An Institutional Ethnography of Exclusionary Processes and Practices in English Primary Schools

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by

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Declaration

I, Susan Wallis-Maclean declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my original research.

I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- Where I have drawn on or cited the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- Where the thesis or any part of it is based on work done by myself jointly with others I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- None of this work has been published before submission;
- The word count is 79742

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the exclusionary processes and practices in English primary schools, examining how school ethos, behaviour policies, and institutional frameworks contribute to the exclusion of vulnerable children. Grounded in Institutional Ethnography (IE), this study uncovers the often-hidden mechanisms that lead to formal and informal exclusions. IE provides a methodological lens that traces how ruling relations, such as behaviour policies, shape local practices, often without regard for the developmental needs of younger children (Smith, 2005).

By focusing on primary schools, this research addresses a significant gap in the literature. While much research has been dedicated to exclusions in secondary schools, primary schools remain under-explored, despite growing evidence that exclusionary practices can have long-lasting effects on children's educational trajectories. Exclusion rates disproportionately affect children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and socio-economically disadvantaged children (Gazeley et al., 2020).

The study adopts a multi-method approach, combining interviews, observations, and policy analysis. A key finding is that exclusion is not only the result of overt policy decisions but also stems from the informal, everyday practices that reinforce institutional norms. These hidden exclusions, such as the use of isolation rooms or unofficial removals, often escape scrutiny and disproportionately impact vulnerable children (Done & Knowler, 2020). Moreover, this research highlights the tension between national accountability frameworks, which emphasise discipline

and performance, and the need for flexible, child-centred approaches that can better accommodate the needs of primary-aged children.

The findings challenge the notion that exclusion is a necessary response to challenging behaviour, arguing instead that it is often a systemic failure to address the root causes of that behaviour. The research calls for more inclusive, trauma-informed approaches to behaviour management that move away from punitive measures and towards supportive interventions. These approaches not only reduce the risk of exclusion but also foster a more inclusive learning environment, promoting equity and improving outcomes for all children.

In conclusion, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the understanding of exclusionary processes and practices in primary schools. It advocates for urgent reforms in national and local policy, promoting inclusive practices that are developmentally appropriate and responsive to the unique needs of vulnerable children. By shifting the focus from punishment to support, schools can become environments where all children, regardless of background or challenges, are given the opportunity to thrive.

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Abbreviations and Their Meanings

Abbreviation	Meaning
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
ALT	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
ALSPAC	Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children
AP	Alternative Provision
CIC	Children in Care
CLA	Children Looked After
CLC	Coram Children's Legal Centre
CLAS	Coram Children's Legal Centre Child Law Advice Service
CPAC	Commons Public Accounts Committee
CPR	Cambridge Primary Review
DCSF	Department for Children and Families Services
DfE	Department of Education
DPA	Data Protection Act
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Association
ECHP	Education, Health and Care Plans
ECM	Every Child Matters
EHC	Education, Health and Care
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FSM	Free School Meals
Fx	Fixed Term Exclusion
Fx1+	More than one Fixed Term Exclusion
GTC	General Teaching Council
HPA	Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal
HMI	Her/His Majesty's Inspector
HMG	Her/His Majesty's Government
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
IE	Institutional Ethnography
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
KS1/KS2	Key Stage 1 and 2
LA/LEA	Local Authority/Local Education Authority
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
MNS	Maintained Nursery Schools
MRI	Magnetic Imaging
NC	National Curriculum
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OCC	Office of Children's Commissioner
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education

ORACLE	Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation
PRU	Pupil Referral Units
PTN	Primary Types of Need
Px	Permanent Exclusion
SAT	Standard Assessment Test
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SMCPC	The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission
SofS	Secretary of State
SF	Social Finance
TA	Teaching Assistants
TDA	Teaching and Development Association
TES	Times Educational Supplement
UNCRC	United Nations Commission for the Rights of Children
WB	White British

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Jack's[1] Poem (given to me the day he left primary school)

I walked through those gates 7 years ago
To learn, to study and hopefully grow

But I started to worry, panic and run
And never really found school that much fun

Things weren't that easy as I struggled to cope
And on many days I walked a behaviour tight rope

I needed to think more and stop being a pain
And then in stepped the headteacher, Mrs Wallis-Maclean

She helped me understand what needed to be done
And day by day school started to become fun

With the help of my teachers and my parents too
I learned exactly what I needed to do

I still have my moments and mumble and groan
But I no longer feel that I'm all alone

Now things have improved and I understand why
I get more back by the more I apply

So thanks to the staff at this wonderful school
And I promise I will try and fulfil my potential

By Jack[2]

[1] All the children's names have been changed throughout this thesis.
[2] I was Jack's headteacher at the time he wrote this poem. He gave it to me when he left Year 6. The poem is unchanged and uncorrected from Jack's original.

Poems and stories are used in this chapter as it is hoped they will serve as a powerful narrative tool within the text to emotionally engage readers while connecting them to the core themes being explored. In Jack's poem, for example, the personal journey he describes offers an intimate lens into the challenges and triumphs of navigating school life, reflecting broader themes of growth, support, and transformation. Poems and stories have the capacity to distil complex experiences into concise, vivid imagery that can highlight the emotional depth behind the academic content, setting the stage for deeper reflection.

In this context, the reader is invited to consider the human dimension of school exclusion, learning difficulties, and personal growth, through a relatable, lived experience. By signalling early on that poems and stories will be included, the reader is prepared to explore themes not only through data and analysis but also through personal, emotive narratives that provide insight into the real-world implications of the discussed issues. This approach helps to balance the analytical rigour with human stories, creating a fuller, more engaging reading experience.

Primary education in England has undergone significant changes over time, with exclusionary processes and practices continuing to affect vulnerable groups. While formal exclusions are documented, "hidden" and "informal" exclusions often remain unnoticed, despite their detrimental effects on children's learning and social development. This thesis critically examines these exclusionary practices, focusing on how official and unofficial exclusions are enacted within primary schools. It positions the discussion within the broader context of educational inequalities, disciplinary policies, and childhood development.

1.1 Research Questions, Aims, and Objectives

This research is driven by two central questions:

1. **What factors contribute to the increasing use of suspensions in English primary schools?**
2. **How do institutional processes and disciplinary practices in some English primary schools contribute to the increased risk of suspension for some children?**

These questions reflect the need to examine broader factors beyond policy, incorporating institutional cultures and relationships that affect suspensions.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this thesis is to critically explore the factors that lead to variations in the use of suspensions in English primary schools, with a particular focus on the disciplinary practices and institutional processes that heighten the vulnerability of certain children to exclusion.

1.3 Objectives

1. To investigate the institutional processes and relational dynamics that place certain children at a greater risk of exclusion, despite behaviour policies.
2. To analyse how disciplinary decisions are organised and operationalised within schools, focusing on the day-to-day enactment of behaviour policies.
3. To identify the key cultural and leadership factors that contribute to a school culture that reduces or increases the risk of suspension.

1.4 Introduction to Institutional Ethnography (IE)

To explore exclusionary processes and practices within primary schools, a methodological approach was needed to examine the everyday realities of teachers, staff, and children. Institutional Ethnography (IE), developed by Dorothy Smith (1987), was chosen because it focuses on how local experiences are shaped by broader institutional practices and ruling relations. IE highlights the voices of individuals while tracing the structures and policies that organise their actions, making it ideal for uncovering hidden and unofficial practices contributing to exclusion in schools.

By examining the lived experiences of staff and children, IE maps how institutional texts, like behaviour policies, are enacted and how these enactments may unintentionally lead to exclusionary outcomes. This framework enables a nuanced exploration of the ruling relations, (the interplay of policy, power, and practice), that contribute to a child's exclusion. Thus, IE helps identify processes that either increase or reduce the risk of exclusion in primary schools. Chapter 2 will provide a more detailed discussion of the IE framework and its relevance to the study's broader objectives.

1.5 Why Research Exclusions? My Positionality

Positionality refers to the researcher’s acknowledgment of their own background, experiences, and perspectives, which inevitably shape the research process. Understanding positionality allows the researcher to critically reflect on how their identity, values, and professional experiences influence their interactions with the subject matter, data interpretation, and methodological decisions (Creswell, 2013; Holmes, 2020).

In this thesis my personal and professional experiences deeply inform the research focus. As a former educator, headteacher, and Ofsted inspector, my understanding of exclusion is shaped by direct interactions with children at risk. This provides valuable insider knowledge but also necessitates a critical lens to ensure objectivity (Smith, 1999).

Reflecting on my positionality ensures transparency in the research process, bridging my experiences with the larger research question: the impact of exclusion on vulnerable children.

During my career there have been many children that have had a significant impact on the way I think and behave towards children. Their dogged determination has, and will remain with me, for the rest of my life. They are the reason for this professional doctorate. Below are just two reflections of many.

Sarah's Story

As a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), older than most with three of my own children, but daunted by 30 four-and five-year-olds I meet Sarah. Wiry thin, long blonde hair, no smile. The start of the day was to go on a 'Bear Hunt', a very well-planned lesson with lots of super learning objectives and excellent learning outcomes. Sarah refuses to come out from under the table, wrapping herself around a table leg. No amount of cajoling would entice her from her underworld. A cross and exasperated NQT threatened this little girl with the headteacher, her mum, all to no avail and a resounding "fuck off". Re-think, I waited until playtime to talk. Sarah was tired, she had got up really early that morning to make her baby brother's bottle. She had

given Robert his bottle, changed his nappy and got dressed for school and had walked to school by herself. Sarah was just five, and I had no idea.

Josh's Story

I threatened to exclude Josh. I felt I had no alternative. He was 6 years old. His father had tried to drown him when he was three. He had been excluded from Nursery and was in a mainstream school. Josh's Mum struggled to manage Josh at home, a two-bed high rise flat. She had a social worker, but they kept changing and she would often come to school with Josh's younger brother, sit in my office and cry. When I arrived as headteacher, Josh had not been allowed to mix with his peers, had two Teaching Assistants (TAs) with him throughout the day and had never been in a mainstream classroom. He was loveable, extremely cheeky and could be very gentle. He could also stab you and himself with a pencil in the blink of an eye. I was informed by the Local Authority (LA) that his placement had been agreed by the outgoing headteacher. We were not the right school for this little boy and all we were doing was containing him like a caged animal, without the skills and expertise to do anything more. My threats were loud and persistent, the alternative was one session with the Educational Psychologist who was due to retire and continued to say he had provided the necessary information needed to support Josh when he was at nursery school. Threats, phone-calls and determination eventually provided the right highly specialised school for this little boy to have a chance of an education that was right for him.

1.6 My Journey

Throughout my early life, significant personal experiences profoundly impacted both my siblings' and my own experiences of school. When I was nine, my younger brother died after a prolonged illness, leading to a shift in family dynamics where I took on the role of caregiver for my other younger siblings. This period was marked by considerable disruption and emotional trauma, both at home and in school, as I navigated the complex aftermath of grief and loss, which inevitably shaped my educational experience during that time.

My youngest brother's experience following our brother's death was marked by attachment difficulties and increasingly poor life outcomes. Time played a critical role in shaping our divergent paths. While my first four years were stable, filled with security and happiness, my brother's early years were defined by upheaval. Our mother was frequently away caring for our poorly brother, and our father became emotionally distant, leaving a once joyful family to navigate deep grief, which profoundly impacted my brother's development and well-being.

The emotional impact of my family's personal tragedy gave me a profound understanding of how early childhood experiences shape long-term outcomes. This insight became even more pronounced during my career in education, where I witnessed firsthand the struggles of vulnerable children, like Sarah, Josh, and Jack, whose lives mirrored my own brother's challenges. During my time as a new teacher in a deprived area of Telford, I became increasingly aware of how external factors such as poverty, trauma, and systemic inequities shaped children's behaviours and life outcomes. Initially, I was unaware of the profound challenges young children like Sarah, Josh, and Jack faced daily, but I soon realised that their experiences

mirrored those of many others. Poverty was widespread, and the complexities of equity played out in their lives.

As a deputy headteacher I witnessed the varying degrees of competence class teachers and other members of staff had to support children with a range of behavioural difficulties. In a position of hierarchy, it was easy to blame, being bound by the need to implement policies that were given to them to enact, without acknowledgement of the inherently different experiences of individual adults, and that experiences also changed daily due to the everydayness of being in a school.

As a headteacher I initially excluded children believing it was the only option left to me. I excluded children for different reasons and there were often a range of complex issues that impacted the decision. This included extreme behaviours from children who had complex needs which manifested in challenging behaviours, but who came from complex backgrounds, including domestic violence, drug abuse, nomadic lifestyles, safeguarding issues, and extreme poverty. However, other pressures were present. Pressure from other parents who had their view of the disrupter and the disrupted. Pressure to perform as an institution, an object, in a testing, performative environment. I was also following policies that were texts coming in from government that were to be implemented because the guidance is law, and it compels.

As an Ofsted inspector, inspecting in different primary schools gave me an insight into the differences between them and how relationships impacted on both adult and child behaviour. I also witnessed the way in which children who were potentially challenging were ‘sidelined’ into

activities that were provided to 'keep them quiet' or removed from classroom learning to be in different sites such as nurture groups or going out with a Teaching Assistant (TA). As an outsider and someone that was perceived to have power, I was aware of the need for empathy and to gain trust. I also worked with inspectors who used their authority with disregard to the context of individual schools, using the power of ruling relations to judge indiscriminately.

As a primary headteacher I have excluded children - permanently and for fixed terms - for varied and often complicated reasons[3]. One child put a stop to my use of exclusion. At seven years old Jack[4] would have severe outbursts of rage, turning classrooms upside down in seconds and launching at me; fists, feet, teeth and spit all used to good effect. It was exhausting, for me and for Jack. Jack had no special educational need (SEN),[5] a supportive family and his apologies were heartfelt. From staff there were clarion calls for exclusion. It was this attitude that made me re-think. Excluding Jack meant - then what? He was one of mine. I resolved to think and behave differently to our most challenging children. Jack stayed, doing well academically and emotionally (most of the time), and went on to enjoy secondary school.

Fortunately, prior to developing a deeper, more researched understanding of attachment, trauma, adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and brain development, my resolve to think and behave differently to our most challenging children meant that Jack stayed and was successfully

[3] I have excluded children because their needs were so complex that a mainstream placement was not the correct place for them to be able to thrive. I have excluded children because having been recently appointed to a school that had experienced poor leadership and high staff turnover, a significant number of children were presenting with extremely challenging behaviour and there were insufficient processes and systems in place to keep children and adults safe. I have excluded children because of extreme violence with a weapon.
[4] Not his real name.
[5] These children may have their needs met by schools through SEN support or have more complex needs which are met by a statutory Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

supported to embrace his educational career. Understanding and responding to Sarah's responsibility as a carer of her baby brother at the age of five, or Josh's neurodiversity, requiring a more specialised service, may allow more children like them to flourish rather than face any form of exclusion.

Throughout my 30-year education career, I have retained a passion for improving the life chances of children, particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged children. As England's first Work Force Reform Manager in a LA, my role was to implement a Common Service Delivery Process and deliver the "Every Child Matters (ECM)" agenda[6] by implementing multi-agency teams in the LA. When I was accepted on the Professional Doctorate for Children and Young People's Services my research question 'Is the integration of health services, education and social care having a positive and timely impact on outcomes for vulnerable children and their families' was put forward because little seemed to have changed in the effectiveness of multi-agency working for vulnerable children.

My experience of multi-agency working concerned children who had been excluded or were at risk of exclusion. As my studying progressed, and with guidance from supervision, it became apparent there was limited research into the exclusion of children in primary schools. Most research on exclusion is secondary school focussed, and the resulting implications concern older children. With agreement from supervisors, I changed my research question to study the impact of suspension on younger children.

[6] The strategic vision of the ECM agenda was to implement system change to frontline practitioners and services by turning the strategic vision of partnership working to change from service and threshold led to needs led and solutions focused on children and their families.

My professional experience suggests exclusion is often a reactionary measure rather than a preventive one, with schools frequently failing to address the root causes of disruptive behaviour. Research shows that exclusion, particularly in primary schools, can harm a child's long-term development. Hayden (2003) and Gazeley (2012) argue that early intervention and support are far more effective. I argue that headteachers should not have unilateral authority to permanently exclude children without external consultation, as recommended by the Timpson Review of School Exclusion (2019), which advocates for a more transparent and balanced decision-making process.

The complexity of suspension data often masks the broader challenges faced by children, especially in early years settings. The Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) (2012) report, They Never Give Up on You, advises against permanent exclusions for younger children, highlighting the long-term impact on learning and emotional well-being. Research, such as McCluskey et al. (2015), shows that early childhood exclusion can lead to academic disengagement, social isolation, and further disadvantage. Therefore, exclusion in primary schools should be reconsidered in favour of more inclusive practices that better support vulnerable children's educational and emotional needs.

1.7 The Continuum of Exclusion

Exclusionary practices can be thought of as forming a spectrum of "severity". By recognising and defining "hidden" practices it will become possible to explore the potential cumulative effects of 'absences from learning' that have the intended or unintended consequences of putting a child

at risk of exclusion. At one end of the spectrum are "hidden" more nuanced forms of exclusion, such as removing a child from the classroom for varying periods, isolating a child, separating them from their peer group in the classroom or even in the non-classroom setting, dining hall or playground. The fact that a child is receiving any of these forms of sanction is highly likely to be a marker of susceptibility to behavioural issues and hence to an increased risk of more formal exclusion. Then, as we move across the spectrum, the continuum moves to the formal, legal exclusion of removing a child from school, for a fixed period or permanently. This continuum of severity is shown in my diagram below.

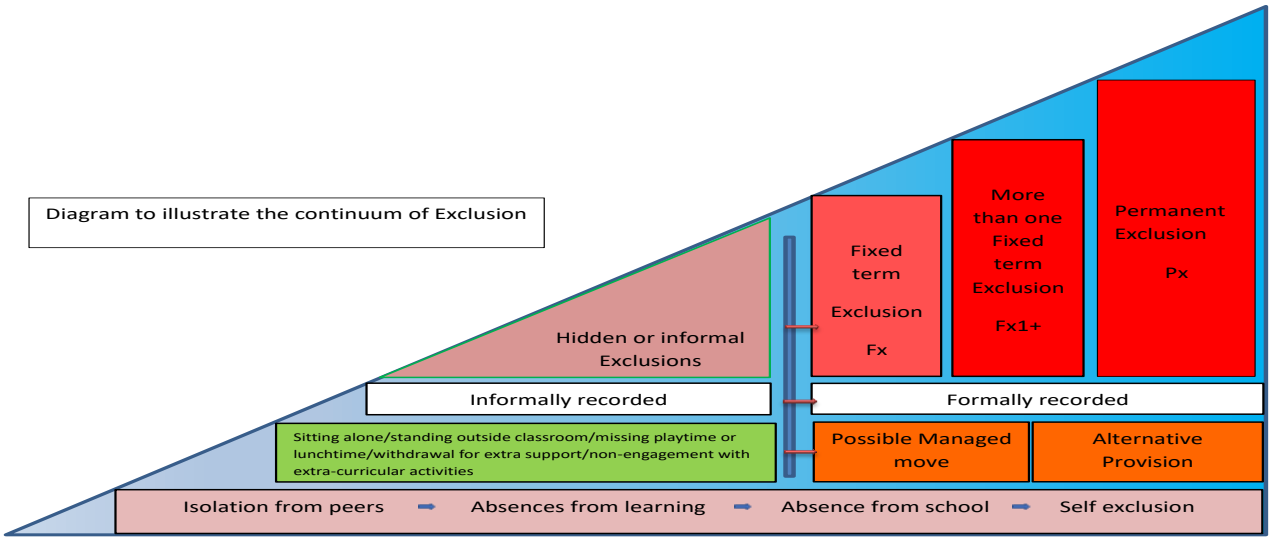
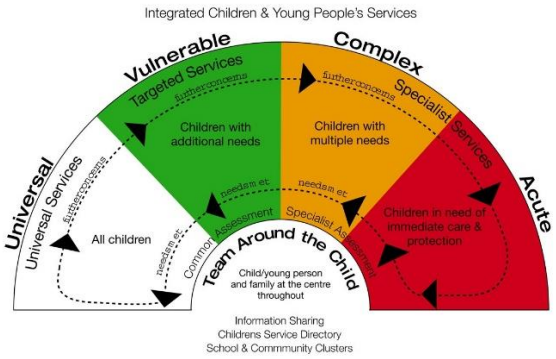


Diagram 1: My illustration of the continuum of exclusion

This diagram was developed as a result of my working with national and local government on the ECM agenda and developing the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) created as a process to support multi-agency teams to identify and support children's unmet needs (see diagram at below). The CAF has now been replaced by the Early Help Assessment.



Continuum of Needs
(commonly known as The Windscreen)

Diagram 2: The Continuum of Needs

The visual representation of the continuum of exclusion can be a powerful tool for professionals to grasp the varying degrees of exclusionary practices and how they operate in educational settings. By presenting exclusion as a spectrum, ranging from hidden, less visible forms (e.g., isolation or removal from classrooms) to formal, legal exclusions, this model highlights the cumulative effects that smaller, unnoticed exclusions can have on a child's risk of permanent exclusion.

1.8 Continuum Thinking

Using the continuum diagram can aid professionals in several ways:

1. **Identifying Early Warning Signs**: By visualising exclusion as a continuum, professionals can recognise subtle markers of exclusion, such as frequent isolation or disciplinary removals. For example, if a child is regularly removed from the classroom, the continuum can help teachers and support staff understand this behaviour as a potential precursor to more serious forms of exclusion. The framework can guide early interventions, helping teachers and staff target children at risk before they face formal exclusions.

2. **Collaboration Among Agencies**: When working with multi-agency teams, the continuum model can help identify gaps in knowledge or action. For instance, social workers, teachers, and health professionals may not fully understand how minor sanctions contribute to a child's marginalisation. The visual representation helps foster a shared understanding and encourages joint efforts toward early intervention.

3. **Mapping Out Hidden Exclusions**: The continuum model emphasises hidden exclusions, such as isolation rooms, which may not be officially recorded but still contribute to a child's detachment from the learning environment. It aids schools in assessing how these informal practices might be disproportionately affecting certain children. Studies by Power and Taylor (2018) show that these hidden forms of exclusion are often overlooked but can significantly hinder a child's educational trajectory.

4. **Informing Policy Development**: Schools can use the continuum to identify areas where policy gaps exist, such as inconsistent use of sanctions or unclear guidelines for handling behavioural issues. For instance, using the continuum, school staff may realise that informal exclusionary practices are widespread but unregulated, prompting them to create more comprehensive policies to mitigate these risks.

5. **Fostering Professional Reflection**: The continuum invites educational practitioners to reflect on their practices, encouraging a deeper understanding of how everyday disciplinary actions contribute to broader exclusionary mechanisms. It can help educators question whether actions such as repeated time-outs or temporary removals

are genuinely supportive or merely punitive, pushing children toward more severe exclusion.

The continuum highlights a critical gap in existing research, which has primarily focused on formal exclusions (McCluskey et al., 2015). However, much of the damage begins earlier through hidden practices not captured by exclusion data. This framework encourages more nuanced research and responses, shedding light on how informal exclusions exacerbate vulnerabilities in children, especially those with SEN and from disadvantaged backgrounds.

By using the continuum as a roadmap, professionals can better understand how exclusionary practices develop and escalate, allowing for timely interventions to prevent severe exclusion outcomes. This proactive approach ensures that children remain included and supported in educational settings.

Continuum thinking conceptualises exclusion as a process, not isolated incidents, mapping a spectrum from informal practices to formal exclusions (Done & Knowler, 2020). It reveals how small, often unrecorded actions can accumulate and lead to long-term educational disengagement (Boyle, 2019). This challenges the binary view of "excluded" versus "not excluded" and highlights the nuanced experiences of many children, particularly those with SEN.

By addressing hidden exclusions like off-rolling or isolation (Power & Taylor, 2018), professionals can better understand the compounding nature of these practices and develop more proactive, inclusive interventions (Done & Knowler, 2020). This framework fosters collaboration among

educators, social workers, and school leaders, enabling earlier identification of exclusion risks and more effective interventions (Graham, 2020).

Ultimately, the continuum broadens the scope of exclusionary practices, shifting the focus from punitive measures to understanding and addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability.

1.9 Exclusionary processes and Exclusionary practices

While there is substantial research on school exclusions and the risk factors contributing to a child's likelihood of being excluded, a critical gap remains in understanding the exclusionary practices and processes specific to primary schools. These processes and practices, often informal or hidden, may disproportionately increase the vulnerability of certain children. This study seeks to address this gap by identifying and analysing such processes and practices, aiming to propose strategies to mitigate or eliminate them in primary settings, ultimately reducing exclusionary risks as children progress into secondary education (Done & Knowler, 2020; Daniels et al., 2020)

For this study It is important to differentiate between "exclusionary processes" and "exclusionary practices" as these concepts, while related, have distinct meanings and implications within the framework of educational research.

1.10 Exclusionary Processes

Exclusionary processes refer to the systemic and institutionalised mechanisms that contribute to the exclusion of certain groups or individuals. These processes are often embedded within

the policies, regulations, and structural frameworks of an institution and function at a macro level. They can be understood as the overarching procedures and rules that govern the operation of exclusion within an institution. In the context of English primary schools, exclusionary processes might include:

1. **Policy Formulation and Implementation**: How policies related to discipline, attendance, and academic performance are designed and enforced. For instance, zero-tolerance policies can systematically marginalise children from certain backgrounds who are more likely to be disciplined under these rules.

2. **Curriculum Design**: The way the curriculum is structured can systematically exclude certain perspectives and knowledge forms, reinforcing dominant cultural narratives while marginalising others.

3. **Resource Allocation**: Decisions about the distribution of resources (funding, teaching staff, special education support) that can disproportionately disadvantage certain groups of children.

1.11 Exclusionary Practices

Exclusionary practices are the specific actions and behaviours carried out by individuals within the institution that result in exclusion. These practices are the tangible manifestations of the exclusionary processes and can be observed in everyday interactions and decisions. They

operate at a micro level and are the day-to-day activities that reinforce exclusionary processes. Examples in English primary schools might include:

1. **Adult Interactions**: The ways in which teachers or other adults interact with each other and children, such as giving less attention to certain children, making biased disciplinary decisions, or failing to accommodate diverse learning needs.

2. **Peer Interactions**: How children interact with one another, which can include bullying, social ostracism, and the formation of cliques that exclude certain children based on race, socioeconomic status, or ability, or because you have different coloured hair!

3. **Classroom Management**: Specific classroom management strategies that disproportionately affect marginalised children, such as seating arrangements that isolate certain children or the use of punitive measures that are not equitably applied.

1.12 Academic Differentiation

To academically differentiate between these two concepts in the thesis, it will be important to consider the following points:

1. **Scope and Level of Analysis**:

   Exclusionary Processes: Analyse at a systemic and institutional level. Discuss how policies and institutional structures inherently favour or disadvantage certain groups.

   Exclusionary Practices: Focus on the observable actions and behaviours of individuals within the institution. Examine case studies or specific examples of how these actions play out in day-to-day school life.

2. **Frameworks and Theories**:

   Exclusionary Processes: Use sociological and institutional frameworks to explain how exclusion is embedded in institutional structures.

   Exclusionary Practices: Apply theories related to social behaviour and interaction revealing how they reflect and reinforce institutional norms.

3. **Data Sources**:

   Exclusionary Processes: Utilise policy documents, institutional reports, and statistical data to illustrate systemic trends and patterns.

   Exclusionary Practices: Employ ethnographic methods, such as interviews, observations, and case studies, to capture the lived experiences of individuals and the specific actions contributing to exclusion.

4. Implications for Change:

Exclusionary Processes: Suggest reforms at the policy and institutional level aimed at addressing structural inequalities.

Exclusionary Practices: Recommend changes in everyday practices and professional development for teachers to foster a more inclusive environment.

By clearly distinguishing between these two levels of analysis, this thesis will provide a comprehensive examination of how exclusion operates within English primary schools, from the institutional frameworks to the everyday practices of individuals within the school community.

1.13 Background on Exclusions

This research critically examines the exclusion of primary school children in England, a practice rooted in educational policy and societal structures. Exclusion, legally sanctioned since the 1944 Education Act (Hayden, 1997; Parsons, 1999), is intended to maintain discipline but also reflects broader political and ideological influences (Spink, 2011; Hatton, 2013; Power & Taylor, 2018). Governed by a legal framework that has evolved to the 2023 Department of Education (DfE) guidance, exclusions involve both temporary suspensions and permanent removals.

Headteachers have the authority to exclude children, as outlined by the Education Act 2002, but decisions must be "lawful, rational, fair, and proportionate" (DfE, 2023). This raises concerns about the subjective nature and consistency of exclusion decisions, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children with SEN or those from disadvantaged backgrounds (McCluskey et al., 2019; Daniels et al., 2022). Although exclusions should be a last resort, some schools use them

more frequently, influenced by institutional failings rather than solely the child's behaviour (Cole et al., 2019). This is especially prevalent in socio-economically deprived areas, where pressures may lead to increased exclusion rates (Feingold & Rowley, 2022).

Additionally, informal exclusions, such as isolation rooms and unofficial managed moves, often remove children from mainstream education without legal sanction, contributing to disengagement and poor outcomes (Power & Taylor, 2021). The discretionary nature of exclusions, coupled with hidden practices, highlights gaps in how exclusion functions within schools. This thesis explores both formal and informal exclusion processes and practices to contribute to the debate on their appropriateness and propose strategies for reducing their prevalence, particularly among vulnerable groups. The research aims to develop more inclusive practices that support vulnerable children through early intervention.

1.14 Legal Exclusions

The legal framework governing school exclusions in England defines two official forms: permanent exclusion (Px) and suspension (formerly known as fixed-term exclusion (Fx)). Px permanently removes a child from school, while suspension temporarily removes a child for up to 45 school days per academic year. Both decisions lie with the headteacher, who must act lawfully, fairly, and proportionately. Key considerations include safeguarding the welfare of the child and others, addressing any SEN, and ensuring that the exclusion is not used to circumvent the school's responsibility to meet a child's needs (DfE, 2023).

The statutory guidance stresses that exclusions should be a last resort, only applied for serious or persistent breaches of school behaviour policies, or when a child's presence risks the welfare of others. Headteachers must consider alternatives, such as early intervention and multi-agency support, before deciding to exclude (DfE, 2023). This underlines the importance of addressing underlying behavioural issues and using exclusion judiciously, ensuring it is not a mechanism to avoid addressing a child's needs (Power & Taylor, 2021).

The introduction of new categories for exclusion reporting in 2020, such as abuse related to sexual orientation and social media misuse, aims to capture the evolving nature of behavioural challenges. There are inconsistencies in how exclusions are documented (Coram's Legal Centre (CLC), 2016; Martin-Denham & Donague, 2020). This inconsistency raises concerns about transparency and accountability in how schools apply exclusionary practices.

Comparatively, exclusion processes and practices vary significantly across the UK's home nations. English schools account for 98% of permanent exclusions, with a marked difference in how exclusion is employed as a disciplinary tool in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (Tawell & McCluskey, 2022). The Timpson Review (2019) characterised permanent exclusion in England as rare, affecting only 0.1% of the school population. Yet, this statistic masks a daily reality in which around 40 children are permanently excluded, with over 2,000 suspensions occurring each day, a figure that has been rising, in primary schools (DfE, 2019; 2022).

While exclusion is intended as a disciplinary tool of last resort, these figures call into question how schools are balancing exclusionary practices with their legal obligations to provide inclusive

educational environments. The rise in suspensions in primary schools, particularly post-pandemic, indicates that underlying systemic issues may be contributing to the frequency with which exclusion is used (Feingold & Rowley, 2022). Such trends suggest that exclusion is often a response to deeper issues, such as socio-economic deprivation or unmet mental health needs, that require more comprehensive solutions than exclusion alone can provide (Done & Knowler, 2020). The legal process is at *Appendix 1*.

1.15 Illegal and Unofficial Exclusions

The distinction between illegal and unofficial exclusions is critical in understanding the broader scope of exclusionary practices in schools. Illegal exclusions occur when schools unlawfully send children home or reduce their school hours without following due process or formal documentation (McCluskey et al., 2019; Power & Taylor, 2021). These actions contravene legal frameworks, such as the Education Act 2002 and Equality Act 2010, which require exclusions to be formally documented, justified, and subject to appeals.

In contrast, unofficial exclusions involve practices like isolation, managed moves, or long-term informal removals that, while technically legal, often bypass formal reporting mechanisms. These exclusionary processes remain hidden, contributing to disengagement and marginalisation but are not captured in exclusion statistics (Done & Knowler, 2020). The key difference lies in the degree of transparency and legality, illegal exclusions violate statutory obligations, while unofficial exclusions remain within legal limits but obscure the child's removal from learning (Feingold & Rowley, 2022).

This study seeks to understand how these exclusionary processes and practices manifest in primary schools, as such exclusions are under researched compared to secondary education. Gaps in reporting mechanisms and subjective interpretation of exclusionary actions complicate efforts to measure their full scope and impact, especially in younger children (Brodie & Berridge, 1996).

Researching school exclusion, particularly informal and hidden exclusions, presents significant methodological challenges that limit the depth of understanding regarding the true scope of these practices. While formal exclusions, such as suspensions and permanent exclusions, are well documented and governed by strict regulations (DfE, 2023), research consistently reveals the existence of hidden forms of exclusion that often go unreported and are harder to quantify (OCC, 2013; Parkes, 2012). These unofficial exclusions may evade formal reporting procedures but still significantly contribute to educational disengagement and marginalisation (Gazeley et al., 2015; Paget et al., 2016).

The absence of standardised reporting mechanisms for such practices creates a lack of transparency, complicating the collection of reliable data. Schools may utilise strategies that are technically legal but that result in the marginalisation of certain children, especially those who are already vulnerable due to factors like socio-economic disadvantage or SEN (McCluskey et al., 2019; Done & Knowler, 2020). This raises concerns about the "hidden" dimensions of exclusion that often go unnoticed in formal exclusion statistics, but which still exert a profound impact on children’s educational experiences (Power & Taylor, 2021).

Moreover, the subjective interpretation of what constitutes exclusionary actions further complicates efforts to accurately measure these practices (Brodie & Berridge, 1996). Schools may remove children from mainstream classrooms for a variety of reasons, ranging from behavioural infractions to perceived learning difficulties, but these actions may not always be captured as exclusions. These informal exclusionary practices, such as repeated isolations or managed moves, can have a cumulative effect on the child's educational trajectory, pushing them closer to formal exclusion (Vulliamy & Webb, 2000).

The methodological challenges of researching hidden exclusions leave significant gaps in the literature. The long-term effects of repeated absences, whether through informal isolation or unrecorded removals, are still poorly understood (Social Finance (SF), 2021). Thus, there is a need for methodologies incorporating qualitative insights, longitudinal studies, and multi-agency perspectives to fully capture the complexity of exclusionary practices (Feingold & Rowley, 2022). Without such advancements, understanding of exclusion remains incomplete, making it difficult to develop effective interventions.

Interestingly, Bennett's (2017) broad definition of exclusion as "any form of removal from the mainstream classroom" underscores the need to expand our view beyond formal mechanisms. Practices like short-term isolation or placement in 'special provision' groups such as Nurture Groups, while sometimes supportive, can function as a subtler form of exclusion, potentially leading to disengagement if not properly monitored (Power & Taylor, 2021).

Research must expand to include these less visible exclusionary processes and practices that occur in primary schools before formal actions like suspension. The rise in suspensions in primary education demands closer scrutiny of the mechanisms that make certain children more vulnerable to exclusion (Done & Knowler, 2020). Addressing these unofficial processes and practices is crucial to preventing at-risk children from becoming disengaged from education altogether.

1.16 Characteristics of Excluded Children

The over-representation of certain demographic groups in school exclusion data has been consistently documented, with particular attention to children from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with SEN, those eligible for free school meals (FSM), and children who are or have been part of the care system (Ofsted, 1995; Brodie & Berridge, 1996; Gazeley, 2010). As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic new vulnerabilities emerged.

Historically, exclusions have been most common among groups already marginalised within the education system. Children with SEN or from low socio-economic backgrounds often face systemic barriers that contribute to higher exclusion rates (Hayden, 1997; Gazeley et al., 2015). Exclusionary policies have exacerbated these inequalities, with research pointing to how schools may respond to disruptive behaviour without fully addressing underlying factors such as unmet educational or emotional needs (Power & Taylor, 2021). However, the new vulnerabilities emerging due to the Covid-19 pandemic, prompted concerns about the increased risk of exclusion among children affected by the social, emotional, and educational disruptions caused by the crisis.

Daniels et al. (2020) highlight several emerging risks for children post-pandemic, including those who became disengaged from school during lockdown, children struggling with mental health, and those who thrived in smaller, more manageable classroom settings. Their work illustrates how the pandemic created new challenges for an already at-risk population, introducing additional categories of vulnerability that may have previously gone unnoticed. Children who experienced bereavement, loss of routine, or reduced access to educational support during the pandemic face heightened risks of disengagement and exclusion (Daniels et al., 2020). The pandemic has revealed potential gaps in the system's ability to adequately support children, highlighting the need for a more inclusive approach to schooling that considers the broader spectrum of children's social and emotional needs (Cole et al., 2019).

Primary school exclusions have been on the rise since the pandemic, with schools reportedly becoming less tolerant of children who struggle to adapt to post-pandemic behavioural expectations (Daniels et al., 2020). Changes in legislation and school policy, such as the revised guidelines on Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and behaviour management policies, may have contributed to this more rigid approach, further marginalising already vulnerable groups. This raises critical questions about the role of schools in managing behavioural difficulties, especially in a post-pandemic context, where children are facing unprecedented emotional and psychological challenges (Power & Taylor, 2021).

The impact of Covid-19 has opened new lines of inquiry into how schools can build more inclusive environments. It also highlights the importance of considering how policy and practice can evolve to meet the emerging needs of children, particularly those most at risk of being left

behind in the current system. Schools must address these challenges head-on, ensuring that exclusionary processes and practices do not further exacerbate the educational inequalities already experienced by many vulnerable children (Feingold & Rowley, 2022).

1.17 The Developing Child at Risk of Exclusion

The exclusion of children from school is often the culmination of a complex interplay of factors, both genetic and environmental, that shape a child's behaviour over time or in response to a single event. Understanding the neurodevelopmental and social factors that influence behaviour, such as attachment, trauma, and ACEs, is crucial to effectively managing and supporting children at risk of exclusion. It is important to critically examine these factors and explore how they contribute to exclusionary outcomes.

1.17.1 Brain Development

Contemporary research on childhood brain development shows that early sensory inputs, such as vision, hearing, social interaction, and emotional communication, play a crucial role in shaping neurological growth (Nelson et al., 2014). The brain's plasticity during early childhood allows it to adapt to stimuli but also increases its vulnerability to negative experiences like trauma and stress. This highlights the critical window during which early experiences, whether positive or negative, have lasting effects on behaviour and mental health (Stiles & Jernigan, 2010).

Neuroscience underscores the importance of stable, nurturing relationships that foster positive attachment and emotional regulation (Balbernie, 2001). The prefrontal cortex, responsible for

decision-making and emotional regulation, continues developing into adolescence. Early negative experiences, such as trauma, can disrupt this process, leading to difficulties in self-regulation and increased susceptibility to behavioural issues (Nelson et al., 2014). These disruptions are particularly relevant in school exclusions, where behaviour often influences exclusionary decisions.

1.17.2 Social and Economic Factors

Socioeconomic status plays a significant role in shaping a child's emotional and behavioural development. Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to experience ACEs such as domestic abuse, neglect, and community violence (Moss et al., 2011). These stressors can hinder cognitive and emotional development, placing these children at greater risk of behavioural issues that may lead to exclusion. The "social gradient" concept illustrates how socio-economic disadvantage is linked to poorer health, educational and social outcomes (Shonkoff, 2011). In particular, poverty exacerbates the effects of other risk factors, creating a "double jeopardy" for children born into vulnerable families (Balbernie, 2001).

Current research suggests that educational systems are often ill-equipped to address the nuanced developmental needs of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, further contributing to their exclusion from school environments (Shonkoff, 2011). Interventions must take into account the complex interplay between a child’s social environment, their neurological development, and their behaviour in order to effectively support children at risk of exclusion.

1.17.3 Early Care and Attachment

The quality of caregiving during early childhood is one of the most significant predictors of a child's developmental outcomes. Secure attachment, fostered through sensitive and responsive caregiving, is associated with lower stress reactivity and better emotional regulation (Gunnar et al., 1996). In contrast, children who experience insecure attachment[7] are more likely to exhibit behaviour that places them at risk of exclusion (Gilbert et al., 2009). Children who lack these stable, nurturing relationships are more vulnerable to stress, which in turn can lead to difficulties in managing behaviour in school settings (Gunnar et al., 2009).

The growing body of research into ACEs and their impact on brain development has led to the development of trauma-informed educational practices, which aim to address the root causes of behavioural difficulties by understanding the child's underlying stress and trauma. These approaches emphasise the importance of creating stable, nurturing school environments that can buffer the effects of early adversity and prevent exclusion (Moss et al., 2011).

1.18 The Role of School

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory highlights the significant role that schools play in shaping a child's development, second only to the family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Schools have the potential to act as protective environments for children who have experienced early trauma or stress. However, this requires schools to have a deep understanding of child development and to foster strong, trusting relationships with both children and their families. Schools that lack social cohesion or that fail to provide adequate support for vulnerable children may

[7] Due to neglect or inconsistent caregiving.

inadvertently exacerbate behavioural issues, leading to higher rates of exclusion (Shonkoff, 2011).

Many children at risk of exclusion exhibit hypervigilance, an adaptive response to early trauma that manifests as difficulty adjusting to the structured school environment (Balbernie, 2001). Schools with well-developed social cohesion and a supportive ethos can mitigate these behavioural difficulties, whereas schools with limited resources and training may struggle to accommodate these children, increasing the likelihood of exclusion (Shonkoff, 2011).

Despite significant advancements in understanding the role of brain development and early childhood experiences in shaping behaviour, educational systems remain largely ill-equipped to address the individual needs of children at risk of exclusion. Current policies and practices often fail to account for the nuanced differences in children's experiences and reactions to their environments (Shonkoff, 2011). Also, socio-political forces drive educational policy, which tends to focus on group-level interventions rather than the individual differences that characterise children's developmental trajectories.

The increasing recognition of ACEs and trauma-informed practices provides an opportunity for schools to adopt more inclusive approaches that better meet the needs of vulnerable children. However, these approaches must be integrated with broader systemic changes that address the root causes of exclusion and provide comprehensive support for children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Without such changes, the risk of exclusion for children who have experienced adversity will continue to persist (Moss et al., 2011).

The exclusion of children from school is not merely a response to disruptive behaviour but a reflection of deeper systemic failures to address the developmental and social needs of vulnerable children. Understanding the role of brain development, socio-economic factors, and early caregiving environments in shaping behaviour is essential to developing effective interventions that can prevent exclusion. By adopting trauma-informed practices and fostering supportive school environments, educators can help mitigate the risk of exclusion and promote more positive outcomes for all children.

1.19 Outcomes for Excluded Children

School exclusion has significant and often detrimental consequences for children, as highlighted in Edward Timpson's 2019 review, which stressed the need for exclusions to be applied lawfully and fairly. Research consistently shows that exclusion leads to poor outcomes, including educational disengagement, social isolation, and long-term socio-economic disadvantage (Brodie & Berridge, 1996; Gill, Quilter-Pinner & Swift, (2017); McCluskey et al., 2015). Beyond disrupting education, exclusion is critiqued as a punitive measure that fails to meet children's underlying needs (Parsons, 2018). Short-term studies document the psychological effects of exclusion, such as stress and anxiety, while longitudinal research links exclusion to future involvement in crime (Hayden & Martin, 1998; Gillies, 2016).

Excluded children often face ongoing social marginalisation, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage into adulthood (Paget et al., 2017). International research supports this, showing how childhood exclusion reflects broader socio-political and economic forces that reinforce inequality (Dornan

& Woodhead, 2015). The societal costs of exclusion are considerable, affecting not only the individual but also wider communities.

Research on ACEs shows that children exposed to trauma, poverty, and instability are at greater risk of exclusion due to behavioural and emotional challenges (Caspi et al., 2016). These challenges, rooted in disruptions to neurodevelopment, disproportionately impact socio-economically disadvantaged children (Luby et al., 2013). Exclusion exacerbates these vulnerabilities, reinforcing the hardships that often lead to behavioural issues (Ford et al., 2020).

1.20 Contribution to Knowledge

This research offers a significant contribution to understanding exclusionary processes and practices in primary schools, emphasising the hidden dimensions of exclusion. By investigating the mechanisms that lead to suspension such as informal exclusionary tactics, isolation, and unofficial removals, the study reveals how these practices contribute to a broader exclusionary process that is not always captured in official data (Gazeley et al., 2015). These hidden exclusions, which disproportionately affect vulnerable children, are often unregulated and left out of formal policy discourse, making them particularly insidious.

The research critiques the current policy framework surrounding suspensions and exclusions, highlighting its gaps, especially in primary education where there is limited research compared to secondary schooling. By focusing on the continuum of exclusion, the study sheds light on the long-term effects of repeated hidden exclusions and suspensions, which can escalate into formal exclusions. Understanding these incremental exclusions offers a new framework for

considering how small, daily decisions by educators contribute to larger patterns of educational marginalisation (McCluskey et al., 2015).

