

Creating a Continuum of Provision to support high needs pupils

EVALUATION REPORT DECEMBER 2021

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Glossary of abbreviations

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AP	Alternative Provision
BSIB	Blackpool School Improvement Board
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Continuum of Provision
DfE	Department for Education
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EHE	Elective Home Education
FSM	Free School Meals
FT	Fixed-Term (exclusion/suspension)
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
HNB	High Needs Block
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
IDL	International Dyslexia Learning
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
IYFA	In Year Fair Access
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS4	Key Stage 4
LA	Local Authority
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
NGRT	New Group Reading Test
NLP	Neuro-Linguistic Programming
OA	Opportunity Area
PAN	Published Admissions Number
PASS	Pupil Attitude to Self and School
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner

SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SLCN	Speech Language and Communication Needs
TAS	Team Around the School
TOWRE	Test of Word Reading Efficiency
YARC	York Assessment of Reading Comprehension

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education or Blackpool Council.

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Executive Summary

Background

The Continuum of Provision (COP) project aimed to develop a collaborative approach between the Local Authority (LA), the Opportunity Area and Blackpool's eight secondary academies to reduce high rates of pupil movement through permanent and fixed-term exclusions, and to improve in-year admissions. The project sought to build capacity in the local school system to develop and commission inclusive practices and to improve processes for In Year Fair Access (IYFA). The project was jointly funded by the Blackpool Opportunity Area (OA) Programme and the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant via the local authority.

The objectives of the Continuum of Provision project were to:

- ensure leaders of Blackpool's secondary schools collaborate to enable reasonable, prompt, and equitable placement of young people without school places into suitable secondary schools.
- improve secondary schools' capacity and capability to successfully support young people's continuing participation in mainstream and, where appropriate, alternative provision education.

Evaluation

An independent evaluation of the COP project was undertaken between May and September 2021. A mixed-method design addressed three core evaluation questions:

- To what extent have In-Year transfer procedures accelerated the integration of high needs pupils who are new to the town and/or previously permanently excluded?
- What is the impact of the introduction of whole school approaches to inclusion?
- What is young people's experience of re-integration to mainstream classes?

The evaluation report draws on multiple data sources including interviews with post holders responsible for the strategic and operational delivery of the project, analysis of pupil movement data in Blackpool secondary academies pre- and post-2018, a review of COP project documents, and interviews and Q-methodology with eighteen young people receiving in-school support to reduce the risk of exclusion. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-four key informants in the following roles: Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Chief Executive Officers/Executive Director Education, Headteachers/Executive headteacher, Deputy headteachers, school inclusion/behaviour leads, and Council officers and Pupil Referral Unit staff.

Key findings

Pupil Movement

Patterns of pupil movement shifted during the lifespan of the COP project (Section 3.1). Rates of permanent exclusion fell sharply in six academies. However, the rate of fixed-term exclusion (suspension) and days lost through fixed-term exclusion fell in just two of the eight schools. In addition, the length of time young people without a

school place were on the Out of School Register (OOSR) rose significantly.¹ Elective Home Education spiked during the academic year 2019/20. In assessing progress, it is important to note that pupil mobility patterns were affected by school and office closures to contain the UK Coronavirus outbreak from 23 March 2020.

Analysis of pupil movement over time by pupil characteristic (pre-Covid) confirms a disproportionate number of the most vulnerable learners experience disrupted trajectories. Pupils with experience of exclusion in Blackpool are more likely than their peers to be eligible for free school meals (FSM), have experience of poverty and identified additional learning needs (SEND, SLCN) (Blackpool Council, 2021). The marked persistence and intersection of multiple vulnerabilities confirms that young people most at risk of school exclusion, and subsequent social exclusion, have complex needs.

There are a number of blind spots in extant data that require attention to develop a better understanding of pupil movement and continuity of pupil experience in the Blackpool area. These concern transparency and consistency of records for managed moves and on-roll alternative provision.

Use of Data and Assessment Tools

A key outcome of the project is growing awareness among senior leaders of the relationship between behaviour and unrecognised/unmet social, emotional and learning needs (Section 3.2). The COP project promoted better use of data and assessment tools to screen pupils, supporting bespoke responses to identified need. A number of the schools have developed graduated models of in-school, on-roll alternative provision, and have invested in training and specialist support around childhood trauma, and adolescent mental health and wellbeing. Social segregation within school can also be a marginalising action and therefore some schools have taken care to valorise alternative pathways and learning spaces in both the curriculum and school estate. As the models develop, further work is needed on the degree of fluidity between graduated responses and to share practices that have promise in supporting successful re-integration. The extent of co-production of local strategies with parents/carers and with young people could be developed further. A children's rights and capabilities approach that extends participation beyond professionals would strengthen interventions designed to aid re-integration.

High Quality Teaching

All schools participating in the project acknowledge the importance of high-quality teaching for disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs. Supporting vulnerable pupils well requires curriculum and teacher development. In general, this entails attracting and retaining teachers equipped to thrive in high needs settings, and attending to Initial Teacher Education (ITE), induction, and early career support when the learning curve is steepest, as well as providing promotion pathways and leadership opportunities for skilled practitioners who elect to specialise in high needs support and inclusion. In particular, the COP project has signalled a need to develop practitioners' awareness and skills in supporting children and young

¹ The Out of School Register records the number of children and young people resident in Blackpool who are awaiting a place at a Blackpool school.

people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), specifically receptive language skills, expressive language skills and social communication skills.

Collaboration

Overall, the COP project promoted place-based professional collaboration between schools, MATs and the local authority (Section 3.3). Senior figures within the five MATs to which the academies belong have engaged fully in the project and most school leaders attend secondary headteacher meetings to strengthen local cooperation across the town. Commitment to addressing complex needs also requires sustained multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration. Tackling inequity in education demands quality partnership work with children's social care and related health and welfare agencies. In sum, the COP project illustrates the contribution of a locality model in providing connectedness and coordination across settings. Emerging findings demonstrate that adequately resourced local cooperation has the potential to promote innovation and greater equity for high needs pupils within a decentralised system.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project: Blackpool Opportunity Area

In October 2016, the Education Secretary announced plans for 12 Opportunity Areas to raise education standards and broaden the horizons of young people in areas struggling with social mobility.² Each Opportunity Area (OA) - identified as social mobility 'cold spots' (with both poor social mobility and schools that face challenges) - received a share of £72 million to boost opportunities for young people in their communities over a three-year period initially, later extended to five years.

1.2 Context and background data

Data shows that there are higher risks of exclusion (fixed term and permanent) and absenteeism (particularly persistent) at Blackpool secondary schools than at primary, with a number of pupils becoming disengaged early on in their secondary careers. Between September 2014 and May 2019, 228 pupils were permanently excluded from Blackpool secondary schools. This is approximately twice the rate of permanent exclusions compared to neighbouring authorities and four times the national rate of permanent exclusions. While arrangements for in-year access to mainstream secondary schools were in place in 2019, there was a high reliance on the Authority's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to take newcomers and mainstream admissions were not always successful. The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) numbers on 2 May 2019 were 283. During the 2018/19 academic year (to May 2019), there were a total of 44 permanent exclusions and 54 re-integrations via the In Year Fair Access (IYFA) Panel. In the same period, 73 pupils transferred to Elective Home Education. In Blackpool the Local Authority has control over the allocation of places through IYFA. The proportion of pupils in Alternative Provision (AP) is higher in Blackpool than in other local authorities. There are a variety of reasons for this, but evidence suggests:

- Large numbers of pupils with high needs move into Blackpool each year.
- There have been higher than average levels of permanent exclusions by some Blackpool academies over an extended period.
- There has been limited reintegration of pupils from AP into Blackpool mainstream academies.

1.3 The Continuum of Provision project

In the years preceding the COP project, high levels of permanent and fixed term exclusions were placing considerable pressure on Blackpool Council (the Local Authority (LA)) and its High Needs Block (HNB) budget. In 2019, the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the Trusts committed to working collegiately with each other and the LA and OA, and developed the Continuum of Provision (COP) project to: prepare the ground for Alternative Provision (AP) devolution; inject capacity into the school system to develop and commission inclusive practices; and support the LA in improving processes for In Year Fair Access (IYFA).

The COP project's objectives are to:

² Department for Education (DfE) (2017) [Unlocking talent, fulfilling potential: a plan for improving social mobility through education](#). [Command paper 9541]

- ensure leaders of Blackpool's secondary schools collaborate to enable reasonable, prompt, and equitable placement of young people without school places into suitable secondary schools.
- improve secondary schools' capacity and capability to successfully support young people's continuing participation in mainstream and, where appropriate, alternative provision education.³

1.4 Funding & monitoring

The COP project was jointly funded by the Blackpool OA Programme and the High Needs Block, via the Local Authority (LA) school forum at a cost of £1,081,108 per annum. In each year, the LA contributed £593,000 from the HNB; and Blackpool OA contributed £488,108. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) was put in place to confirm match funding arrangements. Under the SLA, where an academy exceeds one permanent exclusion in a term, three in total for the academic year they are held responsible for commissioning a place in alternative provision for the additional permanently excluded pupils. In one Academy Trust (with the largest number of secondary schools in the town) exclusions were considered across the Trust, rather than per school. During the COP project, where permanent exclusions exceeded the agreed project targets, commissioning costs of £10,000 per pupil was held back from OA funding to schools. This was to pay for places at the Pupil Referral Unit.

Baseline data for 2018/19 (reasons for all pupils leaving Blackpool secondary academies, by academy) was shared among participating schools, and monitored against key performance indicators (KPIs) through 2019/20 and 2020/21. Two monitoring meetings per school per term were attended by the headteacher, COP project lead and the Blackpool Opportunity Area lead.

1.5 Structure of the Report

The following section, Part 2, outlines the evaluation design, guiding questions and methodological approach, including some limitations. The key findings are presented in Part 3. These are organised in three areas that align with the evaluation questions: 3.1 outcomes for pupil mobility (secondary quantitative data analysis); 3.2 school strategies to promote inclusion (interviews, pupil case studies, Q-methodology); and 3.3 project implementation (interviews and document review). Part 4 concludes the report with key messages and recommendations.

³ Blackpool Opportunity Area Programme Office (28 November 2019) Blackpool Opportunity Area. Creating a Continuum of Provision to Support High Needs Pupils. Project Initiation Document.

2 Evaluation approach

Following a procurement exercise, on 27 February 2020 Manchester Metropolitan University was awarded the contract to undertake an independent evaluation of the Continuum of Provision Project (COP). The evaluation commenced in May 2021 and was completed in September 2021 (five months duration).

The evaluation considered how the COP programme operated (process) and what it accomplished (outcomes). A process evaluation was conducted drawing on COP project documentation, monitoring records, and semi-structured interviews with key informants. Secondary sources included school COP project logic models, behaviour review reports and, in some cases, school policies e.g., revised behaviour policies. Due to the disruption to education arising from the coronavirus pandemic, a fully remote model of engagement was applied.

2.1 Evaluation questions

A mixed method evaluation design was used to address three core evaluation questions. In addressing these questions, the evaluation considered the impact on schools of the Covid-19 pandemic (Section 3.3.4 Sustainability):

- To what extent have In-Year transfer procedures accelerated the integration of high needs pupils new to the town and previously permanently excluded?
- What is the impact of the introduction of whole school approaches⁴ to inclusion?
- What is young people's experience of re-integration to mainstream classes?

2.2 Quantitative data: pupil movement

The evaluation team worked closely with Blackpool Council Business Intelligence and School Organisation and Admissions Teams to access and review school-level outcome-related and monitoring data: number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions, moves to elective home education (EHE), number admitted/retained via IYFA, number on the OOSR awaiting a place at a Blackpool school. Topline findings for pupil mobility (leavers) for the period 2016-2020 are reported in Section 3.1, figures 1-7 (n.b. one school opened in 2018). Rates are shown in relation to the size of the respective school population (per 100 pupils). Referrals to secondary academies through the IYFA process are presented for 2019/20 and 2020/21. Local Authority comparator data on annual exclusion rates, 2016-2020, was extracted from the DfE Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England National Statistics release.⁵

2.3 Quantitative data: Q-methodology

Q-Methodology (i.e., a card sorting technique and factor analysis deployed to understand subjective viewpoints) was used to explicate positive practices that support the successful reintegration of young people to mainstream classes. The Q-statements (25 card deck) was informed by the staff and pupil interviews (see 2.3)

⁴ Whole school approaches involve all parts of the school and extend responsibility for inclusion to every member of the school staff.

⁵ [Academic Year 2019/20, Permanent exclusions, and suspensions in England](#), published 29 July 2021.

and extant research on effective approaches to re-integration.⁶ Eighteen young people from Years 8 to 11 in three secondary academies completed the Q-sort online, with additional written explanation for their choices, between July and September 2021 (See Appendix 2 for Q statements).

2.4 Qualitative data: interviews

Twenty-four key informant interviews with education professionals were conducted virtually, between May 2021 and July 2021. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 70 minutes duration and were recorded for transcription with the consent of participants. Interview transcripts were coded thematically. The range of interviewee roles is outlined in Table 1. Senior leaders in each of the five MATs and 7 of the 8 secondary academies in Blackpool participated in the evaluation. Participation in five academies included the headteacher and deputy headteacher/ inclusion or behaviour leads.

Table 1 Evaluation participants

Key informant role	Total
Multi-Academy Trust Chief Executive Officer or Executive Director Education	5
Headteacher/Principal or Executive headteacher	8
Deputy headteacher/Assistant Principal	5
Council officer/OA lead	2
School inclusion/behaviour lead	2
Pupil Referral Unit leads	2
Total	24

2.5 Qualitative data: case studies

Three vignettes (Section 3.2, figures 9, 10 and 11) were produced after interviews with support staff and five secondary pupils with experience of bespoke support provided through the Continuum of Provision initiative in three academies to illustrate the range of approaches to inclusion and the impact of these on pupil experience. Remote interviews lasting between 15 and 30 minutes were carried out via Microsoft Teams in the presence of a teacher or teaching assistant. Two pupils were interviewed individually and three interviewed together (at their request). The interviews were semi-structured, and the pupils were encouraged to expand on their answers. The pupil names used in the vignettes are pseudonyms.

2.6 Limitations of the evaluation approach

The triangulation of multiple data sources and perspectives adds to the credibility of the evaluation findings. However, there are several considerations when appraising the robustness of the data and approach used in this evaluation.

As all eight secondary academies in the town participated in the programme there is no comparison or control group (at school-level) within the local authority. Baseline data for pupil mobility in 2018 are therefore compared with annual rates before and after programme implementation. Exclusion rates in Blackpool are compared with a comparator Local Authority selected for size, demographic and socio-economic

⁶ Graham, B., White, C., Edwards, A., Potter, S. & Street, C. (2019) School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain children. London: Department for Education.

profile (Knowsley) and a neighbouring Authority with cross-border pupil mobility (Lancashire).

