

IntegratED

Fewer exclusions. Better alternative provision.

2024
Annual Report

Foreword

This state of the nation report into school exclusion and alternative provision (AP) from the IntegratED partnership brings together available data, research, and policy from this historically overlooked cohort.

Every year, thousands of children are permanently excluded from school and an even greater number are moved into AP through other routes. In the last academic year, both exclusions and suspensions hit new record highs. 9,376 pupils were permanently excluded and there were 786, 961 suspensions, with over 1.5 million days of learning lost due to suspensions.

This is a social justice issue. School exclusion disproportionately affects the most disadvantaged. A pupil on free school meals is five times more likely to be permanently excluded than their more affluent peers. A pupil in receipt of SEN is support is also five times more likely to be permanently excluded than their peers with no identified SEN.

School exclusion can have potentially catastrophic consequences for a child, for wider society and the economy. 90 per cent of excluded children do not achieve a pass in GCSE maths or English. Additionally, exclusion has been shown to increase a pupil's likelihood and ending up not in education, employment or training (NEET) and children outside of mainstream education are more vulnerable to becoming the victim of child criminal exploitation. New analysis by Pro Bono Economics has uncovered that there is at least £170,000 lifetime costs per child directly associated with permanent exclusion. For last year's excluded cohort alone, this means costs to the state of £1.6 billion over a lifetime.

The impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, high levels of mental health in children and a steady increase in the level of SEND over the last decade are all contributing to a tidal wave of challenges hitting children, families and schools. More must be done to reduce preventable school exclusions, to support children earlier to prevent them reaching crisis point and to ensure children in AP have access to high-quality education and support.

This important report reviews the policy landscape, tracks changes to the Timpson review of school exclusion, explores the research published in this space and gives an update on the APPG, Ministerial changes, the new Education Select Committee membership.

The report also gathers together all the data on which children are moved around the system, and how. It tracks the various routes out of mainstream schools and analyses how many children are known to be educated in alternative provision and what types of setting they are educated in.

As outlined in this report, despite the disproportionate effect on some of our most vulnerable children, there is still a lot we do not know about where our children are being educated and what quality of education and support they are receiving. This includes the overall number of children in AP and the location of educational provision for many children.

Ensuring every child is able to access a high-quality education that meets their educational, social and emotional needs should be the mission of every one of us. We will continue to work tirelessly, alongside our colleagues, to shine the light on this and advocate for more support for children, their families and for our schools and APs.

Lord Storey
Liberal Democrat Lords Spokesperson on Education

Lord Knight
Former Minister of State for Schools and Learning, Labour

About IntegratED

IntegratED is a coalition of partner organisations working to reduce preventable exclusions and improve the quality of education for children excluded from school. We do this through a whole-child development lens.

It is our belief that all young people should leave school with the skills, values, aptitudes, and capabilities necessary to realise their full potential and contribute to the common good. Our implementing partners are working across the education, charity and policy sectors training teachers, trialing interventions, and conducting research to achieve long-term system change.

Our partners are training teachers to engage children who have challenging behaviours and training school leaders of the future to implement whole-school strategies to reduce preventable exclusions. Working with children at risk of exclusion, we are implementing literacy programmes, raising aspirations, helping children to develop agency for their own learning, and bringing together teachers and pupils to uncover the reasons driving high exclusion rates. We are researching illegal exclusions; unexplained pupil moves into alternative provision; parental engagement; teacher awareness of whole-child development; local and national systemic drivers behind exclusions and how the quality of relationships affects outcomes in alternative provision (AP).

The work each partner is doing is summarised on the following pages.

The IntegratED annual report is designed to be a "state of the nation" of school exclusion and AP. In the following chapters we review the latest data and research, as well as the year's policy developments.

Our annual report complements the online knowledge hub, available at www.integrated.org.uk, which offers an up-to-date repository of research into exclusions, AP and whole-child development.

IntegratED partners

Ambition Institute

Ambition Institute is a national education charity, helping schools tackle educational disadvantage and helping their teachers and school leaders to become more expert over time. They do this by training teachers and leaders at all levels, sharing what works by connecting people to the latest research and best practice, and championing every teacher's potential to develop.

The Anna Freud Centre

Anna Freud is a mental health charity for children and families. They work to close the gap in wellbeing and mental health by advancing, translating, delivering and sharing the best science and practice with everyone who impacts the lives of children and families. They work with those who work and support children and young people directly, including families, teachers, social workers and mental health professionals.

Aspire AP

Aspire Schools does things differently. They offer transformative Alternative Provision and SEMH education for secondary school aged pupils. Their work is underpinned by their core principles of safe-love-learn – ensuring that pupils feel secure and valued and ready to fulfil their potential. As a multi-academy trust, their impact is far and wide, spanning across six school sites throughout Buckinghamshire rated "outstanding" by Ofsted. Beyond the classroom, they provide home tuition, outreach and hospital teaching services. Their work matters. They change lives.

Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think-tank that studies the root causes of Britain's social problems and addresses them by recommending practical, workable policy interventions. The CSJ engages in research and political advocacy to improve policy around school exclusions and alternative provision. As the "hub" organisation for IntegratED, the CSJ disseminates the programme's findings, as well as conducting original research.

Coram Group

Coram is the first and longest serving children's charity in the UK. Established as the Foundling Hospital in 1739, today they are a vibrant charity group of specialist organisations – the Coram Group – supporting hundreds of thousands of children, young people and families every year. They do this by championing children's rights and wellbeing and making their lives better every day through our range of services. Coram run a school exclusions hub, offering free information and resources for professionals and community organisations supporting children and their families in challenging school exclusions.

The Difference

Through its programmes, research and partnerships, The Difference learns what works to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, and shares this best practice across its network and the sector. The Difference creates specialist senior school leaders, with the expertise to lead whole-school and multi-agency approaches to meeting the learning, wellbeing and safeguarding needs of all children, and most crucially those with high levels of need and vulnerability.

Education Policy Institute

The Education Policy Institute is an independent, impartial and evidence-based research institute that aims to promote high quality education outcomes for all children and young people, regardless of social background. Their research and analysis aims to shed light on whether current policy is delivering a high quality, equitable, education system, and identifies issues where further policy development is needed.

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab are a group of expert analysts who produce independent, cutting-edge research on education policy and practice. They conduct research for policy-makers to help them understand the education landscape. They carry out quantitative research on the education system in England primarily using the National Pupil Database and other national datasets linked to it.

Excluded Lives

Excluded Lives is a multidisciplinary and multi-site research team, with members from the universities of Oxford, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Queen's Belfast and the LSE – specialising in Education, Criminology, Law, Psychiatry, Economics, Sociology and Social Policy. The overarching aim of the project is to provide a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary view of the different policies, practices and costs of formal, informal and unlawful school exclusions across the UK.

Impetus

Impetus transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the right support to succeed in school, in work and in life. Together with the Henry Smith Charity, they're backing charities that provide targeted support to those at risk of exclusion from school or in Alternative Provision, building on the evidence of what works to support and grow impactful programmes that will set more young people on a path to success.

Fair Education Alliance

The Fair Education Alliance (FEA) is a coalition of nearly 300 of England's leading organisations from business, the third sector and education, all working towards a world where our education system is fair – where no child's educational success is limited by their socioeconomic background. The FEA Secretariat unites its members to drive collective action, influence policy and scale impactful initiatives to create an education system that builds essential life skills, prioritises wellbeing, supports teachers and leaders, engages parents and communities, and provides support for all post-16 routes.

IntoUniversity

IntoUniversity's Holistic Aspirations project in Leeds, run in partnership with Leeds East Academy and the Co-operative Academy of Leeds, works with students aged 11-16 who are at high risk of exclusion and meet our eligibility criteria, including being eligible for free school meals. Delivering a targeted version of their programme, they aim to increase students' attachment to longer term goals and increase their school engagement, thereby avoiding a range of negative outcomes such as exclusions.

Inspiration Trust

Inspiration Trust, a family of schools in East Anglia, are piloting a model that integrates alternative provision into our mainstream provision, keeping children on the school roll and with an approach that ensures pupils are still part of the school community. Their alternative curriculum will include social and emotional interventions as well as an academic curriculum, largely delivered by mainstream teachers to enable the children to gradually re-join their mainstream peers in a supported transition process.

Mission 44

Launched by Seven Time Formula One World Champion Sir Lewis Hamilton in 2021, Mission 44 is a charity that is working to build a fairer, more inclusive future for young people around the world. The charity invests in solutions that empower young people to overcome social justice and succeed. It has a particular focus on developing an inclusive education system, creating employment opportunities in STEM and motorsport, and empowering young people to shape the world they live in.

IPPR

Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is an independent charity working towards a fairer, greener, and more prosperous society. They are researchers, communicators, and policy experts creating tangible progressive change, and turning bold ideas into common sense realities. Working across the UK, IPPR, IPPR North, and IPPR Scotland, and through their pioneering participative research, they are deeply connected to the people of our nations and regions, and the issues our communities face. They have helped shape national conversations and progressive policy change for more than 30 years. More recently in education, they have worked across the sector with organisations such as Big Change, The Difference, Impetus and Mission44. IPPR is also a leading organisation aiming to improve outcomes for early years and health and wellbeing of young people and has successfully contributed to childcare reform across the nation.

KPMG

KPMG Foundation works with others to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people in the UK, by investing in partners and programmes for children in their early years, in school and through adolescence, wherever, whenever and however the greatest benefits can be achieved. The Foundation is proud to support the Anna Freud Centre's work on reducing school exclusions through a whole family approach, in collaboration with Porticus and the IntegratED initiative.

Pro Bono Economics

Pro Bono Economics uses economic analysis and the unique insight provided by our connection to the social sector to help charities, funders, firms and policymakers to collectively tackle the causes and consequences of low personal wellbeing in the UK. Pro Bono Economics are working with social sector organisations to help them evaluate the economic impact of their work with young people at risk of exclusion, with a particular focus on valuing improvements in young people's wellbeing. They are also collaborating with organisations across the sector to call for the introduction of universal wellbeing measurement for children and young people.

Porticus

Porticus is the philanthropic organisation supporting the IntegratED programme. They believe the most effective way to educate children, especially those in extreme adversity, is to embed a holistic whole-child development approach within education systems. The programme vision is that all children, irrespective of family income or background, should have fair opportunities to develop as socially responsible, fulfilled individuals with a strong academic grounding, able to contribute to and benefit from a just society.

Relationships Foundation

Relationships Foundation believes that good relationships are fundamental to achieving a broad range of social and educational outcomes. As part of the IntegratED programme, they are measuring and exploring relationships in a range of alternative provision settings to understand how factors like closeness and trust support high performance. Relationships Foundation are also seeking to identify what it is that enables good relationships within settings and in the wider system, to support sustainable improvement.

Right to Succeed

Right to Succeed support communities in areas of high deprivation to work collectively to give children and young people the best start in life. Their IntegratED pilot programme worked with every child in the first three years of secondary school in Blackpool to close the literacy gap, giving pupils the ability to engage better with the curriculum and improving their ability to communicate with those around them. It also sought to understand the impact of literacy, language and communication on children's whole development, looking particularly at attitudes to self and school as well as attendance and exclusion.

The RSA

The RSA is where world-leading ideas are turned into world-changing actions. Their vision is a world where everyone can fulfil their potential and contribute to more resilient, rebalanced and regenerative futures.

Social Finance

Social Finance is working in partnership with two local authorities, Cheshire West and Chester County Council and Gloucestershire County Council, to transform how they identify and support children at risk of exclusion. The programme will develop data insights on who is being excluded, explore what interventions and quality assurance are needed and understand how local systems should support this. Social Finance is a not-for-profit organisation that researches better ways of tackling social problems.

Shine

SHINE wants to see all children leave school with real choices in their future. They believe that children should be given the best possible chances in education, no matter what their backgrounds or starting points. Their mission is to raise the attainment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds across the North of England. They do this by supporting innovations in education which have the potential to transform education outcomes for the most disadvantaged children. SHINE is proud to support Right to Succeed in their work to close the attainment gap, alongside Porticus and the IntegratED initiative.

Teach First

Teach First is seeking to embed the four main principles of whole-child development within its programmes. Whole-child development encompasses cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. They aim to raise awareness among teachers and school leaders of how these principles can benefit pupils in their schools. Through their programmes, they hope to equip teachers and school leaders to better respond to underlying factors that impact outcomes for pupils, particularly those facing educational disadvantage.

Wates Family Enterprise Trust

Providing opportunities for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in our communities is the driving force behind The Wates Family Enterprise Trust's work in one area of its funding. The Trust is passionate about providing support to those who from a young age could easily become lost in the system. They are keen to better understand how to support quality improvement in AP, aid pupils' post-16 transition, and want to ensure that there is a reduction in the number of those excluded or missing from school.

Whole Education

Whole Education is a network of leaders who share the vision that everyone should thrive in a transforming world. They believe that when people connect around a shared purpose amazing things begin to happen. In all of the work that they do, they seek to grow and deepen the connections between leaders across schools, local authorities and trusts who believe in the power of a whole education.

Wild Learn

WILD Learning exists to help people create the conditions for sustained behaviour change. They begin by guiding people to reflect inwards, understanding how they typically learn, then planning outwards developing their learning power and thinking skills to achieve a purpose that matters to them. This is as important for teachers and carers as it is for the young people they look after. They use a research validated Learning Power self-assessment tool and learning analytics via their WILD App to support end-to-end learning journeys. The overall outcomes of an effective learning journey are the distinctively human intelligences of self-leadership, learning relationships and thinking skills for complex problem solving.

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Key facts

In the 2022/23 academic year in England

9,376

pupils were permanently excluded

786,961

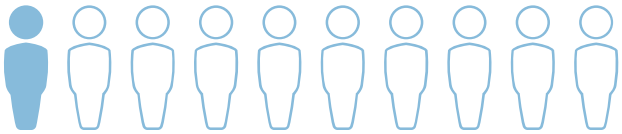
suspensions were given to 304,040 pupils

1,530,498

days of education were lost due to suspensions

Persistent disruptive behaviour accounts for:

permanent exclusions	39%
fixed-term exclusions	48%



1 in 10 pupils

experienced an unexplained exit during their time at secondary school

Comparing the 2021/22 academic year with the 2022/23 academic year:

44%

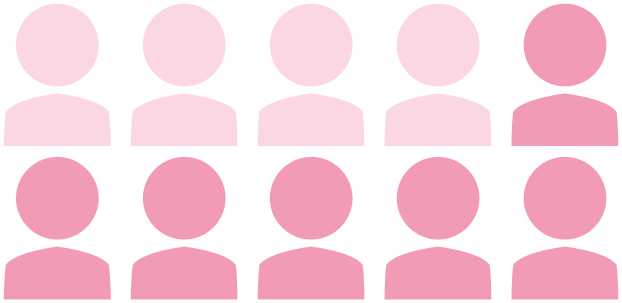
permanent exclusions increased by 44%

20%

suspensions increased by 20%

390k

over 390,000 more days were lost to suspensions



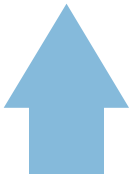
40% of pupils

who experience an unexplained exit leave to an unknown destination and never return to the state school system

Key facts

Fewer than one in 10

LAs are confident that they know of all pupils who are in home education in their area



17% increase

in the number of local authority funded placements and a seven percent increase in the number of pupils in school commissioned placements



An estimated 126,100

children were in home education at any one point during the 2022/23 academic year

There are at least

333 alternative providers

operating across England educating at least

15,866 pupils

A further 11,065 children were dual registered in state-maintained AP

11,065 pupils

There has been a 20 per cent increase in the number of children educated in state-maintained AP

20% increase

Exclusions

What are exclusions?

A suspension is a time-limited exclusion. The term "suspension" has been used by the Department for Education (DfE) the last two years, but in previous years the term "fixed-term exclusion" (FTE) was used. A pupil who is suspended is temporarily removed from school for a set period, which can total no more than 45 days in one school year. For context, there are a total of 190 days in each school year. If a child has been suspended, the school is required to set work for the first five school days and from the sixth day, to arrange suitable alternative full-time education.[1]

A permanent exclusion is not time limited. When a pupil is permanently excluded, their name is removed from the school's register and the local authority (LA) must arrange suitable alternative full-time education from the sixth day following said permanent exclusion.[2]

How many pupils are excluded?

Annual analysis

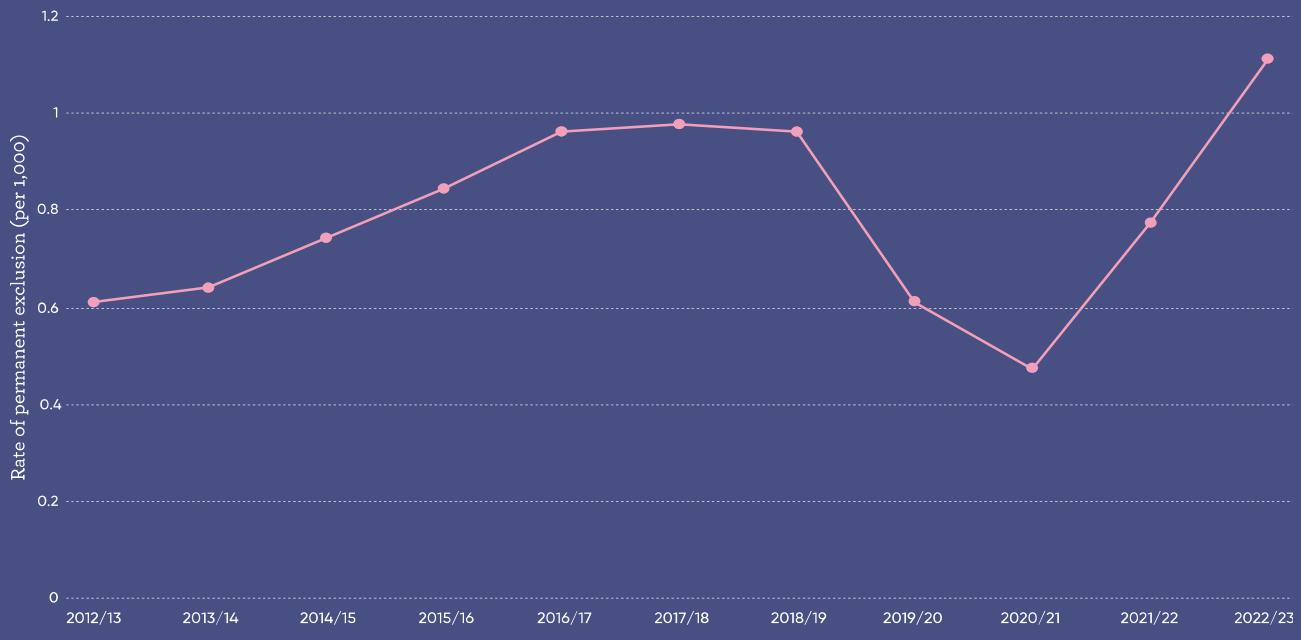
Permanent exclusions

In 2022/23, 9,376 pupils were permanently excluded.[3]

This represents a 44 per cent increase on the 6,495 pupils permanently excluded in 2021/22, and exclusions have now soared above pre-pandemic levels. There has been a 19 per cent increase in the number of pupils permanently excluded from the last academic year unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic (7,894 pupils in 2018/19).[4]

The rate of permanent exclusions has increased from 0.8 per 1,000 pupils in the last academic year to 1.1 per 1,000 pupils in 2022/23. School closures during 2020/21 resulted in the lowest recorded rate of exclusions for a school year, at 0.5 per 1,000.[5] In the three years prior to 2019/20 however, the rate of permanent exclusions remained steady at roughly 1.0 per 1,000 pupils.[6]

The rate of permanent exclusions declined markedly during the COVID-19 pandemic, but is on the rise again.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Suspensions

In 2022/23 the number of suspensions increased to the highest levels on record with 304,040 pupils receiving a combined total of 786,961 suspensions.[7] This compares to 2021/22, when 252,463 pupils experienced a combined total of 578,280 suspensions. Meaning there has been a 36 per cent increase in the number of suspensions compared to the previous academic year.[8]