In relation to policy, this research proposes that the current guidance, such as the DfE's statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions, is not fully equipped to address the complexities of exclusionary practices in primary schools. The study identifies the need for more nuanced, context-specific interventions that consider the social, emotional, and behavioural needs of children at risk of exclusion. This includes advocating for policies that promote early intervention, multi-agency collaboration, and greater accountability for schools that engage in unofficial exclusionary practices.

The findings of this study have implications for future educational practice by recommending that schools adopt a more inclusive approach to discipline, outlining the importance of providing comprehensive training for all staff in primary schools, not just classroom teachers but support staff, to address exclusionary practices effectively. Recent research indicates that a whole-school approach to professional development in trauma-informed care and understanding ACEs can significantly reduce exclusionary practices and promote inclusivity (Thompson & Tawell, 2020; Ford et al., 2020). By equipping staff with the tools to identify and address minor exclusions and behavioural issues early, schools can create environments that prioritise intervention over exclusion, ensuring all children receive equitable access to education.

This aligns with the study's call for stricter regulations and transparency in reporting mechanisms for hidden exclusions, encouraging earlier and more effective interventions. This holistic approach contributes to ongoing debates on reforming exclusion policies and fostering educational environments that better support vulnerable children, thereby creating more equitable educational outcomes (Daniels et al., 2020).

1.21 The Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 – Introduction The chapter begins with Jack's Poem, providing an emotional foundation, followed by reflections on personal and professional experiences with school exclusion, highlighting how the researcher's background shapes the inquiry. The Research Aims focus on examining formal and hidden exclusionary processes in primary schools to develop inclusive practices. The Continuum of Exclusion, outlining exclusionary practices that accumulate over time and disproportionately affect vulnerable children, is then introduced. Institutional Ethnography (IE) serves as the methodological framework for investigating how school policies coordinate exclusion. The chapter concludes with an overview of the legal framework for exclusions in England, identifying policy gaps and setting the stage for the critical investigation that follows.

Chapter 2 - Institutional Ethnography (IE) This chapter explores IE as the chosen methodological framework, discussing how it allows the investigation of exclusionary practices in schools by connecting institutional policies with lived experiences. The

chapter critiques the application of IE, highlighting its potential to address gaps in exclusion research.

Chapter 3 - Political and Legislative History of Exclusion The chapter traces the evolution of exclusion policies from the 1944 Education Act to the present day, emphasising how political and social dynamics have shaped primary education and the use of exclusions.

Chapter 4 - Literature Review The literature review critiques the dominant focus on secondary schools in exclusion research, identifying gaps in understanding exclusionary practices in primary schools. The review highlights the cumulative impact of informal exclusions and sets the stage for the study's contribution.

Chapter 5 - Methodology and Methods This chapter outlines the study's methodological approach, including the use of interviews, observations, and document analysis. Institutional Ethnography is justified as the primary methodology, and challenges in capturing hidden exclusionary practices are addressed.

Chapter 6 - Analysis of National and Local Authority Data The chapter analyses exclusion data at both national and local levels. The findings highlight the variation in exclusion rates.

Chapter 7 - Analysis of School Questionnaires Staff responses are analysed to examine variations in how schools apply exclusion policies. The chapter critiques the gap between national guidelines and actual school-level practices.

Chapter 8 - Policy Document Analysis This chapter critically analyses key national policy documents, arguing that ambiguities in statutory guidance enable informal exclusions. It calls for clearer policies to ensure more equitable practices.

Chapter 9 - Behaviour Policy Analysis in Schools The chapter examines how school leaders interpret and enact behaviour policies, creating disparities in exclusionary practices across different schools.

Chapter 10 - This chapter synthesises the study's findings, integrating them with the literature and theoretical frameworks. It examines the systemic causes of exclusion, highlighting policy inconsistencies and leadership's critical role. The discussion emphasises the need for trauma-informed and inclusive approaches to reduce exclusionary practices.

Chapter 11 – Conclusion The thesis concludes by urging reforms to prevent exclusion through age-appropriate disciplinary measures and comprehensive staff training.

Chapter 2: Institutional Ethnography (IE)

2.1 Introduction - IE and My Research Journey

This chapter introduces Institutional Ethnography as the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis. It describes my personal journey as a novice researcher, with limited academic learning but with over thirty years' experience in education. The chapter then gives an overview of the theory of IE. Finally, it discusses the use of IE in this study making connections to conceptions of exclusion.

One of the reasons for this professional doctorate has been to help me understand my own struggle with exclusion and the questions and concerns it has raised for me in using such a punitive sanction:

- Why did I use it?
- How did it make the child feel?
- How did it make others feel?
- How did it make me feel?
- How was I part of the problem?

Seeing the big picture in terms of national policy and how I was passively complying to something from 'above' was given little thought when leading and managing the daily comings and goings of over 500 people, some still in nappies! IE enables me as the researcher to use my own skills and knowledge of the subject being researched.

I have worked in childcare and educational settings for over thirty years as:

- Registered child minder
- Teacher (Reception, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6)
- Head of Pre-school
- Deputy Head
- Headteacher
- Ofsted Inspector
- Coach
- Consultant

My roles in childcare and education have provided deep insights into school communities and dynamics, enabling me to navigate various settings with ease and confidence, responding effectively to both children and adults. I've honed my ability to observe school practices in a way that helps those being observed feel at ease, maintaining a quiet, unobtrusive presence. This advantage, however, comes with the challenge of carrying my own preconceptions about teaching and learning, based on my extensive experience in education. As a researcher, I had to remain conscious of my personal biases regarding how schools should operate, while acknowledging how my ethnicity, class, and professional background might influence relationships and interactions in the research setting (Swain, 2006). I needed to stay aware of my partial insider status, balancing the advantages of familiarity with the potential risks of bias in my observations and writing. Conscious of this, I focused on ensuring that only relevant data, directly linked to the research questions, would be documented and used in my thesis (Brannick & Coughlan, 2007; Mercer, 2007; McGinty, 2012; Greene, 2014).

A pivotal moment in this process was embracing Institutional Ethnography as a methodology. IE encouraged me to use my own experiences in education as a valuable resource, aligning with the professional doctorate's ethos of reflecting on one's practice. Through my engagement with Dorothy Smith's work and that of other IE scholars, I gained the confidence to draw on my background, knowing that it would enrich the research rather than compromise it (Oakley, 2019; Rankin, 2017). Smith's concept of bifurcated consciousness (her navigation between her academic work and personal life) resonated with my dual identity as a mother and headteacher. I too felt that my life ran along parallel tracks, each influencing the other, yet often separate (Smith, 2005).

IE's focus on exploring how individuals' experiences are shaped by institutional processes made it a fitting framework for investigating exclusionary practices in primary schools. It provided a structured approach to explore how policies and practices in schools unintentionally contribute to exclusion, enabling a broader analysis of how institutional texts and policies guide everyday actions. By applying IE, I aimed to map out the hidden and informal practices that contribute to exclusion and investigate how these are embedded within the ruling relations of schools.

In sum, my professional journey and evolving understanding of exclusion in primary schools underpin this research, reflecting my commitment to both academic inquiry and practical application. IE allowed me to bring my expertise into the study while maintaining the critical distance necessary to explore exclusionary processes objectively.

2.2 Institutional Ethnography – an Overview

The foundations of IE were established by Canadian sociologist Dorothy E. Smith (1987, 1999, 2005, 2014). Her work was informed and developed from the work of others, including: Marx and historical materialism, Foucault; Bakhtin and Mead. Smith's work has continued to be developed in exploring institutional processes by other researchers and academics (Smith, 2006; Quinlan, 2009; Rankin, 2004, 2017; Walby, 2019). It has predominantly been used in Canada and North America, particularly in social work and health care, however in recent years it has been used by academics researching different institutions such as the Criminal Justice system (Walby, 2019). IE is a method of qualitative enquiry which looks at the complexity of relationships in hierarchical institutions, supporting inductive analysis, going from particular experiences to general analysis of social relations (Quinlan, 2009). Stanley, (2018) cited in Walby, (2019) argued that:

> 'Institutional Ethnography should be treated as one of the most insightful, original methods of inquiry ever developed in the history of sociology.' (p 148)

Institutional Ethnography (IE) builds on ethnomethodology and other sociological traditions that explore everyday life and social order (Quinlan, 2009). Smith viewed IE not just as a methodological approach but as a new sociology, shifting away from traditional paradigms to one that centres on the individual and their social interactions (Oakley, 2019). As a methodological practice, IE employs "data dialogues" (Smith, 2005). The primary dialogue occurs between the researcher and the participant, whether through observation or interviews. The secondary dialogue takes place between the researcher and the data, such as transcripts or field notes (Walby, 2013, 2019). However, Walby critiqued IE, cautioning that researchers could

misuse their authority in data generation and interpretation, potentially conflicting with IE's foundational goals.

IE takes the perspective of the individual to determine how their activities are shaped and co-ordinated by social relations and the relations of ruling in, for example, the making of policy. It investigates the social organisations in which people make decisions concerning their everyday life. People in IE are treated not as the object of analysis but seen as the starting point into understanding organisational processes. This is important in terms of the relationship between agency and structure. McCoy, cited in Smith (2006) writes:

> 'The analytical goal is to make visible the ways the institutional order creates the conditions of individual experience'. (p 109)

IE research involves working with people, not studying them nor looking at what they are doing but trying to find out how things are organised and what needs to be looked at to find out if it needs to be changed. Trying to learn how people are putting things together and the complexities of the social interactions going on. Smith (2005) writes:

> 'The institutional ethnographer works from the social in peoples experience to discover its presence and organisation in their lives and to explicate or map that organisation beyond the local of the everyday.' (p 11)

Rankin (2017) describes the aim of IE:

> 'is to investigate how people working in a particular place are co-ordinated by work going on elsewhere. The research goal is to amass evidence that is used to describe and to empirically explicate how disparate interests are activated and subordinated.' (p 2)

McGinty (2012) researching the complexities of researcher identity in school-based ethnography looked at the positionality of the researcher in schools and how they are perceived by participants within the institution. She highlights the importance of understanding and reflecting on one's own identity and the impact this could have when undertaking fieldwork.

My research draws on my experience as an educationalist and my persistent interest in children who present behaviours in school that are perceived to be outside of the norm and are therefore deemed as unacceptable, often resulting in a punitive outcome.

2.3 Key Features of IE

IE offers a unique framework for understanding the complex interplay between individual experiences and institutional processes. Developed by Dorothy Smith, IE provides a powerful lens to explore how ruling relations shape daily practices in educational settings, including exclusionary processes in primary schools. Below, I critically examine the key features of IE and their relevance to this research, which investigates how behaviour policies and exclusionary practices in primary schools are influenced by broader institutional forces.

2.3.1 The Problematic

In IE, the concept of the "problematic" is not about identifying predefined problems but about exploring issues that emerge from the lived experiences of individuals (Smith, 2005). The problematic focuses on identifying how everyday experiences are co-ordinated with ruling relations that shape institutional practices. In the context of this research, the problematic is centred around understanding why suspension and exclusion are increasingly used in primary schools, and how certain children become more vulnerable to exclusionary processes and practices.

Rankin (2017) highlights that the strength of IE lies in uncovering the disjuncture between what people experience and how institutional policies are applied. This is particularly useful for examining how exclusion guidance, such as the shift from the 2017 to the 2022 exclusion guidance, impacts primary schools differently compared to secondary schools. The disjuncture lies in the fact that policies crafted with a secondary school focus often fail to consider the developmental and contextual needs of primary-aged children. By mapping the everyday practices of staff and children in primary schools, this research aims to identify how ruling relations embedded in government guidance shape, and often constrain, the ways exclusionary practices are implemented.

2.3.2 Standpoint

Standpoint, a foundational concept in IE, argues that research should begin from the everyday experiences of individuals, acknowledging them as experts of their own lives (Smith, 2005). In the context of this research, the standpoint of primary school teachers, headteachers, and

vulnerable children offers crucial insights into how exclusionary processes unfold in practice. This is particularly relevant given that children, especially younger ones, may not be fully aware of the power dynamics and ruling relations shaping their exclusion.

Smith (1990) expanded the notion of standpoint to include individuals who may be "lost" in institutional discourse, which is particularly applicable to children at risk of exclusion. Exclusionary practices are often rationalised through managerial discourses that obscure the child's perspective, reducing complex behavioural issues to breaches of school discipline (Gazeley et al., 2015). In this research, the use of standpoint helps highlight how behaviour policies, framed through adult-centric managerialism, overlook the developmental needs and experiences of younger children. This research contributes to the literature by arguing that to mitigate exclusion, primary school policies must better reflect the standpoint of children, whose behaviour can be shaped by trauma, ACEs, and developmental factors (Cole et al., 2019).

2.3.3 Ruling Relations

A central tenet of IE is the concept of ruling relations, which are the translocal processes that organise and regulate everyday life through institutional texts and discourses (Smith, 2005). Ruling relations are critical in understanding how exclusionary processes and practices are not simply the result of local school policies but are coordinated by broader institutional forces such as government legislation and statutory guidance (Smith & Turner, 2014).

In the context of this study, ruling relations are evident in how national exclusion policies shape the ways primary schools manage behaviour and exclusion. The analysis of exclusion guidance

from 2017 to 2022 revealed that ruling relations embedded in these texts have become more punitive, aligning school behaviour management with broader government agendas focused on discipline and order (Daniels et al., 2022). This shift in discourse increases the likelihood of schools relying on suspension as a disciplinary measure, even when it may not be appropriate for younger children. Devi et al. (2020) have shown that institutional processes can subordinate local practices, and this research extends that analysis by exploring how ruling relations in exclusion guidance subordinate the professional judgment of teachers and headteachers in primary schools.

2.3.4 The Use of Texts in IE

Texts play a pivotal role in IE by co-ordinating and regulating institutional practices across different sites. Texts, such as statutory exclusion guidance, behaviour policies, and school disciplinary records, standardise the way exclusion is enacted, often removing the agency of individuals in interpreting policies based on local needs (Smith, 2005).

In this study, exclusion guidance texts are analysed to understand how they organise behaviour management practices in primary schools. Smith (2006) argues that texts serve to perpetuate ruling relations by imposing a standardised set of actions that are replicated across institutions. This was evident in the analysis of exclusion policies, which revealed that primary schools often adopt punitive measures designed for older children, without adjusting for the age and developmental stage of younger children (Gazeley et al., 2015).

Moreover, the study highlights how these texts lack explicit guidance on age-appropriate sanctions, leading to a disconnect between the intended protective role of exclusion policies and their practical application in primary schools. This reinforces the need for exclusion policies to better reflect the specific needs of primary-aged children, as current texts promote a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to consider developmental differences (Smith & Turner, 2014).

2.3.5 Mapping

Mapping is a methodological technique used in IE to trace the connections between local practices and broader institutional processes (Walby, 2019). In this research, mapping was employed to understand how exclusionary practices in primary schools are connected to national policies and ruling relations. By tracing the sequence of actions from the implementation of school behaviour policies to the final decision to suspend or exclude a child, this study reveals the complex co-ordination between local and translocal forces.

For example, the mapping of disciplinary actions in primary schools showed how exclusion decisions are often shaped by pressures from government performance metrics, which prioritise behavioural conformity over the emotional and developmental needs of children (Power & Taylor, 2021). This finding supports the argument that exclusionary practices are not just a reflection of local school culture but are deeply embedded in the ruling relations of the educational system.

2.3.6 Work

The concept of "work" in IE extends to all activities that take time, effort, and coordination (Smith & Griffiths, 2022). In the context of this research, work includes not only the formal roles of teachers and headteachers but also the everyday actions of children as they navigate school life. By examining the work that goes into managing behaviour and enforcing exclusions, this study reveals the often-invisible labour involved in maintaining school discipline, particularly the emotional work performed by teachers in balancing punitive measures with the need to support vulnerable children.

2.3.7 Time

Time in IE is used to explore how institutional processes and practices unfold in sequences of actions over time (Smith, 2006). In this research, time is an important factor in understanding how exclusionary practices evolve, from the moment a child exhibits behavioural difficulties to the point of exclusion. This temporal dimension also highlights how exclusion policies, when implemented without sufficient consideration of early intervention, lead to a cycle of exclusion that disproportionately affects certain groups of children (Daniels et al., 2020).

Time, as a concept, takes on distinct meanings within different institutional contexts, particularly when considering primary schools and the broader governance structures that regulate them. In schools, time is experienced as finite and linear from the perspective of the child, whose primary school years constitute a critical, unrepeatable window of opportunity. For some children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, this finite period may represent a rare and crucial life chance, an opportunity to acquire not just academic knowledge

but also the socio-emotional support that may be lacking in other areas of their lives (Vygotsky, 1978; Shonkoff, 2011). In contrast, adults working within schools experience time as cyclical, structured around academic terms and year groups, often viewing the school year as part of a routine process, a "conveyor belt" through which cohorts of children pass.

This cyclical experience of time for educators and professionals can sometimes obscure the singularity of the child's experience. For teachers, time is mediated by institutional pressures, curricular demands, performance metrics, and administrative responsibilities, which may inadvertently promote a factory-like view of education (Ball, 2013). However, educational professionals strive to resist this mechanised perception, bringing their expertise and ethical commitments to bear on the individual needs of their children. Nevertheless, the demands of educational institutions often conflict with the professional autonomy of teachers, resulting in a tension between institutional time and the child’s individual developmental trajectory (Simons, 2007).

Government legislation operates within a framework dictated by political expediency and parliamentary timetabling, often prioritising short-term objectives over the long-term needs of the education system. Education Acts and revised Statutory Guidance, while potentially progressive or well-meaning, are frequently introduced outside the natural cycle of the school year. This creates practical difficulties for headteachers and school leaders, who are required to adjust policies and implement changes mid-year, often with little time for thorough consideration or adequate staff training (Ball, 2013; Whitty, 2016). The timing of these

legislative changes disrupts the stability and continuity necessary for effective school management and child development.

From the perspective of the child, however, education is experienced as a linear and continuous process, where each moment in school builds cumulatively towards their future life chances. Children do not experience education in fragments or political cycles; their time in primary school is singular and finite, a one-time opportunity to gain both academic knowledge and social-emotional skills crucial to their development (Shonkoff & Fisher, 2013). Mid-year changes in policy, though necessary for compliance with new legislation, risk undermining the child's seamless experience of education. These disruptions can contribute to inconsistencies in teaching, behavioural management, and pastoral care, which are particularly detrimental to vulnerable children who may already be at risk of disengagement or exclusion (Caspi et al., 2016; Rivenbark et al., 2018).

Given that primary education represents a critical period for shaping a child's future trajectory, it is imperative that legislative changes be more closely aligned with the natural rhythm of the school year. The child's experience of time in education should be protected from the upheaval caused by political timetabling, ensuring that schools can provide a stable, high-quality educational environment. As Daniels et al. (2020) argue, the focus must remain on giving each child the best possible experience during their limited time in primary education, thereby maximising their potential and life chances. This highlights the need for greater coherence between educational policy timelines and the temporal realities of school life, ensuring that children's uninterrupted learning remains the priority.

For the child, the continual motion of their schooling experience, each lesson building upon the next, means that exclusion, even for short periods, risks missing not just academic instruction but also crucial emotional and social development. Research consistently shows that exclusionary practices, such as suspension, interrupt the educational trajectory of children in ways that disproportionately impact their long-term outcomes, particularly for those already vulnerable (Caspi et al., 2016; Rivenbark et al., 2018). The temporal disruption caused by exclusion, whether formal or informal, can have profound consequences on a child's development, as missed time in school equates to lost opportunities for learning and care that are difficult, if not impossible, to recover (Daniels et al., 2020). This makes the case for time-sensitive, inclusive practices in schools that prevent exclusion and prioritise continuous engagement with education, especially for at-risk children.

While teachers and educational professionals work within institutional cycles of time, it is critical to foreground the child's linear experience of schooling, where exclusionary practices can have lasting and detrimental effects. A more nuanced understanding of time in educational settings is needed, one that recognises the temporal fragility of a child's schooling experience and the long-term consequences of even brief exclusions.

Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term

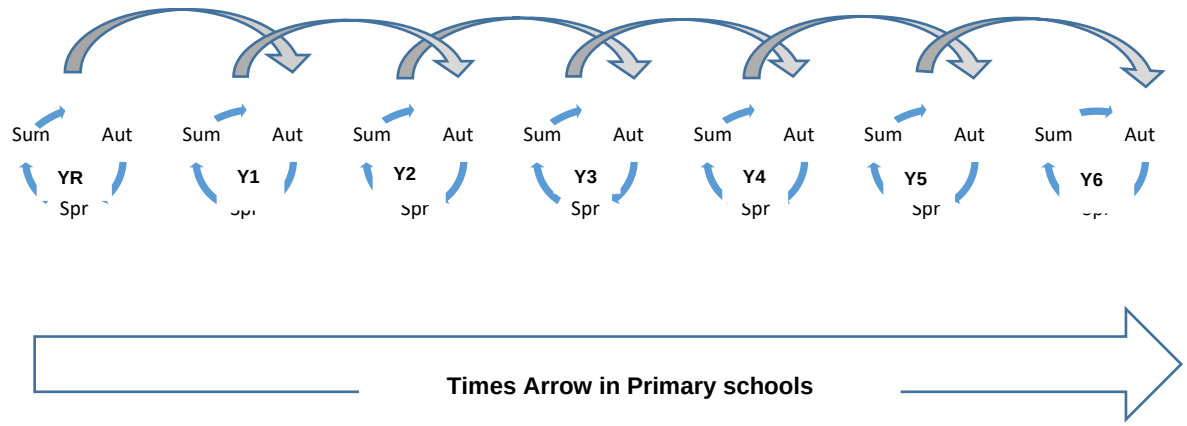


Diagram 3: Primary School Cycle of terms/years

2.4 Summary

IE offers a unique analytical framework that focuses on uncovering the ruling relations shaping institutional practices (Smith, 2005). This research, by using IE, seeks to understand if the ruling relations embedded in government texts subordinate local practices leading to an over reliance on punitive measures driving exclusionary processes and practices.

Chapter 3: Primary Schools, Politics, Policy and Practice

3.1 Introduction

Primary schools in England have undergone significant transformations, shaped by a range of political, social, and economic forces that have directly impacted exclusionary processes and practices. The evolution of primary education, from the introduction of state-funded schooling in the 19th century to the present day, has been heavily influenced by legislative decisions, social movements, and government policies (Whitty, 2016; Gillard, 2018). These historical developments have shaped the curriculum, behaviour management systems, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision, ethnic minority inclusion, and the education of children in care. Within these areas, exclusionary processes and practices have emerged as critical issues, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable children, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and minority groups (Parsons, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2019).

Primary schools play a crucial role in early education, equipping children with foundational skills for life (Alexander, 2010). Their governance is closely linked to national policies, which shape daily operations and influence children's educational experiences (Ball, 2017). In contrast to Scotland and Wales, England’s primary education system is governed by unique legislative frameworks with specific implications for inclusion and exclusion (Riddell & Weedon, 2016). Exclusionary practices in primary schools deserve special attention, as they differ significantly from secondary education, where policies often overlook the developmental needs of younger children (Power & Taylor 2018). Research shows that exclusion policies' "one-size-fits-all"

approach inadequately addresses younger children's behavioural and emotional complexities (Power & Taylor, 2018).

This chapter traces the history of primary education, highlighting key developments such as the introduction of compulsory schooling, 20th-century progressive movements, and significant reports like the Hadow Reports (1926) and the Plowden Report (1967), which influenced behaviour management and exclusion policies (Gillard, 2018). Political shifts under Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair further redefined the legislative frameworks governing exclusion in English primary schools (Ball, 2008; Whitty, 2016). Using IE, this chapter examines how policy analysis uncovers the power structures that sustain exclusionary practices (Smith, 2005) and assesses these policies' practical implementation, suggesting reforms to better support vulnerable children (Daniels et al., 2020).

Part One

3.2 Structure of Primary Education in England and Comparative Perspectives

Primary education in England starts with nursery (ages three to four), followed by Reception (ages four to five), and progresses through Key Stage 1 (KS1) (ages five to seven) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) (ages seven to eleven). Each stage follows learning objectives set by the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum, with mandatory assessments like the phonics screening test at age six and SATs at age eleven (DfE, 2021). This centralised system, monitored by bodies like Ofsted, ensures consistency in quality (Whitty, 2016) but imposes a rigid accountability framework, complicating issues like exclusion where flexible, child-centred approaches may be needed (Ball, 2017).

While England's primary education system is centralised, systems in Scotland and Wales grant more autonomy to Local Authorities to adapt policies to local needs. Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* promotes flexibility, prioritising overall child development over centralised assessments (Priestley & Biesta, 2013), allowing teachers to adjust strategies for individual needs, fostering inclusivity (Humes, 2021). Similarly, Wales's *Curriculum for Wales* emphasises well-being and child-centred pedagogy (Donaldson, 2015; Power & Taylor 2021), creating a more localised and inclusive educational approach.

Differences in governance and educational philosophy impact exclusionary practices. Research shows exclusion rates are lower in Scotland and Wales compared to England, likely due to more flexible, locally-driven approaches (Parsons, 2021). The emphasis on inclusivity and well-being in these policies helps protect vulnerable children facing behavioural challenges (Riddell & McCluskey, 2017). However, concerns remain about policy enactment, as hidden exclusions or off-rolling may still occur (Power & Taylor, 2021). Their work stresses the need for further research on how local interpretations of policies can unintentionally undermine anti-exclusion efforts.

The differences between the education systems in England, Scotland, and Wales underscore how structural and policy variations shape exclusionary practices. In England, strict accountability and performance targets limit schools' flexibility to adopt inclusive approaches for children with complex needs (Done & Knowler, 2020). In contrast, Scotland and Wales's more flexible, child-centred models suggest adaptable governance may better support

vulnerable children. However, Power and Taylor (2021) caution that any move towards flexible models must be carefully monitored to prevent new forms of exclusion and inequities.

3.3 The Primary School – A Brief History

State education in England dates back to the 19th century, facing opposition from authorities resistant to mass education (Simon, 1960; Gleeson, 1992). The Church of England supported education with a religious focus. The Royal Commission on Popular Education (1850) criticised the system, and Newcastle (1861) noted many left school without basic skills. The 1862 Code introduced "payment by results," narrowing the curriculum and focusing on testing, and was criticised for stifling education (Holmes, 1911, cited in Gillard, 2018). Free elementary education was established by the 1891 Elementary Education Act (Simon, 1960; Gleeson, 1992).

In this period, SEND children were largely segregated. Schools for the blind and deaf existed but primarily served to separate rather than educate (Gillard, 2018). The 1870 Education Act (Forster Act) marked a key shift, establishing elementary education for children aged five to ten, although it was not until the 1944 Education Act that free, compulsory primary education for all, was universally established.

3.4 The Hadow Reports

The Hadow Reports (1921-1933) recommended reforms, including dividing primary education into infant and junior phases, promoting co-education, smaller classes, and teacher specialisation in early childhood. However, these suggestions were largely overlooked, with the 11+ exam remaining dominant (Kogan, 1978; Simon, 1999; Jones, 2020; Alexander, 2022). Burt’s

theories of innate intelligence soon overshadowed the Hadow Reports, reinforcing class-based divisions through IQ testing, which limited opportunities for working-class children (Simon, 1974). Though later discredited, Burt's influence persisted into the post-war period.

3.5 The 1944 Education Act

The 1944 Education Act established the tripartite system of primary, secondary, and further education but entrenched social divisions through streaming, disproportionately affecting working-class children and those with special needs (Simon, 1960). Progressive education, advocated by John Dewey and Maria Montessori attracted considerable attention from educators, however teaching methods remained focused on older children, neglecting younger learners (Kogan, 1978; Simon, 1999; Alexander, 2022). Despite Burt's discredited theories, practices like streaming and "teaching to the test" persisted in primary schools (Simon, 1999). The Act also granted headteachers broad authority to exclude children, reinforcing exclusionary practices (Hayden, 1997).

3.6 The 1950s

The 1950s saw economic growth and social security expansion, but concerns about poverty and inequality grew. Primary education was divided into infant and junior stages, with traditionalist views clashing with calls for child-centred approaches. Angus Maude criticised progressive methods, fearing they would lower standards (Knight, 1990, cited in Gillard, 2018). Overcrowded schools and budget cuts worsened conditions, with more funds allocated to arms than education (Simon, 1999). Minister Eccles blamed juvenile delinquency on poor parenting,

positioning schools as responsible for maintaining discipline (Knight, 1990, cited in Gillard, 2018).

Despite evidence that coaching influenced test outcomes, streaming based on selection exams at age eleven persisted, disproportionately affecting disadvantaged children (Simon, 1953). Psychologist Philip Vernon challenged the rigidity of intelligence testing, showing that coaching could raise IQ scores, questioning the validity of the eleven-plus (Gillard, 2018). Simon argued that these tests favoured middle-class children, embedding class bias in education (Simon, 1953).

This historical analysis shows how entrenched practices like streaming and intelligence testing reinforced social divisions, with enduring impacts on exclusionary trends, emphasising the need for reform in primary education.

3.7 The 1960s

The 1960s marked a period of economic growth and increased governmental focus on education as a key aspect of social policy. By the end of the decade, government spending on education surpassed that of defence, and primary schools numbered around 700,000 (Simon, 1999). However, this period also saw growing tensions as progressive educational ideas, like those promoted by the Plowden Report, clashed with traditionalist views.

3.8 The Plowden Report

The Plowden Report (1967) promoted a child-centred approach, curriculum flexibility, smaller class sizes, and nursery provision, particularly in disadvantaged areas, acknowledging

educational inequalities (Simon, 1999; Jones, 2020; Tomlinson, 2022). Despite this, streaming by ability was widespread, with Jackson (1964) reporting that 96% of schools streamed children, often from age seven, entrenching social divisions. Middle-class children were placed in higher streams, while vulnerable, working-class children were relegated to lower ones, exacerbating inequalities (Jackson, 1964; Simon, 1991).

The 1960s saw the decline of the 11+ exam as the Newsom and Robbins Reports (1967) advocated for comprehensive education, challenging the notion of fixed intelligence (Gillard, 2018). Although comprehensive education was seen as liberation from the 11+, traditionalists resisted, leading to the "Black Papers" in the late 1960s and 1970s, calling for a return to discipline and testing (Simon, 1999).

3.9 The 1970s

The 1970s, with Margaret Thatcher as Secretary of State for Education, saw a backlash against progressive ideas. The "William Tyndale Affair"[8] led to media outrage and increased scrutiny of radical teaching, resulting in greater government control over the curriculum (Kogan, 1978; Simon, 1999). The Black Papers falsely blamed progressive schools for poor standards, setting the stage for a test-focused approach to education (Boyson, 1975, cited in Gillard, 2018). Thatcher's neoliberal education policies emphasised reduced public expenditure, privatisation, and parental choice, exacerbating social inequalities. Severe capital cuts led to deteriorating school infrastructure, marking a decline in educational standards (Simon, 1999). The 1988

[8] The newly appointed headteacher of the William Tyndale School radicalised the school's day to be centred around the child. Children had freedom during certain periods including the ability to leave school.

Education Act established the National Curriculum (NC) and SATs, reinforcing discipline and accountability measures, but neglected primary children's developmental needs and entrenched exclusionary practices (Chitty, 1989; Jones, 2020; Tomlinson, 2022).

Keith Joseph furthered the New Right's influence, arguing that declining educational standards contributed to social ills, reinforcing class divisions and limiting opportunities for disadvantaged children (Simon, 1999). The 1979 and 1980 Education Acts reintroduced selection in secondary schools, adding pressure on primary schools to prepare children for competitive exams.

3.10 The 1990s to the Present Day

John Major's government continued this trajectory, with Education Secretary Ken Clarke promoting a return to traditional teaching methods. The "Three Wise Men" report (1992)[9] criticised progressive education and endorsed streaming and ability grouping, which many educators warned would strip teachers of professional autonomy and stifle innovation (Thomson, 1992). The rise of Ofsted in 1992, tasked with inspecting schools, led to increased pressure on schools to perform well on standardised tests, often at the expense of inclusivity, as teachers focused on "borderline" children at the expense of those with special educational needs (Gillard, 2018; Jones, 2020).

3.11 New Labour

Blair's New Labour government, while initially promising social inclusion and poverty reduction through programmes like Sure Start, continued to prioritise standardised testing and market-

[9] Chris Woodhead - Chief Executive of the National Curriculum Council, Robin Alexander – Professor of Primary Education, Leeds University and Jim Rose – Chief Inspector, HMI.

driven reforms. Blair's emphasis on academies and private sponsorship of schools intensified privatisation and reduced local authority control, increasing educational inequities (Chitty, 2009). This approach, coupled with Blair's endorsement of exclusion as a crucial disciplinary tool (Steer Report, 2005), entrenched exclusionary practices in primary schools. Despite calls from educationalists like Galton (2007) to halt statutory tests and focus on holistic education, Labour's policies often sidelined social inclusion in favour of performance metrics.

Gordon Brown's tenure saw a focus on social mobility, with the Children's Plan aiming to reduce educational inequalities. However, despite comprehensive reviews like the Cambridge Primary Review, which condemned the centralisation of education policy and its link to poverty and underachievement, many recommendations were ignored (Alexander, 2020). The rise of academies continued, creating greater inequalities as these schools could exclude disruptive children without financial repercussions (Gillard, 2018).

3.12 The Return of the Conservatives

The coalition government, led by David Cameron, further entrenched marketisation, with the introduction of free schools and academies removing local authority oversight and exacerbating exclusion risks for vulnerable children. Despite promises of greater parental choice and inclusion through policies like the pupil premium, child poverty and class sizes increased, undermining efforts to create equitable educational opportunities (The Guardian, 2015 cited in Gillard, 2018). This highlights how neoliberal education policies, market-driven reforms, and standardised testing frameworks have reinforced exclusionary practices in primary schools.

Since 2015, the Conservative government has focused heavily on promoting academisation in education. The 2016 'Education and Adoption Act' accelerated the process, making it easier for maintained schools to become academies (Tomlinson, 2022). In their 2016 White Paper, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', the DfE emphasised leadership, accountability, and higher expectations to raise standards. However, this shift continued to promote market-driven policies with little consideration for the specific needs of primary-aged children, a trend that continued under Theresa May's administration, which sought to re-introduce grammar schools (Schools Week, 2018 cited in Gillard, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic, occurring under Boris Johnson's government, had a particularly profound effect on primary education. School closures and remote learning revealed deep educational inequalities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable children, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those with SEND (Bradbury et al., 2022). Educators worked diligently to meet the varied needs of children under unprecedented circumstances, but the pandemic highlighted systemic gaps in provision and support, especially for disadvantaged children (Emery et al., 2020; Tawell et al., 2020).

3.13 Primary Schools, Behaviour, and Attendance

The issue of behaviour and attendance has been central to exclusionary processes and practices in primary schools. Historically, exclusions were legitimised by the 1944 Education Act, which gave headteachers the authority to exclude children for disciplinary reasons. However, the Hadow Reports (1921–1933) were early advocates for a more nurturing approach to primary education, recognising that young children's behaviour was influenced by their developmental

stage and socio-emotional needs. The Hadow Reports recommended small class sizes, differentiated instruction, and a focus on the physical, mental, and moral development of children, principles that would, theoretically, reduce the need for punitive measures like exclusion (Hadow Report, 1931). However, the theories of Cyril Burt, particularly his advocacy for intelligence testing and streaming, had a lasting impact on the way behaviour was managed in primary schools. Burt's work, which suggested that intelligence was innate and unchangeable, supported the streaming of children based on ability. This led to the segregation of lower-performing children, often those from disadvantaged backgrounds, into lower streams, where behavioural issues were more likely to arise. These children were more likely to face exclusion, as they were often labelled as "troublemakers" or "disruptive" (Simon, 1974).

The Black Papers of the late 1960s and early 1970s further fuelled the debate on discipline in schools. These papers criticised progressive education and blamed it for declining standards of behaviour, calling for a return to more traditional, authoritarian approaches. This narrative paved the way for Thatcher's government in the 1980s, which prioritised discipline and control in schools. The 1986 Education Act and subsequent policies focused on zero-tolerance approaches to behaviour, reinforcing exclusion as a tool for maintaining order (Gillard, 2018). The ongoing emphasis on standardised testing and performance targets, first embedded by the 1988 Education Reform Act, has led to a narrowing of the primary school curriculum, with schools prioritising subjects like English and maths (Ball, 2013). This focus often marginalises children unable to meet these benchmarks, reinforcing exclusionary practices, particularly for disadvantaged children or those with special educational needs (Hall et al., 2004).

The emphasis on behaviour and attendance continued into Blair's government, with the introduction of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and the Every Child Matters agenda in the early 2000s. However, while these initiatives aimed to address the root causes of poor behaviour, they were not always implemented consistently, leading to a continued reliance on exclusion as a solution to behavioural challenges in primary schools (Steer, 2005).

3.14 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Children with SEND have historically been at higher risk of exclusion due to inadequate support systems. Children with disabilities in the 19th and early 20th centuries were largely segregated with many children placed in special schools or institutions. The 1944 Education Act aimed to integrate children with SEND into mainstream schools, but this was not fully realised until the 1981 Education Act, which introduced a system of statementing to identify and support children with special needs.

The Warnock Report (1978) was a watershed moment in the inclusion of SEND children in mainstream schools. It called for greater recognition of the rights of children with SEND and recommended that schools provide appropriate resources and support. However, the implementation of these recommendations was slow, and many primary schools lacked the resources to adequately support SEND children, leading to higher exclusion rates (Warnock, 1978).

Recent legislation, such as the 2014 Children and Families Act, introduced Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) to replace statements of special needs. While this was intended to

provide a more integrated approach to supporting SEND children, the process of obtaining an EHCP is often complex and bureaucratic, leaving many children without the necessary support. As a result, these children are more likely to be excluded, either formally or informally, through practices such as reduced timetables (Demie, 2022).

3.15 Ethnic Minorities

The exclusion of ethnic minority children in primary schools remains a significant issue. Post-war immigration led to an influx of children from the Caribbean, South Asia, and Africa into English schools, where many faced systemic racism and discrimination. The Rampton Report (1981) and the Swann Report (1985) both identified the underachievement of ethnic minority children and called for a more inclusive curriculum reflecting the diversity of British society. However, despite these early recommendations, ethnic minority children, particularly Black Caribbean boys, continue to experience disproportionate exclusion from schools (Gillborn, 2008; Knowler, (2019).

Knowler's (2019) analysis of exclusionary practices in schools, through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT), sheds light on how these processes are not solely a product of overt racism but are also embedded within institutional frameworks that maintain disparities through ostensibly neutral policies. CRT emphasises how structural racism is perpetuated within educational institutions, often through 'colour-blind' approaches that fail to account for the unique challenges faced by ethnic minority children (Gillborn, 2014). These frameworks contribute to the marginalisation of ethnic minority children, particularly Black Caribbean boys, by ignoring the intersection of race and exclusion. As a result, schools that do not actively address these

structural inequalities risk reinforcing the marginalisation of these children, leading to the continued overrepresentation of ethnic minority children in exclusion statistics.

Government policies in the 1990s and early 2000s, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, sought to address racial inequalities in schools. However, the focus on performance and accountability under the NC often led to the exclusion of ethnic minority children who were perceived as not meeting academic or behavioural standards. Research shows that ethnic minority children are more likely to be placed in lower streams, face harsher disciplinary actions, and be excluded from mainstream education (Rollock, 2012).

3.16 Poverty and Social Issues

Poverty has long been a driver of exclusion in primary schools. The Plowden Report (1967) was one of the first to highlight the impact of social disadvantage on educational outcomes, calling for Education Priority Areas (EPAs) to support children in deprived communities. However, the implementation of these recommendations was limited, and children from low-income families continue to face significant barriers to education.

The introduction of market-based reforms under Thatcher's government in the 1980s, including the promotion of school choice and competition, exacerbated inequalities. Schools in more affluent areas tended to perform better, while those in deprived areas struggled to meet performance targets. This led to higher exclusion rates for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, as schools sought to improve their results by excluding children who were seen as less likely to succeed (Gorard, 2021).

Blair's government introduced policies aimed at reducing child poverty, such as Sure Start, as did the later Coalition government with the Pupil Premium, which provided additional funding for schools with high numbers of disadvantaged children. While these policies have had some success in reducing exclusions, the persistent link between poverty and exclusion remains a significant issue. Research shows that children from low-income families are more likely to be excluded from school, and exclusion often leads to further social disadvantage (Strand, 2014).

3.17 Children Looked After

Children in care (Children Looked After (CLA)) are one of the most vulnerable groups in primary education, with exclusion rates significantly higher than their peers. Historical neglect of these children's educational needs has been well-documented. The 1948 Children Act first recognised the state's responsibility for children in care, but it was not until the 2004 Children Act that education was formally integrated into the care system (Brodie, 2001).

Blair's government introduced the Every Child Matters agenda (ECM), which placed a strong emphasis on improving outcomes for children in care. However, despite these efforts, children in care continue to face disproportionate levels of exclusion. A study by Melkman (2020) found that pre-school children who were looked after fell behind their peers academically, and this poor trajectory continued into primary school, often resulting in exclusion.

Below is a timeline outlining some key milestones in primary education, highlighting the potentially unacknowledged consequences of creating or perpetuating exclusionary processes and practices.

3.18 Timeline: Key Developments in potential Exclusionary Practices in Primary Education

1. **1944 Education Act**: Established the formal power for headteachers to exclude children, setting the legal framework for exclusion in schools.
    - **Significance**: Institutionalised exclusion as a tool for behaviour management, with little differentiation between age phases.

2. **1981 Education Act**: Introduced the concept of integrating special needs children into mainstream schools, but exclusion practices remained largely unchanged.
    - **Significance**: Highlighted the need for inclusive practices, yet exclusion remained a common tool for managing behaviour.

3. **1996-2000s National Literacy Strategy**: Increased standardised testing in primary schools, contributing to a performance-driven culture that exacerbated exclusions.
    - **Significance**: The pressure to perform on standardised tests increased exclusions, particularly among vulnerable children.

4. **2017 Statutory Guidance on Exclusion**: Formalised exclusion practices, reinforcing the legal basis for exclusions but without differentiating between primary and secondary schools.
    - **Significance**: Increased the reliance on exclusion as a behavioural tool in primary schools, without considering the developmental needs of younger children.

5. **2022 Statutory Guidance on Exclusion**: Updated guidance emphasising suspensions yet failing to address the specific needs of primary-aged children.
    - **Significance**: Despite updates, exclusion policies continued to reflect secondary-school-oriented approaches, neglecting the age-specific needs of younger children.

This timeline underscores the persistent challenges in developing exclusion policies that are appropriate for primary schools highlighting the critical need for reform.

3.19 Summary Part 1

The first section of this chapter has laid out the historical and structural evolution of primary education in England, providing essential context for understanding how exclusionary practices have been shaped by political, social, and educational forces. By tracing the development of the primary school system from the 19th century to the present, legislative decisions have been explored, such as the 1944 Education Act and key reports like the Hadow and Plowden Reports, have contributed to the current educational framework. These foundational elements are critical to understanding why exclusionary practices have persisted, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children with SEND, ethnic minorities, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Building on this historical and structural overview, the second section will delve into the specific policies and practices that govern behaviour and exclusion in primary schools, exploring how these have been influenced by both historical legacies and contemporary political agendas. Through a policy analysis lens, exclusionary practices are examined to see how they have

become embedded in school governance and reflect on how these institutionalised processes can be transformed to foster more inclusive educational environments. This shift from historical context to policy analysis is vital to the thesis's aim of revealing and addressing the underlying causes of exclusion in primary education, advocating for a system that better supports all children, especially the most vulnerable.

Part Two

3.20 The Importance of Policy Analysis in Addressing Exclusionary Practices

Policy analysis plays a pivotal role in understanding and addressing exclusionary processes and practices in primary schools. Policies dictate the formal processes and practices that schools must follow when addressing behaviour, but they also shape the broader cultural context within which these processes are enacted (Ball et al., 2012, 2018). An analysis of policy, especially from the perspective of IE, uncovers the hidden power dynamics embedded within ruling texts, which co-ordinate institutional behaviour (Smith, 2005). Policy analysis reveals how exclusionary processes and practices are not just the result of individual decisions by headteachers but are also driven by the larger structural and political forces that govern school processes.

As seen in England's "Statutory Guidance on Exclusion" (2017 and 2022), exclusion policy emphasises compliance and legal thresholds, often at the expense of contextual flexibility. For example, the power to exclude children in primary schools rests heavily on maintaining discipline, but this is often framed through secondary-level approaches that do not account for the developmental needs of younger children. By contrast, policy frameworks in Scotland, influenced by their more child-centred educational philosophy, incorporate restorative justice principles and multi-agency support (Graham et al., 2021). This stark difference highlights why

policy analysis is crucial: it offers an opportunity to critique exclusion policies that are misaligned with the needs of primary-aged children and provides evidence for alternatives that prioritise inclusion and child welfare.

3.21 Exclusionary Processes and Practices in Primary Schools – Why Age Phases Matter

The exclusionary processes and practices in primary schools are distinct from those in secondary schools because of the developmental stage of the children involved. Children in primary schools are in their early formative years, and exclusions at this age can have long-lasting impacts on their educational trajectory and psychological development. Research suggests that exclusions in early years education are particularly harmful, often exacerbating issues such as low self-esteem, poor academic outcomes, and social isolation (Gazeley et al., 2020).

