in receipt of Free School Meals, and the lowest gap was at the school with the highest percentage of young people receiving Free School Meals

2.3 Participants

The number of participants in each stakeholder group are summarised in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Summary of the sample

Stage of the research	Participant groups	Number of participants
Stage One	Initial Teacher Training tutors	8
Stage Two	Local authority staff	3
	Behaviour Support Staff	4
Stage Three	<i>Desk based</i>	
Stage Four	Adults in the six case study schools (n=55)	
	School 1	17
	School 2	9
	School 3	6
	School 4	10
	School 5	7
	School 6	1
	Participants in school partnership meeting	5
	Young people in the six case study schools (n=53)	
	School 1	20
	School 2	8
	School 3	5
	School 4	12
	School 5	8
	School 6	0
Total number of participants		123

2.4 Data analysis

Notes were taken at the time of the interviews and in cases where this was appropriate they were also recorded and transcribed. Where quotes are not attributed to an individual, this has been done intentionally to protect anonymity. Data were analysed at the end of each of key stage in the research process, in order to inform the development of the next phase of work. All data were revisited when final data collection was complete, for a cross-stakeholder analysis in relation to the questions outlined by the Office of the Children's Commissioner in the tender specification. Data were analysed thematically, using a template developed for this purpose. The core analytic questions were as follows:

- How can exclusion rates for different groups of children be reduced?
- Where can good practice in reducing these differentials be identified?

- What are the characteristics of this good practice, and what is the evidence of its effectiveness?
- What are the characteristics of effective training and development materials in these areas?
- What are the motivating and inhibiting factors that affect trainees and qualified teachers engaging with learning and training that supports understanding and good practice in supporting diversity, inclusion and equality in schools?
- What has been the impact of the Public Sector Equality Duty on school's behaviour in these areas?
- What proportion of the school workforce have received high quality training in these areas?
- What are the implications of these findings for: practice; training; national policy?

As a final stage in the analysis, to incorporate a component of 'check and challenge' on the research team's interpretations and to discuss potential recommendations for good practice, key themes to emerge from the initial analysis were discussed with two expert advisory groups. The first of these groups was the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Children's and Young People's Group Advisory Group on Exclusions, facilitated by the Runnymede Trust. The second was the research project's own Expert Advisory Group, consisting of academics and professionals with expertise in this area and including representatives of the main stakeholder groups. Representatives of the Office of the Children's Commissioner and of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Children's and Young People's Group Advisory Group on exclusions also contributed to this second advisory forum.

3. Understandings of exclusion

3.1 A continuum of provision and prevention

Exclusion from school is often viewed as a discrete outcome – either permanent or fixed term – and quantified and analysed as such in national and school level data. However, the research clearly showed that fixed term and permanent exclusion may be better conceived of as points in a process and that the relationship between process and outcomes is key. Moreover, the potential outcomes associated with exclusion processes have shifted, not least in response to efforts to reduce permanent exclusion. Consequently, in considering exclusion as an equalities issue, it is necessary to take account of the range of possible outcomes from exclusions-related processes. Figure 3.1 illustrates the continuum of provision with which exclusion-related practices were associated in the six case study schools.

School and local authority staff interviewed for this study were very aware of the focus on reducing the use of permanent exclusion, and there was a strong commitment to using managed moves as an alternative to this, as part of a wider recognition of the impact of exclusion on young people's life chances. For example, a member of staff in School 5 observed:

We know that prisons are full of young people who were permanently excluded.

However, concerns were not only focused on permanent exclusion. Respondents also emphasised the need to find alternatives to fixed term exclusion; the two main alternatives to fixed term exclusions appeared to be internal isolation arrangements and 'afternoon school' arrangements, whereby the young person attends in the afternoon and until after the end of the school day. Across the six schools, a continuum of provision associated with exclusion and alternatives to exclusion was apparent. Critically, this was underpinned by a wide range of practices and approaches that were said to have contributed less directly to reductions in exclusion. Across the schools, there was for instance a problem-solving approach that contributed to a resourcefulness and willingness to develop and try new things. A member of staff in School 5 summed up this perspective, saying:

We're always keen to have anybody in to try anything really.

This openness appeared to be linked to the strong emphasis that was placed on identifying and meeting the needs of individuals, corresponding to an explicit rejection of a 'one size fits all' approach. For example, at School 4, managed moves were seen as preferable to afternoon school, but it was also argued that managed moves were not appropriate for all, and that for some individuals, there was a greater need for the 'nurturing' environment and continuity of relationships provided by afternoon school.

In all six case study schools, respondents described a willingness to invest in resources to provide the type and level of support deemed necessary, informed by an empathetic understanding of the communities in which they were working. At School 2, investment in specialist staff was said to leave teachers free to focus on teaching and learning. Another of the schools had invested in a small new alternative provision for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. An ITT tutor provided the following rationale for this:

Based on the experiences of kids that have been excluded, so instead they've said: Instead of these children following that path how do we change the path that they take?

There was a strong awareness of the vulnerability of many young people at risk of exclusion, and a concomitant emphasis on their need for support from systems that were responsive to their particular circumstances. In School 5, a member of staff observed:

We know that the kids have got to survive out there when they leave us. They go to homes that are dysfunctional, that often they might be in a primary care role or there are all sorts of deficiencies at all sorts of levels. They could be drug and alcohol misuse issues with parents, extended family members, mental health issues, but while they're in here we try not to leave them.

Some of the case study schools made use of specialist provision external to the school, such as Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and placements with the Behaviour Support Service (BSS). In one authority, the PRU was considered to be an important part of the alternative provision on offer, and there was evidence of strong partnerships and information about progress made being fed back to school staff. However, one interviewee commented that not all schools were likely to be equally invested in partnership working with alternative provision and that some 'would probably think nothing of putting a student somewhere and just forgetting about them'.

There are two essential points to be made in relation to the continuum of provision. Firstly, the variety of options that had been developed were in part a response to concern about the challenges of working with existing options. Interviewees in three local authorities spoke, for example, about supply exceeding demand with PRUs in the past 'overflowing' with young people who had little or no opportunity to return to mainstream education.

Questions about the quality and impact of the provision experienced by young people continue to be important wherever a young person is positioned within the continuum of alternative provision, even if exclusion is not the outcome. As one local authority stakeholder observed:

What are the impacts of some of these things? Are we just putting kids into provision and then washing our hands of them? And actually is that having a positive impact? And there isn't enough of that kind of evaluation and analysis.

Nevertheless, in a context in which exclusion is not the *only* outcome, young people who contributed to this study were clear that permanent exclusion may be the most concerning.

The second key consideration relating to a continuum of provision relates to the risks of focusing concerns about inequality on recorded exclusion (largely permanent exclusion) alone. Questions about equity are equally relevant when it comes to the broader continuum of provision, as similar patterns of over-representation may exist there but may be unidentified and/or less formally monitored. This concern invites a more systemic analysis of inequalities in relation to wider school processes and practices, as will be explored further in the next section.

Figure 3.1 Exclusion and alternatives to exclusion: a continuum of provision



3.2 Recognising inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion

The question of how inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion are understood at practice level is key to the development and maintenance of good practice in this area. The study revealed differences between the respondent groups in their perspectives on this issue. Local authority officials specialising in exclusion and closely involved in monitoring recorded exclusions across groups of schools appeared more at ease with an emphasis on analysing inequalities in exclusion. Concerns at practice level were most strongly focused on permanent exclusion, although the research also highlighted some evidence of the over-representation of boys, young people eligible for Free School Meals, and young people with Special Educational Needs, in relation to fixed term exclusions as well as in alternative provision and in other school-level disciplinary processes such as emergency removals from the classroom.

Tutors in the two ITT providers were given the Office of the Children's Commissioner's statement on inequalities in rates of exclusion, as quoted in opening this report⁸, and asked to discuss the causes of this over-representation. One tutor (ITT1) commented that the inequality reflected *multi-factorial* considerations, which could be unpicked in many ways:

It could be the attitude, the preconceived ideas of teachers, it could be the culture of the school, acceptance of the pupils, acceptance of teachers, opportunities. [...] You can't generalise, that's the thing. You could be Black, you could have special needs and you could be from a working class background and still do fine, still not be excluded, but yes.

At school level, respondents tended to emphasise that exclusions related to individuals and to their behaviour, commenting that permanent exclusion was confined to significant offences. Similarly, one Behaviour Support Service interviewee thought that the most pressing need was to look at behaviour and address this rather than looking at trends. A number of interviewees also highlighted potential difficulties with using data on recorded exclusions to identify patterns of over-representation. For example, one commented that the notion of inequalities in relation to exclusion was complex, arguing that it was easier to identify patterns of over-representation at national or local authority than at school level where numbers were smaller. In addition, it was argued that a pattern of over-representation identified at national level might in fact be consistent with a school's demographics. One respondent suggested that the relatively small numbers in schools, compared to national data, could mean that individual cases could skew the data very easily:

I can get a student in from another school on a managed move... and all of a sudden that particular student, our percentage of exclusions will rise. And if that just happened to be a Roma student then our percentage of Roma will go high. It doesn't [...] necessarily tell us an awful lot about focusing in on a particular group because what we're looking at with, I think a relatively low number of exclusions, with 52 students out of 1,200, it's all a question of personality here.