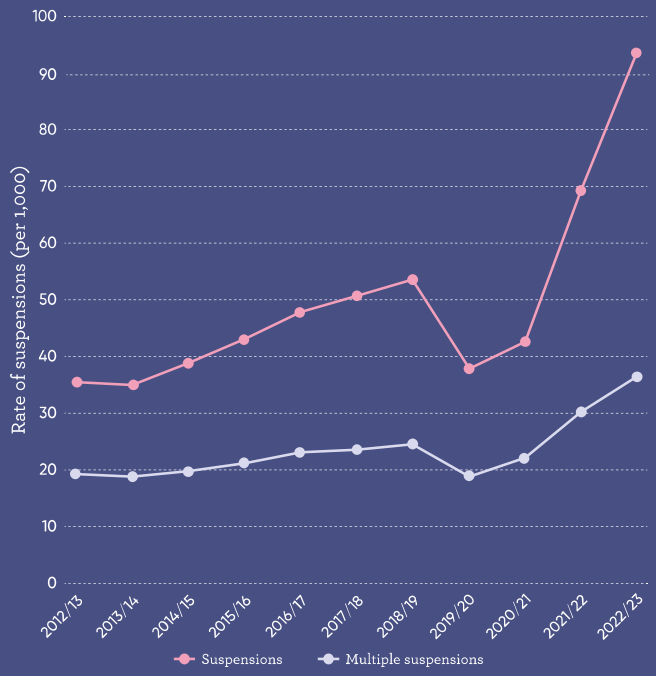
Overall, in the 2022/23 academic year 1,530,498 days of education were lost to suspensions, compared to 1,139,530 in the previous academic year.[9]

The rate of suspensions is similarly the highest on record, at 93.4 per 1,000 pupils compared to 69.1 per 1,000 pupils in the previous academic year. Prior to the pandemic, the rate of suspensions and multiple suspensions had been steadily rising. However, 2019/20 recorded a significant decline, followed by an increase in 2020/21 and another increase to record levels in 2021/22. 2022/23 now marks a new record. The rate of multiple suspensions has also reached a new record, at 36.1 per 1,000 pupils, compared to 30.2 per 1,000 pupils in the previous academic year.[10]

On average, pupils who experienced a suspension in 2022/23 received 2.6 suspensions and missed an average of 5.0 days per suspension. These figures are up compared to 2021/22 when excluded pupils received 2.3 suspensions average and missed 4.5 days per suspension.[11]

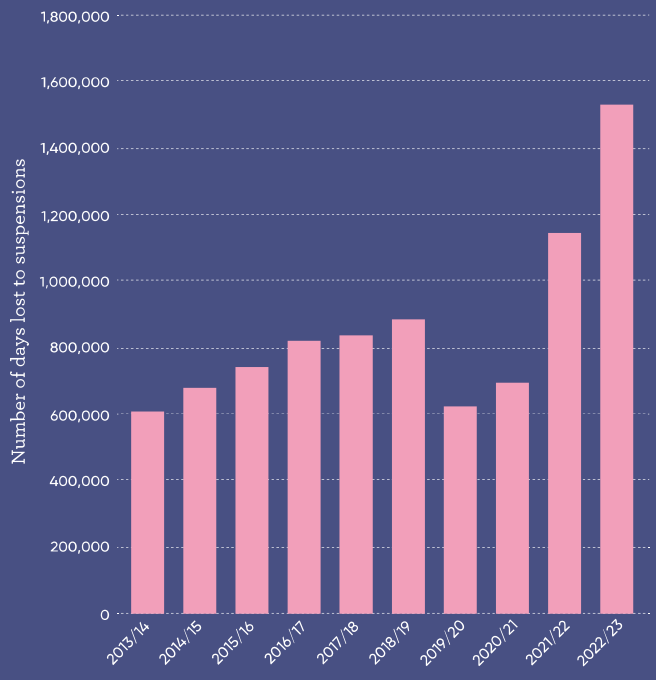
In response to the Timpson Review of School Exclusion, hereafter referred to as The Timpson Review, the previous government pledged to consult on reducing the total number of days a pupil can be excluded in one year, and on strengthening the requirement to arrange AP during suspensions.[12] Following on from the Timpson debate (16 September 2021), then Minister for Children and Families, Vicky Ford MP, stated that the Government would be looking into reducing the number of days that a pupil could be suspended.[13]

The rate of suspension is at its highest level since records are available.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

2022/23 saw the highest number of days lost to suspension since records are available.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Termly analysis

Permanent exclusions

In every term in 2022/23 the number of permanent exclusions increased compared to the same term in 2021/22:

- In Autumn, permanent exclusions increased by 48 per cent from 2,095 in 2021/22 to 3,103 in 2022/23.[14]
- In Spring, permanent exclusions increased by 39 per cent from 2,179 in 2021/22 to 3,039 in 2022/23.[15]
- In Summer, permanent exclusions increased by 46 per cent from 2,221 in 2021/22 to 3,234 in 2022/23. [16]

If we only analyse the rate of permanent exclusions in the Autumn term, the rate of permanent exclusions increased this year from 0.3 per 1,000 pupils in Autumn 2021/22 to 0.4 per 1,000 pupils in Autumn 2022/23. Looking pre-COVID-19 pandemic, 0.4 per 1,000 pupils in Autumn 2019 were permanently excluded.[17]

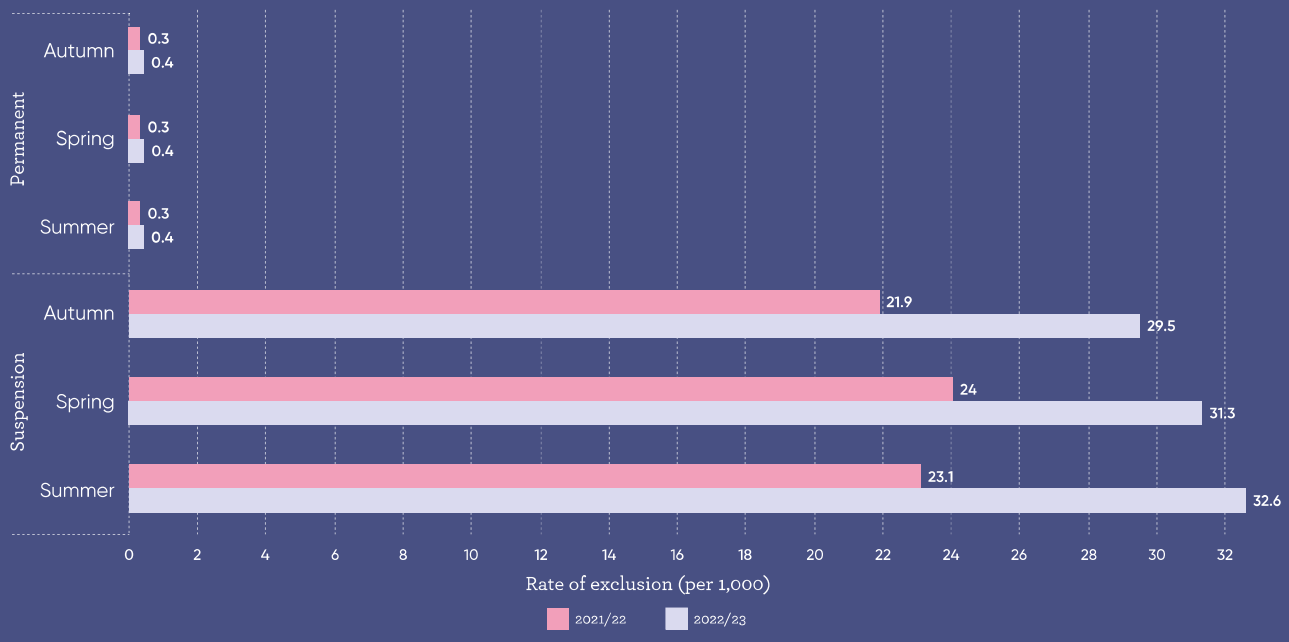
Suspensions

In every term in 2022/23 suspensions were higher than the equivalent term in 2021/22.

- In Autumn, suspensions increased by 35 per cent from 183,647 in 2021/22 to 247,106 in 2022/23.[18]
- In Spring, suspensions increased by 31 per cent from 201,088 in 2021/22 to 263,904 in 2022/23.[19]
- In Summer, suspensions increased by 43 per cent from 193,545 in 2021/22 to 275,951 in 2022/23.[20]

If we analyse the rate of suspensions in the Autumn term, the rate increased this year from 22.1 per 1,000 pupils in 2021/22 to 29.5 per 1,000 pupils in 2022/23.[21]

The rate of exclusion has increased in every term compared to 2021/22.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

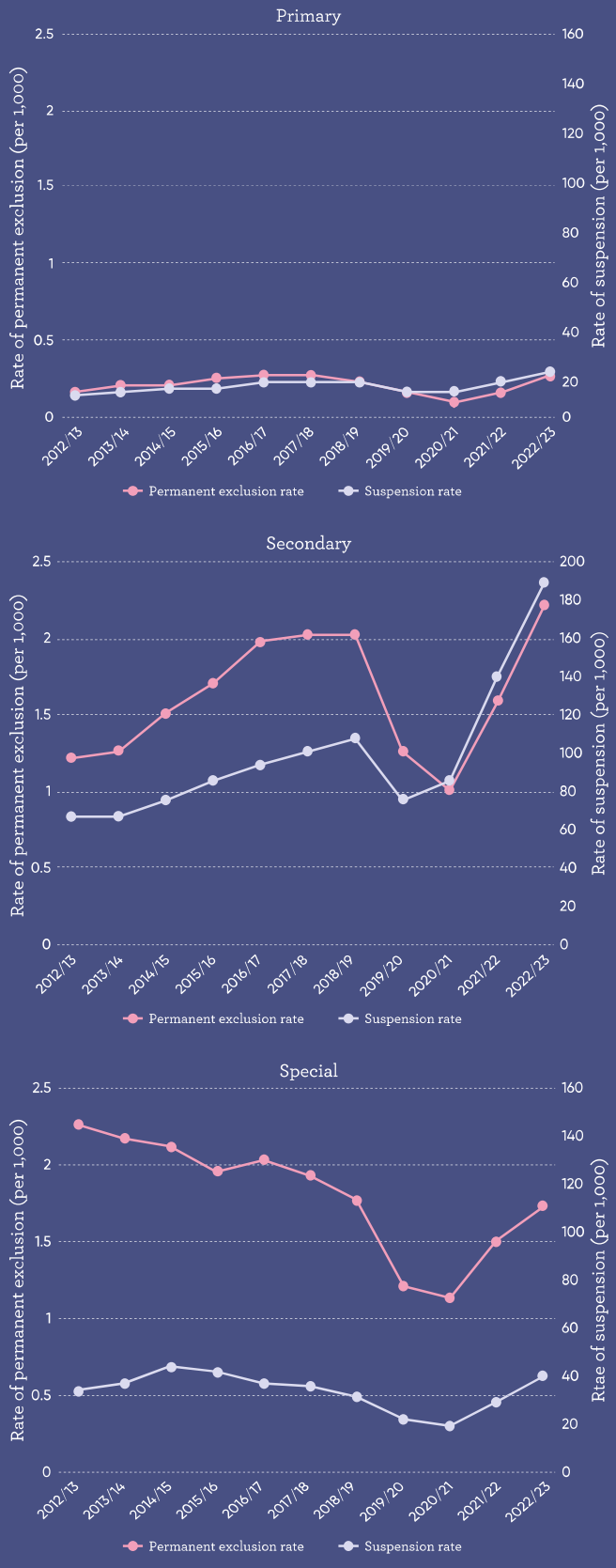
Exclusions by school phase

Primary schools continue to exclude at lower rates than secondary schools, though both have seen increases this year. However, when comparing the 2021/22 academic year to 2022/23, primary schools have seen a higher percentage increase in the rate of permanent exclusions compared to secondary schools. Overall, primary schools saw a 59 per cent increase in the rate of exclusions, compared to a 40 per cent increase in secondary schools. However, due to the overall higher rates of exclusion in secondary schools, secondary schools remain the primary driver of the considerable increases in both permanent exclusions and suspensions.[22]

As is consistent with the trends seen in mainstream schools, special schools saw a sharp reduction in permanent exclusions over the COVID-19 pandemic but the rate of permanent exclusions in special schools has now increased to higher than pre-pandemic levels.[23]

Across the course of 2022/23, special schools saw exclusion rates peak in the autumn term, secondary schools saw exclusion rates peak in the Summer term, while primary schools saw the highest exclusion rates in the Spring term. This differs from the pre- COVID-19 pandemic norm of exclusions for all school types peaking in the Autumn term.[24]

The rate of permanent exclusions in secondary schools continues to exceed other school phases.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Exclusions by year group

This year's data demonstrates that pupils in secondary school experience much higher rates of permanent exclusion relative to pupils in primary school.

When the data is disaggregated by year group, the rate of exclusion in every year in secondary school is higher than any year in primary school. In 2021/22, Year 6 pupils were permanently excluded at a rate of 0.4 per 1,000 pupils, while Year 7 pupils were permanently excluded at a rate of 1.5 per 1,000.[25]

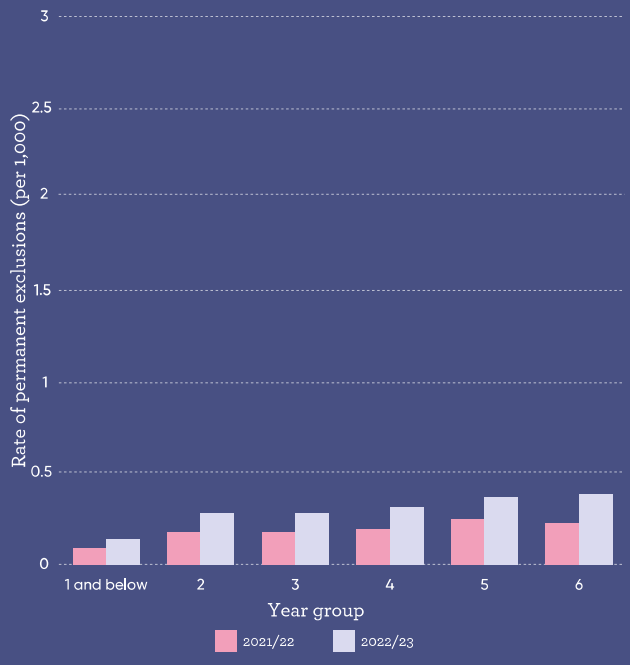
All year groups across primary and secondary schools saw an increase in the rate permanent exclusions in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.

Pupils in Year 6 experienced the highest increases in the permanent exclusion rate, with an increase of 71 per cent on the previous year. This was followed by Year 4 (66 per cent increase) and Year 3 (57 per cent increase). The lowest percentage increase was Year 10 (31 per cent).[26] However, despite having the lowest percentage increase, as in previous years, the rate of permanent exclusions across all year groups was still highest in Year 10.[27]

Within year groups, FFT Education Datalab analysis shows that pupils with birthdays earlier in the academic year are more likely to be excluded. Between 2019 and 2021, rates of permanent exclusions were consistently highest for pupils born in the autumn, and lowest for pupils born in the summer.[28]

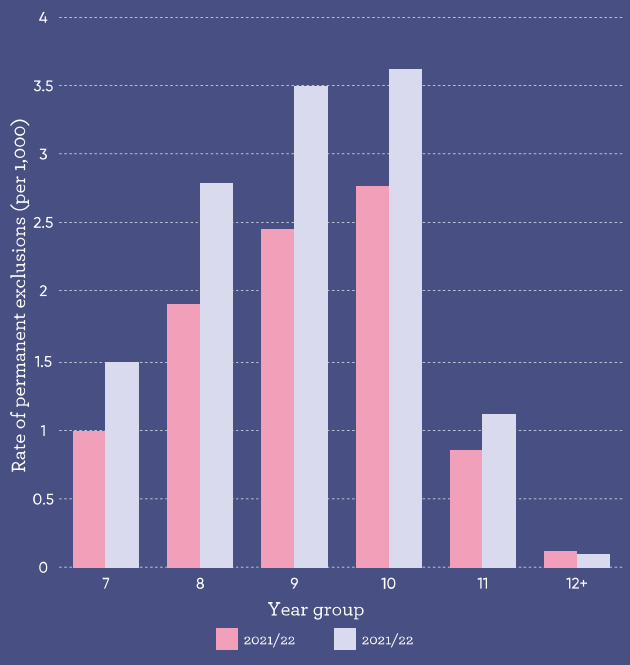
FFT Education Datalab has attributed this trend to the fact that summer born pupils tend to be lower attaining early on in their school career and are therefore disproportionately more likely to be identified as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Summer born pupils are more likely to access the appropriate support, which can mitigate some of the risk of exclusion. Indeed, an analysis of the 2021/22 cohort showed that by the end of Year 7, 34 per cent of summer born pupils were identified at some point as having SEND. This compares to only 25 per cent of autumn born pupils.[29]

The rate of permanent exclusions has increased in every year group.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

The rate of permanent exclusions has increased in every year group.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Why are pupils excluded?

When a pupil is excluded from school, schools are required to record the main reason for exclusion in the Schools Census, choosing from a set of 16 codes.[30]

In 2022/23, the most common reason for both permanent exclusions and suspensions was "persistent disruptive behaviour", accounting for 39 per cent of permanent exclusions and 48 per cent of suspensions.[31] DfE guidance describes "persistent disruptive behaviour" as challenging behaviour, disobedience or persistent violation of school rules.[32]

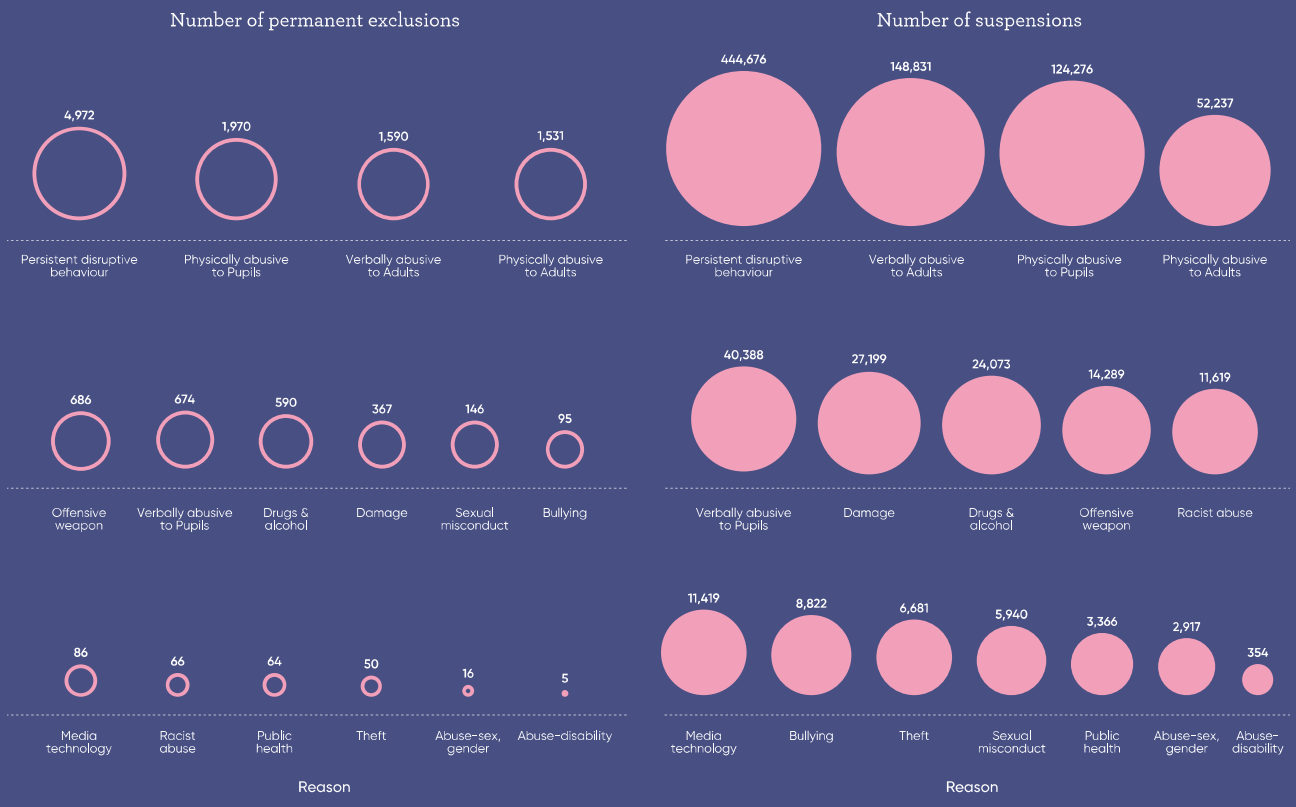
Concerning permanent exclusions, the second most common reason was "physical assault against a pupil", at 15 per cent. For suspensions the second most common reason was "verbal abuse against an adult", accounting for 16 per cent of suspensions.[33]

The Timpson Review argued that the "other" category was unclear and made it difficult to understand the challenges that had led to the decision to exclude. It was recommended that the DfE change these codes to better reflect the range of reasons for exclusion.[34]

As of 2020, the Schools Census has been updated. The reasons for exclusions have been expanded and "other" no longer features as an option.[35]

New categories are: "use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item" (this previously fell under "verbal abuse/threatening behaviour"), "abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity (for example, LGBT+)", "abuse relating to disability", "inappropriate use of social media or online technology" and notably in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, "wilful and repeated transgression of protective measures in place to protect public health".[36]

Persistent disruptive behaviour continues to be the most common reason for permanent exclusions



Which pupils are permanently excluded?