Moreover, primary schools face unique challenges when managing behaviour, as younger children often display behaviours linked to unmet social and emotional needs. These behaviours should be met with support, rather than punitive responses like exclusion. Unfortunately, current behaviour and exclusion policies fail to account for the significant differences between primary and secondary-aged children. Ball (2021) argues that applying secondary-school-based exclusion processes and practices to primary-aged children is inappropriate and harmful, leading to increased disparities, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children with SEND.

3.22 Institutional Ethnography and Policy Analysis – Transforming Practice

IE provides a powerful framework for examining how ruling texts, such as exclusion and behaviour policies, shape the social relations within schools. Smith's (2005) theory posits that

texts serve as tools that regulate and direct institutional actions, often reproducing existing power dynamics and reinforcing exclusionary practices. By applying IE to the study of exclusion in primary schools, this research highlights how policies do not merely guide behaviour; they create structures of control that disproportionately affect vulnerable children.

Policy analysis through an IE lens not only reveals the gaps in current behaviour and exclusionary policies but also points to avenues for transformation. For instance, research into the effects of exclusion on young children calls for more inclusive practices such as early intervention, trauma-informed approaches, and restorative justice. Gazeley et al. (2020) argue that integrating these practices into policy frameworks could drastically reduce exclusion rates and improve long-term outcomes for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This research builds on that foundation, offering practical insights for how policymakers can develop more age-appropriate policies that address the specific needs of primary-aged children.

3.23 Findings, Summary, and Conclusion

The historical and political developments discussed in this chapter reveal a complex landscape in which exclusionary processes and practices in primary schools have been shaped by a combination of legislation, policy, and social factors. From the beginnings of state education to the present day, primary schools have been subject to a range of influences that have reinforced exclusionary processes and practices, particularly for vulnerable groups such as SEND children, ethnic minorities, children from low-income families, and those in care.

Despite efforts to create more inclusive education systems, many of the policies introduced over the past century have unintentionally increased the risk of exclusion for certain groups. The focus on standardised testing and academic performance, which began with the 1988 Education Reform Act, continues to marginalise children who do not fit the traditional academic mould. Similarly, the lack of adequate support for SEND children, ethnic minority children, and children in care has perpetuated a cycle of exclusion that disproportionately affects the most vulnerable.

IE provides a useful framework for understanding how exclusionary practices are embedded in the structure of primary education. By examining the power dynamics within policies and ruling texts, we can identify areas for reform that prioritise inclusion and child-centred approaches.

This historical context is crucial to the thesis, as it illustrates how policy reforms, often driven by political agendas, have systematically shaped exclusionary processes and practices in English primary schools, reinforcing inequities and marginalising vulnerable children. Understanding these trends helps frame the thesis's exploration of how policy analysis can address and transform these exclusionary processes and practices.

Chapter 4: Literature Review on Primary School Exclusions in England

4.1 Introduction

Exclusions in primary schools have been a persistent issue, attracting increasing scrutiny from scholars, policymakers, and the media over the past three decades. These concerns have brought attention to the complex dynamics behind school suspensions and exclusions, necessitating a detailed examination of the institutional and relational factors that shape disciplinary processes. This thesis aims to explore these issues through two central research questions:

- **What factors contribute to the increasing use of suspensions in English primary schools?**
- **How do institutional processes and disciplinary practices in some English primary schools contribute to the increased risk of suspension for some children?**

To critically examine these questions, the research utilises Institutional Ethnography (IE) as its methodological framework. IE provides a lens through which the institutional processes and ruling relations governing school exclusions can be scrutinised, offering a unique perspective on how policies and practices are enacted in the everyday functioning of schools (Smith, 2005). This chapter's literature review draws on IE's principles by investigating how systemic processes shape local actions in schools, contributing to exclusionary outcomes. The aim is to understand how broader institutional practices heighten the vulnerability of certain children to exclusion and how disciplinary decisions are operationalised within schools, with specific attention to how school leadership and institutional culture influence these outcomes.

The thesis has three interrelated objectives: firstly, to explore the institutional processes and relational dynamics that predispose specific children to a higher risk of exclusion despite existing behaviour policies; secondly, to investigate how disciplinary decisions are enacted, focusing on the day-to-day implementation of behaviour policies within schools; and thirdly, to identify the cultural, structural, and leadership factors that mitigate or exacerbate the risk of suspension, offering insights into how school environments shape exclusionary outcomes.

This chapter is divided into two key sections. The first section outlines the methodology employed in conducting a comprehensive review of the literature on primary school exclusions, detailing the inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting relevant academic research and policy documents. The second section critically engages with the existing literature, analysing how exclusionary practices in primary schools are influenced by institutional process, socio-cultural contexts, and policy frameworks. In line with the principles of IE, this review examines the ruling relations, texts, policies, and institutional discourses that co-ordinate exclusionary processes and practices at the local level, demonstrating how these relations are materialised in school settings.

By synthesising the literature, this chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how school environments, leadership approaches, and institutional practices contribute to exclusionary outcomes, laying the groundwork for the thesis's broader inquiry into the dynamics of exclusionary practices in English primary schools.

4.2 Section One - Literature Review Methodology – Background

4.2.1 Approach and Process

This section outlines the methodology employed for the literature review, describing the search strategy, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and the process of analysis. In keeping with IE's emphasis on uncovering the organisational and ruling structures behind everyday practices (Smith, 2005), the review aims to understand the rising trend of suspensions and the reasons certain children are more at risk. The research questions guided the selection and inclusion of relevant literature, ensuring coherence with the thesis's objectives and alignment with the institutional focus of the study.

4.2.2 Scoping Review

A scoping review was conducted, following the framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). Scoping reviews are particularly suited for mapping key concepts, identifying research gaps, and clarifying definitions within a broad research area. Given the multifaceted nature of exclusion in primary schools, this approach allowed for the inclusion of diverse research across educational, psychological, and policy domains. The flexibility of scoping reviews made it ideal for examining exclusionary practices, particularly in contexts where existing research may be sparse or fragmented (Munn et al., 2018; Levac et al., 2010).

This methodological approach aligns with IE's focus on uncovering systemic processes and the broader institutional context in which local actions occur (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). By using a scoping review, the study ensures that institutional processes influencing exclusionary practices

are thoroughly examined across multiple research domains, providing a holistic view of the issue.

4.2.3 Search Terms and Sources

The literature search was structured using PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) criteria, facilitating a systematic approach to identifying relevant studies. (*Appendix 2*). The search was conducted through Bedfordshire University's Discover search tool and Google Scholar, supplemented by searches in the British Library EThOS database for theses. The search terms included 'fixed-term exclusion' (Fx), 'suspension,' 'primary school exclusion,' and 'school discipline,' with Boolean operators such as 'AND' and 'OR' to ensure comprehensive coverage. Key inclusion criteria were:

1. Peer-reviewed articles
2. Empirical and theoretical studies
3. Publications between 2010 and 2020, focused on the UK
4. Studies on primary school exclusions, with parallel research relevant to suspension

Parallel searches in policy documents and grey literature were included to provide a broader understanding of exclusion within the national context, addressing potential biases from policy-driven frameworks.

4.2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were evaluated based on their relevance to primary school suspensions and exclusionary processes, with secondary focus on other educational contexts where appropriate.

Studies that isolated the problem to individual factors without considering systemic influences were excluded, as these did not align with the holistic, institutional perspective required for this research. In contrast, studies that examined exclusion as an institutional process were prioritised, in keeping with the IE framework's emphasis on the interconnectedness of individual actions and institutional structures (Smith, 2006). Below is a flow diagram which was adapted from Aveyard et al. (2016) to demonstrate the search process.

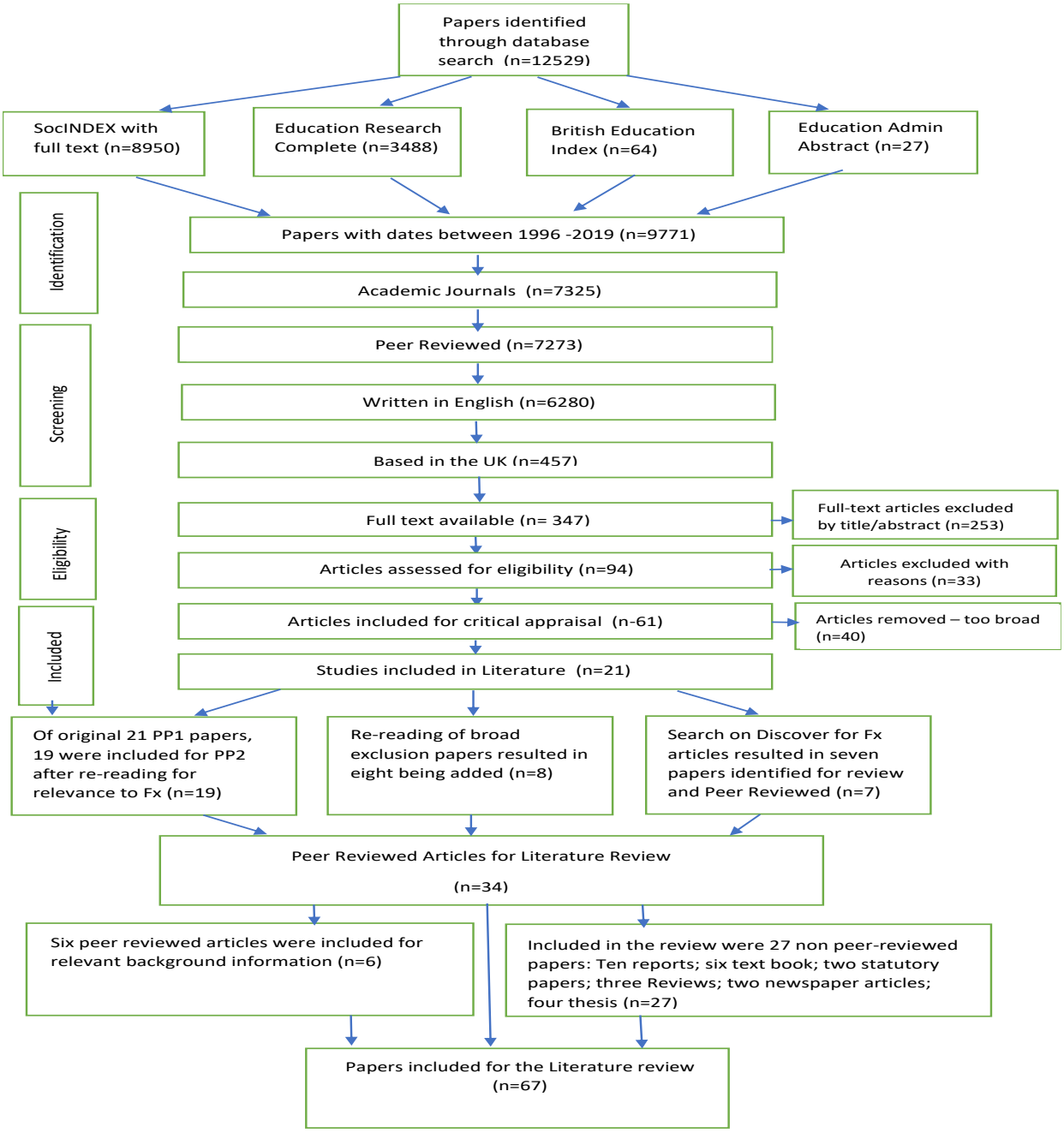


Diagram 4: Based on PRISMA (preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta analyses) adapted from Aveyard et al., (2016)

4.2.5 Data Extraction and Thematic Analysis

NVivo software was employed to assist in the coding and thematic analysis of the selected literature. Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines,

allowing for the identification of recurring themes related to school-related factors of exclusion, the role of institutional culture, and the specific processes leading to fixed-term suspensions.

4.2.6 Emerging Themes and Gaps

Through the thematic analysis, key themes emerged (*Appendix 3*) regarding the relationship between school leadership, institutional culture, and exclusionary practices. Much of the existing literature focused on secondary education, indicating a gap in research specifically addressing exclusions in primary schools. Furthermore, the lack of longitudinal studies and limited engagement with children's perspectives in primary school settings were identified as significant areas requiring further exploration (Gould, 2018; Burton, 2019). This gap reinforces the need for the current research to focus on primary school settings, where exclusionary processes and practices are often under-explored despite their long-term impacts on children's educational trajectories.

In line with IE's emphasis on mapping ruling relations, these themes highlight the need to examine how institutional processes, such as policy enactment, contribute to exclusionary practices. The findings from this review point to a broader institutional context that shapes the everyday work of teachers and administrators, highlighting the importance of understanding exclusion not merely as an individual action but as a process embedded within institutional power structures (DeVault & McCoy, 2006).

4.3 Summary of Methodology

The scoping review methodology offered a comprehensive framework for systematically examining the literature on primary school exclusions, ensuring the inclusion of a diverse range of empirical studies and theoretical perspectives.

By incorporating the principles of IE, this chapter provides a solid foundation for the thesis's broader inquiry into how exclusionary practices in primary schools are organised and enacted, and how these processes disproportionately affect vulnerable children.

4.4 Section 2: Review of the Literature

4.4.1 Introduction

Exclusion from school has long been recognised as a complex issue, with significant implications for both the individual child and wider societal outcomes. Research has consistently demonstrated that exclusion negatively impacts a child's educational trajectory, social development, and overall well-being, often leading to long-term consequences such as increased risk of criminal behaviour, unemployment, and social exclusion (Caspi et al., 2016; Rivenbark et al., 2018). These detrimental effects highlight the profound impact of exclusion, particularly on vulnerable children, and underscores the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to exclusionary practices in schools.

In England, exclusion has become a highly debated topic, both politically and within the public sphere, drawing divergent views on its role within the education system. As noted by McCluskey

et al. (2015) and Ford et al. (2018), the discourse surrounding exclusion reflects broader tensions between inclusion, disciplinary policies, and educational equity. These debates often centre on the balance between maintaining school discipline and providing an inclusive, supportive environment for all children, particularly those who are most at risk of being marginalised.

The literature is clear in highlighting the variability in exclusion practices across schools, demonstrating the need for a more nuanced understanding of how institutional policies translate into everyday school practices (Hayden, 2003; Parsons, 2018). This variability suggests that exclusion is not simply a matter of individual behaviour but is deeply intertwined with school ethos and culture, leadership, and the effectiveness of support systems for children facing behavioural challenges.

This literature review seeks to explore the complexities of exclusion in English primary schools. The research included in this review is focused on primary education, drawing on broader evidence to identify recurring themes and patterns relevant to exclusionary processes and practices across different age groups. The review addresses several critical issues: how exclusion policies are enacted, the consequences of exclusion for vulnerable children, and the systemic factors that contribute to the variation in exclusion practices.

By focusing on primary schools, this review seeks to illuminate the specific dynamics that contribute to exclusion at this educational stage. The chapter will conclude with a summary of

the findings, outlining key areas where further research and policy interventions are needed to reduce exclusion rates and promote more inclusive practices in primary education.

This section has outlined the background and purpose of the literature review, focusing on the problematic nature of school exclusion. The following sections will delve deeper into the specific factors influencing exclusionary practices in primary schools, offering a critical analysis of current research and identifying gaps in the literature that need further exploration. By doing so, the review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the state of exclusion in English primary schools and offer insights into how these practices might be reformed to create more equitable educational outcomes.

4.4.2 School Exclusion in Primary Schools: An Overview

While much of the research on exclusion has historically focused on secondary schools, there is growing recognition of the need to examine exclusionary processes and practices within primary education. Research in this area demonstrates that exclusions in primary schools often reflect broader systemic issues, such as inadequate support for SEN and a lack of early intervention strategies (Ford et al., 2018; Gazeley et al., 2012).

Over the past 30 years, research has consistently documented the ongoing issue of exclusions in primary schools, highlighting that they present unique challenges compared to secondary school exclusions (Brodie & Berridge, 1996; Hayden, 1997; Parker et al., 2016a). A central focus of this research is understanding the root causes, complexities, and potential strategies for early intervention that might reduce exclusions in primary education. Hayden and Ward (1996)

highlighted how early preventative measures, especially in primary school, could provide better outcomes and reduce future exclusions.

Primary school exclusions are often tied to low-level but persistent disruptive behaviour, culminating in singular “high-profile” events (Hayden & Ward, 1996). Studies suggest that the impact of exclusion on younger children can be more complex and far-reaching, affecting both short-term educational outcomes and long-term social-emotional development (Maguire et al., 2003; Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007). Brodie (1996) emphasised the severity of exclusion's impact on younger children, describing their circumstances as often more traumatic than those of their older peers.

A well-researched concern is the over-representation of boys in primary school exclusions (Hayden, 2003; Parsons, 2001). Studies by Ripley & Yuill (2005) revealed that 100% of the excluded primary boys in their research had undetected language and communication needs, an alarming statistic that points to systemic failures in early diagnosis and intervention. Undetected mental health challenges, including low mood and self-harm in primary school children, exacerbate this problem. Whear et al. (2014) found that without adequate support, these mental health issues deteriorate, placing children at a higher risk of exclusion.

The CLC (2016) flagged significant concerns about exclusions among children aged three to seven, identifying not only the volume of suspensions and permanent exclusions in this age group but also the extent of unlawful exclusions, especially among children with SEN. Their findings are supported by statistics that show that suspensions for children in this age group has

risen dramatically. Furthermore, unofficial and illegal exclusions often go unreported and unrecorded by the DfE, meaning that the problem is likely larger than the statistics suggest.

A recurring issue is the use of "hidden exclusions," where children are removed from the classroom without official exclusion procedures, limiting their educational and social experiences (Power & Taylor, 2018); Maguire et al., (2003) emphasised that whether the exclusion is official or not, the effect is the same: children are denied access to the curriculum and classroom interactions, further marginalising them. Hayden & Ward (1996) found that lunchtime exclusions and isolation were common, highlighting the hidden nature of many exclusionary practices that disproportionately affect younger children.

Recent studies draw attention to the need to address not only behaviour management but also the emotional experiences of children at risk of exclusion. Lobley (2020) found that children aged seven to eleven who were at risk of exclusion expressed feelings of injustice, disconnection from normal school life, and negative relationships with authority figures. Listening to children is essential to understanding their experiences and finding solutions, as also noted by McCluskey et al. (2015).

Thematic analyses by Hatton (2013) reveal that schools with clear, consistent behaviour policies and effective communication among staff and children can manage disruptive behaviours without resorting to exclusion. In her study, high-excluding schools often lacked consistency in applying their behaviour policies, while low-excluding schools had clear guidelines understood

by both staff and children. This suggests that the school's ethos and behaviour management strategies play a critical role in reducing exclusions.

4.4.3 Children at Risk: Complexity of Needs and Contextual Factors

Research highlights the early identification of children at risk of exclusion, often due to a combination of behavioural and socio-emotional factors. These children typically display behaviours that are triggered by traumatic experiences, adverse family conditions, or developmental challenges (The Children's Society, 2018). Hayden (2003) noted that in primary schools, exclusion is rarely a result of a singular incident; rather, it is the culmination of a series of disruptive or unstable behaviours that build over time. This aligns with Hayden and Ward's (1996) assertion that exclusions are a "journey" rather than an isolated event.

For children who exhibit such behaviours, the early recognition of issues can improve both short and long-term outcomes if acted upon through timely intervention (Paget et al., 2017). However, often these behaviours stem from deeper underlying concerns, such as hypervigilance, often a manifestation of trauma or maltreatment, that can exacerbate classroom behaviours like hyperactivity or aggression (Balbernie, 2001).

One significant gap in the system is that much of the behaviour leading to exclusion is often attributed to "defiance of rules" rather than actual violent behaviour (McCluskey et al., 2015). This finding suggests a misalignment between how behavioural issues are perceived and addressed, particularly for children who may not have violent tendencies but struggle with compliance or authority in the classroom. For example, Parker et al. (2016) stress that many

children at risk of exclusion present with overlapping challenges across developmental, psychological, and academic domains. In these instances, exclusion becomes not only a failure of the individual child but a broader systemic failure to address their needs in a comprehensive manner.

The complexity of exclusion extends beyond individual behaviour. As Paget et al. (2016) argue, exclusion must be understood through the "complex interaction" between a child's context, including their home, school environment, and family dynamics. This holistic perspective is essential because many children at risk of exclusion are caught in a web of interrelated factors that contribute to their behaviour, from socio-economic deprivation to familial instability. The research of excluded children by Parker et al. (2016) in the Southwest of England draws attention to this, finding significant overlap between psychological, developmental, and social challenges.

Research on school exclusions in England primarily focuses on permanent exclusion (Px) in secondary schools, yet the insights drawn are equally relevant to primary schools. Excluded children are often described in a manner that emphasises their shared traits, but Brodie (1996) warns against viewing these children as a homogenous group, highlighting the individuality and complexity of their needs. Gazeley's (2012) research into exclusion inequalities reveals intersecting factors such as gender, social class, and ethnicity, which together increase a child's vulnerability to exclusion.

Exclusion in England disproportionately affects already vulnerable groups of children. As studies by Paget et al. (2016) and McCluskey et al. (2016) confirm, boys, children from certain ethnic minorities (such as Black African-Caribbean and Gypsy/Roma groups), children eligible for free school meals (FSM), children looked-after (CLA), and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are particularly at risk. This disparity in exclusion rates, sustained over the past 30 years, continues to reflect deep-rooted patterns of social inequality.

Gender differences in exclusion are significant, with boys more frequently excluded than girls. However, recent evidence suggests that girls may be more vulnerable to informal exclusions, particularly in contexts where behaviour policies are inconsistently applied (Social Finance (SF), 2020).

Furthermore, children with SEN are disproportionately represented in exclusion data. Hayden and Dunne (2001), Parker et al. (2016), and the CLC (2016) have all drawn attention to this trend. Hayden's (1997) study of primary school exclusions revealed that 94% of excluded children had some form of SEN, with the majority excluded for disruptive behaviour, often rooted in unmet emotional, social, or mental health needs (Whear et al., 2014; Ford et al., 2018; Paget et al., 2018).

Children supported by social care are also highly susceptible to exclusion. The Timpson Review (2019) reported a strikingly high rate of exclusion among children who have had social care involvement. Exclusion can destabilise foster placements for CLA (Hayden, 1998), with Brodie (2001) noting that many of these children face multi-layered challenges both at home and in

school. The CLC (2018) found that 30% of looked-after children aged eight to ten were fearful of attending school due to bullying, further compounding their risk of exclusion.

Ethnicity is another critical factor in exclusion. Black Caribbean boys are four times more likely to be excluded than their peers (Parsons, 2008; Timpson, 2019). This trend extends to other ethnic groups, including Roma, Gypsy, and Irish Traveller children (Bhopal, 2011; Timpson, 2019). A better understanding of the cultural and social dynamics affecting these groups is necessary to reduce their risk of marginalisation and exclusion (Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot, 2007).

Research on risk and protective factors related to school exclusion is extensive. Protective factors are essential in mitigating exclusion risks, such as resilience, affectionate parental relationships, pro-social beliefs, and consistent parental involvement in education. The quality of a child's home life is often the most critical protective factor (Parsons et al., 2001; Paget et al., 2017). Breakdown in key relationships, particularly with parents, can leave children vulnerable to exclusion, emphasising the significance of family support structures (Lobley, 2020; Partridge et al., 2020).

A 2020 SF report identified key risk factors for exclusion, including contact with children’s services, socio-economic deprivation, SEN, gender, ethnicity, and experience of trauma. These risk factors collectively demonstrate how complex and layered exclusion vulnerabilities are in schools.

Another important risk factor is the undiagnosed communication needs of many excluded children. Law and Sivyer (2003) and Ripley and Yuill (2005) emphasise the need for early identification of language difficulties, whether expressive, receptive, or phonological, to enable effective intervention. These findings align with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' (2018) call for systematic assessments of language development to prevent exclusion and promote inclusion.

Further studies demonstrate that mental health and learning needs are closely tied to exclusion. Unmet needs in these areas often manifest as disruptive behaviours, which can lead to exclusion (Whear et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2016b). Children experiencing low mood, obsessive-compulsive behaviour, and anxiety may not receive the necessary interventions to remain integrated in the school system. Importantly, exclusion may exacerbate these pre-existing conditions if not properly managed.

Academic challenges and behavioural issues are also intertwined with exclusion risks. Many children with academic difficulties struggle to build relationships with peers, further complicating their social experiences in school (Parsons, 2001; Paget et al., 2017). Bullying, whether as a victim or a perpetrator, is another frequent correlate of exclusion.

The relationship between exclusion and a child's behaviour is bi-directional. Children with physical or mental disorders may act out in ways that lead to exclusion, while exclusion itself may deepen these issues (Paget et al., 2016b). Early and targeted interventions are crucial to prevent this feedback loop from leading to permanent exclusion. Research emphasises the

importance of addressing underlying challenges, be they academic, behavioural, or emotional, before exclusion becomes an inevitable outcome (Ford et al., 2018).

By focusing on both risk and protective factors, the research suggests that schools can better support at-risk children, avoiding exclusion by addressing the root causes of challenging behaviour.

The rise in exclusions within English schools has been linked to structural changes such as academisation, deregulation, and marketisation. These shifts have reduced collaboration between schools, potentially contributing to increased exclusion rates (Parsons, 2018; Partridge et al., 2020). Pressures arising from accountability measures like Ofsted inspections, changes in the curriculum, and resource constraints have created inflexible approaches that may lead to exclusion (Kulz, 2015). Contrary to this, Rose et al. (2018) argue that academies have developed partnerships that promote better practices around inclusion and exclusion through sharing resources and best practices.

Parents are often the first to alert schools and health professionals to behavioural concerns, yet their role is frequently underutilised or overlooked in managing a child's risk of exclusion (Hayden and Martin, 1998). This lack of parental engagement is a critical failure in the process, as early involvement could help prevent the escalation of behavioural issues. IE can provide valuable insights into how school policies and institutional practices marginalise certain children, further contributing to their exclusion. By examining the everyday dynamics within schools, IE allows researchers to explore how systemic practices can either mitigate or

exacerbate the risk of exclusion, particularly for those children who already face multiple disadvantages.

Children at risk of exclusion present complex challenges that require multifaceted interventions. Early identification, family involvement, and systemic approaches that address behavioural and socio-emotional issues holistically are crucial for preventing exclusions. Research emphasises that exclusion should not be seen merely as a consequence of individual behaviour but as a reflection of the broader socio-economic and institutional contexts that shape a child's school experience.

4.4.4 Critical Perspectives on Exclusionary Practices

The use of exclusion as a disciplinary tool, particularly with the rise of zero-tolerance policies (Brownstein, 2010), is contentious. Research consistently shows that exclusion does little to resolve underlying behavioural issues and, in many cases, exacerbates them by removing children from learning environments and essential support systems (Paget et al., 2016). Schools that heavily rely on exclusion are often criticised for failing to address the root causes of disruptive behaviour, which may stem from unrecognised or unmet mental health or developmental needs (Parker and Ford, 2013). This systemic reliance on exclusion reflects a deeper issue within the educational framework, where punitive responses overshadow preventive and supportive interventions (McCluskey et al., 2019). While exclusion remains a widely accepted disciplinary tool in England, its efficacy and fairness are increasingly questioned.

Exclusions are utilised across schools with varying degrees of frequency and severity, influenced by the balance between punitive and supportive measures. According to Parsons (2018), the application of exclusion reflects "the limits of adult tolerance" (Hayden, 2003). The nature of exclusion, however, differs significantly among schools, driven by disparities in institutional cultures, resources, and leadership approaches (Spink, 2011; Ford et al., 2017). These variances challenge the premise of uniformity in disciplinary policies, indicating that exclusions are not solely driven by the behaviour of children but are intricately linked to how schools interpret and enforce policies.

Suspension as a disciplinary tool in schools has seen a significant rise, with the highest suspension rates reported in 2019 since 2006/7. This increase, particularly among children experiencing repeated exclusions, highlights the growing reliance on suspension as a behaviour management strategy (Parsons, 2018; Dickens, 2020). Research suggests that suspension is often a precursor to permanent exclusion (Px) and should be treated as a marker for heightened risk (Ofsted, 2009; Paget et al., 2016; SF, 2020). Ofsted guidelines reflect this concern, noting that inspectors are now tasked with evaluating the effectiveness and patterns of suspensions during school inspections (Ofsted, 2019).

A key finding from research into suspensions is the wide variability in their use across schools and local authorities. McCluskey et al. (2019) point out the disparity in suspension rates across the UK, with England showing a sharp increase compared to other regions such as Scotland, where exclusion rates remain low. The inconsistency of suspension usage between schools, even those with similar intakes, creates a "postcode lottery" effect, contributing to entrenched

inequalities within the education system (Lawrence and Hayden, 1997; Maguire et al., 2003). Schools' application of national guidance is inconsistent, with some excluding children for relatively minor infractions, exacerbating the issue of unequal treatment (Gazeley et al., 2015; Timpson, 2019).

4.4.5 Official and Unofficial Exclusion

The use of official exclusion as a disciplinary tool in English schools has been scrutinised for its potential to be neither "lawful, reasonable, nor fair," as required by statutory guidance (Justice, 2019). Multiple reports, including those by Kulz (2015) and Hodge & Wolstenholme (2016), highlight ambiguities in the language of exclusion policies, suggesting that the current guidance lacks clarity, particularly around the use of suspensions. This opens up the possibility for varied interpretations, leading to inconsistencies in how exclusions are applied across schools, particularly when considering the different demographics of children and behavioural issues. The most common justification for exclusion is "persistent disruptive behaviour," a broad and somewhat vague term that covers a range of conduct, from minor infractions to more serious disruptions (Paget et al., 2017). However, Paget et al. (2016) argue that exclusion as a deterrent does not address the root causes of such behaviours, particularly when these are linked to unrecognised or unmet needs. Children with SEND are especially vulnerable to multiple suspensions, as disciplinary actions do little to address their underlying challenges (DfE, 2017b). Research shows that exclusion is often reactive and fails to adopt a more holistic, intervention-based approach, thus perpetuating cycles of punitive measures rather than resolving the behavioural issues that stem from a child's unmet needs (Parker et al., 2016a).

Further critique from Hayden (2003) suggests that policymakers and educators need to reflect on past education practices before making assumptions that the behaviour of children has worsened in recent years. Instead of adopting harsher disciplinary measures, Hayden advocates for more considered and context-sensitive responses to children's behaviour, particularly those that acknowledge systemic and societal changes in education.

Unofficial and illegal exclusions, though underreported, are prevalent in English schools, posing significant concerns for children's rights and educational outcomes. Unofficial exclusions occur when children are sent home informally, placed on restricted timetables, or isolated from classroom activities without following the legal procedures for formal exclusion (Hayden, 2001).

These practices, often implemented as temporary solutions, lack legal standing and disproportionately affect vulnerable children, particularly those with SEN (OCC, 2012). Illegal exclusions, distinct from unofficial ones, violate statutory guidance. They occur when children are removed without official documentation or parental notification, contravening the Education Act 2002, which stipulates that all exclusions must be properly recorded and reported (DfE, 2017).

The misuse of internal exclusion, such as placing children in isolation rooms, is a common form of hidden exclusion. These rooms are often used to segregate children for extended periods without formally excluding them from school. While these methods are intended to manage behavioural issues, they often marginalise children from educational engagement. A 2018 report by Power and Taylor highlights children placed in isolation or subject to "off-rolling", are

effectively excluded, but these actions bypass formal documentation processes. Off-rolling, widely condemned as unethical and illegal, violates children's rights to education under Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UNICEF, 1989). While not formally recorded as exclusion, off-rolling involves removing children from the school roll, often under pressure or coercion, to avoid damaging the school's performance statistics. This practice is widely considered illegal under Section 52 of the Education Act 2002, as it deprives children of their legal right to education. Schools may pressure parents to homeschool their children or transfer them to another institution without going through the legal exclusion process, circumventing accountability (Gorard, 2016). Exclusion, whether official or unofficial, must adhere to legal standards as outlined in the DfE's guidance. Any exclusion outside these procedures is illegal. Illegal exclusions violate the requirement for fair, reasonable, and lawful treatment of children, as prescribed by DfE Statutory Guidance (2017). Practices such as off-rolling and isolation rooms can be classified as unlawful when they are used excessively, without parental consent, or outside the framework of behaviour management policies (Justice, 2019). Kulz (2015) and Hodge and Wolstenholme (2016) emphasise that such practices lead to significant disparities in how exclusions are applied, with marginalised children being the most affected.

McCluskey et al. (2015) and Parsons et al. (2001) argue that exclusion, whether formal or informal, often fails to address the underlying emotional or behavioural challenges faced by the child. Instead, it perpetuates a cycle of marginalisation, where children, particularly those with SEN, are repeatedly subjected to exclusionary practices. This reliance on punitive measures,

such as isolation and informal exclusion, reflects a systemic failure to provide adequate support for children with complex needs, as identified by researchers such as Paget et al. (2016).

Increasing rates of suspension have led to frustration among parents, with some opting for home education as a response. Parsons (2018) notes that parents who feel their children are being repeatedly and unpredictably suspended are increasingly turning to homeschooling. Arora (2006) identifies three primary reasons for this decision: unmet SEN support, bullying, and school refusal. This trend is concerning as it highlights the inability of schools to provide a supportive environment for all children, especially those with complex needs.

4.4.6 National Perspectives on Exclusion

Exclusion in England operates differently from other parts of the United Kingdom, where Scotland, in particular, has demonstrated significantly lower exclusion rates, reflecting a preventive, holistic approach to school discipline (McCluskey et al., 2019). England's reliance on exclusion, however, raises critical concerns about the efficacy of this approach, especially as European comparisons reveal fewer formal mechanisms for removing children, and more inclusive approaches to handling at-risk children (Parsons, 2011). While Ford et al. (2017) acknowledge that exclusion is a global practice, it is notably "peculiarly British" in its systemic structure and frequency (Parsons, 2011). In England, headteachers hold the authority to exclude children, a power that differs from the model in Scotland, where exclusion decisions lie with the education authority. Headteachers' involvement in exclusion decisions often follows teachers' attempts to manage challenging behaviour, with headteachers becoming involved when classroom containment fails. This approach, as observed by Lawrence and Hayden (1997) and

Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007), creates a system in which headteachers may become overburdened by extreme behavioural incidents, resulting in exclusion becoming the default resolution.

4.4.7 The Impact of Exclusion: Legal, Ethical, and Social Considerations

The negative consequences of exclusion are well-established, with long-term impacts on a child's educational trajectory and future life opportunities (McCluskey et al., 2015). While some justify exclusion as a necessary disciplinary tool, research indicates little evidence that it benefits the excluded child or others, particularly when used as a "warning" to deter similar behaviours in other children (McCluskey et al., 2015). Vulnerable children, especially those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, face compounded challenges even before entering the school system (Paget et al., 2016; CLC, 2016).

Hodge and Wolstenholme (2016), drawing from Mills' (1959) distinction between private troubles and public issues, explore how family struggles become publicly scrutinised through exclusion processes. Families with external support involvement often find their private matters subjected to public judgement, further complicating the child's chances for educational success. Studies emphasise the importance of recognising parents' intimate understanding of their child's difficulties, which often remains overlooked by schools, limiting meaningful interventions (Hayden & Martin, 1998; Parsons et al., 2001).

McLeod et al. (2013) and McCluskey et al. (2015) have documented the perspectives of parents whose children have been excluded, demonstrating how exclusionary practices can disconnect

the family-school relationship. Yet, as Parker et al. (2016) note, research on the perspectives of parents, particularly those with younger children, remains limited, signalling a gap in understanding how exclusion policies affect family dynamics and educational outcomes.

The complex network of professionals involved in a child's education requires careful coordination to improve outcomes for children at risk of exclusion. As Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) and MacLeod et al. (2013) argue, disengagement from any professional can have lasting, detrimental effects on the child, underscoring the need for steadfast and thoughtful engagement across all support structures.

Exclusion from school has long been under scrutiny due to its significant consequences on both individual trajectories and societal structures. The literature consistently highlights exclusion's links to underachievement, criminality, and broader social issues, including gang culture and poverty (Kane, 2011; Parsons et al., 2001; Ford et al., 2017; The Children's Society, 2018). Research has generally portrayed exclusion as punitive, serving more as a response to problematic behaviour than addressing underlying causes (Hayden, 2003; Parsons, 2001, 2018).

The punitive nature of exclusion is further reflected in its negative long-term impact on a child's educational and social future, increasing their vulnerability to social exclusion. As Hayden (2003) argues, exclusion is more than a disciplinary issue; it is intertwined with broader societal factors. Exclusion is disproportionately concentrated among children from low socio-economic backgrounds, further exacerbating their marginalisation (Kulz, 2015). The exclusion of children from school perpetuates cycles of disadvantage, contributing to long-term social exclusion

(Parsons, 2001). Studies, including those by McCluskey et al. (2015) and Paget et al. (2016), have shown that excluded children often face multiple disadvantages, including mental health issues, socio-economic difficulties, and unrecognised or unmet SEN. The disproportionate exclusion of children from lower socio-economic backgrounds or minority ethnic groups highlights the intersection between education policy, social inequality, and systemic exclusion.

Social exclusion is a complex, multi-dimensional process. Levitas et al. (2007) describe it as a lack of resources and inability to participate in societal norms, impacting both individual life outcomes and societal cohesion. School exclusion can be seen as an early form of social exclusion, setting children on a path that distances them from mainstream opportunities, particularly when they are already disadvantaged (Levitas et al., 2007). Klasen (1999) adds that school exclusion contributes to adult social exclusion, with educational disadvantage translating into social and economic marginalisation in adulthood.

The relationship between school exclusion and social exclusion highlights the importance of social justice in educational policy. Exclusion disproportionately affects already vulnerable children, reinforcing patterns of inequality. The Centre for Social Justice (2018) emphasised that excluded children often face years of unresolved issues, both in and out of school, leading to marginalisation. Without early, effective intervention, these children are pushed to the periphery of society, where their future prospects are severely limited (The Centre for Social Justice, 2018).

The financial implications of exclusion are profound. Paget et al. (2017) note that the cost of excluding a child for a year exceeds the cost of keeping them in education. Moreover, the long-term financial consequences, including welfare dependence, criminal justice involvement, and healthcare costs, can total hundreds of thousands of pounds per excluded child (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007; Parker et al., 2016a). The social costs are equally concerning, as exclusion correlates with higher rates of anti-social behaviour and criminality (Hayden, 2003). Addressing exclusion through preventative measures and early intervention could reduce both the financial and social burdens on society.

4.4.8 Use of Data in School Exclusions

The availability of official exclusion data offers valuable insights into the trends in suspensions, yet there are significant limitations in the depth and utility of the analysis, especially for primary schools (Ofsted, 2009; SF, 2020). These datasets cannot fully explain the context or causes of exclusion, leaving room for hidden exclusions or practices that perpetuate inequality (McCluskey et al., 2015).

Data collection in exclusions needs to consider the factors behind trends, such as the extent to which schools may be implementing inclusive practices. There is a growing concern that some schools may use hidden exclusionary tactics, masking inequalities and failing to provide necessary support for marginalised children. McCluskey et al. (2015) argue that the data needs to be contextualised to capture this broader story, not just the official statistics.

In a quantitative longitudinal analysis of 500,000 pupils, Strand and Fletcher (2014) explored how exclusion is influenced by neighbourhood contexts, providing a nuanced perspective on the inequalities in the application of exclusions. They found that exclusion rates varied significantly based on socio-economic and neighbourhood factors, raising the question of fairness in how exclusion is applied. Their research suggests that while data provides a snapshot of exclusion rates, deeper analysis is required to address the underlying issues affecting certain groups disproportionately.

Further evidence from SF (2020) supports this call for a more nuanced analysis of data. Their research identified key indicators, such as contact with social services, absenteeism, and repeated suspensions, that signalled a heightened risk of exclusion for certain cohorts. By triangulating these data points, they argue for the need to target interventions at an earlier stage, addressing the issues that lead to exclusion before they escalate.

This evidence points to a critical need for a multi-dimensional approach to analysing exclusion data, integrating socio-economic factors, school practices, and the child's broader life context. Only through this lens can the data inform targeted, effective interventions to prevent exclusion and foster a more inclusive school environment.

4.4.9 Early Intervention and Preventative Approaches

In response to the growing body of evidence on the consequences of exclusion, scholars argue for a shift towards preventative measures. McCluskey et al. (2015) and Paget et al. (2017) both advocate for the early identification of at-risk children and the implementation of holistic

support systems that address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour. Addressing factors such as mental health issues, family circumstances, and socio-economic disadvantages could prevent exclusion and promote social inclusion, benefiting both the child and society.

The relationship between school exclusion and social exclusion is well established in the literature. School exclusion is not merely a disciplinary action but a symptom of broader societal inequalities.

The SF report (2020) highlights the need for early identification of children at risk of exclusion, advocating for evidence-based interventions to mitigate this risk. The report emphasises the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to exclusion, enabling schools and support agencies to develop proactive measures tailored to at-risk children.

Williams (2018) provides a model for early intervention through a holistic assessment of risk and protective factors. Her study on primary school children with behavioural difficulties demonstrates that systematic evaluations, at the child, home, and school levels, can help identify early indicators of exclusion and provide targeted interventions. Williams' thematic findings highlight several key areas that can influence exclusion risk, including developmental delays, pupil satisfaction with school, and the absence of the child’s voice. These factors not only influence behaviour but also play a significant role in a child’s ability to navigate the complexities of the educational system.

Critically, the study points to the importance of monitoring and evaluating interventions used with children experiencing emotional, behavioural, and social difficulties, emphasising the need

for a comprehensive, ongoing support system that extends beyond reactive disciplinary measures. The systemic failure to address these issues through tailored interventions contributes to the cycle of exclusion, often compounding the difficulties these children face both in school and at home.

Early identification and intervention are consistently highlighted as effective strategies for reducing exclusion. Children experiencing challenges such as absenteeism or mental health issues may be more responsive to early support, preventing their challenges from escalating into exclusion-worthy behaviours (Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot, 2007). Timely intervention also helps children remain engaged in school, improving both their mental health and their social and emotional well-being (Paget et al., 2017). By focusing on the strengths of each child and involving all stakeholders, teachers, parents, and external agencies, schools can better support children at risk of exclusion.

Researchers have identified a range of best practices for early intervention, including:

- Intervening promptly when problems arise.
- Listening to and involving parents.
- Identifying and addressing the child's strengths and needs.
- Ensuring flexibility in finding solutions and making necessary changes.
- Collaborating effectively across agencies to ensure comprehensive support (Lawrence and Hayden, 1997; Parsons et al., 2001).

However, research also indicates that certain interventions, if not carefully implemented, may inadvertently increase the likelihood of suspension (Rose et al., 2018). This highlights the need for well-designed, contextually appropriate interventions that consider the specific challenges facing each child and school.

By promoting early intervention, fostering a positive school ethos, and ensuring comprehensive training for staff, schools can create environments that are more inclusive and reduce the risk of exclusion. Addressing both the immediate needs of children and the structural issues that contribute to exclusion is essential for long-term success in preventing exclusion and supporting vulnerable children.

Effective early intervention is essential for preventing exclusion, especially when school staff are equipped with the skills and training needed for timely assessments and appropriate interventions. This process can help reduce the strain on external services and minimise the bureaucratic delays that lead to poorly managed problems (Parsons et al., 2001). A systematic approach to established assessments, as suggested by Parker et al. (2016), ensures that interventions are applied at the right time, preventing further escalation and exclusion.

Training is a crucial component of prevention strategies. Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) must be trained to understand and manage the diverse social and emotional needs of children, including identifying mental health disorders and developmental challenges. Additionally, training in positive behaviour management is required to foster a team-based approach in developing and implementing cohesive behaviour plans (Osler et al., 2001; Panayiotopoulos and

Kerfoot, 2007; Paget et al., 2017). This comprehensive training not only addresses behavioural concerns but also promotes the well-being of children at risk of exclusion.

Early intervention remains a critical strategy for preventing exclusion, particularly through assessments that address the child's, families, and school's needs. Paget et al. (2017) emphasise the importance of proactive assessments that generate dialogue between schools and parents to mitigate the risk of suspension. However, as some interventions may inadvertently increase the risk of suspension (Rose et al., 2018), it is crucial to ensure that early interventions are well-tailored to the specific needs of the child, school, and community.

While suspension continues to be used as a behaviour management tool, it poses significant risks of exacerbating social inequalities and negatively impacting children's educational and life outcomes. The inconsistent application of suspensions and hidden exclusions points to the need for better support for inclusive practices, early intervention, and a more nuanced understanding of the needs of children.

4.4.10 School Ethos, Culture, and Inclusive Practices

The ethos and culture of a school are critical in shaping its inclusion and exclusion practices. Ethos refers to the collective values and beliefs that guide how things are done within the school (Munn et al., 2001), while culture encompasses the broader attitudes, norms, and behaviours that characterise the school community. Together, they influence the school’s operational practices, policies, and its response to children’s behaviour.

Schools with a positive and inclusive culture tend to have clear, consistently applied policies that promote equal opportunities and support positive behaviour (Hayden, 2003; Hatton, 2013). These schools prioritise building an environment where both staff and children understand and uphold principles of inclusion. School culture deeply affects the school's disciplinary practices, shaping how staff approach children's behaviour, with inclusive schools being more likely to emphasise early intervention and support over punitive measures.