⁸ 'If you were a Black African-Caribbean boy with special needs and eligible for free school meals you were 168 times more likely to be permanently excluded from a state-funded school than a White girl without special needs from a middle class family' (Office of the Children's Commissioner 2012, p9)

Staff in two of the case study schools also noted that patterns in relation to exclusion could vary depending on student cohorts. A member of staff in one school remarked:

Every year group is different and it's very, very difficult to say we've focused in on a particular ethnic group.

These understandings were associated with a wider perception that it was difficult to look at exclusions data in terms of disproportionality for particular groups, rather than in relation to individual students. For example, at one school:

So you know whenever we deal with percentages because of our diversity we're always back to, well actually let's look at these individual students and that happens time and time again. I can't remember any stage in anything that I've done that I've had to say, "It is that group of Pakistani students", "It's that group of West Indian students", "It's that black African student" who are causing this immediate problem.

Some local authority stakeholders raised concerns about the potential unreliability of data on recorded exclusions. One interviewee observed for instance:

[I would be] uncomfortable saying that having no exclusions is good as it could just be that exclusion is happening informally.

Another gave the example of an academy with a large number of students with challenging needs, which had managed to keep exclusion rates low without resorting to 'dubious methods', as was felt to be the case in some other schools.

Nevertheless, not all interviewees shared this perspective. One local authority representative for example described exclusions data as really crucial, as when broken down by categories such as gender, ethnicity, age, school type, SEN, FSM and LAC status, it could provide 'a global and very finite picture of what is happening on the ground in terms of disproportionality' – and used to identify and address problems that might otherwise be hidden.

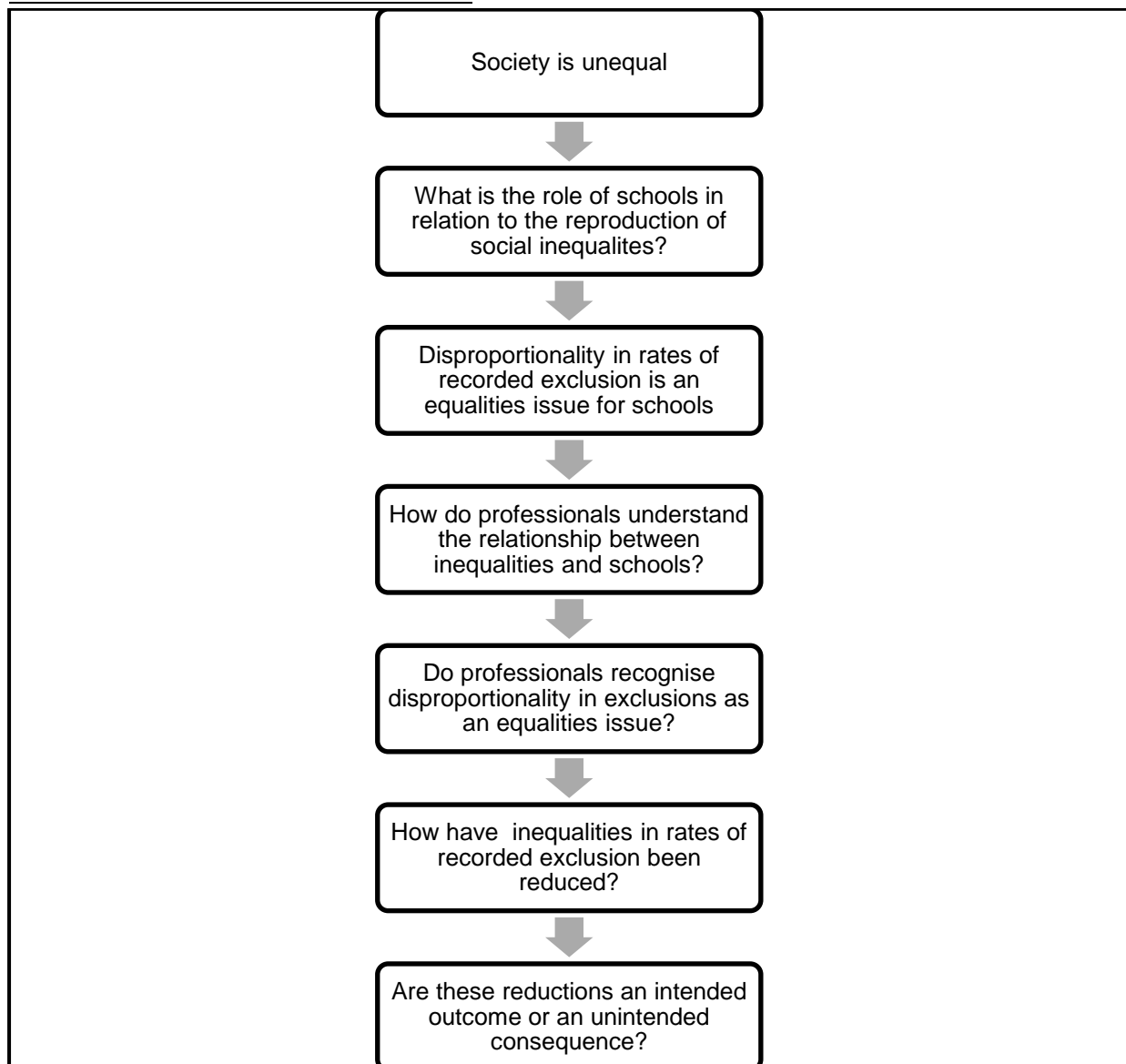
In discussing inequalities in exclusion, several professional stakeholders (local authorities and schools) indicated an awareness of one particular pattern of over-representation through references to underachievement and behaviour and its intersection with social disadvantage. For example, an interviewee from the Behaviour Support Service observed:

Generally speaking highly attaining and highly achieving students are not being permanently excluded or fixed term excluded from school. It is the low attending, low achieving students that will... The biggest inequality is that students that don't attend and don't achieve are... over-represented.

Practitioners' understandings of the relationships between different structural factors, and the extent to which exclusion is addressed in terms of equity, is a critical question for the development of good practice. Previous research has suggested that teachers and trainee teachers often find it difficult to think in terms of systemic inequalities and tend to refute this (e.g., Solomon et al., 2005), preferring instead to think in terms of

individual children. Figure 3.2 draws on gaps in participants' framing of inequalities, to offer a framework of questions within which to address practitioners' understandings of disproportionality in exclusions.

Figure 3.2 Conceptualising disproportionality in exclusion as an equalities issue



ITT tutors reported that trainees were being challenged to develop the sorts of systemic understandings represented in Figure 3.2 within their teacher training programmes. One tutor, who had experience of an education system that does not set by ability, discussed how (s)he had raised this practice with trainees:

When you look at the make-up of, for example, of a lower ability set in languages, it's going to be full of boys, it's probably going to be full of working class pupils, of special needs children as well. [...] Lots of schools call the lowest set an SEN set, which is so telling because it's so untrue. You can have a special educational need and be in a top set. [...] So that's one of the things I explore with the British pupils who have gone through the system, setting has worked for them – they

were in the top sets. [...] But it doesn't work when you look at the research, it really doesn't work for the rest of the population.

(Tutor, ITT 1)

More systemic analyses of this type were infrequent however. Among school staff, there was only one reference to institutional racism as a possible factor in exclusions, and this comment was made by a Sociology teacher.

Many interviewees, from across all of the stakeholder groups, showed however an awareness of demographic differences that highlighted the social stratification of schools and communities. Interviewees suggested that differences in head teachers' practices around exclusion were sometimes linked to these strata, and so school variation in willingness to exclude a young person was itself a form of inequality. A local authority stakeholder observed:

In one school a particular type of behaviour might result in some kind of pastoral intervention or sanction, in another it could literally be permanent exclusion.

Several respondents suggested that less inclusive schools were sometimes located in more leafy areas and some ITT tutors' noted that trainees' preconceptions about the relationship between schools and their contexts were sometimes wrong:

They think it's a nice leafy suburb, it'll be fine, and if it's in the inner city, the kids will be unmanageable. Actually, they go in and they recognise that geography is so little of what the school ethos is about, it's not that simple a relationship.

(Tutor, ITT 1)

Tutors in this ITT setting also gave the example of a school that was said to have a reputation for challenging students from the outside, but inside to be 'like a haven'. A student placed there was said to have enjoyed this experience, because:

It's a very strong community resource rather than it just being a school in a place. It's part of the community.

(Tutor, ITT 1)

Differences in school ethos were also said by one ITT provider to be becoming more evident across the local authorities with whom they worked:

It's probably worth saying that there are a minority of schools or colleges that we don't work with because of the way they operate.

4. Approaches to reducing exclusions

A critical question for the present study was to consider how approaches aimed at reducing school exclusion relate to an agenda that is specifically concerned with reducing *inequalities* in exclusion. To what extent are these two areas of work seen as linked? One interviewee indicated for example that the best approach to reducing inequalities would be to continue the focus on reducing permanent exclusion:

If exclusions are reduced full stop, then they will reduce for all.