The characteristics of the pupils most likely to experience an exclusion in 2022/23 remained consistent with previous years. Pupils who experience a permanent exclusion are more likely than their peers to:

- be male;
- be Black Caribbean or White and Black Caribbean;
- be Gypsy/Roma or Traveller of Irish Heritage;
- be on special educational needs (SEN) support;
- have an education, health and care plan (EHCP);
- have SEN with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) primary need;
- be eligible for FSM;
- be in secondary school.

Pupils that fall into more than one of these subsets are even more at risk of exclusion. Analysis by Pro-Bono economics suggests that the likelihood of exclusion increases rapidly for young people with multiple risk factors.[37]

Children known to social services

The Timpson Review found that pupils supported by social care have some of the highest chances of being excluded.[38]

Even controlling for other factors, pupils with a Children in Need (CIN) Plan are around four times more likely to be permanently excluded compared to their peers, pupils with a Child Protection Plan are 3.5 times more likely and Looked After Children are 2.3 times more likely.

Looked After Children are more than five times more likely to be suspended than all children whereas Children in Need are about three and a half times more likely to be suspended.[39]

Looked After Children have lower rates of permanent exclusion compared to other children who are known to social services. The Timpson Review theorised that the lower rates of permanent exclusion for Looked After Children may be accounted for by the success of Virtual School Heads (VSHs). Since the introduction of VSHs, the permanent exclusion rates for looked after children have fallen considerably.[40] In September 2021, then Minister for Children and Families, Vicky Ford MP, announced that the role of VSHs was to be expanded to support all children who have a social worker.[41]

The 2021 analysis by IntegratED partner FFT Education Datalab also looked at the patterns of permanent exclusion for pupils who ever received a CIN referral. They found that of the 6,700 pupils excluded in the cohort they analysed, only 2,000 were never referred to CIN.[42]

58 per cent of all pupils who were permanently excluded were, at some stage, identified as having SEN. 10 per cent were 'looked after' at some stage.[43]

The Timpson Review also recommended that the government begin to release statistics on the exclusion rates for pupils who were previously 'looked after' and have left LA care.[44] The government has provided this data from the academic year 2017/18.

Over the 2021/22 academic year, 2.4 per 1,000 pupils with a child arrangement order, 3.3 per 1,000 pupils with a special guardianship order, and 0.9 per 1,000 adopted children experienced a permanent exclusion. The rate of permanent exclusion for pupils who were not previously looked after was lower at 0.8 per 1,000 pupils. This trend has remained consistent with previous years' data.[45]

Gender

In 2022/23, boys continued to experience permanent exclusions and suspensions at a higher rate than girls.[46]

The rate for permanent exclusions for boys in the whole academic year of 2022/23 was 1.5 per 1,000 pupils. This rate was over double the rate for girls which stood at 0.7 per 1,000 pupils.[47]

Similarly, the rate of suspensions for boys was much higher than for girls. For boys the rate of fixed-term exclusions last year was 116.6 per 1,000 whereas for girls it was 69.1 per 1,000.[48]

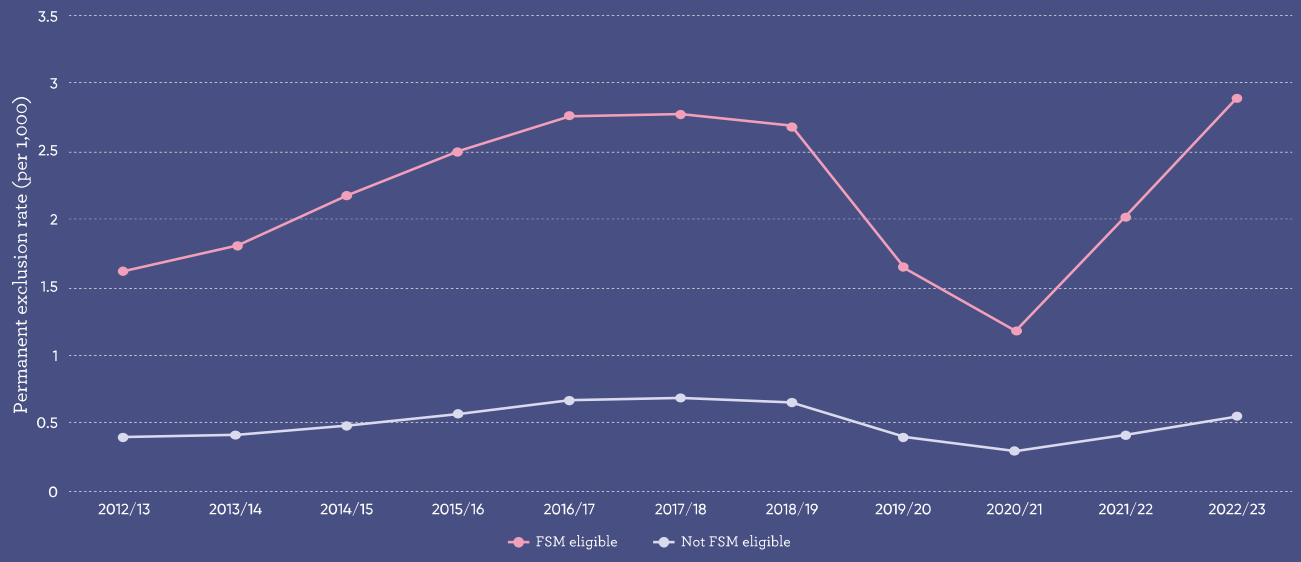
The overall yearly rates of exclusions for both boys and girls has increased compared to 2021/22.[49]

Poverty

In previous years, the rate of permanent exclusion for pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) has remained steady at four times the rate of permanent exclusions for pupils not eligible for FSM.[50] However, in 2021/22 this had risen to five times the rate and has remained at five times the rate in 2022/23.

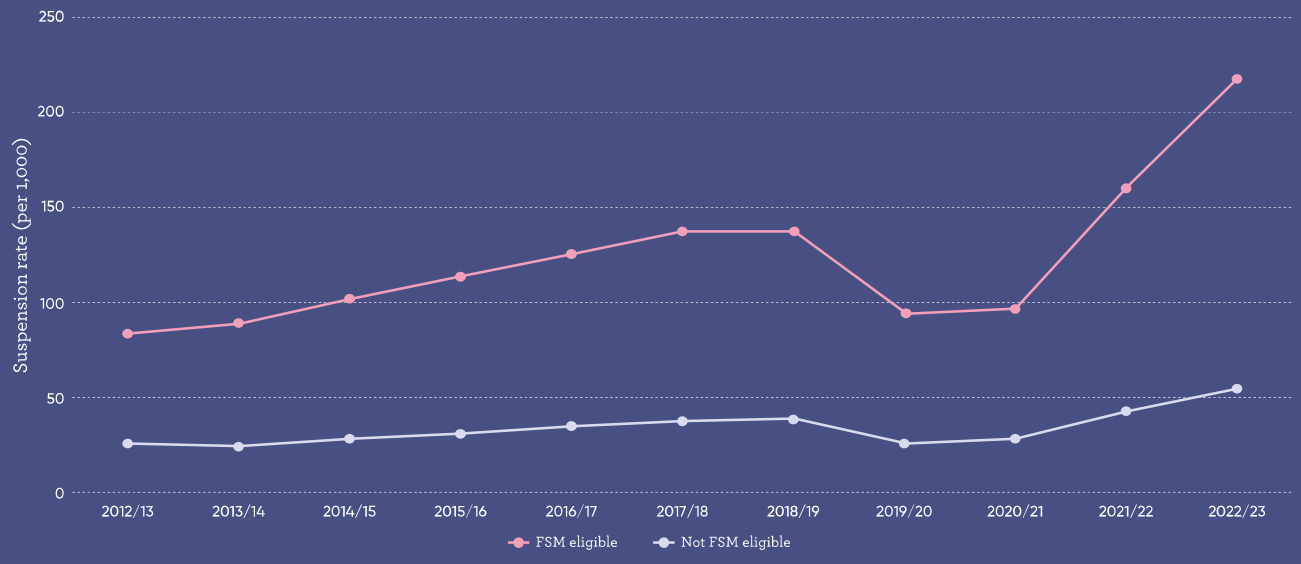
Concerning suspensions, pupils eligible for FSM in 2022/23 were 4.0 times more likely to receive a suspension than pupils not eligible. This is up from 3.8 times in 2021/22.[51]

The rate of permanent exclusion for FSM pupils is increasing rapidly.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

The rate of suspension for pupils eligible and not eligible for FSM is widening.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Special educational need

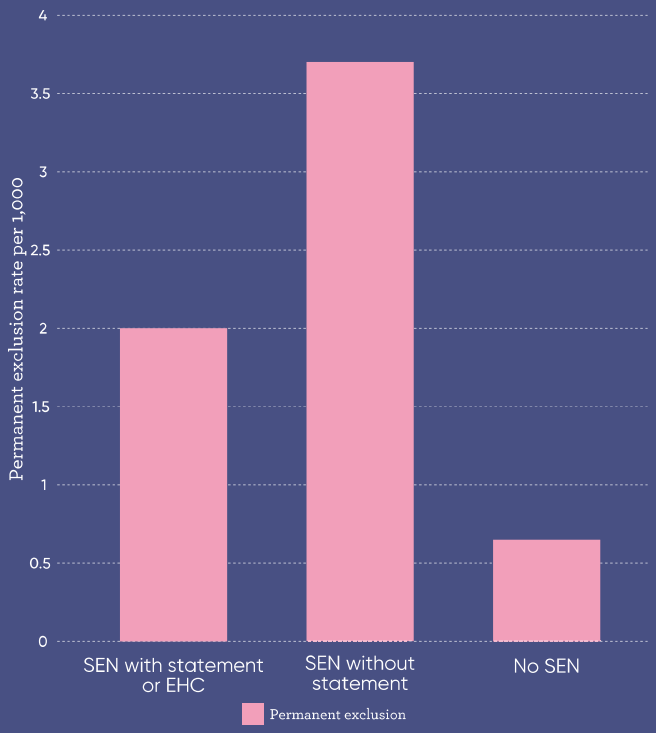
Exclusions by SEN Provision

A total of 4,716 pupils who were permanently excluded in 2022/23 had some form of SEN. This equates to 50 per cent of all permanently excluded pupils, despite SEN pupils accounting for only 17 per cent of the total school population.[52] Of these permanently excluded pupils, 4,002 were on SEN support and 714 had an EHCP.[53]

Both the overall number of pupils excluded in 2022/23 and the proportion of pupils who had some form of SEN is higher relative to 2021/22.[54]

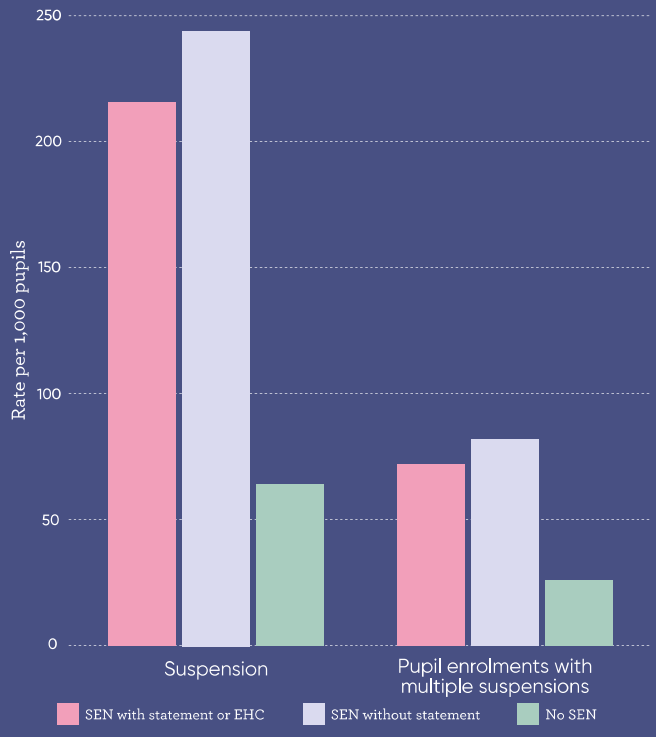
Pupils in receipt of SEN support experience the highest rates of suspension compared to their peers. In 2022/23, pupils in receipt of SEN support and those with EHCPs received suspensions and experienced multiple suspensions at far higher rates than those not in receipt of any form of SEN provision.[55]

Pupils on SEN support are more likely than their peers to experience a permanent exclusion.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Pupils on SEN support are suspended at far higher rates than other pupils.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Exclusions by SEN primary need.

The rate of exclusions also varies by the primary need of pupils with SEN.

The latest official data on exclusion rates by SEN primary need is from the 2021/22 academic year.

Pupils with SEMH continue to experience the highest rate of permanent exclusions. Of the 6,495 permanent exclusions in 2021/22, 1,779 pupils had SEMH. This equates to more than 1 in 4 of all permanent exclusions. Across 2021/22, 7.1 per 1,000 pupils with SEMH needs received a permanent exclusion. 508.6 pupils with SEMH in every 1,000 received a suspension.[56]

The relationship between mental health and exclusions is complex, according to researchers. While pupils with mental health problems are more likely to be excluded, exclusion itself has been found to trigger and exacerbate mental health problems.[57] The Timpson Review calculated the odds ratio of exclusion for pupils with SEN by primary need, controlling for other factors. Their results suggested that when a pupil has SEMH and an EHCP, there is no significant increased likelihood of exclusion when compared to other pupils with no SEN.[58]

However, pupils with SEMH on SEN support (rather than an EHCP) still retained a significantly higher likelihood of exclusion. After controlling for other factors, these pupils were around 3.8 times more likely to be permanently excluded compared to pupils with no SEN.[59]

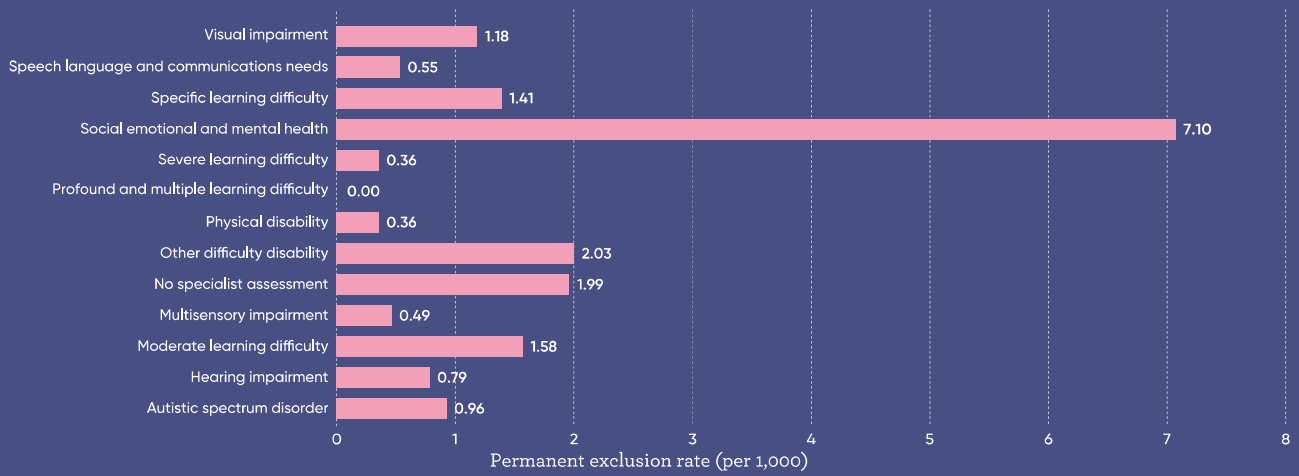
A 2023 analysis by IntegratED partner FFT Education Datalab focused specifically on the connection between exclusions and pupils with SEMH as their primary SEN need.

The analysis found for many pupils identified as having SEMH needs, they were identified as having SEN for the first time relatively recently prior to exclusion, or soon after.[60]

Of the 890 pupils in receipt of SEN support with SEMH as their primary need that were excluded in 2020/21, 40 per cent were first identified as having SEMH needs either in 2019/20 or 2020/21. A further 349 pupils who were permanently excluded in Autumn 2020/21 were only identified as having SEMH as their primary need in Spring 2020/21. 696 pupils who were permanently excluded in Spring or Summer 2020/21 were identified as having SEMH needs for the first time in Spring 2021/22.[61] Given the large number of pupils receiving a diagnosis after being excluded, the strong correlation between exclusions and SEMH as a primary need in exclusion statistics may still be an underestimate. An earlier 2021 analysis by FFT Education Datalab examined the overlap between social care and SEN for pupils who experienced a permanent exclusion or alternative provision at some point in their educational career.[62]

This analysis found that of the 6,700 pupils identified as having experienced a permanent exclusion, 6,000 had some form of SEN. Of these, 4,500 were diagnosed with either behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or SEMH. 600 pupils were diagnosed with SEN but never had their need identified and 900 pupils had some other form of SEN.[63]

Pupils with SEMH needs have the highest rate of exclusion compared to other pupils with SEN primary needs.