Parker et al. (2016a) emphasise the importance of the "school/pupil fit," indicating that schools with flexible, inclusive cultures are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of children, especially those at risk of exclusion. Conversely, rigid school cultures may lack the adaptability required to address the varying needs of children, contributing to higher exclusion rates. A school's ability to embrace diversity and employ early assessments can prevent exclusion and help avoid the stigmatisation of children as "deficit" (Maguire et al., 2003; CLC, 2018).

Research has identified place-based deprivation as a key factor in school exclusions. Schools located in deprived areas often face an increased clustering of children with risk factors such as poverty, low attainment, ethnicity, and SEN (Gorard, 2016; SF, 2020). This geographical clustering of vulnerability amplifies challenges for schools, further complicating efforts to provide targeted support and prevent exclusion.

Inclusive practices in schools are vital to reducing exclusion, yet the pressures on schools to be inclusive, while operating with limited resources, can paradoxically lead to increased

suspensions. These hidden exclusions often occur as schools struggle to meet the complex needs of their children without adequate support (OCC, 2012; Hodge & Wolstenholme, 2016).

For example, Rose et al. (2018) demonstrate that partnership-based approaches, where children at risk of exclusion are transferred between schools, have been employed as a means to address suspension rates. While these partnerships may foster more inclusive practices, they often fall short of true inclusion since children are still being removed from their regular school environment. The pressure to maintain classroom order and mitigate disruptive behaviours, often cited by staff and parents, remains a significant factor driving suspension rates (Parsons et al., 2001).

A key issue surrounding exclusions is the inconsistency in how schools define and manage behaviours that lead to exclusion. Studies by Paget et al. (2016) and Hayden (2003) highlight that persistent disruptive behaviour is the most cited reason for exclusion, but there is no standardised interpretation of what constitutes "disruption." As Parker and Ford (2013) suggest, what one school deems as severely disruptive may be considered minor in another, reflecting stark differences in ethos, expectations, and available support systems. Hatton (2013) similarly points to observable discrepancies between high and low excluding schools, where some schools, despite dealing with similar demographics and behaviours, opt for non-exclusionary methods.

TAs play a crucial role in supporting children at risk of exclusion, particularly those with SEN. Their interactions with children can be the difference between successful school placement and

exclusion. However, the effectiveness of TAs depends on adequate training and appropriate boundaries, allowing children to gain independence while receiving the necessary support (Parker et al., 2016a). The deployment of TAs to manage complex behaviours often places them at the forefront of behavioural interventions, making their role central to inclusion efforts.

Parental and staff pressure to remove disruptive children also plays a role in exclusion rates. Parents may view their child as a victim of classroom disruption, demanding the removal of the perceived disrupter. This dynamic shifts the conversation away from inclusion and towards protecting the learning environment for the majority. However, this can lead to increased exclusions, particularly when teachers feel personally challenged by non-compliant children (Spink, 2011; Gould, 2018). The escalation of behaviours, often due to mismanagement, can transform minor disruptions into grounds for exclusion (Hayden and Martin, 1998; Hayden, 2003).

Furthermore, the introduction of new headteachers often correlates with a rise in exclusions, either as a response to perceived behavioural issues or as part of an administrative effort to ensure accurate reporting of all disciplinary actions (Osler et al., 2001). Some headteachers use exclusion or suspension as a means to access additional external resources, particularly for children with SEN (Kulz, 2015). The tension between excluding children and addressing complex behavioural and mental health issues is highlighted in reports from Ofsted (2009), which noted that exclusions sometimes occur in place of necessary safeguarding referrals.

4.5 Conclusion

The 2012 OCC Schools Exclusion Inquiry highlighted concerns regarding exclusions in primary schools, recommending that there should be a presumption against permanent exclusions for younger children, particularly in Reception and Key Stage 1. Despite these recommendations, statutory guidance still permits exclusions.

The political context and policymaking surrounding education have a direct impact on exclusion rates. Partridge et al. (2020) point to unintended consequences of rigid behaviour policies, which disproportionately affect vulnerable children. Such policies often fail to address the systemic pressures, including high stakes testing and reductions in local authority funding, that lead to exclusion (Parsons, 1999; Power & Taylor, 2018). As a result, vulnerable children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, experience increased anxiety, disengagement, and marginalisation within the school system.

Exclusions, both formal and informal, are only the visible part of a larger problem. Gazeley et al. (2015) argue that the formal exclusion process only scratches the surface, with many more children effectively removed from the education system through unofficial exclusions. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) reported in 2017 that five times as many children are educated outside of formal schooling than official data suggests, as many informal exclusions go unrecorded. Munn et al. (2000) argue that this points to an urgent need to broaden the definition of exclusion and hold schools accountable for hidden exclusions, thus ensuring that all children receive their legal right to an education (Power & Taylor, 2018).

Moreover, questions of fairness and disproportionality surround exclusion practices, with evidence suggesting that certain groups, particularly those from ethnic minorities and disadvantaged backgrounds, are at a higher risk of exclusion. Researchers like Parkes (2012) and McCluskey et al. (2015) have raised concerns about whether exclusion is truly proportionate and equitable across different demographics. The disproportionate impact of exclusions is further compounded by the fact that excluded children face long-term negative outcomes, including poor educational attainment and social exclusion (Hayden, 2003; Maguire et al., 2003).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which the UK has ratified, highlights every child's right to an education (UNICEF, 1989). Articles 28 and 29 emphasise the importance of education in developing a child's full potential. However, exclusion from school often denies children this right, leading to broader social exclusion and long-term marginalisation. While the UK has committed to the principles of the UNCRC, gaps in legislation and implementation leave many children at risk of being denied their fundamental right to education.

Despite some progress in improving exclusion practices over the past three decades, many of the most vulnerable children remain at risk. Studies have largely focused on permanent exclusions in secondary schools, yet the rising trend of suspensions in primary schools remains under-explored. Hidden exclusions and unofficial practices, which contribute significantly to the marginalisation of young children, require further research and policy attention (McCluskey et al., 2015).

Exclusion in its various forms continues to be a significant issue in the English education system. While formal exclusions are well-documented, the real concern lies in the hidden and informal exclusions that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups. The variability in exclusion practices, described as a "postcode lottery," further exacerbates the challenges faced by children and their families, suggesting an urgent need for reform (McCluskey et al., 2015).

Chapter 5: Methodology and Methods

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology for this study with a focus on the aims of the research questions, ensuring they remain adequately addressed and answered. An account of the methodology and research design is given, providing the ontological and epistemological position taken and the methodological framework adopted, and why other potential methods were not taken. The research methods are then provided, concluding with ethical considerations.

5.2 Aim:

The aim of this thesis is to critically explore the factors that lead to variations in the use of suspensions in English primary schools, with a particular focus on the institutional processes and disciplinary practices that heighten the vulnerability of certain children to exclusion.

5.3 Objectives:

1. To investigate the institutional processes and relational dynamics that place specific children at a greater risk of exclusion, despite behaviour policies.
2. To analyse how disciplinary decisions are organised and operationalised within schools, focusing on the day-to-day enactment of behaviour policies.
3. To identify the key cultural and leadership factors that contribute to a school culture that reduces or increases the risk of suspension.

5.4 Questions This research is driven by two central questions:

- What factors contribute to the increasing use of suspensions in English primary schools?
- How do institutional processes and disciplinary practices in some English primary schools contribute to the increased risk of suspension for some children?

These questions reflect the need to examine broader factors beyond policy, incorporating institutional cultures and relationships that affect suspensions.

My methods evolved over the period of this research as my understanding of the subject of exclusion developed. During this period of research, I decided to use Institutional Ethnography (IE) (Chapter 2) as a methodological framework and approach to sociological thinking (Quinlan, 2008). I felt it would be a valuable tool to use in helping to explain the complexities of exclusion whilst maintaining a focus on the child.

I researched the political and policy making history in relation to primary education in England (Chapter 3) and the key decisions that had the potential to have a negative impact on children at risk of exclusion. Using the literature review (Chapter 4) as a platform to identify and understand the approaches used by other researchers, I selected the methods I thought most appropriate for my research. These are:

- Analysis of government statistics on exclusion and then to compare the national data with an English LA – Mercia.[10]

[10] Anonymised name.

- Analysis of the behaviour policies of 10 schools within Mercia to develop a questionnaire and analyse the resultant responses.
- Analysis of four nationally written documents pertinent to school exclusion.
- Fieldwork in five schools using observations and semi-structured interviews.

I used IE to develop my thinking which enabled me to create a framework to map the fieldwork data, school policy and national guidelines on exclusions. This helped to identify a child's experience in school that could be perceived to put them at risk of exclusion, against some of the institutional processes that were shaping that experience. This could then be mapped against the institutional discourse of the wider organisation of government guidelines and policy.

5.5 Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology in IE is relational. It is interested in the embeddedness of subject and object and the relationship they have in shaping and being shaped by the other (Reid, 2016). The experiences of people are both embodied and historically and materially co-ordinated with other peoples doings. Individuals and groups of people are socially situated, defining people in defined places doing something which is in a discoverable way organised. McCoy, (2021) quotes Smith, (2005) understanding of the ontology of IE:

> 'Individuals are there [in time and space]; they are in their bodies; they are active; and what they're doing is co-ordinated with the doings of others. That is the four-part package that is foundational to the institutional ethnographic project.' (p36)

Epistemology is social in IE, beginning in local sites of activity, located throughout society. Within this society participants become aware of how those who are powerful or privileged can ignore the less powerful or the less privileged.

My position as a researcher is based on how primary schools can be seen as part of an objective world, socially constructed as a result of the people making sense of that world, by interpreting and giving meaning to interactions with others in the world. This research sought to have the child at the centre of it. These communication networks are a part of the language, symbols and other stimulus enabling them to develop as individuals (Moreton, 2018). Peoples' understanding and actions, to some extent, are governed by external factors of which they have limited control. However, they can still have the capacity to use these in constructing their social being, individuality and personality. Schools have an order as a result of the interactions and understanding and relationships of those working in them. Conceptualising organisations and cultures through a constructivist lens define them as having a negotiated order through the ongoing and underlying process that arises from the understanding of the interactions by those in them, their interpretation of its rules and procedures, their roles within it and their relationships with others (Bryman, 2016). Any study involving organisations is complex as a result of continuous change, requiring the need to collect in-depth data, providing rich descriptions, building a picture, where detail is added throughout the process. Ontological considerations of constructivism can be used by social researchers to conceptualise organisations and cultures (Bryman, 2016). Social constructivism is knowledge which is co-created through social processes and interactions. People construct knowledge between them

and try and find understanding of the world that they exist in, creating multiple realities because of their unique lived experience.

For this study I needed to be mindful of young children in research and that they are at the beginning of understanding the social world they are in and how they make meaning from this. We place children in a socially constructed world and expect them to behave within the parameters set by adults. How children interact and make sense of their environment, provides a context for their actions (Moreton, 2018).

Exclusionary processes and practices and the use of suspension exist in this socially driven context. Providing a conceptual framework of exclusion to review the relationship between context and individual action may provide a greater insight into its use in primary schools. A framework allows the researcher to conceptualise the social world, to justify why, how and what they are doing. Understanding patterns, structures and relationships to develop an explanation is possible even though these can change over time.

The decision to use IE as the overarching framework for this research presented a dilemma in that much of what has gone before in the exploration of exclusion has been framed by theorising using conventional sociological approaches. Using intellectual theory such as Bourdieu's field theory provides novice researchers with a robust framework to guide their thinking and construct meaning from their data. Although IE is often pronounced as non-theoretical it was established from theoretically informed sociology, such as Foucault and Bakhtin and should be embraced as such to allow it to flourish and progress in the field of

research. The unorthodox framing of IE can sometimes lead novice researchers to question the integration of other methodologies alongside IE, despite their potential to enhance the identification and understanding of empirical data (Mikhailovsky et al., 2021).

The background, beliefs and biases of the researcher, as well as the research questions will also influence the research process. There will be an opportunity to draw on existing knowledge and the experiences of children and adults in primary school settings.

5.6 Research Design

The study focused on ten primary schools in Mercia, identified through the analysis of the data in DfE statistics, the School Census, and in conversations with the LA's exclusion officer. There were five schools that had above average suspensions (Fx in the data) and five schools with below average suspensions compared to national data.

The methods chosen were dictated by the nature of the problem set by the research questions and the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches were seen as appropriate. A convergent mixed method is an approach where qualitative and quantitative data is collected and analysed separately (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research involves the use of numbers within data to describe trends over time, opinions or attitudes. Qualitative research places an importance on how people make sense of their world, allowing the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' world, providing rich descriptive information about relationships which is difficult to achieve when using instruments of measurement.

Grounded theory was considered as a research method. It generates abstract theory from actions, processes or interactions which are collected from participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) and has been successfully used in researching exclusions. It is useful in new, applied areas where a lack of theory and concepts are available to describe and explain what is going on. It attempts to arrive at new theories rather than testing hypotheses from existing theoretical frameworks (Dunne, 2011). Although this approach lends itself to the research question, the use of a theoretical framework at the start of the empirical research may not support the grounded theory process. After consideration of a range of approaches, IE was chosen as the most pertinent approach to this research.

This research comprised of a number of stages or components that could be clearly defined. They were not strictly sequential, allowing the ability to reflect and return to the richness within the data to enhance and develop understanding.

Data collection techniques, semi-structured interviews, participant observation and researchers reflections were used to explore the experience that provided the starting place and identifies the problematic which then generated descriptions of what people were doing in their everyday lives at their primary school. The investigation then moved to begin examining those institutional processes that may be shaping the experience but that are not wholly known to the child or adult in the school. Observation and analysis of naturally occurring language data were used to examine institutional work processes. Text and discourse analysis were used to examine textual forms and practices of knowledge that organise those work processes. Interviews were a primary source for filling in the gaps. The need was to understand what people were saying,

where the gaps were and how to fill them in, and to move beyond institutional language. This was achieved by 'following a chain of action typically organised around and through a set of documents because it is texts that co-ordinate people's activity across time and place within institutional relations' (Smith, 2006, p 21).

5.7 Triangulation

The research process needed to demonstrate that rigorous procedures had been adopted throughout, were transparent and could be understood and replicated. Using what was already known about exclusion and exclusionary processes and practices from other researchers, carefully cross-referencing and filling in some of the identified gaps in research, generalisable processes involved in exclusion were identified, setting the scene for future larger research. Using a mixed-method approach and combining methods, triangulation can be used to strengthen a study (Golafshani, 2003). Triangulation is a strategy for improving the reliability and validity of research. This involved gathering multiple sources of information, looking for comparability and themes helping to reduce bias and establishing truthfulness.

5.8 Reliability

Reliability in quantitative research can be defined as producing results which are consistent, and an accurate representation of the population being studied with the aim that, by using a similar method, the same results can be reproduced. The questionnaire for this study was designed so that it could be reliably used in all English primary schools. In qualitative research reliability is used differently with researchers debating its use or re-defining the term e.g. consistency,

dependability, applicability or transferability (Golafshani, 2003). The use of IE provided a framework which demonstrated a consistent approach to the mapping and analysis of texts.

5.9 Validity

The researcher needs to establish validity of both the quantitative and qualitative methods used in the study. Validity in quantitative research determines whether what is being measured is intended to be measured and that the results are true to the questions asked. Lub (2015) cites the work of Guba and Lincoln (1981) as being influential in developing procedures and criteria for assessing the validity of qualitative research. In using a mixed-method design, Creswell & Creswell (2018) comment that the researcher needs to consider all the methods chosen, both qualitative and quantitative when recording and analysing the data.

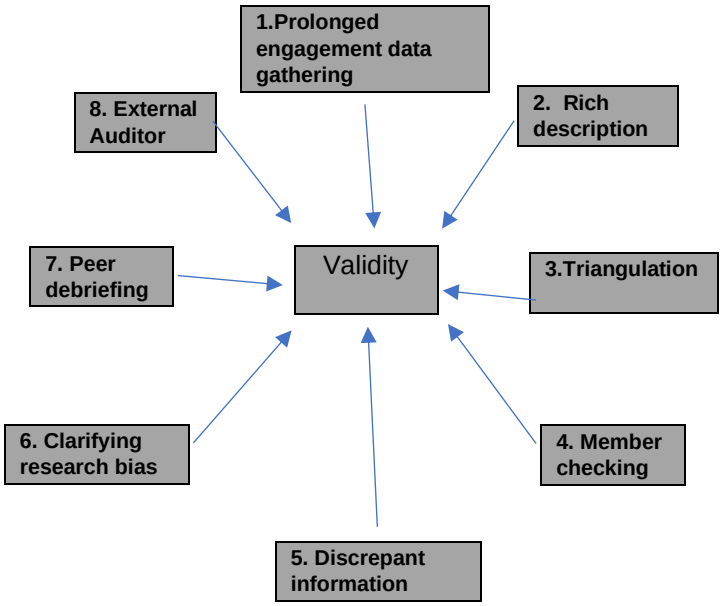


Diagram 5: Strategies for Ensuring Validity

The concept of validity is key in ensuring the robustness of the study, it is multifaceted and will be dealt with in greater detail before moving on to the next phase of the research.

1. Time was spent, developing an in-depth understanding of exclusion and exclusionary processes and practices in different schools. Understanding the differences and nuances in the phenomenon allowing for more accurate findings.

2. Bringing the research to life, enabling shared experiences of children at risk of exclusion through detailed and rich description of the setting helping to validate the findings.

3. The use of a range of methods to ensure multiple data sources were utilised to build a comprehensive picture of exclusions. This process added validity to the study.

4. Sharing information with participants so they could comment on the writing of major findings, helping to determine accuracy and to identify if there needed to be any follow-up interviews.

5. Acknowledging when findings may not be what was anticipated, which would add credibility to the study.

6. Acknowledging that bias and my pre-conceived ideas as being a researcher and previously in my roles in education would influence the collection and analysis of data

and the findings. I needed to be reflective about my background and manage people's expectations and my expectations about my role in their school.

7. Use the experience and knowledge of my peers and supervisors to ensure what is being done resonates with others in the field of exclusion.

8. Ensure that the findings are clearly understood by someone unfamiliar with this study adding to the validity of the research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Reliability and validity in IE research rely on understanding and interpreting the experiences of participant and researcher, acknowledging that each is positioned differently in the institutional division of work and the researcher constructs their relevant sequences of action together to make explicit the relation of ruling, with and outside of the local site, acknowledging positionality but maintaining the standpoint as the primary interest (Smith, 2005).

5.10 Transparency

Throughout the research I focussed on cohering the study, justifying the journey I was taking, particularly regarding IE. Being open and transparent has allowed me to make sense of the whole process, justifying and clarifying the power of the argument, why the research is being done, what I am doing and how I am doing it.

5.11 Limitations and Challenges

This study is designed to build on the work of others, hoping to provide an alternative lens to view suspension in primary schools. Exclusion is a popular topic, and it is important to keep up to date with new information. It is hoped that findings from the research will be transferable to other settings. However primary schools are individually unique with children and adults coming from different backgrounds, having different beliefs and biases. It is hoped that the trustworthiness of approach and the use of IE as the framework for this study will support generalisability.

5.12 Generalisability in Qualitative Research

While often associated with quantitative studies, generalisability also applies to qualitative research, though in a different way. In qualitative research using IE, the goal is not to statistically generalise but to offer insights into processes and mechanisms that can be applied in similar contexts. This approach, known as naturalistic generalisation (Stake, 1995), allows findings to resonate with readers, enabling them to apply insights to their own settings. In this study, while the specific schools may not represent all English schools, the institutional dynamics, such as how exclusionary policies are enacted, could be relevant to other schools with similar educational frameworks and challenges.

A key limitation of this study's generalisability is its focus on a specific local authority. While the findings may reflect broader trends, they may not apply uniformly across regions with differing policies, resources, and demographics. As Hammersley (1992) argues, qualitative research often prioritises depth over broad applicability, which can limit generalisability. However, this detailed

approach provides rich insights into how institutional policies shape exclusion, even if the findings are not universally applicable.

This in-depth analysis allows for analytical generalisability (Yin, 2014), where findings are transferable to other settings with similar institutional conditions. Although the findings are specific to certain schools, the processes uncovered may apply to other schools governed by similar policies and socio-political frameworks.

5.13 Analytical Generalisability in Institutional Ethnography

Institutional Ethnography does not aim to generalise traditionally but seeks to reveal how institutional processes shape everyday experiences. In this study, exclusionary practices observed in specific schools can be linked to national policies and socio-economic structures, offering insights relevant to understanding exclusion in similar educational contexts (Smith, 2005).

Additionally, naturalistic generalisation (Stake, 1995) suggests that readers, such as educators or policymakers, may identify parallels between the study's context and their own, making the findings applicable to their situations. This research offers a framework for understanding exclusion in primary schools, which can inform policies and practices in other institutions.

In this study, generalisability is achieved through both analytical and naturalistic frameworks. Although the focus is on specific primary schools, the findings offer valuable insights into institutional processes shaping exclusionary practices. These insights can be applied to schools

with similar challenges, contributing to broader discussions on educational inequality and exclusion within English primary schools.

5.14 Methods

Methods of research are the specific tools used to gather information. The approaches described below were selected as most appropriate to address the research question of this thesis.

5.15 Secondary Data

The methods chosen were felt to be the most appropriate to generate, organise and analyse the data. The use of different sources of data provided rich and detailed information to help answer the key research questions. For this research, comparative data was gathered including information from literature, national data, school websites and local demographic and geographical data (Moreton, 2018). Sensitivity to the context of the research was needed due to the schools being studied. This approach uses previously collected data from other sources. Any data that is available can be used as a method of research. This is a useful strategy as it allows the researcher to capitalise on the work of others, it is publicly available and cost effective.

Examples are, case study reports, use of single or multiple data sets, use of regular or repeated surveys (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Several academic studies have used secondary data effectively, providing rich and detailed evidence on exclusions (Parsons et al., 2001, Paget et al., 2017). Limitations of the approach include the possibility that data may not have been

systematically collected or recorded and that it was not specifically published for the purpose of research. The use of secondary data made a significant contribution to the study and involved:

- Analysis of national and local statistics on exclusions.
- Analysis of publicly available school documents.
- Government legislation and guidance

Documents for the study were authentic, had credibility and meaning and were representative of primary schools in England. They could also be used to triangulate information from other sources. Secondary data analysis including statistical and document analysis was used to gain insight into some of the processes and practices that may have intended or unintended consequences on the use of suspension in primary schools.

There was a wide range of data to be analysed. A key consideration when using secondary data was focusing on the research questions, particularly when analysing large and overwhelming pieces of information. Maintaining an exploratory approach led to further relevant questions. The decision about what data was needed and how it was collected was bound by the research questions, aims and objectives.

5.16 Data Collection

The study focused on one LA in the south of England. This was for two key reasons. Data highlighted this Authority had been in the five highest authorities for suspension in primary schools. Also, the researcher's knowledge of the LA and its accessibility helped with the field-work phase of the study. This could be identified as a case study as the term 'case' usually

associates the case study with a location and the emphasis on intensive examination of the setting. Case studies usually use qualitative methods such as unstructured interviews and participant observation to generate a detailed examination of the case. However, this approach involves the development of intensive and detailed knowledge about a single exclusion, or a small number of exclusions and the details typically emerge during data collection and analysis of a single case (or a small number of related cases), study of the case in its context and collection of information via a range of data collection techniques (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p 80).

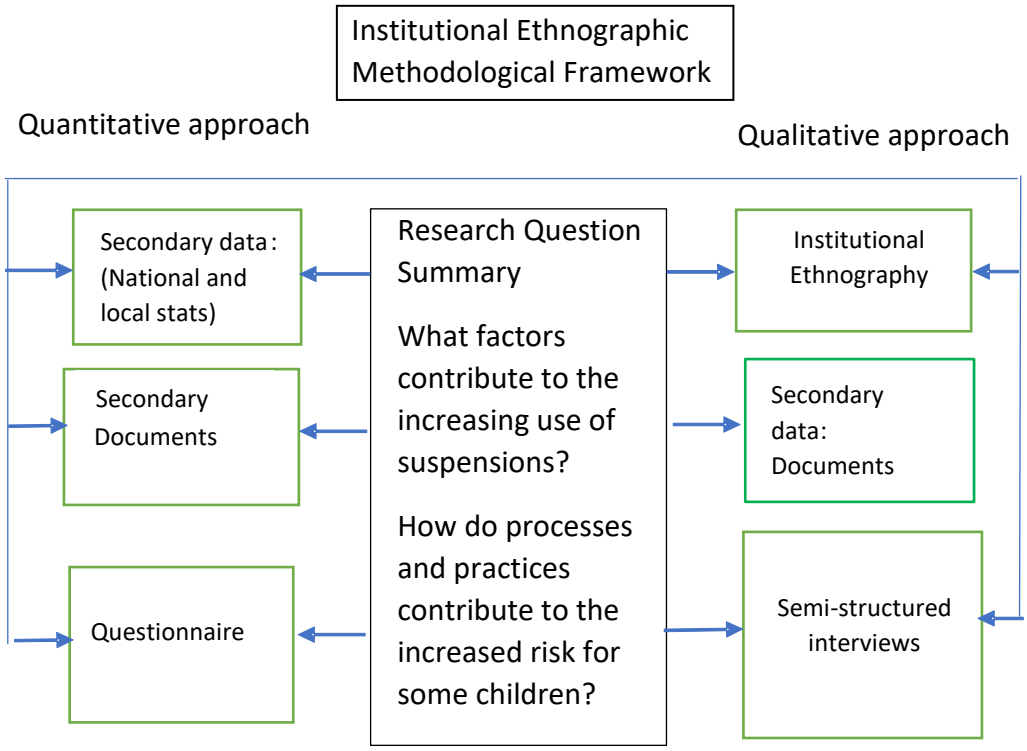


Diagram 6: Research Design

5.17 Survey

I developed a questionnaire which posed questions about school culture and ethos and exclusion in primary schools. The questionnaire was developed from the analysis of the secondary data and the literature review. The behaviour policies of the five high excluding and five low excluding schools were used to identify similarities and differences and to structure the questionnaire and decide who it should be targeted at within the school (the groupings) and the type of questions to pose. The behaviour policies set out how teachers and other staff should deal with behavioural issues, the standards of behaviour required by the children and adults, and how it is to be enacted. These polices collected for analysis were all downloaded on the 11th August 2022 from each schools website. The questionnaire was circulated to all staff in the targeted schools.

The research had indicated that it is the interpretation of these policies and how the adults follow them that can lead to some children being at greater risk of exclusion. The questionnaire sought to find out how the adults, within the different groupings and within the different schools weighted their interpretation of the behaviour policies.

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the returned questionnaires to identify and compare differences and similarities across the schools, as well as between the participant groupings selected for the study. This analysis provided insights into the patterns emerging from the data and facilitated a deeper understanding of the factors distinguishing the schools involved in the research.

I approached all of the schools (five highest excluding and five lowest excluding in Mercia) asking if they would complete the questionnaire, sending out a covering letter, information sheet, questionnaire and envelopes to all of the schools. Interestingly it was only the schools that had agreed for me to do my fieldwork who completed the questionnaire. One other school, whose headteacher was willing to complete the questionnaire was used, resulting in returns from six schools.

5.18 Participants and Recruitment/Sampling

The ten schools identified were used to help understand the spaces (the school) that children and staff live in and how they go about their day. I aimed to see how the ethos/culture differed between the high and low excluders and after obtaining ethical approval, these schools were contacted to invite their participation in my research studies. Due to the impact of Covid-19 most of the schools were reticent to be involved and three of the schools had put in place new policies which prohibited unnecessary visits.

The fieldwork element of this study was inadvertently timed for 2020 which coincided with the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic. This resulted in many layers of complexity both in accessing schools and the impact on the everyday lives of people. Lockdown began in March 2020 and UK government coronavirus lockdowns and measures continued to December 2021. This made accessing schools extremely difficult, with many making the decision to have no visitors even after lockdown was lifted.

As a researcher and as a professional in education I assumed that schools would want to help. I had gone through the University of Bedfordshire's rigorous ethics procedures; my ethics approval is at *Appendix 4*. I had developed the necessary documentation for schools. The letter of introduction and request for school to take part is at *Appendix 5*. I was ready to go, but I was not wanted. Having gone through lockdown, like many I had struggled with the fear of losing loved ones and the loss of contact of those who were normally part of my everyday life.
'I don't feel as if I belong to me at the moment – I need to find my way back so that I can move forward' (My diary entry 26/3/21).

The rejection from headteachers was sharply felt because I had been one of them - I could empathise with their struggles. My notes during that time were heartfelt:
'I feel so frustrated, this is so difficult, I thought it would be easy! I need to control my anger and think about doing the research. It's like taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. I need to cherish the contacts I have and demonstrate my sensitivity to the tension that exists in their school due to Covid – reflection and positionality WM!'[11] (My notes 20/7/21).

As a result of this, only three schools were willing to continue with the study, however, two schools in an adjoining LA agreed to participate. Another school in this LA also gave permission for the distribution and analysis of the questionnaire. Three schools had above average suspensions and three schools had below average suspensions. The pandemic has had a considerable impact on children in primary schools, resulting in a number of the lower excluding

[11] This refers to my surname 'Wallis-Maclean'

schools expressing concerns regarding an increase in challenging behaviour and the pressure to use suspension as a sanction.

5.19 National Document Analysis

The documents chosen were:[12]

1. **Document 1 (VS17) Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England –** Statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion September 2017 (DfE).
2. **Document 2 (VS22) Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (**Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England, September 2022 (DfE).
3. **Document 3 - Schools inspection handbook for September 2022 (Gov.UK).**
4. **Document 4 - Behaviour in schools, Advice for headteachers and school staff September 2022 (DfE).**

In researching government exclusion guidance, it felt appropriate to include the 2017 document as this was the document in place when this project began, however the 2022 documents show how behaviour, and the exclusions landscape has changed in primary schools in England over the last 5 years. It is the texts in the statutory guidance that are legally applicable but the **Behaviour in schools, Advice for headteachers** (**Doc 4**) accompanies the statutory guidance.

[12] Document 1 is also referred to as VS17 (Version September 2017) and Document 2 as VS22 (Version September 2022)

The reason for including **Document 3** is its use by headteachers as a result of their need to feel prepared for an Ofsted inspection and the judgements that will be made as a result of it. Schools require a 'good' judgement to allow them more autonomy within the education system.

All of the documents are replicable which means they can be read and heard by more than one person at different times and in different places. The text appears to be independent of the individual. (Smith, 2006)

> 'It is the replicability of text that sub-structs the ruling relations; replicability is a condition of their existence.' (p 166)

The documents will be identical in their form whenever they are downloaded from the government website, co-ordinating peoples' actions trans-locally. Smith continues:

> 'And when we are addressing institutions as we are for the most part in IE, we must be particularly aware of the role of texts in the generalisation of social organisation that we take for granted when we use the term.' (p 166)

Three further reasons for the selection of the documents were:

- they contain statutory guidance relating to school exclusions.
- they provide national guidance about behaviour and exclusions.
- the researchers experience as a headteacher.

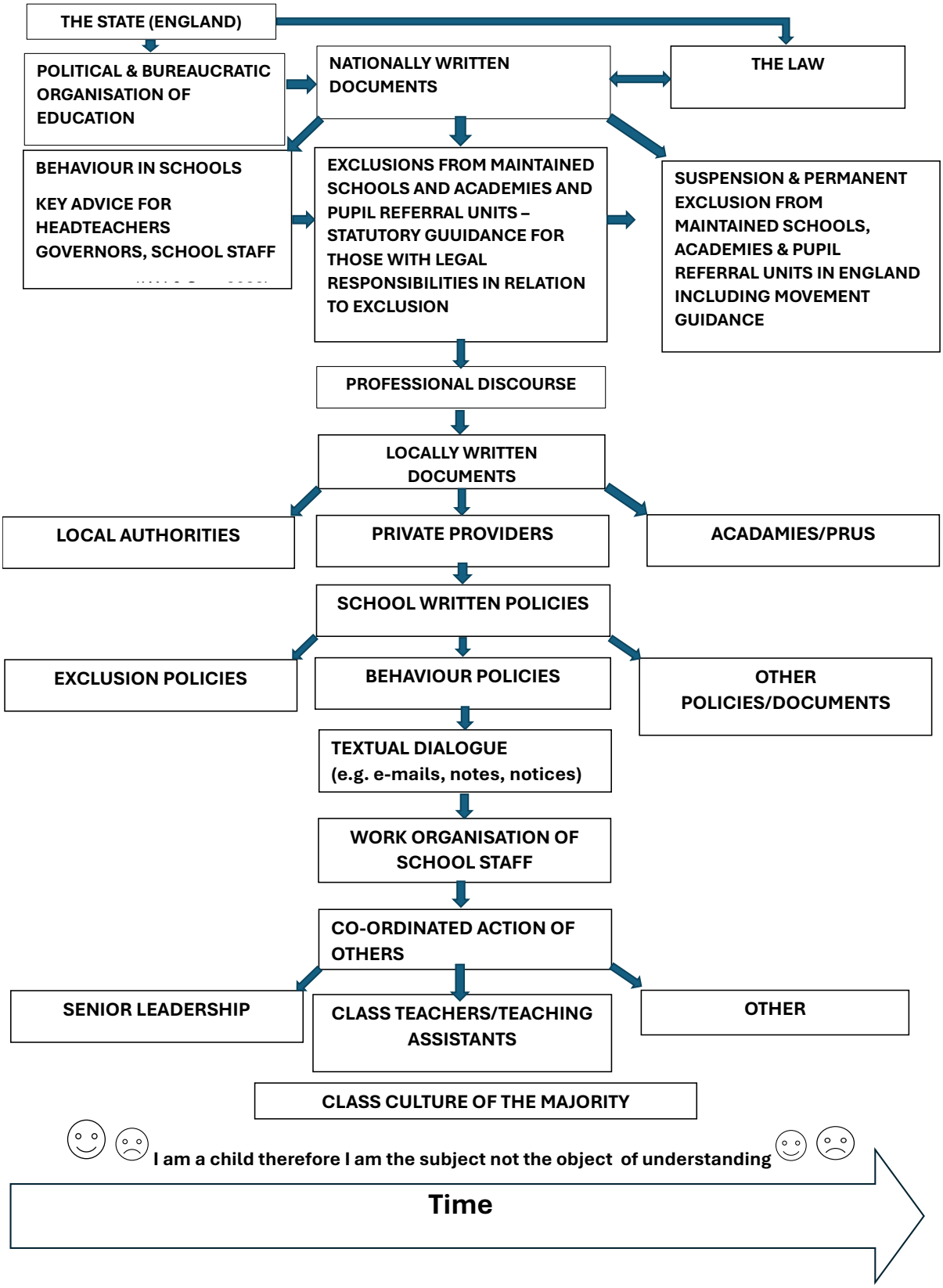
Having set the parameters of documents for analysis, the following process was used to interrogate the data, maintaining a focus on the research questions, aims and objectives:

- Mapping national documents 1 and 2.
- Mapping national documents 3 and 4.
- Mapping national documents 3 and 4 with the school behaviour policies.
- Mapping observations and interviews against national documents and behaviour policies.

The diagram below, developed from Smith, (2006) identifies the key policies and documents selected for analysis.

Diagram 7: Education Policy Relevant to Children at Risk of Exclusion

Institutional Processes and Practices



5.20 Observations and Interviews

In IE observation work starts at a specific place. Over time it explicates the co-ordination and social organisation of the extra-local and trans-local into local sites (Reid, 2016). Observation notes were used to analyse the standpoint of participants, revealing and following the textual mediation of experience in the schools. Participant observation was used as a data collection method focusing on the culture of the school and was the 'corner stone' of the institutional ethnographic research. This aspect of participant–observation required me to 'observe, listen, and read symbolic systems, including the oral, the written, and the image' (Floersch et al., 2013).

Participation-observation with a focus on observation was used as the main data collection method. Interviews were used, not to reveal subjective states, but to locate and trace the points of connection among individuals working in different parts of a primary school and the complexes of activity (DeVault and McCoy, p18 in Smith, 2006). The instructions and consent forms for participants is at *Appendix 6*. Coherence and transparency were essential to make sense of the whole process, justifying and clarifying the power of the argument, why the research is being done, what the researcher is doing and how they are doing it. This involved a considerable amount of 'conversations in corridors' with staff, allaying fears that I was not there to judge teaching and learning and that if at any time they felt unsure, to talk to me or to ask me to leave. Clarity of the purpose of the study was fundamental to establishing positive relationships with children and adults allowing me the freedom to observe with few constraints and have open and honest interviews. The relationship with participants and the trust

established enabled participants to feel confident to withdraw at any time during the study. This fortunately did not happen throughout the study. My notes Sep 2021.

'I need to think about how to remain reflective but clear and focussed about what I'm observing and how I describe it. It will be so easy to go in with my 'headship or inspectors shoes' on – remember you are a researcher WM, however difficult that might be. Be self-aware and think about my interactions with everyone in school. Think about the spaces I will be in and how they might be different.

- *the classroom*
- *the corridor*
- *the playground*
- *the dining hall*

How will I negotiate my presence - think about my body language, think about what I need to wear (you're not a headteacher anymore WM). What will my approach be? Think about the complex range of factors I bring:

- *long experience in education in various roles*
- *limited experience as a researcher and very new learning in an academic world.*

I need to be seen as legitimate, think this through WM – I am a confident educationalist but an inexperienced researcher and academic- think before I walk in through the school door. Can I be value free – that can't be possible, but I need to be aware of my values and how that may affect my take on what I see. Control - Headship – Footsteps (as a head my school knew I was coming

because of my footfall)! Think perceptions of staff, parents and children- it's their local community. Complexities of being in a high excluding school – don't judge WM observe/listen.'

The 'messiness' of fieldwork became very apparent during my time in schools. It was much harder than I thought it would be. Many factors came to bare, such as the logistics of getting to the schools, not being an automatic trusted member of the community I had been welcomed in to. I was often fearful of my own health due to Covid[13] and above all I felt the emotional turmoil, when having observed something I felt was a potentially exclusionary action towards a vulnerable child, I had to walk away. This came with a sense of loneliness and isolation because I was the only researcher with no-one to share my thoughts and feelings with in the immediacy of the event.

The observation and interview stage of this research was conducted with children face to face, creating complex ethical considerations.

I suspect it was challenging for the schools and the teachers. Three of the schools had higher suspension rates than local and national data. In one school this created vulnerabilities which appeared defensive and at times, obstructive. The need to demonstrate empathy and build trust as a researcher was crucial during the fieldwork element of the research.

My supervisors were important for me to be able to express my feelings in a safe and meaningful way and gain from their experiences. The fieldwork took a toll as it took

[13] I have brittle asthma.

considerably more effort to get schools to allow me to carry out my research in them than I had anticipated and during the field work I returned each day – often having stayed away overnight (we had moved), feeling physically and emotionally drained. Sometimes, I also somewhat arrogantly, wanted to return to headship just to try to make an impact on a child's life.

Observations and interviews focussed on the everyday lives of adults and children in school. This was to understand the implementation and enactment of behaviour policies in practice and how adults and children respond to these in a range of school contexts. By finding and describing social processes that have a generalising effect and the features of ruling relations that may be operating across the many social settings in schools it may be possible to address how and if there are experiences of exclusionary processes produced in primary schools and if so, what is the child's experience as a point of entry. Using IE there was the potential to shift the focus of investigation that could be useful in an effort to change the social relations that subordinate these children if exclusionary practices were identified.

The research into the specific analysis of social co-ordination followed a sequence:

1. Identifying an experience.
2. Identifying some of the institutional processes that were shaping that experience.
3. Investigating those processes in order to describe analytically how they were operating or being enacted.

Staff and children were spoken to throughout to find out how things work in their particular school. In building up an understanding of the co-ordination of activity in 5 different schools,

interviews did not need to be standardised as IE looks at the ability to learn about the relational chain. IE interviews aim to analyse how the people living in these different circumstances are drawn into a common set of organisational processes and they must be driven by a faithfulness to the actual processes that connect individuals and activities in a primary school (Smith, 2005, p 33). Rigour came from the careful and dynamic use of the developing map of social relations.

There needed to be clarity and consistency of procedure across all schools so that there was parity of information requested and the researcher was not 'persuaded' to look at specific children or cohorts. During this time, it was important to become 'part' of the school day, making regular detailed observations and listening to a range of conversations. Children are naturally curious and will be interested in a 'new person' in their class and following them around school. However, my experience suggests that an older person who is not particularly exciting does not remain interesting for very long! Participating with adults and children during fieldwork whilst attempting to remain as passive as possible enabled a greater degree of observation to take place. This helped to develop an understanding of the culture and ethos of each individual school and the behaviour of those within it and those involved with it, resulting in writing a detailed account of observations made (Bryman, 2016, p 424).

During interviews there needed to be awareness of the use of institutional language and the difference of the language used that was describing everyday work processes in a school. This is a popular means of data collection when researching exclusion in schools. The research questions were used to influence the questions asked in the interview, focussing on connected themes, generating further questions. The questions posed were clear and accessible to

participants allowing for a conversational style and for them to speak freely expressing their thoughts and feelings. This approach allowed for co-construction of meaning with the participant able to lead and shape the direction of the conversation thus reducing the researcher's input and influence.

Interview guidelines were written prior to the interviews to provide the necessary structure, outlining the key points to address whilst having the ability to remain flexible (Bryman, 2016). This allowed for more open-ended questioning. A limitation of this approach is that the interview was in place for one reason, for me, as the researcher, to interview the participant to gather information for my research.

5.21 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval of the research was applied and obtained from the University of Bedfordshire in accordance with its ethical procedures. Undertaking research which involves people, particularly children, can be stressful and can create undue anxiety, and stress (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Research ethics are concerned with the avoidance of harm to anyone involved in the research process and being aware of potential risks to participants and to me, as the researcher. This involved having an understanding of the demographics of individual schools, having a working knowledge of each school's website and whilst on site being aware of any potential issues or vulnerabilities that might need me to take a different course of action than had been planned. An example of this was during a session in a class a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) became noticeable distressed by my presence. It was important that I removed myself from the situation. Later when the teacher came to find me, we were able to speak about her

experience and allay any fears she had about my role as a researcher. Another example was when, as a result of seeing inappropriate adult behaviour towards a young child, although not a safeguarding issue, I felt compelled to remove myself from the situation and take some time-out.

Exclusion and exclusionary processes often result in emotionally charged and upsetting situations, leaving both adults and children vulnerable. Sensitivity to the physical and psychological well-being of all those involved, including myself as researcher, was needed to reduce the risk of harm. This required the principles of respect, competence, responsibility and integrity to be at the forefront of the research process.

Throughout the project and particularly when in school, I ensured that the process was a positive experience for all those involved by being sensitive to the needs of those being observed, answering any questions immediately and openly. At all times I was aware of my positioning in and around each school, being aware that I was an outsider and unknown by children and staff and aware of the need to be approachable and respectful was key in gaining trust. There was a need to be constantly vigilant for the possibility of imposing meaning because of unconscious bias, particularly due to my professional background, and ethical principles needed to be adhered to throughout the process not only during fieldwork or face to face contact but also in the use of secondary data and the writing of the thesis. The LA and the schools are anonymised in the thesis to prevent public identification. I will need to consider the ethical implications when disseminating the findings of this thesis, both to the schools and to the LA involved.

5.22 Gatekeepers

The use of gatekeepers and building relationships to develop empathy and trust was important, allowing sensitivity to the context of the research. Some schools being studied had increased levels of suspension potentially due to the Covid-19 pandemic and some adults and children were anxious about being observed by someone not directly connected to the school. The key gatekeepers controlling access to the population identified for the study was the LA Exclusion Officer and the headteachers of the individual schools identified. The meetings with the headteachers were important as it helped to explicate the dynamics and potential ethical dilemmas (Smith, 2002). This allowed for relationships and trust to be built during the process of recruitment. This was important as participants were children as well as adults and therefore there was a higher ethical risk (Bryman, 2016). Due to the potential vulnerability of some children and the sensitivity and complexities that surround exclusions, it was vital to be conscious of safeguarding procedures, ensuring that safeguarding policies and practices were adhered to, and ethical issues and a duty of care consistently considered.

5.23 Access Strategy

This is a small-scale project for a Professional Doctorate and therefore the samples needed to be manageable in terms of how time is managed and the collection and analysis of data (Swain, 2006).

I ensured that all participants had the details of the University supervisors attached to the researcher in the consent form, so if, as a result of the fieldwork the participants had raised

concerns or there had been complaints about the conduct of the study, they were aware of who to contact.

The complex ethical considerations when interviewing a child were mitigated by asking advice from class teachers on which children to interview and then sought further information on the child. Children were interviewed in an open space, and I explained to the child, using the guide developed during the ethics application, that they could participate or not, and could end the interview at any point. I also employed my long experience working with children to make the child feel appropriately at ease.

School's were sent detailed information which provided them with:

- The role of the researcher.
- The nature of the research.
- How the research will be conducted.
- The role of participants in the research.
- How they can choose not to participate.
- Right to de-briefing and feedback.
- Data Protection.
- Due regard given to Data Protection Act (DPA).
- Their right to withdraw at any time during the study.
- Access to and feedback from the data collection in order to verify that what has been established is acceptable.
- Access to the research findings at the conclusion of the study.

What became increasingly apparent during the recruitment of schools is how Covid had created more barriers to accessing headteachers. The administration officers on many occasions were not only the gatekeepers to the headteacher but often appeared to hold the veto on whether to pass on the information to them.