Interview data is derived from self-report and requires participants to reflect on engagement over a two-year period. Opportunities for primary data gathering were restricted due to pressures on senior staff in schools and Trusts, and the concurrent evaluation of different OA initiatives. A range of secondary sources (project documentation) were used as evidence-based prompts to focus reflection. Fieldwork visits to schools were not possible during the summer term of 2021. Access to in-school AP through observation and learning walks would enhance the evaluation. Access to pupils was restricted due to high levels of absence (through isolation).

The evaluation uses de-identified pupil mobility data collected and shared by the Council. This data was not generated by the purposes of the evaluation but was collected as part of the local authority's obligation for monitoring school admissions and attendance.⁷ The validity of the data assumes consistent use of attendance, absence, and transfer codes (e.g., how managed moves are recorded) and is affected by changes to the way information is recorded over time (and between data entry operators). Coverage over a longer period is limited by data retention regulation. The team worked closely with Business Intelligence officers to generate a new dataset to address the evaluation questions.

While pupil exclusion rates fell in 2019/20, caution should be taken when comparing figures across years. Solo causal attribution is not possible given the social complexity of the problem and possible alternative explanations which include recurring school closures and high levels of pupil absence (self-isolation) due to Covid-19 from March 2020. Multiple OA projects operating in the same space and contextual factors such as the prior commitment, knowledge and capacity of the participating school are likely contributing factors. The COP evaluation shows an effect but not direct causality and can be assessed at Level 2 of the Nesta (2013) Standards of Evidence.⁸

The COP project supported schools to develop in-house AP with plans for sustainability. A time-limited evaluation, however, cannot provide firm evidence of the lasting impact of an initiative. Periodic monitoring of agreed key indicators and further contact with participants would provide insights into the longevity of initial effects. Comparative case studies conducted over time would enable greater insights into how context influences the success of strategies to promote inclusion for high needs pupils. More time is needed to establish the scale and durability of project outcomes both in terms of school-level trends and outcomes/destinations for pupils engaged with COP supported activities. Given the high social and educational costs of exclusion, a longitudinal design has merit.

⁷ Department for Education (2020) [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#).

⁸ Puttick, R. & Ludlow, J. (2013) [Standards of Evidence](#). London: Nesta.

3 Findings

3.1 Pupil movement

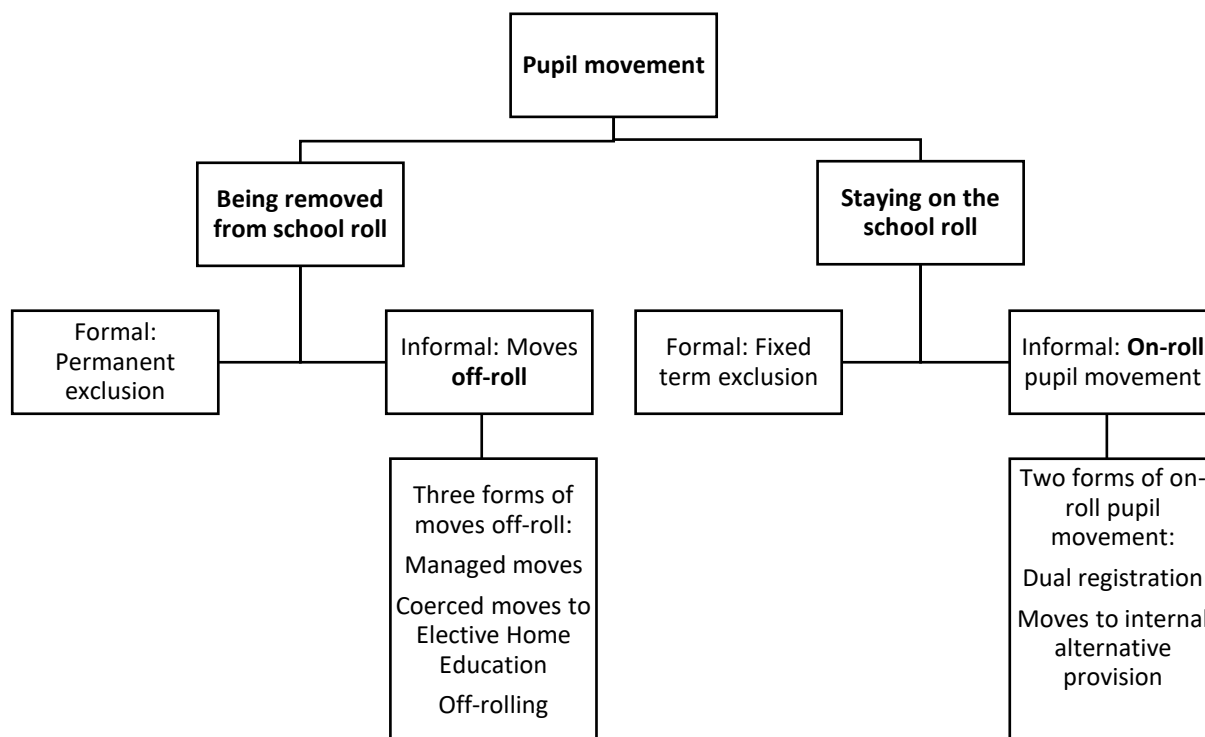
Summary

- Rates of permanent exclusion and referrals to the LA PRU (per 100 pupils) have fallen in all but one of the schools between 2016 and 2020, and particularly since the launch of the COP project.
- Rates of fixed-term exclusion (not limited via the COP Service Level Agreement) and number of days lost through fixed-term exclusion fell in just two of the eight schools.
- Rates for elective home education (EHE) peaked in 2018, plateaued at the start of the COP project and are rising again post-pandemic, in line with the national trajectory.
- Local authority patterns of exclusion by pupil characteristic are generally consistent with national trends. More boys than girls receive a permanent or fixed-term exclusion. Exclusion rates peak around Years 9 and 10.
- A very high number of pupils who are excluded have additional support needs. Between 2016/17 and 2019/20, a clear majority of permanently excluded pupils, 141 out of 170 (83%), were designated as SEN.
- Eighty-seven of the 170 secondary pupils permanently excluded between 2016/17 and 2019/20 were eligible for Free School Schools (51%).
- Initial referrals to secondary academies through IYFA during 2019/20 were fairly evenly distributed, but a high withdrawal rate (over 58%) threatens equity in admissions through IYFA.
- Using available secondary data, it is not possible to determine with a high degree of accuracy how many pupils have undergone a managed move between Blackpool secondary academies due to variability in recording.
- The number of children on the Out-of-School Register decreased during 2019 and 2020, as migration was affected by the pandemic. However, the length of time children spent without a school place increased as school transfers were not taking place.

This report addresses six forms of pupil movement: fixed-term and permanent exclusion, managed moves, transfer to elective Home Education (EHE) and off-site and in-school alternative provision.⁹ Types of pupil movement across schools in England are summarised in Figure 1 (overleaf).

⁹ See Glossary for a definition of terms used in this Report.

Figure 1. Off and on-roll pupil movement



Source: IntegratEd (2020) *Annual report: Fewer exclusions. Better alternative provision*, p.20.

3.1.1 Permanent exclusions and suspensions by geography

Caution should be exercised when making comparisons between years due to the impact of school closures from 23 March 2020. Nationally the rate of permanent exclusions in England decreased from 0.10 in 2018/19 to 0.06 in 2019/20.¹⁰ Similarly, the rate of suspensions decreased from 5.36 in 2018/19 to 3.76 in 2019/20.¹¹ However, during the Autumn term 2019 there were 3,200 permanent exclusions in 2019/20 (up 5% from 2018/19) and 178,400 suspensions (up 14%).

Exclusion and suspension rates were escalating year-on-year in Blackpool before the 2019/20 school year (Table 2). While the annual rates fall sharply in 2019/20, it should be noted that rates also fell in the selected comparator local authorities that were not part of an Opportunity Area. The permanent exclusion rate in Blackpool secondaries fell from 0.82 in 2018/19 to 0.20 in 2019/20. Eleven of the 14 permanent exclusions made by Blackpool secondary academies during 2019/20 were actioned in the Autumn term 2019 before the national lockdown (Table 3).

¹⁰ The permanent exclusion rate is the number of permanent exclusions as a proportion of the overall school population in an academic year.

¹¹ The suspension rate is the number of suspensions as a proportion of the overall school population in an academic year.

Table 2. Permanent exclusions and suspensions for state-funded secondaries in Blackpool, Knowsley, and Lancashire between 2016/17 and 2019/20

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Blackpool	Headcount ¹²	6,723	6,594	6,813	7,023
	Number of secondary schools	7	7	8	8
	Permanent exclusions	40	42	56	14
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.59	0.64	0.82	0.20
	Pupil enrolments with one or more suspension	632	568	715	478
	Pupil enrolments with one or more suspension (rate)	9.40	8.61	10.49	6.81
	Suspension (rate)	19.17	19.41	29.63	15.65
	Suspensions	1,289	1,280	2,019	1,099
Knowsley	Headcount	5,093	5,262	5,408	5,557
	Number of secondary schools	6	6	6	6
	Permanent exclusions	10	9	19	9
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.20	0.17	0.35	0.16
	Pupil enrolments with one or more suspension	490	412	373	350
	Pupil enrolments with one or more suspension (rate)	9.62	7.83	6.90	6.30
	Suspension (rate)	20.48	13.70	12.78	11.59
	Suspensions	1,043	721	691	644
Lancashire	Headcount	66,384	67,077	67,962	69,464
	Number of secondary schools	85	86	85	83
	Permanent exclusions	298	279	299	139
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.45	0.42	0.44	0.20
	Pupil enrolments with one or more suspension	3,135	3,102	3,542	2,500
	Pupil enrolments with one or more suspension (rate)	4.72	4.62	5.21	3.60
	Suspension (rate)	8.93	8.59	10.47	6.41
	Suspensions	5,926	5,762	7,117	4,451

Table 3. Exclusions and suspensions for state-funded secondaries in Blackpool, Knowsley, and Lancashire for 2019/20 Autumn Term

		2019/20 Autumn Term
Blackpool	Headcount	7,023
	Number of schools	8
	Permanent exclusions	11
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.16
	Suspension (rate)	9.17
	Suspensions	644
Knowsley	Headcount	5,557
	Number of schools	6
	Permanent exclusions	6

¹² Headcount figures given correspond to the headcount in Spring term each year, and therefore rates for Autumn and Summer terms are calculated based on exclusions and suspensions in those terms, but as a proportion of the spring headcount.

	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.11
	Suspension (rate)	6.66
	Suspensions	370
Lancashire	Headcount	69,464
	Number of schools	83
	Permanent exclusions	98
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.14
	Suspension (rate)	3.44
	Suspensions	2,392

3.1.2 Exclusions, EHE and PRU referral at school level

The number of fixed-term (FT) exclusions/suspensions peaked in 2018 for schools A, B, C, D and E (Table 4). Schools C and D have significantly decreased the number of FT exclusions to 6 and 7 respectively. In school H, the number of FT exclusions was at its highest in the 2020 school year despite closures due to Covid-19. School E had lower numbers of permanent exclusions before 2018 and has not demonstrated any decrease since the introduction of the COP programme. Rates of FT exclusion at School G are rising as the school grows and increased almost four-fold between 2019 and 2020 despite the school closures.

Table 4. Fixed-term exclusions per school, 2016-2020

	Number of fixed term exclusions per school							
Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2016	94	302	65	85	84	446		159
2017	80	202	91	73	126	521		173
2018	115	349	584	125	145	488	7	195
2019	69	326	80	103	144	207	23	118
2020	91	165	6	7	143	279	87	254

Analysis of the days lost due to fixed-term exclusions (Table 5) reveals mixed findings. The highest number of days lost for schools A, C, D and E was during the 2018 academic year. Significant decreases can be seen in schools C and D; of note is school C where the number of days lost decreased from 1243.5 in 2018 to just 7.5 in 2020. Despite the introduction of the COP initiatives and the effects of Covid-19 in 2019/2020, school E maintains consistent numbers of both days lost and number of children excluded whilst the numbers in schools A, B, F and G continue to fluctuate. The increase in school G is comparatively higher than the other schools.

Table 5. Number of days lost due to fixed-term exclusions per school, 2016-2020

	Number of days lost due to fixed-term exclusions per school (number of children)							
Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2016	324.5 (49)	868 (142)	295.5 (39)	237 (54)	333.0 (45)	786.5 (191)		551.5 (95)
2017	315 (42)	276.5 (95)	270 (52)	193 (38)	322.5 (62)	666.5 (178)		515.5 (93)
2018	494.5 (47)	467 (119)	1243.5 (170)	250 (67)	382.5 (61)	689 (133)	8 (3)	474.5 (107)
2019	192 (44)	405 (99)	127.5 (46)	232.5 (58)	348.5 (62)	252 (76)	46.5 (15)	243 (71)
2020	296 (49)	246 (79)	7.5 (6)	13.5 (7)	345.5 (59)	451.5 (101)	188 (41)	409.5 (133)