Source: Department for Education, 2023. "Statistics: Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: Academic year 2021/22"

Ethnicity

The Timpson Review established a link between ethnicity and exclusions.[64]

15 per cent of pupils that began Year 1 in 2009 or 2010 experienced a suspension by Year 11. This rose to over 20 per cent among each of Black Caribbean, Mixed White/ Black Caribbean, Gypsy/Roma, Irish Traveller, Black other, Black African, and Mixed White/ Black African groups.[65]

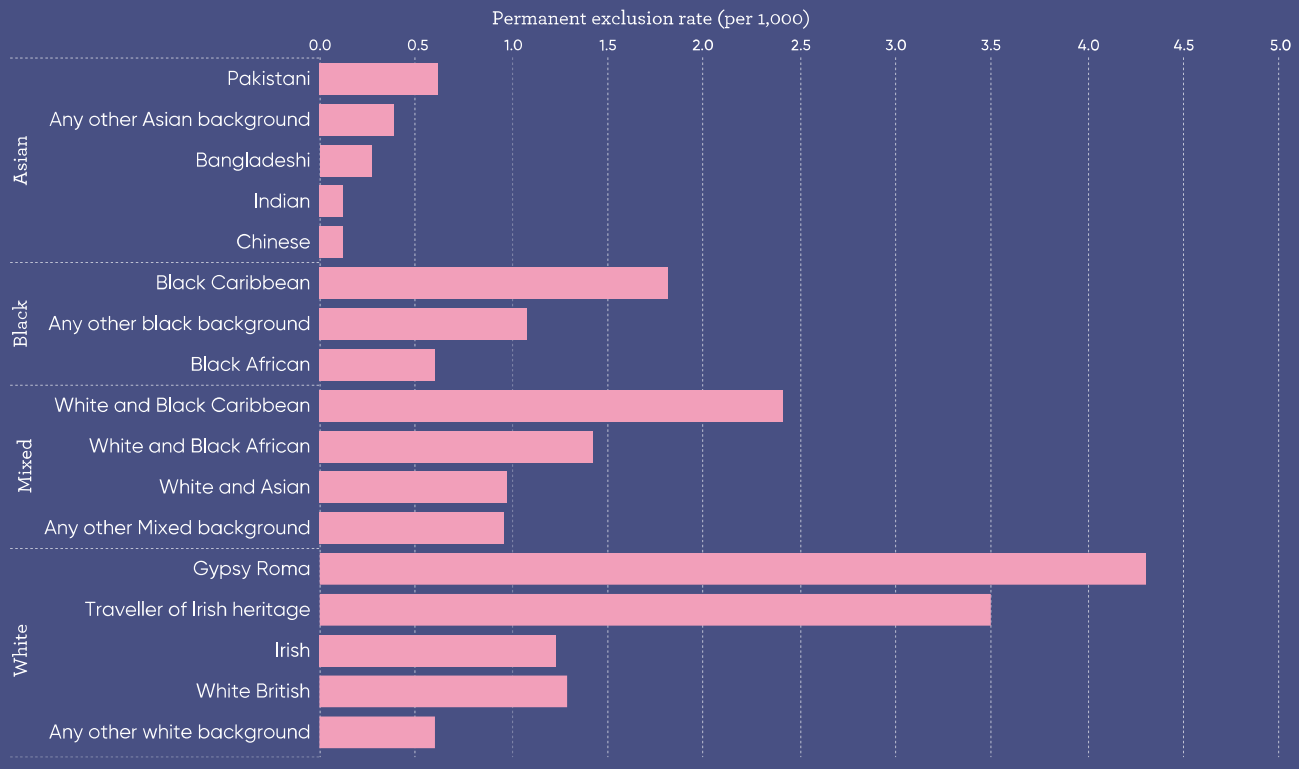
These trends are also reflected in the most recent data. While the pandemic has deeply disrupted our education system, the disproportionate exclusion of Gypsy/Roma, Traveller of Irish Heritage, Black Caribbean and White and Black Caribbean pupils has remained consistent with previous years.[66]

1.3 per 1,000 White British pupils experienced a permanent exclusion in 2022/23, which is slightly higher than the average permanent exclusion rate across all ethnicities of 1.1 per 1,000. However, the rate for some minority ethnic groups was much higher still.[67]

Gypsy/Roma pupils had the highest rate of permanent exclusions in 2022/23 (4.3 per 1,000 pupils). Traveller of Irish heritage had the second highest rate of permanent exclusion (3.5 per 1,000 pupils). Pupils of mixed White and Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean pupils had a permanent exclusion rate of 2.4 and 1.8 per 1,000 pupils respectively. The groups with the lowest permanent exclusion rates were Chinese (0.1 per 1,000), Indian (0.1 per 1,000), and Bangladeshi (0.3 per 1,000) ethnic groups.[68]

Regarding suspensions, the story is similar. 111 per 1,000 White British pupils received a fixed term exclusion in 2022/23, higher than the average across all ethnicities of 93 per 1,000. The rate for some minority ethnic groups however were considerably higher. Gypsy/Roma pupils had the highest rate of suspensions 337 per 1,000 pupils. Traveller of Irish heritage pupils had the second highest rate of suspension (218 per 1,000 pupils). Pupils of mixed White and Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean pupils had a suspension rate of 174 and 136 per 1,000 pupils respectively.[69]

Some ethnic groups face disproportionate rates of exclusion.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

Where do permanently excluded children go?

Pupils who are permanently excluded tend to be educated in AP schools directly following their exclusion, with nearly four in five transitioning to a state-maintained AP school at least on a temporary basis.[70] In the academic year following the permanent exclusion, around two thirds of pupils remained in some form of state-maintained or LA funded AP placement, while only one fifth had returned to mainstream.[71]

The year following an exclusion, 13 per cent of pupils move to an unknown destination. This could include pupils who are in home education or those who have emigrated.[72]

However, permanent exclusion is not the only route into AP. Analysis by FFT Education Datalab suggests that only 41 per cent of all pupils in state-maintained AP schools have previously been permanently excluded.[73] The remaining 59 per cent arrived through alternative routes.

Pupils of compulsory school age in state-funded AP schools and local authority AP, 2023

	State-funded Ap schools		Local authority AP	
	Number	%	Number	%
Previously excluded	5,185	41%	1,973	8%
Never excluded, ever SEMH	5,237	42%	12,230	48%
Other pupils with SEN	1,123	9%	10,447	41%
All other pupils	1,014	8%	813	3%
Total	2,559		25,463	

Source: FFT Education Datalab, 2023. "Who are alternative provision schools for"

1 Department for Education, 2024. "Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance August 2024"

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Timpson, 2019. "Timpson Review of School Exclusion"

13 Hansard, 2021. "That this house has considered the implementation of the Timpson Review"

14 Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

15 Department for Education, 2023. "Statistics: Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: Academic year 2021/22"

16 Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 FFT Education Datalab, 2022. "The relationship between month of birth, exclusions and identification of special educational needs"

29 Ibid.

30 Department for Education, 2023. School census 2022 to 2023 Business and technical specification, version 1.4.

31 Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

32 Department for Education, 2023. School census 2022 to 2023 Business and technical specification, version 1.4.

33 Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

34 Timpson, 2019. "Timpson Review of School Exclusion"

35 Department for Education, 2023. "Schools Census Guidance: Data items"

36 Ibid.

37 Pro bono economics. "How many children are at risk of permanent exclusion in the UK"

38 Timpson, 2019. "Timpson Review of School Exclusion"

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Hansard, 2021. "That this house has considered the implementation of the Timpson Review"

42 FFT Education Datalab, 2021. "The overlap between social care, special educational needs, and alternative provision: part two"

43 Ibid.

44 Timpson, 2019. "Timpson Review of School Exclusion"

45 Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Department for Education, 2023. "Special educational needs in England: Academic year 2022/23"

53 Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Department for Education, 2023. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2021/22"

57 Ford et al, 2018. "The relationship between exclusion from school and mental health: A secondary analysis of the British Child and Adolescent Mental Health Surveys 2004 and 2007" (Psychological Medicine)

58 Timpson, 2019. "Timpson Review of School Exclusion"

59 Ibid.

60 FFT Education Datalab, 2023. "Some things you might not have known about special educational needs and permanent exclusions"

61 Ibid.

62 FFT Education Datalab, 2021. "The overlap between social care, special educational needs and alternative provision: Part two"

63 Ibid.

64 Timpson, 2019. "Timpson Review of School Exclusion"

65 FFT Education Datalab, 2022. "Repeat suspensions and exclusions during compulsory schooling"

66 Department for Education, 2024. "Statistics: Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Academic year 2022/23"

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 FFT Education Datalab, 2019. "Managed moves vs permanent exclusions: Do outcomes differ?"

71 FFT Education Datalab, 2023. "What happens to permanently excluded pupils?"

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

Moves off-roll

What is off-rolling?

In recent years, the issue of off-rolling has captured the attention of the media and researchers. While off-rolling doesn't have any single clear legal definition, the definition adopted by Ofsted is:

"The practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil."[1]

Ofsted have also described it more frankly as:

A pupil being taken off the school roll in order to try and manipulate reported exam results/league tables.[2]

How Many Pupils Are Off-Rolled?

It's not easy to estimate how many pupils are being off-rolled each year.

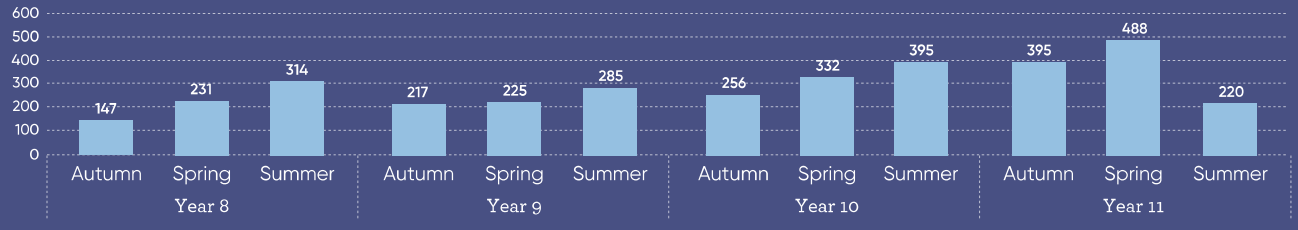
Government data tracks how pupils move in or out of schools, but not the reason for each move.[3] These pupils may be moved off-roll completely and end up out of the education system or they may be moved off-roll from one school to another.

It is unclear where children who are moved off-roll, but not to another state-maintained school, go. This problem has been highlighted through FFT Education Datalab's series "Who's Left". Their analysis found that around 20,000 children leave the state school system during the five year secondary school cycle from Year 7 to Year 11. Some of these children will have moved to independent schools or moved countries but others will have left the school system altogether. Their analysis showed that pupils who complete Key Stage 4 (KS4) outside of the state school system are more likely to be disadvantaged, have some form of SEN, have a history of absence or have a history of exclusion. Not all of these pupils will have been off-rolled but this analysis gives us a further insight into the pupils who leave the state school system.[4]

Subsequent analysis by FFT Education Datalab has shown that in 2022, secondary school pupils left the state-maintained school system at a rate of 19 of every 1,000 pupils per year. For the same year, pupils with EHCPs left at a rate of 21 of every 1,000 pupils.[5] The destinations of these pupils are unknown. Research by the Centre for Social Justice has also suggested that schools may be off-rolling lower-performing pupils in order to lift their average grades. Their analysis indicates that such tactics have persisted in recent years. If a pupil is on the school roll at the January census date, then their subsequent KS4 results are attributed to that school.

In the 2022/23 academic year there was a spike in pupil referral unit enrolments in Year 11 which occurred shortly before January. This pattern suggests schools are removing pupils with lower attainment, who could compromise the school's overall performance data, before the date at which their results would continue to be attributed to the school.[6]

Net increases in Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) population by year group and term.



Source: Centre for Social Justice, 2024. "Suspending Reality: Part One"

Moves off-roll

Ofsted has turned its attention to off-rolling. In 2020, it first identified 320 schools that exhibited exceptional levels of pupil movement and investigated them individually to determine the reasons.[7] In 2021, Ofsted identified 160 schools to have exceptional levels of pupil movement. This decrease in the number of schools identified was put down to the fact that, over 2020 and 2021, schools were held less accountable for performance data, which may have meant that schools had less incentive to off-roll pupils.[8] However, Ofsted also noted that the pandemic has obscured trends in exclusions and off rolling, so it is harder to tell if off-rolling is still a problem.[9] As part of changes made in response to the Ofsted Big Listen (a consultation of views on Ofsted's work), in 2024 Ofsted announced that schools which off-roll children with SEND will be 'graded down''.[10]

The most thorough, published attempt to date to identify cases of off-rolling is the Unexplained Exits research by the Education Policy Institute (EPI). Their research looks at all pupil moves in and out of schools, removes from their analysis any move that could feasibly be explained as having been motivated by parental choice (e.g. house move, move to a school rated more highly by Ofsted, move to a special school) then examines the pupil characteristics of those that remain. It should be noted that not all unexplained exits will be cases of off-rolling, but their findings present a good starting point for discussion.

EPI researchers found that:[11]

- **1 in 10** pupils experienced an unexplained exit during their time at secondary school.
- There was some evidence to suggest that the rate of **unexplained exits had increased** over time.
- **1.2 per cent** of pupils experienced multiple unexplained exits. Again, this appeared to be increasing over time.
- Only **4.4 per cent** of pupils who experienced an unexplained exit had returned to their original school by year 11.
- **40 per cent** of pupils who experience an unexplained exit leave to an unknown destination and never return to the state school system.

Why are pupils off-rolled?

For obvious reasons, there is no official reporting of the reasons behind instances of off-rolling, unlike exclusions. We have to therefore rely upon survey data to get a sense of the most common reasons for off-rolling pupils.

In a poll conducted for Ofsted by YouGov, teachers reported that persistent disruptive behaviour was the most common reason that schools gave to parents for off-rolling pupils, which is also the reason most commonly recorded for permanent exclusions.[12]

Schools also gave parents reasons such as poor attendance or a lack of specialist resources in the current school. Only one in five teachers said that schools had cited academic attainment as an explanation to parents for off-rolling.

However, when teachers were asked what they personally believed were the real reasons motivating off-rolling, league table results were reported as the second most common reason, cited by two in five teachers. They also believed that schools were off-rolling pupils to keep official school exclusion records low.[13]

When are pupils off-rolled?

While exclusions peak in year 10, the number of unexplained exits was shown to increase over the course of key stage 3 and peak in year 9.

As is consistent with the findings from Ofsted, there was a big increase in the number of unexplained exits in the Autumn term of year 11, prior to the January census. This is consistent with evidence suggesting pupil exclusions peak in KS4, just before GCSEs, in an attempt to improve the school's league table performance.[17]

Which pupils are off-rolled?

Teachers believe that pupils with behavioural issues, low academic attainment and SEN are at particularly high risk of being off-rolled, as are those whose parents have a poor understanding of the education system.[18]

EPI researchers found that unexplained exits affected:[19]

2 in 5 pupils who had also experienced a permanent exclusion.

1 in 6 pupils ever identified with SEN.

Nearly a third of pupils who had ever been looked after.

1 in 6 pupils ever eligible for FSM.

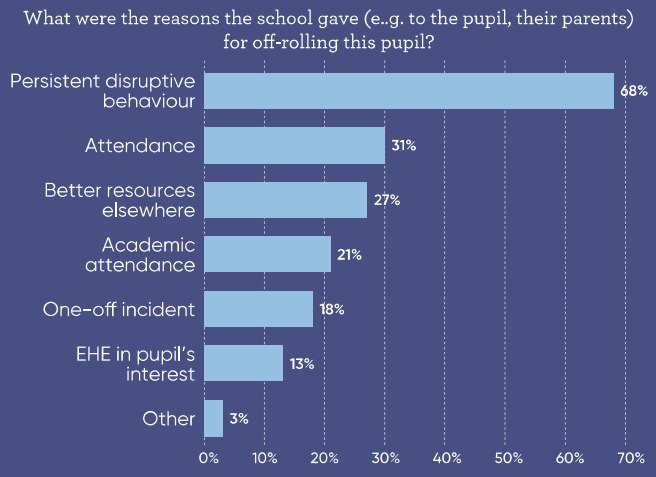
A quarter of all pupils with a fixed-term exclusion or with high levels of authorised absences.

Over a quarter of pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs.

1 in 5 current or former children in need.

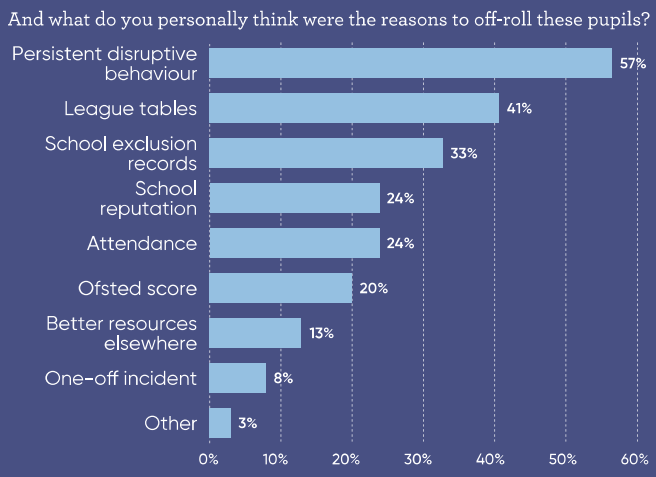
1 in 8 pupils from black ethnic backgrounds.

The most common reasons schools gave for off-rolling is persistent disruptive behaviour.



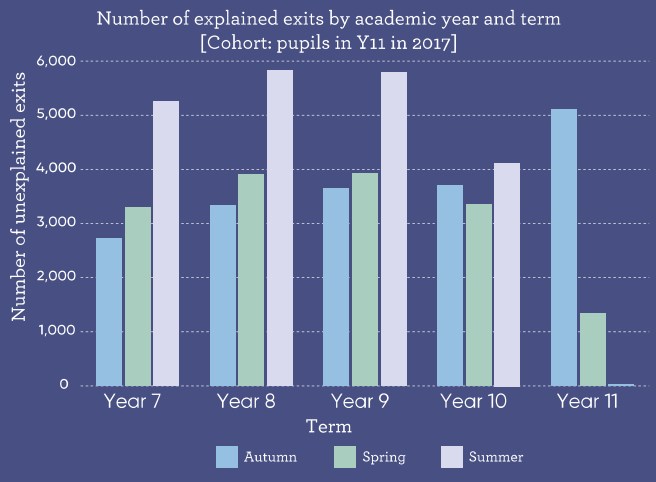
Source: YouGov[14]

Teachers believe league tables are the second most important reason motivating off-rolling.



Source: YouGov[15]

Unexplained exits peaked in the summer term and saw a big increase in the first term of year.



Source: Education Policy Institute[16]

Managed Moves

What is a managed move?

Managed moves are voluntary arrangements to transfer a pupil to another school with the consent of all parties, including the parents and the admission authority for the new school.[20]

There is usually a trial period where a pupil is put on the register of both the sending school and the receiving school. If the trial is successful, they will move to the register of the receiving school indefinitely and come off the roll of the sending school. If the trial is not successful, the pupil will be returned to the sending school.

In cases where the managed move was initiated in an attempt to avoid permanently excluding the pupil, they may face exclusion upon their return. However, legal experts advise that families should never feel pressured to accept a managed move under threat of exclusion, pointing out that this would likely be unlawful.[21]

Ofsted has previously stated that off-rolling will be deemed to have occurred if its inspectors find evidence of an inappropriately used managed move.[22] It has renewed its commitment to being tough on schools when such instances are found to have occurred, stating that schools' leadership and management will likely be deemed inadequate if managed moves have been used inappropriately.[23]

How many pupils experience a managed move?

Nobody really knows how many managed moves take place.

Research conducted by FFT Education Datalab in 2024 estimates identified around 6,000 potential managed moves that started each year between 2017 and 2019.[24] This number fell considerably during the pandemic, increasing again to around 5,000 in 2022. FFT Education Datalab analysed that around 80 per cent of them were explicit dual registrations.[25] In a follow up piece of research, FFT Education Datalab also identified that pupils who experience managed moves tend to have lower levels of prior attainment and more likely to have experienced some form of economic, social or educational disadvantage.[26]

Where do pupils get moved to?

Whereas the majority of pupils who are permanently excluded go on to an alternative provider, there are a variety of destinations for pupils who experience a managed move.

Analysis by FFT Education Datalab found that 75 per cent of moves are to mainstream schools and 22 per cent to APs.[27] When considering the outcomes of pupils who experience managed moves, they uncovered that 27 per cent of pupils who experienced a managed move achieved grades 9-4 in GCSE English and Maths compared to an average of 64 per cent for the full cohort.[28]

Moves into home education

What is home education?

Home education is where a pupil is educated at home – or at home and with support from an additional provider – rather than being educated at a school full-time.[29]

In most cases, the choice to home educate is made freely and based on a parental views and preferences.[30] However, in other cases, parents may feel the state is not providing adequately for their child's educational needs and that they are left with no choice but to remove their child from school. In recent years, strong evidence has emerged about a third route into home education: Ofsted inspections and LA accounts suggest that some pupils are being coerced into home education following the threat of exclusion from school.[31] This research has been built upon by the Education Select Committee.[32] Home education has thus been identified by the Department for Education and Ofsted as one of the methods some schools are using to off-roll pupils.[33]

How many pupils are moving into home education?