I spent many hours e-mailing headteachers whose names had been given to me by the LA Exclusion Manager. Initial communications which had to go to the headteachers via the school's administrators had virtually no responses, second communications were typically the same.
I then communicated with the Exclusions Manager explaining the problem and she forwarded the headteachers direct e-mail. This elicited some responses. The response rate was frustrating and even when the school had agreed to participate considerable effort was required to actually confirm concrete dates and participation.

I wrote circa 100 emails, 40 telephone calls and numerous bartering sessions with schools administrative staff even before I got to the headteacher and many emails using the exclusion officer as an intermediary elicited few genuine participants. The schools that did participate, however, once committed stayed throughout. I had telephone conversations with the headteachers before each visit and on the distribution of the questionnaire. Interestingly, although I had imagined my background would be anonymous all the headteachers communicated my background to their staff. This, I believe, made some teachers feel uncomfortable but may have assured others that I was a trusted school participant. To the best

of my understanding no headteachers communicated my presence with parents although in school 5, the headteacher sought permission for me to speak to a parent.

5.24 Bias

Due to my professional background and experience, I assumed that an 'insider' stance should be taken. This influences how the researcher behaves and affects pre-conceived ideas of what is expected, and how participants behave and what they think the researcher might want to see and hear. For this research, an 'insider' position may have inhibited the data collection process. I felt, having discussed the situation with key participants, I should take on the role as a researcher with experience in primary education and not disclose my professional background. This did not work in practice, with all the headteachers telling their staff that I had been a headteacher. As can be seen later in the analysis and summary sections, this had an effect on how I was accepted, particularly by some members of staff.

5.25 Conflict of Interest

I have not been an employee of Mercia LA, therefore, a conflict of interest was not envisaged.

5.26 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodology and methods used in this study, providing the gateway to the next chapters of analysis and findings.

Chapter 6: Data on Exclusion of Children from English Primary Schools: The Picture from National and Southern Local Authority (LA) figures

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of exclusion data from primary schools in England, comparing national data with that of a specific Local Authority (LA) on the South Coast, anonymised as Mercia, during the 2017/18 academic year. The chapter emphasises the importance of exploring primary school exclusion data to understand trends, identify differences between LAs, and ultimately inform policy and practice to address exclusion issues. Analysing national exclusion data was essential to determine whether the patterns and issues identified in the literature remain pertinent (Brodie & Berridge, 1996; Hayden, 1997; Maguire et al., 2003; CLC, 2016). The comparative analysis was instrumental in selecting schools with high and low exclusion rates for further investigation, enabling the researcher to engage with these schools through questionnaires and in-depth observations to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying factors influencing exclusion processes and practices.

6.2 Method

The data for this chapter were sourced from National Statistics available on GOV.UK, including the DfE reports on Permanent (Px) and Fixed Period (Fx) Exclusions in England (2017-2018) and the School Census data from January 2018. This data collection is statutory and occurs three times a year. The analysis includes data on primary school pupils, and children aged 11, who may be in either Year 6 or Year 7, highlighting transition-related questions.

Three types of exclusions data are collected by the government: Permanent (Px), Fixed term (Fx) and lunchtime exclusions. The term Fixed term was the describer when this data was collected and is therefore used throughout this chapter. It is now referred to as suspension and multiple suspension in the Government data. Whilst schools collect lunchtime exclusion data it is not included within the published statistics. Fx data is broken down to Fx and Fx1+. Fx1+ is when a child receives repeated Fx in an academic year.

Data for exclusion is collected and aggregated to annual figures by summing the number of termly exclusions. A unique pupil identifier is used alongside each reported exclusion. Linking exclusion records collected in the census to unique pupil identifiers, gives the total number of exclusions received by each pupil across a given period (such as a term or academic year).

Exclusions are linked to the relevant pupil's characteristic data collected via the school census (A guide to exclusion statistics, 2017b, p21). Rates[14] of exclusion rather than the number of exclusions is used in most comparisons, to account for change over time and make comparisons easier with data from smaller LAs.

[14] Px rates are calculated by dividing the number of Px recorded across the academic year by the number of children who are both sole and dual main registered on roll on the January Census Day, multiplied by 100. Fx rates are calculated in the same way but use the number of Fx across the academic year. Fx 1+rates are calculated by dividing the number of pupils Fx1+ in an academic year by the number of children on role on the January census day.

6.3 Analysis Framework

The chapter employs Institutional Ethnography (IE) as a framework for analysis, acknowledging the inherent tensions in applying quantitative methods within IE (Malachowski et al 2017). IE critiques the objectification and categorisation of human experiences through rigid data classifications, urging a recognition of the children behind the statistics.

6.4 National Exclusion Statistics: Analysis and Implications

The following section presents a comprehensive analysis of national primary school exclusion statistics comparing this analysis with the data from Mercia, focusing on both permanent and fixed-period exclusions. This comparison aims to identify significant deviations from the national trends, offering insights into regional variations that may stem from differing local policies, socio-economic conditions, or school practices. By pinpointing these differences, the research identifies potential areas for further investigation and fieldwork, particularly in understanding the local factors that contribute to these variations. This comparison provides a foundation for developing region-specific strategies to address exclusion and improve educational outcomes.

6.5 Mercia LA Primary School Exclusion Statistics and Comparisons to National Data

Mercia has had higher rates of Fx in some schools, than the national average for over five years. It is the largest southeastern city in England, outside of London. It has 19 Lower Super Output areas which are within the 10% of most deprived areas in England, and 1 in the 10% least deprived. It is ranked 55 out of 317 LA's in the Index for Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and it has been estimated that nearly 12,000 children may be living in absolute low-income families (Mercia CC data, 2020).

There are 55 Primary schools with a child population of 20,551. Fifteen of these schools are Converter Academies, four are Sponsored Academies and one is a Free School. Mercia has one PRU which provides full-time education for children from five to 16, with a dedicated class for children in KS2.

6.6 Detailed Analysis

The utility of official statistics in research is well-documented, although it is important to acknowledge that, due to their primary purpose and method of collection, there may be discrepancies and limitations when applying them to research projects (Parsons, 2008; Malcom, 2018). A significant limitation is that such data often fails to contextualize and capture the underlying processes and potential inequalities that contribute to exclusions (Gazeley et al., 2015).

The analysis provides both the number and rate of exclusions, utilising a modified risk ratio (Bolmer, 2007) to calculate the average risk of exclusion for specific groups. This ratio is determined by dividing the percentage of children from each characteristic group by the percentage of children who received a Px, Fx, or Fx1+.

In reporting these ratios, some data are presented to four decimal places, following the DfE standards. Although presenting data to four decimal places may not be as concise or intuitive as two decimal places, it allows for a more nuanced understanding of the differences in ratios,

which can provide a more accurate picture of the disparities.[15] In other tables, two decimal places are sufficient to provide clear and accurate data.

After conducting a thorough analysis of the national data under each specified characteristic, comparisons will be made against the data from Mercia LA. This comparative analysis will utilise the same characteristics to identify any significant variations from the national trends. These identified discrepancies will highlight potential areas for further research and inform subsequent fieldwork, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing exclusion rates within different local contexts.

6.7 Pupil Characteristics

The analysis commences with a detailed description of pupil characteristics in state-funded primary schools as of June 2018, focusing on various demographic and socio-economic factors. It is crucial to consider the diverse range of children who receive fixed-term exclusions (Fx) and to recognise that they are not a homogenous group, as different triggers may lead to an exclusion (Brodie, 1996). The selection of characteristics for analysis is grounded in the nationally available data on primary exclusions, which consistently highlights the disproportionate representation of certain groups in exclusion statistics (Brodie, 1996; Hayden, 1997; Parkes, 2012; McCluskey et al., 2016; Parsons, 2018). These characteristics include:

- Age and Gender

[15] For example, when examining Fx by age and gender for children aged four and under, the rate for boys might appear as 0.60 and for girls as 0.06, resulting in a ratio of 10 when rounded to two decimal places. However, at four decimal places, these figures might be 0.5996 and 0.06376, respectively, resulting in a ratio of 9.4. This subtle difference in decimal precision can significantly impact the interpretation of gender disparities in exclusions.

- Ethnicity
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Social class
- Children in Local Authority Care (CLA)

The analysis dissects key demographic variables, such as age and gender, to identify patterns and trends in exclusion practices. This nuanced understanding allows for a more targeted approach in addressing the factors leading to exclusions.

6.8 National Primary School Exclusion Statistics

The DfE produces data on school exclusions annually. The analysis is for 2017/18 (DfE 2019). Unlike for secondary schools, DfE data does not isolate primary school exclusions by SEN or ethnic group, thus there are difficulties in doing direct comparisons with national data. Data for primary schools has been isolated and presented where possible.

6.9 Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusion in State Funded Primary Schools in England

The figures in the tables are extracted from (DfE National Statistics: England 2017 to 2018. Table 1 is a direct lift, but other tables are amended by the author, and below is a graphical of Fx and Fx1+ over time.

Table 1: Px & Fx in State-funded primary schools 2013/14 to 2017/18

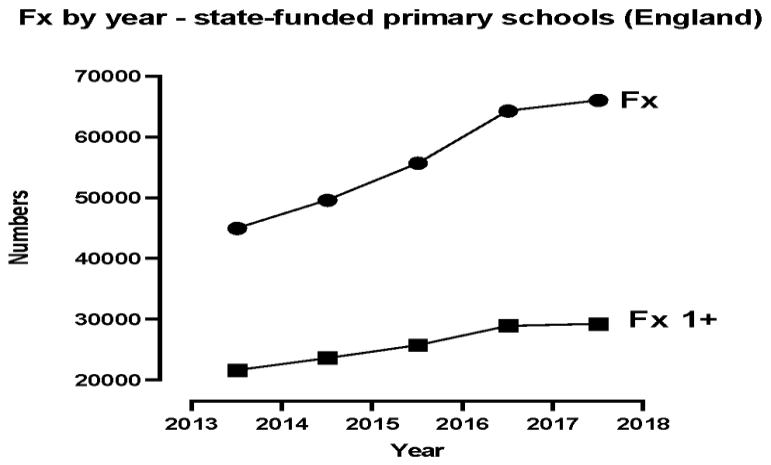
State-funded primary schools	**2013/14**	**2014/15**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2017/18**
Number of schools[16]	16,831	16,799	16,804	16,837	16,816
Number of pupils[17]	4,416,708	4,510,308	4,615,172	4,689,658	4,716,244
Number of permanent exclusions	872	917	1,147	1,253	1,210
Px rate[18] to 2 decimal places	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03
Px rate to 4 decimal places	0.0197	0.0203	0.0249	0.0267	0.0257
Number of fixed period exclusions	**45,007**	**49,653**	**55,739**	**64,338**	**66,105**
Fx rate[19] to 2 decimal places	**1.02**	**1.10**	**1.21**	**1.37**	**1.40**
Fx rate to 4 decimal places	**1.0190**	**1.1009**	**1.2080**	**1.3720**	**1.4017**
Number of pupil enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion	**21,650**	**23,628**	**25,765**	**28,942**	**29,236**
Fx1+ rate[20] to 2 decimal places	**0.49**	**0.52**	**0.56**	**0.62**	**0.62**
Fx1+ rate to 4 decimal places	**0.4902**	**0.5239**	**0.5583**	**0.6172**	**0.6199**

The data states:

- The rate of Px has risen from 0.02 to 0.03, and, despite a small decrease in Px in 2017/18 from 2016/17, there has been a notable increase over the last five years.
- Fx have shown a year-on-year increase, from 45,007, a rate of 1.02, in 2013/14 to 66,105, a rate of 1.40, in 2017/18.
- The number of children receiving Fx1+ has increased over the past five years from 21,650, a rate of 0.49 in 2013/14, to 29,236, a rate of 0.62 in 2017/18. The growth of Fx1+ is less than for Fx but nonetheless an increasing trend (Graph 1).

[16] The number of schools as at January each year plus the number of schools which opened after January and reported exclusions.
[17] Includes pupils who are sole or dual main registrations. Including boarding pupils.
[18] The number of Px expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils in January each year.
[19] The number of Fx expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils in January each year.
[20] The number of pupil enrolments receiving Fx1+ expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils in January each year.

Graph 1: Fx and Fx1+ over time



6.10 Mercia LA Fixed Period Exclusions 2017/18

There was 1 permanent exclusion in a Mercia primary school in 2017/18 which puts it at 118 out of the 152 LAs in England. Table 2 a and b highlights the ten highest fixed term excluding LAs and the top ten LAs for Fx1+, from National data. Mercia is second highest for Fx with a rate of 3.06, this is only 0.02 behind the top excluding Fx authority but 0.13 above the third. Mercia is top for Fx1+ although not by much from second and third LA's. A comparator table is at table 2.

Table 2: LAs with the highest rate of Fx and LAs with the highest rates of Fx+1

Table 2a: LAs with the highest rate of Fx				**Table 2b: LAs with highest rate of Fx1+**		
LA	Fx Rate	N of Fx		LA	Fx1+ Rate	N Fx1+
A	3.08	332		**Mercia**	**1.19**	**245**
Mercia	**3.06**	**629**		C	1.18	433
B	2.93	1,697		A	1.17	126
C	2.8	1,027		B	1.1	640
D	2.73	451		J	1.06	125
E	2.61	1,749		K	1.01	156
F	2.38	307		L	1.01	391
G	2.34	334		E	1	668
H	2.32	1,202		M	0.95	1,109
I	2.31	773		N	0.94	214

In order to access the difference of the rate of Fx for Mercia, compared to the National rate, Standard Deviation (SD) was used[21]. Mercia's mean Fx rate of 3.06 is significantly greater than the mean national Fx rate at 1.62 (SD=0.617) and lies beyond the Mean +2SD (2.85). Similarly, the Mercia Fx1+ value of 1.19 is more than twice the mean national Fx1+ at 0.62 (see Table 2). This raises the question of why, with a low Px, numbering 1 (0.00487), the Fx and Fx1+ are significantly above the national average.

6.11 Number of Excluded Children in Mercia in State Funded Primary Schools

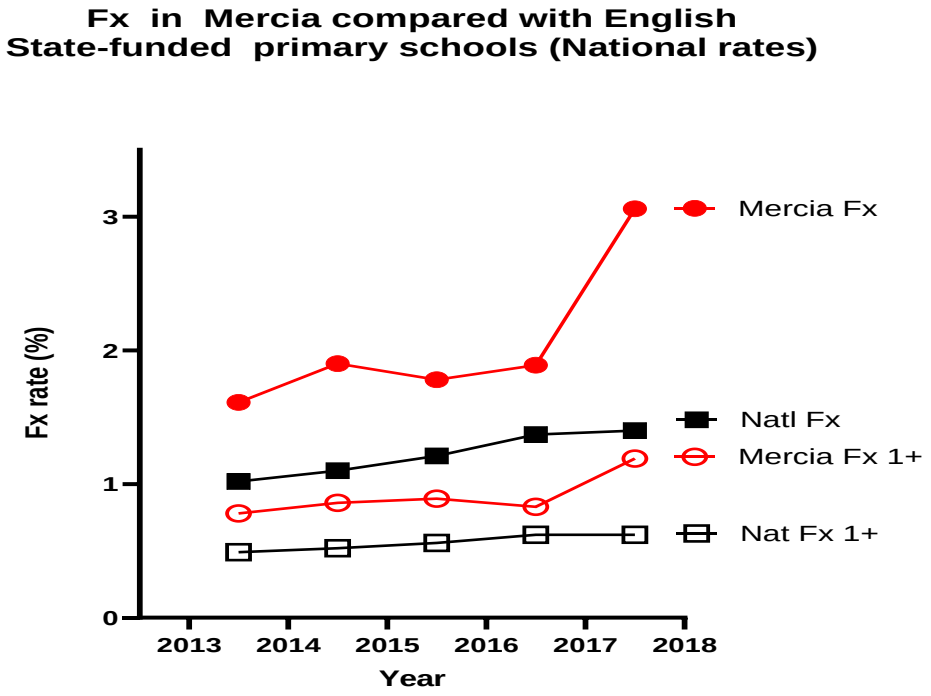
Table 3: Primary school exclusions both Px and Fx for Mercia 2017/18

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of schools					55
Number of pupils	18303	18984	19861	20331	20551
Number of permanent exclusions	0	3	3	4	1
Permanent exclusion rate	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.004
Number of fixed period exclusions	**295**	**361**	**354**	**385**	**629**
Fixed period exclusion rate	**1.61**	**1.90**	**1.78**	**1.89**	**3.06**
Number of pupil enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion	**142**	**164**	**177**	**168**	**245**
One or more fixed period exclusion rate	**0.78**	**0.86**	**0.89**	**0.83**	**1.19**

[21] SD is used to measure spread and to see how much a set of data is distributed around the mean or average. It is commonly used when distribution is approximately normal and to understand whether a specific data point is expected or unusual. A data points distance from the mean is measured by the number of SDs it is above or below the mean. Beyond a certain data point from the mean will represent an outcome significantly above or below the average. SD is calculated by:

1. Working out the mean.
2. Subtracting the mean and square the results for each value.
3. Working out the mean of the squared differences.
4. Taking the square root of the results in 3 above.

Graph 2: National and Mercia trends of Fx and Fx1+ comparisons 2013/14 to 2017/18



As seen in table 3 and graph 2, Fx in Mercia has been consistently above the national average since 2013 to 2018. There was a significant increase in Fx between 2016/17 at 1.89 to 2017/18 at 3.06. This is the same as Fx1+ at 0.83 to 1.19.

6.12 Age and Gender Differences in Exclusions

The analysis begins by examining the differences in exclusion rates across various age groups and between genders. Both National data and Mercia data consistently show that boys are more likely to be excluded than girls, a trend that is particularly pronounced in certain age groups. For instance, boys in Year 6 exhibit significantly higher exclusion rates compared to their female peers, reflecting broader behavioural trends observed in pre-adolescent boys. By dissecting these statistics, the research identifies critical junctures where interventions could be most effective.

6.13 Fixed Period Exclusions: Incidence and Patterns

This subsection delves into the incidence of fixed-period exclusions, offering a detailed breakdown by age and gender. It highlights the prevalence of multiple fixed-period exclusions, an indicator of persistent behavioural challenges that schools struggle to manage effectively. The analysis also examines the distribution of exclusions across NC year groups, identifying specific years where children are most at risk. Such patterns are essential for developing age-appropriate interventions and support systems aimed at reducing repeated exclusions and addressing the root causes of disruptive behaviour.

6.14 National Age and Gender Difference

Maintained schools must provide for the admission of children from the September following their fourth birthday. There are also Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS), early education providers, providing education and childcare to disadvantaged children in most deprived areas of England and legally constituted as schools. In 2018 there were 392 MNS, although this number has declined from around 600 over three decades. According to the January 2018 School Census, MNS delivered the free early education entitlement to 33,470 three-and four-year olds and 7,510 two-year-olds. Therefore, these children would be included in the census data which includes exclusion data. It is interesting and important for any focus on pre-school provision to note that all private nursery data is not collected. This is a concern as there is no official data on exclusion in these settings although there is anecdotal evidence that it occurs.

Government policy is that primary education is typically provided for children aged five to ten. In practice this is providing primary education for children in their fifth year to their tenth year

of life. Translated into its truest form, all children could not start school on the day they turn five as this would mean schools would have to provide an intake on 365 days a year which is neither possible nor practicable. A rule has to be applied. A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age on the 31st December, 31st March or 31st August following their fifth birthday, whichever comes first.

Most children start primary school at the start of the school year (Autumn term) in which they turn five.[22] In practice these dates act as a dividing line that is dependent on the child's birthday and means that year groups contain children who are nearly a year in age difference. Thus child 1 born on 30th Aug 2013 can start school on the 1st Sep 2017 aged four years and one day whereas child 2 born on the 1st Sep 2013 can start school aged five in 2018. Despite differing in age by one day they will be in different school age groups. Child 2 will start school at five, with children who were born before the 31st Aug 2014 who will be aged four.

Summer-born children, defined as those born before the 31st of Aug, are eligible to begin school in the Sep following their fourth birthday. The state allows parents of these children to defer their child's school entry by a year. This flexibility in school start age reflects the complexities of developmental readiness and has implications for understanding the educational trajectories and early experiences of summer-born children, particularly in the context of school readiness and institutional policies surrounding age and entry criteria.[23] Many parents must balance this decision against the cost of providing childcare or paying for childcare

[22] www.gov.uk/schools-admission/school-starting-age
[23] www.gov.uk/schools-admission/school-starting-age

beyond the government provision. For many disadvantaged households or those on tight budgets these costs could outweigh the disadvantage of a just four years+ child starting school.

6.15 National Fixed Period Exclusion (Fx) by Age and Gender 2017/2018

Table 4 looks at Fx by age and gender and shows a ratio of boys vs girls. In the rate column the figure is the total number of exclusions as a proportion of the total population in that age group. The final column, shown in bold, is the comparative rate of Fx exclusion of boys compared to girls.

Table 4: Fx difference by age and gender 2017/18

Age	Numbers			Rate			**Ratio of rates boys compared to girls**
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	
4 and under	2,886	294	3,180	0.5996	0.0638	0.3374	**9.4040**
5	6,051	833	6,884	1.7661	0.2558	1.0301	**6.9051**
6	8,102	1,219	9,321	2.3642	0.3748	1.3954	**6.3087**
7	9,425	1,306	10,731	2.8052	0.4093	1.6381	**6.8542**
8	10,038	1,420	11,458	3.0508	0.4517	1.7808	**6.7546**
9	12,000	1,693	13,693	3.6322	0.5357	2.1183	**6.7805**
10	13,388	1,720	15,108	4.2096	0.5665	2.4303	**7.4306**
11	38,713	9,490	48,203	12.7069	3.2616	8.0928	**3.8959**

Across the age groups, boys are significantly more likely to have an Fx than girls. This is most marked at the age of four and under where boys receive Fx at 9.4 times the rate of girls and at the age of ten where boys receive Fx at 7.4 times the rate of girls. At ages five to nine, whilst the rate varies from just under 6.9 times to 6.7 times it remains fairly consistent. Whilst the rate of Fx for boys steadily increases through the age groups (column 5) it significantly increases from age ten to eleven, going from 4.21 to 12.71, a threefold increase. Among girls (column 6), whilst the Fx rate increases through the age groups, it starts lower and the increases are less marked

than among the boys, until the age of eleven, when the rate for girls increases by a factor of 5.7. Interestingly, the rate of exclusion increases by a factor of 3.02 for boys but is nearly double this (5.76) for girls. This evidence shows the dramatic increase in exclusions for pupils when they transition into secondary school and an interesting move in the direction of closing rates of exclusion between boys and girls (although boys remain four times more likely to be excluded). In the school year 2017/18 53,405 more boys receive an Fx than girls between the ages of four and ten. On average, boys received Fx seven times more than girls. What is evident is that the gender difference can be seen from the beginning of a child's educational journey.

6.16 Children Receiving More Than 1 Fixed Period Exclusion (Fx1+) by Age and Gender 2017/18

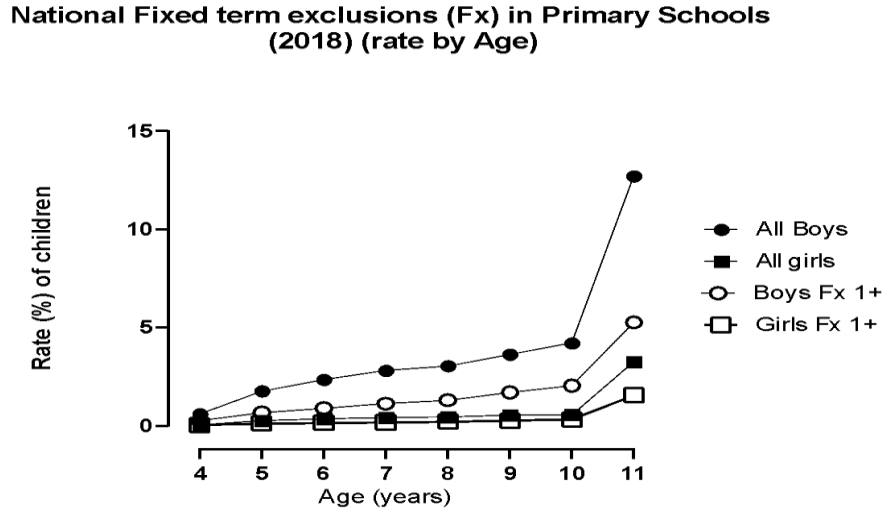
Table 5 shows the number of pupils receiving Fx1+ exclusion in relation to age and by gender. The rate of Fx1+ is expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils including sole or dual registered children for each age, calculated using the date of birth provided by the school census.

Table 5: Fx1+ by age and gender 2017/18

Age	Number			Rate			
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Ratio**
4 under	1,269	171	1,440	0.2637	0.0371	0.1528	**7.1103**
5	2,329	383	2,712	0.6798	0.1176	0.4058	**5.7804**
6	3,090	474	3,564	0.9017	0.1457	0.5335	**6.1876**
7	3,818	554	4,372	1.1364	0.1736	0.6674	**6.5455**
8	4,320	666	4,986	1.3130	0.2118	0.7749	**6.1978**
9	5,605	822	6,427	1.6966	0.2601	0.9943	**6.5230**
10	6,522	966	7,488	2.0507	0.3182	1.2046	**6.4451**
11	16,058	4,548	20,606	5.2708	1.5631	3.4596	**3.3720**

This shows a similar pattern to Fx with the highest ratio being at the age of four and under. The number of Fx1+ applied to girls at the age of eleven was 4,548, an increase of 3,582 or 79% increase on Fx1+ applied to girls aged ten. Boys at eleven had 13,118 more Fx1+ than ten-year-old boys, an increase of 64%. Boys at age four and under are 7 times more likely to receive an Fx1+ than a girl aged four and under. Again, this data suggests the potential difficulties for boys receiving more than one Fx, meaning a possible disruption to their schooling and the consequences in the short-term but also in the long-term.

Graph 3: Fx and Fx1+ by all pupils and by gender against age



The graph illustrates the point that both girls' and boys' rates of exclusions rise through the years and significantly increases at age ten to eleven.

6.17 Mercia Fixed Term Exclusions (Fx) Compared to National Fixed Term Exclusions by Age 2017/18

Table 6 shows a comparison of Fx and Fx1+ in Mercia against the National data. The final four columns provide a rate.

Table 6: Mercia compared to National Fx and Fx1+ by Age in primary schools 2017/18

Age	Headcount		Number Fx		Total Rate Fx		Number Fx1+ / Total Rate Fx1+	
	Mercia	National	Mercia	National	Mercia	National	Mercia	National
4 and under	3379	923,712	34	3,180	1.00	0.34	0.44	0.15
5	2998	653,715	46	6,884	1.53	1.03	0.63	0.41
6	3087	653,159	135	9,321	4.37	1.40	1.26	0.53
7	2882	640,327	72	10,731	2.50	1.64	1.40	0.67
8	2782	629,174	69	11,458	2.48	1.78	1.04	0.77
9	2840	620,185	128	13,693	4.51	2.12	1.70	0.99
10	2583	594,268	145	15,108	5.61	2.43	2.20	1.20
11	2235	584,437	107	48,203	4.79	8.09	2.00	3.46

Fx in Mercia in 2017/18 for all ages up to the age of ten is greater than the national Fx. However, there is a reversal at age 11 with the National Fx being 8.09 and the corresponding Mercia Fx being 4.79. This is an interesting statistic and needs further research outside of this work to understand if it's a trend and why it happens.

6.18 National Curriculum (NC) Year Groups

The NC Year Group is the year group in which the pupil is taught for the majority of the time, regardless of their chronological age. Occasionally, children may be taught in the year above or below their expected Year Group because a child is more academically advanced, or, where the demands of the next phase are considered to be too challenging. The NC is organised by year groups into stages. KS1 covers the first and second year and KS2 covers the third to the sixth year of primary school. The reception year is covered by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which sets out the standards for the learning development and care of children from birth to five years old. The national reporting of exclusions under the heading of NC covers EYFS.

6.19 National Rate of Fixed Period Exclusions Between Boys and Girls in NC Year Groups 2017/18

Table 7 shows the number of pupils receiving Fx exclusion in relation NC year group, with rate compared to the total and ratio of boys to girls.

Table 7: Reports the rate of Fx exclusions between boys and girls by year groups

Year Group	Number			Rate			
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Ratio**
Nursery	108	9	117	0.0721	0.0062	0.0397	**11.6306**
Reception	2,881	282	3,163	0.8690	0.0895	0.4892	**9.7091**
1	6,015	833	6,848	1.7608	0.2561	1.0269	**6.8748**
2	7,994	1,210	9,204	2.3363	0.3723	1.3795	**6.2756**
3	9,369	1,293	10,662	2.7908	0.4054	1.6287	**6.8841**
4	9,990	1,418	11,408	3.0377	0.4511	1.7736	**6.7338**
5	11,937	1,684	13,621	3.6142	0.5329	2.1077	**6.7818**
6	13,306	1,713	15,019	4.1852	0.5643	2.4166	**7.4168**
7	38,605	9,449	48,054	12.671	3.2473	8.0676	**3.9022**

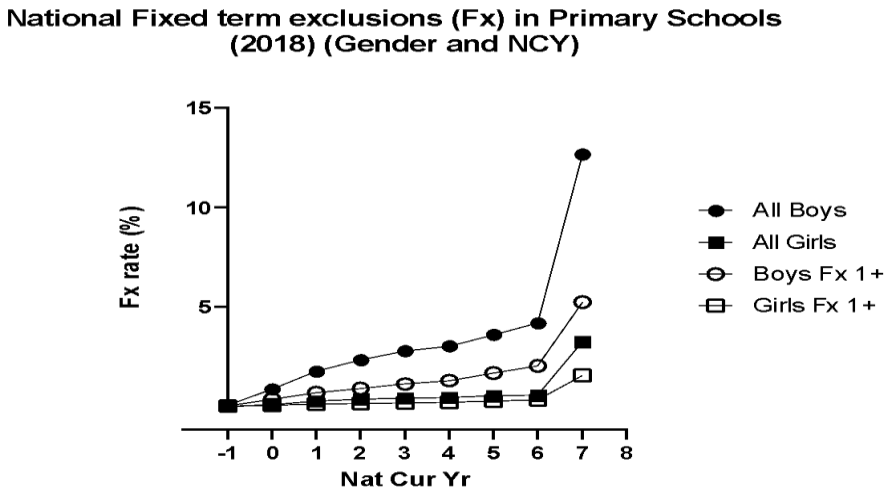
6.20 The Rate of More Than 1 Fixed Term Exclusion (Fx1+) Between Boys and Girls in NC year groups 2017/18

Table 8 shows the number of pupils receiving Fx1+ exclusion in relation NC year group, with rate compared to the total and ratio of boys to girls.

Table 8: Reports Fx1+ exclusions by gender and year group

2017/2018							
Year	Number			Rate			
Group (Yr)	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Ratio**
Nursery	67	9	76	0.0447	0.0062	0.0258	**7.2161**
Reception	1,234	162	1,396	0.3722	0.0514	0.2159	**7.2398**
1	2,312	380	2,692	0.6768	0.1168	0.4037	**5.7925**
2	3,039	468	3,507	0.8882	0.1440	0.5256	**6.1682**
3	3,780	546	4,326	1.1260	0.1712	0.6608	**6.5774**
4	4,286	662	4,948	1.3033	0.2106	0.7693	**6.1883**
5	5,558	815	6,373	1.6828	0.2579	0.9861	**6.5246**
6	6,481	961	7,442	2.0385	0.3166	1.1974	**6.4393**
7	15,963	4,515	20,478	5.2396	1.5516	3.4380	**3.3769**

Graph 4: Fx and Fx1+ by all pupils and by gender against NC year Group



Although the numbers of children receiving a Fx or Fx1+ are nationally small, the figures, as shown in tables 7 and 8 and the graph above, demonstrate the difference in gender. At Nursery age, boys are 11 times more likely to receive a Fx than girls. This difference between genders remains in each year group but as children progress through school the ratio of boys receiving a Fx exclusion compared to girls decreases to just over 6 times by Y6. At Y7 the ratio reduces from 7.24 at Y6 to 3.90 at Y7.

The graph shows that each year for girls and boys the percentage increase, i.e. the percentage difference year on year stays fairly consistent for boys and girls until the sharp increases for both genders from Y6 to Y7.

Y7 is anomalous in that the rates for both boys and girls increase. For boys at Y7 the increase is 3 times greater than at Y6 but for girls the increase is 5 times greater. Correspondingly, despite the greater increase in girls receiving Fx and Fx1+ at Y7 the gap in ratio reduces from the prior years to 3.9 for Fx and 3.4 for Fx1+.

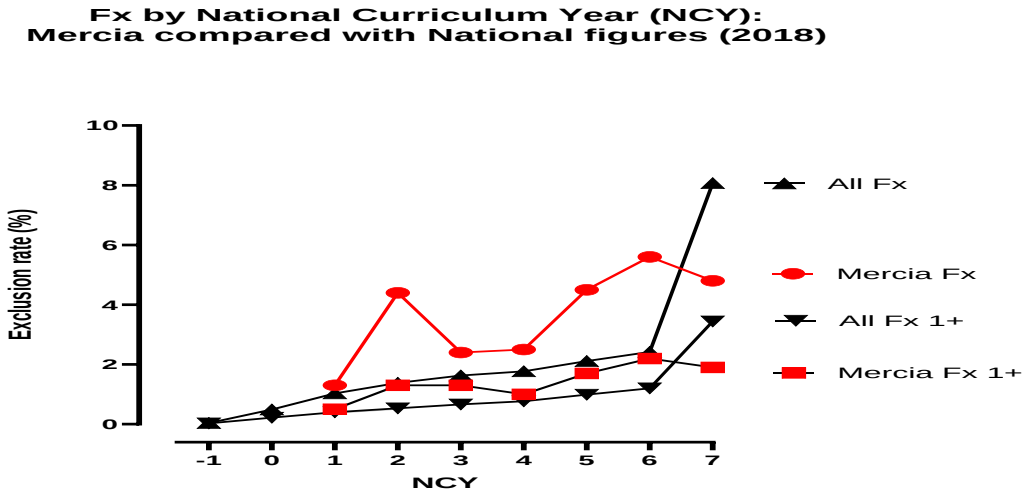
6.21 National Curriculum (NC) Year Groups in Mercia compared with National NC year groups 2017/18

Table 9 shows the rate of pupils receiving Fx1+ exclusion in relation to NC year group in Mercia and nationally and the ratio of boys to girls.

Table 9: NC Year Groups in Mercia compared with NC year groups in 2017/18.

NC Year	Fx Rate Mercia	Fx Rate National	Ratio For Fx	Fx1+ Rate Mercia	Fx1+ Rate National	Ratio for Fx1+
Year1 and below	1.2535	Yr 1 only 1.0269	1.2207	0.5327	0.4037	1.3197
Year 2	4.3746	1.3795	3.1711	1.2638	0.5256	2.4044
Year 3	2.3603	1.6287	1.4492	1.3190	0.6608	1.9960
Year 4	2.4820	1.7736	1.3994	1.0432	0.7693	1.3560
Year 5	4.5070	2.1077	2.1384	1.6901	0.9861	1.7140
Year 6	5.6158	2.4166	2.3238	2.1689	1.1974	1.8113
Year 7	4.7875	8.0676	0.5934	1.9239	3.4380	0.5596

Graph 5: Comparison of National and Mercia Fx and Fx1+ by NC Year groups



It is not possible to compare the data for Y1 because for Mercia it is for Y1 and below and nationally it is for Y1 only. In Y2 children are over three times more likely to receive a Fx than the national average. Interestingly, for Y3 and Y4 children although the Fx rate is higher in

Mercia the increase is not as great as other years. Mercia's ratio of Fx remains higher than the National figures until Y7 when there is a considerable turn around with children nationally being nearly 2 times more at risk of an Fx than children in Mercia. Table 9 and the above graph also show a similar picture to that in Table 8 and reiterate the following question of what is happening in Y7 in Mercia.

6.22 Reasons for Exclusion

Understanding the reasons behind exclusions is critical for developing effective prevention strategies. This section provides a data-driven exploration of the most common causes of both fixed-term and permanent exclusions. Behavioural issues such as persistent disruptive behaviour, physical assaults, and verbal abuse are identified as leading causes. The chapter further contextualizes these reasons by examining the environments and circumstances under which these behaviours manifest, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by schools in managing children's behaviour.

All schools have to give a reason for exclusion from the 12[24] categories below:

- Bullying.
- Damage (to the school or to personal property).
- Drug and alcohol related.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Physical assault against an adult.
- Physical assault against a pupil.
- Racist abuse.

[24] Now there 15 categories with other no longer a reason, but at this date point these were the 12 reportable reasons.

- Sexual misconduct.
- Theft.
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult.
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil.
- "other"[25].

6.23 National Fixed Term Exclusions by Reason 2017/18

Table 10 shows the number of Fx by reason and comparator rate of reason expressed as a percentage of the total number of Fx. Pupils can receive Fx1+ for one or more reasons. Therefore, care should be taken when reviewing these rates as duplicate pupils are included in the numerator.

Table 10: Reason for Exclusion

Fx by reason primary school 2017/18			
Fixed period exclusions	**Number**	**% of Fx[26]**	**Rate[27] (2)**
Persistent disruptive behaviour	18,611	28.2	0.39
Physical assault against an adult	18,133	27.4	0.38
Physical assault against a pupil	13,859	21.0	0.29
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against an adult	6,294	9.5	0.13
Other	3,933	5.9	0.08
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against a pupil	2,506	3.8	0.05
Damage	1,491	2.3	0.03
Racist abuse	496	0.8	0.01
Bullying	406	0.6	0.01
Sexual misconduct	200	0.3	0.00
Theft	142	0.2	0.00
Drug and alcohol related	34	0.1	0.00
Total	**66,105**	**100.0**	**1.40**

[25] Descriptions for each category are given (A guide to exclusion statistics: 2017) advising that the category "other" is to be used sparingly.
[26] Number of Fx by reason expressed as a percentage of the total number of Fx primary schools
[27] Pupils can receive Fx1+ for one or more reasons.

Persistent disruptive behaviour was the reason given for most Fx at 0.39 followed closely by physical assault against an adult at 0.38. The rate has been calculated by dividing the number of Fx or Fx1+ by reason by the population for primary school children in England 2017/18 (4,716,244). What is not publicly available via official statistics is the breakdown of gender by reason. Given the effect of gender on exclusion, it is puzzling that reasons are not reported by gender.

The highest five reasons of Fx could be seen as reasons open to greater interpretation and thus wider variation in reporting. For example, what is seen as verbal abuse/threatening behaviour by one adult in a primary school setting may not be seen in this way by another adult. Whereas damage or drug related reasons are potentially less open to interpretation or misinterpretation. Notably more than one reason for an exclusion can now be given and recorded in the data

6.24 Reasons for Fixed Term Exclusion in Mercia 2017/18

Table 11 shows a comparison of reasons for exclusion between national data and Mercia data. There is no Mercia rate given in the underlying data so in column E the author used the same formula to create a comparator rate for Mercia. The ratio is the difference between rates.

Table 11: Reason for Fx Mercia primary schools 2017/18

Reasons	Number	% of Fx Mercia	% of Fx Nat	Rate Mercia	Rate Nat	**Ratio**
Column A	B	C	D	E	F	**G**
Physical assault against an adult	175	27.82	27.40	0.8515	0.3845	**2.2148**
Physical assault against a pupil	146	23.21	21.00	0.7104	0.2939	**2.4176**
Persistent disruptive behaviour	144	22.90	28.20	0.7007	0.3946	**1.7757**
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against an adult	95	15.10	9.5	0.4623	0.1335	**3.4640**
Damage	26	4.13	2.3	0.1265	0.0316	**4.0024**
Other	25	4.00	5.9	0.1216	0.0834	**1.4588**
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against a pupil	11	2.00	3.8	0.0535	0.0531	**1.0073**
Bullying	4	0.64	0.6	0.0195	0.0086	**2.2606**
Theft	2	0.312	0.2	0.0097	0.0030	**3.2332**
Racist abuse	1	0.160	0.8	0.0049	0.0105	**0.4625**
Sexual misconduct	0	0.00	0.3	0.0000	0.0042	**0.0000**
Drug and alcohol related	0	0.00	0.1	0.0000	0.0007	**0.0000**
Total	629	100	100			

The main reason for Fx in Mercia, physical assault against an adult is different to the main reason nationally, which is persistent disruptive behaviour. Table 11 shows that children in Mercia are more likely to get excluded than children nationally in 10 out of the 12 reasons. There were no reported Fx in Mercia for sexual misconduct or drug and alcohol related reasons. A child in Mercia is 3 times more likely to get an Fx for verbal abuse or threatening behaviour towards an adult than the national average and more than 4 times for damage. As with the national figures, other than the reason for damage, the four highest reasons may be more open to interpretation than the other reasons.

6.25 Ethnicity

Exclusion rates are not uniformly distributed across different demographic groups. This section presents a critical analysis of how exclusions disproportionately affect children from various

ethnic backgrounds. The data reveal stark disparities, with certain ethnic groups, particularly Black Caribbean and Gypsy/Roma students, facing higher exclusion rates.

Data for ethnicity is provided using 23 categories which are then aggregated into six main ethnic groups:

- Asian.
- Black.
- Chinese.
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic group.
- White.
- Other.

The data for primary school exclusions by ethnicity are difficult to find because they are not isolated from other schools in the National Exclusions data but are available on the Government's 'ethnicity facts and figures' website where the phrase 'temporary' is used rather than Fx. This questions whether they are directly comparable.

The Government has provided statutory guidance on the exclusion of ethnic groups at a higher risk of exclusion than others (DfE, 2012 updated 2017) including the use of:

- Early intervention.
- Multi-agency assessment.
- Identifying un-met needs.
- Providing extra support from professional/support services.

6.26 National Fixed Period Exclusions by Ethnicity 2017/18

Table 12 is sourced from underlying data from the DfE statistics and the school census, and cross checked for accuracy. The figures in bold in the second column add up to the total number of Fx in primary schools recorded in 2017/18. The National data does not breakdown Fx1+ data by primary schools. The first 3 columns show the number of temporary exclusions by ethnicity, ranked highest to lowest and the percentage of temporary exclusions amongst that ethnic group. For comparison, in the right-hand 3 columns, in bold, the table is arranged from highest to lowest by the percentage by ethnicity. The final shows the ratio against White British (WB).

Table 12: National Fixed (temporary) exclusions by Ethnicity in primary school England 2017/18

Ethnicity	Number high low	%	Ethnicity	**% high to low**	**Number**	**Ratio all**	**Ratio W/B**
White	54,252	1.56	Irish Traveller	**8.14**	**379**	**5.80**	**4.99**
White British	50,848	1.63	Gypsy/Roma	**4.3**	**772**	**3.07**	**2.64**
Mixed	5,264	1.81	Mixed W/Bk Caribbean	**3.46**	**2,558**	**2.47**	**2.12**
Black	4,110	1.57	Black Caribbean	**3.28**	**1,521**	**2.34**	**2.01**
Mixed W/B Caribbean	2,558	3.46	Mixed	**1.81**	**5,264**	**1.29**	**1.11**
White other	2,087	0.62	Mixed W/B African	**1.81**	**733**	**1.29**	**1.11**
Black African	2,002	1.12	White British	**1.63**	**50,848**	**1.16**	**1.00**
Black Caribbean	1,521	3.28	Black other	**1.61**	**587**	**1.15**	**0.99**
Mixed other	1,414	1.32	Black	**1.57**	**4,110**	**1.12**	**0.96**
Asian	1,323	0.25	White	**1.56**	**54,252**	**1.11**	**0.96**
Gypsy/Roma	772	4.3	Unknown	**1.46**	**606**	**1.04**	**0.90**
Pakistani	769	0.37	White Irish	**1.37**	**166**	**0.98**	**0.84**
Mixed W/B African	733	1.81	Mixed other	**1.32**	**1,414**	**0.94**	**0.81**
Unknown	606	1.46	Black African	**1.12**	**2,002**	**0.80**	**0.69**
Black other	587	1.61	Mixed White/Asian	**0.81**	**559**	**0.58**	**0.50**
Mixed White/Asian	559	0.81	White other	**0.62**	**2,087**	**0.44**	**0.38**
Other	526	0.57	Other	**0.57**	**526**	**0.41**	**0.35**
Irish Traveller	379	8.14	Pakistani	**0.37**	**769**	**0.26**	**0.23**
Asian other	224	0.26	Asian other	**0.26**	**224**	**0.18**	**0.16**
Bangladeshi	197	0.24	Asian	**0.25**	**1,323**	**0.18**	**0.15**
White Irish	166	1.37	Bangladeshi	**0.24**	**197**	**0.17**	**0.15**
Indian	133	0.09	Chinese	**0.11**	**24**	**0.08**	**0.07**
Chinese	24	0.11	Indian	**0.09**	**133**	**0.07**	**0.06**

Over 8% of the Irish Traveller population are excluded and 4% of the Gypsy Roma population. The next two highest population groups to receive a Fx are Mixed White/Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean at nearly 3.5 and 3.25 respectively. These four ethnic groups are all significantly higher than the other ethnic groups. The percentages of Fx for Black Caribbean are nearly double that of the next ethnic group, and Mixed White/ Black Caribbean over double. For Gypsy/Roma it's 3 times greater and for Irish traveller it's over 6 times greater.