(Behaviour Support Service)

All six case study schools had achieved reductions in the use of permanent exclusion – in two cases to zero. Some had also reduced their use of fixed term exclusions although the trends here were more variable. School approaches can be grouped into two broad areas of practice: work directly related to exclusion; and wider school practices. Within those broad domains, six specific approaches were seen as key across the case study areas:

- Partnership working to reduce permanent exclusion
- Providing alternatives
- Creating an inclusive culture and ethos
- Fostering relationships
- Promoting positive whole-school approaches to behaviour management
- Empowering young people

4.1 Partnership working to reduce permanent exclusion

Across all of the case study schools there was a strong focus on reducing permanent exclusion – on working very hard to keep pupils in. In LA2, a group of schools working in partnership had successfully reduced the number of permanent exclusions:

There is as a real determination not to exclude and to keep youngsters in their communities, a never give up on you approach. Very much, these are all our children – how are we collectively going to help? That's its strength.

(Local authority official)

The cross-school partnership was described as having a holistic, whole-child, solution-focused approach. Inequalities were said to feed in to this but were not highlighted as needing specific intervention, apart from young people with statements of SEN and Looked After Children, who were identified as groups given special consideration.

In the context of changing school and local authority structures, it is striking that this partnership had persisted even though schools were no longer required to work in this way. Respondents suggested that this model of partnership working was continuing as it was recognised as good practice, and based on an understanding of collective responsibility.

School staff in a local authority that advocated a zero permanent exclusion approach said that this had been an important driver for their success in reducing permanent exclusions to zero. The local authority had promoted partnership working between local

secondary schools with consideration of inequalities embedded as part of the process. In another school, the zero permanent exclusion aspiration was also linked to the attitude and leadership of the head teacher:

The head doesn't believe in permanent exclusion because to what end? What does the child do after that? We look upon it as something else that we've failed.

Other schools had more than halved permanent exclusion by working in partnership and adopting a three tier system in which they were said to '*challenge each other to do the very best and to be as good as they could possibly be.*' The three tier system was as follows:

- Tier 1 Within school strategies and opportunities to share practices and engage in joint training
- Tier 2 Additional resource or managed move
- Tier 3 Long term alternative provision

The introduction of this system was also said to have contributed to a change in the most common recorded reasons for permanent exclusion – from 'persistent disruption' to significant offences, such as the carrying of weapons or drugs. The majority of these exclusions in this area were said to be of White working class or Asian boys, and to be consistent with the demographics of the schools in the partnership.

The reductions in permanent exclusion described above were largely achieved through the use of managed moves, and a number of the young people who were interviewed had experience of making a successful managed move. Some interviewees noted, however, that these moves were not always successful. They cautioned that the processes around managed moves had to be governed by very clear guidance, involving careful planning and the exchange of information between schools, with moves being for a fixed period and progress being carefully monitored and reviewed. At School 5 it was noted that young people continued to be supported and monitored until such time as it was clear that the managed move had been a success. The high level of support given to young people joining a school on a managed move was described by one member of staff:

We do actually try to make it clear to the young person that we don't want them to think that we're just doing them a favour. We're saying we've taken you because we think we can make it work. We try to get the parents on board from the word go. We also then have support from the Behaviour Support Service and also the school from which the child has come. So there's a lot of information sharing initially because it's about identifying what the issues might be and trying to prevent them rather than waiting for them to happen... we choose our strongest staff ... The most vital thing with managed move students is that they need to develop good relationships quickly, so quite often they spend the first few days they're here... in the head of year's office, seeing other students coming and go, and sort of picking up on our culture.

Interviewees made it clear that trust and collaboration between schools was essential in this process, while warning of the risk that collaborative approaches could be undermined by pressures on schools to perform. One local authority official observed:

There is a need to take competition out of it – so [schools are] genuinely in it together.

A useful perspective on this tension was highlighted by a member of staff at School 2, who stated that, when accepting a young person on a managed move, they looked at ‘*what they could do for the child, not at what the child could do for the school.*’

4.2 Perspectives on alternative provision

1. Alternative spaces

Within the case study schools, many alternatives to exclusion were in use (see Figure 3.1). All had systems in place to allow young people to spend a day in isolation within the school, as an alternative to fixed term exclusion. Some also operated ‘afternoon school’, as a higher level sanction that entailed spending part of the day working at home and the later part of the day working at school in isolation and continuing after other pupils had left. Young people who were interviewed in School 4 and School 5 were positive about these alternative arrangements, commenting that they provided a second chance for the student to show that (s)he can work and do well; conveyed a recognition that everyone makes mistakes; protected students future chances, as internal arrangements did not go on record or affect college opportunities; and, in the words of one student, offered ‘*an opportunity to learn from your mistakes*’. Staff at School 4 indicated that this type of provision had also enabled young people to continue with their school work and complete GCSE examinations.

A number of interviewees raised concerns about diminishing access to specialist services and resources, associated with cuts in local provision. However, even within this straitened climate, the case study schools had developed an approach to alternative provision that was conceptualised as supporting inclusion, rather than imposing sanctions for poor behaviour. Close partnerships between professionals played an important part in the support provided for young people, as a member of staff explained in School 5:

They understand us, we understand them and that partnership working allows us to be flexible and creative.

Flexibility was also seen as important. At School 1, for example, there were a number of different types of spaces, tailored to meet different types of need. These gave young people access to staff with whom they said they had developed supportive relationships. Every young person was also said to know that there was somewhere they could go at all times. School 2 had a dedicated base for young people considered to be vulnerable or at risk of permanent exclusion. These students undertook much of their learning there, as an alternative to attending mainstream classes. The majority were said to leave having achieved 5A*-C grades at GCSE, success that was directly attributed to being in supportive and inclusive provision.

2. Alternative curricula

As well as alternative spaces, schools were also offering alternative curricula. In particular, work/college programmes at Key Stage Four were said to increase motivation and re-engage young people at risk of exclusion. In School 5, a member of staff said:

Those students go to college once a week, they have a high level of TA [teaching assistant] support, they're taught by very experienced staff and they do courses that are much more suitable for them... And I think the evidence is that giving the right curriculum to young people is vital in preventing exclusions really.

In this school, young people thought to have struggled with their behaviour in Year 9 were said to be no longer having exclusions. It was suggested that similar options would be useful for Year 9 students (the last year of Key Stage Three). Across schools, young people who were interviewed indicated that they both enjoyed and valued having the opportunity to follow a vocational course. For example:

It gives you more options, like if you want to do something else...more to your taste.

(Young Person, School 4)

It was noted by staff at School 5, that capacity to offer alternative curricula had changed in response to policy changes following the Wolf Report (2011), such that some vocational courses no longer counted in the school's performance data. Nonetheless, one local authority respondent described a strong local emphasis on quality assuring alternative curricula for young people at Key Stage Four, suggesting also that schools continued to be willing to provide young people with access to this type of provision because it was seen to be successful in retaining young people in education, employment and training.

Some of the case study schools had also reviewed the curriculum offered to all students. One school for example had developed an alternative curriculum in Year 7, designed both to support transition and to ensure that young people developed competency in the core skills needed for successful learning in the future. Another school had introduced one year GCSE options from Year 9 that had been found to be motivating and engaging. In addition, there was a fortnightly space in the curriculum for enrichment activity, with a view to promoting the development of undiscovered potential. Young people who were interviewed said that they looked forward to selecting a termly focus for enrichment and that it allowed them to develop a wide range of talents and interests. They suggested also that sport provided a good channel for aggression and advocated the development of more opportunities to participate in sports.

The curriculum was also thought to exert negative pressures on students at risk of exclusion. For instance, one respondent commented that the pressure on schools for performance in GCSE examinations could be a barrier to their reintegration:

The first term of Year 10, after that it is more difficult to get a young person reintegrated back in because of the way the curriculums work.

Staff at one school explained that students who moved schools might have followed a different curriculum for GCSE English or missed coursework, making it hard for them to

catch up. In a context where performance is measured by the percentage of pupils attaining a Grade C in GCSE English this was thought to be an additional pressure on some schools.

4.3 Creating an inclusive culture and ethos

Tutors in both ITT settings stated that they did a lot of work with trainees on understanding the culture of the school, commenting that every school is different. One provider had a particularly strong focus on social justice, which was described as contributing to a *'strong thread underpinning the course which is about understanding the community in which you teach'*. It was also suggested that the culture and ethos of a school was related to its inclusivity, and that the most inclusive schools were also those where trainees were best supported. As one tutor observed, these schools were also often those that were more diverse:

I think the ones you do get drawn to are the ones with mixed, very kind of diverse intakes, and how those schools manage that diverse intake. And quite often, that suggests a school that's got to grips with inclusion and exclusion and diversity and equal opportunities, that it's able to manage an incredibly diverse intake.

Through the course input, ITT tutors said they encouraged trainees to recognise that *'by having belief in individual students you can make a difference'*.

