

Education Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 27 March 2018

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Permanent Exclusions from Lancashire Schools

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

This reports provides an overview on the current situation around permanent exclusions in Lancashire.

There is a rising trend in permanent exclusions nationally. In Lancashire the number of permanent exclusions in secondary schools has continued to grow across the county, while the number of permanent exclusions from primary schools across Lancashire reduced in the academic year 2016-17 by 35%. The most likely children and young people to be excluded are those with Special Needs, disadvantaged pupils, Children Looked After and Children in Need, our most vulnerable groups.

Recommendation

The Education Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- i. Note and comment on the report
- ii. Consider how to promote inclusion within schools in each district of the county and the adoption of strategies to reduce the number of excluded pupils.
- iii. Consider how inclusion support to primary schools can be maintained and developed across the authority.

Background and Advice

Within a national trend of increased exclusions, Lancashire has some of the highest exclusion figures, from both primary and secondary schools. It is important to note that in some local authorities the statistics may 'mask' the number of exclusions, due to practices that within Lancashire are challenged, i.e. taking pupils off roll and placing in alternative provision without exclusion - which is an illegal or grey exclusion.

Summary: Lancashire

| Academic Year | Primary exclusions | Secondary exclusions | All (including special schools) |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2014-15 | 52 | 192 | 250 |
| 2015-16 | 78 | 222 | 305 |
| 2016-17 (unvalidated) | 49 | 297 | 346 |

Nationally, and in Lancashire, pupils most likely to be excluded are those from vulnerable groups such as SEN, Pupil Premium, Children in Need, Children looked after.

There are a number of factors that are believed to impact on the growing number of exclusions:

- Changes to attainment/assessment measures in primary and secondary phases. Pupils who struggle to meet new national expectations can have a significant impact on whole school results and Ofsted judgements.
- Pressures on school funding are impacting on a school's capability to fund support staff, alternative provision, and additional resources.
- An increase in children and young people who experience trauma, separation and other negative experiences that impact on emotional well-being, mental health and behaviour.
- Financial pressures on support services and NHS can impact on the level and timeliness of support available to schools and families.

Impact of exclusion on a pupil:

- Significant period in alternative provision, and disruption to their education.
- Educational outcomes for pupils who have been permanently excluded are generally poor.
- Excluded pupils are more likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training) and to become involved in criminal activity.

Impact on LA of high exclusions:

- Pressure on alternative provision (Pupil Referral Units) places and capacity.
- Pressure on High Needs School Block.
- Risk to LA Ofsted judgements.

Current Strategies and Impact

Primary

Primary Advice and Support Service (PASS) was launched in June 2016. This is funded by High Needs School Block. Staged support is available to all primary schools.

Impact: Reduction in primary exclusions by 30%.

West Lancashire Primary Inclusion Model

This was launched in September 2016. This is funded by High Needs School Block.

Impact: Zero primary exclusions in West Lancs District.

The planned strategy was to replicate the inclusion model across the county. However this is now at risk due to pressure on School Funding.

Secondary

Work has been carried out to gather views of alternative providers and main stream schools in each area on the current provision, identifying strengths and gaps in provision.

Pilots

There is a need for earlier intervention identified at Key Stage 3, and tracking from Key Stage 2. A pilot programme is being implemented in Fylde and Wyre, in a partnership between the area PRU and mainstream schools.

Identifying Successful Reintegration

Education Psychologists are working with a group of 20 intervention pupils in secondary PRU in the east of the county to identify strategies to improve successful reintegration into their mainstream school.

Next Steps

A task group meeting has been set up, involving Schools Finance, Alternative Provision, School Improvement, schools and SEND to further develop county strategy.

Lancashire's Alternative Provision lead officer is currently a member of an Advisory Group contributing to a project led by the Office of Social Justice, on exclusion and Elective Home Education. This will lead to policy recommendations to the government. Lancashire are also contributing to a review of Alternative Provision being carried out nationally. This includes response to an on line questionnaire, telephone interview and possible visit to the authority.

Alternative Provision is part of the SEND Sufficiency and Suitability Project.

The Education Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and comment on the report, consider how to promote inclusion within schools in each district of the county and the adoption of strategies to reduce the number of excluded pupils and consider how inclusion support to primary schools can be maintained and developed across the authority.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Legal

Failure of the LA to comply with statutory duty to provide suitable education to children who have been permanently excluded.

Equality and Cohesion

Impact on the quality of education and outcomes for excluded children who often come from the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Financial

The High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant is currently under significant pressure, this includes expenditure on Alternative Provision presented within this report. The LA is currently working with schools across all phases to review models of service provision to ensure that services continue to impact on the number of permanent exclusions whilst remaining within available budgets.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

| Paper | Date | Contact/Tel |
|-------|------|-------------|
|-------|------|-------------|

NA

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

NA