These statistics are borne out when considering the rate of exclusion by ethnicity compared with the whole primary school population (column 7) and compared with the WB population (column 8). Comparing rates:

- Irish travellers are nearly 6 times more likely to be excluded than the whole population and nearly five times more than WB.

- Gypsy Roma are nearly 3 times more likely to be excluded than the whole population and nearly 2.5 times more than WB.

- Mixed White/Black Caribbean's are nearly 2.5 times more likely to be excluded than the whole population and nearly twice more than WB.

- Black Caribbean's are nearly twice as likely to be excluded than the whole population and nearly 2 times more than WB.

6.27 Mercia Ethnicity

Table 13 shows National and Mercia Fx comparisons by ethnicity from 2017/18. The last column shows Mercia Fx ratio from highest to lowest. Mercia's data does show Fx1+ by ethnicity and cannot be compared with the National Data which records temporary exclusions by ethnicity only and does not break it down into Fx1+. It is not clear if the National data for temporary exclusions by ethnicity is a cumulative figure of Fx and Fx1+. If it is, then a comparator is not statistically valid as the National data would be artificially high. However, a comparator, at this stage of the research, highlights areas for investigation.

Table 13: National and Mercia Fx Ethnicity Comparison Primary Schools 2017/18

Ethnicity 2017/18	Headcount	Number Fx	Mercia rate	Nat rate	Ratio High to Low Mercia
Chinese	132	1	0.76	0.11	6.91
White and Asian	388	14	3.61	0.81	4.46
White and Black African	323	18	5.57	1.81	3.08
White British	12350	539	4.36	1.63	2.67
White Total	15197	564	3.71	1.56	2.38
Mixed Total	1382	51	3.69	1.81	2.04
Pakistani	597	4	0.67	0.37	1.81
Any other white background	2749	25	0.91	0.62	1.47
White and Black Caribbean	337	15	4.45	3.46	1.29
Black African	602	8	1.33	1.12	1.19
Any other Mixed background	334	4	1.2	1.32	0.91
Minority ethnic pupil	8152	90	1.1	1.32	0.83
Black Total	691	8	1.16	1.57	0.74
Asian Total	2749	5	0.18	0.25	0.72
Any other Asian background	948	1	0.11	0.26	0.42
Irish	28	0	0	1.37	0
Traveller of Irish heritage	21	0	0	8.14	0
Gypsy Roma	49	0	0	4.3	0
Indian	949	0	0	0.09	0
Bangladeshi	255	0	0	0.24	0
Black Caribbean	35	0	0	3.28	0
Any other black background	54	0	0	1.61	0
Any Other Ethnic Group	351	0	0	0.57	0
Unclassified	49	0	0	1.46	0

Comparison of Mercia and national Fx for ethnicity highlights the continuing trend of higher Fx in Mercia, and maybe more starkly above the National figures based on the above point. Due to the small number of Fx for some groups there needs to be caution when making direct comparisons. For example, although the data points to Chinese children in Mercia being nearly 7 times more likely to receive an Fx than Chinese children nationally, there was only 1 Fx applied to a Chinese child in Mercia. The data highlights figures above the National rates that are worth further analysis:

- White and Asian – 4.5 times likely to receive a Fx.
- White and Black Caribbean – 3 times more likely to receive a Fx.
- WB – 3 times more likely to receive a Fx.

Table 14 shows from highest to lowest the rate by ethnicity of children receiving Fx1+. As detailed earlier there is no way to compare Mercia Fx1+ exclusion with the National Fx1+ exclusion by ethnicity as the National Data does not break down by primary school.

Table 14: Mercia Fx1+ in primary schools Ethnicity Comparison 2017/18

	Headcount	**Fx1+ number**	**Fx1+ Rate**
White and Black Caribbean	337	9	2.670623145
White British	12350	206	1.668016194
White and Black African	323	5	1.547987616
White Total	15197	216	1.421333158
Mixed Total	1382	19	1.374819103
Black African	602	5	0.830564784
White and Asian	388	3	0.773195876
Chinese	132	1	0.757575758
Black Total	691	5	0.723589001
Any other Mixed background	334	2	0.598802395
Pakistani	597	3	0.502512563
Minority ethnic pupil	8152	39	0.478410206
Any other white background	2749	10	0.363768643

Asian Total	2749	4	0.145507457
Any other Asian background	948	1	0.105485232
Irish	28	0	0
Traveller of Irish heritage	21	0	0
Gypsy Roma	49	0	0
Indian	949	0	0
Bangladeshi	255	0	0
Black Caribbean	35	0	0
Any other black background	54	0	0
Any Other Ethnic Group	351	0	0
Unclassified	49	0	0

- White and Black Caribbean – 2.5 times more likely to receive a Fx1+ than other ethnic groups in Mercia.
- White British, and White and Black African – are the next highest at slightly over 1.5 times more likely to receive a Fx1+ compared to other ethnic groups and this is nearly 0.5 times higher than the next ethnic group.

6.28 Educational Need

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are excluded at disproportionately high rates, often due to schools' inability to adequately support their needs.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the SEND provision and from Sep 2014 children who were referred for assessment to a LA were assessed under the Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) process which details the provision a child with a SEN should receive. Prior to this, children who were identified as having a SEN were provided with a Statement of Educational Need. Currently although statements are to be phased out, children with SEN can have either. A

child who has been assessed as requiring extra support which is additional to and different from what is provided by a school, is given a category of 'SEN support' which has replaced 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' categories (DfE, Special Educational Needs, 2018). Children's SEN status, Primary Type of Need (PTN) and provision is recorded at the time of exclusion. Children are identified as having an SEN by 12 PTN:

- Learning Difficulty.
- Moderate Learning Difficulty.
- Severe Learning Difficulty.
- Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty.
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health.
- Speech, Language and Communications Needs.
- Hearing Impairment.
- Visual Impairment.
- Multi- Sensory Impairment.
- Physical Disability.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Other Difficulty/Disability.

6.29 Fixed Period Exclusions of Children with SEN 2017/18

Table 15 shows the number of pupils and the rate of SEN which is calculated by dividing the number of children with Fx with a statement or EHC plan by the total number of children with a statement or EHC plan in Primary schools multiplied by 100. This is the same with children who have SEN support.

Table 15: National SEN Fx and Fx1+ Primary Schools 2017/18

Fixed period exclusions		
	Number	**Rate**
Pupils with SEN with statements or an EHCP	8,978	13.44
Pupils with SEN Support	41,278	7.07
Pupils with no SEN	15,849	0.39
All pupils	**66,105**	**1.40**
Pupil enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion		
Pupils with SEN with statements or an EHCP	3,554	5.32
Pupils with SEN Support	16,985	2.91
Pupils with no SEN	8,697	0.21
All pupils	**29,236**	**0.62**

The number of children with a statement of SEN or an EHCP in 2018 was 66,790. The number of children with SEN support in 2018 was 583,665. Of Fx exclusion, 76% are applied to children with SEN which is disproportionately high. This statistic has remained a 'worrying trend' (Brodie, 1996) and highlights the need to delve deeper into the reasons why and whether there are alternative approaches other than exclusion. Malcolm, (2018) highlights the unintended consequences of government policy to reduce exclusions of children with SEN leading to a 'dramatic over-representation' of SEN children in alternative provision.

6.30 SEN National and Mercia Exclusion Comparisons 2017/18

It is difficult to make comparisons between Mercia and National SEN data due to certain data not being available for primary schools, but a comparator table is below.

Table 16: National SEN Fx and Fx1+ rate compared with Mercia

	Fx Rate Mercia	Fx Rate Nat	Ratio	Fx1+ Rate Mercia	Fx1+ Rate Nat	Ratio
No SEN	0.91	0.39	**2.33**	0.39	0.21	**1.86**
SEN with statement EHC	20.99	13.44	**1.56**	8.83	5.32	**1.66**
SEN without statement	11.54	7.07	**1.62**	4.27	2.91	**1.50**

It has been established that Mercia has significantly higher rates of Fx and Fx1+ than the National rates of Fx and Fx1+. This is also the case with children who have a SEN either with or without an EHCP. It would follow as there are more Fx in Mercia, so more SEN pupils are excluded.

6.31 Socio-Economic Factors: The Role of Deprivation in Exclusion

Socio-economic status is a significant factor influencing exclusion rates. This analysis explores how eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) and levels of deprivation correlate with higher exclusion rates. Children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are often at greater risk of exclusion, reflecting the broader social inequalities that permeate the education system. This section emphasises the need for policies that address these socio-economic disparities, such as providing additional resources and support for schools serving high-poverty communities. By understanding the socio-economic underpinnings of exclusion, policymakers and educators can better address the root causes of behavioural issues and reduce the reliance on exclusion as a disciplinary measure.

6.32 Free School Meals (FSM)

Children's eligibility to receive FSMs is recorded within the School Census. Children in KS1 and EYFS (aged four to seven) are entitled to receive a FSM and the government provides additional funding for a FSM to children whose parents or carers are in receipt of the following benefits:

- Income support.
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax credit.
- Working tax credit.

6.33 National Fixed Term Exclusions for Children Eligible for FSMs 2017/18

Table 17 shows the Fx and Fx1+ of children on FSM. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of children with Fx by the number of children eligible for FSM in 2018.

Table 17: National Fx and Fx1+ of children eligible for FSMs primary school 2017/18

	Number	Rate
Fixed period exclusions		
Known to be eligible for FSM	28,156	4.34
Not eligible for FSM	37,940	0.93
Unclassified	9	.
All pupils	66,105	1.40
Pupil enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion		
Known to be eligible for FSM	11,698	1.80
Not eligible for FSM	17,533	0.43
Unclassified	5	
All pupils	29,236	0.62

The rate of FSMs declined in 2018 when fewer parents were claiming benefits. However, an unintended consequence of the high rate of Fx an Fx1+ among children receiving FSMs is that they are deprived of a meal, without any compensatory arrangement.

6.34 Mercia Free School Meals (FSM)

Table 18 acts as a comparator between national and Mercia exclusions of children on FSMs.

Table 18: National and Mercia comparisons in exclusion for those children with FSMs 2017/18

Fx Number Mercia	Fx Number Nat	Fx Rate Mercia	Fx Rate Nat	Ratio	Fx1+ Mercia Number	Fx1+ Number Nat	Fx 1+Rate Mercia	Fx1+ Rate Nat	Ratio
331	28,156	8.71	4.34	2.00	112	11,698	2.94	1.80	1.63

Graph 6: National and Mercia comparisons of Fx with FSM from 2013/14 to 2017/18 and Mercia Fx1+ 2013/14 to 2017/18

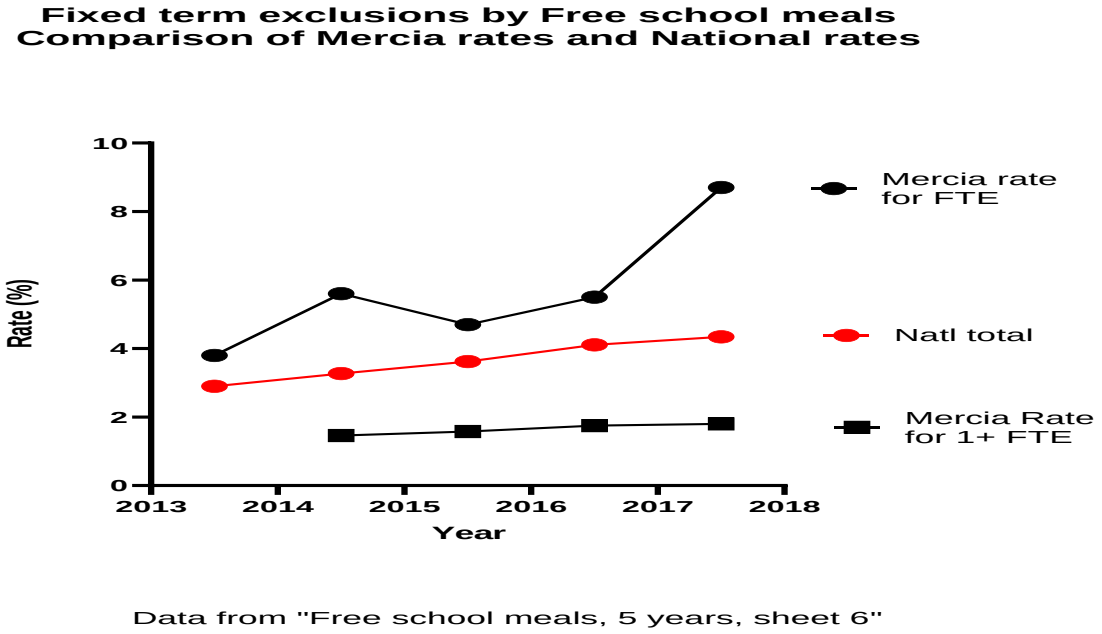


Table 18 and the graph 6 show that in Mercia more than twice as many children receive as Fx or Fx1+ who are in receipt of FSM than the National average.

As already stated, the national figures relating to FSM are concerning. Therefore, with the Mercia figures being twice that of the national average, it is an area of research that needs attention. An area for further research is, if Mercia's Fx level is driven by poverty, to compare Fx exclusion rates for FSM pupils in low deprivation areas vs FSM pupils in high deprivation areas.

6.35 Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation are a unique measure of relative deprivation at a small local area level - Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) across England and have been produced by the Government since 2000. They provide a set of relative measures of deprivation across England, based on seven different domains of deprivation:

- Income Deprivation.
- Employment Deprivation.
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation.
- Health Deprivation and Disability.
- Crime.
- Barriers to Housing and Services.
- Living Environment Deprivation.

Deprivation is measured to encompass a wide range of aspects of an individual’s living conditions. Each of the domains is constructed from a range of different data datasets, or indicators. The seven domains are combined to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). In addition to the seven domain-level indices, the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) has been created as a subset

from the Income Deprivation domain. IDACI indicators are based on the relationship between pupil postcode, LA district and IDACI scores. IDACI measures the proportion of children who live in income deprived households.

6.36 National Fixed Period Exclusions by Level of Deprivation 2017/18

Table 19 shows Fx and Fx1+ by 2015 IDACI at Super Output Area level based on the location of the school.

Table 19: National Px and Fx by level of deprivation of school State-funded primary schools 2017/18

IDACI[28]	Number of schools[29]	Fx		Fx1+	
		Number	**Rate[30]**	**Number**	**Rate[31]**
0-10% most deprived	1,547	12,489	2.43	5,563	1.08
10-20%	1,601	9,699	1.75	4,351	0.78
20-30%	1,573	8,440	1.65	3,735	0.73
30-40%	1,536	7,263	1.51	3,238	0.67
40-50%	1,623	7,166	1.49	3,077	0.64
50-60%	1,726	5,838	1.27	2,572	0.56
60-70%	1,823	4,990	1.09	2,207	0.48
70-80%	1,857	4,097	0.95	1,815	0.42
80-90%	1,873	3,487	0.81	1,514	0.35
90-100% least deprived	1,655	2,632	0.66	1,162	0.29
Total[32]	16,816	66,105	1.40	29,236	0.62

[28] 2015 IDACI at Super Output Area level based on the location of the school. Includes all schools which returned information on exclusions for 2017/18.
[29] The number of open schools as at January 2018 plus the number of schools which opened after January 2018 but reported exclusions.
[30] The number of exclusions (or the number of pupil enrolments receiving Fx or Fx1+ for each school type expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of relevant pupils (including sole or dual main registrations and boarding pupils) as at January 2018.
[31] As footnote 31.
[32] Totals include a small number of schools who could not be placed into an IDACI band as the school did not have a LSOA value on Edubase.

Further research is required when looking at deprivation due to the difficulty in finding the relevant data, for example, the number of primary schools based on their IDACI indicator. The data shows that children in the most deprived schools receive Fx slightly below 4 times more than in the least deprived school and Fx1+ slightly over 4 times more. The complexities around deprivation and how they affect children raises many questions about how schools address these potentially diverse needs.

6.37 Primary Academies

There are two types of Primary academies, Sponsored and Converter, which are directly funded by Government and run by an Academy trust.

- Sponsored primary academies usually replace underperforming schools and transferred to academy status as part of a government intervention. The Sponsors can come from another school or from a range of backgrounds including businesses; universities; other primary academies.

- Converter primary academies are successful Primary schools which have chosen to convert to academy status.

6.38 National Fixed Period Exclusions in Primary Schools including Academies 2017/18

Table 20 shows the number of exclusions (or the number of pupil enrolments receiving Fx or Fx1+ for each academy type.

Table 20: National Fx and Fx1+ by State funded primary schools including Academies 2017/18

Schools[33] [34]			Fx		Fx1+	
Primary school type	**Number of schools**	**Headcount**	**Number**	**Rate[35]**	**Number**	**Rate[36]**
State-funded (All)	16,816	4,716,244	**66,105**	1.4017	**29,236**	0.6199
LA maintained	12,461	3,314,881	40,822	1.2064	18,557	0.5484
Academies and Free Schools (Ac/F)	4,355	1,401,363	25,283	1.8973	10,679	0.8014
Converter	2,976	984,339	12,160	1.3063	5,284	0.5676
Sponsored	1,227	387,214	12,768	3.4336	5,248	1.4113
Free school	152	29,810	355	1.1909	147	0.4931

Academies and free schools made up 27% of primary schools in 2018 (School Census, 2018). Pupils attending sponsored academies have the highest rate of eligibility for FSM (21.3% claiming FSM whilst the proportion of children attending Converter Academies eligible and claiming FSMs was 12.7%. The statistics provided by the government are somewhat confusing as the data for the number of primary academies differs between the national exclusion statistics 2018 and the School Census 2018. The School Census had to be used in order to check

[33] Includes all academies open before 12 September 2017 (this is consistent with presentation in school performance tables).
[34] Total academy figures have not been provided as these are not comparable with totals for all schools. Most academies are secondary schools; therefore, totals would be disproportionately affected by the relatively large number of secondary schools which tend to have higher levels of exclusions.
[35] The number of exclusions (or the number of pupil enrolments receiving Fx or Fx1+ for each academy type expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils (including sole or dual main registrations and boarding pupils) as at January 2018 in academies open in relevant year.
[36] As above.

the rates of exclusion as the headcount is needed for each type of school and this is not available in the exclusion statistics. Children are nearly 2.5 times more likely to receive a Fx in a Sponsored Academy than in any other school, a figure that increases to nearly three times when compared with maintained LA schools. As already stated, these are schools that have usually been underperforming prior to changing into a Sponsored Academy. Potentially this has a range of other issues which may impact on the number of Fx and the reasons for them.

6.39 Highest and Lowest Excluding Schools in Mercia 2017/18

A specific focus is given to schools within Mercia LA with the highest and lowest rates of fixed-term exclusions. The following three tables provide data from the School Census and National Exclusion Statistics 2017/18 to show Mercia's highest Fx and Fx1+ primary schools, and by comparison its lowest Fx and Fx1+.

Table 21a shows the top 10 schools within Mercia for Fx exclusions by rank; and table 21b the top 10 schools for Fx1+ exclusion and table 21c shows the lowest Fx and Fx1+ Mercia schools. The schools' names have been changed. Schools denoted by a number were visited by the researcher. Other schools are denoted by a letter.

Table 21: Mercia Highest Fx Schools 2017/18 and Mercia Highest Fx1+ Schools 2017/18 and Mercia Lowest Fx and Fx1+ schools 2017/18

Table 21a: Mercia Highest Fx Schools 2017/18

School	Number on Roll	% of pupils with FSM	% of pupils White British (WB)	Fx Number	Fx Rate	Fx1+ Rate
School 4	565	34.2	82.1	177	31.33	9.73
A	261	41.8	76.6	66	25.29	6.51
B	181	42	71.3	45	24.86	8.29
C	270	14.8	70.4	26	9.63	2.22
D	412	21.6	78.6	24	5.83	2.18
E	382	35.1	80.9	20	5.24	2.88
F	407	35.4	88	16	3.93	2.7
G	385	32.2	93	14	3.64	1.81
School 3	241	20.7	60.6	8	3.32	2.07
H	208	27.4	49.5	5	2.4	1.92

Table 21b: Mercia Highest Fx1+ Schools 2017/18

	Number on Roll	% of pupils with FSM	% of pupils WB	Fx Number	Fx Rate	Fx1+ Rate
School 4	565	34.2	82.1	177	31.33	9.73
B	181	42	71.3	45	24.86	8.29
A	261	41.8	76.6	66	25.29	6.51
E	382	35.1	80.9	20	5.24	2.88
F	407	35.4	88	16	3.93	2.7
C	270	14.8	70.4	26	9.63	2.22
D	412	21.6	78.6	24	5.83	2.18
School 3	241	20.7	60.6	8	3.32	2.07
H	208	27.4	49.5	5	2.4	1.92
G	385	32.2	93	14	3.64	1.81

Table 21c: Mercia Lowest Fx and Fx1+ schools 2017/18

	Number on Roll	% of pupils on FSM	% of pupils W/B	Fx Number	Fx Rate	Fx1+Rate
School 2	340	10.3	0.6	0	0	0
I	382	25.7	9.4	0	0	0
J	392	11.5	18.4	0	0	0
K	457	16	21.7	0	0	0
L	493	7.1	25.8	0	0	0
M	405	12.6	42.5	0	0	0
N	414	17.9	46.9	0	0	0
O	412	15.5	75.5	0	0	0
P	245	15.9	69	0	0	0
Q	651	10.1	73.7	0	0	0

What is noticeable is the significant difference in the rates across the LA. In the lowest excluding schools, no child received a Fx or Fx1+. In the top ten Mercia schools the data shows large variation within the top ten from 31.33 Fx to 2.04 Fx, and for Fx1+ from 9.7 to 1.8. In the top ten the range the percentages for children with FSM or WB are relatively in the same range with some outliers. The order remains fairly consistent with School 4 highest for both but School A and School B alternating 2nd and 3rd.

6.40 Mercia Highest Excluding Primary Schools Compared with Mercia and National Primary Schools Rates 2017/18

The two tables below take the identified highest ten Mercia primary schools and compare their Fx and Fx1+ rate against all Mercia primary schools and National rates.

Table 22: Ratio of Fx by school compared to Mercia and National rates 2017/18 and Ratio of Fx1+ by school compared to Mercia and National rates 2017/18

Table 22a: Ratio of Fx by school compared to Mercia and National rates 2017/18					
School	Fx Rate school	Fx Rate Mercia	Fx Rate National	Ratio School/Mercia	Ratio School/Nat
School 4	31.33	3.06	1.40	10.24	22.38
A	25.29	3.06	1.40	8.26	18.06
B	24.86	3.06	1.40	8.12	17.76
C	9.63	3.06	1.40	3.15	6.88
D	5.83	3.06	1.40	1.91	4.16
E	5.24	3.06	1.40	1.71	3.74
F	3.93	3.06	1.40	1.28	2.81
G	3.64	3.06	1.40	1.19	2.60
School 3	3.32	3.06	1.40	1.08	2.37
H	2.40	3.06	1.40	0.78	1.71
Table 22b: Ratio of Fx1+ by school compared to Mercia and National rates 2017/18					
	Fx1+ Rate school	**Fx1+ Rate Mercia**	**Fx1+ Rate National**	**Ratio School/Mercia**	**Ratio School/Nat**
School 4	9.73	1.19	0.62	8.18	15.69
B	8.29	1.19	0.62	6.97	13.37
A	6.51	1.19	0.62	5.47	10.50
E	2.88	1.19	0.62	2.42	4.65
F	2.70	1.19	0.62	2.27	4.35

C	2.22	1.19	0.62	1.87	3.58
D	2.18	1.19	0.62	1.83	3.52
School 3	2.07	1.19	0.62	1.74	3.34
H	1.92	1.19	0.62	1.61	3.10
G	1.81	1.19	0.62	1.52	2.92

The data above reiterates the high levels of Fx and Fx1+ within these 10 Mercia primary schools. School 4 is 10 times more likely to issue Fx compared to Mercia schools and 22 times more likely to issue a Fx than nationally. School 4 is 8 and 15 times more likely to issue a Fx1+ compared to other Mercia primary schools and primary schools nationally, respectively. School 3 the rates are not as high, yet its use of Fx and Fx1+ is over 1 time and over 1.5 times higher than Mercia schools and over 2 times and nearly 3.5 times higher than the National average respectively. This differentiation points to the arbitrary use of Fx and Fx1+ in English schools in 2017 to 2018 and raises questions about how and why this is happening in these schools.

6.41 Summary

The focus of this chapter was, by analysing the national exclusion data, to understand trends on who and why children are being excluded for a Fx and then to draw a direct comparison to Mercia and to draw from that analysis potential factors that could be causing the differential.

For this research it was important to understand Mercia's position in a league table of LA's on exclusion rates and was it excluding for the same reasons and the same children as the National averages. Mercia is a high excluder and has some points of difference in why it excludes. Who it excludes is broadly in line with National figures, but Mercia has higher rates, but it is also a LA with high deprivation. The data analysis of the National versus the local data was used to illuminate the research questions further as the study progressed.

Researching the exclusion data by school, across the LA identified low and high excluding schools. By identifying these schools, the researcher could identify schools whose behaviour policies should be interrogated to understand if there were policies within them that could be driving exclusion and secondly to hone and frame the school questionnaire and what schools to send it to. Investigating the LA exclusion data identified the schools to approach to be observed and in which to conduct interviews. Thus, framing the questions to be asked in the interviews and what to look out for during the observations in the schools.

Comparing Mercia primary data with national primary data has shown by focusing on a LA with high Fx and Fx1+ it may be possible to further understand the processes and procedures that lead up to a Fx or Fx1+ and to raise the question whether there are alternatives.

The data has also revealed gaps in understanding and further potential areas of study which are beyond the remit of this research, which include:

- The transition of Year 6 (last year of Primary school) to Year 7 (first year of Secondary school).
- Who are these 11-year-olds and where are they?
    - Year 6 primary?
    - Year 7 secondary?
    - Summer born?
    - Boys/Girls?
- FSM and exclusion, and what is the health costs for a child that may not be in school to receive their FSM?

6.42 Discussion on National Data

The national data shows that permanent exclusion has noticeably increased over the last five years with Fx increasing year-on-year, and Fx1+ increasing, albeit slightly less sharply year on year. The data cannot tell us why because, whilst the national data appears to be comprehensive at first look, it has gaps as identified in this analysis. The biggest gap is intersectionality, the data is presented by gender, ethnicity, SEN, reasons for exclusion, age and NC group and in Px, Fx and Fx1+. Only gender and age and gender and NC group are interconnected. This is surprising and unhelpful given that there is clear evidence that gender is a significant pre-determinant for exclusion.

The other characteristics are shown as absolutes. Therefore, it is not transparent at what age and what gender a child with a SEN is being excluded nor is the reason for the exclusion penetrable. The same is true for ethnicity with is recorded in the Government's 'ethnicity facts and figures' website as temporary exclusions and due to how it is recorded with Fx and Fx1+ not separated it is difficult to cross reference, further exacerbating the ability to understand why and who from ethnic communities are being excluded.

The exclusion of children on FSMs is similarly not broken down by gender, ethnicity or reason. This is a gap as it is difficult to determine whether children with more than one risk factor of exclusion become disproportionately more at risk of Fx. Therefore, it is difficult to know how children are being identified and whether schools are using data effectively to pre-empt Fx. These gaps bring into sharp focus that the data alone does not help to contextualise the potential inequalities and factors that could affect exclusions (Gazeley et al., 2015).

Another area for enquiry is unpicking the processes that are involved in making the judgement on what is deemed to be reasonable or unreasonable behaviour and to understand what is happening to children to put them at risk of Fx. Identifying the training provided to adults in schools to deal with young and potentially vulnerable young children may also help.
Through the review of literature and data analysis questions have been raised about the use of SEN, whether it is being used to manage difficult issues rather than providing the resources needed to meet a child's needs and by using Fx we are removing potential ameliorative action.

Also, why are there some schools with high deprivation but low Fx whilst others have high rates, and why are deprivation indicators for children not more accessible? There needs to be an understanding of what happens to an excluded child's FSM provision and does that child still receive their FSM if not on site? This is pertinent but difficult to decipher as primary schools IDACI indicator is challenging to find. The data shows that children in the most deprived schools receive Fx slightly below 4 times more than in the least deprived school and Fx+1 slightly over 4 times more. The complexities around deprivation and how they affect children raises many questions about how schools address these potentially diverse needs.

Given that Academies and free schools made up 27% of primary schools in 2018, although the headcount is not in the exclusion data but in the school census, and given high rates of FSM in sponsored academies and greater Fx exclusion rates in these schools, there is more research needed into the exclusion rates. Other areas identified are health issues or trauma affecting a child's life and how this risks Fx.

If the Government wants to drive up standards and achievement and wants to be serious about tackling behaviour and reducing exclusion, a detailed National picture is needed with greater transparency and focus on the child in the data. How many children receiving an Fx go on to have Fx1+, or a Px, and who are they, from what background and what other factors are affecting their pre-determination to be excluded.

6.43 Discussion on National/ Mercia Comparisons

Mercia as a whole is above the National average and has been for 5 years, for both Fx and Fx1+ exclusions. Its Px rate is however low. It has high deprivation and areas of the LA – 19 – are within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in England.

An important question that arises from this data is why has the increase in Fx from four and under to age ten been reversed in Yr7 in Mercia which is lower than the National average. Has something happened prior to a child receiving an Fx in Y7? It could mean there has been changes to reporting arrangements for children aged 11 or Mercia may have effective Y7 practice in place such as, Y6/7 transition arrangements, pastoral care, appropriate curriculum.

In Mercia the highest reason for an exclusion differs from the National data where persistent disruptive behaviour is the highest reason. In Mercia its physical assault against an adult although it's worth noting that Mercia has higher rates of exclusion in 10 out of the 12 reasons. Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour towards an adult is also higher than the National average by 3 times and its 4 times higher than the National average for damage. With the exception of damage these reasons could be regarded as interpretive but since the data cannot be broken

down by gender, SEN, FSM or ethnicity is difficult to conclude why Mercia has higher rates for these reasons. Greater research is needed into each school and its school ethos and population. This framed the questionnaire and the observations that the researcher conducted.

Mercia's Fx level could be explained by poverty but there is still over representation in the data. Could the data be broken down to allow consideration of Fx rates for FSM pupils in low deprivation areas vs FSM pupils in high deprivation areas. A future piece of work will need to consider, given the size of the SEN population and Fx in Mercia, whether there is variation of over exclusion vs national data. This raises questions such as, are children who present with potential difficulties being dealt with differently? Are these children being moved elsewhere and have reporting arrangements changed?

Another area for exploration is ethnicity. Mercia and National data, like all LAs, was difficult to derive a direct comparison given the differing reporting arrangements. However, in Mercia White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean and WB have Fx rates higher than the national data by between 4.5 and 3 times. This could be a reflection of the population as a whole but the prominence of certain ethnic groups, WB and Black Caribbean and Black African is consistent with other research. Is this linked to poverty or differing culture backgrounds or immigration? Is there provision within school ethos and behaviour strategies to differentiate the needs of these children?

Three schools the researcher approached on the analysis of this data agreed to allow observation and interviews to be undertaken. Two high excluders, and in the case of School 4

the top LA Fx excluder and high Fx1+ excluder and school 2, a school with no exclusions. School 4 provided further research analysis, as by the time of the field work, it had changed leadership and was a low excluder. These differentiations and the factors driving them require greater in-depth research.

6.44 Conclusion

Chapter 6 provides a comprehensive and critical examination of exclusion data from English primary schools, with a specific focus on comparing national statistics with data from the Mercia LA. The analysis reveals significant disparities in exclusion rates, particularly in terms of demographic and socio-economic factors, and underscores the importance of context-specific interventions.

The findings from this chapter suggest that Mercia, despite its low rate of permanent exclusions, exhibits alarmingly high rates Fx and Fx1+. These trends are particularly pronounced among certain demographic groups, including boys, children from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, specific ethnic minorities and those with SEN. The persistent over-representation of these groups in exclusion statistics is consistent with broader national trends, highlighting systemic inequalities within the education system (Gazeley et al., 2015; Graham et al., 2021).

The chapter employs IE as a framework to critique the limitations of quantitative exclusion data. IE challenges the objectification of children through statistical categories, emphasising the importance of understanding the lived experiences behind the numbers (Smith, 2005). This

approach is crucial for moving beyond mere data analysis to addressing the root causes of exclusion, which are often linked to broader social, economic, and institutional factors.

One of the key critiques emerging from this chapter is the inadequacy of current exclusion data in capturing the full complexity of the issue in English primary schools. The lack of intersectional analysis, particularly regarding how different factors such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and SEN intersect to influence exclusion rates, limits the utility of this data for informing policy and practice (Gazeley et al., 2015; Malachowski et al., 2017). For instance, while boys are consistently shown to be more likely to be excluded than girls, the data does not adequately explore how this risk is further compounded by other factors, such as SEN or socio-economic deprivation.

This chapter raises critical questions about the effectiveness of current policies and practices in addressing exclusion. The high exclusion rates in Mercia, particularly for reasons such as physical assault against adults and persistent disruptive behaviour, suggest that schools may be relying too heavily on exclusion as a disciplinary measure, rather than addressing the underlying issues that lead to such behaviours. This is particularly concerning given the well-documented negative impacts of exclusion on children's long-term educational and social outcomes (Parsons, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2016).

The chapter also highlights the need for more targeted support for vulnerable groups, such as children eligible for FSM and those with SEN. The disproportionately high exclusion rates among these groups indicate that current support mechanisms are insufficient and that more needs to

be done to provide inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for all children (Graham et al., 2021; Malcolm, 2018).

Finally, the chapter emphasises the importance of local context in shaping exclusion practices. The significant variations between Mercia and national data suggest that local policies, socio-economic conditions, and school practices play a crucial role in influencing exclusion rates. This finding aligns with broader research on the importance of localised interventions in addressing educational inequalities (McCluskey et al., 2016; Gazeley et al., 2015).

In conclusion, Chapter 6 calls for a more nuanced and context-sensitive approach to understanding and addressing school exclusions. It advocates for the integration of qualitative insights, as emphasised by IE, into the analysis of exclusion data, to better understand the lived experiences of excluded children and to develop more effective and equitable policies and practices. Future research should focus on the intersections of various demographic and socio-economic factors in influencing exclusion and explore the potential of alternative disciplinary measures that do not rely on exclusion. This approach is essential for creating a more inclusive and just education system that supports all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Chapter 7: Questionnaire Analysis

7.1 Introduction

The research focussed on understanding why primary schools are increasingly using suspension and why there is such a wide variation in its use across schools. Within this research an objective was to identify factors that may contribute to a school culture that reduces the risk of suspension. My objectives were firstly to identify if there are processes and practices in primary schools that may lead to certain children being at greater risk of exclusion. Taking the standpoint of those living in the everyday of school, how do the behaviour policies mediate the experiences of the participants, plotting lines of ruling relations beyond the local site? Secondly, to identify the disciplinary decisions that are made every day and how these decisions are organised in specific ways in schools.

One way to address these objectives was to gain insight and understanding of how exclusion rates may reflect the ethos and culture that prevails in each school. To assess the ethos and culture, a questionnaire was devised which sought to obtain information on the awareness of the school's behaviour policy from a range of staff members, and how issues are subsequently dealt with. The challenges of obtaining permission to conduct fieldwork in schools during the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the scope and methodology of the study. Strict access restrictions meant that the researcher could not conduct fieldwork in all 10 of the originally identified schools that were representative of the initial plan to focus on suspension rates. This created an obstacle to research, as not all of the selected schools aligned with the Mercia data and the intended selection of schools with the highest suspension rates and the

schools with the lowest suspension rates. The pandemic also introduced new variables, such as increased behavioural challenges and a shift in disciplinary practices, with suspensions becoming more frequent post-pandemic. These changes highlight the dynamic nature of exclusionary practices, influenced by both institutional policies and external social disruptions. Thus, the questionnaire and the fieldwork were not seeking to identify school demographics or the suspension of children from identified and known characteristics. Rather the study focuses on the enactment on ruling texts on school behaviour policies and their implementation and enactment, and where this differed, if the schools had higher than national or lower than national suspension rates. Comparisons have been made as to whether schools had lower than national suspension rates **(Sus-)** or higher than national suspension rates **(Sus+),** however 3 of the six schools that submitted questionnaires were not from Mercia but a neighbouring LA, and although they could be grouped as having higher or lower suspension rates there needs to be caution when drawing conclusions from the data.

Table 23: Researched Schools Comparator

Researched Schools			
High excluding (Sus+)	**Low excluding (Sus-)**	**Local Authority**	**Notes**
	School 1	External LA*	Used for fieldwork and questionnaire
	School 2	Mercia	Used for fieldwork and questionnaire
School 3		Mercia	Used for fieldwork and questionnaire
School 4 Pre 2018	**School 4 Post 2018**	Mercia	Used for fieldwork and questionnaire – This was the school with the highest Fx in Mercia in 2017/18
	School 5	External LA[37]	Used for fieldwork and questionnaire
School 6		External LA	Questionnaire only

[37] External LA schools were from the same neighbouring LA

7.2 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire focuses on the staff in schools' understanding or 'awareness' and alignment with their behaviour policy and their understanding of exclusion. The questions were derived and inspired by the work of Spink (2011) which had used a similar questionnaire approach to explore school ethos. A unique opportunity arose during the research in that School 4 had **(Sus+)** and participated by answering the questionnaire. Following a change of leadership, it then become **(Sus-)** and took part a second time by answering the questionnaire again.

Mercia has high suspension rates **(Sus+)** and has some points of difference in why it excludes. Researching the exclusion data by school, across the LA, identified low **(Sus-)** and high **(Sus+)** schools. Two schools in Mercia were identified as having higher than national suspension rates **(Sus+)**, **School 3 and 4 (pre-2018)**, and one school with lower than national suspension rates **(Sus-)**, **School 2. School 1 and 5** from a neighbouring LA had lower than national exclusion rates **(Sus-)** and School 6 from the same LA had higher than national exclusion rates **(Sus+). School 4 (post-2018)** was used because its suspension rates had become lower than the national average **(Sus-)**.

7.3 Organisation

Through the DfE statistics, the School Census, and, as a result of conversations with the LA's exclusion officer, ten schools were identified: five with higher than national suspension rates **(Sus+)** and five with lower than national suspension rates **(Sus-)**. The behaviour policies of these ten schools were accessed (from their school websites) and analysed to help refine the questions. Six broad themes were identified, and the questions were framed accordingly: policy;

training; children's understanding; rewards and sanctions; potential exclusionary practices and beliefs about exclusion. Amendments made after a pilot study reduced the number of questions from 37 to 34. The Questionnaire, instructions and an explanation/information sheet for participants is at *Appendix 7*.

As described in the methodology, schools were contacted to take part in this research and to complete the questionnaire. The information requested from the headteacher, prior to completing the questionnaire was the role of staff. Despite sending to all ten schools (in all cases by visiting the schools) and through contact with headteachers, only the schools where I had conducted fieldwork completed the questionnaire. To increase the sample size another school, whose suspensions were higher than average **(Sus+)** and I had contact with, took part. Several other schools outside the target 10, where also contacted to increase the sample size but either refused or in most cases did not respond.

Staff were classified into one of four categories: Senior Leadership Team, Teacher, Teaching assistant and "Other" which includes administrative and support staff. Participants could choose not to give their ethnicity[38]. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was not required as the study is not sufficiently large scale to require one. Whilst in my possession, the data is locked away in a secure filing cabinet and all data on the computer is password protected. The questionnaires will be destroyed at the end of the doctoral process and completion of the thesis.

[38] The ethnicity of staff was also requested as the ethnicity of those engaged in potential exclusionary processes may be important. The answers to the questionnaire were anonymised and therefore, it would be difficult to link the ethnicity to a specific person. In the end it was not a factor in my research.

7.4 Response and Analysis

A total of six schools participated in the questionnaire survey. They were classified schools with Higher than the national average suspension rates **(Sus+)** or Lower than average suspension rates **(Sus-)** based on the suspension (Fx) figures recorded in the National data on exclusions (2017/18).

- Schools with suspension rates higher than the national average **(Sus+)**:
    - **School 3, School 4 (Pre 2018), School 6**.
- Schools with suspension rates lower than the national average **(Sus-)**:
    - **School 1, School 2, School 4 (Post 2018), School 5**.

The number of questionnaires provided was based on the number of all staff and four governors as shown on the schools' websites. 329 were distributed with a response rate of 27% (n=88). There were no governor responses. During the distribution and collection of the questionnaires many of the six schools were experiencing extremely high levels of staff absence due to covid which probably affected the number of responses received.

School 4 offered a unique opportunity to observe how suspension rates change following a change in school leadership and the policies that determine how behavioural issues were dealt with. Prior to 2018, **school 4** was a **(Sus+)** school but in 2018, the headteacher and senior leadership team were changed, new policies were implemented and after 2018, the school became **(Sus-)**. For the analysis of the relationship between suspension rates and ethos/culture, the two sets of data for **school 4**, before and after 2018, have been included in the **(Sus+)** and **(Sus-)** groups respectively.

After discussion with, and agreement from the headteacher of each school, the questionnaires, information sheet and a self-sealing return envelope, were distributed to the staff who were requested to complete the questionnaire anonymously.

7.5 Analysis of Questionnaire Responses

The participants were requested to respond using a five-point Likert-type scale reflecting their agreement or otherwise with each question. The responses could be "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree", "Strongly disagree" or "Don't know". To render the responses in the questionnaires into a form which could be quantified and analysed, the different levels of agreement were given arbitrary scores as in this table:

Table 24: Likert Scale

Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Score	10	8	6	4	2	1

To illustrate how responses were recorded and analysed, three peoples responses for a low excluding school to the first 6 questions is shown.

Table 25: SLT Exemplar School Responses

Statement	SLT (including SENCo /Welfare officer) – **(Sus-)** school					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
There is a behaviour policy	2	1				
The behaviour policy was developed in collaboration with staff.	1		1			1
The behaviour policy was developed in collaboration with parents			1	1		1
Staff understand the behaviour policy.	2		1			
Staff receive training in the behaviour policy.		1	1			1
Staff are trained to be consistent in implementing the behaviour policy.		2	1			

In the next table, the number of responses at each agreement level are multiplied by the score assigned to that agreement level - e.g. question 1, 2 responses were “strongly agree” so are multiplied by 10. Then, for each question, these scores are added to give a total agreement score – last column on the right.

Table 26: SLT Responses for Exemplar School shown as an Agreement Level

							N=3
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	**TOTAL**
Value	**10**	**8**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**31**
There is a behaviour policy	20	8					**28**
The behaviour policy was developed in collaboration with staff.	10		6			1	**17**
The behaviour policy was developed in collaboration with parents			6	4		1	**11**
Staff understand the behaviour policy.	20		6				**26**
Staff receive training in the behaviour policy.		8	6			1	**15**
Staff are trained to be consistent in implementing the behaviour policy.		16	6				**22**

Next, the total agreement scores are summed to give an overall score for each staff category – exemplified in the next table.

Table 27: Total Agreement Score by Staff Category in (Sus-) Schools

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	**TOTAL**
SLT (including SENCo /Welfare officer N=3	260	235	78	44	24	8	**649**
Teacher N=3	70	288	120	72	34	4	**588**
Teaching Assistants N=3	420	192	90	68	10	2	**782**
Other (admin/support staff)	475	161.5	85	18	3	6.5	**749**

Next, because for each school and within each staff category, the numbers of responders differed, the scores were averaged and normalised by dividing by the number of respondents in that category, to allow a "per single staff response". Finally, within each staff category, all the scores for the levels of agreement and for each question were summed to give a grand total that reflected the "awareness" of the staff of that category, of the policies and culture expounded in the school's documents – the "awareness score", for all staff is the number in the bottom right cell and by staff category the number in the right-hand column.

Table 28: Scores Normalised (averaged) to per Individual

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	**TOTAL**
SLT (including SENCo /Welfare officer [N=3]	87	78	26	15	8	3	**216**
Teacher [N=3]	23	96	40	24	11	1	**196**
Teaching Assistants [N=3]	140	64	30	23	3	1	**261**
Other (admin/support staff) [N=3]	158	54	28	6	1	2	**250**
Totals	**408**	**292**	**124**	**67**	**24**	**7**	**923**

The next steps were to group the data from the 3 **(Sus+)** schools and the 4 **(Sus-)** schools so they could be analysed and compared. This panel shows the final, normalised awareness scores for each of the 4 **(Sus-)** schools. The bottom line shows the global "awareness score" across all 4 staff categories for each school.