The case study schools also had a strong focus on seeing the school within its community context – as part of that community and having responsibility for the young people in that community. Staff at one school for example identified the school as a *family*. The SEN and Inclusion Policy at School 5 stated that the school aimed to create an environment in which all children feel valued and safe and to engender *'a sense of community and belonging'*. This policy document made specific reference to learners at risk of disaffection and exclusion, and asserted that it aimed *'to model inclusion in our staffing policies, relationships with parents and carers and the community'*. The school framed its role as a support for vulnerable children, and interviewees highlighted a strong focus on children having social needs as well as learning needs. They commented that it was in the interests of the school to identify and work with these. For example:

We just decided with our client base that actually, yes to get the teaching right, yes we need to get the learning right, yes we need good teachers, yes we need to look at attainment and achievement, but there are so many barriers that a lot of our kids face and we've got to try and overcome those barriers. As a school we've invested, because it's in the kid's best interest, and it's in the school's best interest to get these kids to do well.

All the case study schools emphasised a personalised approach to intervention that highlighted their inclusivity. One consistent theme to emerge was of a model that looks at what provision needs to be made for the child, rather than locating the problem within the child:

We find that we have to personalise our interventions depending on the individual child that we're dealing with, because a whole strategy or an approach for all children doesn't work really and so we do find that we have to look at the context

of the child or the background, any personal issues outside of school, any issues across faculties, in lessons.

(Member of staff, School 5)

Inclusive ideals needed to be supported by robust systems. At School 1, for example, Inclusion Intervention Forms were completed and reviewed weekly to ensure a holistic perspective on the young person and their progress, including information about reading age, any vulnerable characteristics or areas of difficulty, details of strategies and their effectiveness, and information about exclusion.

Nonetheless, interviewees emphasised the importance of an *overall* approach – an ethos or culture – beyond specific rules or practices. One member of school staff commented:

[It's] not [...] you know 'do this, do that, do the other.' For us it's about the whole, it's what we're about really isn't it.

At School 3, it was noted that teamwork was an important part of making the school's ethos work. Nevertheless, across stakeholder groups it was recognised that staff needed to be inducted into and supported in modelling and reinforcing these collective messages as they needed to come from everyone:

Spirit is what is powerful... Inclusion is a state of mind. How every staff member at the front sends the message out that they are wanted and that they want to keep them.

(Behaviour Support Service)

For this reason, strong leadership was generally considered to be important, setting a culture of high expectations and embedding an inclusive ethos and values in whole school practices, supported by training for all. School staff also thought it important to reflect positive images back to young people, making efforts to ensure that all groups were represented positively. There were also visible and frequent reminders of core values:

It's about reminding kids, this is what we expect of you, this is modelling what we want the school to be like and reminding them all the time.

(Member of staff, School 5)

In contexts where aspirations were felt at times to be low or circumstances difficult, there was also strong focus on looking towards the future. A staff member in School 5 spoke of saying to young people, *'you've got to aim for the best that you can be'*.

4.4 Fostering relationships

All six schools had non-teaching staff in pastoral roles, as learning mentors or to support behaviour. At some schools, these staff were employed as Heads of House who were said to be *'available all day every day'* (Member of staff, School 5). The young people who were interviewed said they had known the staff for a long time, and felt comfortable with them. One commented that these practitioners were people *'who notice how you are'*. At School 3, a key supportive role was delivered by academic mentors, who were said to be able to take the pressure off individual teachers by providing the young person with:

A fresh voice, a fresh opinion, a different relationship... rather than just sensing someone's frustration – that person's frustration as an adult.

Similarly, in School 5, staff said it was important that the students had someone they felt that they could talk to. For example:

If we look back at the students that we've had to come to the point of saying 'not sure what else we can do' it's because every single relationship has broken down. If there's still one person in this building that the young person will respond to and engage with, we keep going.

Young people and staff also noted that there were always places for young people to go within school, and that relationships with staff were such that students were able to say if they felt that they had been treated unfairly. There was a strong emphasis in all of the case study schools on the importance of developing relationships with young people based on mutual respect. Staff emphasised that there needed to be respect from the teachers as well as the young people for 'students [to] get that sense of fairness'. Where relationships broke down teachers were expected to take responsibility for this too and also work to put things right. The young people who were interviewed also emphasised the importance of trust. It was noticeable that young people in all six case study schools thought that teachers should not shout, those at School 5 making it explicit that you cannot build trust when you shout.

There was also an emphasis on genuinely listening to young people. One young person who had experienced a managed move said that she wanted to be at her current school because staff listened to her and 'did something' about what she said. At School 1 the starting point was said to be to find the thing the young person was doing well and to build on from there. It was noted that this could take time but that this builds trust and the confidence to try more difficult things. One young person stated:

Here they made me see I could do something.

Good relationships with parents were also considered to be important. At School 3 staff commented that in some families developing these relationships requires time and persistence. In School 5, non-teaching Heads of House had much more time to do this, as a member of staff explained:

We don't get to a position with parents where they're being difficult with us because they've gone on the journey with us, the long journey from the first incident to the conversations with heads of year to 'We've done this, we've done that, we've done the other, we've tried 2-5, we've tried our very best to access everything, and now we're at a point where we don't have a choice. This young person can't be here.' But we'll still try and get you another school. We're not going to cast you adrift completely.

4.5 Positive whole-school approaches to managing behaviour

Behaviour management systems operating in the six case study schools were in some ways very different, but there were also some very striking similarities. One cross-cutting theme was a very strong emphasis on consistency and fairness: in all schools, staff were expected to implement school policy in the same way. They were also expected to model the correct behaviour as part of their responsibility to develop good citizens. In School 2, for example, the behaviour policy contained a section called ‘*Advice to teachers*’ which stated that they need to be aware of the language they use, to seek to engage rather than enrage and to have empathy. At School 3 it was noted that organisational change must be led from the top, so school leaders need to model good behaviour for staff.

All of the schools indicated that behaviour management was positive and proactive rather than punitive and reactive. This did not mean ignoring problems, but ensuring that there were strategies in place, including sufficient pastoral and behaviour focused staff. All schools operated rewards systems. A group of young people interviewed at School 2 suggested that ‘*[it is] worth being a law abiding citizen [...] work hard nice things happen*’; further commenting that this positive feedback helped students to find ‘*[the] energy to behave better*’.

Young people also cautioned that staff should not ‘*try to scare you into good behaviour*’. Both School 5 and School 2 operated reward systems in which young people began with a reward that they could then work to enhance or lose by not meeting expectations:

It’s the moving away from the punitive to being positive, so we like kids to work towards something, towards a reward rather than working away from punishment.

(Member of staff, School 5)

Interviews with young people highlighted a general view that it was important for reward systems to be designed in such a way that they include everyone and provide recognition for doing the right thing. It also reduced a perception of unfairness reported by some of the young people interviewed, that young people who misbehave ‘*get all the attention*’. At one school the young people who were interviewed thought that it was too difficult to get information about reward points (due to a technical difficulty) and they also suggested that behaviour points could be a badge of honour rather than a deterrent.

Three schools used very structured and staged systems of behaviour management that focused on consequences, but consequential approaches were also made explicit in schools that adopted less staged/stepped approaches. The rationale was explained at one school as being to provide an environment conducive to good discipline, rather than being reactive. Staff spoke of creating a ‘*whole-school team feeling and a “we can do this” attitude*’ as well as a ‘*platform for improving teaching and learning*’.

Young people at School 2 noted that because every teacher had the same approach to behaviour this provided clear boundaries, giving them a greater sense of being in control. This consistency was also said by some to be supportive of SEN students because it meant they only need to work with one set of rules. However, a counsellor interviewed at one school observed that young people with attachment difficulties might respond to approaches to behaviour management in different ways and that staff had therefore received training to develop their understanding of this. In School 3, staff emphasised

that behaviour management has to be a combination of good systems, alongside a flexible approach to allow for individual circumstances within that.

Across schools, approaches to behaviour management were rooted in an emphasis on the importance of relationships, a perspective summed up by a member of staff in School 5:

Whilst you can have as many techniques and strategies listed on a piece of paper, it is about your relationship with these young people that is going to allow you to manage their behaviour, or not manage their behaviour, really. And we all get it wrong from time-to-time. But it's also about acknowledging that it's not 'one-size fits all', that reward is positive praise and humour plays an amazing role in this school I think in terms of managing our kids.

At School 5 it was suggested that the behaviour system had been developed specifically to reflect the culture and ethos of the school:

And it's really worked with some of our students that struggle with their behaviour because they're now wanting to get these [rewards] and it has made some improvements in the way that they've settled in school. I'm not saying it's perfect.

Monitoring systems were thought to be essential for identifying early not only who might need intervention, but also to show where things were improving.

At School 2, the consequences associated with problematic behaviour were dealt with through a central system managed by separate non-teaching staff and not by the teacher. Both staff and young people felt this system helped to depersonalise incidents and to support the maintenance of positive relationships within the class. Young people in this school also commented that students gained a sense of safety, knowing that there were people whose job included coming to remove students if necessary.

There was also a strong focus on restorative justice in several case study schools, again developed through a whole school approach. Pastoral heads at School 4 described how this had led to a reduction in aggression throughout the school as well as an improved ability amongst students to negotiate through difficulty. For example:

They've learned the process of talking which a lot of our students don't always have the skills, do they... We don't get to the fight bit as much anymore.

Systems based on restorative justice were also considered to have had an impact in breaking down gangs:

I think our exclusions were always for, really, aggressive behaviour or inappropriate behaviour ... bullies ...yeah, that's the type of thing we've excluded for in the past. Whereas now there's much less of that, so much less anti-social behaviour that we don't really see as many exclusions.