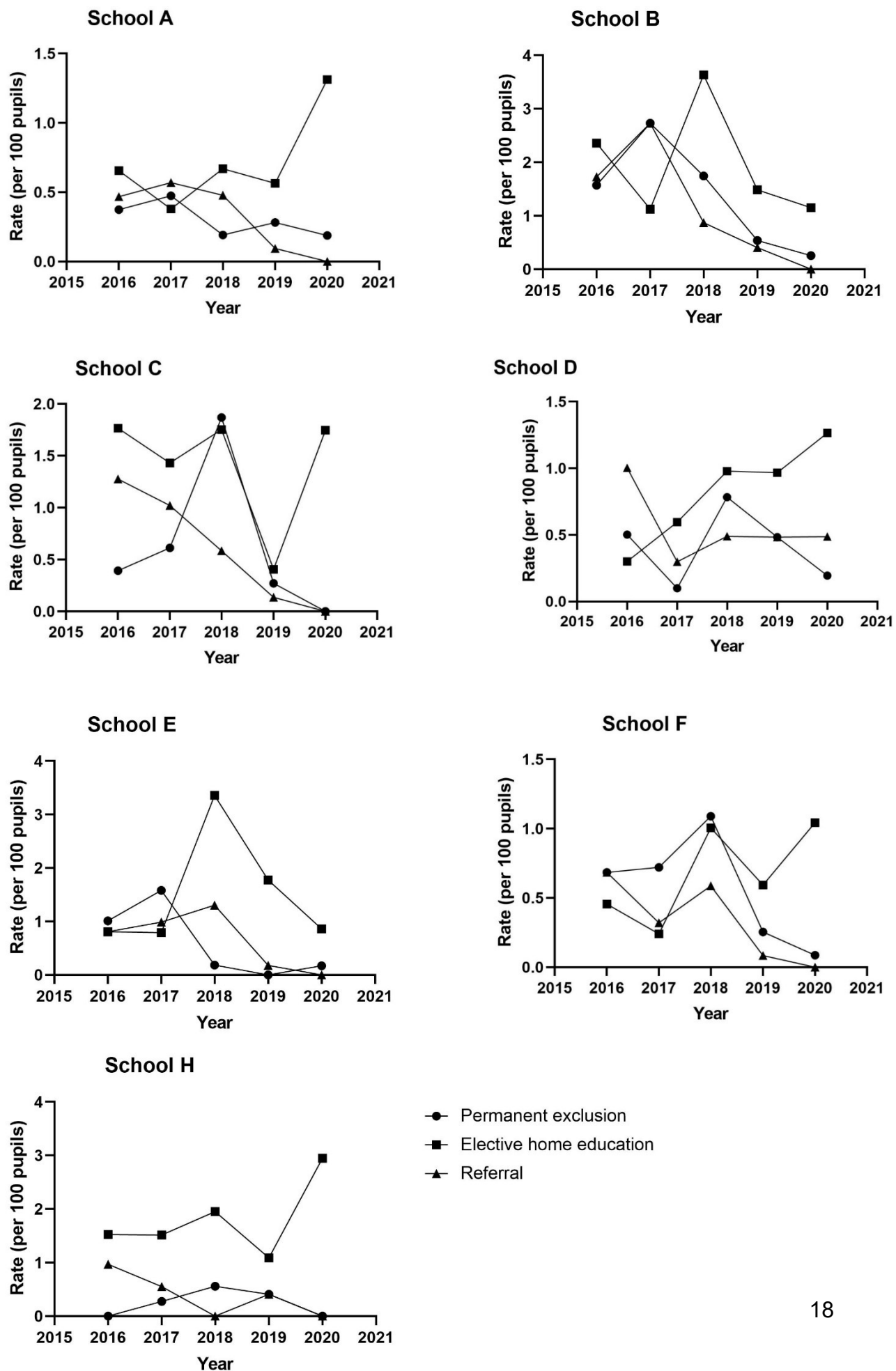
Comparisons against the project baseline year of 2018 show rates of permanent exclusion have fallen in Blackpool's secondary academies (Table 6). Reductions in permanent exclusion are most marked in Schools B, C and F.

Table 6. Permanent exclusions per school, 2016-2020

	Number of permanent exclusions (rate per 100 pupils)							
Year	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F	School G	School H
2016	4 (0.37)	10 (1.57)	4 (0.39)	5 (0.5)	5 (1.01)	9 (0.68)		0 (0)
2017	5 (0.47)	17 (2.73)	6 (0.61)	1 (0.01)	8 (1.58)	9 (0.72)		2 (0.28)
2018	2 (0.19)	12 (1.74)	16 (1.87)	8 (0.78)	1 (0.19)	13 (1.09)	0 (0)	4 (0.56)
2019	3 (0.28)	4 (0.54)	2 (0.27)	5 (0.48)	0 (0)	3 (0.25)	0 (0)	3 (0.41)
2020	2 (0.19)	2 (0.26)	0 (0)	2 (0.19)	1 (0.17)	1 (0.09)	1 (0.21)	0 (0)

Figure 2 shows the rates per school for three types of pupil moves: permanent exclusion, elective home education (EHE) and referrals to the LA PRU. By 2020, the rates of permanent exclusion and referrals to PRUs (per 100 pupils) had fallen in all schools (except School D, which has referrals at just under 5% for the past three years).

Figure 2. Permanent Exclusion, EHE & PRU Referrals, 216-2020



Since 2016, 358 secondary school pupils have been withdrawn from school to be electively home educated (202 female and 156 male). Eighty-seven (87) of these were categorised as in need of SEN support (24%).¹³ The numbers moving to EHE have decreased since the start of the COP evaluation but rose again in 2020. Of the 86 leaving for EHE in 2020/21, the number that stated Covid as a reason for withdrawal was 67 (78%). Not all the schools followed this pattern however and the absence of a rise in EHE at Schools B and E may be due to the demographics of their intake e.g., parents who may not feel confident to home educate. Generally, the reason stated for withdrawing pupils is 'parental choice' although since 2016, 100 parents declared 'other' as a reason. Prior to the start of the COP, the local authority had only 0.4 FTE staff to monitor these pupils for educational provision and safeguarding. COP funding has enabled recruitment of 2.0 FTE staff.

Schools B and E have similar rates of EHE. In 2018, 25 pupils were withdrawn from School B to be electively home educated (EHE) and 18 were withdrawn from School E. The rates in these two schools around the start of the COP were far greater than the other schools (note differing y-axis to scales on below figures). The peak in 2018 corresponds with a large decrease in the number of permanent exclusions. Since then, there have been very low numbers of permanent exclusions and referrals to the PRU. The home education rates are steadily declining in both schools, which is contrary to the increase nationally (especially since the first Covid-19 lockdown).

In 2018 School F also had a large increase (from 3 to 12) in pupils being withdrawn for EHE. This preceded the drop in permanent exclusions and referrals. There were significant decreases in all three reasons for leaving in 2019. (The increase in 2020 is most likely due to Covid-19).¹⁴

School C has shown dramatic decreases recently with both referrals and permanent exclusions falling to zero in the 2020 school year. Exclusions peaked in 2018 at 1.87 per 100 pupils. School H's rates for both referral and permanent exclusion have been consistently low since 2016 and decreased to zero in 2020 (figure 6). EHE rates in both schools showed a decrease in 2019 to around 0.4 and 1 respectively per 100 pupils. The recent rise to around 1.7 and just under 3 is most likely as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Schools A and D have low rates of all three reasons for leaving (note the differing scale to schools B and E). The increase in home education in 2020 reflects the national picture during the Covid-19 pandemic and is still very low, increasing from approximately 0.5 to 1.3 in school A, and from just under 1 to 1.3 per 100 pupils in school D.

¹³ A 'right to return' period was introduced by the local authority to discourage the use of EHE by parents seeking to subvert the admissions procedures, or schools seeking to remove pupils from their roll. Children moving to EHE who subsequently return to mainstream, return to the school they exited.

¹⁴ Local Government Association (LGA) [Children Missing Education](#), 16 November 2020; ADCS (2020) [Elective Home Education Survey](#) 2020.

3.1.3 Exclusions by pupil characteristic at local authority level

Local authority patterns of exclusion by pupil characteristic are generally consistent with national trends. Boys are more likely to have permanent and fixed-term exclusions/suspension than girls. Since 2016, of the 170 secondary pupils permanently excluded from Blackpool secondary academies 118 were male and 52 female (Table 7). The suspension rate for girls in Blackpool in comparison with the national rate was particularly high before 2019.

Table 7. Exclusions by Gender in Blackpool and England, 2016-2020

		Blackpool				England			
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Gender female	Permanent exclusions	8	14	22	3	1,550	1,672	1,769	1,104
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.24	0.44	0.66	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.06
	Suspension (rate)	13.08	13.18	25.79	9.96	5.61	6.33	6.85	4.72
	Suspensions	432	422	862	348	89,999	102,707	113,594	80,317
Gender male	Permanent exclusions	32	28	34	11	4,834	4,940	4,984	3,165
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.94	0.83	0.98	0.31	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.19
	Suspension (rate)	25.05	25.29	33.33	21.27	13.15	13.90	14.62	10.12
	Suspensions	857	858	1,157	751	212,892	227,378	244,121	172,990

Rates of permanent exclusion and suspension generally increase with age, and are highest at age 14 i.e., Years 9 and 10 (Table 8). Eighty-seven (87) of the 170 secondary pupils permanently excluded between 2016/17 and 2019/20 were eligible for Free School Meals (51%) (Table 9). One hundred and eight (108) pupils are in centiles below 10 (63.5%), with 66 in centile 1, the most deprived 1% in the country (38.8%) (Figure 3).¹⁵ Between 2016/17 and 2019/20, a clear majority of permanently excluded pupils in Blackpool, 141 out of 170 (83%), were designated as SEN (Table 10).

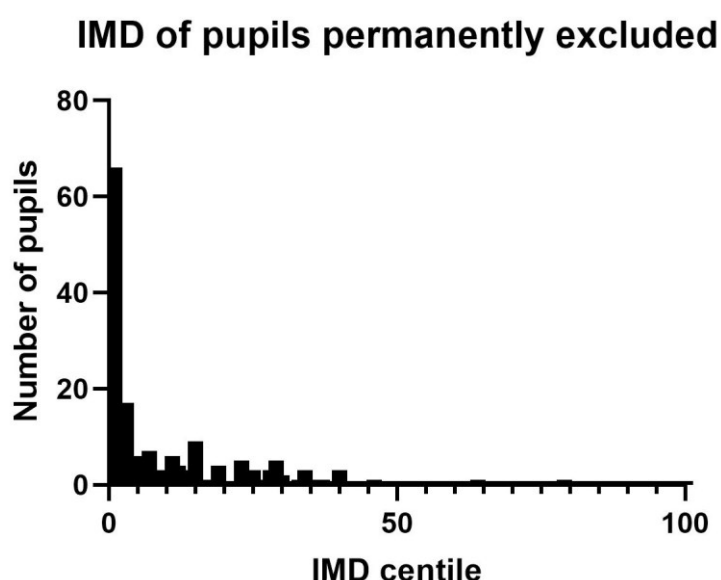
Table 8. Exclusions by School Year 7-11, 2016-2020

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
NC Year 7	Permanent exclusions	12	6	7	1
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.89	0.52	0.53	0.07
	Suspension (rate)	15.28	17.26	18.57	13.40
	Suspensions	205	200	246	184
NC Year 8	Permanent exclusions	8	13	17	2
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.61	0.99	1.48	0.15
	Suspension (rate)	19.45	18.06	34.64	17.95
	Suspensions	255	238	398	237

¹⁵ National Statistics English indices of deprivation 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

NC Year 9	Permanent exclusions	8	10	18	7
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.68	0.78	1.39	0.61
	Suspension (rate)	22.06	28.95	45.65	19.79
	Suspensions	261	372	593	226
NC Year 10	Permanent exclusions	10	10	13	2
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.84	0.85	1.02	0.16
	Suspension (rate)	26.55	26.17	40.05	19.97
	Suspensions	316	307	509	254
NC Year 11	Permanent exclusions	1	3	0	2
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.09	0.27	0.00	0.16
	Suspension (rate)	16.32	12.80	21.70	12.34
	Suspensions	191	143	245	151

Figure 3. Indices of Deprivation Blackpool domiciled permanently excluded pupils, 2016-2020.



In Blackpool, sixty-six or 38.8% of the children who have been permanently excluded since 2016 come from the 1% most deprived homes in the country (IMD centile 1) and 108 children (63.5%) are in the lowest decile.¹⁶

¹⁶ The index of multiple deprivation (IMD) is calculated using seven sources of information: income deprivation, employment deprivation, education, skills and training deprivation, health deprivation and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services, living environment deprivation. The most recent publication of IMD in 2019 ranked 32,844 English neighbourhoods. The data are divided into ten equal groups to give deciles so, for example an area can be categorised as being amongst the 10% most deprived. Further division into centiles can be used to determine which postcodes are within the 1%, 2%...etc most deprived in the country (those in centile 1 are the 328 lowest out of all English neighbourhoods). It should be noted that these rankings are relative and there is no specified cut-off point for being a deprived area. Source: [The English Indices of Deprivation 2019, FAQs](#).

Table 9. Exclusions FSM Eligible, 2016-2020

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
FSM - Eligible	Permanent exclusions	25	27	28	7
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	1.44	1.65	1.42	0.30
	Suspension (rate)	37.48	32.33	50.08	26.71
	Suspensions	651	529	987	624

Table 10. Exclusions by SEN provision, 2016-2020.

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
No SEN	Permanent exclusions	25	30	40	8
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.43	0.54	0.71	0.14
	Suspension (rate)	16.24	16.04	26.43	11.17
	Suspensions	935	895	1,488	641
SEN without statement	Permanent exclusions	15	12	16	6
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	1.63	1.24	1.42	0.49
	Suspension (rate)	36.37	37.75	44.59	35.94
	Suspensions	335	365	503	436
SEN with statement or EHC	Permanent exclusions	0	0	0	0
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Suspension (rate)	44.19	43.48	51.85	31.43
	Suspensions	19	20	28	22

3.1.4 In-Year Applications: IYFA, managed moves & Out of School Register

In-year admissions are admissions at the start of any school year which is not a normal point of entry for the school concerned (i.e., beyond transition), and admissions during any school year in normal years of admission.

The In-Year Fair Access Protocol aims to secure access to education quickly for 'unplaced and vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year'.¹⁷ It operates outside the usual admission processes and can allocate places to year groups that are full or over-subscribed. The IYFA protocol only applies to Blackpool resident children without a mainstream school place who meet defined criteria.¹⁸ The IYFA Protocol was renegotiated with schools in

¹⁷ [School Admissions Code 2021, p.32 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁸ Fair Access Protocol (FAP) criteria include: children either subject to a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan or having had a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan within 12 months at the point of being referred to the FAP; children living in a refuge or in other Relevant Accommodation at the point of being referred to the FAP; children from the criminal justice system; children in alternative provision who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education or who have been permanently excluded but are deemed suitable for mainstream education; children with special educational needs (but without an education, health and care plan), disabilities or medical conditions; children who are carers; children who are homeless; children in formal kinship care arrangements; children of, or who are, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers; children who have been refused a school place on the grounds of their challenging behaviour; children for whom a place has not been sought due to exceptional circumstances; children who have been out of education for 4 or more weeks where it can be demonstrated that there are no places available at any school within a reasonable distance of their home; and previously looked after children for whom the local authority has been unable to promptly secure a school place. Source: [DfE \(2021\) Fair Access Protocols](#)

September 2021 in relation to the new School Admissions Code. The local authority SEND team deals with placing children with an EHCP and those who meet the criteria for in-year fair access are assessed by the IYFA panel.

Pupils with a secondary school place in Blackpool who transfer between local academies are *not* categorised as IYFA. Transfers outside the normal admissions cycle may be managed moves. A managed move is a formal voluntary agreement between two schools, a pupil, and the pupil's parents/carers. Managed moves allow a child at risk of permanent exclusion to have a trial transfer to another school on a dual registration basis and can be a viable alternative to permanent exclusion (which should only be used as a last resort).

