

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 2015

Report by Director of Education

EXCLUSION RATES IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE'S PRIMARY
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform elected members of the progress made by the department and schools in decreasing exclusions over the last five school sessions, 2010 – 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Education Committee is asked to note and comment on the exclusion rates in East Renfrewshire primary and secondary schools.

BACKGROUND

3. Members will be well aware of the department's vision statement, *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences* as being at the heart of the department's and schools' work. It underpins the attitudes and beliefs upon which schools and centres base their approaches to children, young people and their parents / carers, and states clearly for all stakeholders the values and principles which we embrace.

4. Exclusion levels are key measures of the success of our schools in exemplifying this vision statement. An objective within the department's local improvement plan is to *'Maintain and where possible improve upon the already low exclusion rates in our schools, especially for looked after children'*.

5. Exclusion rates are reported on in terms of the number of exclusion incidents per 1000 pupils. Members will be aware of targets set within the department's Outcome Delivery Plan in terms of exclusion rates in primary and secondary schools. The three-year average targets 2013 – 2015 are 13 incidents per 1000 pupils for the secondary sector and 2 per 1000 pupils in primary schools.

REPORT

Policy / Practice Development

6. In the past three – four school sessions the department and its schools have revised their policies and approaches to inclusion.

7. The department has provided clear guidance to schools with a consistent message. All schools are expected to develop a nurturing ethos, where all children and young people feel included within an environment which reflects that of a nurturing home with relationships which model such.

8. The department, in partnership with our Education Psychological Service, has developed an audit toolkit which assists schools to evaluate their practices and policies against key aspects of a nurturing school.

9. Many of our primary schools operate 'learning centres' and all of our secondary schools have pupil support bases where children and young people who need additional support to experience a nurturing approach get the intensive help they need as early as that need is identified. The centres / bases support emotional growth in an environment that promotes security, routines and clear boundaries; they enhance opportunities for rich learning experiences based on positive relationships; they help children and young people to develop their self-esteem; teach social skills such as turn-taking, sharing, co-operating and appreciating the feelings of others; and the development / use of language for communication.

10. Our Education Psychological Service offers therapeutic interventions, such as Therapeutic Play which gives children the opportunity to express and explore their emotions and experiences through play; Cognitive Behaviour Therapy which aims to teach young people about the relationship between thoughts, emotions, physical feelings and behaviour; and, Solution Oriented Approach which is focused on helping young people to develop goals and solutions rather than explore and analyse current problems and helps them to build solutions rather than solving problems.

11. The Outreach Support Service was introduced a number of years ago to support primary schools, in particular to maintain children within their mainstream school. It operates out of St. John's Primary School and works with children and staff in primary and the earlier stages of secondary school.

12. Outreach Support staff work alongside school staff, both teaching and support staff, helping them to develop staged interventions to meet the needs of individual children and young people who may be displaying challenging behaviours as well as offering intensive intervention where this is necessary to address particular targets.

13. The Quality Improvement Team, supported by colleagues in the Education Psychological Service, organised and delivered a half day head teacher seminar on Looked After Children. The seminar considered how to improve outcomes for this group of pupils and heard from a few young people who had been looked after by their local authority themselves, about their experiences of education and the impact of feeling socially as well as formally excluded from school.

14. Professional learning opportunities are offered by the Quality Improvement Team, Education Psychological Service and the Outreach Support Service to clusters / whole schools or groups of staff.

15. All of the above developments contribute to ensuring more children and young people are included in East Renfrewshire's schools.

Exclusion Rates

16. In school session 2010 – 2011 there were 101 temporary exclusions from East Renfrewshire secondary schools; a rate of 12.6 incidents per 1000 pupils. In the primary sector there were 7 temporary exclusions in 2010 – 2011; a rate of 0.9 incidents per 1000 pupils.

17. The table below tracks the number of incidents in our primary and secondary schools over the past 5 schools sessions and indicates the number of half days lost per 1000 pupils:

	No. of Incidents per 1000 pupils					No. of half days lost per 1000 pupils				
	10 - 11	11 - 12	12 - 13	13 - 14	14 - 15	10 - 11	11 - 12	12 - 13	13 - 14	14 - 15
Secondary	12.6	9.0	5.8	3.3	2.3	53	38	22	13	11
Primary	0.9	1.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	6	4	0	1	0

18. Clearly from the above the downward trend in exclusion rates can be seen. Exclusion rates over the 5 year period have reduced by 82.3%. The department has achieved its three year average objectives as indicated in paragraph 5 above.

Looked After Children

19. Over the same period we have seen similar significant improvements in the exclusion rates for looked after children and young people. Since there are small numbers of looked after children in East Renfrewshire we report on this group as an amalgamation of primary and secondary pupils. The three-year average target (2011 – 2013) set for this group of young people of 250 exclusions per 1000 pupils has been met. The table below shows the overall downward trend:

	Looked After: No. of Incidents per 1000 pupils					Not Looked After: No. of incidents per 1000 pupils				
	10 - 11	11 - 12	12 - 13	13 - 14	14 - 15	10 - 11	11 - 12	12 - 13	13 - 14	14 - 15
Looked After Children	72	169	25	29	0	6.3	4.2	2.7	1.5	1.1

20. From the data above elected members may note that in 2010 – 2011 looked after children and young people were 12 times more likely to be excluded from school than those who are not. No looked after children were excluded from school during 2014 - 2015. The department is on target to achieve its three-year average target (2014 – 2016) of 58 incidents per 1000 pupils for looked after children.

Next Steps

21. Throughout the period 2010 – 2015 the most frequent incidents of exclusions have been as a result of fighting, persistent disobedience or damage to school property. We aim for all children to feel safe in school and will continue to work with pupils through the health

and wellbeing curriculum to ensure they understand the impact of violence on their own mental health as well as on others.

22. Despite the significant improvements in exclusion data for Looked After Children, we will continue to ensure schools and pupils are supported to understand the circumstances leading to challenging behaviour and the impact on this group of exclusion from school which can reinforce messages of not being wanted or cared for. The Quality Improvement team and Education Psychological Service will continue to offer advice and guidance on strategies which can be applied to ensure this vulnerable group of young people are included and engaged in education.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

23. There are no financial / efficiency implications related to this paper.

CONCLUSION

24. The work and positive attitudes of our school staff, supported by the Education Psychological Service and Outreach Support Service, have led to significant improvements in the exclusion rates from East Renfrewshire's primary and secondary schools, reaching lowest ever levels in both sectors in 2014 – 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

25. Education Committee is asked to note and comment on the exclusion rates in East Renfrewshire primary and secondary schools.

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Director of Education
27 August 2015

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Key Words

This paper is about the lowest ever exclusion rates achieved by East Renfrewshire's primary and secondary schools in school session 2014 – 2015.