There were strong similarities between schools' approaches to behaviour management and the discussion of behaviour management with ITT tutors. One tutor for example talked about moving away from the phrase 'behaviour management' to learner or learning management, noting that discipline is only one part of learner management:

There can be an assumption by trainees that behaviour management is something you do when it's gone wrong, whereas actually what we might mean by behaviour management is everything that we do to put together a lesson, to meet the needs of students, and to avoid conflicts occurring in the first place. So some of this is about diversity and equal opportunities and not putting students in a position where they will want to misbehave, for want of a better phrase.

(Tutor, ITT 1)

The tutor was also looking at emotional engagement, which was described as 'a *much higher-order proactive strategy*'. As in the case study schools there was an emphasis on behaviour management as part of a *philosophy* – rather than about specific techniques – embedded within a strong focus on engaging young people in the classroom:

I feel that the trainees understand that if you address the behaviour of students and if you challenge them and engage them in what you're teaching you're less likely to have behavioural problems from your class. And then some of them make the wider connection that actually that means the student's more likely to be successful in school, and less likely therefore to face an exclusion.

The view amongst the ITT tutors was, as in the schools, that if you get the culture and ethos right: 'then they are going to be only wanting to exclude children if it's an absolute must.'

4.6 Empowering young people

Tutors in ITT1 emphasised the relationship between the democratic aspects of schooling – such as school councils and student voice – and inclusion, noting that democratic frameworks provide a means of empowering pupils. Staff in several of the case study schools gave examples of initiatives that allowed young people to take on significant roles in relation to learning and each other, as well as in the wider community. At School 2, for example, two young people were said to be freely elected by the peer group to be representatives on the Senior Leadership Team, and Year 9s were given the opportunity to train as peer mentors as part of an accredited programme that prepared them to work with primary pupils and support their transition. Peer mentoring was also used within a vertical house system adopted at School 3 to help young people to settle in better. Staff there noted that 'the older ones help the younger ones and the gang culture within our school has gone.'

Staff at School 5 said that they often spoke to young people about being good role models and they had developed a wealth of initiatives to support young people into positions of responsibility. Examples included a peer coaching initiative that involved training all Year 9s and Year 10s to work with all Year 7s and Year 8s, while staff took responsibility for coaching Year 11s. Initiatives such as this were said to include *all* young people and to be part of a strategy to:

Try to bring out leadership in some of these more challenging youngsters, to divert their energies into being positive role models rather than not.

Young people in this school were also involved in teaching lessons as part of Year 7 induction, as well as delivering input on future opportunities to parents. At School 3 staff said that young people should legitimately have a say in what goes on and that this could in part be achieved through formal systems of representation but also by working to create an open culture in which students feel safe to talk to adults and secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to. At School 5 the behaviour system was said to have originated from a survey of young people and to be a direct response to their views and concerns. Whilst these examples are not concerned directly with exclusion practices, they are relevant as part of a wider ethos within the school, and were highlighted as such by staff and student stakeholders across schools.

5. Addressing inequalities

5.1 Insights into over-represented groups

In this chapter, we turn to key issues emerging from the research in relation to four factors identified as associated with over-representation in recorded exclusions from school:

- Free School Meals;
- gender;
- ethnicity; and
- Special Educational Needs.

It is important to note however that these categorisations address aspects of identity that are both different and in some cases contested as will be elaborated in the following sections. It is also important to note that they are categorisations that also at times intersect, as evidenced by concerns raised about the behaviour and underachievement of White boys in receipt of Free School Meals at several points during the course of the research.

1. Free School Meals

Free School Meals is a benefit linked to low-levels of household income and therefore strongly associated with childhood poverty. It is also sometimes erroneously conflated with the term working class when in reality it is an overlapping but narrower grouping. Consequently our understandings of the relationship between social class and school processes are important for understanding the over-representation of this group within school exclusion processes (see Gazeley, 2010 and Gazeley 2012). Many interviewees identified social deprivation as one of their biggest concerns, unsurprising perhaps given the urban contexts in which most were working. Two of the case study schools were for example located in a local authority where over 70% of pupils in the Pupil Referral Unit were said to be eligible for Free School Meals. The percentage of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals in one of these schools was more than double the national average and staff there expressed their awareness of links between economic hardship and other social problems, and the ways in which familial stressors could contribute to problems of behaviour in school. It was said that the children's safeguarding team in one school had been extended because of the scale of work involved. At GCSE level, however, there was almost no achievement gap between those receiving FSM and those who were not. This was said to be a consequence of consistency of approach and persistence, led strongly by the head teacher.

A key finding to emerge from the research was that the introduction of the Pupil Premium had raised the profile of Free School Meals as a category within school populations. This increased attention is hardly surprising, given that Pupil Premium funding is so closely tied to numbers eligible for Free School Meals. In line with Ofsted's (2013) report, the case study schools were focusing Pupil Premium funding on narrowing the achievement gap between young people eligible for Free School Meals and others – a gap that can be large, but which was below the national average in five of the case study schools. Pupil Premium funding was also being used to provide opportunities for young people to participate in extra activities and to ensure that there were enough staff deployed in support roles, such as within specialist non-teaching behaviour teams and as learning

mentors. At one school the funding was being used to develop alternative off-site provision for young people at risk of exclusion in Key Stage 4, and a reduction in fixed term exclusions for young people in receipt of FSM was stated as one of the expected outcomes. The other schools, while clearly utilising the Pupil Premium to fund interventions around behaviour and social and emotional well-being, did not explicitly identify this as a strategy to reduce exclusions however.

Although a number of interviewees raised the concern that White boys in receipt of Free School Meals were the group most likely to present with difficulties around behaviour and underachievement, staff attitudes often appeared quite empathetic:

Don't get me wrong, lots of our kids are absolutely beautiful... but where the sticking barriers are, are often families where there is no aspiration, there's worklessness.

(Member of staff, School 5)

There was a strong focus on attendance, with one school stating that learning mentors funded through the Pupil Premium had contributed to an attendance rate of 94% for young people eligible for Free School Meals. At School 4, where White boys eligible for Free School Meals were also identified as matter for concern, there was a focus on keeping these young people in school because:

If people are out they're more likely to offend...particularly if - sorry for the generalisation - if they aren't supported by parents in a way that we'd ideally like them to be.

Other interventions run specifically for young people eligible for Free School Meals included a reading group for reluctant readers at one school and a successful short term girls' support group in School 4. A young person in this school explained:

You can just talk about anything you want to, if you've got problems, and you all sit there and, like, help each other out.

However, Staff at School 5 suggested that there were sensitivities around taking young people from this group out to work on their own (as with Looked After Children) and one commented:

Actually if it's good practice for them it's good practice for everybody.

2. Gender

The disproportionality in rates of recorded exclusion for boys was recognised by many respondents. For example in one local authority, 70 per cent of fixed term exclusions were of boys and 86 per cent for permanent exclusions. One interviewee suggested that disproportionate rates of exclusion amongst boys were not a particular cause of concern, noting that they were also over-represented in the prison and the probation populations and also more affected by genetic disorders. Other interviewees raised particular concerns relating to girls, including problems involving social networking sites, a lack of specialist provision for girls, and concern that whereas boys might get angry, girls might not attend.

The particular challenges of engaging boys were highlighted in School 5, and in this regard, the provision of alternative routes within the curriculum (discussed previously) was seen as valuable. Students could be offered one day a week out to do a practical course such as painting and decorating or construction:

All hands on practical things that they're interested in as they find it difficult to access the curriculum because they just can't sit still and there's behaviour difficulties along the way.

Boys and girls accessing practical courses said that they enjoyed them, and staff in the school thought the approach was successful:

It's really worked in our favour because there's quite a few year 11 boys in the past who are bright boys, who should have been coming out with 5A-Cs and who if we hadn't have placed them out for that one day, and re-engaged them through something they're interested in, which then has an effect on school because they're more settled and they're more focused and they're doing what they should be doing, I think we could have lost some of those boys along the way... so it really does support, especially the boys.*

Another school was also running a Key Stage 3 nurture group for boys that provided support from transition and beyond.

Gendered understandings of problem behaviour were raised as an issue at several of the schools, where it was suggested that there were developmental differences between girls and boys which affected their emotional and behavioural maturity. Staff in several schools commented that rather than seeing boys as just 'naturally' badly behaved, they might need to be treated differently:

Boys are very different to girls... some leave it until very late, Year 11.

A local authority interviewee also commented that the behavioural problems of boys are more likely to attract concern – an observation also highlighted in the literature discussed in Chapter 1:

I think their behaviours are often very overt in terms of generally their responses to challenge might well be aggressive perhaps, seem to be aggressive.

(Behaviour Support Service)

Young people interviewed at School 1 discussed differences in the classroom behaviour of boys and girls. They commented that boys tended to interact with teachers in ways that distract them from teaching, whereas girls interacted with teachers in a 'more cheeky way'. These young people suggested that disruptive behaviours might arise from students 'giving up' as a consequence of not understanding, and so, they argued, it was important to make them believe that they could do things (see Marrable 2011). They also suggested that lessons that were more active were more enjoyable, and that teachers should take a chance and try different things.