It is not possible to determine with a high degree of accuracy from local authority admissions data how many pupils have undergone a managed move between Blackpool secondary academies. Some managed moves are categorised as a 'school transfer' and failed managed moves are categorised as 'back to mainstream' or 'other'. Discussion with data officers suggests that discrepancies in allocating reasons are likely to be due to staff changes.

The spread of initial referrals through IYFA in 2019/20 was fairly even across all academies (School G had only two secondary year groups in 2019/20) (Table 11). However, a withdrawal rate of over 58% can compromise equitably sharing placements.

Table 11. IYFA Referrals to Secondary Academies, 2019 / 2020 (at 16/12/20)

Academy	Referrals	On Roll	Pending	Withdrawn
A	6	2	0	4
B	5	2	0	3
C	6	2	0	4
D	6	2	0	4
E	7	5	0	2
F	8	1	1	6
G	3	1	0	2
H	7	4	0	3
TOTALS	48	19	1	28
%		39.6%	2.1%	58.3%

The following reasons were recorded for the 28 withdrawn cases during 2019/20 (58.3% of referrals):

- 10 Left the Blackpool area prior to placement.
- 9 Did not proceed on advice from the PRU
- 5 Returned to the PRU after very brief re-integration.
- 3 Returned to EHE.
- 1 Accessed a place at a land-based/rural college.

Withdrawals for 2020/21 (at 21 July 2021) (Table 12) were due to the following reasons: three moved to EHE, one moved to the PRU, and one left the country.

Table 12. IYFA Referrals to Secondary Academies, 2020 / 2021 (at 21/07/2021)

Academy	Referrals	On Roll	Pending	Comments	Withdrawn
A	6	5	1	June 2021 referral pending	0
B	4	3	0		1
C	3	2	0		1
D	5	4	1	July 2021 referral pending	0
E	5	4	1	June 2021 referral pending (re-integration)	0
F	8	5	1	July 2021 referral pending	2
G	2	2	0		0
H	6	5	0		1
TOTALS	39	30	4		5
%		77%	10%		13%

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the numbers of families moving into the Blackpool area, and this is the likely cause of the decreased number of secondary age children on the Out of School Register in 2019 and 2020 (figure 5). Difficulties in placing children during the multiple lockdowns due to school and office closures meant that the time spent on the register significantly increased (see figure 5). The cumulative percentage of children reaching level 3 (30-39 days) and level 4 (40+ days) peaked at 22.8 in the 2019/20 school year but decreased slightly the following year to 19.23. This is still over double the number reported in the 2016/17 school year (9.18).

Figure 4. Children on Out of School Register, 2016-2020.

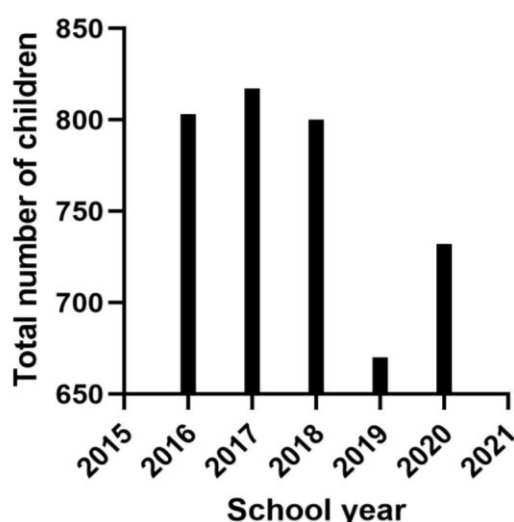
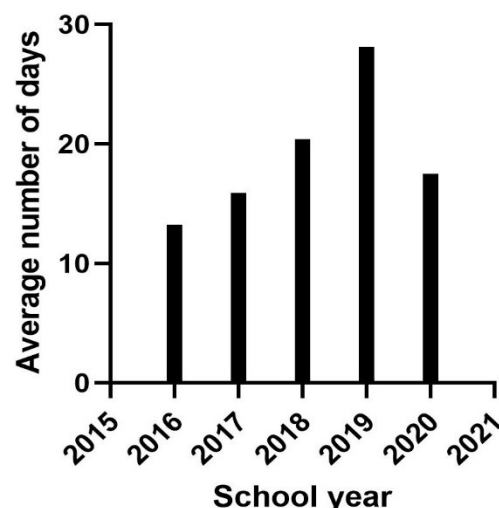


Figure 5. Days spent on Out of School Register, 2016-2020.



This section of the report (3.1) reviewed the progress against key performance indicators i.e., rates of permanent and fixed term exclusion, moves to elective home education referrals through IYFA, and length of time on the Out of School register. The following section (3.2) considers how far the COP project helped schools to develop whole-school approaches to inclusion.

3.2 School strategies

Summary

- Before the COP project, most schools had separate systems for behaviour management and special educational needs.
- Some schools now demonstrate a commitment to improved use of assessment in developing inclusive practice, especially through the identification of unmet need and early help. Regular assessment and monitoring cycles support responsive and timely intervention.
- Increasing practitioner confidence, skills and understanding in meeting the needs of young people in relation to speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) is a development priority.
- The length of time permissible in processing funding applications to support additional needs e.g., through Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) is costly in terms of pupil progress and school resources.
- Some schools have developed a range of graduated responses within internal AP (or In-School Inclusion Centres) focused on additional support for 'return to learning'.
- Pupils with experience of AP highlight the importance of having a safe place and trusted adult in school to go to for support outside the classroom.
- There is growing recognition that workforce development is needed to support effective intervention via in-school AP and to reduce repeat referrals, especially through a period of culture change.
- The quality of pupil-teacher relationships affects the success of reintegration from in-school AP, or external AP or exclusion.
- Inclusion is adversely affected by local challenges to teacher recruitment and retention, with implications for teacher induction and Continuing Professional Development.
- Multi-Academy Trusts and schools are using curriculum flexibility to revise their curriculum offer at Key Stage 4 to improve behaviour and engagement.

3.2.1 Addressing unmet need

The COP project helped schools to re-align systems of behaviour and additional support, which had previously been separate. For example, in more than one school the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) was not fully involved in the strategic direction of behaviour support. Behaviour reviews were undertaken by an external consultant with each school at the start of the COP Project in November 2019, with a follow-up review in April 2021. With one exception, interviewees reported that the behaviour review process supported the development of integrated approaches to behaviour, additional support, and pupil wellbeing. The majority of interviewees regarded the behaviour review process as 'helpful' in providing 'another measure, rather than just the hard data to actually look at the systems and processes that sit behind the numbers and get an understanding there.'

The COP project raised awareness that persistent conduct issues might reflect unidentified and unmet learning or social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Schools focused on improving the learning environment to better address diverse pupil needs. This aligns with the philosophy underpinning the 2015 Special

Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (SEND CoP) for English schools, which emphasises schools' duties to make 'reasonable adjustments' to include students and to meet the diversity of their needs.¹⁹

Changes to the way in which the problem of behaviour was conceptualised was accompanied by more effective use of data to inform action. For example, some schools prioritised screening pupils and scrutinised patterns of behaviour referrals. Interventions and tailored support were put in place as an outcome of this analysis, sometimes involving outside agencies. Attention to individual needs resulted in a reduction in the number of repeat referrals for behaviour incidents, fixed-term exclusions and the number of days lost due to fixed-term exclusion.

Some of these pupils really struggled to follow the behaviour code within the school. We needed to home in on unmet need. A significant number showing real signs of social, emotional, and mental health needs that we didn't know about previously, because it was entangled with misbehaviour

The first piece of work was having a look at our baseline data and find out exactly what was causing these behaviours. And typically, it was due to lower reading ages, not being able to access curriculum, a lot of SEND needs that were not being met.

Most schools demonstrated a commitment to improved use of assessment in developing inclusive practice. Tools included the GL Assessment suite of assessment tools, both for learning in literacy, Maths, and wellbeing²⁰, which were implemented as part of the OA's KS3 Literacy project. For literacy, the GL New Group Reading Test (NGRT) was being widely used, along with the York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC).²¹ This was facilitated by the borough-wide OA literacy initiative, which had recommended these measures of pupil progress. Other interventions included IDL Literacy software and the IDL Dyscalculia Screener.²² The PRU employed more detailed profiling e.g., the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE-2) and the Dyslexia Portfolio for screening children at risk of dyslexic-type difficulties.²³ This extensive use of assessment supported the development of suitable literacy interventions. Some schools were using the GL assessment of affective factors, the Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS),²⁴ as well as the Boxall Profile,²⁵ to help establish a more thorough understanding of individual pupil's social and emotional needs. Two schools built this assessment work into a larger cyclical framework of assessment, moving through a six-stage Spiral of Inquiry consisting of: scanning; focusing; developing a hunch; learning; taking action and checking.²⁶

Overall, assessment practice seemed to be well-developed. Most schools showed a clear commitment to the use of regular assessment of pupils, especially those beginning to show disengagement from learning, as well as pupils with already

¹⁹ Department for Education/ Department of Health (2015) [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#). Reference: DFE-00205-2013, p.17.

²⁰ <https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/>

²¹ <https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/assessments/new-group-reading-test/>; <https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/assessments/products/yarc/>

²² [International Dyslexia Learning Solutions Limited](#) (IDL)

²³ <https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/assessments/products/dyslexia-portfolio/>

²⁴ <https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/assessments/pass/>

²⁵ <https://new.boxallprofile.org/>

²⁶ Halbert, J. & Kaser, L. (2013) *Spirals of Inquiry for Equity and Quality*. The BC Principals & Vice Principal Association: Vancouver.

identified SEND needs and Pupil Premium pupils. For example, at one school these were built into a cycle of meetings between the school's SENCo and their Head of Inclusion, using a 12-week action/reflection cycle.

One interviewee identified a gap in current assessment practice in profiling the Speech, Language and Communication Needs of students (SLCN). While often at the heart of learning difficulties, SLCN are not often considered in secondary schools' assessment practice.²⁷ This may be because SLCN assessment and support have traditionally fallen under the remit of health, rather than education professionals in England. The PRU uses the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS-3) to assess students' receptive language skills and also pointed to the ELKLAN organisation's SLCN assessment and teaching tools as examples of best practice to follow. One school had accessed ELKLAN training for some staff to enhance its support for children with speech, language and communication needs.²⁸

The above advances in identifying needs require concomitant improvement in teachers' capacity to address needs well. There was an acknowledgement that diagnostic testing needed to be followed by substantive change to classroom practice to improve day-to-day support for children with identified needs. Attention to teachers' professional learning is reported in section 3.2.2 School Workforce Development.

We're very good at placing labels on young people. SENCos are very good at having a diagnosis here and a diagnosis there. But using that information to inform practice within the teaching environment is missing. It's alright saying the child needs this, this and this, but what do you change as a practitioner to make sure that child gets that in the room?

Blackpool schools are good at managing behaviour. We can manage children but what we don't necessarily do is change behaviour.

As a result of improved use of assessment and monitoring data (learning analytics and scrutiny of behaviour referrals and sanctions), several schools now offer graduated responses to identified pupil need (see Figures 6, 7 and 8). These range from external alternative provision provided off-site, through to time-limited interventions managed within on-site inclusion centres, and blended part-time programmes. Re-integration or a return to learning is an explicit aim, although this can be within separate specialist in-school AP provision or full reintegration to mainstream classes. Inclusion Centres can operate as a 'school within a school', and/or offer a staggered pathway to re-integration to mainstream classes. In most cases bespoke provision is supported by access to the school SEND team, mental health workers, and in one case a speech and language therapist and educational psychologist. Two schools have appointed a specialist counsellor to support pupils, and several schools are keen to expand counselling services available for pupils. Two schools have introduced a sensory room (limited use due to Covid restrictions) and others have established a designated space/therapy room to accommodate specialist student support services.

²⁷ Lindsay, G. & Dockrell, J. (2012) *The relationship between speech, language and communication Needs (SLCN) and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)* Research Report DFE-RR247-BCRP6. Department for Education.

²⁸ Elklan delivers training to education staff to enable them to be more effective in their support of children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

Figure 4. School-based AP model 1

Pathway 0	Pupils access external alternative provision
Pathway 1	Pupils are taught within the Centre for all aspects of their curriculum (academic and enrichment)
Pathway 2	Pupils access some mainstream lessons, as well as completing sessions (academic and enrichment) within the Centre.
Pathway 3	Pupils are full integrated into mainstream lessons but are withdrawn to undertake specific targeted intervention as part of their identified plan.

Figure 5. School-based AP model 2

Bridge	A 6-week intervention, internal AP, to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.
Nurture	Small group focused intervention. Individualised timetable and curriculum, most full-time. Regular monitoring of progress and support.
Hybrid timetable	Blended timetable of mainstream classes and bespoke provision.

Figure 6. School-based AP model 3

Ark	A school within a school, full curriculum with off-site vocational learning one day per week.
Well Centre	A 6-week intervention for pupils who are facing barriers affecting their mental wellbeing and ability to attend mainstream classes.
Sanctuary	A 6-week intervention to support pupils in Years 7 and 8. Early intervention for unmet needs that are leading to behavioural issues

Becoming more inclusive is about the quality of pupil experiences as well as the range of responses available to support continuity of provision. Discussions with pupils highlighted the importance of timely and skilled intervention by professionals who cared about their progress and wellbeing. Pupil accounts confirmed the importance of relational dynamics and the key role of trusted adults in re-building positive attitudes to learning and social relationships in school (Figures 9 and 10). Young people with experience of exclusion were articulate about which interventions they found supportive, and which were less successful or reinforced their sense of marginalisation.

Figure 7. Pupil case study 1

Lucy, Paige and Mia are approaching the end of Year 11. They attended their school's inclusion provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties during their final year of school.

Mia had experienced exclusions due to her behaviour and was being tested for ADHD. She felt the flexibility of the inclusion unit was beneficial and admitted she "would purposely get sent out because they wouldn't let me move and I needed to move." Paige experienced homophobic bullying in the main school and stopped attending. The classroom environment was unsettling: *"It was just the uncertainty of it all, being so packed in with a bunch of people who don't like you and you don't like them."* Lucy suffered from panic attacks in class. Prior to reintegration she provided a small list people she could not sit next to but claims this was not taken seriously when she returned to school. The three girls believed out of class passes drew attention to them as a 'problem'. Teachers in corridors would question why they were out of class.

The girls felt that home visits were the least effective intervention and regarded this as an invasion of their safe space. Mia had a car sent to transport her to school but stated this made her feel 'scared'. The threat of parental fines for non-attendance caused anxiety. Lucy said this added to her worries. The girls all agreed that having access to a designated caring adult made the greatest difference to them. Lucy emphasised, *"knowing that there's that one teacher you can always go to no matter what. When you do get a good teacher and someone you build a relationship with, it does really help."*

Lucy and Paige felt that if it had not been for the inclusion unit, they would have left school to be home educated. Mia felt she would have been sent to the Pupil Referral Unit if the school inclusion provision had not been available.

