

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Tuesday 1 February 2022

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1
2QH

Supplemental Agenda No.1

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Date: 31 January 2022

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 24 January 2022	Meeting Name: Education and Local Economy Scrutiny commission
Report title:		Exclusions and Alternative Provision – Update on implementation of scrutiny recommendations	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Report author(s):		Jenny Brennan, Assistant Director Family Early Help and Youth Justice	

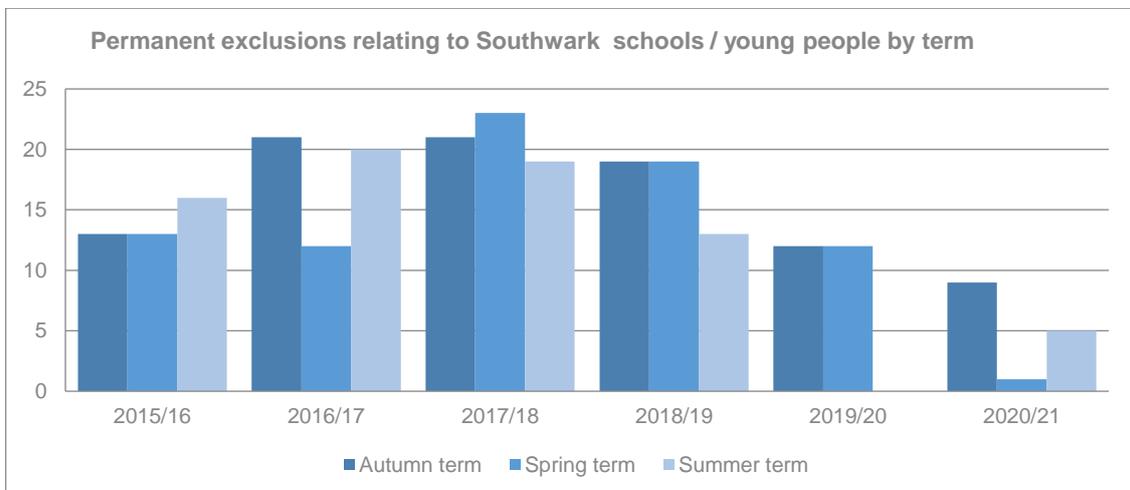
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. In July 2020 the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny commission report on Exclusions and Alternative Provision made 9 recommendations in relation to:
 - 100% inclusion
 - Off-rolling
 - Home Education
 - Alternative Provision
 - Data
 - Regulatory reporting
 - Schools
 - School-Council partnership

UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Following a Keeping Children in Education conference in early 2020 a Task & Finish Group on 100% inclusion was established with Head Teachers, chaired by the Deputy Leader Cllr Jasmine Ali. This has focused on designing an Inclusion Charter, understanding the special needs local and national agenda, and the review report on Southwark Inclusive Learning Service (SILS), our alternative provision.
3. Commitment from Head Teachers has been significantly impacted by Covid 19 and the pressures on schools with the continually changing priorities for school leaders during the last two years.
4. New funding from central government has provided a multi-agency Alternative Provision (AP) Taskforce to be created at SILS with staff seconded from the Youth Offending Service, Family Early Help and CAMHS with additional input from Speech & Language Therapy and an internal Transitions worker. This 2 year pilot will be evaluated and Southwark were one of 20 hotspot areas for violence crime chosen for the additional funding.

5. Additional funding from central government for work to reduce exclusions from Southwark Schools was announced in December 2021 for the top 10 serious violence hotspot areas to set up a **SAFE (Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed) Taskforce** which will be led by schools to deliver evidenced based interventions to support young people with challenging behaviour enabling them to attend school regularly so they can fulfil their potential and exceed their expectations.
6. The Task & Finish Group developing the Inclusion Charter is due to meet next on on 3rd February 2022. The agenda includes a presentation from the DfE on the SAFE Taskforce to engage schools in the delivery of the program, as well as updates about the AP Taskforce, Social Worker in Schools program and Mental Health Support Teams in Schools.
7. This engagement work with schools, and development of the “Team Around the School” approach is an ongoing response to the commission recommendations.
8. The exclusion data continues to show an increasing trend of inclusion. The latest published DfE data for school year 2020/21 shows the overall rate of permanent exclusion for Southwark is 0.02 compared to the Inner London rate of 0.04 and national rate of 0.06.
9. In terms of numbers of children permanently excluded from Southwark schools this reached a peak of 51 in the 17/18 academic year and reduced to 39 (18/19), 10 (19/20) and local census data indicates the number is 13 in 20/21 (not yet published by Department of Education). The closing of schools and attendance of children has obviously been impacted by Covid and this may be reflected in these numbers.
10. The table below shows the decline in numbers of all children permanently excluded per term from Southwark schools or where Southwark children attended out of borough schools. Note there was no data required from schools for summer term 19/20, and 20/21 data is from census only not Department of Education published.



11. Disproportionality continues to be included in the data analysis and there is growing concern about an increased proportion of young women being permanently excluded. In 2021 this rose to 67% from its usual 16 – 30%. Noting these are low numbers and relates to a total of 10 girls and 5 boys.