3. Ethnicity

Concerns about the relationship between ethnicity and exclusion varied, unsurprisingly, depending on the demography of the local populations in case study authorities and schools. In one local authority, the Behaviour Support Service identified the main group for whom permanent exclusions had fallen over time as Black boys and this was said to have been because of a strong focus on reducing exclusions within this group between 2006 and 2009. Although these dates overlap with a policy focus on this issue at that time (see Chapter One), this was not identified as having been a contributory factor. The over-representation of boys of mixed race had also been identified as a local concern in 2008, being approximately six per cent of those in the local authority as a whole, but 14 per cent of those permanently excluded.

One Local authority stakeholder noted that recorded exclusions for specific ethnic groups could vary from year to year. Another interviewee indicated that the local Behaviour Support Service was seeing more referrals relating to young people from Asian backgrounds, linked to gang culture. This issue was also raised at School 3 but staff said that changes to school practices had led to this being eliminated as a problem.

There were very few ethnic minority students in one of the case study schools, whereas in two other schools White pupils were in the minority. One case study school had high levels of population transience, which was partly linked to migration patterns. Both school and local authority staff in the study discussed how local demographics were changing, with increasing numbers of students from Eastern Europe in particular. One local authority official indicated that there was a team working with East European young people coming in to the area. There was also a language centre where work was done on English prior to entry to school. It was suggested that these recent initiatives were likely to have helped to reduce exclusions amongst incoming minority groups.

In line with previous research in the field (e.g., Lloyd and Norris 1998; Wilkin et al. 2010) there was some perception amongst interviewees that Gypsy, Traveller or Roma students may not understand school rules, and that some might carry weapons without realising that this was inappropriate. Similar concerns were raised for some refugee groups.

4. Special Educational Needs

A number of issues emerged in relation to young people identified as having Special Educational Needs. In one area, the local authority interviewee noted that there continued to be a disproportionate number of young people with SEN statements excluded for a fixed term but that none were now being permanently excluded because at that point the local authority would intervene. Most (over 90 per cent) of these fixed term exclusions were said to be coming from Pupil Referral Units and Special Schools. Another interviewee argued, however, that as some Special Educational Needs relate specifically to behaviour, higher rates of exclusion might be expected amongst this group.

Good preparation for transition was identified as an important factor in relation to young people with SEN in particular. Some interviewees suggested that the different nature of primary schools (e.g., differing size and structure) could mask some of the difficulties that can increase risk of exclusion for children with SEN. Others, including one local authority interviewee, also questioned whether primary schools might not be sufficiently proactive in terms of identifying needs:

What secondary schools are saying is that in many cases they receive students from primary whose needs have not been addressed. So therefore when they move to secondary they're incapable of engaging effectively and in many case that leads to behaviour difficulties.

One local authority official commented that issues sometimes arose after transition to secondary school because parents had opted for mainstream provision when even with best efforts this was unlikely to be successful. Another interviewee said that there were also some secondary schools that did not think they could manage students with the greatest level of need. Interviewees noted that following a period of difficulty in mainstream, young people with SEN were sometimes moved to local authority provision so that their needs could be assessed and more suitable long term provision made. One interviewee suggested that, in addition to there being a lot of unidentified SEN, it was a case of *'trying to force some square pegs into round holes'* and so alternative provision that was felt to be working very successfully had been developed to provide *'some square holes'*.

Four of the case study schools had specialist units for statemented pupils, and it was evident that attention had been given to accommodating specific needs, such as those of young people with a diagnosis of autism. The broader emphasis across the schools that we noted earlier, on individualised approaches and adopting a solution-focused approach, seemed to apply to work being done to support young people with SEN in particular:

We need to be really creative about how to cope with and manage these kids who've got a range of special needs, some that are fairly complex and enduring.
(Member of staff, School 5)

Within the case study schools there was evidence of careful thought and planning in enabling students to manage the demands of a large, noisy secondary school. Again, staff emphasised flexibility and attention to the needs and preferences of the young person. Staff were said to be well prepared and kept informed, so that they were aware of the implications of particular needs for young people's experience in schools. Examples given included understanding how young people with autism might react to being reprimanded, or how to ensure that exposure to problematic external factors such as bells and crowds were minimised. A governor interviewed at one school provided the example of her foster son (on the autistic spectrum) having been given an adapted timetable with a two hour lesson split between academic work and 'social skills' work – a framework that enabled him to cope. A young person interviewed at School 1 discussed how the English teacher had come to the specialist unit and built a working relationship over time. At School 6 there was a positive handling plan that included a requirement that there be counselling for both the teacher and the young person should an incident occur.

Good relationships with specialist professionals outside the school context were also considered to be important in supporting inclusion for students with SEN. At one school, a relationship had been developed with a specialist nurse over time, and this had led to termly face-to-face meetings to discuss young people with statements for ADHD.

It was noted at another school that many of those accessing practical, vocational courses were on the SEN register, including a number with significant learning difficulties:

It gives them an opportunity because these are our weakest students... they really enjoy it.

This school was also doing a lot of work to develop reading, as around 25% of the intake each year had reading ages below age 9. In another school, concerns were raised about what the new SEN rules would mean and how they might affect the level of resource and support.

Both of the ITT providers reported that trainees had more opportunities to gain experience of SEN than in the past. Inclusion and SEN were said to be covered in ways that equip beginning teachers with an awareness that is not a deficit model - an approach designed to prepare trainees positively to work with the range of young people in schools. At one provider there was said to be a focus on making the curriculum accessible for all rather than changing the curriculum for them. In ITT1, inclusion was said to be very much the philosophy of the course '*right from day one*'. Trainees were encouraged to be aware of and make use of school data so that they could talk about individuals in their classes and what their needs are. One provider also worked closely with a local special school and so there were opportunities for students who were particularly interested to go on alternative placements there or to take part in voluntary activities:

The relationship we have with our schools is really kind of fundamental to this because the partnership contribute to the curriculum development, or certainly on the presentation and discussion on special needs, for example so there is very much a kind of dual approach really.

(Tutor, ITT 2)

Trainees at ITT 2 were able to hear teachers from a local special school talk to an SEN interest group, and there was series of six compulsory lunchtime lectures given by outside speakers and experts that covered a range of aspects including autism, dyslexia and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some students were also able to choose a training model which combined four days in mainstream provision and one day in a SEN Unit or in alternative provision.

5.2 The impact of equalities duties

Equalities legislation could be seen to have had an impact in two main areas, in line with statutory requirements. First, there was evidence that legislation had increased the monitoring and analysis of exclusion and other data relating to involvement in disciplinary processes, both within the local authority and within each of the case study schools. Second, equalities legislation could be seen as a factor underpinning other school policies, including inclusion and behaviour policies.

Local authority staff with specific responsibility for monitoring permanent and fixed term exclusions indicated that the identification of trends in recorded exclusions was an important part of the work that they undertook. One local authority exclusions officer noted that head teachers were advised that they must look at who they are excluding, to

refer to the Equalities Act and to look at vulnerable categories and to be aware of the need to be more tolerant, observant and empathetic. The groups highlighted as warranting particular attention were Looked After Children (LAC), young people with SEN, and particular ethnic groups. Within this local authority, there was also a forum for feeding back data if a specific pattern of exclusions became apparent, along with opportunities for the sharing of best practice. Where disproportionality was identified, there were strategies in place to try and minimise inequality.

In case study schools, data on permanent and fixed term exclusions were being collected and analysed to assess impact on specific groups. Data on involvement in other disciplinary processes was also being collected, such as the number of on-calls and emergency referrals and the departments from which these had originated, as well as incidences of bullying. These data were regularly reviewed, in some cases weekly, and used to inform interventions. One Senior Leader (identified as a pastoral person as well as responsible for data) was described as making data *'accessible to those who aren't data people, so not only does he know how to work with these youngsters, he can actually show us who it is we need to be working with'*.

Interviewees also emphasised that it was essential to think about what data monitoring was used for. The figures on SEN at one school for example had prompted a review of SEN provision and a member of staff explained:

Everything is an application isn't it? Knowing about it and actually applying it are very different things.

Applications included the identification of *'hot-spots'* which would then be investigated and followed up with support and training for staff if necessary. At one school a specialist teaching team had been trained in coaching support to work with individual staff to improve their practice.

School policy documents suggested that the duties prescribed by the Equalities Act were considered as these were being developed and written, and this was also a process described by some staff:

As far as the Equalities Act is concerned we certainly now refer to it at any time we're looking at changing a policy, writing a policy... we look at it yeah in relation to everything that we do. Will this cover every one of our students? Will this cover every bit of the group that we have or is anybody losing out from this?

At School 1, policy documentation stated that that all staff have access to resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion. It was noted that the action which followed from this statement was critical in making a difference, and so these principles had been linked to the annual School Improvement Plan. Behaviour, discipline and exclusion were areas where policies and practices had been informed by this policy (under the heading *ethos and organisation*). Seven guiding principles were outlined in the policy including the following:

1. All pupils are of equal value.
2. The school recognises and respect difference - that equal treatment [is] not necessarily the same treatment.

3. The school aims to foster positive attitudes and relationship to promote a shared sense of belonging.
4. The school aims to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.