Autumn 2022 marked the first time that home education data was collected by the DfE from local authorities on a voluntary basis. This data has continued to be collected on a termly basis. As of the census day in Autumn 2023 it is estimated that a total of 92,000 pupils were known to be home educated.[34] This number is based on a figure of 87,700 reported by 95 per cent of LAs, and is likely to be a low estimate, as parents are not required to register their pupil as home educated with the LA. This represents a 14 per cent increase in the number of children home educated, compared to census day in Autumn 2022.[35]

At any point during the 2022/23 academic year LAs identified an estimated 126,100 children as being in home education. This number is based on a figure of 119,200 reported by 94 per cent of LAs. This represents an 8 per cent increase in the number of children home educated, compared to the 2021/22 academic year.[36]

These estimates are likely to be conservative, given fewer than one in 10 LAs are confident that they know of all pupils who are home education in their area.[37] To address this, in April 2019 the DfE launched a consultation to introduce a compulsory register of all children not in school.[38] As part of the consultation, they considered introducing a duty on parents to inform the LA when their child is not attending a mainstream school. In the 2024 King's Speech, the government announced that it would legislate for a Children Not in School Register as part of its upcoming Children's Wellbeing Bill.[39]

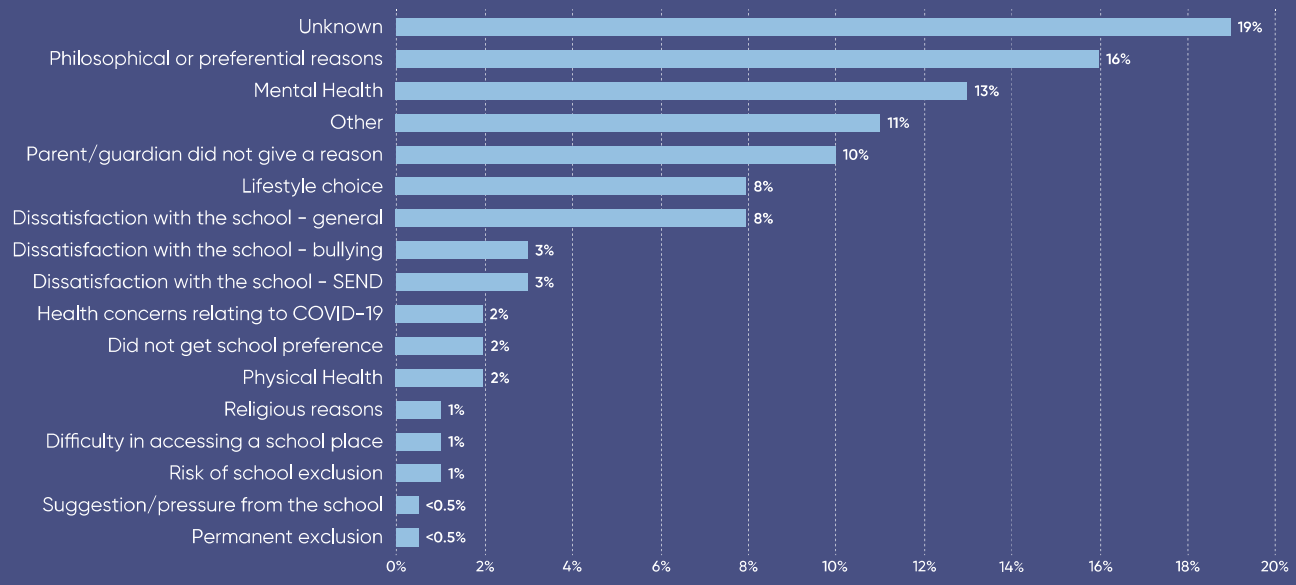
In previous years, approximations of home education pupil numbers relied upon the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ACDS) estimates. ACDS used census data from October 2021 to give an estimate of 81,196 pupils being home educated at the beginning of the 2021/22 academic year, based on a figure of 67,308 recorded from 126 LAs.[40] Over recent years the evidence has suggested that home education numbers have been steadily increasing, and numbers soared during the pandemic. The Local Government Association has shown that, in September 2021, home education uptake increased by as much as 180 per cent in some LAs.[41]

Which pupils are moving into home education?

The census data collected on a voluntary basis from LAs serves as indicative evidence of the breakdown of pupil demographics in home education. Autumn 2022 census data suggests that the gender split of pupils being home educated is not as unbalanced as it is for permanent exclusions. Half of all pupils known to be home educated were female (51 per cent).

The census data also collects reasons for pupils moving to home education. Given 10 per cent of respondents did not give a reason, 11 per cent cited 'other', and 19 per cent were unknown, limited inferences can be made from this data. However, it is worth noting that 13 per cent of pupils recorded 'mental health issues' as the reason for moving to home education, the second highest specific reason given, behind only 'philosophical reasons' (16 per cent).

Many of reasons for pupils moving to home education remain unknown.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Elective Home Education"

Evidence on characteristics is also drawn from surveys and statements from professionals working with home educated pupils. In 2021, ADCS noted that an increasing number of pupils with multiple layers of vulnerability were moving into home education. In 2021, ADCS released their last home education survey results. In this, they found the majority of LAs (82 per cent of the 114 who responded) said that between 0-5 per cent of their home educated cohort were currently known to children's services. However, only 44 per cent of LAs said a similar proportion were known to wider children's services through historic cases. 15 per cent of LAs said that at least a quarter of the children in home education were historically known to children's services. In 2020, ADCS found that the average percentage of home educated children known to wider children's services, either historically or as a current case, was 14 per cent.[42]

There is also a growing body of evidence supporting the suggestion that pupils with special educational needs are especially at risk of experiencing a coerced move into elective home education. In their SEND reviews, Ofsted has discovered parents who have been asked to keep their children at home because school leaders believed they could not meet their needs.[43] Census data indicates that at least 2 per cent of moves to home education last year were because of dissatisfaction with school SEND services. In their review of home education, Ofsted stated that more children with additional needs are being home-educated.[44]

This is supported by evidence presented by LAs to the Education Select Committee. LAs told MPs that the increase in home education in their areas was mainly driven by an increase in pupils with SEND being home educated.[45]

Following school closures during the pandemic, many pupils with SEND have continued to receive their education at home.[46]

Excluded Lives has recently shown there is a cohort of pupils who no longer wish to return to school – 'the happier at home' cohort, whose parents who no longer wish for their children to return given they feel their needs won't be met in school.[47] IntegratED partner, Relationships Foundation, has also identified pupils no longer wanting to go back.[48] These cohorts typically have SEND.[49] It is important to note that those with physical disabilities have shown a greater tendency to move into home education, during the COVID-19 pandemic, given the health risk. Some parents/carers were reluctant to send their children back, whilst some pupils, too, were concerned about their welfare.[50] ADCS found that LAs were reporting a noticeable increase in children who are home educated with an EHCP or requiring SEN support.[51] LAs also reported that the number of home-educated pupils on FSM has risen.[52] Again, more data on this is required.

How many pupils are being coerced into home education?

Due to a lack of oversight and data collection on home education, it is impossible to separate cases where parents make this choice freely from instances where a parent has made the choice to move their child into home education as they feel the school is not meeting their child's needs or even occasions of coercion into home education, through the scourge of off-rolling. In addition to government and Ofsted reports, the press has published letters being used by schools to off-roll pupils into home education.[53]

1 Ofsted, 2019. "What is off-rolling and how does Ofsted look at it on inspection?"

2 Ofsted, 2019. (YouGov) "Exploring the issue of off-rolling"

3 Education Policy Institute, 2019. "Unexplained pupil exits from schools: A growing problem?"

4 FFT Education Datalab, 2022. "Who's Left 2021"

5 FFT Education Datalab, 2022. "The rate at which pupils left the state funded mainstream school sector fell during the pandemic but not among pupils with EHC plans"

6 Centre for Social Justice, 2024. "Suspending Reality: Part One"

7 Oftsed, 2022. "The Annual Report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2021/22"

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ofsted, 2024. "Building a better Ofsted: the response to the Big Listen"

11 Education Policy Institute, 2019. "Unexplained pupil exits from schools: Further analysis and data by multi-academy trust and local authority"

12 Ofsted, 2019. (YouGov) "Exploring the issue of off-rolling"

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Education Policy Institute, 2019. "Unexplained pupil exits from schools: A growing problem?"

17 Timpson, 2019. "Timpson Review of School Exclusion"

18 Ofsted, 2019. (YouGov) "Exploring the issue of off-rolling"

19 Education Policy Institute, 2019. "Unexplained pupil exits from schools: A growing problem?"

20 Department for Education, 2017. "Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England: Statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion"

21 Just for Kids Law. "Quick-Guide: Managed Moves"

22 Tes, 2021. "Ofsted admits it failed to flag off-rolling"

23 Ofsted, 2023. "School inspection handbook"

24 EPI, 2019. "Unexplained pupil exits from schools: Further analysis and data by multi-academy trust and local authority"

25 FFT Education Datalab, 2024. "Investigating managed moves part one"

26 FFT Education Datalab, 2024. "Investigating managed moves part two"

27 FFT Education Datalab, 2024. "Investigating managed moves part one"

28 FFT Education Datalab, 2024. "Investigating managed moves part two"

29 Department for Education, 2019. "Elective home education: Departmental guidance for local authorities"

30 ADCS, 2020. "Elective Home Education Survey 2020"

31 Ofsted, 2019. "Exploring moving to home education in secondary schools"; Office of the Schools Adjudicator, 2020. "Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Report: September 2018 to August 2019"

32 Select Committee: Education, 2021. "Strengthening Home Education

33 Department for Education, 2019. "Elective Home Education: Call for Evidence 2018 Government consultation response"; Ofsted, 2019. "Exploring moving to home education in secondary schools"

34 Department for Education, 2024. "Elective Home Education"

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Children's Commissioner, 2019. "Skipping School: Invisible Children"

38 Department for Education, 2019. "Children not in school: proposed legislation Government consultation"

39 Prime Minister's Office, 2024. "The King's Speech 2024"

40 Department for Education, 2022. "Elective Home Education"

41 Local Government Association, 2020. "Children Missing Education"

42 ADCS, 2021. "Survey on Elective Home Education"

43 Ofsted, 2017. "Local area SEND reviews: one year on"

44 Ofsted, 2019. "Exploring moving to home education in secondary schools"

45 Cornwall Council, 2018. "Written evidence to the Education Committee Inquiry into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities"; Lambeth SEND, 2018. "Written evidence to the Education Committee Inquiry into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities"

46 Excluded Lives, 2020. "School Exclusion Risks after COVID-19"

47 Ibid.

48 Relationships Foundation & Big Change, 2021. "Pandemic as portal"

49 Ibid.

50 Excluded Lives, 2020. "School Exclusion Risks after COVID-19"

51 ADCS, 2021. "Elective Home Education Survey"

52 ADCS, 2020. "Elective Home Education Survey 2020"

53 Tes, 2019. "Illiterate parent was asked to sign off-rolling letter"

On-roll movement

The previous sections looked at pupil moves out of mainstream schools. Sometimes a pupil can be removed from the classroom on a medium- to long-term basis while staying on the roll of their mainstream school, which can make them harder to track at a national level.

Examples are schools that have set up their own on-site AP and the use of external providers for short- or long-term, part- or full-time placements.

This section will explore three types of on-roll moves: dual registration, moves to internal AP, and the use of B codes. In some instances, these moves can be part of a wider platform of behaviour interventions to avoid a permanent exclusion, but evidence cited below suggests that these avenues of pupil movement are sometimes exploited as a way for LAs or schools to avoid scrutiny.

The following sections should be seen as a starting point for further research. There are other types of on-roll pupil movement (some of which will be explored in the "What we don't know" section on page 45) and the very fact that pupils remain on-roll means that these kinds of moves are not well recorded.

Dual registration

What is dual registration?

Dual registration is where a pupil attends a second provider – either part-time or full-time – to receive education that is complimentary to the education they receive at their main school.

When a pupil is dual registered it means that they are on the roll of two different schools. One is listed as their "main" school and the other as their "subsidiary".[1]

There are no time limits on dual registration. Sometimes a pupil may be dual registered at an alternative provider for a short period of time as part of a wider programme of support. But in other instances, dual registration is used long-term and pupils can attend their subsidiary school exclusively for a number of years while remaining on the roll of their main school.

There are benefits to children remaining on the roll of their mainstream school while attending an alternative provider. First, mainstream schools stay accountable for their dual-registered pupils' results - even if they were to spend the whole of Years 10 and 11 full-time at their subsidiary school. This means mainstream schools have an incentive to help support the education of these children.

Second, it should be easier for dual-registered pupils to reintegrate into mainstream education than those who are permanently excluded, as they will be able to return to their school of origin. For this reason, it is assumed that dual-registered pupils are more likely to return to mainstream education than pupils who have been permanently excluded, although the government does not collect or publish data on how long dual-registered pupils spend in AP or whether they return to a mainstream school.[2]

How many pupils are dual registered?

Due to the way that data is collected, there is no way to estimate the total number of pupils dual registered throughout the course of an academic year.[3]

Instead, we have to rely upon an approximation from how many pupils were dual registered on Spring Census Day 2024. Data released by the Department for Education suggests that 11,065 pupils had a dual subsidiary registration in state-funded AP schools, alongside a main registration at another school.[4]

However, this number is likely an underestimate as it does not take into account where a child may have a secondary registration at another mainstream or special school – potentially as part of a managed move.

Analysis by FFT Education Datalab uncovered that around 80 per cent of the managed moves between 2015-2022 were explicit dual registrations and that 70 per cent of the managed moves were to mainstream schools, indicating that it is likely there will be more pupils who are dual registered, with their secondary registration at another school.[5] A small number of pupils will also be main registered with a state-maintained AP, with their subsidiary placement at a mainstream or secondary school.

Moves to internal AP

What is a move to internal AP?

When a pupil is moved to internal AP, they remain on their school register but are separated from other students and removed from their normal classes.

In some cases, they attend AP on the same site as where their normal classes take place. In other cases, pupils may attend sessions in an AP unit at a different mainstream school.

How many pupils are being moved into internal AP?

There is no data collected on internal AP in England and consequently we do not know how many exist or how many pupils attend them.

Some analyses have attempted to identify a sample of internal alternative providers, but systematic oversight is not possible.[6]

No new analysis had been produced on the number of children moved into internal AP.

The best figures available that estimate the prevalence of internal AP comes from the DfE Winter Survey. In a 2019 survey of 1,815 school leaders and teachers, 91 per cent of leaders and 81 per cent of teachers said that they had used "in-school" units to support pupils at risk of exclusion in the last 12 months.[7] This survey did not determine if these units were on-site or at a different mainstream school or if they prioritised therapeutic or punitive interventions.

Why are pupils moved into internal AP?

Research by the DfE found that schools with internal AP are reported to believe that pupils can access some of the benefits of off-site AP without the need to move off-roll.[8]

These include smaller class sizes and the ability to remove pupils from a situation of conflict.

However, it is notable this DfE qualitative research found the nature of provision varied substantially.[9] Some teachers reported that the internal AP they offered was focused on inclusion and behaviour support whereas others described their provision in more punitive terms, seeing the provision as a means of isolation.

When are pupils moved into internal AP?

Interviews conducted by IFF Research Ltd suggested that internal AP is more common for pupils in secondary rather than primary school. While more than half of all secondary schools reported having internal AP to support pupils at risk of exclusion, only a minority of primary schools did.[10]

Which pupils are moved into internal AP?

It cannot be definitively stated which pupils are being moved into internal AP because there is no pupil-level data collected on this method of pupil movement.

However, concerns have nonetheless been raised that the pupils most likely to be moved to internal AP share some of the characteristics of pupils most likely to be permanently excluded.

In evidence to the Women and Equalities Select Committee, one professional stated that schools were now using "internal exclusion units", rather than externally excluding Roma pupils. The motivation for this was claimed to be a desire to no longer have these pupils show up on the published exclusions statistics.[11]

Despite anecdotal evidence of some pupil groups experiencing internal AP, due to the lack of data and monitoring in this area no one can definitively say who is in internal AP or who is more likely to be moved there.

B coding

What is B coding?

Schools use absence and attendance codes to record and monitor attendance patterns and reasons for absence.

When a pupil is present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school, their attendance is denoted by a B code.[12]

Pupils with code B are counted as present in the attendance data unless the off-site educational activity provider notifies the school and informs them that they are absent. When a pupil is educated off-site, schools remain responsible for the child's safeguarding and welfare.[13]

B codes should not be used in instances where a child is at home completing schoolwork or where a child is unsupervised.[14] While many pupils whose attendance is denoted by a B code will not be attending alternative provision and will be partaking in a short-term educational activity, some children will be B coded long-term while they are attending alternative provision. B coding therefore can count as another form of pupil movement where a child is kept on roll but is, in fact, attending alternative provision rather than being educated in a mainstream school environment.

Since the start of the 2022/23 academic year, schools now must record the reason that pupils of compulsory school age receive a b-code. Reasons may include:[15]

- attending taster days at other schools;
- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision arranged or agreed by the school.

B coding therefore can count as another form of pupil movement where a child is kept on roll but is, in fact, attending alternative provision.

How many pupils are B coded?

There are no national statistics produced on the number of pupils who are recorded with a B code throughout the academic year.

FFT Education Datalab provided the first comprehensive insight into the scale of B coding. Their analysis takes data from nearly 8,000 schools and estimates that the number of pupils who received a B code in the first full week of October in 2021 was 37,000.[16]

Since then, FFT Education Datalab has produced a further analysis to understand how many pupils are being regularly educated off-site.[17] In their analysis, FFT Education Datalab used data covering the Autumn 2022 for over 10,000 schools and identify pupils as being regularly educated off-site if they were educated off-site for four weeks or more.

When the analysis is scaled up to the full national population of pupils at the time – seven million pupils – it estimates that 33,000 pupils were regularly educated off-site (0.47 per cent).[18]

Additional research conducted by the FFT Education Datalab in 2024 highlighted a notable decrease in the use of B codes in September 2024, compared to September 2023. FFT Education Datalab pointed to the ASCL highlighting that DfE made clear remote learning should not be counted as a B code, but instead be counted as absence, which could explain the decrease in B code.[19]

When are pupils B coded?

Whereas school exclusions increase gradually by year group and the rate of school exclusions increases dramatically between Year 6 and Year 7, this pattern is not replicated in the data for B codes.

Research by FFT Education Datalab uncovered rates of B codes were higher in Year 6 than in Year 7 in 2020 and 2021. There was a particularly high rate of B codes in Year 6 in 2021. After contacting schools to enquire about the reasons behind likely anomaly in 2021, FFT Education Datalab uncovered that this is due to situations where pupils were visiting secondary schools for a variety of reasons, typically to do with the transition from primary school to secondary school.[20]

As with exclusions, the rate of B codes peaks in Years 10 and 11.[21]

For pupils regularly educated off site, looking solely at Year 11, the analysis concluded that 158 in every 10,000 pupils (1.58 per cent) were regularly educated off-site in the term.[22]

Overall, secondary schools have higher rates of B codes than primary schools and pupils with EHCPs are far more likely to be regularly educated off-site.[23]

Pupils regularly educated off-site tend to spend more time off-site than present in school. 35 per cent of sessions are spent off-site compared to 33 per cent in school. The remaining per cent of sessions were either absent or marked using another attendance code.[24]

1 Department for Education, 2023. School census 2022 to 2023 Business and technical specification, version 1.4.

2 Centre for Social Justice, 2020. "Warming the cold spots of alternative provision: A manifesto for system improvement"

3 Department for Education, 2023. School census 2022 to 2023 Business and technical specification, version 1.4.

4 Department for Education, 2024. "Schools, pupils and their characteristics"

5 FFT Education Datalab, 2024. "Investigating managed moves part one"

6 BBC News, 2018. "'Hundreds of pupils spend week in school isolation booths'"

7 Department for Education, 2020. "The School Snapshot Survey: Winter 2019– Support for pupils"

8 Department for Education, 2018. "Investigative research into alternative provision" IFF

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Select Committee: Women and Equalities, 2019. "Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities"

12 Department for Education, 2022. "Working together to improve school attendance"

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 FFT Education Datalab, 2021. "How many pupils from mainstream schools are educated off site each week?"

17 FFT Education Datalab, 2023. "Attendance code b not absent but not present at school"

18 Ibid.

19 FFT Education Datalab, 2024. "Usage of new attendance codes"

20 FFT Education Datalab, 2021. "How many pupils from mainstream schools are educated off site each week?"

21 Ibid.

22 FFT Education Datalab, 2023. "Attendance code b not absent but not present at school"

23 FFT Education Datalab, 2024. "Usage of new attendance codes"

24 FFT Education Datalab, 2023. "Attendance code b not absent but not prese nt at school"

AP schools

This report has looked at the flow of pupils out of mainstream schools and into AP. This section considers the AP schools and other settings in which children are educated when they are removed from mainstream school.

FFT Education Datalab has found that the majority of children who experience a permanent exclusion spend time in some AP, but not every child who has spent time in AP has been excluded. Of the 6,609 pupils who experienced an exclusion in the 2019 cohort, 89 per cent spent time in some form of AP.[1]

This section analyses the AP Census, using January 2024 data. The AP Census does not just collect information about pupils in AP, a large proportion of pupils on the census are being funded by the LA to attend specialist provision.[2] The overall figure of LA commissioned AP therefore includes the pupils in specialist education settings.