Figure 8. Pupil case study 2

Ben is 12 years old and about to go into Year 9. He began to get into trouble in Year 7 when he, "started getting distracted in class, being a bit silly and making everyone laugh". Sending him to another classroom did not work. Being excluded for full days in the referral room had some affect as, "it was horrible ... there's loads of naughty people in there and it distracts you from learning."

After a small number of fixed-term exclusions, Ben recalled being threatened with a part-time timetable. This was something he did not want and, along with being offered a key worker, feels this was a tipping point for improving his behaviour. He appreciates timely support from his key worker, stating that, "they can take you out for about 10 minutes and then you can calm down". The key worker touches base with Ben every lesson and checks how he is doing with his work. If there is a problem, he takes him on a 'walk and talk' or removes him from the classroom for the remainder of the lesson to de-escalate some of his behaviour. Ben sometimes gets frustrated, can lose his temper and is easily distracted. In addition to the key worker, Ben is supported by:

- An NLP life coach who provides interventions around emotions and concentration.
 - Access to a sensory room where he can de-escalate his behaviour in a safe space.
 - Access to a therapy room if he needs to offload or discuss anything that is worrying him.
- This is a comfortable space for focused therapeutic interventions.

Ben's key worker and behaviour manager maintain regular contact with home to build a positive home-school relationship. Ben is very pleased when he receives rewards and postcards are sent home.

There is still one teacher who Ben feels shouts at him without justification when he is "just sitting down normally". Apart from this, he feels his teachers are doing a good job and spoke very highly of the positive impact of his key worker.

In addition to In-school inclusion centres/AP, schools continue to work in partnership with the local authority Pupil Referral Unit. The case study below (figure 11) illustrates one young person's experience of exclusion and the factors she and school staff attribute to her successful reintegration and return to learning. The case study suggests that the chances of successful reintegration increase as a result of effective partnership work between mainstream schools and AP. Dialogue between settings prepares the ground well for a return to school and extends support during a trial re-integration period.

Figure 9. Pupil case study 3

Zara is 13 years old and about to go into Year 9. She was previously a looked after child and recently moved in with her grandmother under a special guardianship order. Zara has SEMH needs and is on the school's SEN register. Since Year 7 she has regularly been in trouble, "arguing with the teachers and kicking off". She has received several fixed-term exclusions for verbal abuse and threatening behaviour. She has Teaching Assistant support in lessons and attends a small class of 7/8 pupils for all her lessons. She receives one-to-one sessions with a staff member to help regulate her emotions.

Zara was referred to the six-week Chrysalis programme at Educational Diversity (LA Pupil Referral Unit) after her latest exclusion. She felt she was forced to go and that it was her "last chance". She admitted to being scared initially but she enjoyed being there. Caring staff helped her manage her anger in a small class, which she liked.

She transitioned back to her mainstream secondary school with the support of staff from the PRU. Zara believes teachers treat her "more nicely" now. The Chrysalis programme helped Zara to regulate her feelings and her behaviour significantly improved in school. Since returning to school, Zara has received 30 positive points (for achievement) and only four negative points.

In addition to normal lessons, the intervention incorporates the 'know how' scheme which is based on neuro-linguistic programming, cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness.

"It's all about looking at the behaviours that have gotten them into trouble in the past; 90% of it is their reaction. So, a teacher tells them off but it's how they react that is actually what's going to be the trouble".

Before returning to school, Zara and a staff member labelled her timetable red, amber and green. She will begin school on days that are preferred. Restorative conversations with class teachers are facilitated to enable a fresh start. The Chrysalis staff follow-up with six-week resilience tracker questionnaires to monitor progress.

Young people completing the Q-sort (2.3) identified areas of support they found more or less helpful in reducing their risk of exclusion. Personalised support and attention were highly valued, especially among older pupils (Years 10 and 11) transitioning back to mainstream classes. A perception of being seen and heard was critical in helping young people establish positive relationships in school and overcome barriers to reintegration. The three most highly ranked statements on this theme were: teachers taking pupil issues seriously (e.g., bullying or health/personal issues; having a key person in school to talk to about anything; and teachers being aware of pupil needs (See appendix 2). Younger pupils (Years 8 and 9) in particular valued having a safe place or person to go to for support outside the classroom. The three most highly ranked statements on this theme were: out of class passes/time out cards/being able to leave the room; a calm and nurturing base in school; and having a mentor. Access to a calm and nurturing base and/or a mentor evoked a sense of security. Young people generally agreed on what they feel does *not* help: parents

being fined for child's non-attendance at school; home visits from school staff; and changing school.

Sustaining a continuum of provision for high needs pupils has cost implications and the timeliness of interventions is important. Several school leaders expressed frustration at the length of time taken to process applications for funding to support additional needs. Secondary headteachers suggested that early identification at primary school would assist in obtaining timely support on transition. The process undertaken to obtain resources for secondary pupils (albeit within statutory limits) was regarded as too long, and too costly in terms of the negative impact on pupil progress and school resources while awaiting the outcome of an application.

The statutory assessment process for a pupil who everybody can see needs additional support in a mainstream school feels like a funding delay. To have 16 weeks of assessment or even longer if you can't get people to come in and do an assessment, or start the process, leaves you supporting people without funding.

The length of the process to get an EHCP can be 20 weeks. Well, that's half a school year. If you've got a student coming in presenting extreme behaviours from day one, that's a long road to go down.

3.2.2 School workforce development

Workforce development was addressed in terms of developing capacity to work effectively within in-school AP provision, and in terms of building whole staff commitment to inclusion. School leaders acknowledged the challenge of changing staff attitudes and expectations. Recently appointed headteachers were engaged in an on-going process of culture building.

Any headteacher can reduce permanent exclusions. It's more difficult to reduce permanent exclusions and change your culture for the better across school at the same time. It's making sure you get your culture right and then culture will impact on progress.

A lot of people will tell you that it's always a difficult decision to exclude pupils but when you compare that to trying to be inclusive, the easier route is to exclude. The harder route is to be fully inclusive.

Senior leaders with longer experience in some school settings suggested that high rates of fixed-term and permanent exclusion before 2019 had been necessary to first establish a basis of orderly conduct in school. Two interviewees associated the high rate of exclusions with short-term strategies to improve behaviour in response to poor Ofsted outcomes. Ofsted assesses schools' use of exclusion as part of its inspection arrangements for Leadership and Management, which includes evidence for moves off roll.

It's very tricky for headteachers who go into a school that has been operating at a high level of permanent exclusion and the expectation of staff is that that should continue, particularly when you've got very difficult challenging young people. For that headteacher to take a different direction in terms of culture, expectation and inclusion is a really challenging aspect of headship.

The facilities and the mechanisms were not sufficient to be able to deal with some of the behaviours that were going on in the school. It was really

important to get it under control and safe. So, the road at the start was quite rocky.

In the first two years, we were firefighting behaviour. We were very sanction-driven, which worked to some extent in reducing lower-level behaviour but wasn't reducing fixed-term and permanent exclusions. We have a new mantra of inclusivity which is paying off. It's not reducing the number of challenging students we have, but how we manage them and how we help them to progress despite their challenges.

Having established facilities for in-school inclusion, their effectiveness was deemed dependent on ensuring levels of staffing with professionals with appropriate training and positive attitudes towards inclusion. Several schools have invested in strengthened pastoral support teams to cope with growing need. In describing the work of one school inclusion center, an interviewee noted 'a lot of the teachers when they come in have to have a mindset shift in terms of delivery'. In promoting positive outcomes through internal AP, interviewees noted the importance of 'trust between pupils and staff'. Inclusion centres required a mix of enthusiastic high-quality pastoral and teaching staff to support engagement and improve outcomes. One school leader noted the importance of maintaining consistency through a stable team of Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and key workers with specialist skills. Another noted the importance of directing 'our best teachers' to work with small groups of pupils within the AP to ensure equitable access to high quality teaching appropriate to need. Two school leaders noted the importance of selecting and then supporting appropriate staff specifically to work with high needs pupils. In one Centre teachers new to the AP receive additional training before working with pupils in that setting. Pupils needed to know that the professionals working with them wanted to be there.

[In-school AP] is very different to students who go off to an alternative provider and feel like well, you don't care about me anymore.

In contrast, school leaders also stressed the importance of developing capacity across the wider school staff to support pupils with high needs. As one interviewee observed, inclusion is, 'not about developing a room for a child to sit in a punitive environment and staff it with £40,000'. Transitioning to a relational behaviour management policy required targeted staff development. For example, for some interviewees 'on call' systems used to extract pupils who are disrupting classes for isolation were deemed to be symptomatic of deeper concerns. The 'on call' policy without attendant teacher development or pupil support perpetuated a cycle of challenging behaviour.

All you're doing is abdicating responsibility to manage the needs in that classroom from the teacher by SLT coming down the corridor to take a child out. That child is struggling to develop a relationship with that member of staff so they're kicking off, and you're reinforcing that and undermining the system. You've got to take time to upskill staff, not take the problem away.

Headteachers noted the need to continue to invest in supporting staff to work with more challenging pupils and to foster commitment to inclusion rather than remove children who present with challenging behaviours. This included the development of trauma-informed practice, awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), restorative practices, and confident use of a range of de-escalation strategies.

It's thought provoking for staff to talk about the situations that some of these students find themselves in before they walk through the school gates in the morning; to talk about the needs they have, the agencies working with them, and what they have to deal with on a day-to-day basis before they walk into

their lesson. There is more tolerance amongst staff if students don't do the right thing straight away.

Teacher turnover, in terms of recruitment and retention, was cited as a potential barrier to progress by three headteachers. Up to 20 teachers could move out of one school each year according to its headteacher, although staff mobility had reduced as the school made progress. This school now includes a scenario involving challenging behaviour and how to support it within interview protocols. Teach First has been used to secure high quality entrants but some schools continue to have trouble retaining early career teachers with few ties to the area. One school noted a recent change in reasons for turnover with teachers leaving for promoted posts elsewhere for the first time. Headteachers noted the proximity of schools in more affluent neighbouring areas, Wyre and Fylde Borough Councils, where teachers might experience fewer challenges.

People said you needed a tin hat to come here. I was told you'll never get good teachers to Blackpool. Well, we're on the tipping point now. I've recruited 48-49 new staff from all over the north west. Good teaching and pastoral care are paramount.

Staff can apply for a job three miles away and have a far easier experience in the classroom on a daily basis. We've done a lot of work get our staff to buy into the inclusion model.

Table 13 summarises the triangulation of approaches to promoting inclusion.

Table 13. School approaches to promoting wellbeing and engagement

Wellbeing initiatives	Behaviour codes	Teacher development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloom resilience training • Blackpool resilience pathway • Mindfulness meditation • Kooth online counselling service • NHS texting support service • My Mental Health Rocks! • Lego therapy • Talkabout for teenagers • Learning journals • Resilience questionnaires • Blackpool FC Community Trust resilience programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations • Line-ups at transition times • Binary behaviour system – non-negotiable behaviours • Restorative conversations and reset opportunities • 'Warm-strict' behaviour code • Classcharts system to reward positive behaviour and communicate with parents. • personalised attendance targets and rewards • staggered starts and break times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELKLAN training for SLCN • Liaison with Shine Therapy speech and language therapists • Whole school restorative practice • Awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) • Trauma informed practice • Every Interaction Matters • Child and adolescent mental health first aid • Emotional coaching • Zones of regulation • Induction support for NQTs, ECTs and practitioners new to AP.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football beyond borders • Enrichment activities • Pupil ambassadors as peer mentors • Duke of Edinburgh award scheme • PiE (pursuing individual excellence) programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupil panel included in behaviour policy review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress for All – Curriculum Adaptation Training • Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) • Pivotal Education behaviour management training
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3.2.3 Curriculum for inclusion

The emphasis on inclusion embedded in the COP project encouraged schools to ‘fit the curriculum to the needs of the child, not the child to the curriculum’. Some schools have reviewed their curriculum offer as part of their commitment to improve behaviour and engagement in Key Stage 4. While providing a broad and balanced curriculum, schools exercised flexibility to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils more at risk of exclusion. One CEO noted, ‘this temptation to chase a narrow academic agenda is a risky one’ if schools genuinely want to engage all learners. Another school removed the requirement to choose an English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subject to provide more appropriate pathways for individual children.²⁹

The Trust has taken the line that we want a curriculum that is fit for purpose in terms of all our students, and for some students going down the EBacc route would not be appropriate. It has been up to the individual headteacher and their senior leaders to work out what the best curriculum model will be.

We are not chasing Progress 8 scores. This is about engaging that very small number of children who need something different, who could potentially be on the cusp of a permanent exclusion.

Some schools were re-purposing on-site facilities to cater for a broader range of curriculum choices and activities such as horticulture, hospitality, hair and beauty, sports coaching, and ASDAN programmes.³⁰

The value attached to different areas of school activity can be evident in the space and profile afforded to it. Three schools have purposively given a high priority to making alternative curriculum choices visible and valued by co-locating student support, nurture and vocational provision, alongside senior leadership team offices, on the ground floor. The physical location of student support resources signals the value attached to inclusion and is an expression of parity of esteem with traditional academic pathways. All-through schools, in particular, celebrated learning that was not associated with attainment.

²⁹ The EBacc is a set of subjects at GCSE: English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history, and a language.

³⁰ [ASDAN](#) courses develop skills for learning, work and life, with practical and accessible pedagogy, to engage young people in greatest need.

For some schools the COP project was part of an espoused wider commitment to fostering an enduring sense of belonging. One senior leader described developing a more inclusive ethos as part of the school's mission to 'keep our sheep in our fold'

'We wanted people to see that these students belong in the School'

I am really against sending youngsters out into the community. I want to keep them part and parcel within the school at all costs as part of our [School] family.

In addition to a revised curriculum offer in school, headteachers reported that there are now more alternative places for young people that better match their curriculum needs and interests. Interviewees reported that schools had limited choice at the outset of the COP project, which included among others The Alternative School (Independent PRU), Education Diversity (LA PRU) and the Boathouse (youth center).

This section of the report (3.2) outlined the range of responses and challenges faced by schools as they sought to promote inclusion at school-level. The following section (3.3) considers the implementation challenges of a collaborative place-based approach to reducing area-level exclusion through effective partnership work.