It was also noted in the Equal Opportunities Policy document in School 5 that in order to provide equality of outcome it is '*sometimes necessary to provide different opportunities*'.

5.3 Training and equalities

1. On-going training for school staff

Local authority officials provided training on equalities and exclusion, drawing on the insights gained from their oversight of exclusions in all local schools. Local authority interviewees noted that they were able to provide bespoke training for schools, in addition to an annual programme of training available to all governors and senior staff. A small number of governors were interviewed for the present study, but none had personally undertaken this training. Such training is important though as the governing body monitors the implementation of school policies and young people in the case study schools were in some cases given governor's warnings as a stage prior to a managed move or permanent exclusion. Much of the training at local authority level focused on processes and procedures and there was also training for clerks in exclusion meetings about complaints and appeals. This training is needed to provide an understanding of the concept of disproportionality but also understanding of its implications for practice at all levels:

An exclusion is an exclusion whatever. Not looking at it because you're this race so more likely ...

(School Governor)

One of the local authority officials reported having found information networks run by the DfE useful as a means of sharing practice at a strategic level, but these meetings had now stopped. These networks could also help to bridge difficulties around cross-border working, an area raised as a concern by a number of interviewees in different contexts.

Across stakeholder groups and schools, it was considered to be important for *all* school staff – not only teachers – to be involved in training, as part of a whole school approach that modelled and reinforced key messages, particularly around behaviour management. The Head of Key Stage Three at one school had done CPD training with all staff on behaviour management, supported by insights gained from monitoring data. Within all of the schools one of the key uses of these data was to identify staff training needs and to provide additional support, by compulsion if necessary.

One school had developed a whole school training session on emotional awareness in teaching (see for example Marrable 2012), couched as 'Developing positive relationships in the classroom' and 'Classroom management – a Positive Ethos'. The powerpoint slides from the training included the following:

- *Are we setting an example to our students in how we expect them to behave?*
- *If we're not then who is?*

- *Are we trying to create hierarchy or equality?*
- *How do we talk to them?*
- *How many of us would react positively to being shouted at or talked down to?*
- *Are we giving opportunities to improve their behaviour?*
- *Being treated unfairly leads to poor behaviour!*

Staff suggested that the teachers at the school could see the results from their changed practices and that this had contributed to a cultural shift within the school. Working at the school was described as allowing for '*tremendous personal development*' and it was noted that staff turnover was low. The school's partnership arrangements reinforced these strengths, providing opportunities for staff from different schools to participate in shared training and to develop a consistency of approach.

Another school had invited Primary training specialists in to do some training on receptive language and also hosted a session on Understanding Anger delivered by the local authority specialist behaviour team. Staff attending these sessions then delivered them across the school, because as one explained:

It's got to become something that's just embedded and part of the culture.

Another interviewee expressed concern however that some schools might refuse specialist training of this type, after an experience with a head teacher in which there appeared to have been some resistance to the implication that external specialist staff might know more about managing behaviour than a school's own staff.

2. Initial Teacher Training

ITT is an important formative stage in the development of teachers and the ITT tutors noted that it is explicitly concerned with the development of professional values:

This is the time at which we get people to confront those, their existing ones, and hopefully develop them.

(Tutor, ITT 2)

A lot of work is done therefore on issues relating to trainees' own identity as well as those of young people and supporting them in:

Understanding their own baggage a bit as well... what they're bringing as a teacher and what prejudices they've got that they need to be aware of. Aim to: get beginning teachers to recognise what they arrive with, to challenge their misconceptions and to offer them experiences to show how you as a teacher can make a difference to an individual, but also to have that to inform your teaching, not to ... blame kids...

Within ITT 1, trainees had been asked to reflect on what they found difficult, and to use that understanding to inform their practice, something that they were said to find it hard to do:

They're all successful learners, they're all good at what they're doing, ...for them to try to remember what it's like not to like a subject, not to feel good at it, or to feel like everything you try is failing, I think that's really quite difficult.

Trainees were also encouraged to think about the subject they were worst at when they were at school and the one they liked best, as a way of recognising the importance of the teacher, and of setting boundaries and being fair. These understandings were echoed in the comments of young people interviewed at School 2, who also noted that teachers were likely to have been good students themselves and that they may not understand 'how a not good student thinks', and the causes of their problems.

Within the ITT providers there was a feeling that this was a difficult time to be preparing trainees to teach:

I think the climate in schools at the moment because of the accountability agenda, is such that... in some ways what we're doing is trying to prepare the students really to think about how they want to teach in the future as well as preparing them to teach for what is reality today.

Concerns were also raised about the move from university provision to school-based training:

If they're just in a school doing their own training they are not going to get that diversity, they're not going to get that cultural awareness.

The ITT tutors emphasised that it was important for trainees to be able to come out of school to contextualise their understandings of school practices by sharing these with trainees in other contexts:

We've got a real concern with the way that School's Direct is going that schools will just train the teachers to work in that particular context and if it's a school that's proud of its exclusion rate they're going to have a very skewed vision.

It was also noted that because ITT providers work in partnership with schools, they have been able to develop multiple or paired placements and place trainees in schools where they would need a higher level of emotional support. At ITT 2 the tutors stated that they aimed to build the resilience of trainees to understand children within their contexts and to maintain high expectations for them:

Working with students to get a sense of social justice and community is about that kind of holistic understanding of the backgrounds that the kids are coming from within the context of a school where expectations should be high, obviously, and they need to learn, but that's a very challenging interface in certain institutions. So the student needs to build that kind of resilience that the tutors here really work on with them.

It was noted that ITT was also about developing reflexivity in the trainee - like the emphasis found in the case study schools on developing teachers' own emotional literacy:

It's actually about understanding how to deal with some of those very difficult situations with Black boys where emotionally you're finding it difficult to deal with that and being clear in yourself about where it's okay to criticise and where it's not. So all of this is about looking at that because it's easy to focus on just exclusions, isn't it, really without looking at all those other contributory factors.

(Tutor, ITT 2)

Within the ITT providers, it was noted that there was a focus on diversity and inclusive practice rather than on exclusion, or reducing exclusion or reducing inequalities in exclusions. There was evidently some variation across curriculum areas in terms of the formal input that trainees' received that suggested that there was some scope to include more training on exclusion as an aspect of current school practice. The tutors at ITT 1 thought for example that it was '*maybe something that you could mention more of, but it's actually continued in schools later on in their practice*'. Trainees did evidently have opportunities to explore issues relating to exclusion more indirectly however as suggested by the following account:

Our [trainees] have heard two different people talk in the first few weeks of the course, one of whom was very much, ' We have zero tolerance and we're proud of our exclusion rate' and another who was , We are so pleased at how low our exclusion rate is and this is what we've done, de, de' and just asking the students to critique that and not to give an opinion but ... for them to think about what it means about those two schools and how it makes them feel.

Trainees were also learning about exclusion through first-hand experiences at school-level:

On a practical level they will come across students on their placements that have had a temporary exclusion or are returning from a fixed-term exclusion. So they have to know how to deal with those students, but also what's happened to lead to that point. You know they do come back with stories of 'This kid turned up and I'd never seen them before and it turned out they'd been on a managed move to somewhere else, and then they'd come back ...' So they do get experience of what goes on in schools regarding exclusions.

Overall, the ITT tutors - like staff in the case study schools - thought that approaches to exclusion within ITT settings were necessarily more complex than a focus on strategies:

It's a whole philosophy about the way you approach your curriculum, the way you talk to students, the way your course is constructed, what your beliefs are, what challenges you offer students.

(Tutor, ITT 2)

And:

We don't actually talk about exclusion, I don't anyway, and why schools exclude. But I think that because of everything that we do, because of the philosophy of the course, because it is an inclusive course, then that's bound to have a consequence and an effect, because a lot of them very quickly get positions quite high up within schools. So therefore I think if their philosophy is right, then they are going to be only wanting to exclude children if it's an absolute must.

(Tutor, ITT1)

There were strong synergies between what the ITT tutors said about their approach to issues relating to diversity, inclusion and exclusion and the insights provided by staff in the case study schools into the characteristics of good practice in this regard. Most importantly, training on exclusions was not seen to be a one-off intervention but an attitude developed through an on-going, collaborative process of self-development.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Concluding comments

The research reported here was focused on learning from examples of well-developed practice, in addressing inequalities in school exclusions in England. In considering findings from the study, it is important to remember that we did not seek to evaluate practice in the schools or local authorities studied, but rather to learn from their experience. Equally, we do not claim that the case studies discussed here are representative of schools or local authorities across the country. Nevertheless, despite the diversity of case study schools – in size, structure and population – consistent common themes emerged across the study as a whole.

The project identified a number of similarities in practices and ethos across the case study schools as well as a strong commitment to reducing rates of recorded exclusion. A key challenge has been however to isolate good practice in school exclusion generally in order to provide insights into good practice in relation to reducing inequalities in exclusions specifically. Tasked with identifying examples of practices effective in reducing inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion relating to gender, Free School Meals), ethnicity, and Special Educational Needs (SEN), the study found that reductions in exclusions, at least at the level of school practice had not necessarily been achieved through a focus on reducing inequalities for these groups. Instead they related in part to practices and characteristics associated with inclusivity, about which there was a high level of agreement both across the case study schools and also between schools and the other stakeholder groups that participated in the study. Although reductions in exclusions for these groups can be achieved indirectly and through good practice, the over-representation of these groups in alternatives to exclusion and the wider disciplinary processes of schools suggests however that it continues to be necessary to raise this issue as an equalities issue, and to explore how to address gaps in understandings of exclusion as an equalities issue through more focused policy interventions and/or training.