This year the analysis includes, for the second-time, data on any AP that is commissioned directly by schools, but not by the LA. The school-arranged AP placement module was introduced to the school census on a voluntary basis from the 2021/22 academic year but become mandatory from the Spring 2023 census.[3]

The numbers in this section should be treated as lower-bound estimates. Factors that are unable to be identified or included in this analysis include:

- any unregistered AP that is commissioned directly by home educating families;
- any pupils attending state-maintained AP on dual registration;
- precise pupil and setting numbers of independent AP.

State-maintained alternative provision

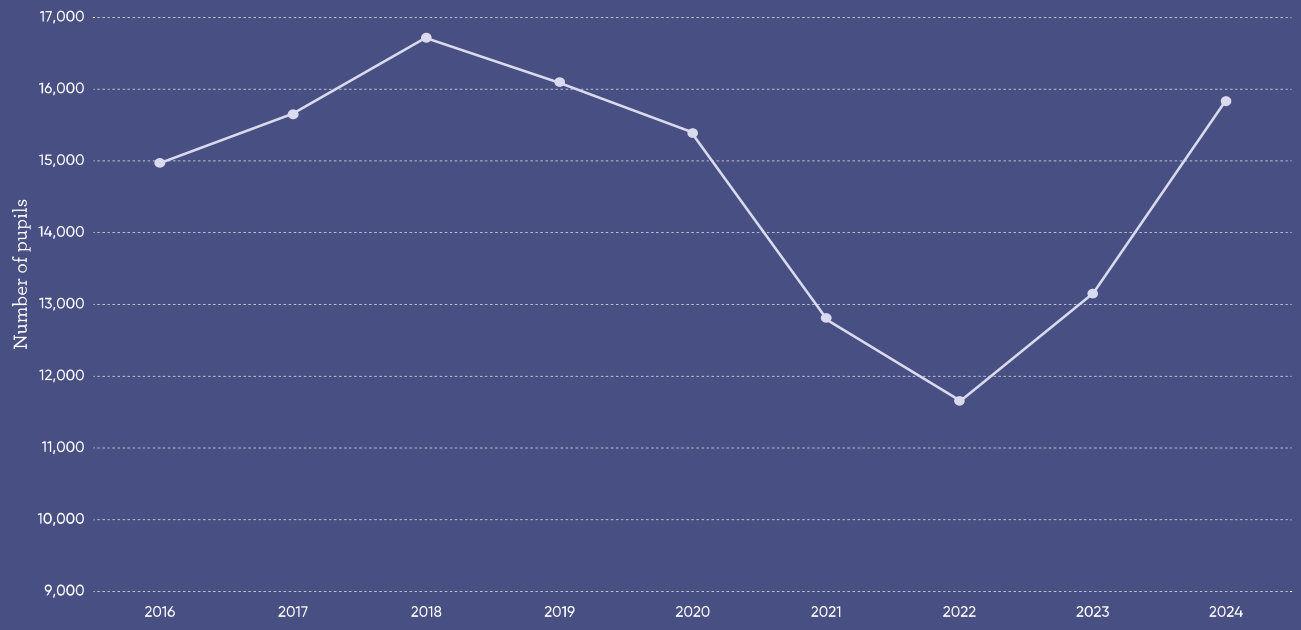
Analysis of the Spring 2024 school census showed there were 333 state-maintained alternative providers in January 2024, with at least 15,866 pupils being educated in them.[4] As outlined above, a further 11,065 pupils are dual registered in state-maintained AP schools, meaning there were at least 26,931 pupils educated in state-maintained alternative provision at the Spring census.[5]

When considering the type of state-maintained AP:

- There were 8,874 pupils in 170 Pupil Referral Units. This represents 56 per cent of the pupils educated in state-maintained alternative provision.
- There were 3,977 pupils in 83 converted academy alternative provisions. This represents 25 per cent of pupils educated in state-maintained alternative provision.
- There were 1,546 pupils in 29 sponsor-led academy alternative provisions. This represents 10 per cent of pupils educated in state-maintained alternative provision.
- There were 1,469 pupils in 51 free school alternative provisions. This represents 9 per cent of pupils educated in state-maintained alternative provision.[6]

When compared to January 2023, there was a less than 1 per cent decrease in the number of state-funded alternative provisions (down from 335 in January 2023), but a 20 per cent increase in the number of pupils being educated in state-funded alternative provisions (up from 13,191 in January 2023).[7]

Number of pupils in state-maintained alternative provision over time.



Source: Department for Education, 2024. "Schools, pupils and characteristics"

AP schools

When comparing the different types of state-maintained alternative provision between January 2024 and January 2023:

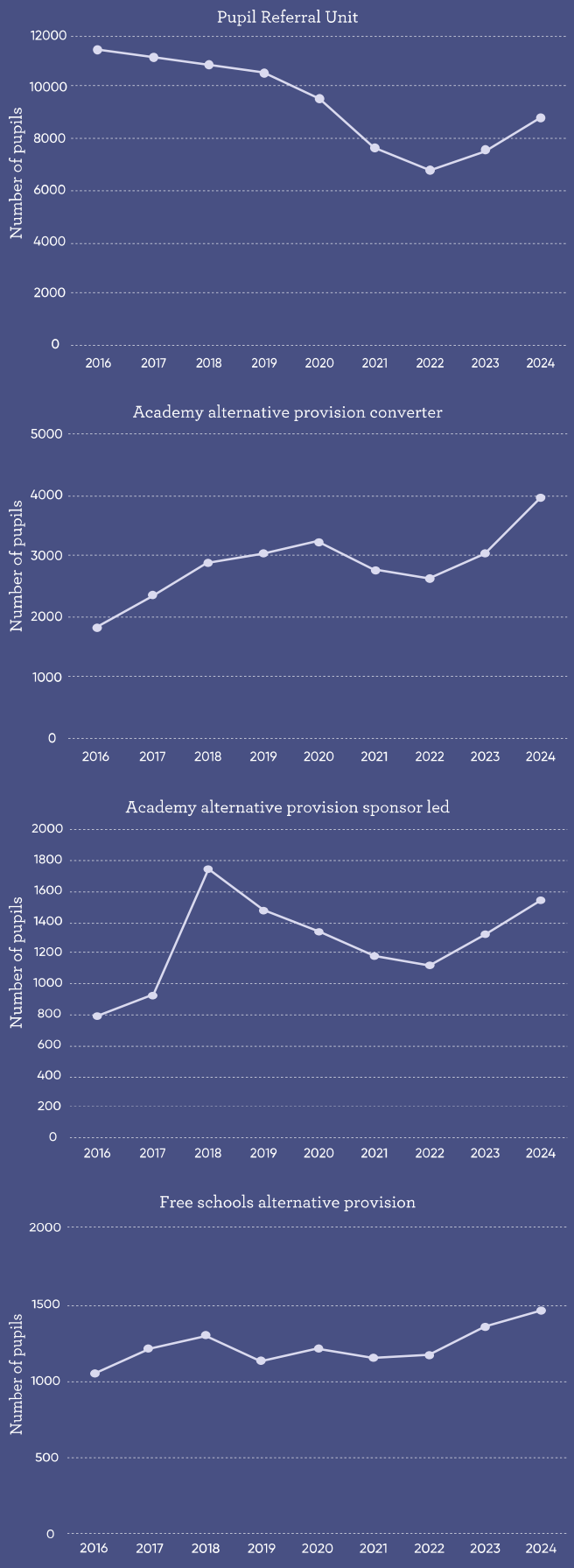
- The number of pupils in PRUs has increased by 19 per cent and the number of PRUs has decreased by 4 per cent.
- The number of pupils in converted academy alternative provisions has increased by 31 per cent and the number of converted academy alternative provisions has increased by 6 per cent.
- The number of pupils in sponsor-led academy alternative provisions has increased by 17 per cent and the number of sponsor-led academy alternative provisions has stayed the same.
- The number of pupils in free school alternative provisions has increased by 8 per cent and the number of free school alternative provisions has stayed the same.[8]

Of the 15,866 pupils in state-maintained AP schools:

- 61 per cent (9,630 pupils) were known to be eligible for free school meals and 39 per cent (6,236 pupils) were not known to be eligible.
- 33 per cent (5,173 pupils) were female and 67 per cent (10,693 pupils) were male.[9]

When considering age, there were more 15-year-olds in state-maintained AP than any other age group – accounting for 35 per cent, followed by age 14 (24 per cent) and age 13 (17 per cent).[10]

Number of pupils in different types of state-maintained AP over time.



Local authority funded placements

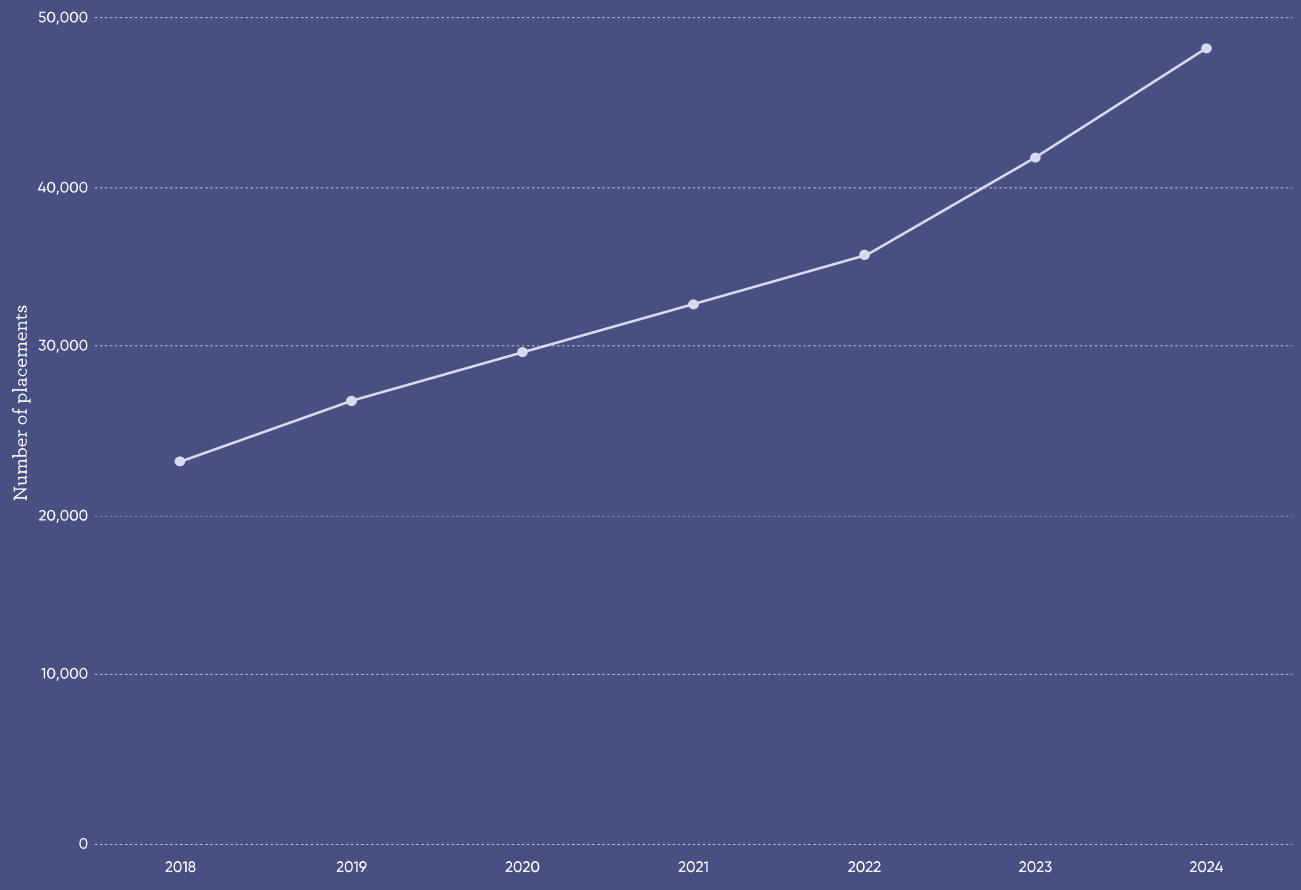
The 2024 Spring census showed that there were 47,612 pupils in 48,133 local-authority funded placements in non-state-funded alternative provision in January 2024. There are more placements than pupils as pupils can have multiple placements.[11]

When considering the type of local authority funded provisions, there were:

- 36,646 placements in an 'education setting with Unique Reference Number (URN)', this represents 76 per cent of all local authority funded placements.
- 5,275 placements in 'one-on-one tuition, this represents 11 per cent of all local authority funded placements.
- 3,043 placements in an 'other unregistered provider', this represents 6 per cent of all local authority funded placements.
- 2,068 placements in an 'education setting with UKPRN', this represents 4 per cent of all local authority funded placements.
- 804 placements in a 'non maintained further education college', this represents 2 per cent of all local authority funded placements.
- 297 placements in a 'work-based placement', this represents less than one per cent of all local authority funded placements.[12]

When compared to January 2023, there was a 17 per cent increase in the number of local authority funded placements (up from 41,314 in January 2023).[13]

Local authority funded placements over time.

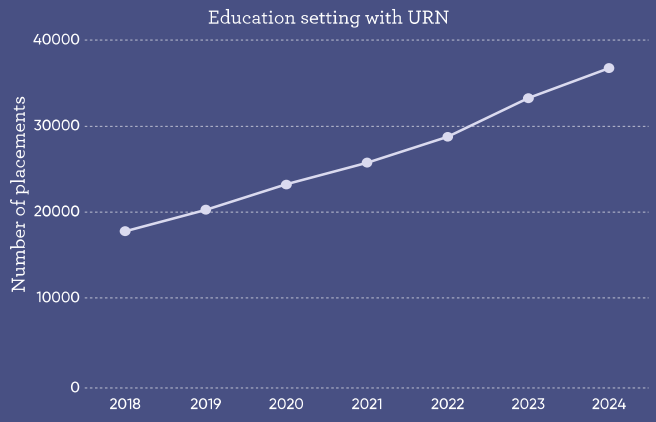


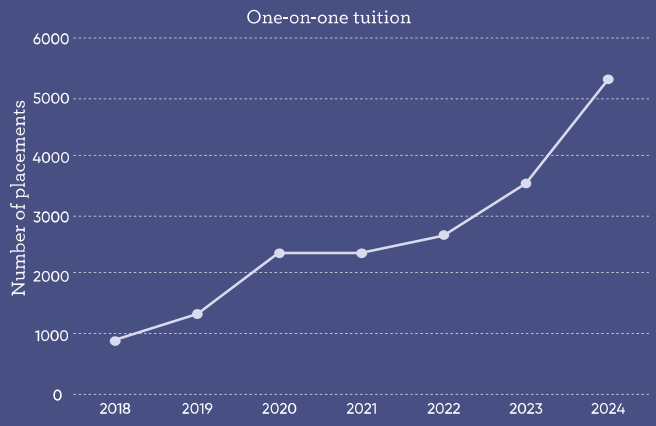
AP schools

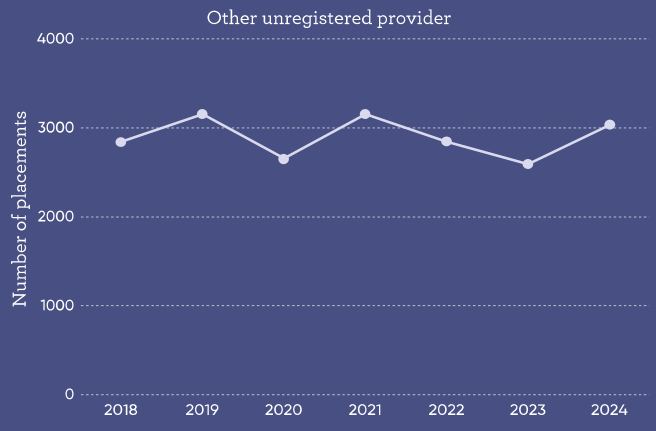
When comparing the different types of local authority funded placements between January 2024 and January 2023, there was:

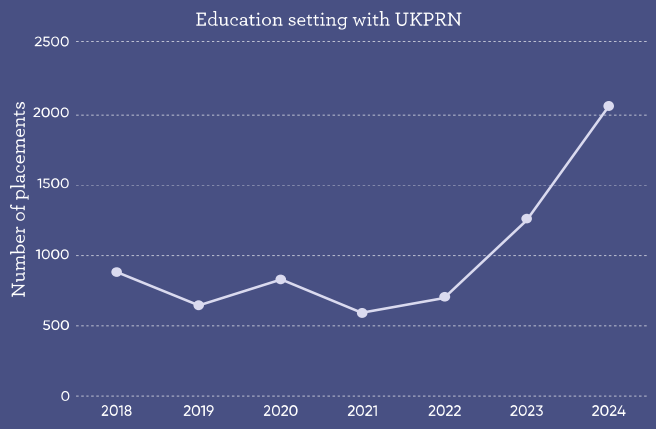
- An 11 per cent increase in the number of placements in an 'education setting with URN'.
- A 49 per cent increase in the number of placements in 'one-on-one tuition'.
- A 19 per cent increase in the number of placements in an 'other unregistered provider'.
- A 66 per cent increase in the number of placements in an 'education setting with UKPRN'.
- A 14 per cent increase in the number of placements in a 'non maintained further education college'.
- A 16 per cent increase in the number of placements in a 'work-based placement'.

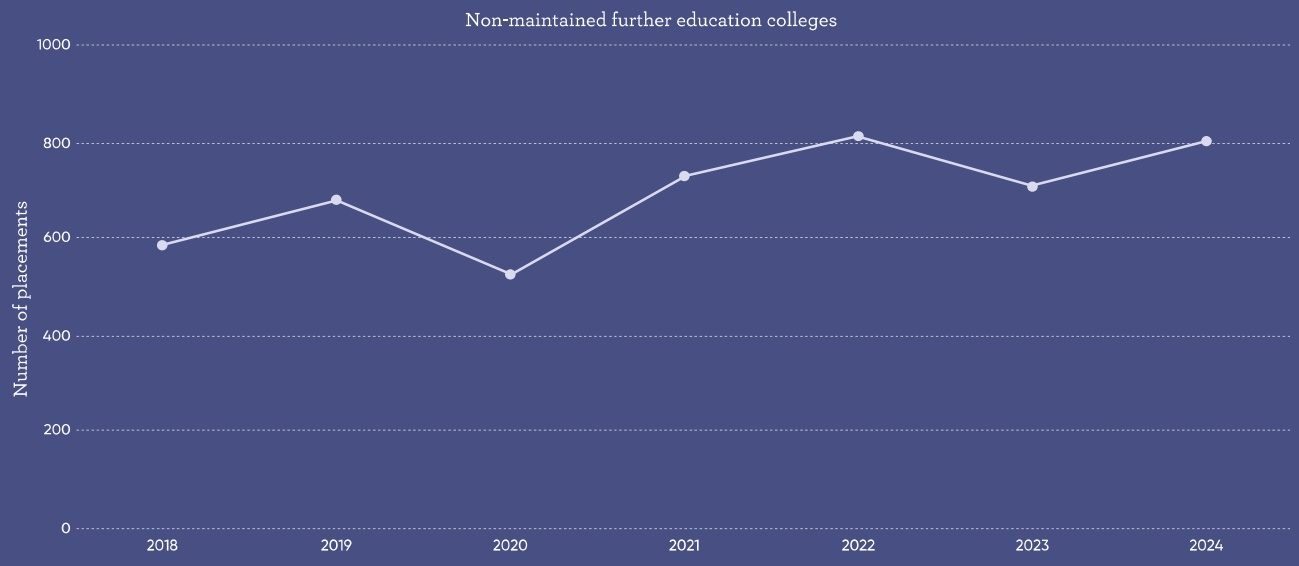
Local authority funded placements over time, by placement time.