3.3 Project implementation

3.3.1 Collective responsibility and data sharing

Summary

- Effective project leadership was valued in fostering collective responsibility. As the project evolved, representation included relevant stakeholders at strategic (MAT) and operational (school) levels, and between education bodies (Council, Opportunity Area teams).
- There is growing recognition that inclusion is multi-faceted and different definitions of inclusion suggest different success indicators. Different approaches to inclusion using alternative metrics detracts from a shared understanding of impact.
- Data sharing was critical in promoting collective responsibility and constructive dialogue.
- For a minority of participants there is a perceived tension between fiscal (reduction in high needs spend) and educative aims (addressing unmet need).
- The early stages of the Opportunity Area promoted multiple opportunities for schools and Trusts which could be challenging for senior leaders to navigate and operationalise, especially releasing key staff.
- Sustainability in some schools is threatened by an escalation in high needs post-Covid and a reduction in ring-fenced funding.
- The impact of financial disincentives for exclusion contained within the Service Level Agreement (SLA) depend on the financial position of the MAT.

The objectives of the COP project - to collaborate to ensure the prompt and equitable placement and continuing participation of high needs pupils in education - received high levels of support. Prior to the initiation of the COP project, evaluation participants reported that the Authority's inclusive approach to tackling pupil movement had created a lot of 'noise' with limited change. Schools with lower enrolments (below Published Admissions Number, PAN) felt under pressure to accept pupils permanently excluded from other schools in the town. A degree of 'ill-feeling', 'animosity' and 'tension' had developed between schools in relation to admissions. One headteacher who reported a lack of collective ownership before COP, suggested that the prevalent culture around exclusion was 'these children were someone else's problem, just cast aside'. Another commented, 'people are very protective of their own academies and Trusts. It's almost a competition'. Town level deliberation was impeded by a lack of collective responsibility, which led to the IYFA process 'breaking down and being taken over by the authority'. Meetings between secondary headteachers in the years preceding initiation of the COP project were described as 'very limited and sporadic at best, almost non-existent'. Headteacher non-attendance at meetings was described as 'taking the ball home and not playing, just not really valuing the process'. The need for a coordinated collaborative effort was widely recognised.

A child in the system is everybody's issue, everybody's responsibility. No matter which school they're educated at, where they go to, how long they

stay in the system, they are our children. If we expect somebody else to pick up the impact of our behaviour, we're not doing right by children.

When asked about rising levels of Elective Home Education (EHE) (see 3.1 Pupil mobility), five contributing factors were suggested by interviewees: public perception of the number of schools deemed to be underperforming in the Blackpool secondary phase; dissatisfaction with some of the decisions that were made around the sponsorship of academies; a high rate of permanent exclusion, which led parents to believe that if they didn't act to remove their children from school they would be permanently excluded; parents' attempts to circumvent the admissions round by applying to a different school after a period of EHE; and parents attempts to avoid fines for their child's non-attendance.

The COP project contended well with the challenge of a coordinated approach to an intransigent issue while not eroding school-level autonomy. Several factors were associated with effective project management. Interviewees noted the advantage of external leadership of the project from a committed and respected educationist with in-depth local knowledge. At a strategic level, the COP project required engagement from senior figures within the five MATs who held ultimate reasonability for transfer decisions. Equally, headteachers where keen to note the importance of the secondary headteachers group and the representation of headteachers within decision making structures. To strengthen linkage between strategic and operational activities headteachers are represented on the Education Improvement Board, and a serving headteacher chairs a secondary headteacher Board. The involvement of headteachers was regarded as important particularly as several schools had a change in headship since the period of high exclusions.

The situation is better not just because of COP but because we've got a Blackpool heads' group, which never existed. So, we're seeing each other every half term, we're talking to each other, sharing with each other. That's avoided the cloak and dagger stuff that was going on

In addition to creating decision making structures with appropriate balance and representation, several practices were identified as effective drivers of change. These include: (i) a commitment to transparency through data sharing; (ii) financial incentives to retain pupils in mainstream education; and (iii) moves to reduce 'gaming' of the admissions process by parents seeking entry to school places other than those allocated.

First, the commitment to work collegiately included a commitment to data sharing. Interviewees were unanimous in asserting that a higher level of transparency was a key factor in making progress. Data sharing in the COP project was described by one CEO as 'the bow on the icebreaker' that facilitated the formation of 'dynamic relationships.' A cultural shift away from privacy at school and MAT level towards one of openness and challenge was an evident theme. Data sharing was identified as a key factor in promoting constructive dialogue.

People are perfectly open to call someone out if they think there's an issue ... In previous models there would have been hundreds of emails flowing in one direction objecting to something. Now, we sit down and grab a problem by the scruff of its neck and have a conversation about it.

You can't hide away. If somebody is not in the mix around their contribution to the project, everybody can see it. Holding people to account against that information in a public forum has really helped. What you're saying is, give me your commitment to be here, but then also give me your commitment to

be held to account by your peers for what is happening within your Multi-Academy Trust.

Second, the Service Level of Agreement held partners to account. Should a Trust authorise more than three permanent exclusions during one academic year it would incur a cost of £10,000 per additional exclusion. There was also the expectation that, where appropriate, schools would admit children through the IYFA process. Schools were charged a day rate if they moved pupils to the Pupil Referral Unit, and pupils remained dual registered. In this way, funding followed the young person out of the school to contribute to the costs of alternative provision. The degree to which financial sanctions are effective is influenced by the financial position of the Trust. As one head noted,

I wouldn't be saying this if [my school] was in a worse financial position, but that sanction doesn't really come into my thinking.

Third, a two-term protocol was introduced to address the rise in EHE. The two-term protocol ensures that parents who elect to home educate understand that should they seek readmission within two terms it will be to the school that their child left. Mobility monitoring means it is less easy for pupils to move between schools and more effort is expended on retaining pupils within their current setting.

3.3.2 Metrics used to measure progress

All interviewees acknowledged the importance of accountability and the need to agree indicators of progress from a common baseline. The clarity and regularity of monitoring around common goals was experienced as 'very supportive' although was also said to encourage a degree of 'finger pointing'. The COP project provided support for the development of logic models that reflected each school's needs. Some settings, for example those within the Research Schools network, had greater familiarity with theories of change. Logic models reflected core objectives, and stipulated required actions and intended outcomes. During the project, the sharing of the logic models was regarded as supportive. Regular monitoring visits reviewed progress against plans.

Several participants acknowledged that the drive for inclusion was inevitably multifaceted. While the project had clear success criteria associated with trends in pupil mobility, some participants were keen to assert a more sophisticated understanding of the many challenges facing schools.

The drive for inclusion is multifaceted. Having an internal provision around trying to prevent exclusion by having a different room where children go, a slightly different curriculum, slightly different members of staff, is one element of that solution. Other elements are peer mentoring, vocational provision, and family support workers. The headteachers have shown that what you initially thought would be a solution to the problem only scratches the surface.

The issue is multifaceted: its deprivation, mobility, transience, aspirations. This is funding those areas that are a priority for the school and community. We want to keep those children with us for as long as possible to improve their life chances, qualifications, and skills.

The complexity of the task meant that a range of indicators might potentially have been deployed in addition to permanent and fixed term exclusions, moves to other schools and EHE. The social complexity of working with high level needs in areas of

deprivation might include consideration of the numbers of children on education, health and care plans (EHCPs), numbers of new education, health and care plans, numbers of children supported through early help assessments, numbers of children in need, and the numbers of children who have escalated through social care.³¹

There are so many different ways to skin a cat, other ways to change the dynamic of your school without necessarily permanently excluding a child. We could look at the number of part-time timetables, alternative use of register codes, the flow of children out of the school in other ways, at the numbers of pupils who've got below 60% attendance, or numbers of in year admissions that go to appeal.

The indicators are okay if we don't mistake them for the object itself, which is true social transformation. The indicators are proxy measures that have been useful and kept us focused, but they are the start of understanding what's going on.

In addition to top line figures around pupil movement, interviewees suggested that consideration might usefully be afforded to how schools and Trusts chose to spend their COP funding. A cost analysis could provide additional insight to school priorities. A review of expenditure would highlight the relative spend on alternative provision places, staffing decisions/appointments, investment in teacher development and curriculum development. Interviewees were keen to highlight positive outcomes that were more challenging to quantify, such as child wellbeing.

It is hard to say, look at the data, it's had a significant impact on children; but attendance is up year-on-year, you're increasing engagement, you're reducing behavioural incidents. Pupils are having a more caring, confident, and happy education. Building that kind of comfort is harder to measure than moving from a reading age of x to y.

A minority of interviewees noted that top line project data did not fully acknowledge the contribution of schools who worked with challenging pupils transferred from other settings. The production of pupil case studies by participating schools was valued as yielding qualitative insights, although requiring time to collate. There is as yet limited information on which components of targeted interventions produce positive outcomes in particular settings.

3.3.3 Coherence and attribution

Achieving coherence across different policy strands and initiatives was a challenge for school leaders, who sometimes felt caught between competing accountabilities. There was a perception in some quarters that the COP project was primarily oriented to cost reduction, while meeting high needs required significant levels of sustained additional support.

There's a disconnect between certain professionals understanding of inclusion, meaning not practising exclusion and other people's perception of inclusion as working with family support programmes, with the EHCPs in the system, a diverse curriculum offer. Sometimes people come at things from entirely different directions.

³¹ A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of children's social care services, or the child is disabled.

Discerning the impact of school-led initiatives supported by the COP project - vis-a-vis the range of other OA activities - was acknowledged as problematic. Reflecting on the projects supported by OA funding, interviewees expressed strong support for the impact and inter-connectedness of the COP and literacy projects. For some, the Opportunity Area was experienced initially as a 'burst of different projects' to which a 'retrofit evaluation' was added at a later stage.

There have been too many individual projects that the schools have tried to deal with. You can't suddenly solve literacy, numeracy, inclusion, exclusion, exercise, all these things all at once.

It has become sadly, quite fragmented. We throw money at things and we don't really know where things are having impact because we've got so many different initiatives running.

The volume of projects running concurrently was regarded as a challenge that risked 'initiative overdrive' and 'decision fatigue'. One interviewee criticised a 'scattergun approach' and two noted the challenge of releasing senior staff to be involved with multiple projects. Another described the strategy as 'firing with a shotgun at the problem rather than being forensic and going for a sniper rifle approach'. Similarly, a headteacher described the imperative of using professional judgement to align available opportunities with strategic direction.

It does pull you in different directions. You have to make decisions about what you can and can't commit to. Rather than opt in for money, you commit to things that align with your culture and philosophy.

In addition, a minority of participants described how the OA project opportunities were initially experienced as a 'bidding war' between Trusts who were placed in competition with one another to secure a lead role in designated projects with attached funding. This strategy was not felt to promote school-to-school collaboration.

3.3.4 Funding and sustainability

The project leveraged funding from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant via the local authority and Opportunity Area to support Continuum of Provision. Additional funding was widely regarded as a critically important stimulus for change. One interviewee described the funding as 'instrumental' to moving forward. The funding provided the incentive for schools to 'try a little bit harder' to retain pupils at risk of exclusion within their current school. Access to additional resource was welcome given the pressure on children's social care and school pastoral care in areas of acute deprivation.

The seedcorn funding from the Continuum of Provision allowed us to start thinking about how to do things differently. [It] made us look forensically at an alternative provision offer to make sure curriculum needs were met.

Some school and MAT leaders were keen to note that they had made considerable investment in inclusion prior to the additional resource available through the COP project, or indeed had managed to make progress in reducing exclusion rates with no additional resource.

The allocation of funding appears to have generated more effective partnership work and dialogue around inclusion across the secondary phase. Improved relationships

between school leaders were associated with an increase in managed moves before exclusion, and temporary respite arrangements.

There is collective responsibility now and headteachers are working more closely together. There are more managed moves for children who were struggling. Previously that may have escalated to exclusions. There are now alternative solutions because of those better working relationships. There is a fairer distribution but there are fewer children to distribute because schools are working differently together. Pupils are retained in school, or you are working closely with other schools to give them a second chance, even for respite. That work has meant that we can keep our pupils or get them a different home temporarily.

Interviewees were cautious not to overclaim from early indicators and several were concerned about sustainability following the reduction in COP funding from September 2021 (reduced by £10k).

Those opportunities have been much needed and have helped move things forward. Whether people were expecting meteoric improvements in data and that this would all be fixed in a year or two? I think there must be some realism about that, but we are all slowly but surely moving in the right direction.

Movement between schools has reduced between 2019 and 2021 (See 3.1 Pupil movement). However, three interviewees suggested that although managed moves protocols and the IYFA process have been strengthened, pupil moves may nevertheless rise again on conclusion of the COP project. Some headteachers suggested that the project was being pursued in some quarters for instrumental gain, rather than an enduring commitment to inclusion.

People are putting strategies in place because there's money and a limit on three permanent exclusions a year. Once the Continuum of Provision project disappears, and the money starts significantly reducing, some schools will say, we'll do four or five exclusions, because I can afford to pay the price.

There are some schools and Trusts that will try and keep to the three because that's the right thing to do. Others will think there's no speed camera, and that opens the door to potential inequalities in the system.

In addition to assessing outcomes at the end of the COP project lifespan, several interviewees commented that the timescale for significant change needed to be set against the *Blackpool Education Improvement Board's 2020-2030 strategy*. Sustainability may require a 'ring fenced inclusion grant over a long period of time' rather than a series of time limited projects. It was also noted that over-subscribed schools and larger Trusts had greater reserves within which to set priorities. Others were concerned about maintaining current provision, especially the high staff-pupil ratio within recently established in-school inclusion centres. Some headteachers, not all, anticipated an increase in support needs, particularly around mental health issues. Continuation of additional support on the conclusion of the COP project would reflect schools and MATs' commitment to inclusion, and their capacity to direct resources to sustain effective provision.

I don't think it will be fully self-sustainable. We would have to cut other areas to be able to do that. When the funding stops, we will find a way to support it. Now that will either be through generating additional external income and by making savings in other areas.

People may default back to the national solution to children's behaviour, which is exclusion, because a lack of staffing, tiredness, or teachers needing to cope with other things has not allowed them to do what they set out to do.

Despite significant progress, interviewees suggested that more work needs to be done around In Year Fair Access. Interviewees indicated continuing tension between differing interpretations of fairness around admissions. Some schools are below their Published Admission Number (PAN) and have spaces in their older year groups. In these circumstances, schools are keen to attract new intake at transition (Year 7) but cautious about in-year transfers that may require significant support. School leaders pointed to the high level of additional support required to address the needs of some young people joining the school community via IYFA. Concern was also expressed about a perceived increase in transfer requests from outside Blackpool, particularly from Lancashire.

We are trying to get collaboration, and yet there's competition. We're trying to recruit children into the schools.

IYFA provides an extra nominal £5k. Often these are pupils who have been permanently excluded from another school. It feels like a lot of repair work. That restorative work will happen in our inclusion centre. If you're getting a lot of pupils coming in through that route, that can overload the system. We need to think about that risk.