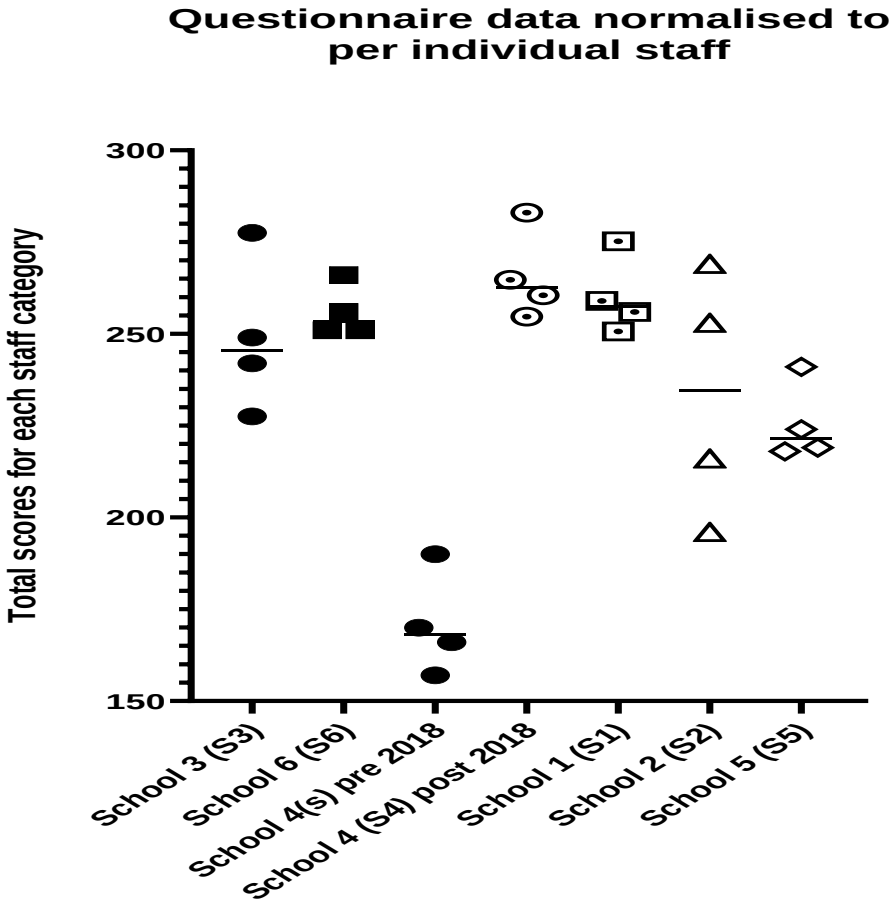
Table 29: Normalised Awareness Scores – 4 (Sus-) Schools for Staff Categories by School

(Sus-) schools	**S2**	**S4-** Post 2018	**S1**	**S5**	**Means**
SLT (including SENCo /Welfare officer	216	283	256	234	**247**
Teacher	196	254.7	259	232.5	**236**
Teaching Assistants	261	264.8	250.66	218	**249**
Other (admin/support staff)	250	260.5	275.25	244	**257**

7.6 Awareness of School Culture and Policies

From the analysis process described above, the awareness scores for each staff category by each school can be compared. The same analysis as described earlier was repeated for the 3 **(Sus+)** schools including **School 4** Pre-2018. Each school is shown by a different symbol for ease of representation. The four staff categories are shown separately to highlight the spread of awareness across the four staff groups with each data point showing the normalised total "awareness score" for one staff category. The staff categories are not identified. The mean point for each school is represented by – symbol on graph 7.

Graph 7: Questionnaire scores normalised to per staff member for 3 (Sus+) and 4 (Sus-) schools including school 4 both before and after 2018. Each data point represents a different staff group.[39]



Except for **School 2**, the awareness across the staff groups is clustered fairly closely, reflecting that in each school, there is a common and relatively uniform level of agreement across all the staff categories with respect to their awareness of the school's culture and policies. School 2 has a wide spread of awareness scores, yet it was a **(Sus-)** school. **School 2** is in an area of high deprivation but during observation in **school 2** there appeared to be a culture of compliance

[39] This is also highlighted if the scores for all the schools together were compared by use of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This revealed that within all the data, there was a highly significant difference ($P<0.0001$), but most of this difference is likely due to the contribution by the data from school 4, pre-2018 **(Sus+)**.

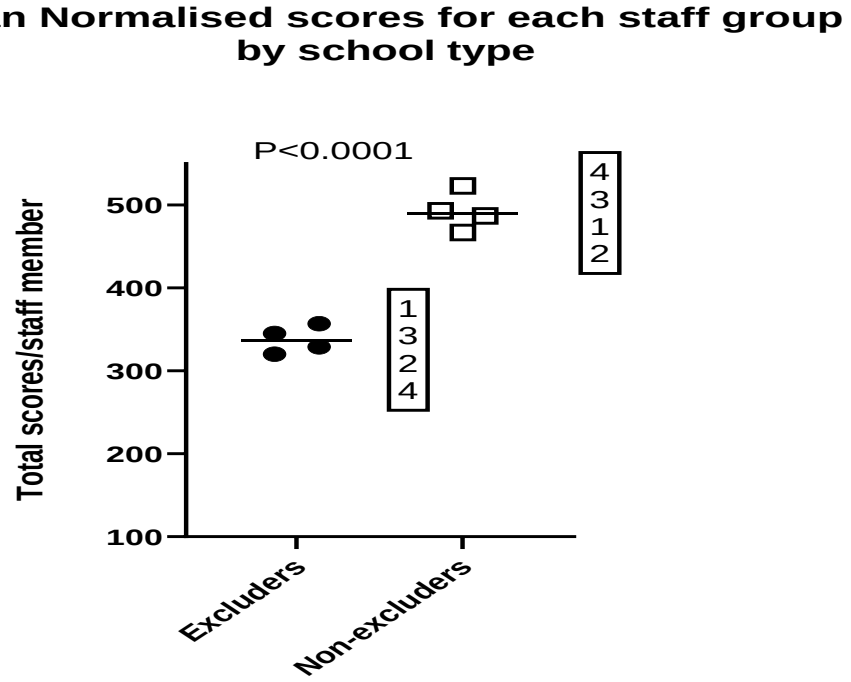
and limited professional dialogue among the staff. The staff absence, due to Covid, was very high during fieldwork. The school's population is very diverse. The children appeared compliant and willing to follow instruction and rules with little resistance. This is explored in further detail in Chapter 9.

7.7 Comparison of Pooled Awareness Scores Comparing the Low Excluding to the Excluding Schools

To determine if there was a difference in the awareness score of the schools' staff between schools that are **(Sus+)** schools and those that are **(Sus-),** the awareness scores for each staff category were pooled – e.g. all the Senior leadership scores for the three **(Sus+)** schools pooled to give one value and the same for the four **(Sus-)** schools.

The staff groups were numbered: 1 = Senior Leadership, 2 = Teachers, 3 = Teaching Assistants, 4 = Other (admin/support) staff – the numbers in boxes in the graph indicate the order of the staff categories. The mean of each of these staff groups was calculated and plotted as a symbol on the graph below – circle for staff groups in **(Sus+)** schools and squares for staff grouping in **(Sus-)** schools. The pooled scores for the two groups of schools were then compared as shown in graph 8.

Graph 8: Mean scores for each staff category and school type, comparison of all (Sus+) schools (N=3) vs all (Sus-) schools (N= 4)



1 = Senior Leadership, 2 = Teachers,
3 = Teaching Assistants,
4 = Other (admin/support) staff

- staff groups in **(Sus+)** schools

- squares for staff grouping in **(Sus-)** schools.

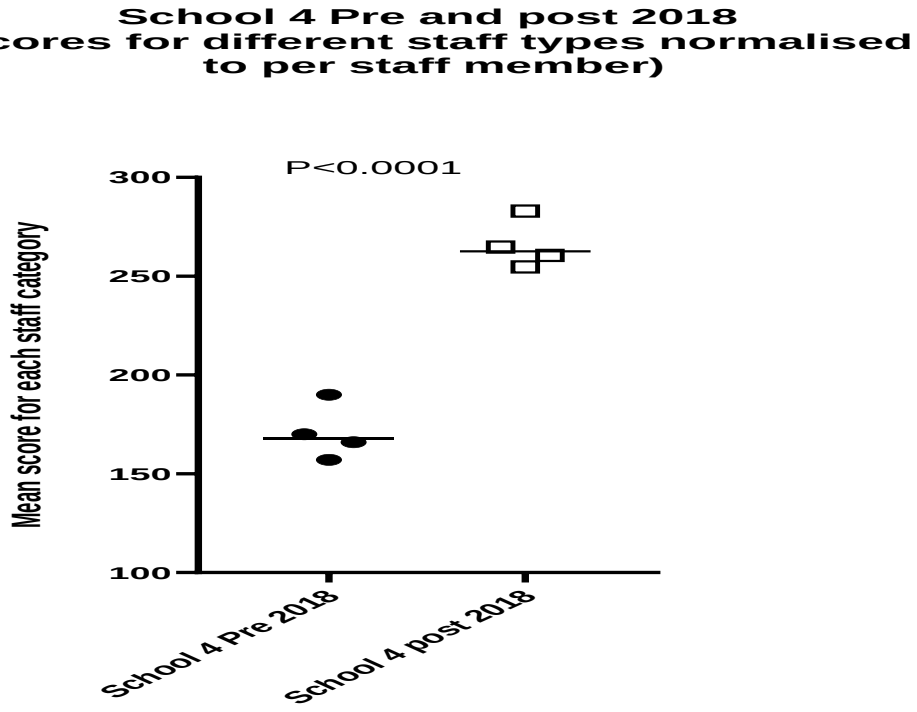
A highly significant difference between the school groups was revealed. The mean score for **(Sus+)** schools was 338, that for **(Sus-)** schools – 499 (P<0.0001, Mann Whitney). This suggests in **(Sus-)** schools the staff are clear on and aligned on the school ethos and policies. Interestingly, in the **(Sus+)** schools, the SLT and teachers had the highest awareness scores whilst in the **(Sus-)** schools it was TAs and others who had the highest scores. This may indicate whole school staff buy in and good communication and togetherness in the staff in **(Sus-)** schools. My observations and personal experience as a headteacher would corroborate that where policy is clear, shared, discussed and jointly formed, that you get greater buy in.

7.8 Analysis of School 4 Before and After 2018

School 4 offered a particular opportunity to look at how the school ethos and culture, reflected by staff and policies, translated into the suspension of children. Therefore, the data was

compared from before and after the senior leadership and associated policies were changed in 2018 (Graph 9). Again, there was generally good agreement of awareness across the different staff categories at each time. However, the changes introduced in 2018 were associated with a highly significant change in both staff awareness and "buy-in" to the schools' policies, which was associated with a significant reduction in suspensions from the school.

Graph 9: Mean questionnaire "awareness scores" for each staff type: Comparison of awareness scores before and after 2018.



7.9 Findings

The analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed several key findings related to staff awareness of behaviour policies, the alignment of school ethos with these policies, and the implications for suspension rates in primary schools.

1. **Staff Awareness and Policy Alignment**: Schools with lower suspension rates (**Sus-**) generally exhibited higher levels of staff awareness and alignment with their behaviour policies compared to those with higher suspension rates (**Sus+**). This suggests that a strong, well-communicated, and consistently applied behaviour policy is crucial in reducing the likelihood of suspensions.

2. **Leadership Impact on School Culture**: The case of **school 4** provided a unique insight into how changes in leadership and behaviour policies can significantly impact suspension rates. Before 2018, **school 4** had high suspension rates (**Sus+**), but following leadership changes and the implementation of new policies, the school saw a marked reduction in suspensions, becoming a (**Sus-**) school. This demonstrates the vital role of leadership in shaping school culture and reducing exclusionary practices.

3. **Disparity in Awareness Among Staff**: In schools with higher suspension rates (**Sus+**), there was often a significant disparity in awareness levels among different staff categories, with senior leadership and teachers being more aligned with behaviour policies than teaching assistants and support staff. This lack of cohesion could contribute to inconsistent application of policies, thereby increasing suspension rates.

4. **Case of School 2**: Despite being classified as a (**Sus-**) school, **school 2** showed a wide range of awareness scores among staff, which is atypical for low-suspending schools. Factors such as high staff absence due to COVID-19 and a culture of compliance among children may mask underlying issues with staff engagement and communication. This

finding suggests that low suspension rates alone do not necessarily indicate a positive school culture.

5. **Role of Teaching Assistants and Support Staff**: The analysis highlighted the significant role that TA and support staff play in influencing suspension rates. In (**Sus-**) schools, these staff members showed high levels of awareness and alignment with behaviour policies, indicating their crucial role in fostering an inclusive school environment.

6. **Comparison Between (Sus+) and (Sus-) Schools**: There was a significant difference between the average awareness scores in (**Sus+**) and (**Sus-**) schools, with (**Sus-**) schools having much higher scores. This further supports the idea that staff buy-in and consistent application of behaviour policies are associated with lower suspension rates.

7.10 Summary

This chapter aimed to understand the relationship between staff awareness of school behaviour policies and suspension rates in primary schools. Through a detailed analysis of questionnaire responses from staff across six schools, the study found that schools with lower suspension rates tend to have higher levels of staff awareness and alignment with behaviour policies. Leadership changes and consistent policy application emerged as critical factors in reducing suspension rates. The chapter also highlighted the vital role of teaching assistants and support staff in shaping school culture and the potential issues that can arise when there is a disparity in awareness levels among different staff groups.

7.11 Discussion

The findings of this chapter accentuate the importance of a cohesive and well-communicated behaviour policy in reducing exclusionary practices within schools. The disparity in awareness levels among different staff categories in (**Sus+**) schools suggests that a lack of cohesion can lead to inconsistent policy application, which may contribute to higher suspension rates.

The case of School 4 is particularly illustrative of the impact that leadership can have on school culture. The significant reduction in suspension rates following changes in leadership and behaviour policies, aligns with existing research that emphasises the role of leadership in shaping school culture and fostering an inclusive environment (Smith, 2005; Gazeley et al., 2020). This finding also highlights the dynamic nature of school culture and the potential for positive change when leadership is committed to promoting inclusivity and consistency in policy application.

The role of TAs and support staff, often overlooked in discussions of school culture, is critical in shaping children's behaviour and ensuring the consistent application of behaviour policies. This aligns with research that suggests the importance of whole-school approaches to behaviour management, where all staff members are engaged and aligned with the school's ethos (Ball, 2021). The high levels of awareness among TAs and support staff in (Sus-) schools indicate that their engagement is crucial for creating a supportive and inclusive environment because of their relationships with individual children.

The case of **school 2** raises important questions about the relationship between compliance and a positive school culture. Despite being a (**Sus-**) school, the wide range of awareness scores suggests that low suspension rates may not always indicate a healthy school culture. This finding aligns with critiques of overly compliant school environments, where underlying issues with staff communication and engagement may be masked by outward signs of compliance (Graham, 2021).

7.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided valuable insights into the relationship between staff awareness of behaviour policies, school culture, and suspension rates. The findings suggest that consistent and well-communicated behaviour policies, supported by strong leadership and engaged staff with a child-centred approach are crucial for reducing suspension rates and fostering an inclusive school environment. The case of **school 4** highlights the potential for positive change when leadership is committed to promoting inclusivity and consistency in policy application. However, the findings also raise important questions about the nature of school culture and the potential for compliance to mask underlying issues. The case of **school 2** suggests that low suspension rates alone are not sufficient indicators of a healthy school culture and that deeper engagement with staff and children is necessary to understand the true dynamics at play.

Overall, this chapter contributes to the broader thesis by emphasising the importance of cohesive and inclusive school cultures in reducing exclusionary practices and highlights the need for continued research into the ways in which school policies are enacted and experienced by staff and children alike.

Chapter 8: Findings on an Examination and Analysis of Key Government Issued Statutes and National Guidance Documents on Exclusion

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 critically examines the role and influence of key government-issued statutes and national guidance documents on the practices of exclusion within primary schools. Building on the preceding analyses in Chapters 6, and 7, this chapter aims to deepen the understanding of how statutory guidance and policy frameworks shape the enactment of exclusionary practices.

Chapter 6 provided foundational insight into the national and local data on exclusion rates, uncovering significant disparities based on demographic factors such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, and SEND. Chapter 7 expanded this analysis using staff questionnaires to explore how school cultures, policies, and leadership influence suspension rates.

In Chapter 8, the analysis continues by focusing on the ruling texts themselves, particularly statutory guidance, emphasising how these documents influence the behaviour policies and disciplinary practices within schools. Using IE as a guiding framework, this chapter explores how ruling texts co-ordinate social relations, shaping the practices of exclusion at multiple levels. Smith's (2005) notion of ruling texts as material objects that extend their influence across multiple sites is central to this analysis. These texts are not only read and interpreted by different individuals across diverse settings but are also activated in ways that reproduce power dynamics and institutional control.

The chapter is organised into two sections. The first section offers a comparative analysis of two key statutory guidance documents on exclusion: the DfE **Statutory Guidance on Exclusion** from September 2017 **(VS17)** and September 2022 **(VS22),** alongside a third, unissued version from January 2022 **(VJ22)** which was available on the DfE website but never formally adopted**.** This analysis investigates the differences and developments between these documents and evaluates how changes in statutory language and emphasis may impact the interpretation and enactment of policies in primary schools. The purpose of this section is to critically assess whether the shifts in statutory guidance influence the risk of exclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children with SEND or those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The second section extends this analysis by examining two additional non-statutory documents: the **Schools Inspection Handbook for September 2022** and the **Behaviour in Schools Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2022)**. Though not legally binding, these documents exert substantial influence on primary school practices, particularly through their connections to Ofsted inspections and behaviour management strategies. The inclusion of these non-statutory guides provides a more holistic understanding of the multi-layered regulatory environment that primary schools must navigate when addressing issues of behaviour and exclusion.

This chapter critically engages with how these texts, despite their replicable nature as outlined by Smith and Turner (2014), are subject to differential interpretations and activations in primary schools. The guiding question here is: how do these ruling texts shape and mediate the daily practices of behaviour management, and what are the implications for children at risk of exclusion? By examining the interaction between statutory guidance, school leadership, and

staff practices, this chapter builds on the analysis from earlier chapters to offer a comprehensive view of the systemic factors that contribute to the perpetuation or reduction of exclusionary practices.

Understanding the specific legal frameworks governing exclusions is essential. The statutory guidance documents refer back to key legislative acts, including the **Education Act 2002**, the **Education and Inspections Act 2006**, and the **School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) Regulations 2012**. While the primary legislation has remained consistent between 2017 and 2022, the interpretation and enactment of these statutes has evolved, necessitating a close examination of how schools navigate this regulatory landscape in practice.

Through this comparative and critical analysis, Chapter 8 seeks to bridge the gap between policy intention and practical implementation, highlighting how ruling relations shape the lived realities of both adults and children in primary schools. The chapter offers both a theoretical exploration, grounded in IE, and practical insights for educators and policymakers seeking to reduce exclusion and create more inclusive school environments.

8.2 Analysis of Government Statutory Guidance

This section critically examines two key government-issued documents, the **DfE Statutory Guidance on Exclusion** from September 2017 **(VS17)** and September 2022 **(VS22),** both of which play a pivotal role in shaping exclusionary practices within primary schools in England. The purpose of this comparative analysis is to identify the key differences between these documents and evaluate how these changes influence the enactment of exclusion policies in primary

schools, especially regarding the decision-making processes of headteachers and the wider institutional context. The analysis seeks to understand how changes in statutory language, emphasis, and omissions in the updated guidance may either support or undermine efforts to reduce exclusion rates in primary schools, a core focus of the research presented in earlier chapters.

Chapters 6 and 7 laid the groundwork for this inquiry by exploring the broader institutional context of exclusion and the perceptions of school staff about exclusionary practices. Chapter 6 focused on local and national statistics and the relationship between exclusion rates and socio-economic, ethnic, and Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) factors, highlighting the structural inequalities that influence exclusion. Chapter 7, meanwhile, used questionnaire data to explore staff awareness and understanding of behaviour policies, revealing disparities in how these policies are applied.

Chapter 8 builds on these earlier findings by interrogating the very texts that serve as the foundation for exclusion policies, allowing for a detailed exploration of how statutory guidance both reflects and shapes institutional practice.

The two statutory documents, **VS17** and **VS22**, serve as key ruling texts in the governance of exclusions. Smith's (2005) Institutional Ethnography (IE) E framework, which underpins this analysis, emphasises the power of such texts in coordinating social relations. Ruling texts are understood to carry institutional authority, shaping how individuals, such as headteachers, governors, and other school staff, navigate legal responsibilities and make decisions about

exclusions. Texts like **VS17** and **VS22** extend their influence across multiple sites, dictating actions and expectations while also leaving room for interpretation and variation in implementation.

The DfE's definition of statutory guidance is clear: schools are required to comply unless they have a compelling reason not to. The weight of statutory guidance in shaping school behaviour policies cannot be overstated. Both **VS17** and **VS22** guide headteachers on their legal authority to exclude children, the roles and duties of the governing bodies and local authorities, and the compliance frameworks that primary schools must follow. However, as the analysis will show, the subtle differences in language, emphasis, and omissions between these documents may have a profound impact on how exclusion is enacted in practice.

One key point of comparison between the two documents concerns the power of the headteacher to exclude a child. While both documents affirm this power, the 2022 guidance places a stronger emphasis on suspension as a disciplinary tool, a shift that may have significant implications for the increase in suspensions observed in the post-pandemic period. The 2017 guidance, by contrast, focused more on permanent exclusions and the circumstances under which they are justified. This shift in emphasis reflects broader changes in educational policy, where suspension is seen as a more flexible tool for managing behavioural challenges. However, this change may also increase the risk of exclusion for vulnerable groups, particularly those with SEND, as suspension is often a precursor to permanent exclusion (Gazeley et al., 2020).

A further point of interest is the unissued **January 2022 document (VJ22)**. Its presence on the government's website, without an explicit acknowledgment that it was subject to consultation, creates potential confusion and risk for headteachers and school leaders. As Smith and Turner (2014) note, the replicability of texts means that they can be activated in multiple sites and at different times, but their interpretation may vary depending on the specific institutional context. In this case, the premature availability of **VJ22** could have led to procedural missteps by headteachers who relied on the draft document before its formal adoption in September as **VS22**.

The analysis of these documents also draws attention to the language and discourse used to frame exclusionary practices. In line with IE's focus on ruling relations, it is crucial to examine how these texts coordinate the roles and responsibilities of different actors within the primary school system. For instance, **VS22** introduces more nuanced language around "pupil movement", reflecting growing concerns about the practice of off-rolling, where children are unofficially moved to other schools to avoid formal exclusion. This shift in language may signal an attempt to tighten regulations around exclusion, particularly in response to criticism from education watchdogs and advocacy groups (Ofsted, 2022). However, it remains to be seen how schools interpret and enact these provisions, especially in high-exclusion contexts where pressure to meet academic standards is intense.

Additionally, the analysis raises questions about omissions in the later documents. While both **VS17** and **VS22** maintain a broad focus on exclusion as a disciplinary tool, the 2022 document appears to downplay certain aspects of age-appropriate disciplinary measures. For example,

VS17 provided more explicit guidance on managing exclusions in early years and primary school settings, with a focus on child-centered approaches. This aligns with research emphasising the need for developmentally appropriate behaviour management strategies in early childhood education (Graham et al., 2021). By contrast, **VS22** lacks this level of detail, potentially leaving primary schools with less guidance on how to implement exclusion policies in ways that are sensitive to the developmental needs of young children.

From a critical perspective, this omission may reflect a broader neoliberal shift in education policy, where there is an increasing focus on standardisation and compliance, often at the expense of individualised and context-sensitive approaches to behaviour management (Ball, 2021). The 2022 guidance's focus on "pupil movement" and "suspension" as solutions to behavioural challenges risks perpetuating exclusionary practices, especially in schools serving disadvantaged communities. This aligns with findings from Chapter 7, where schools with higher suspension rates were shown to have less cohesive staff alignment around behaviour policies.

The language and structure of **VS22** may contribute to this fragmentation by offering fewer practical strategies for managing complex behaviour without resorting to exclusion.

Finally, the analysis also considers the implications of these changes for primary school compliance. While both documents make clear the legal obligations of schools, **VS22** places a heavier emphasis on the importance of documenting behaviour incidents and ensuring transparency in the decision-making process. This focus on accountability, while positive in some respects, may also place additional administrative burdens on schools, diverting attention

from more proactive behaviour management strategies, where exclusion is framed as a failure of institutional support, the shift towards heightened documentation may reinforce exclusion as an acceptable outcome of behaviour management, rather than encouraging schools to explore alternative interventions.

The comparative analysis of **VS17** and **VS22** reveals important shifts in the statutory framework governing exclusions. These changes reflect broader trends in education policy, including a growing emphasis on compliance, accountability, and the use of suspension as a disciplinary tool. While these changes may provide schools with clearer guidance on certain procedural aspects of exclusion, they also risk perpetuating exclusionary practices by emphasising documentation and legal compliance over child-centered approaches to behaviour management.

The findings in this chapter connect directly to the insights gained from earlier chapters, particularly in relation to the disparities in exclusion rates and the role of school leadership in shaping exclusionary practices. By examining these statutory texts through the lens of IE, this analysis highlights how ruling texts coordinate social relations and influence the daily practices of primary schools, with potentially profound implications for children at risk of exclusion. The next section will extend this analysis by considering the non-statutory guidance documents that further shape the enactment of behaviour policies in schools.

8.3 Section 1: Findings of Government Statutory Guidance

8.3.1 Recognition of Challenging Behaviour

Both **VS17** and **VS22** acknowledge the significant challenges schools face when addressing children's behaviour. However, the guidance offered by these statutory documents shifts between a supportive stance and a more remedial, punitive tone. **VS17** is more comprehensive in recognising the multifaceted nature of these challenges, such as unmet needs and early intervention, aligning with the findings in Chapter 6, where exclusion is shown to disproportionately affect vulnerable groups like children with SEND, those eligible for FSM, and certain ethnic minorities. The limited reference to such groups in **VS22** suggests a shift away from recognising these systemic challenges.

The emphasis on behaviour management rather than proactive interventions aligns with the national discourse on exclusion, which frames behavioural issues primarily as the responsibility of the child rather than the institution (Ball, 2021). The focus on exclusion as a necessary tool for maintaining discipline (**VS22**, p 3) contrasts sharply with research that suggests early identification of unmet needs can prevent challenging behaviour from escalating to exclusion (Hayden, 2003). This issue was also explored in Chapter 7, where it became evident that staff alignment on behaviour policies directly affects how exclusionary practices are enacted.

8.3.2 Behaviour Management

Both **VS17** and **VS22** focus primarily on behaviour management rather than addressing the root causes of challenging behaviour. This focus reflects broader neoliberal policies that prioritise

order and compliance over individual needs (Ball, 2021). In **VS22**, the role of schools in contributing to behaviour challenges is downplayed, and punitive measures are presented as the default response, which may exacerbate already existing inequalities, particularly for marginalised groups.

The discussion in Chapter 6 about the over-representation of vulnerable children in exclusion data is relevant here. By placing the onus primarily on the child's failure to meet behavioural standards, **VS22** aligns with the findings in Chapter 7, where staff in high-exclusion schools (Sus+) often lacked cohesive strategies to manage behaviour in a non-punitive way. The absence of detailed early intervention strategies in both **VS17** and **VS22** highlights the need for more comprehensive guidance to support primary schools in adopting preventative measures. Recent research continues to stress that punitive approaches often result in further alienation of vulnerable children (Graham et al., 2021).

8.3.3 Prevention

One of the most striking findings is the delayed emphasis on external professional support in **VS22**, which suggests that such support is often seen as a post-exclusion remedy rather than an early intervention. This contrasts with best practices highlighted in recent studies, which stress the importance of multi-agency assessments being initiated as soon as a child exhibits vulnerability to exclusion (Paget et al., 2017; Parker et al., 2016). As shown in Chapter 7, schools that employ early, collaborative interventions have significantly lower exclusion rates.

By relegating external support to a later stage, **VS22** may contribute to a system where schools rely on exclusion as a necessary step before accessing support services. This finding also connects to IE, revealing how ruling texts shape the daily practices of schools, often prioritising compliance with government standards over child-centered approaches.

8.3.4 Systems and Sanctions

Both documents frame exclusion as a legitimate and necessary sanction, particularly **VS22**, which reinforces the idea that exclusion is a routine tool to manage behavioural challenges. The emphasis on punitive measures like off-site direction and managed moves further suggests that exclusion is not only accepted but also condoned as part of standard school management.
This emphasis on punitive measures is critical when considered in the context of primary education, where exclusion can have long-lasting effects on young children. As noted in Chapter 6, exclusion often reinforces inequalities by disproportionately affecting marginalised groups.

Additionally, Chapter 7 demonstrates that schools with lower exclusion rates tend to foster more inclusive environments, where staff work collaboratively to address behavioural challenges without resorting to exclusion. Research continues to show that punitive sanctions can have a harmful impact on vulnerable children, particularly when schools do not take into account the broader socio-economic and developmental context of the child (McIntosh et al., 2017).

8.3.5 Process

The life-changing effects of exclusion are not adequately addressed in either **VS17** or **VS22**. Both documents emphasise giving headteachers greater confidence to exclude pupils, with **VS22** strengthening the support for suspensions and permanent exclusions as key disciplinary tools. This contrasts with growing evidence that exclusion can have severe long-term consequences, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Gazeley et al., 2020). The lack of robust guidelines for governors and other professionals involved in the exclusion process, as pointed out in both documents, is a critical omission, and this aligns with the findings in Justice (2022), which noted the lack of governance accountability in exclusion decisions.

8.3.6 SEND and Vulnerable Children

One of the most critical omissions in both **VS17** and **VS22** is the lack of detailed guidance on how schools should handle exclusion for SEND and vulnerable children. Although **VS17** acknowledges that SEND, FSM, and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected, **VS22** removes explicit references to these groups, diminishing the visibility of these disparities. This reduction in emphasis suggests a shift away from targeting specific systemic inequities, which has significant implications for how schools support vulnerable pupils.

Research consistently shows that SEND children are at a greater risk of exclusion, and the failure to provide clear anticipatory guidance on reasonable adjustments could potentially exacerbate this issue (Special Educational Consortium, 2022). As highlighted in Chapter 6, exclusion rates are disproportionately high for vulnerable groups, and without targeted guidance, schools may inadvertently perpetuate these inequalities.

8.3.7 Age and Child Development

Both **VS17** and **VS22** offer insufficient reference to young children and their developmental needs in the context of exclusion. Removing a child from a familiar environment can have adverse effects on their well-being and learning trajectory. Recent research supports this, pointing to the long-term developmental consequences of exclusion for children as young as two (Egan et al., 2021).

The lack of differentiation in these statutory documents between primary and secondary school exclusions reflects a "one-size-fits-all" approach to education policy, which fails to recognise the specific needs of younger children. This aligns with concerns raised in Chapter 7, where exclusion was shown to be a blunt instrument for managing behaviour in Sus+ schools, which often did not engage in meaningful professional dialogue about alternative behaviour strategies.

8.3.8 Child's Voice

Both **VS17** and **VS22** offer limited consideration of the child's voice in exclusion processes, undermining the potential for children to be involved in interventions that address their behaviour.

8.3.9 Language and Interpretation

The subtle changes in language between **VS17** and **VS22** are significant, as they shape how exclusion is framed and enacted in schools. The prescriptive tone of **VS22**, coupled with a reduction in the distinction between "must" and "should," signals a shift towards a more compliance-focused approach. This contrasts with the government's commitment, following the

Timpson Review, to reduce exclusion and adopt a more supportive approach to behaviour management. **VS22's** focus on using suspensions "well" rather than as a last resort underscores this shift towards more prescriptive, punitive measures.

8.4 Findings of Government Statutory Guidance

In summary, the comparative analysis of **VS17** and **VS22** reveals a shift in statutory guidance towards a more prescriptive and punitive framework for managing behaviour in primary schools. This shift has important implications for the most vulnerable pupils, who are already over-represented in exclusion statistics. The findings in this chapter connect directly to earlier discussions in Chapters 6 and 7, where exclusion was shown to perpetuate inequalities and disproportionately affect marginalised groups. The omission of detailed guidance on early intervention and SEND provisions in **VS22** further entrenches these disparities.

By critically examining these statutory texts through the lens of IE, this chapter illuminates how ruling texts shape the everyday practices of schools, often prioritising compliance over child-centred approaches. The implications of these findings suggest the need for a re-evaluation of exclusion policies, particularly in primary schools, where exclusion can have long-term detrimental effects on child development.

Section 2: Analysis of the Schools Inspection Handbook for September 2022 and Behaviour in Schools Guidance

8.5 Document 3: Schools Inspection Handbook for September 2022

The Schools Inspection Handbook primarily serves as a guide for Ofsted inspectors, yet its publication also aims to inform schools and other educational organisations of the inspection process and procedures (p.4). This transparency ensures that schools are aware of the expectations and criteria they will be judged upon, shaping the way schools develop and implement policies. As a guiding document for the wider school community, its impact on behaviour management and exclusion policies cannot be overstated.

The handbook signposts the reader to over 58 different documents, creating a complex web of institutional texts that coordinate and shape school practices. This aligns with the core tenet of IE explored in Chapter 9, where ruling texts function to organise and regulate the activities of institutions across different settings. The sections on SEND and Behaviour and Attitudes are particularly pertinent to the discussion of school exclusions, as they provide a direct link to the broader discourse on vulnerability, behaviour, and inclusion in primary schools.

In Chapter 6, the over-representation of SEND and marginalised pupils in exclusion data is highlighted, raising concerns about the fairness of exclusionary practices. The **Schools Inspection Handbook** reinforces this by linking Ofsted's criteria for a ‘good’ school to effective behaviour management and inclusive practices. Despite the comprehensive guidance offered,

the handbook fails to provide a nuanced analysis of how exclusionary policies may exacerbate the disadvantages faced by vulnerable pupils, especially in primary education settings.

Furthermore, while the **Behaviour and Attitudes** section addresses the need for clear behavioural standards, it remains largely prescriptive and framed within a neoliberal agenda that prioritises order and discipline over understanding and support (Ball, 2021). This prescriptive tone is echoed in Chapter 7's findings, where staff in high-exclusion schools (**Sus+**) often interpreted behaviour policies rigidly, contributing to the overuse of exclusion.

8.6 Document 4: Behaviour in Schools – Advice for Headteachers and School Staff, September 2022

The **Behaviour in Schools** document functions as a non-statutory companion to the **Statutory Guidance on Suspension and Permanent Exclusion (VS22),** providing advice to headteachers and staff on managing pupil behaviour. Like the **Schools Inspection Handbook**, it heavily influences how schools develop and enforce their behaviour policies, directly impacting children at risk of exclusion. This document is a critical piece of the puzzle in understanding how institutional texts coordinate the social relations of schools.

In the opening section, the document emphasises that good behaviour is essential for creating an environment conducive to learning, thus echoing the broader narrative of behaviour management as central to educational success. However, this focus on compliance raises questions about how behavioural expectations are shaped by institutional policies rather than an individual child's needs. As discussed in Chapter 6, exclusion disproportionately affects

vulnerable groups, yet the **Behaviour in Schools** document provides minimal guidance on how schools can adjust their behaviour policies to accommodate these children.

This gap is particularly evident in the section on the **behaviour curriculum**, which calls for positive reinforcement and sanctions but offers little clarity on how schools can adapt their practices to support children with SEND or those facing other socio-economic challenges. The lack of detailed guidance on preventative measures mirrors the absence of robust early intervention strategies in **VS22**, as discussed in Section 1 of this chapter. The prescriptive tone of both documents signals a broader trend of placing responsibility for behaviour solely on the child, with limited attention to the systemic factors influencing behavioural challenges (Gazeley et al., 2020).

8.7 Behaviour and School Culture

The emphasis on schools embodying a consistent culture of behaviour aligns with Ofsted's 'good' grade descriptor for **Behaviour and Attitudes**, as outlined in the **Schools Inspection Handbook**. The notion that schools should cultivate a calm, safe, and supportive environment is central to both the **Behaviour in Schools** document and the broader discourse on managing behaviour. However, this framing can be critiqued for its potential to obscure the complexities of individual children's experiences, particularly those from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds.

The directive for schools to maintain high standards of behaviour, as outlined in the **Behaviour in Schools** document, risks perpetuating exclusionary practices if schools focus too heavily on

compliance without considering the underlying causes of challenging behaviour (Graham et al., 2021). Moreover, the notion that all children can be 'taught' good behaviour without adequate differentiation for SEND or socio-economically disadvantaged children reflects a lack of flexibility in the application of these standards.

8.8 Developing and Communicating Behaviour Policies

The guidance provided on developing a school behaviour policy emphasises that a school's culture and vision should be manifested in its behaviour policy, with a focus on clear communication to all stakeholders, including staff, parents, and children. This is a positive aspect, as it highlights the importance of transparency and consistency, principles that were also found to correlate with lower exclusion rates in low-exclusion schools **(Sus-)** in Chapter 7. In these schools, behaviour policies were not only clearly communicated but also collaboratively developed, fostering a sense of shared ownership and responsibility among staff.

However, while the guidance emphasises the importance of communication, it falls short in addressing how policies can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of children. This omission is particularly concerning given the evidence presented in Chapter 6 regarding the disproportionate impact of exclusion on children from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with SEND. Schools are encouraged to ensure compliance with behaviour policies, but without sufficient guidance on making reasonable adjustments, the risk of discriminatory exclusion remains high (Special Educational Consortium, 2022).

8.9 Roles and Responsibilities in Behaviour Management

The **Behaviour in Schools** document outlines the roles and responsibilities of school leaders, teachers, pupils, and parents, placing a strong emphasis on consistency in the application of behaviour policies. This hierarchical structure, where headteachers and senior staff hold significant power in shaping school culture, mirrors the findings in Chapter 7. The analysis of school staff roles in Chapter 7 revealed that schools with lower exclusion rates often had more distributed leadership models, where TA's and other support staff played an active role in managing behaviour and supporting children.

In contrast, the rigid structure outlined in the **Behaviour in Schools** document may inadvertently centralise decision-making in ways that reduce the opportunities for other staff members to contribute to behaviour management. As noted in Chapter 7, schools that foster an inclusive and collaborative environment tend to be more successful in addressing behaviour issues without resorting to exclusion.

8.10 Responding to Behaviour and Sanctions

The sections on responding to behaviour and sanctions provide detailed guidance on a range of disciplinary measures, including detentions, the use of reasonable force, searching, and confiscation. These measures align with the prescriptive tone seen in **VS22** and the broader emphasis on exclusion as a necessary disciplinary tool.

The document's guidance on SEND children is similarly limited. While it acknowledges the need for adjustments, it does not provide sufficient clarity on how these adjustments should be

applied in practice, particularly in relation to exclusion decisions. This lack of specific guidance aligns with findings in Chapter 6 that SEND children are at a heightened risk of exclusion.

The analysis of the **Schools Inspection Handbook** and **Behaviour in Schools** guidance reveals a continued emphasis on behaviour management and compliance, rather than a more holistic, preventative approach to exclusion. Both documents provide detailed procedural guidance but lack substantive direction on how schools can develop more inclusive practices that support vulnerable children, particularly those with SEND or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The prescriptive nature of these documents, particularly their focus on sanctions and disciplinary measures, risks perpetuating exclusionary practices in schools, particularly where behaviour is interpreted rigidly and without consideration of underlying factors. In the context of primary schools, this approach is especially problematic, as it fails to account for the developmental needs of young children and the disproportionate impact of exclusion on marginalised groups.

8.11 Findings on the Schools Inspection Handbook for September 2022 and Behaviour in Schools Guidance

8.11.1 Language

The contrast in language between **Document 3 (Schools Inspection Handbook for September 2022)** and **Document 4 (Behaviour in Schools)** is striking and has significant implications for how behaviour is managed and understood in schools. **Document 3** frames its guidance

positively, using language that is both authoritative and educational. It emphasises the role of adults in schools to support children at risk, which aligns with the broader educational discourse of inclusion and holistic support for children. This tone reflects a developmental and proactive approach to behaviour management, resonating with the findings from Chapter 4, which highlighted the importance of early intervention and the supportive role of educators in mitigating exclusion risks for children with SEND and other vulnerable groups (Parker et al., 2016; Parsons et al., 2022).

Conversely, **Document 4** adopts a more punitive and directive tone, focusing on the responsibility of the child to conform to behaviour expectations, with less emphasis on the responsibilities of adults to adjust their approaches or consider the broader social and developmental factors that may contribute to misbehaviour. This shift in tone risks perpetuating exclusionary practices, particularly for younger children and those with SEND, as it places the onus on the child to 'fit in' rather than addressing the systemic issues within schools that may contribute to behavioural challenges. This language disparity reflects the broader policy tension identified in Chapter 7 between schools that take a compliance-focused approach to behaviour management and those that adopt more inclusive practices (Gazeley et al., 2020; Hayden, 2020).

8.11.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Document 3 places clear responsibility on adults in schools for shaping and managing behaviour, with an emphasis on considering individual needs and making adjustments where necessary. This inclusive approach encourages adults to take an active role in fostering positive

outcomes for all children, particularly those who are vulnerable or at risk of exclusion. The focus on adult responsibility in **Document 3** connects to findings from Chapters 6 and 7, which highlight how effective leadership and collaborative staff practices in low-excluding schools **(Sus-)** contribute to more supportive and inclusive environments for children (Demie, 2022; Muniz, 2021). This aligns with the IE framework where ruling relations and institutional practices are organised to either support or marginalise children depending on how school policies are enacted.

In contrast, **Document 4** focuses on imposed roles and behavioural expectations, with less consideration for the responsibility of adults to reflect on their own practices or the impact of school environments on children's behaviour. The limited reference to the responsibilities of school staff to support vulnerable children is concerning, as it reinforces a hierarchical and punitive model of behaviour management. This echoes the findings in Chapter 7, where high-excluding schools **(Sus+)** tended to implement rigid and punitive policies, leading to higher exclusion rates (McIntosh et al., 2017; OCC, 2012).

8.11.3 Expectations

The expectations in **Document 3** for adults in schools are clear: they are responsible for supporting all children and ensuring the curriculum meets their diverse needs. This inclusive stance promotes positive behaviour strategies and early intervention, suggesting that improved outcomes are a result of well-considered and inclusive strategies. These expectations reflect the broader educational ethos that values equity and the importance of creating adjustments for children with SEND and other vulnerabilities, as outlined in Chapter 6 (Rose et al., 2018).

However, **Document 4** shifts towards a compliance-focused approach, with an emphasis on dealing with misbehaviour promptly, predictably, and consistently. The use of negative language and the focus on permitted and prohibited behaviours reinforce the notion that children must conform to social norms, with little acknowledgment of the challenges some children may face. This rigid approach may exacerbate behavioural issues rather than addressing their root causes (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007). The lack of guidance on how to meet the expectations of children with SEND in **Document 4** further highlights this shortcoming, leaving schools with limited direction on how to balance high expectations with the need for reasonable adjustments (Special Educational Consortium, 2022).

8.11.4 Systems and Structures

Both documents outline the systems that schools should have in place to manage behaviour, but their approaches differ significantly. **Document 3** places a strong emphasis on systems to assess and meet the needs of vulnerable children, highlighting the importance of early intervention, external support, and alternative strategies to exclusion. This approach mirrors the findings in Chapter 7, where schools that implemented supportive systems saw improved outcomes and lower exclusion rates. The systems outlined in **Document 3** focus on monitoring sanctions, reintegration, and the use of external support, offering a more holistic and proactive approach to managing behaviour (Parsons et al., 2022).

On the other hand, **Document 4** provides a more rigid list of behaviour management strategies, including targets, sanctions, rewards, and de-escalation techniques. While these systems may work for some children, they are less flexible and may not sufficiently account for the needs and

age of children with complex behavioural challenges or those with SEND. The focus on sanctions in **Document 4**, including the use of detention, reasonable force, and removal from classrooms, raises concerns about the potential for these strategies to further marginalise young, vulnerable children (Hayden, 2020).

8.11.5 Rewards and Sanctions

In terms of rewards and sanctions, **Document 4** provides examples of rewards such as positions of responsibility, but these may be difficult for vulnerable children to achieve without targeted support. The reliance on sanctions as a deterrent, including the potential use of writing tasks or detention, may unintentionally worsen behavioural issues by alienating children further from the school environment. In contrast, **Document 3** emphasises the need for fairness, legality, and proportionality in the use of sanctions, with a focus on listening to the child and considering their individual circumstances.

8.11.6 Consistency and Fairness

Both documents emphasise the importance of consistency in applying behaviour policies, but **Document 3** frames this in terms of fairness and ambition for all children. It highlights the need for adults to understand children's perceptions of fairness, which is particularly important for children at risk of exclusion. The consistent and fair application of behaviour policies, as discussed in Chapter 7, is a hallmark of low-excluding schools **(Sus-)**, where staff are trained to consider the individual needs of children and apply behaviour policies in a way that supports their development rather than pushing them towards exclusion (Graham et al., 2021).

Document 4, however, places a stronger emphasis on routines and high expectations, with less focus on fairness and more on compliance. This approach may lead to a more punitive atmosphere in schools, as rigid expectations may not take into account the diverse needs of children. This lack of flexibility in the application of behaviour policies is a key factor contributing to higher exclusion rates, as discussed in Chapter 6 (McIntosh et al., 2017).

8.11.7 Training and Engagement

Document 3 advocates for comprehensive training for school staff, particularly those who may not have a background in child development. This focus on professional development aligns with the findings from Chapters 6 and 7, which highlight the importance of training in reducing exclusion rates and promoting inclusive practices. In contrast, **Document 4** provides limited guidance on training, suggesting that it should be included in behaviour policies but without the same level of emphasis on staff development. This discrepancy raises concerns about the ability of schools to effectively implement behaviour policies that account for the needs of all children, particularly those with complex needs (Paget et al., 2017).

8.12 Document 3 and 4 Summary

The analysis of **Document 3** and **Document 4** reveals two very different approaches to behaviour management in schools. **Document 3** takes a more inclusive and supportive approach, with a focus on the responsibility of adults to create a positive environment where all children can thrive. It emphasises the importance of early intervention, professional development, and fairness, aligning with the findings from Chapters 6 and 7 on the importance of inclusive practices in reducing exclusion rates. **Document 4**, however, takes a more punitive

and compliance-focused approach, placing the responsibility for behaviour largely on the child and offering limited guidance on how to support vulnerable children. This approach risks perpetuating exclusionary practices, particularly in schools that are already struggling to manage complex behavioural needs.