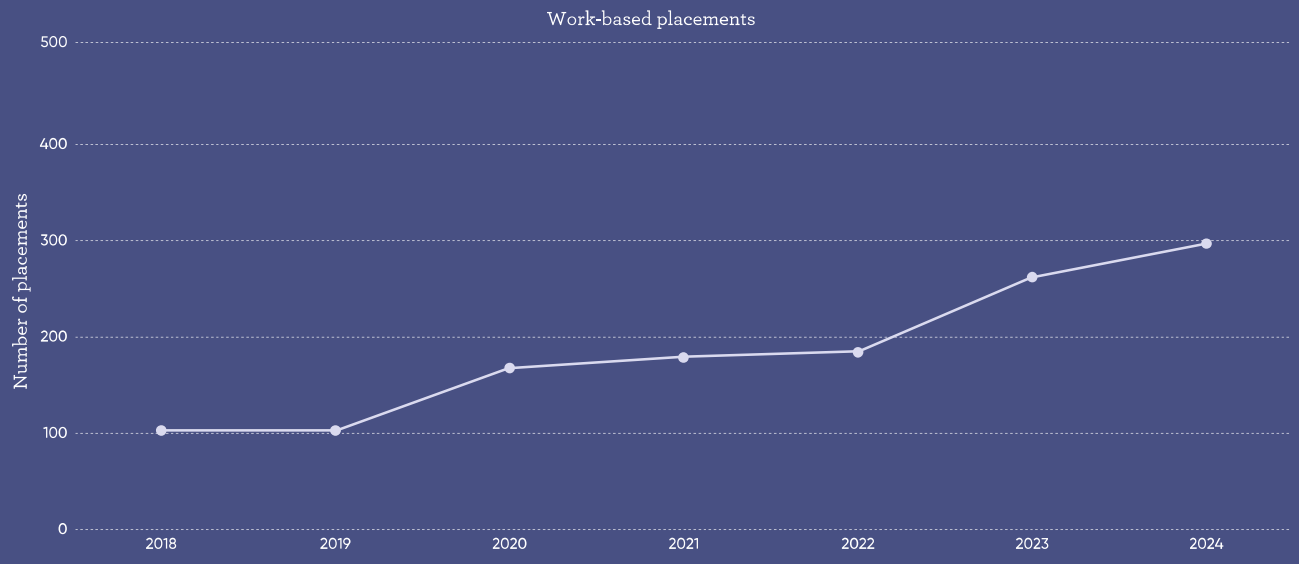












Of the 47,612 pupils in local authority funded placements:

- 22 per cent (10,282 pupils) were eligible for free school meals and 78 per cent (37,330 pupils) were not eligible.
- 29 per cent (13,618 pupils) were female and 71 per cent (33,968 pupils) were male.[14]

When considering age, there were more 15-year-olds in local authority commissioned placements than any other age group – accounting for 15 per cent, followed by age 14 (13 per cent) and age 13 (12 per cent).[15]

The most commons reason given for a local authority placement was 'setting named on EHC' plan, which was the reason given for 81 per cent of the placements (38,952 placements).

The second most common reason was 'other including pregnancy/childcare', which was the reason given for 12 per cent (5,536 placements). Other reasons given include 'permanent exclusion' (1,797 placements, 4 per cent), 'mental health need' (799 placements, 2 per cent) and 'new arrival without a school place' (746 placements, 2 per cent). The least common reasons given were 'pupil in young offender institutes/secure training centres' and 'physical health need' which both accounted for less than 1 per cent.

School commissioned placements

The 2024 spring census also published information about school-commissioned placements in non-state-funded alternative provision. In January 2024, there were 26,358 pupils in school-commissioned alternative provision.

Of the pupils in school commissioned alternative provision, there were:

- 10,788 pupils educated in a 'education setting with a URN', this represents 41 per cent of pupils in school commissioned placements.
- 8,007 pupils educated in a 'other unregistered provider', this represents 30 per cent of pupils in school commissioned placements.
- 3,522 pupils educated in a 'one-to-one tuition', this represents 13 per cent of pupils in school commissioned placements.
- 2,782 pupils educated in a 'registered provider with a UKPRN', this represents 11 per cent of pupils in school commissioned placements.
- 813 pupils educated in a 'work-based placement', this represents 3 per cent of pupils in school commissioned placements.
- 446 pupils educated in a 'non-maintained further education college', this represents 2 per cent of pupils in school commissioned placements.[16]

When comparing to previous years, official data published by the Department for Education in the 'schools, pupils and characteristics release', only contains data on school-commissioned placements for the January 2023 and January 2024 census.

When compared to January 2023, there was a 7 per cent increase in the number of pupils being educated in school commissioned placements (up from 24,577 in January 2023).[17]

When comparing the different types of school commissioned placements between January 2024 and January 2023, there was:

- A 14 per cent decrease in the number of pupils educated in an 'education setting with URN'.
- A 37 per cent increase in the number of pupils educated in 'one-on-one tuition'.
- A 24 per cent increase in the number of pupils educated in an 'other unregistered provider'.
- A 49 per cent increase in the number of pupils educated in an 'registered provider with a UKPRN'.
- A 33 per cent increase in the number of pupils educated in a 'non maintained further education college'.
- A 5 per cent decrease in the number of pupils educated in a 'work-based placement'.[18]

Of the 26,358 pupils in school-commissioned placements in non-state-funded alternative provision:

- 55 per cent (14,496 pupils) were eligible for free school meals and 45 per cent (11,862 pupils) were not eligible.
- 24 per cent (6,294 pupils) had an EHCP, 43 per cent (11,213 pupils) were in receipt of SEN support and 34 per cent (8,851 pupils) had no identified SEN.
- 37 per cent (9,808 pupils) were female and 63 per cent (16,550 pupils) were male.[19]

When considering age, there were more 15-year-olds in school commissioned placements than any other age group – accounting for 37 per cent, followed by age 14 (24 per cent) and age 13 (15 per cent).[20]

The most common reason given for a school commissioned placement was 'off-site placement for behavioural support', which was the reason given for 14,587 pupils (55 per cent). This was followed by 'other' which was the reason given for 6,007 pupils (23 per cent). 4,893 pupils (19 per cent) had 'medical condition: mental health need' as the reason, with 578 (2 per cent) having 'medical condition: physical health need'. The least common reasons given were 'suspension' (114 pupils, 0.4 per cent) and 'permanent exclusion where still going through the review process' (179 pupils, 0.7 per cent).[21]

What are the outcomes for pupils in AP?

KS4 destinations data indicates the short-term outcomes for pupils attending AP. When looking at state-place funded AP, 66.3 per cent of pupils who finished KS4 in 2022/23 recorded a sustained education, employment or apprenticeship destination. This compares to 92.9 per cent of pupils in mainstream state schools for the same year.[22]

Nearly a third (28.7 per cent) of pupils in any AP provision didn't sustain their destination for the required 6-month period, this compares to 5.9 per cent of students from state funded mainstream schools.[23]

Tracking longer-term outcomes is harder, given at a national level the long-term outcomes for pupils who attended AP settings are not formally recorded. However, independent analyses have sought to uncover the destinations of these pupils.

IntegratED partner FFT Education Datalab conducted a longitudinal analysis in 2022 which tracked the long-term outcomes of pupils that were 16 years old in 2012/13.[24] The analysis found that by the age of 19, less than one quarter of the pupils who had attended AP at any stage in their school career were in continuous employment, compared to 57 per cent of those who had never been in AP. It also found that 4.7 per cent of the AP cohort had experienced custody by aged 19, compared to 0.2 per cent of pupils who had never been in AP.

These outcomes do not necessarily indicate a lack of quality in AP schools but reflect the challenging needs and vulnerabilities of the cohort that attends such settings. The outcomes of pupils that have attended AP are poor when compared to the general population.

1 FFT Education Datalab, 2021. "Working Paper: Returning to state schools following permanent exclusion or alternative provision"

2 Department for Education, 2023. "Alternative provision census 2023 Business and technical specification version 1.0"

3 Department for Education, 2023. "School census 2022 to 2023 Business and technical specification, version 1.4."

4 Department for Education, 2024. "Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2023/24"

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Department for Education, 2023. "Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2022/23"

14 Department for Education, 2024. "Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2023/24"

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Department for Education, 2023. "Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2022/23"

18 Department for Education, 2024. "Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2023/24"

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Department for Education, 2024. "Key stage 4 destination measures"

23 Ibid.

24 FFT Education Datalab, 2022. "Long term outcomes of pupils who experience alternative provision"

What we don't know

This report has tried to give a comprehensive oversight of everything we know about pupil movement and AP, but the truth is there is a lot we do not know.

This section outlines some of the biggest blind spots.

How many pupils are internally excluded

Schools that use internal isolation, inclusion units, or on-site AP do not need to flag this in any reporting to DfE. They do not have to record which pupils are placed in such provision or how long a pupil spends out of their mainstream classroom.

How many pupils are sent to other schools' isolation units

Schools are not required to report when they send pupils to another school due to behaviour reasons, for example in place of a suspension. The coding categories in attendance registers are broad and are used inconsistently.

Why pupils are being informally excluded

In previous reports, the reasons for permanent exclusions were unclear. For one in five permanent exclusions the reason given was recorded as "Other".

Since removing this "Other" category there is more clarity regarding the reasons for formal exclusions.

However, this clarity does not extend to forms of informal exclusion. At present, we still do not have data about why a pupil is off-rolled, dual registered or sent to internal AP. We do not know if these moves are motivated by different reasons or if they are effectively a substitute for a formal exclusion.

> A lot of pupils who move out of mainstream schools and into alternative provision remain invisible.

How many AP settings exist

While there is a comprehensive directory of all state-maintained APs in England, there is not a full list of all independent AP settings in use.

This information is not clearly indicated on the AP Census. And even if there was a full directory of schools and registered providers from every kind of commissioner, there is no list of all unregistered settings in England.

How many pupils are educated in AP settings

An estimate can be provided of how many pupils are educated in state-maintained AP on a given day in January.

Our figures only represent a snapshot of the population in AP settings. As the population in AP is incredibly transient, these figures likely underestimate the total number of children in all forms of AP across a given academic year.

Beyond state-maintained AP, there is very little idea about how many pupils are placed in independent provision. It is possible to give a refined estimate of how many pupils a LA commissions AP for, but again this number represents only the total number of pupils on a given day in January. There is no record of LA commissioning throughout the course of the academic year.

There is no systematic recording of the number of pupil places in independent AP schools. It is therefore difficult to estimate the number of children educated in a school but outside of state-maintained AP. This is not only an issue at national government level, but even in some LAs there is no clear information or data held about how schools are directly commissioning independent AP and how many pupils are in such provision. The data that is collected is derived from the AP and school census, taken from the position of the commissioning school, rather than the setting that is actually providing the education.

Similarly, there is no reliable information on the total number of unregistered AP settings which are offering education to children in England. A setting is unregistered if it does not meet the threshold of registering for a school. This report explains what is known so far about the number of children in unregistered AP, but the total number of providers that make up the unregistered AP market remains unknown and the figures quoted do not encompass unregistered AP which is commissioned by parents.

Given the historical lack of understanding of the unregistered provision sector, this also means it remains unknown how mainstream, special and AP schools have used unregistered AP over time. New data is being collected on this theme but will not give insight into retrospective school commissioning patterns. There is also no clear evidence about how long pupils spend in unregistered AP, or the frequency of cases of commissioners patching together a selection of part-time unregistered provision placements to make up full-time education.

Due to the scarcity of data, it is impossible to form a reliable estimate of the total number of children educated in AP.

A year (or so) in policy

Following on from where the previous Annual Report left off, the timeline below sets out the key publications, consultations and other actions taken by the government and Ofsted relating to school exclusions, children at risk of exclusion, alternative provision and children otherwise excluded from school – whether formally or otherwise.

New framework published

In January 2024, the government published the 'initial teacher training and early career framework'. From September 2025, this framework will combine and replace the 'initial teacher training core content framework' and the 'early career framework'.

Guidance updated

In February 2024, the government updated the 'working together to improve school attendance' guidance. This guidance came into force from August 2024 and became statutory from then.

Consultation report published

In May 2024, the government published its report following the public consultation on unregistered alternative provision. The report outlined the key findings of the call for evidence and outlined the next steps the government would take to build upon the call to evidence and deliver their approach to unregistered alternative provision.

Guidance updated

Guidance for local authorities and schools about children educated at home was updated in August 2024, to include new attendance regulations that came into force in August.

Guidance updated

Guidance on school suspensions and permanent exclusions was updated in August 2024, to reflect new attendance regulations that came into force in August 2024.

Review launched

In July 2024, the government announced the launch of the Curriculum and Assessment review, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE. This was followed, in September 2024, by the launch of a public consultation. The review will publish its recommendations in 2025.

A year (or so) in policy

Taskforce established

In August 2024, a new Child Poverty Taskforce held its first meeting. The taskforce is co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. The taskforce will publish a new Child Poverty strategy in Spring 2025.

Guidance updated

In September 2024, the new 'keeping children safe in education' came into force. The guidance had initially been published in May 2024.

Update to Ofsted grading

In September 2024, the government announced that single headline Ofsted judgements for schools would be scrapped with immediate effect. For inspections this academic year, parents will see four grades across the existing sub-categories: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership & management.

Spending announced

In the 2024 Budget, the Chancellor announced a £1 billion uplift in funding to support the SEND system. This £1 billion is part of the overall £2.3 billion increase in the core schools' budget, also announced.

Timpson Review

The Timpson Review of School Exclusion (2019) explored how headteachers use exclusions in practice and why some groups of children are more likely to be excluded than others.

It concluded that we cannot be confident that every exclusion is lawful, reasonable, and fair and that certain groups of pupils are more likely to be excluded than others.

While all 30 recommendations were accepted in principle, our Timpson Tracker demonstrates how far the government had come and how much further they still need to go.

2020

30	4	10	16
Recommendations	Implemented	Some action taken	No action

2021

30	9	17	4
Recommendations	Implemented	Some action taken	No action

2022

30	9	17	4
Recommendations	Implemented	Some action taken	No action

2023

30	9	17	4
Recommendations	Implemented	Some action taken	No action

Progress on recommendations to date

Provide behaviour training for schools	Implemented
Review SENCO and mental health lead training	Implemented
Publish exclusions data for previously looked-after children	Implemented
Review reporting categories for exclusions	Implemented
The school census should record the use of off-site AP	Implemented
Track all pupil moves	Implemented
Downgrade schools' leadership and management to 'Inadequate' in cases of off-rolling	Implemented
Broaden the remit of the Youth Endowment Fund to include mainstream and AP schools	Implemented
Review the toal number of days a child can be out of education	Implemented
Update statutory guidance on exclusions	Some action taken
Empower local authorities to lead on partnership working	Some action taken
Embed behaviour training in the Early Career Framework	Some action taken
Strengthen guidance on in-school units	Some action taken
Facilitate sharing of expertise between AP and mainstream schools	Some action taken
Raise the profile of AP to attract high quality staff	Some action taken
Invest in improving and expanding AP facilities	Some action taken
Invest in building multi-disciplinary teams around schools	Some action taken
Remove financial incentives to exclude	Some action taken
Provide guidance and training for governors	Some action taken
Include AP and exclusions guidance for parents in SEND Local Offer	Some action taken
Review patterns of pupil movements out of school	Some action taken
Publish best practice on managed moves	Some action taken
Consider how to mitigate against unintended consequences to accountability reforms	Some action taken

A year (or so) in policy

Notify social workers and parents when a Child in Need moves out of school	Some action taken
Share real-time data on exclusions with Local Safeguarding Children Boards	Some action taken
Continue to fund diversity hubs	No action
Establish a practice improvement fund	No action
Rename pupil referral units	No action
Make schools accountable for the results of excluded children	No action

Westminster Watch

All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on School Exclusion and Alternative Provision

The APPG on School Exclusion and Alternative Provision was previously set up with cross-party support on 12 October 2020, with the CSJ as secretariat. The APPG was dissolved, alongside all other APPGs, at the dissolution of parliament in May 2024, ahead of the July 2024 General Election, but is now looking to reform. When re-set up, the APPG will work to publish the results of its inclusion inquiry, held in the previous Parliament. The APPG will also continue to explore how best to support pupils at risk of exclusion, as well as those who have been excluded from school, and to improve the quality of alternative provision.

Ministerial Updates

- Current Ministers, as of July 2024, under Sir Keir Starmer's premiership:
    - Education Secretary: Rt. Hon. Bridget Phillipson MP
    - Minister of State for School Standards: Catherine McKinnell MP
    - Minister of State for Skills: Rt. Hon. Baroness Smith of Malvern
    - Minister for Early Education: Stephen Morgan MP
    - Minister for Children and Families: Janet Daby MP

The Education Select Committee has a new Select Committee Chair in Helen Hayes MP. The Education Select Committee also has a new membership, following the 2024 General Election. These new members are: Jess Asato MP (Labour), Sureena Brackenridge MP (Labour), Dr Caroline Johnson MP (Conservative), Amanda Martin MP (Labour), Darren Paffey MP (Labour), Manuela Perteghella MP (Liberal Democrat), Mark Sewards MP (Labour), Partrick Spencer MP (Conservative), Dr Marie Tidball MP (Labour) and Caroline Voaden MP (Liberal Democrat).

Research

The reports featured below all explore the issue of school exclusion or AP — either directly or indirectly.

Some are entirely devoted to the topic while others refer more generally to pupils that we know to be vulnerable to exclusion e.g. children with SEND or children who have interacted with the social care system.

For further reports on exclusions and AP, head to the IntegratED website: integrated.org.uk/research.

Investigating managed moves: part one

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab used School Census data to identify pupils who have experienced managed moves.

The report identified:

- Around 6,000 potential managed moves each year between 2017 and 2019. This number fell considerably during the pandemic, increasing again to around 5,000 in 2022. Around 80 per cent of these are explicit dual registrations.
- 72 per cent of transition periods last up to 24 weeks, 14 per cent of transition periods last more than 40 weeks.
- 75 per cent of moves are to mainstream schools and 22 per cent of moves are to AP schools.

Investigating managed moves: part two

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab continued their investigation into managed moves. They examined the characteristics of pupils who probably experienced a managed move and their Key Stage 4 outcomes.

The report uncovered that:

- Pupils who experienced managed moves tend to have experienced multiple forms of disadvantage compared to their peers, however less so when compared to pupils who experienced permanent exclusion.
- 27 per cent of pupils who experienced a managed move achieved pass grades in their Maths and English GCSEs, compared to 64 per cent for the full cohort.

At-risk or a risk? SENCOs' conceptualisations of vulnerability and risk in relation to school exclusion

Excluded Lives

Excluded Lives conducted research exploring how SENCOs conceptualise vulnerability and risk, and how these conceptualisations inform their responses to students at risk of exclusion from school.

The research concluded that:

- Vulnerability was mainly constructed as multi-layered (including factors such as individual, school, family, community and society) and talked about in conjunction with impact. This indicated the complexity of responding in order to reduce the risk of exclusion.
- As a result of the different layers of vulnerability, interventions were largely bespoke, multi-faceted and targeted at individuals, with less widespread school-level or other changes.
- Some students became repositioned from 'at-risk' to 'a risk' when intervention strategies failed to have an impact. In these circumstances, being seen as 'a risk' rather than 'at-risk' tipped the balance in the decision to permanently exclude.
- Special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) can be constrained by time-consuming and bureaucratic policies and practices, which are at odds with the dynamic and creative approach needed to reflect the vulnerability in young people at risk of exclusion.

Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children

National Audit Office

The National Audit Office examined whether the Department for Education is achieving value for money through its funding supporting the attainment of disadvantaged children.

Its assessment concluded:

- Despite the DfE's investment in narrowing the attainment gap, disadvantaged children performed less well than their peers across all areas and school phases in 2022/23.
- DfE has evidence to support some of its interventions, but it does not yet understand the outcomes resulting from a significant proportion of its expenditure on disadvantaged children.
- The DfE does not have a fully integrated view of its interventions, or milestones to assess progress and when more may need to be done.
- The DfE should build more evidence of what works, look strategically across its interventions and how it allocates its funding, and work effectively across government to address the wider factors to make progress on this complex issue.

How far do pupils travel to AP and does this affect their attendance?

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab conducted an analysis to understand how far pupils travel to attend AP and to see if there is a link between distance travelled and absence.

In their research they uncovered:

- On average, secondary age pupils travel 9km to AP schools and 3km to mainstream schools.
- While APs overall have high rates of absence, there was little difference in absence rates compared to distance travelled by the pupil to get to the AP.
- However, when considering dual-registered pupils, 62 per cent of dual registered pupils attended their AP school more often than their mainstream/special school, despite on average travelling further to their AP school.

Unexplained school transfers and managed moves: local protocols, practice and outcomes for pupils

Education Policy Institute

The Education Policy Institute published a report examining the prevalence and impact of school-to-school moves which do not appear to be driven by pupil or family decisions, including managed moves, among secondary school pupils in England.