A student who has lots of issues in one school, potentially getting close to permanent exclusion could suddenly put a transfer request in. We have to pick up some students with quite serious issues that are challenging and labour intensive.

Findings in relation to the impact of the Covid pandemic on the delivery of intended outcomes and the sustainability of early gains were mixed. In the early stages of school re-opening, several school leaders noted a decline in possible attendance, with implications for subsequent positive destinations. Some families were 'fearful' of sending their child to school. Where family members were 'shielding' attendance was regarded as 'too risky for parents'. One interviewee attributed the spike in moves to elective home education to 'fear of Covid'.

There was general agreement that school closures and pupils being sent home due to positive Covid cases disrupted early progress achieved through bespoke provision tailored to individual needs. The slow and careful process of relationship building was disturbed.

You just get to a point where you want to be with the pupils, you build those relationships, you build those boundaries, you build those routines, you build those expectations, and then along comes a lockdown.

At school level, aspects of COP project delivery were 'paused', 'slowed down' or scaled back during the height of the pandemic. Paused activities included part-time attendance of Year 11 pupils at a further education college, and programmes of extra-curricular elective activities (curriculum enrichment). Planned professional development for many teachers was put back or moved online (with a wider range of online programmes becoming available). The number of pupils supported through in-school centres did not expand at the rate anticipated pre-Covid.

As pupils returned, a minority of interviewees commented on an escalation in welfare and conduct issues among some pupils with high needs in the summer term 2021.

However, participants also reported that work to develop whole school approaches to inclusion helped to support the return of more vulnerable pupils. For example, lots of 'resets' were used to help pupils re-adjust to the learning environment. In one school, the use of live streamed lessons during lockdown (accessed via Chromebooks) was retained to provide a degree of continuity for pupils temporarily removed from classes.

The kids have been pretty good when they've come back but some are more challenging. They've struggled being stuck in lockdown because of poverty or the challenging circumstances they face at home.

Children are out of the habits of behaviour and work. There are some children who have had no boundaries whatsoever in the last 12 months.

For some schools, close attention to inclusion through participation in the COP project left them better prepared to respond to increased pupil needs post-Covid. School leaders identified the benefit of strengthened systems of pastoral and learning support, and targeted professional development in adolescent mental health.

It's very clear that the level of need is higher than we would have anticipated by this point in the project. Some children who were coping are not coping on their return. Some children are saying, "I couldn't do it before, there is no point struggling now". Although the problems are greater now than they were at the start of the project, I don't feel I've got the same issue in terms of not having structure in place in school to deal with what's presented.

We trained a number of staff in mental health as a proactive measure. Kids are getting therapeutic support from staff on the ground. We've been proactive in our response to COVID, making sure that all staff are equipped to deal with any issues that arise from kids in mainstream, as well as in our inclusion centre.

The above accounts confirm that the extent and pace of progress was adversely affected by the disruption to education arising from the pandemic. Intermittent pupil attendance (and high rates of teacher absence) temporarily disrupted schools' capacity to maintain and expand the full range of COP activities outlined in logic models. However, while some schools were concerned that an anticipated escalation in need as pupils returned might reverse early gains, others pointed to the value of the project in preparing them to respond to future challenges. The imperative of promoting inclusion intensified as enduring educational inequities were heightened by the pandemic.

After very early promise, it is looking fragile but that's all the more reason for us to redouble our effort where it's needed most.

This section of the evaluation report addressed how far the implementation of the COP programme supported the achievement of its aims. The reduction in pupil mobility achieved in the lifespan of the COP project was supported by data sharing, the use of data in project planning and monitoring, and through financial incentives for cooperation. Significant advances have been made in stakeholder collaboration. The majority of headteachers and MAT CEOs have engaged fully with the development of more effective local communication channels. As inclusion is multi-faceted more work needs to be done to establish the contribution of specific practices initiated through the COP project. The problem of attribution is further complicated as patterns of pupil mobility and need are affected by the pandemic. Some school leaders have identified an escalation of need as the COP funding comes to an end.

Others have highlighted continuing inherent tension around equity in IYFA. These threats to sustainability will require careful monitoring, continued transparency, and strong public leadership in the ensuing years.

4 Conclusion

The Continuum of Provision project sought to prepare the ground for Alternative Provision devolution; inject capacity into the school system to develop and commission inclusive practices; and support the LA in improving processes for In Year Fair Access. This report has outlined progress against performance indicators and reviewed the implementation process. Key findings are summarised below.

Pupil movement

The rate of permanent exclusions across Blackpool secondary academies is within project tolerances, i.e., under 24 within 2019/20. Rates of permanent exclusion and referrals to the LA PRU have fallen in all bar one of the schools between 2016 and 2020, and particularly since the launch of the COP project. Caution should be exercised about attribution. School closures during the pandemic affected exclusion rates and changes to the Inspection Framework have discouraged off-rolling nationally. Permanent exclusion rates fell in selected comparator local authorities at a slower rate (Table 2). Rates of fixed-term exclusion (not limited via the COP Service Level Agreement) and number of days lost through fixed-term exclusion fell in just two of the eight schools. Elective home education (EHE) rates peaked in 2018 but are rising again post-pandemic in line with the national trend. The recent spike in EHE increases the imperative of local authority oversight of the education and welfare of home-educated children. Compared to the 2018/19 academic year the number of pupils on the Out-of-School Register at Level 3 and 4 rose significantly, peaking during 2019/20 due to disruption arising from office and school closures.

Analysis of movement by pupil characteristics shows a strong and persistent association between exclusion and eligibility for Free School Meals, Special Educational Needs, and deprivation. A very high number of pupils who are excluded in Blackpool have additional support needs and live in some of the poorest households in the country. School exclusion in Blackpool contributes to the social marginalisation of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Interviews with professionals record the co-existence of SEN, Social Emotional and Mental Health issues and multiple deprivation among young people presenting challenging behaviours. The COP project promoted place-based professional collaboration between schools, MATs, and the local authority. In addressing complex needs, the agenda for change clearly also requires sustained multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral partnership work with children's social care and related health and welfare agencies (as outlined in the Blackpool Opportunity Area Priority 2 workplan).

Future analysis would benefit from examining pupil movement that falls outside formally recorded permanent and fixed-term exclusions. At present, there are significant blind spots in the official data, notably around managed moves between schools, and on-roll moves to (and from) in-school Alternative Provision. The 2019 *Timpson Review of School Exclusion* recommended that best practice on managed moves was shared with clear guidance to support consistent and effective use.³² Records of managed moves (legal school transfer) might be examined to establish if some groups are more vulnerable to forms of informal exclusion e.g. girls. In comparison with off-roll moves, there is little data on the characteristics of young people supported through in-school AP or dual registration (subsidiary school) to enable a systematic review (e.g., by gender, ethnicity, education, and welfare needs). Census point records are unlikely to fully support an understanding of the journeys of

³² DfE (2019) [Timpson Review of School Exclusion](#), p.98.

high needs pupils that are non-linear. Census data has limitations when pupil movement rates are high and possibly short-term and/or repeated. Earlier evaluations of AP have suggested the use of Pupil Inclusion Records to reduce variability in data sharing between settings.³³ Pupil records and case notes (GDPR compliant) can be used to generate a database of pupil movement through distinct forms of on-roll and off-roll AP. Current datasets would be strengthened by revisiting and clarifying attendance and transfer coding categories to promote consistent application.

Inclusive practice

The COP project promoted a cross-school, place-based approach to reducing exclusion, and participating schools have made progress in promoting a whole-organisation approach to inclusion. There is evidence that the project supported more effective use of assessment to identify unmet needs. In some schools the COP project accelerated moves towards a social model of inclusion to better address diverse pupil needs. There is growing awareness that poor behaviour may be linked to additional and potentially complex needs. The COP-initiated review of behaviour policies helped schools to prioritise inclusion. Strengthening the role of SENCOs within the leadership structure is one example of a beneficial action that has promoted 'advocacy' leadership to advance the interests of pupils most at risk of marginalisation.³⁴ There is less evidence of the involvement of parents/carers and pupils in processes of consultation and co-production of strategies to aid re-integration.

Schools used the COP funding to develop a range of graduated models to promote inclusion. There is evidence of an awareness that effective in-school AP should not be punitive and must be more than 'warehousing'.³⁵ The different forms of in-school AP created through the COP project are intended to be individualised and responsive. Pupils with experience of in-school AP, who were approached by the evaluation team, were positive about the bespoke support they received to help them re-engage with learning. Pupils consistently emphasised the importance of having a trusted adult in school to whom they could turn for support. Compared to off-site AP, the models of on-roll AP developed through the COP project support clearer communication around pupils' educational history and individual needs. Revised school behaviour policies continue to set high expectations but also encourage teachers to consider triggers and deploy strategies to de-escalate conduct issues. Some schools have commissioned training to better equip staff to handle low level issues (e.g., mental health first aid) while recognising the need for specialist support from expert practitioners and advisers.

Further training is needed to develop practitioner confidence and understanding in meeting the needs of young people in relation to SLCN. Speech, language and communication (SLC) skills underpin most areas of learning and thus unmet SLC needs can hamper children's progress across the curriculum. Speech language and communication development also influences social relations with peers, family

³³ DfE (2021) *Evaluation of the Alternative Provision Innovation Fund*, p.28.

³⁴ Clarke, A.L. & Done, E.J. (2021) Balancing pressures for SENCOs as managers, leaders and advocates in the emerging context of the Covid-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Special Education*, 48(2), 157-174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12353>

³⁵ Done, E.J., Knowler, H. & Armstrong, D. (2021) 'Grey' exclusions matter: mapping illegal exclusionary practices and the implications for children with disabilities in England and Australia, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, DOI: 10.1111/1471-3802.12539, p.5.

and with school staff and plays a key part in children's general success and well-being. Practitioners need to develop awareness and skills in supporting children and young people in the three dimensions of receptive language skills, expressive language skills and social communication skills.

School leaders acknowledged that some stages in the journey to becoming more inclusive could be resource intensive. Funding has been used in a range of ways, including the provision of one-to-one and small group support (nurture), re-purposing the school estate (use of space), staffing costs of specialist support workers (counsellors, therapists), staff training (targeted and whole staff), and curriculum enhancement (programmes) and strengthening additional support and pastoral teams (staffing profile/structure). School leaders noted that building a reputation for inclusion could risk a virtuous cycle as inclusive schools attract higher numbers of high needs pupils, which escalates high needs cost pressures. At the same time, the school accountability system (academic attainment measures) can act as a disincentive to schools to take or retain pupils with SEND.³⁶

Implementation and success monitoring

Transparency and accountability across settings is embedded in the COP locality model and has supported a move towards collective leadership and responsibility. Key informants attribute the higher rates of collaboration achieved in the lifespan of the COP project to data sharing, evidence-informed project planning and monitoring, and financial incentives for cooperation. Improved relationships between school leaders are associated with a reported increase in managed moves as an alternative to exclusion, and temporary respite arrangements. Significant progress has been made in promoting open deliberation around In Year Fair Access (IYFA), but more work needs to be done to address continuing tension arising about equity in placement outcomes. As transparency is a key driver to change, it would be beneficial to improve the quality of data shared beyond formal permanent and fixed-term exclusion rates to other forms of on- and off-roll moves.

Interviews with school leaders, teachers and pupils suggest a wide range of hard and soft measures are appropriate when approaching the impact of short-, medium- and longer-term strategies to promote inclusion and re-integration for pupils and positive attitudes towards inclusion among staff. These might include outcomes for young people such as academic attainment but also cognitive and life skills, and positive post-16 destinations. A range of contextual variables would help to provide a more nuanced understanding of the challenges in different settings, such as the number of new Education, Health and Care Plans, children supported through early help assessments, numbers of children in need, and the numbers of children who have escalated through social care. There is a growing body of research that indicates the value of high-quality professional development in improving outcomes for pupils and support for teachers. Moreover, research suggests that the impact of professional development grows the longer a programme continues.³⁷ It follows that reports of early impact on teacher beliefs and practices would be enhanced by periodic follow-up connected to the COP theory of teacher change.

Future considerations for schools and the LA are summarised in Table 14 overleaf.

³⁶ National Audit Office (2019) [Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in England](#).

³⁷ Fletcher-Wood, H. & Zuccollo, J. (2020) [Evidence review: The effects of high-quality professional development on teachers and students](#). Education Policy Institute/ Ambition Institute.

Evaluation Questions	Key findings	Future considerations for the Local Authority and Schools
<p><i>Mobility & transfers</i></p> <p>To what extent have In-Year transfer procedures accelerated the integration of high needs pupils who are new to the town and/or previously permanently excluded?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and MAT leaders collaborate more effectively to support re-integration through regular communication and data sharing. • The permanent exclusion rate in Blackpool secondaries fell from 0.82 in 2018/19 to 0.20 in 2019/20. • The fixed-term exclusion rate in Blackpool secondaries fell from 29.6 in 2018/19 to 15.6 in 2019/20, with considerable variation between schools in days lost. • Moves to EHE peaked in 2018 began to decline but rose again in 2020. In 2020/21, there were 86 moves to EHE. • There is inconsistency in how managed moves are categorised e.g., as a 'school transfer', 'back to mainstream' or 'other'. • Referrals through IYFA in 2019/20 were fairly even across academies but a high withdrawal rate (over 58%) compromises equitable placements. • The average number of days spent on the Out of School register increased year-on-year between 2016 and 2019, falling in 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor variation in days lost through fixed-term exclusion. • Explore associations between moves to Elective Home Education (EHE) and permanent exclusion rates, especially in Year 10. • Explore reasons other than parental choice for a move to EHE. • Promote consistent application in recording processes for managed moves (data entry). • Consult with neighbouring local authorities on cross-boundary in-year admissions and monitor the impact on local schools.
<p><i>Inclusive practices</i></p> <p>What is the impact of the introduction of whole school approaches to inclusion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools have re-aligned systems of behaviour and additional support, which had previously been separate. • Schools are making better use of diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring to identify and address unmet need. • Addressing learning difficulties arising from Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) is an area for development. • School-based Inclusion Centres are being developed that operate as a 'school within a school', and/or offer a staggered pathway to re-integration to mainstream classes. • Targeted teacher development is supporting a transition towards relational behaviour management e.g., training in trauma-informed practice, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), restorative practices, and de-escalation strategies. • Effective use of space fosters parity of esteem across curriculum pathways and reduces a sense of segregation or marginalisation among pupils. • Workforce development is adversely affected in settings with high teacher turnover i.e., local challenges to teacher recruitment and retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve the use of diagnostic assessment and record how this leads to substantive change in classroom practice to improve day-to-day support for children with identified needs. • Share specific practices associated with reductions in pupil movement between settings and effective support for additional needs. • Review school-level capacity to identify and address SLCN. • Conduct cost analysis of promising strategies to inform potential scale-up and sustainability. • Improve data sharing and early intervention for high needs pupils on transition from primary school (Year 7). • Monitor destinations to establish to what extent young people completing Key Stage 4 with experience of alternative provision (including in-school and off-site AP) continue in sustained education, employment and/or training in comparison to other pupil groups. • Monitor how teacher recruitment and retention strategies support the local area e.g., Teaching School hubs and the Early Career Framework.
<p><i>CYP's experience</i></p> <p>What is children and young people's experience of re-integration to mainstream classes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils with experience of AP highlight the importance of having a safe space and trusted adult in school to whom they can turn for support outside the classroom. • Factors that help to support a return to learning include being listened to, teachers taking pupil issues seriously, and understanding pupil's needs. Pupils at risk of exclusion need to retain a sense of personal agency (responsibility and control) and belonging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse data on pupil movement to examine the frequency, rationale for, and outcomes of, managed moves and temporary respite i.e., the impact on continuity for the young person. • Improve data sharing with providers of <i>off-site</i> AP to ensure continuity of relationships and knowledge sharing about the learning, experiences and skills gained by pupils through AP. • Monitor activity and progress made by pupils through <i>in-school</i> AP, and the possibility (and pace) of movement of pupils through graduated responses towards full re-integration, where this is appropriate. • Prioritise inclusion of pupil voice in qualitative assessments of effectiveness.