12. Rates of minority ethnic pupil permanent exclusion from secondary school continue to decline

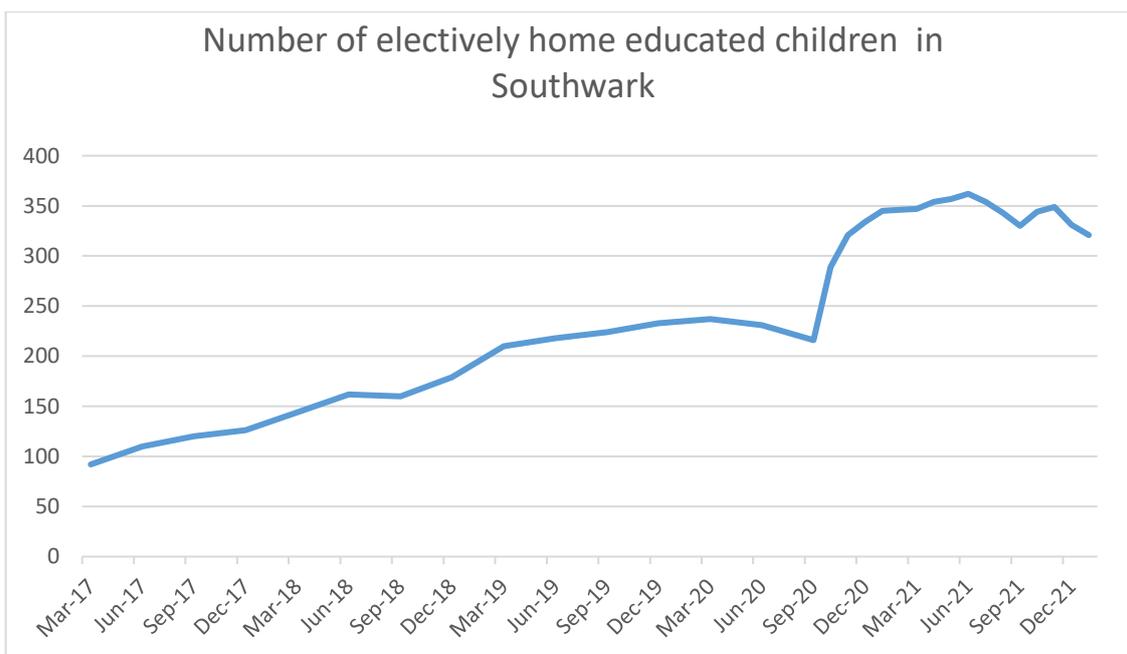
Rates of Minority Ethnic Pupil permanent exclusions from secondary schools						
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	DoT (last year)
Southwark rate	0.14	0.25	0.31	0.18	0.04	▼
National rate	0.17	0.19	0.19	0.17	0.10	▼
Comparison with national	▼	▲	▲	▲	▼	

13. Further analysis of group ethnicity data shows rates for children of mixed ethnicity for 19/20 are 2.3 times higher than those of White children, and rates for Black children lower.

Rates of permanent exclusions per ethnicity group in Southwark, compared to the national rate							
Ethnicity	Rate of PEX in Southwark secondary schools					National rate	Comparison
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2019/20	
Asian	0.22	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	▼
Black	0.16	0.28	0.35	0.24	0.04	0.13	▼
Mixed	0.14	0.17	0.53	0.20	0.14	0.18	▼
White	0.14	0.21	0.18	0.26	0.06	0.13	▼
Minority Ethnic	0.14	0.25	0.31	0.18	0.04	0.10	▼

14. Analysis of the ethnicity group data shows that the rate of exclusion for White and Black Caribbean children is almost six times higher than the rate for White British Children (0.51 compared to 0.09)
15. Monitoring of data on SEND pupils shows a positive position in regards to reducing numbers with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans being excluded but an increasing rate of those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support. The SAFE and AP Taskforces will be a means to ensuring children needing extra support receive effective and appropriate interventions.
16. In order to understand the reasons behind this disproportionality the Council has supported a successful bid by The Nest for funding to work with parents of mixed heritage children who are at risk of exclusion from school. A forum for work with girls and linked issues of engagement in violence and vulnerability is planned for March 2022.
17. Analysis of the latest publication of school suspensions is currently underway to understand the latest trends, areas for concern and resource allocation.
18. The Council continues to audit the compliance of schools in informing the Council when removing children from their school role with a valid reason, failure to do so being a potential indicator of 'off rolling'.
19. The 2021 audit found that in most schools the practice of informing the Council of children being removed from the register is now routine. Where there were children who had left the school without notification being received, the schools were challenged to provide details.
20. The increasing Ofsted focus on off-rolling has included checking details with the Council, making any poor practice in this area a very high risk for school as likely to result in a judgement of inadequate or requires improvement. No findings of off-rolling have been made by Ofsted in Southwark schools.

21. There was a sharp rise in the number of electively home educated children during the first year of the pandemic. Numbers rose from 237 in March 2020 to a peak of 362 in June 2021. Since then numbers have reduced slightly to 321 children (January 2022).
22. Southwark contributed to the Association of Directors of Children's Services 2022 survey of home education which found a similar national trend and led ADCS to renew its call for the Department of Education to publish the outcome of its 2019 consultation which proposed duties on Councils to maintain a register of children who are electively home educated and to provide support to parents who educate their children at home. Southwark has expanded its team offering advice and support to home educated children and is currently reviewing its policy and procedures in this area.



23. All parents are contacted at the point they withdraw their children from school and asked for their reasons. During 2020 and 2021 the most common reasons given were concerns around Covid 19 and 'lifestyle choice', the latter reflecting choices made by parents who may have tried out home schooling during partial school closures and decided to continue with it. There was no evidence of parents in this period being encouraged by schools to withdraw children.