The report found that:

- Around 6 per cent of pupils, or approximately 30,000, in the cohort finishing Year 11 in 2019 experienced at least one 'unexplained' school transfer during secondary school, with vulnerable groups like those with social/emotional needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds at higher risk.
- There is significant variation between local authorities in rates of unexplained transfers and approaches to managed moves, with many lacking clear protocols or oversight.
- Only about 40 per cent of managed moves in the quarter of LAs which provided data to use on managed moves resulted in stable placements at new schools.
- The report recommended improved data collection and monitoring of school moves, as well as guidance informed by evidence on supporting pupils with behavioural and mental health needs.

Belonging schools

Teach First

This research by Teach First:

- Sought to understand what 'inclusion' means to pupils, teachers, and leaders and how relatively more inclusive secondary schools approach and practise inclusion.
- The research highlighted that there is no 'one best way' to achieve inclusion but shows how a sample of relatively more inclusive schools adopt an 'inclusion for all' approach founded on equity, relationships and belonging.
- The report term 'Belonging Schools' highlights the centrality of human relationships underpinned by shared values in all six case study schools. These relationships and values created a sense of belonging where students were seen, known, cared for, understood and supported in ways which best met their needs – from which inclusion was an outcome.

Where have all the children gone?

The Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice conducted research into levels of school absence across Scotland.

Analysing existing government data and a Freedom of Information Request to all local authorities across Scotland, the report found that:

- 32.5 per cent of children were persistently absent in the 2022/23 academic year – equating to one in three children. This is an estimated 62 per cent higher than pre-pandemic.
- An estimated 2.7 per cent of pupils were severely absent in the 2022/23 academic year - an estimated 72 per cent increase on pre-pandemic levels.
- In 2022/23, 9.7 per cent of sessions were marked as absent.

Headline findings: autumn 2023 survey results

#BeeWell

#BeeWell published the results of its Autumn 2023 survey completed by over 38,000 pupils across Greater Manchester, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

Headline findings from the survey included:

- 83 per cent of young people in Greater Manchester have hope and optimism for the future, returning to pre-pandemic levels (83 per cent in 2019, 72 per cent in 2020, 80 per cent in 2021 and 81 per cent in 2022.) However, inequalities persist across gender, sexual orientation and other demographics.
- Eight in ten young people in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton report that they feel they have good, very good or excellent physical health.
- 37 per cent of young people across all 14 local authorities are meeting or exceeding the Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) recommended 1 hour a day of physical activity. Girls are less likely to participate in this level of physical activity with 47 per cent of boys meeting the CMO guideline compared to only 28 per cent of girls.

Suspending reality: part one

The Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice produced a research report, uncovering the reasons behind crisis levels of school exclusions and considering how a more inclusive education system could be built.

Their research discovered that:

- The cost-of-living crisis, increasing numbers of children with SEND and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are adding pressure onto schools and can act as barriers to inclusive learning.
- In recent years, educators and academics have raised growing concerns over school performance pressures cultivating a culture which perversely incentivises the removal of lower-performing pupils. A striking illustration of this exclusionary practice is the annual spike in pupil referral unit enrolments in Year 11 which occurs shortly before January.
- The research uncovered examples of best practice that can serve as a blueprint for an inclusive and effective education system. School-based interventions to promote inclusion were centred on three key areas: curriculum, behaviour policies and pastoral care.
- The report called for reform to the accountability system and for a national inclusion framework.

Suspending reality: part two

The Centre for Social Justice

As part of their research into crisis levels of school exclusions and how a more inclusive education system can be built, The Centre for Social Justice published a research report specifically considering the unique challenges and opportunities facing Multi-Academy trusts.

This report found that:

- In addition to existing pressures across the system, multi-academy trusts face additional unique challenges and opportunities.
- MATs regularly take on under-performing schools and are often balancing a centralised approach with academy autonomy.
- As part of the research, MATs spoke of the need for better guidance on inclusive practice, to support innovative ways of managing the surge of complex needs in recent years.

Why are alternative provision schools so full: an update

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab analysed School Census data, trying to understand why AP schools are so full, despite a fall in the number of pupils on roll at AP according to the official statistics.

The updated analysis found that:

- Official statistics on numbers of pupils on roll in the AP sector under-estimate the true number on roll as pupils with subsidiary registrations are not included.
- It is unknown whether the number of places in each AP has changed, for example capacity may have reduced following the pandemic.
- There may be local differences, for example demand may have increased in some places but not in others.
- If data on subsidiary and other registrations were published, it would provide a better idea of how many pupils are attending each school.

Children's mental health services 2022-23

The Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner published a report on mental health services for children and young people.

The report concluded that:

- Waiting times for mental health services vary hugely across the country, from an average of 147 days in Sunderland to just 4 days in Southend.
- Many of the problems seen in children's mental health services stem from a lack of prioritisation, at both a national and local level.
- The report called for fresh, long-term thinking, with more done upstream to create an environment where children feel happy, safe and supported.

Charting a happier course for England's children: the case for universal wellbeing measurement

Pro Bono Economics

Pro Bono Economics published a report setting out a roadmap for a move towards a universal wellbeing measurement for children and young people, backed by a broad coalition of charities, young people's organisations and mental health experts.

The report highlighted that:

- Parents, care givers, teachers, health professionals and young people's charities alike are united in wanting the country's children and young people to have confidence in themselves, to feel satisfied with their lives, to be able to overcome the problems they face and to feel hopeful about their futures. They want children and young people to have high wellbeing.
- However, too many children and young people do not feel this way. The UK's children and young people have the lowest wellbeing in Europe. 197,000 young people left secondary school with low levels of wellbeing in 2022.
- Better and more comprehensive data is urgently needed to understand the state of wellbeing among the UK's children and young people, what is driving it and how to solve it.

How many pupils are educated off-site: an update

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab published an update to their research on how many pupils are educated off-site.

Their updated analysis found that:

- On any given day in the Autumn and Spring terms of 2023/24, around 21,000 pupils were educated off-site.
- Among secondary-age year groups, disadvantaged pupils are more than twice as likely as other pupils to be educated off-site.
- Among secondary aged pupils, pupils with EHC plans are 12 to 13 times more likely to be educated off-site than pupils with no recorded special educational needs.
- FFT estimate that around 47,000 pupils would have been regularly educated off site in the Spring term.
- Those regularly educated off-site are more likely to be educated off-site than attend the school at which they are enrolled.

Who is losing learning? The case for reducing exclusions across mainstream schools

Who's Losing Learning Coalition

The Who's Losing Learning Coalition, whose steering group members are Impetus, Mission 44, IPPR and The Difference, published a report analysing how much learning is lost due to exclusion.

The report discovered that:

- Suspensions and exclusions increased by over 20 per cent in 2023/24.
- There is a £1.6 billion cost to the state over a lifetime for just a single cohort of permanently excluded children.
- There were 32 million days of learning lost to suspension and unauthorised absence in 2022/23 – up from 19 million pre-pandemic.
- Lost learning is disproportionately experienced by children growing up in poverty, children in contact with social services, children with SEN, children facing a mental health crisis and children experiencing racism.
- 95 per cent of secondary schools are concerned about internal truancy (where children arrive at school but don't attend lessons). Half of secondary teachers surveyed believe this to be an even bigger challenge than absence from school, according to analysis provided by Teacher Tapp for this report.

Five principles for inclusion

Ambition Institute and the Confederation of School Trusts

The Confederation of School Trusts and Ambition Institute convened a series of roundtable discussions on how education can be improved for children with special educational needs.

The conversations resulted in the below five principles, which are expanded upon in the report.

- Dignity, not deficit: difference and disability are normal aspects of humanity – the education of children with SEND should be characterised by dignity and high expectation, not deficit and medicalisation.
- Greater complexity merits greater expertise: all children deserve a high-quality education – where extra support is needed, it should be expert in nature.
- Different, but not apart: encountering difference builds an inclusive society – children with different learning needs should be able to grow up together.
- Success in all its forms: success takes many forms – we should value and celebrate a wide range of achievements, including different ways of participating in society.
- Action at all levels: change happens from the bottom-up as well as top-down – everyone has the agency and a responsibility to act.

An alternative route: post-16 support for young people attending alternative provision

The Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner conducted research, examining why the post-16 outcomes for children in AP are not as good as their peers in mainstream school – with nearly a third of children in AP not sustaining a positive destination after leaving in Year 11.

The research found that:

- Children in AP often have lower levels of self-belief by the time that they arrive in alternative provision.
- Children in AP have often experienced a disrupted education and, if they arrive in AP in Key Stage 4, have very little time to catch up.
- Many children in AP are battling issues in their personal lives, which make it difficult to engage in their education.
- The report called for more to be done to ensure children in AP are given greater opportunities to develop the skills they need for later life, for more wraparound support to be provided for children in AP and for a more sustainable approach to post-16 provision.

Investing in trusted relationships: the economic value of Football Beyond Borders' impact on children's wellbeing

Pro Bono Economics

Pro Bono Economics conducted an impact evaluation for Football Beyond Borders (FBB). The evaluation found that:

- The UK is facing a crisis in children's wellbeing. The life satisfaction of our children has been declining since 2011/12 and an international survey from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development ranked the wellbeing of the UK's children 71st out of 74 participating countries.
- Solutions are needed that can help reverse this trend and having a relationship with a trusted adult has been shown to make a difference. An innovative approach has been taken to robustly measure the impact of the programme on government-recognised measures of wellbeing.
- The average student involved in the programme in 2022/23 benefited from improvements in wellbeing worth around £2,300, based on HM Treasury's approach to valuing wellbeing improvements.
- This means that the programme as a whole delivered more than £5.5 million of benefits to society. This is the equivalent of around £150,000 of benefits per trusted adult practitioner.

The missing link

The Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice commissioned a poll of parents of school-aged children to better understand parental perceptions of absence and of school engagement.

The polling uncovered that:

- Almost three in ten parents (28 per cent) agree that the pandemic has shown it is not essential for children to attend school every day.
- The majority of parents (77 per cent), say they trust their children's school to provide a quality education, however this drops to 70 per cent for low-income households. It also drops to 70 per cent in relation to secondary schools.
- Over a third of parents (35 per cent) said that they are worried about their child's performance and would like more support from school, rising to 42 per cent among low-income households.
- The report called for the creation of a national parental participation strategy, to rebuild the relationship between home and school.

Education, children and violence

Youth Endowment Foundation

The Youth Endowment Foundation published a practice guidance report for school, college and alternative provision leaders on how to reduce children's involvement in violence.

The recommendations in the report included:

- Implement whole-school and targeted behaviour support to reduce the need for exclusion.
- Provide appropriate support for temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children
- Provide one-to-one mentoring by trained adults to support vulnerable children.
- Develop children's social and emotional skills with a universal curriculum, targeted support and whole-school strategies.
- Meet with partners to understand the local context and coordinate your safeguarding response.

Children missing education: the unrolled story

The Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner conducted a further investigation into children missing education. The Commissioner's analysis found that:

- Children who left the state education system and became a child missing education were more likely than other children in state-funded schools to live in deprived neighbourhoods, have a special educational need, have a social, emotional or mental health need, or be known to social care.
- There are significant inconsistencies in the use of the term "children missing education" between local authorities, which can lead to children falling through the gaps.
- Few local authorities take proactive steps to prevent children from going missing from education.
- There is very little one-to-one support available to support children missing education to reintegrate into school after a period of missing education.
- The report called for more action to be taken to prevent children from falling through the gaps and to support children to return to education.

Support for children and young people with special educational needs

National Audit Office

The National Audit Office conducted an assessment of how well the current system is delivering for children and young people with SEN.

Its assessment concluded:

- Although DfE has increased high-needs funding, the system is still not delivering better outcomes for children and young people or preventing local authorities from facing significant financial risks.
- The government has not yet identified a solution to manage local authority deficits arising from SEN costs, and ongoing savings programmes are not designed to address these challenges.
- Given that the current system costs over £10 billion a year, and that demand for SEN provision is forecast to continue increasing, the government needs to think urgently about how its current investment can be better spent, including through more inclusive education, identifying and addressing needs earlier, and developing a whole-system approach to help achieve its objectives.

Alternative provision in local areas in England: a thematic review

Ofsted

Ofsted published its first annual thematic review, which was on AP. The review found that:

- A lack of national standards and a lack of clarity on responsibilities for AP commissioning and oversight are leading to inconsistent and ineffective practice.
- Decisions about placing children in AP are often not rigorous enough, with some AP placements lacking a clear purpose.
- Health, education and care agencies were too often working in silos for children in AP, with little joint oversight of the overall effectiveness of placements.
- Limited specialist provision led to children being placed inappropriately in provision that was not resourced to meet their needs, often for long periods.

The special educational needs of pupils with repeat suspensions

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab examined the special educational needs of young people who experienced repeat suspension.

They found that:

- 80 per cent of pupils aged 11–15 who received 10 or more suspensions up to the end of 2021/22 were identified as having SEN any point in their school career.
- Of these pupils, 57 per cent were identified as having SEN prior to their first suspension, 9 per cent in the same year and 13 per cent following their first suspension. 20 per cent had never been identified as having SEN.
- Almost 39 per cent were identified as having social, emotional and mental health needs as their primary type of SEN.
- Almost 8 per cent of all pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs had been suspended at least 10 times by the end of 2021/22. In comparison, rates for other primary SEN types are all below two per cent.

Hearing feedback, accepting criticism and building a better Ofsted: the response to the Big Listen

Ofsted

During 2024, Ofsted conducted the Big Listen – the largest consultation in Ofsted's history. After the consultation, Ofsted published its response, in which Ofsted committed to:

- Reset its relationship with those who it regulates and inspects, working collaboratively with them to put children and learners first.
- Foster a culture of integrity in which Ofsted always treats people with professionalism, courtesy, empathy and respect.
- Be a learning organisation that operates transparently, listens to challenge and takes action to change.

Outcomes for pupils suspended in primary school

Education Policy Institute

The Education Policy Institute published a research note considering the link between suspension in primary school and outcomes at Key Stage 2.

The research note found that:

- Amongst the cohort of pupils finishing year 6 in 2019, 2.6 per cent of pupils were suspended during primary school.
- Of pupils who experience suspension in primary school, three in five had one or two suspensions.
- On average, suspended pupils left primary school having not met the expected standard in reading and maths.
- Suspended pupils were, on average, approximately 10 months behind their not-suspended peers.

Outcomes for young people who experience multiple suspensions

Education Policy Institute and Impetus

The Education Policy Institute, commissioned by Impetus, published a report examining the relationship between the number of suspensions, or temporary removals from school, in secondary school and outcomes for pupils.

The reports key findings were:

- Young people suspended during secondary school face significantly poorer outcomes than their peers – even years after leaving school.
- Suspended pupils are less likely to pass key GCSEs, attain Level 3 qualifications by age 19, or pursue higher education by age 24.
- They are also more likely to be not in education, employment, or training by age 24 and to rely on out-of-work or health-related benefits.
- Multiple suspensions exacerbate these issues: the more times a pupil is suspended, the higher their risk of poor outcomes.
- Many suspended pupils have additional needs with the research showing that among suspended pupils, many are only identified with having a social, emotional, or mental health need after their first suspension rather than before.
- To improve their long-term prospects, the report called for proactive and early identification of at-risk pupils before suspension becomes necessary.

Early adult outcomes for suspended pupils

Education Policy Institute and Impetus

The Education Policy Institute, commissioned by Impetus, published a report examining adult outcomes for children who were previously suspended at secondary school.

The report found that:

- Outcomes in early adulthood for pupils who are during secondary school suspended are poor, compared to pupils who are not suspended.
- Pupils with multiple suspensions have poorer outcomes in early adulthood and multiple suspensions tend to be cumulatively associated with poor early adult outcomes.
- Pupils suspended ten or more times appear to have just as poor, if not poorer, outcomes compared to those who experience permanent exclusion.
- The report identified a 'suspension employment gap' with young people who are suspended at secondary school experiencing a range of poorer outcomes in late adolescence and early adulthood.

Progress 5: a performance indicator for AP and special schools

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab proposed a new set of measures relating to Key Stage 4 attainment for APs and special schools be produced.

They proposed:

- All regulated qualifications are included in performance measures (including Functional Skills and others) – calling this 'Attainment 5'.
- A new measure called 'Progress 5' which is similar to 'Progress 8', but uses Attainment 5 as the outcome.
- Additionally, Progress 5 compares the scores of pupils in special schools to those of pupils in special schools with similar prior attainment, rather than comparing to those in mainstream schools.
- Progress 5 is also then calculated separately for APs, making it a sector specific measure.

Thinking Differently: a manifesto on how prevention and early intervention can close the gap in children and young people's mental health

Anna Freud

Anna Freud published a manifesto, calling for a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention. The manifesto outlined a five-point plan to support children with mental health:

- Give young people a meaningful say in an expanded approach to prevention.
- Focus on communities.
- Adopt a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Widen our collective understanding of childhood trauma.
- Leverage the power of science and data.

WILD for Meta-Skills: a collaborative research project

WILD Learn

In 2022/23 WILD worked with Nottingham College and NCFE to develop a digital self-evaluation rubric to support students to understand and develop their employability outcomes.

- The rubric was designed to provide formative, feedback which developed students' capacity for self-leadership, learning relationships and thinking skills for complex-problem solving in authentic, work-based contexts.
- The project included developing student friendly language to describe learning behaviours that support systems thinking and problem solving in project-based learning.
- In 2024, NCFE published an evaluation report of the project.

School absence tracker: Spring 2024

The Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice published it's updated School Absence Tracker, analysing the latest available data on school absence.

Their analysis uncovered that, in the spring term of the 2023/24 academic year:

- The number of severely absent pupils has soared by 160.67 per cent since before the pandemic. 157,038 pupils were severely absent from school in Spring 2024, a 161 per cent increase since before the pandemic.
- 1,548,228 pupils were persistently absent in Spring 2024 – the equivalent to one in five pupils and a 68 per cent increase since before the pandemic.
- The overall absence rate in Spring 2024 was 7.25 per cent. This is an increase of 46.98 per cent since before the pandemic.

Tomorrow's teachers: a roadmap to get GenZ into the classroom

Teach First

Teach First commissioned Public First to probe Gen Z's attitudes to careers, particularly in teaching, through polling and focus groups.

Their research found:

- There is a significant pool of Gen Z with initial interest in the teaching profession and think teaching has purpose, but many desire a less linear career and would value professional experiences from different sectors:
- Three quarters (73 per cent) said that teaching was a job that had purpose – the highest of the career options tested.
- Over three fifths (61 per cent) of Gen Z would consider working as a teacher.
- Nearly half (47 per cent) said they would enjoy teaching for a few years, but not their whole career.
- 'Tomorrow's Teachers' sets out a bold new vision for increasing flexibility in the way in which teachers are trained, supported and retained.

Lost in transition: The destinations of children who leave the state education system

The Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner analysed data regarding the number of children who leave the state education system. The analysis found that:

- Between Spring 2021/22 and Spring 2022/23 over 10,000 children left the state education system to destinations unknown to their local authorities.
- In the same period, nearly 3,000 children became a child missing education.
- As part of a number of recommendations, the report called for a more inclusive school system and more high-quality AP.

How many pupils leave school between year 7 and year 11

FFT Education Datalab

FFT Education Datalab updated their previous analysis on how many pupils leave school between Year 7 and Year 11.

They discovered that:

- By the Spring of Year 11, around 7 per cent of the cohorts who reached the end of Key Stage 4 in 2019 and 2023 had left the state-funded mainstream school system.
- There has been a general decline in pupils completing Key Stage 4 at AP schools, but there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils leaving with no destination.
- Pupils who are economically disadvantaged, those with special educational needs, those with a history of exclusion or repeat suspension, and those with lower levels of Key Stage 2 attainment are more likely to have left the mainstream school system or changed school.

Preventing school exclusions: lessons from the front line

RSA

The RSA three-year school inclusion intervention culminated in a report:

- The report summarised the programmes designed and piloted by multi-agency education partners across East Sussex, Oldham, and Worcestershire.
- The focus of the project has been effective collaboration between the diverse agencies working in place to reduce and remove hurdles to inclusive education, and how those partnerships can be made more effective in reducing preventable exclusions.
- The report is accompanied by an external evaluation, designed and authored by independent evaluation partner Vivien Niblett.

IntegratED

info@integrated.org.uk

@IntegratED_ed

2024
Annual Report