Table 14. Summary of key findings and considerations for schools and LA.

Appendix 1: COP Logic Model

Problem	Intervention Description (What are the active ingredients?)	Implementation Activities	Intermediate outcomes	Pupil Outcomes
<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New to area children lack sufficient support; Outcomes for excluded children are poor leading to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak academic attainment; Limited work opportunities; High numbers not in education or employment. <p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disproportionate amount of time spent on resolving pastoral matters; Capacity and capability to develop inclusive practice is limited. <p>LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High pressure on High Needs Block funding which is not sustainable; IYFA Protocol currently not meeting needs of LA and schools; Rate and number of out of town placements is high and costly; School and LA reliance on PRU. 	<p>Active ingredient 1</p> <p>Implement a new fair, transparent and supported process to increase speed of integration of high needs pupils, new to the town and previously permanently excluded.</p> <p>Active ingredient 2</p> <p>Plan and Implement a range of activities/provision to strengthen inclusive practice across the school system including data consolidation data sharing and reporting, training and process reviews.</p>	<p>System Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconvene the IYFA panel; Develop short term triage system (inclusive of place commissioning); process improvements In-Year Transfer procedures; Identify synergies with other OA programmes e.g. TAS; Development of academy-level reintegration programme; Develop new IYFA protocol. <p>School-level system change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop school/cluster wide inclusive systems and procedures for behaviour; to include review of behaviour/ curriculum provision and inclusive of trauma/attachment training; Improve existing support arrangements for children moving between schools via existing cluster working where appropriate. <p>Monitoring and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a data baseline for 'pupil leavers' in secondary schools; Blackpool Council MIS Team to provide baseline data and monthly updates to the senior Project Manager and the Project Manager. 	<p>Fidelity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New IYFA protocol established and panel roles and responsibilities agreed; Short-term triage system in place; permanent process in development; Changes to the In Year Transfer process agreed and implemented; Reduction in variable inclusion practices across secondary school system; Reintegration support programme in place across Blackpool; Behavioural reviews undertaken in every secondary and school-level logic model in place based on an agreed action plan. <p>Reach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of the third term of the project all secondary-age children new to Blackpool will benefit from the new integration programme; All teaching staff across the eight secondary schools benefit from programmes and training designed to develop a whole school approach to inclusion. <p>Acceptability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town wide processes IYFA, IYT overhauled within project lifespan; Secondary schools operate within agreed project tolerances; School-level plans actioned within project lifecycle. 	<p>During the lifespan of the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved support and integration for children new to Blackpool; The number of pupils on the Out of School Register at Levels 3 & 4 will be halved (compared to the 2018/19 academic year). A maximum of 24 permanently excluded children from Blackpool secondary academies in 2019/20 academic year. <p>Beyond the lifespan of project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer children at risk of exclusion / tipping into exclusion; Decrease in the number of pupils permanently excluded from Blackpool secondary academies; High needs/complex cases in appropriate provision; Continuum of support at all points in education journey.

Appendix 2: Q-methodology factor analysis

Out of 25 statements, 14 consensus statements were identified which implies an overlap in viewpoints between two factors: Factor 1 **Being seen and heard**; Factor 2 **Having a safe place or person to go to**.

Statement Number	Statement	Factor 1 Z-score	Factor 1 Rank	Factor 2 Z-score	Factor 2 Rank
1	Having a personalised curriculum with reduced hours or a partial timetable	0.33139 *	1	-0.87886 *	-2
2	Having flexibility in the timetable so they can choose which lessons to attend	0.51967	1	0.18376	0
3	Parents being fined for child's non-attendance at school	-2.32026	-4	-1.85608	-4
4	A car or taxi picking the pupil up to make them go to school	-1.19567	-2	-1.4118	-3
5	Teachers taking pupil issues seriously (e.g. bullying or health/personal issues)	1.41102 *	4	0.03529 *	0
6	Teachers finding out about the pupil and showing an interest	0.07607	0	-0.31113	-1
7	Teachers being aware of pupil needs and what they need more help with	1.12534 *	3	0.5304 *	1
8	Teachers praising positive behaviours	1.07006 *	2	-0.3447 *	-1
9	School staff being trained in the underlying causes of behaviour	0.20528	0	-0.11055	0
10	Teachers staying calm	0.36399	1	0.59971	2
11	Teachers being able to tell by body language that a pupil is too stressed to learn	0.07147	0	0.16583	0
12	Out of class passes/time out cards/being able to leave the room	0.18265 *	0	1.97389 *	4
13	A calm and nurturing base in school	0.03325 *	-1	1.49591 *	3
14	A place in school/inclusion unit to feel safe	-0.03099	-1	0.23784	0
15	Having structure and a clear routine	-0.11282	-1	-0.25322	-1
16	Having friends in the school or unit who understand	0.26743	0	0.24601	1
17	Having a key person in school to talk to about anything	1.29839	3	1.38265	2
18	Having a mentor	-0.88675 *	-2	1.39554 *	3
19	Teachers showing pupils respect	0.81992	2	0.69405	2
20	Staff having an awareness of mental health issues	0.77354	1	0.4526	1
21	Home visits from school staff	-1.90287 *	-3	-1.1016 *	-2
22	Meetings with parents	-0.50659 *	-1	-1.65185 *	-3
23	Changing class	-0.91295 *	-2	0.36175 *	1
24	Changing school	-1.64678	-3	-1.26392	-2
25	Pupil making a lot of effort to improve behaviour/attendance	0.96622 *	2	-0.57149 *	-1

Distinguishing statements are denoted by *. Consensus statements are highlighted in grey.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Academy: An independent state school.

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs): a set of traumatic events or circumstances occurring before the age of 18 (e.g. physical, sexual, psychological abuse, domestic abuse, neglect, family member with mental illness, substance misuse, caregiver incarceration, parental divorce/separation, child sexual exploitation, self-harm, young carer, gangs) that have been consistently shown to predict a variety of poor outcomes in adulthood (e.g. poor physical and mental health, health-harming behaviours, lower educational attainment and antisocial behaviour). Trauma-informed training supports educational provision for the most vulnerable pupils.

Alternative Provision – Education arranged by local authorities, and in some circumstances schools, for pupils of compulsory school age outside of mainstream or special schools, who would not otherwise receive suitable education for any reason. This includes pupils with behaviour problems, with health needs preventing school attendance or without a school place. This may include full or part-time placements in PRUs, AP academies, AP free schools, hospital special schools, FE colleges, independent schools, and other provision such as home tuition services and voluntary or private sector providers.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): a condition that affects people's behaviour. Children and young people with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse.

CEO: Chief Executive Officer.

Challenging behaviour: defined in the Department for Education (2021) Fair Access Protocols as 'behaviour can be described as challenging where it would be unlikely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions to help prevent and address pupil misbehaviour or it is of such severity, frequency or duration that it is beyond the normal range that schools can tolerate.' Such behaviour is likely to 'significantly interfere with the pupil's or other pupils' education or jeopardise the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment' (p. 10).

Children in Need of help and protection: the broadest statutory definition of Children in Need under the Children Act 1989 encompasses all those children receiving statutory support from social workers including those on a Children in Need Plan (CINP), on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and looked after children (LAC).

Co-production: Collaborative, planning and action that involves a range of stakeholders.

Cross-phase: working across the different phases of education.

DfE: Department for Education

Dedicated Schools Grant: specific funding ring-fenced for schools.

Dual registration: where a pupil attends a second school - on either a part-time or full-time basis - to receive education that is complementary to the education they receive at their main school.

Early Help: action to prevent escalation.

Early intervention: early action to improve access to education.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP): A legal document that outlines a plan to support a child to ensure that they receive the appropriate level of education. An EHC plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided

to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the LA after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.

Educational Diversity: Blackpool's Pupil Referral Unit.

Elective Home Education (EHE): a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time. Children being home-educated are not normally registered at any school. Parents who choose to educate a child in these ways rather than sending the child to school full-time take on financial responsibility for the cost of doing so, including the cost of any external assistance used such as tutors, parent groups or part-time alternative provision.

English Baccalaureate (EBacc): a set of core subjects taken by pupils at GCSE, which includes English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history, and a language. Secondary schools are measured on the number of pupils that take GCSEs in these core subjects and on how well their pupils do in these subjects.

Fair Access Protocol (FAP): local authorities are required to have a Fair Access Protocol in place under the School Admission Code, developed in partnership with local schools, to ensure that outside the normal admissions round unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are found and offered a school place as quickly as possible.

Fixed term exclusion: When a pupil is temporarily removed from the school for a fixed amount of time (including exclusion during lunchtime), before returning to the school.

Free school: new state schools that are funded by the government but are not run by the local authority.

FSM: Free School Meals are provided to pupils of all ages who meet benefits-based criteria.

Graduated response: A provision that meets the needs of pupils by working up through a series of types of provision and specialist offers.

Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA): a TA (Teaching Assistant) who has undertaken additional training and is able to take on greater responsibility, including covering classes, and planning and teaching their own lessons.

High Needs Block: A ring-fenced part of the Dedicated Schools Grant for pupils with additional needs.

High needs funding: funding provided to local authorities through the high needs block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) and supports provision for children and young people with SEND from their early years to age 25, enabling both local authorities and institutions to meet their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014. High needs funding is also intended to support good quality AP for pre-16 pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, cannot receive their education in mainstream or special schools.

Inclusion: involving and / or providing for all pupils in a school.

Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI): A sub-set of the Income Deprivation domain on the Index of multiple deprivation (IMD), which measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. The more deprived is an area, the higher the IMD score but the lower the rank.

KS2: Key Stage 2 – A phase of education at a Primary School.

LAC: Looked after child/children whose care is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by a local authority; child/children subject to a care order or placement order (adoption).

Literacy: To do with writing and reading.

Logic model: planning tool used by professionals to think deeply about the specific goals, required resources, processes and intended (as well as any possible *unintended*) outcomes that may result from an intervention.

Managed move: voluntary formal agreement between two schools, parents/carers and a pupil, often used as a viable alternative to permanent exclusion.

Multi-Academy Trust (MAT): an academy trust that operates more than one academy school. School within a MAT work in partnership but are not necessarily geographically close. MATs are single legal entities, with one set of trustees. Their member schools operate under a single governance structure.

Multi-agency: involving a number of different agencies in a locality.

NEET: Not in education, employment or training

Off rolling: Off-rolling 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.

Ofsted: Office for Standards in Education, a non-Ministerial government department established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of all schools in England. Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) form its professional arm. School regulator.

Opportunity Area: A government initiative that aims to boost social mobility in a select number of areas. The first wave of the programme included rural areas such as West Somerset, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, the historic market towns of Norwich and Ipswich, the coastal areas of Blackpool, Hastings and the North Yorkshire Coast, and post-industrial areas of Derby, Doncaster, Bradford, Oldham, and Stoke-on-Trent.

Permanent exclusion: This results in a child being permanently removed from a school's roll. Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Permanent exclusion rate: the number of permanent exclusions as a proportion of the overall school population in an academic year.

Persistent disadvantage: pupil is considered to face persistent disadvantage if they have received free school meals for over 80% of their time at school.

Progress 8: a value-added measure of the progress a pupil makes from the end of primary school (KS2) to the end of secondary school (KS4). Introduced in 2016, Progress 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications including mathematics (double weighted) and English (double weighted), 3 qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and the 3 highest scores from further DfE approved qualifications. Pupils' key stage 4 results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils who had the same key stage 2 SATs results. A score of 0 means that a pupil has achieved similar attainment to their comparable peers.

Published Admissions Number (PAN): the number of pupils that a school can admit into each year group.

Pupil mobility: the transfer of a pupil from one secondary school (or other learning environment) to another.

Pupil Premium: Additional funding paid to schools to help them improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils. Additional funds are available to support pupils who are (or have been) in care, are receiving free school meals (or have done so in the last six years) or are from a military family.

Pupil referral unit (PRU): A provision for pupils who have been excluded and / or need alternative means of education. A type of school that is set up and maintained by local authorities to provide an education to pupils who cannot attend mainstream or special schools. Primary School – A school that provides education for pupils aged 11 or below.

Regional Schools Commissioner: Department for Education Senior Civil Servant.

Reintegration: efforts made to return pupils who are absent, excluded or otherwise missing from school-based mainstream education provision. Can also include 'integration' of pupils moving into a new area.

Research school: schools supported by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to spread the use and effective implementation of evidence-based approaches.

Secondary School: A school that provides education for pupils aged between 11 and 16, or with a Sixth Form, age 18.

SEMH: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health.

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Service-Level Agreement (SLA): a commitment between a service provider and a client. An SLA specifies the metrics by which service is measured, as well as penalties if agreed service levels are not achieved.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO): A qualified teacher in a school who has responsibility for co-ordinating SEN provision.

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN): difficulties across one or more aspects of communication including fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say and using language socially.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND): A child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities if they have a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support.

Suspension rate: the number of suspensions/fixed-term exclusions as a proportion of the overall school population in an academic year.

Teach First: a social enterprise concerned with teacher education and leadership development. The Teach First Leadership Development Programme (LDP) is a two-year employment-based route that prepares new teachers to work in challenging schools.

Transition: moving between schools or phases.