The research identified a number of ways in which schools and local authorities had reduced rates of exclusion, and highlighted apparent benefits for young people from those groups disproportionately affected by exclusion. At the level of practice, the focus was very much on the individual, and how to support them in managing their behaviour. While this approach could evidently be effective, concerns about inequalities may not be the central focus of the individual practitioner and consequently, such concerns may not be fully understood. Wholly individualised approaches are likely to be insufficient when it comes to identifying and addressing the root causes of inequality, facilitating its continuation in other forms. While the case study schools had developed strong processes for recording and monitoring the involvement of different groups in their disciplinary processes, including but not only fixed term and permanent exclusion, understanding of this as an equity issue for young people appeared to be stronger at the level of the local authority. This was perhaps because they had an overview of the data for all local schools which allowed them to spot trends and differences in a way that schools generally felt that they could not with smaller samples, and greater variation between year groups. Local authority stakeholders were also perhaps better placed in terms of understanding how these trends related to national data and to trends at this level.

The research suggested that top down approaches on issues of exclusion and equality could have impact. This was reflected most noticeably in the focus on zero exclusions and in the development of systems and processes supported by one local authority that had led to reductions in exclusions. Young people with statements of SEN and Looked After Children emerged as groups for whom this focus was strongest, a reflection of the continuing commitment to reduce the permanent exclusion of these two groups at policy level. Further evidence of the value of top down approaches to addressing inequality could be seen in the focus within the case study schools on the Pupil Premium as a vehicle for improving outcomes for young people eligible for Free School Meals. The link between investments in pastoral and behavioural support under Pupil Premium funding, and between improved access to learning and improved integration in the school, suggests the potential for a reduction in exclusions although this connection was not often made explicit.

A school's understanding of its relationship with its context also emerged as important, coupled with reflection on need and a commitment to meeting it. All but one of the case study schools was located in an area of higher social disadvantage. A related issue that emerged as important was the strength of the notion of community and the importance of accepting young people at risk of permanent exclusion as a collective responsibility within the locality, rather than as a problem to be managed by a school on its own. Local cross-school partnerships that could provide a space for the sharing of successful intervention strategies were clearly very influential in reducing permanent exclusions, where there was also an individual in a position to drive this agenda forward and a willingness amongst schools to participate.

School ethos and a commitment to developing positive relationships emerged as common emphases across all of the case study schools. Interviewees emphasised that values were made explicit and staff were expected to model these values in their practice. Leadership was seen as key. Flexibility in provision emerged as an important strategy, both in terms of maintaining young people at school and as an alternative to both fixed term and permanent exclusion. This evidence raises wider questions about who accesses these alternatives and their relationship to future educational and life chances. Such questions need to be considered as part of a wider focus on inequalities, given that alternatives to exclusion are associated with similar patterns of over-representation in relation to certain groups as recorded exclusion.

There were strong synergies with the values and attitudes identified in ITT and in schools. There were also strikingly similar emphases in relation to behaviour management in the case study schools, even when the systems in use were quite different. All of the schools had developed approaches to behaviour that were proactive, closely monitored and which facilitated early intervention. All of the schools emphasised the importance of whole-school approaches delivered in ways that provided consistency and clarity about consequences but in which there was much more focus on rewards than on punishment. All of the schools also emphasised that staff were required to model the behaviours they expected and that there were systems in place to support staff when issues were identified. These systems and principles were considered to be essential for the development and maintenance of positive relationships based on trust and when there were difficulties young people and staff were supported in re-building these relationships. A similar emphasis on positive, proactive approaches to behaviour management was also found amongst the ITT providers, where, as in the schools, these understandings

were also seen as integral to teaching and learning. In all of the case study schools it was also clear that approaches to behaviour reflected a wider commitment to listening to and learning from the experiences of young people and empowering them to take responsibility not only for themselves but for others.

While it is important to recognise overlaps between specific groups over-represented in recorded exclusions (e.g., in the intersection between SEN and FSM) it is also important to think about the differences between groups as different intervention strategies and policy approaches may be called for. The monitoring data collected by the case study schools on the involvement of specific groups of young people in their disciplinary processes suggested that there were patterns of over-representation for example in relation to fixed term exclusion and on-calls, even where there were no permanent exclusions and so no patterns of inequality to identify at this level. This suggests the importance of adopting a systemic focus, as is required for instance in thinking about institutional racism, a construct generally not mentioned by interviewees despite our probing about exclusion and ethnicity. Such a construct requires a shift from the individualised perspective noted in the majority of interviewees towards a recognition of how systemic inequalities are both produced and re-produced through educational and social processes.

Changes to the delivery of ITT emerged as a significant concern, as did cuts to local authority specialist services and resources for schools. One key concern with Study Direct was that trainees might be placed in schools that were not models of good practice, or might not gain the range of experience in different schools that would help them to support young people at risk of exclusion in their future careers. Although ITT providers were focusing a great deal of attention on preparing trainees to be inclusive practitioners, there was scope to do more to develop their understandings of the over-representation of specific groups of young people in recorded exclusions from school as an equity issue. But training is not simply a matter for ITT and whole school learning was seen as critical, not least because much of the work on behaviour and inclusion is carried out in schools by staff who are *not* teachers and who will not therefore have come through ITT.

6.2 Key recommendations

1. **Promoting partnership approaches:** The re-structuring of the relationships between local authorities and schools, specialist support services and schools and between ITT providers and schools could adversely affect the support provided to more vulnerable young people. Case studies of good practice showed that inter-professional collaboration can work well and support consistency in developing good practice, even in this changed context. However, to protect and maintain such partnerships in times of restructuring and economic constraint is challenging. It is critical that policy priority (at national and local authority level) is given to the development and maintenance of systems that support collaboration, consistency and the sharing of good practice.
2. **Addressing variable practice:** Whilst focused on examples of good practice, the research identified clear concerns about variations in exclusion practices. Stronger mechanisms are needed to ensure consistency of practice across schools. This issue should also be approached in training for school leaders.

3. **Enforcement/sanctioning of breaches of exclusion guidance:** It is recommended that consequences be established to provide a more effective deterrent for breaches of the national guidance on exclusion.
4. **Key areas for training and practice development in schools**
 - a. **Understandings of equalities issues:** The research identified a tendency to focus on individualised approaches to exclusion and alternatives to exclusion rather than on over-representation in these processes as an equity issue for schools. This indicates that this is an area of professional understanding that needs to be explicitly addressed in training and continuing professional development.
 - b. **Training on behaviour management:** Training on restorative approaches to behaviour management is important to improve school staff practice with young people at risk of exclusion.
 - c. **Primary to Secondary transition:** Support for young people through transition emerged as a critical issue, particularly in relation to young people with additional or previously unidentified educational needs. More should be done to foster pro-active and collaborative practices in relation to Primary to Secondary transfer, with a particular emphasis on support for children with Special Educational Needs.
5. **Delivery of Initial Teacher Training:** ITT currently provides a space in which professional values are shaped and practice contextualised. To achieve the qualities of positive ethos and inclusive practice highlighted consistently across case study schools, especially in a context of change in ITT structure and delivery, it is necessary to develop robust systems to ensure that where ITT is delivered exclusively at school level, it is undertaken within a context that models good practice in relation to exclusion.
6. **Development of monitoring systems**
 - a. **Monitoring the use of the Pupil Premium to reduce inequalities in exclusions:** Central policy drivers have clearly helped in setting priorities for the development of good practice in relation to reducing exclusion. In this context, it is recommended that schools monitor the use of Pupil Premium spending to address disproportionality in exclusions relating to Free School Meals.
 - b. **Providing information about schools' success with exclusion:** Data on a school's record on the exclusion of young people with SEN in particular should be made more readily available to parents and carers as a means of providing greater transparency and accountability but also to inform decision making around transition.
 - c. **Modelling the monitoring of policy to assess its impact on specific groups:** Equalities legislation dictates that all decisions made by schools are informed by an understanding of their impact on specific groups and this is also a duty on government. Given the over-representation of specific

groups in recorded exclusion, national policy ought to be informed by consideration of the potential impact on young people involved in the disciplinary processes of schools.

7. Attention to the perspectives and experiences of young people

- a. **Building positive relationships:** Young people who contributed to this study were very clear that positive relationships with adults were important and needed to be based on trust and respect. There is a need for school systems to take account of young people's views and experiences across the spectrum that relates to exclusion, ranging from behaviour management policy, to alternative approaches within schools, to managed moves and exclusion.
- b. **The rights of young people and parents/carers in exclusion processes:** Policy change relating to exclusions appeals processes limit the likelihood of re-instatement following appeal against permanent exclusion. At the same time, there is no legislative requirement for an appeals process for managed moves. Schools and local authorities need to address the implications of these frameworks for the balance between the rights of head teachers and of young people and families.

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