In summary, while both documents provide valuable guidance for schools, **Document 3** stands out for its focus on inclusion, fairness, and the professional responsibility of adults to support all children. **Document 4**, on the other hand, reflects a more political tone, prioritising compliance and discipline over the holistic needs of children, particularly those at risk of exclusion. These findings reinforce the need for schools to adopt more flexible and inclusive behaviour policies.

8.13 Government Documents Summary

Chapter 8 provides a critical examination of key statutory and non-statutory guidance documents that shape exclusionary practices in primary schools, focusing on two statutory texts—the DfE **Statutory Guidance on Exclusion from 2017 (VS17)** and **2022 (VS22**)—and two non-statutory documents: the **Schools Inspection Handbook (2022)** and **Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2022).** This chapter builds on the findings of Chapters 6 and 7, which identified systemic inequalities and the role of school culture and staff alignment in shaping exclusion rates. Using IE as a framework, Chapter 8 deepens the analysis by exploring how statutory and advisory texts coordinate social relations, influencing the practices of school leaders and teachers, and impacting children at risk of exclusion.

The first section of the chapter focuses on a comparative analysis of **VS17** and **VS22**, revealing a shift towards more prescriptive and punitive approaches to behaviour management in primary schools. This shift is reflected in the stronger emphasis on suspension in **VS22** and the downplaying of child-centred approaches that were more explicit in **VS17**. The analysis shows how these statutory texts have a direct bearing on the decision-making processes of headteachers and governing bodies, particularly in terms of managing behaviour and exclusion.

The second section examines the non-statutory guidance documents, revealing a dichotomy between the more inclusive tone of the **Schools Inspection Handbook** and the punitive and compliance-driven focus of the **Behaviour in Schools** guide. The findings highlight the tensions between policy intention and practical implementation, especially in the context of supporting vulnerable pupils such as those with SEND and children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

8.14 Discussion

The findings of Chapter 8 illustrate how statutory and non-statutory texts influence the practical realities of behaviour management in primary schools, reinforcing the broader themes of exclusion and inequality discussed in earlier chapters. The comparative analysis of **VS17** and **VS22** reveals a notable shift in statutory guidance that could have far-reaching implications for the risk of exclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups. **VS22's** prescriptive focus on exclusion and suspension as disciplinary tools contrasts with the more nuanced and supportive guidance offered in **VS17**, which recognised the importance of early intervention and the potential for unmet needs to manifest as challenging behaviour.

This shift in statutory language and emphasis can be viewed through the lens of IE, which posits that ruling texts have the power to co-ordinate the social relations and practices within institutions. By examining the evolution of statutory guidance, this chapter shows how exclusionary practices are not simply the result of individual decision-making by headteachers; but are deeply embedded in institutional policies shaped by ruling texts. As seen in previous chapters, primary schools that adopt a rigid, punitive approach to behaviour management tend to have higher exclusion rates. This connection between statutory guidance and practical outcomes suggests that policy shifts in documents like **VS22** can inadvertently perpetuate exclusionary practices.

The comparison between statutory and non-statutory guidance documents further exposes the complexities of behaviour management in schools. The **Schools Inspection Handbook** adopts a more inclusive and educational tone, emphasising the importance of early intervention, fairness, and the responsibility of school staff to support all children. In contrast, the **Behaviour in Schools** guide takes a more punitive and compliance-focused approach, placing the responsibility for behaviour primarily on the child and offering limited guidance on how to adapt policies to meet the needs of children with SEND or those facing socio-economic disadvantages.

The shift towards more prescriptive and punitive behaviour management, particularly in **VS22** and the **Behaviour in Schools** guide, reflects broader neoliberal trends in education policy. These trends prioritise standardisation, compliance, and accountability, often at the expense of individualised support and early intervention. The findings of this chapter suggest that these policy shifts may exacerbate existing inequalities, as vulnerable children, particularly those with

SEND, are at greater risk of exclusion when punitive measures are used as the default response to behavioural challenges.

To this researcher, it is both startling and disappointing that in all these official documents, where there is focus on how schools might deal with children's behavioural issues, there is virtually no mention of whether or how parents should be brought into the considerations.

8.15 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 8 stresses the powerful role of statutory and non-statutory texts in shaping the exclusionary practices of primary schools. The comparative analysis of **VS17** and **VS22** reveals a concerning shift towards more punitive and prescriptive approaches to behaviour management, which risks perpetuating exclusionary practices, particularly for vulnerable children. This shift is further reinforced by the **Behaviour in Schools** guide, which prioritises compliance and discipline over more inclusive and child-centred approaches to behaviour management. Conversely, the **Schools Inspection Handbook** offers a more balanced perspective, emphasising the responsibility of adults to create inclusive and supportive learning environments.

By using IE to examine how ruling texts shape the practices of schools, Chapter 8 reveals the systemic nature of exclusionary practices, showing that exclusion is not simply a matter of individual decision-making but is deeply embedded in institutional policies and practices.

Ultimately, the chapter calls for a re-evaluation of behaviour and exclusion policies in primary schools where exclusion can have long-term detrimental effects on child development. There is a pressing need for more flexible, inclusive, and child-centred approaches to behaviour management, as well as clearer guidance on how schools can support vulnerable children and make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND. As the findings of this chapter illustrate, the way in which statutory and non-statutory texts are framed and interpreted has a profound impact on the lived experiences of children at risk of exclusion. By shifting the focus from punitive sanctions to preventative and supportive measures, schools can create environments that are not only compliant with statutory guidance but also conducive to the well-being and success of all children.

A crucial dimension that emerges from the findings in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 is the significance of age-appropriate understanding and dialogue in shaping effective behaviour policies and reducing exclusionary practices in primary schools. As emphasised throughout the thesis, the developmental stage of children, particularly those in early and primary education, necessitates a differentiated and sensitive approach to behaviour management. The statutory and non-statutory guidance analysed in Chapter 8, particularly the **Behaviour in Schools** document, often fails to sufficiently consider the unique cognitive, emotional, and social needs of younger children, placing undue emphasis on compliance and punitive measures that may not resonate with or be fully comprehensible to children at this developmental stage. These findings highlight the importance of fostering environments where dialogue, particularly with younger children, is tailored to their developmental understanding and where school staff are trained to interpret and respond to behaviour in ways that are aligned with the child's cognitive abilities. The

omission of clear guidance on age-appropriate interventions in exclusion policies, as highlighted in this chapter, signals a critical gap in current educational policy, one that must be addressed to ensure that exclusion is not only used as a last resort but also handled in ways that genuinely support the child's well-being and growth. Developing a framework of dialogue and understanding that is rooted in age-appropriate engagement is not just beneficial but essential for fostering inclusive educational environments that reduce exclusionary practices and allow every child to thrive.

By foregrounding the importance of age-appropriate understanding and dialogue in behaviour management, this study makes a significant contribution to academic research in the field of exclusionary practices, particularly within primary schools. While much of the existing literature on school exclusion focuses on secondary education, this research emphasises the often-overlooked challenges faced by younger children in primary settings, where the developmental needs of children are more pronounced and complex. By critically analysing statutory and non-statutory guidance through the lens of Institutional IE, this thesis highlights the shortcomings of existing policies that fail to sufficiently account for the cognitive, emotional, and social development of younger children.

Chapter 9: School Behaviour Policies and their Local Enactment

9.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section examines the behaviour policies of the schools used in this study, focusing on how each school developed and implemented their policies under the heading '**school policy development and enactment**.' The school behaviour policies are analysed against two national documents: **Schools Inspection Handbook (September 2022) and Behaviour in Schools - Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (September 2022)**. Detailed tables mapping national documents with school policies can be found in *Appendix 10*.

The second section, under the heading '**school policy enactment and interpretation**,' explores how individuals respond to these policies in their daily school lives. Both sections use Institutional Ethnography (IE) as a framework to analyse data from the school behaviour policies, interviews, and observations conducted during the fieldwork.

9.2 Introduction to Section 1 - Analysis of Behaviour Policies

In England, it is a statutory requirement that children attend primary school unless educated at home. Schools, as institutions, inherently regulate and control children, a process embedded in both local and broader social relations. These ruling relations, described by Smith (2005), are so deeply ingrained in the daily functioning of schools that they often go unrecognised by those within the institution.

Government directives to schools are perceived as authoritative, grounded in evidence, to inform and guide actions (Reid, 2016). However, those tasked with implementing policies often fail to critically examine their origins, creation processes, or underlying rationale.

Each primary school must develop a behaviour policy referencing government guidelines but adapted to its own context. The standardised nature of the guidance, usually sourced from government websites, serves to co-ordinate actions across various settings, generalising and standardising expectations, irrespective of time, place or person. However, social relations within schools, shaped by personal beliefs, values, and local dynamics, affect how policies are interpreted and enacted. This can lead to differing impacts on children, making some more vulnerable to exclusion.

IE offers a framework for examining how behaviour policies are enacted and their effect on children. By mapping and analysing behaviour policies against Ofsted's inspection guidance and government behaviour guidelines (*Appendix 10*), this research highlights how the individualisation of policies across schools can contribute to unequal outcomes for children. IE helps uncover the institutional dynamics that influence these processes, particularly concerning exclusionary practices.

9.3 The Culture and Ethos of Primary Schools

The culture and ethos of a primary school play a crucial role in shaping the implementation of behaviour policies. These shared beliefs, values, and norms significantly influence how staff interpret and apply behaviour guidelines. Research shows that schools with a positive, inclusive ethos are more likely to implement policies that promote well-being and reduce the likelihood

of exclusion (McCluskey et al., 2019). Schools with a child-centered culture tend to apply behaviour policies more sensitively, minimising disproportionate exclusions (Gazeley et al., 2015). School leaders are pivotal in aligning policies with broader goals of equity and inclusion (Roffey, 2017).

IE offers a valuable lens for understanding how institutional cultures shape the implementation of behaviour policies. By examining the everyday experiences of individuals, IE reveals how behaviour policies are interpreted within specific cultural contexts. Schools with a punitive ethos may enact policies in ways that increase exclusions, especially for vulnerable children. Conversely, schools with an inclusive ethos may focus on restorative practices, reducing exclusions (Smith & Turner, 2014).

The Covid-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to the scope and methodology of this research, particularly by limiting access to schools for in-depth fieldwork. As noted in similar studies, the pandemic disrupted conventional research practices, forcing adaptations in both data collection and participant access (Darmody, Smyth, & Russell, 2020). The restrictions meant that the schools involved in the study were not representative of the initially intended case studies, which were to include both high and low excluding schools in Mercia. This reflects broader issues in educational research during the pandemic, where access constraints often affected sample diversity and, in some cases, introduced biases (Green, 2021).

However, despite these limitations, IE remained a valuable framework for this study. IE's emphasis on uncovering the ruling relations that shape institutional practices provided a robust

means of examining how exclusionary practices are embedded in everyday school life. Smith (2005) asserts that IE allows researchers to trace institutional discourses, regardless of sample size, offering critical insights into the power relations embedded in school policies and practices. Therefore, while the sample was smaller and less diverse than initially planned, IE still facilitated an in-depth analysis of how exclusion practices are enacted within the schools that did grant access.

The pandemic introduced new variables that are critical to understanding the broader context of exclusionary practices. There was a marked increase in behavioural challenges in schools post-pandemic, a phenomenon widely documented in education research (Brom et al., 2021). This surge in behavioural issues was linked to the psychological and social disruptions children experienced during lockdowns, including increased anxiety, trauma, and disruptions in routine (Kim, 2021). As a result, many schools reported a rise in suspensions as a disciplinary measure, reflecting a broader trend across the education sector (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020).
This finding aligns with literature suggesting that external social factors, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, can exacerbate pre-existing institutional issues, including exclusionary practices (Darmody et al., 2020). The increase in suspensions post-pandemic highlights the complex interplay between institutional policies and external social forces. While behaviour management frameworks may remain static, external crises like the pandemic introduce pressures that reshape how these policies are applied, often leading to more punitive measures as schools struggle to manage new behavioural challenges. This highlights the importance of adaptive, context-sensitive approaches to behaviour management that can mitigate rather than exacerbate exclusionary practices during periods of crisis.

Whilst the pandemic limited the original scope of this study, it also brought new insights into how external pressures, such as national crises, interact with institutional practices. The pandemic acted as a catalyst, exacerbating behavioural issues and pushing schools towards more exclusionary practices, particularly suspensions.

Table 30: Overview of the five schools use for fieldwork

	School 1	**School 2**	**School 3**	**School 4**	**School 5**
Type of school	Roman Catholic Voluntary aided	Community Trust	Foundation; part of a co-operative Education Trust	Multi Academy Trust	Church of England Aided
Number on roll	202	231	236	483	409
Pupil premium	26%	23%	23%	62%	27%
Ofsted rating	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement
Vision/Values	Dat Deus Incrementum 'God gives us growth'. At Sch 1 we come to flourish and achieve great things throughout values of community, pride and joy	Caring, Sharing, Aiming High	Be ready, Be respectful, Be safe	We believe that to be a learner you must be safe, be responsible and be respectful	Love, Courage and Trust
Date of behaviour policy	2021 - 22	2022	2021	2021	2021-22
When reviewed	No info	Every 3 years	Yearly	Yearly	Yearly
Rate of suspension	Higher than national average	Lower than national average	Higher than national average	Higher than national average	Lower than national average

Table 31: Overview of Behaviour Policies, Strengths and Challenges.

School	Overview & Key Features	Behaviour Policy	Strengths	Challenges
School 1: Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided	**Type**: Faith-based school. (**Sus+**) **Questionnaire Results**: Staff demonstrated fair understanding, but gaps in collaboration with parents. **Observation**: Inconsistent policy application.	Emphasises community pride and respect but focuses more on sanctions than rewards.	Promotes community values and pride in achievement.	Inconsistent policy implementation, with staff varying in approach. Higher use of sanctions over rewards.
School 2: Community Trust	**Type**: State-funded, low excluding (**Sus-**) **Questionnaire Results**: Strong consistency, but lower awareness among teaching assistants. **Observations**: Low suspension rates, but inconsistent policy application by staff.	Focuses on care and high aspirations. Ensures rewards cannot be withdrawn, fostering fairness.	Clear, consistent recognition system with strong communication channels with parent	Inconsistencies in policy application, particularly among support staff.
School 3: Foundation School	**Type**: Cooperative Education Trust, high excluding (**Sus+**) **Questionnaire Results**: High understanding among senior staff, but low awareness among support staff. **Observations**: Reliance on sanctions, with limited focus on rewards.	Emphasises respect and safety, but with a heavy focus on sanctions.	Clear understanding among senior staff of behaviour management.	Inconsistent policy application, particularly among teaching assistants. High use of sanctions.
School 4: Multi-Academy Trust	**Type**: Multi- Academy (**Sus+**) pre-2018, (**Sus-**) post-2018 **Questionnaire Results**: Significant improvement in staff buy-in post-2018. **Observations**: Notable transformation after leadership change, with focus on inclusivity and reduced exclusion rates.	Major reforms post-2018, focusing on inclusivity and consistency in applying policies.	Dramatic reduction in exclusion rates due to leadership change and policy reforms.	Pre-2018: High exclusion rates and inconsistent application.
School 5: Church of England Aided	**Type**: Faith-based, (**Sus-**) **Questionnaire Results**: Strong awareness and consistency in policy application, particularly among teaching assistants. **Observations**: Emphasises positive reinforcement and fair application of sanctions.	Focuses on love, courage, and trust. Encourages positive reinforcement and child-centred sanctions.	High staff awareness and consistent application of behaviour policies. Strong communication between staff.	maintaining consistency in applying positive reinforcement without bias. Balancing faith-based values with inclusive secular practices

9.4 Themes

The themes used in chapter 8, were used to frame the analysis of the school behaviour policies and their enactment in school. The themes were: Language; Roles; Expectations; Systems; Rewards and Sanctions; Consistency and Fairness; Training; Engagement; SEND and Covid.

9.5 Language use in the Behaviour Policies

The analysis of language in school behaviour policies reveals important differences in how expectations and disciplinary measures are communicated, which is key to understanding their implementation through the lens of IE.

In **Schools 1** and **2**, behaviour policies use authoritative and potentially punitive language, with phrases like “children are expected to be silent” and references to the legal use of “reasonable force.” This dominant tone suggests collective authority through the frequent use of “we,” which can obscure individual responsibility and complicate accountability, such as who writes behaviour management plans. This focus on rule enforcement may lead to exclusionary practices, especially for children who struggle to meet rigid expectations (Graham, 2020).

In contrast, **Schools 3, 4,** and **5** use more inclusive language, with terms like “consistent,” “encourage,” and “professional responsibility,” reflecting a supportive approach to behaviour management. These policies emphasise adult roles in fostering a positive environment, reducing the likelihood of exclusionary practices (McCluskey et al., 2019).

IE helps uncover how language choices in policies reflect broader institutional power dynamics, influencing behaviour management practices and potentially affecting outcomes for children (Smith, 2005). This analysis highlights the need to critically assess policy language to promote inclusive educational practices.

9.6 Roles Defined in the Behaviour Policies

The roles defined in the behaviour policies of the schools in this study vary in clarity, impacting how these policies are enacted. In **Schools 1, 4,** and **5**, there is a lack of clear references to the roles of different adults, such as senior leaders or teaching assistants. The use of collective terms like "we" in **School 1** may foster a sense of shared responsibility but also blurs accountability, making it unclear who is responsible for behaviour management decisions. This ambiguity can lead to inconsistent policy implementation, potentially affecting children's outcomes (Ball, 2017).

In contrast**, Schools 2, 3, 4,** and **5** explicitly reference the importance of adults as positive role models, aligning with best practices in behaviour management. **School 3**, in particular, clearly defines the roles of all staff, fostering a cohesive approach that reduces exclusionary practices (Gregory et al., 2011).

School 2's reference to a Home-School Agreement, despite its outdated legal status, shows an effort to involve parents. However, the inclusion of punitive language may undermine collaboration, highlighting the need to align policies with legal requirements and promote constructive engagement with parents (Roffey, 2017).

IE helps explore how role clarity, or its absence, affects the daily operations of schools, revealing potential gaps between policy and practice and their contribution to exclusionary outcomes (Smith, 2005).

9.7 Expectations outlined in the Behaviour Policies

The expectations outlined in the behaviour policies of the studied schools reveal significant variations in how behavioural standards are communicated and enforced, impacting children, a central focus of this thesis.

School 1 sets high expectations for silence and compliance, which may alienate children who are unable to conform to these strict rules. This rigidity can exacerbate the risk of exclusion for children who deviate from these norms (Smith, 2005). The integration of faith into the policy further complicates the inclusivity of this approach, particularly in a diverse school environment.

School 2 outlines high expectations centered on responsibility, respect, and conflict resolution, promoting an inclusive and supportive ethos. This approach, focusing on anti-bullying and positive behaviour, aligns with research advocating for whole-school inclusivity (McCluskey et al., 2019). Similarly, **School 3** emphasises inclusivity, with exclusion as a last resort and a differentiated approach to behaviour management, supporting the diverse needs of children (Gregory et al., 2011).

School 4 provides clear and consistent behaviour guidelines, emphasising positive management and teacher responsibility, particularly for vulnerable children (Roffey, 2017).

School 5's policy involves children in setting expectations but lacks early parental involvement and relies heavily on senior leadership, potentially leading to inconsistent enforcement and reduced teacher autonomy (Ball, 2017). These variations reflect differing institutional priorities,

and IE helps reveal how the expectations in these policies shape children's behaviour and risk of exclusion, particularly for those who don't conform to dominant norms.

9.8 Systems outlined in the Behaviour Policies

The behaviour policies across the schools in this study reveal varying systems for managing behaviour, with differences in clarity and effectiveness.

In **School 1**, the policy emphasises strict compliance, demanding "100% compliance" from children, but lacks guidance on key strategies such as de-escalation techniques or reintegration following disciplinary actions. This rigid focus on control may neglect individualised support, potentially contributing to exclusionary practices. As Graham (2020) notes, rigid expectations without supportive interventions can reinforce exclusion by prioritising compliance over understanding children's diverse needs.

School 2 employs a behaviour ladder system, but the inconsistent application of this policy and its unclear guidance undermines its effectiveness. The policy's limited attention to conflict resolution restricts its potential to support restorative approaches. McCluskey et al. (2019) emphasise the need for consistency and clarity in behaviour policies to create supportive environments and reduce exclusions. The inconsistencies in School 2 may escalate behavioural issues rather than resolve them.

In **School 3**, the policy clearly outlines problematic behaviours, such as bullying, and provides proactive guidance for parents. However, the sanctions system is hidden in appendices,

potentially leading to misunderstandings among staff, children, and parents. Roffey (2017) stresses the importance of transparency in behaviour policies to ensure the entire school community understands behaviour expectations and consequences.

School 4 focuses on preventative strategies, with staff taking proactive measures to prevent behaviour issues from escalating. This aligns with best practices in behaviour management, which advocate early intervention to reduce the need for punitive responses. As Roffey (2017) suggests, fostering positive relationships and early intervention can significantly minimise exclusionary practices.

However, **School 5** introduces complexity with the "Thrive" approach, aimed at supporting children's emotional and social development. The policy suffers from unclear language, such as the undefined term "VRF," and confusing phrasing like "display seriously inappropriately behaviour." Gazeley et al. (2015) argue that unclear behaviour policies can lead to miscommunication and inconsistent enforcement, increasing the risk of exclusion, particularly for vulnerable children.

Across all schools, the clarity and consistency of behaviour policies play a critical role in reducing exclusion. Schools that adopt clear, proactive, and inclusive behaviour management strategies are better equipped to reduce the need for exclusion and foster positive child development. IE is essential for examining how behaviour systems are enacted in practice, revealing how unclear or inconsistent policies can lead to exclusionary outcomes (Smith, 2005; Ball, 2017).

9.9 Rewards and Sanctions set out in the Behaviour Policies

The analysis of rewards and sanctions in the schools' behaviour policies reveals how these systems can either support or undermine inclusive practices.

In **School 1**, the reward system prioritises "valued" roles within the community, which may unintentionally marginalise vulnerable children who struggle to meet these criteria. McCluskey et al. (2019**)** argue that reward systems should be accessible to all children, especially those at risk of exclusion. By failing to distribute rewards equitably, School 1 risks reinforcing social hierarchies, where only "compliant" children are recognised, raising significant equity concerns. Inclusive reward systems are critical for fostering a supportive environment that promotes positive behaviour across all children.

In contrast, **School 2** demonstrates a clear commitment to fairness and inclusivity. The policy ensures that rewards, once earned, cannot be withdrawn, fostering a sense of fairness and motivation. Gazeley et al. (2015) emphasise that preventing the loss of rewards reduces anxiety and disengagement, which can lead to exclusion. The practice of nominating all children for recognition in the "Golden Book" further reinforces inclusivity, ensuring that no child is marginalised and reducing the risk of exclusion by addressing behavioural issues proactively.

Schools 3 and 4 prioritise positive behaviour reinforcement over sanctions, aligning with research supporting the effectiveness of such approaches in improving behaviour and reducing exclusions. Gregory et al. (2011) note that positive reinforcement strategies foster long-term behavioural improvements by focusing on children's strengths rather than penalising

weaknesses. This proactive approach helps create an environment where children engage positively with learning, reducing the need for exclusion.

School 5, however, presents a problematic approach, using reflection as a sanction. While beneficial for some, this may disproportionately affect children with emotional regulation difficulties, particularly those with SEN. The authoritarian language, which states that "schools generally use force to control pupils," raises concerns about reinforcing exclusionary practices. Ball (2017) critiques such punitive approaches, arguing they can entrench exclusion by prioritising control over support, further alienating vulnerable children.

A further issue is the contradictory communication in some policies, such as in **School 2**, which describes exclusion as both a last resort and a response to serious misbehaviour. Roffey (2017) highlights that unclear policies undermine trust between staff, children, and parents, weakening the effectiveness of behaviour management and potentially increasing the risk of exclusion.

The analysis highlights the importance of inclusive, consistent, and transparent systems of rewards and sanctions. Schools that focus on positive reinforcement, equitable access to rewards, and clear communication are better equipped to support all children, particularly those at risk of exclusion. In contrast, schools that rely on punitive measures or unclear policies may inadvertently perpetuate exclusionary practices, undermining the inclusive ethos essential for a supportive learning environment.

9.10 Consistency and Fairness addressed in the Behaviour Policies

The analysis of consistency and fairness in the schools' behaviour policies underscores their critical role in effective behaviour management. The differences in how these principles are applied highlight their impact on fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment. Inconsistent enforcement of policies can create uncertainty and inequity, while consistent and fair approaches have been shown to reduce anxiety and promote positive behavioural outcomes.

In **School 1**, there is a lack of focus on ensuring consistency and fairness within the behaviour policy. The absence of specific guidelines for enforcing rules consistently can lead to uneven treatment of children and varying interpretations of acceptable behaviour. Ball (2017) argues that inconsistency in policy implementation can create an unpredictable environment, increasing children's anxiety and potentially contributing to misbehaviour. When children feel that rules are applied inconsistently, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds, trust in the disciplinary system erodes, raising concerns about the fairness of sanctions and their impact on vulnerable children.

In contrast, **Schools 2, 3, and 4** demonstrate a strong commitment to consistency in behaviour management. These schools implement regular monitoring by leadership teams to ensure uniform application of behaviour policies. This approach promotes predictability and fairness, which reduces misbehaviour and the need for exclusion. Research by Roffey (2017) and Gregory et al. (2011) supports this view, emphasising that consistent behaviour management fosters

trust between children and staff, creating a stable environment where children can focus on learning without fear of arbitrary punishment.

The benefits of consistent behaviour management are particularly evident in **School 4**, where the policy explicitly links consistency with a reduction in anxiety and a safer school environment. McCluskey et al. (2019) argue that predictable behavioural expectations create security, especially for children at risk of exclusion. By reducing uncertainty, schools like School 4 can prevent misbehaviour from escalating to the point of exclusion, supporting children's well-being and enhancing the fairness of disciplinary actions.

School 5 adopts a participatory approach, involving children in setting behaviour expectations. This engagement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, as children are directly involved in shaping the rules that govern their behaviour. Sanctions are tailored to each child's developmental stage, ensuring that disciplinary actions are both supportive and proportionate. This child-centred approach not only promotes fairness but also reduces the likelihood of exclusion.

The use of IE in this study reveals how consistency and fairness are enacted in practice, exposing discrepancies between policy intentions and children's lived experiences. Smith (2005) and McCluskey et al. (2019) argue that while policies may seem equitable on paper, inconsistent application can lead to unintended consequences, particularly for marginalised children. IE uncovers the subtle ways in which institutional practices diverge from their intended purpose,

highlighting the need for schools to critically assess not only the content of their policies but how they are enacted day-to-day.

9.11 Training Acknowledged in the Behaviour Policies

The analysis of training provisions within the schools' behaviour policies reveals significant variations in how well staff are prepared to implement behaviour management strategies, with implications for the likelihood of exclusion, particularly for vulnerable children.

Schools 1, 2, and **5** show a noticeable lack of emphasis on staff training within their behaviour policies. This omission can lead to inconsistencies in how behaviour management strategies are applied, as untrained staff may lack the necessary skills to handle challenging behaviours constructively. Ball (2017) highlights that without proper training, staff are more likely to resort to punitive measures, which can increase the risk of exclusion, particularly for children requiring specialised support. The absence of structured training leaves staff ill-equipped to manage complex behaviours, making it more likely that exclusion will be used as a default response to perceived misbehaviour. Gregory et al. (2011) argue that training in positive behaviour management is critical for reducing exclusions, as it empowers staff to use inclusive and supportive strategies rather than punitive ones.

In contrast, **School 3** incorporates a comprehensive approach to staff training. The policy aligns with the Teachers' Standards, offering ongoing professional development in areas such as Attachment Disorder and strategies for supporting vulnerable children. This commitment to staff development promotes inclusive practices, as well-trained staff are better equipped to

manage challenging behaviours without resorting to exclusion. Roffey (2017) emphasises that when staff receive continuous training in inclusive practices, the risk of exclusion decreases as staff are more likely to employ proactive and supportive interventions.

School 4, while focusing on familiarising staff with incident recording procedures, lacks a broader emphasis on behaviour management training. This procedural focus may reflect a more bureaucratic approach, potentially overlooking the need for the supportive interventions essential for reducing exclusions (McCluskey et al., 2019). While incident recording is important, it should not substitute for comprehensive training that equips staff with the skills to manage behaviour inclusively.

9.12 Engagement Outlined in the Behaviour Policies

The engagement strategies outlined in the schools' behaviour policies reveal various approaches to fostering positive relationships and supporting the behaviour of children. These strategies reflect the schools' commitment to promoting inclusive practices, particularly for children with additional or special educational needs, in line with research on inclusive education (Roffey, 2017). IE offers valuable insights into how these relationships are cultivated through daily teacher-child interactions, illuminating how institutional expectations are enacted in practice (Smith, 2005). **School 2** emphasises the role of an engaging and differentiated curriculum that is tailored to individual needs. This approach is designed to reduce the disengagement and associated behavioural issues of children by ensuring the curriculum is accessible to all learners. In addition, **School 2** maintains strong communication with stakeholders through various channels, such as the school handbook and meetings with parents, ensuring a transparent and

inclusive approach to behaviour management. **School 3** places a strong emphasis on positive reinforcement and parental involvement, both of which are proven strategies for encouraging positive behaviour and reducing the need for punitive measures. McCluskey et al. (2019) argue that parental engagement is crucial in behaviour management, and **School 3's** policy reflects this by actively involving parents and external professionals in the process. This holistic approach helps to create a more supportive and inclusive school environment, mitigating the risk of exclusion. **School 4** acknowledges the importance of staff modelling positive behaviour and engaging with parents as part of a whole-school approach to behaviour management (Ball, 2017). The collaboration between school and home is seen as essential for supporting children's behaviour and ensuring consistency between the expectations at home and in school.

School 5 adopts a more reflective approach, focusing on understanding each child's unique context. The use of the Thrive approach encourages children to engage in self-reflection and relationship-building, offering targeted support to those struggling with behavioural issues. Gazeley et al. (2015) highlights that targeted interventions, like those offered through the Thrive approach, are effective in helping children to re-engage with learning and reducing the risk of exclusion.

In contrast, **School 1** places greater emphasis on escalating disciplinary consequences without involving parents early in the process. This omission is concerning, as early parental engagement is widely recognised as a crucial factor in reducing exclusion risks (Roffey, 2017). Without this communication, the opportunity for early intervention is diminished, increasing the likelihood of exclusion.

IE provides a critical lens for examining how these engagement strategies are implemented in practice, revealing gaps between policy intentions and their enactment, particularly in schools where parental involvement is limited or absent (Smith, 2005; McCluskey et al., 2019).

9.13 SEND Information in the Behaviour Policies

The inclusion of SEND information within behaviour policies is crucial for ensuring that children with additional needs receive appropriate support to manage their behaviour. Without clear and effective provisions for SEND, children with additional needs are more likely to face exclusion, as they are often at greater risk of misbehaviour when their specific needs are not addressed (McCluskey et al., 2019).

All the reviewed schools acknowledge that some children require additional support, which is an important step toward fostering an inclusive environment. However, acknowledging these needs in policy documents is only part of the solution. Merely referencing SEND needs without a corresponding commitment to practice can perpetuate the risk of exclusion for these children.

School 2 incorporates legal compliance by referencing the Equality Act 2010, which emphasises the school's duty to protect the rights of SEND children. By embedding legal obligations into the behaviour policy, **School 2** strengthens its commitment to safeguarding SEND children from exclusion and fostering positive relationships that are essential for their inclusion (Gazeley et al., 2015). This approach ensures that staff are aware of their responsibilities to accommodate SEND needs and helps to prevent discriminatory practices that may otherwise lead to exclusion.

In contrast, **School 3** provides a more individualised approach, allowing for tailored interventions through collaborative efforts between class teachers, SENCos, and school leaders. This policy involves setting personalised targets within Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), which is crucial for managing the unique challenges that SEND children often face. As Gregory et al. (2011) argue, personalised and flexible behaviour strategies are essential for supporting SEND children and preventing their exclusion.

However, **Schools 1** and **5** give minimal attention to SEND. **School 1** briefly mentions additional support needs, while **School 5** omits SEND altogether from its behaviour policy. This lack of attention to SEND can lead to inadequate support and a higher risk of exclusion for children with additional needs. Ball (2017) emphasises that without clear guidelines and structured support for SEND children, schools risk failing to meet their legal and moral obligations, exacerbating the marginalisation of these children.

In summary, while some schools demonstrate a commitment to supporting SEND children through legal compliance and individualised support, others lack the necessary focus, potentially increasing the risk of exclusion for vulnerable children.

9.14 COVID Procedures Highlighted in the Behaviour Policies

The inclusion of COVID-19 procedures in the behaviour policies of the studied schools reveals varying levels of responsiveness to the pandemic's challenges, offering insights into how institutions adapt to external crises.

School 1 stands out for its proactive approach, incorporating provisions for regularly reviewing protective measures and adjusting routines in response to COVID-19. This demonstrates an institutional awareness of the pandemic's ongoing impact and a commitment to safeguarding both children and staff. Such adaptability is crucial for maintaining safe and effective learning environments, particularly during periods of uncertainty and disruption (Darmody, Smyth, & Russell, 2020).

However, the absence of COVID-19 references in the behaviour policies of other schools raises concerns about their preparedness to handle the unique behavioural challenges posed by the pandemic. Failing to explicitly address these challenges could lead to inconsistencies in how behaviour is managed, creating a disconnect between the practical realities of the pandemic and formal policy frameworks (Green, 2021).

From an IE perspective, the presence or absence of COVID-19 procedures highlights how schools respond to external pressures and adapt institutional processes. These choices affect daily interactions between staff and children, exposing broader issues around institutional preparedness and responsiveness to crisis management (Smith, 2005; Darmody, Smyth, & Russell, 2020).

Table 32: Comparison of Common Themes

Theme	Findings
Suspension Rates and Leadership	Leadership is strongly linked to lower suspension rates. For instance, **School 4**'s shift in leadership post-2018 led to a significant reduction in exclusions.
Inconsistent Application of Policies	**Schools 1 and 3** (**Sus+**) faced challenges in policy consistency, particularly with teaching assistants. In contrast, **Schools 2 and 5** (**Sus-**) had cohesive staff buy-in, leading to more equitable outcomes.
Role of Support Staff	In **Sus**- schools (**Schools 2 and 5**), support staff were well-aligned with the behaviour policies. In **Sus+** schools (School **3**), gaps in support staff training contributed to higher exclusion rates.
Sanctions vs. Rewards	**Sus+** schools (School **3**) relied more on sanctions, while **Sus-** schools (**School 2**) used a balanced approach with a focus on positive reinforcement and rewards.
Policy Understanding and Training	**Sus-** schools (School **5**) provided consistent staff training on behaviour policies, ensuring their effective and fair application. In contrast, schools like **School 3** lacked adequate support staff training, contributing to higher exclusion rates.

9.15 Key Insights

- Leadership, staff cohesion, and policy consistency are crucial for reducing suspension rates and fostering inclusive environments.
- Schools with well-trained support staff and clear communication saw lower exclusion rates.
- Positive reinforcement and child-centred approaches are more effective in creating supportive, inclusive school climates compared to reliance on punitive measures.

9.16 Summary of Behaviour Policies

This section examines the behaviour policies of five primary schools, focusing on their development, enactment, and interpretation within the framework of IE. It explores how these policies align with national guidelines, including the Ofsted inspection handbook and government advice, and how they are implemented in everyday school life. Key themes such as language use, role definitions, expectations, systems, rewards and sanctions, consistency,

fairness, training, engagement, SEND, and responses to COVID-19 are analysed. The chapter highlights how variations in policy clarity and application can lead to different outcomes for children, particularly regarding inclusivity and exclusion. IE is used to reveal the institutional dynamics that shape these policies and their impact on the school environment.

9.17 Discussion on Behaviour Policies

This analysis reveals significant variations in how behaviour policies are developed and implemented, highlighting the complexities of fostering inclusive environments. IE reveals how policies, though seemingly neutral, are shaped by broader institutional dynamics (Smith, 2005). For instance, Schools 1 and 2 use more authoritative language, which may contribute to exclusionary practices (Gazeley et al., 2015), whereas Schools 3, 4, and 5 adopt supportive language, fostering a positive ethos that reduces exclusions (McCluskey et al., 2019).

The section clarifies the importance of role within behaviour policies. Ambiguities in responsibility, as seen in some schools, can lead to inconsistent implementation and increased risks of exclusion (Ball, 2017). Clear role definitions, on the other hand, foster a cohesive environment that mitigates exclusion (Gregory et al., 2011).

Expectations also vary, with rigid standards in some schools exacerbating inequalities and raising exclusion rates for children who cannot conform (Smith, 2005). Schools that emphasise flexibility are better equipped to handle diverse needs and reduce exclusion (McCluskey et al., 2019).

The analysis of rewards and sanctions reveals that positive reinforcement fosters a supportive environment, while complex or authoritarian systems may reinforce exclusionary practices (Gregory et al., 2011; Ball, 2017). Consistency and fairness in policy implementation are crucial for reducing anxiety and exclusion risks (Roffey, 2017), though some schools lack explicit guidelines on these principles (Smith, 2005).

Lastly, the chapter highlights the role of training, engagement, and SEND provisions in promoting fair and inclusive behaviour policies. Schools that invest in training and engage parents and external professionals are better equipped to support all children, particularly those with additional needs (McCluskey et al., 2019). The inclusion of COVID-19 procedures underscores the need for adaptability in behaviour management (Darmody, Smyth and Russell, 2020).

9.18 Conclusion to Policy Analysis

This section provides a detailed analysis of the behaviour policies in five primary schools, revealing the significant impact of language, role definitions, expectations, systems, rewards, sanctions, consistency, fairness, training, engagement, and SEND provisions on the inclusivity and effectiveness of these policies. By employing IE, the study uncovers the complex institutional dynamics that shape the development and enactment of behaviour policies, demonstrating how these policies, though intended to be fair and inclusive, can sometimes lead to exclusionary outcomes. The chapter concludes that for behaviour policies to be truly effective and inclusive, they must be clear, consistent, and responsive to the diverse needs of all children. This requires a commitment to ongoing staff training, active engagement with parents

and the wider community, and a focus on creating a supportive school culture that prioritises the well-being and inclusion of every child. The findings emphasise the need for further research into how behaviour policies are implemented in practice and the impact of these policies on children's educational experiences and outcomes, particularly in relation to exclusion.

9.19 Introduction to Section 2 – School Policy Enactment and Interpretation

This section illustrates the complex interplay between local school practices and broader institutional directives, showing how these dynamics contribute to the risk of exclusion for certain children. It explores how the daily experiences of children and adults in primary schools are influenced by both local and trans-local texts, focusing on how these institutional forces can increase exclusion risks. Drawing from the concept of a "composite" account (Corman, 2023), this analysis integrates individual experiences to reveal how the social organisation of schools is shaped by both local practices and broader governmental policies. This approach moves beyond viewing the child as isolated, examining how their experiences are shaped by interactions between schools and overarching regulatory frameworks (Smith, 2005). The researcher's role in shaping data collection and analysis is acknowledged, recognising that their interpretations influence the construction of findings.

9.20 Discourse Analysis in Institutional Ethnography

Discourse analysis is a crucial component of IE, providing a means to critically examine the language and communication within institutional texts. In IE, discourse analysis reveals how specific language choices in behaviour policies and government directives shape individual experiences in primary schools (Fairclough, 2021). This method helps researchers identify how

texts construct social realities, define roles, and establish power dynamics that influence policy enactment at the local level. For instance, authoritative language emphasising "control" and "discipline" in behaviour policies may lead to a more punitive approach, increasing exclusion risks for vulnerable children (Wright & Taylor, 2022). This study applies discourse analysis to uncover how the language used in these texts can marginalise certain groups, particularly those vulnerable to exclusion (Gee, 2023).

9.21 Interviews

The interviews conducted for this study provided crucial insights into how policy enactment is experienced by different stakeholders within schools. Although the interviews were structured around specific research questions, the discovery of unexpected themes led to deeper explorations of how institutional policies are interpreted and applied in practice (McCoy, 2020). This process of uncovering the un-anticipated aligns with the principles of IE, where the researcher's engagement in the data collection process reveals the social relations that shape individual experiences within the school setting.

9.22 Observations

Observations in this study were conducted in alignment with IE, starting in specific school contexts and extending over time to trace connections between local practices and broader trans-local influences (Smith, 2005). Focusing on the standpoint of individual participants, the observations aimed to reveal how discourse, such as language in government directives and school policies, shapes the lived experiences of children and staff. This approach uncovered

hidden processes through which institutional practices are co-ordinated and enacted in daily school life (Graham & Truscott, 2020).

This chapter highlights the interplay between local school practices and broader institutional directives, showing how these dynamics contribute to exclusion risks for certain children. By integrating findings from Chapters 6, 7, and 8, it constructs a cohesive argument linking policy enactment to individual experiences. The application of IE, particularly through discourse analysis, offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers alike. The themes identified in Chapter 8 and during the analysis of behaviour policies, Language, Roles, Expectations, Systems, Rewards and Sanctions, Consistency and Fairness, Training, Engagement, SEND, and Covid, were used to organise the fieldwork data. These themes provided a structured framework for understanding how institutional policies are operationalised in schools and their impact on children, particularly those at risk of exclusion (Ball, 2021). Grounding the analysis in the real experiences of children ensured a focus on the practical implications of policy enactment, highlighting the significant role of institutional practices in shaping educational outcomes.

9.23 Language

9.23.1 Observation School 1 - Language:

The observation in **School 1** captures interactions between adults during a reception class of 30 children in early October 2021, where four children had identified behavioural issues, necessitating additional adult supervision. The language exchanged between staff during this

session reveals embedded institutional discourses that have significant implications for how behaviour is managed and how children are perceived.

> *1st adult (unknown status) "I'll take Joe next." 2nd adult (unknown status) "Good luck with that one." Strong feeling of the relationships of the adults in the class – a lot of language directed towards each other, speaking 'over' the children. Is this because of the behaviour of some of the children in this class? 1st adult (CT) comment re a YR boy (S) "Have you seen him have one." 2nd adult (ELSA) "No" 1st adult "Well when he does he's dirty." (I think the phrase dirty was to refer to his potential outbursts, but I am not sure).*

In **School 1**, staff language and interactions reveal an established institutional discourse that frames certain children as problematic. The phrase *"Good luck with that one,"* used by a staff member, exemplifies this discourse of challenge and resignation, positioning the child as difficult to manage. This casual labelling, particularly when used in front of children, reflects an institutional tendency to categorise and label certain children based on their behaviour.

According to Ball (2021), such labelling can reinforce negative identities, shaping how children perceive themselves and how they are treated by others, thus perpetuating cycles of exclusion. The conversation further escalates when one staff member refers to a child's outburst using the term *"dirty."* Though likely intended to describe the child's behaviour, this metaphor carries moralistic connotations, implicitly associating the child with impurity or deviance. Such descriptors are powerful in shaping institutional and social perceptions, as Gazeley et al. (2020**)** argue, and contribute to the marginalisation of children early in their school experience. By normalising such language, staff perpetuate exclusionary practices that frame behavioural difficulties as deviations from the norm.

The use of collective pronouns like *"we"* in **School 1's** behaviour policy further embeds exclusionary practices within the school's culture. While it implies a cohesive, unified approach to behaviour management, it can also disguise the normalisation of punitive measures. Graham (2021) notes that such language reinforces institutional values that may justify exclusion as a necessary practice, even when it undermines the individual needs of vulnerable children.

The unprofessional tone and body language observed during staff interactions, through shared glances and casual language, signal a collective acceptance of exclusionary norms. IE highlights how institutional discourse mediates everyday practices, making marginalisation seem routine. The consistent use of loaded, dismissive language like *"dirty"* exemplifies how institutional discourse shapes the way staff perceive and respond to children, reinforcing a system where certain children are more likely to be excluded based on how they are labelled within the school environment.

The use of terms like *"dirty"* or *"that one"* illustrates how institutional discourse influences staff perceptions, dictating responses to behaviour. These terms, embedded in ruling relations, the set of institutional norms that govern behaviour management, guide staff actions in ways that disadvantage certain children (Smith, 2005).

9.23.2 Interview with SLT Member – Language, School 1: 04/10/2021

> "*There is an inconsistency in the way in which adults implement the behaviour policy. Some teachers here have their own way of managing behaviour. He kept throwing him out of the classroom*."

This interview excerpt from a senior leadership team (SLT) member in **School 1** highlights a critical issue: inconsistencies in the implementation of the school's behaviour policy. The statement, *"Some teachers here have their own way of managing behaviour. He kept throwing him out of the classroom,"* underscores a concerning level of individual interpretation among teachers. The phrase *"throwing him out"* is particularly problematic, implying the use of physical force or abrupt expulsion from the classroom, which raises serious ethical and legal concerns about the treatment of children. Gazeley et al. (2020) suggest that such forceful actions can further marginalise children, particularly those already vulnerable to exclusion. The discourse of *"throwing him out"* not only reflects an inappropriate response to misbehaviour but also highlights the institutional power dynamics at play. By using this language, the SLT member normalises exclusionary practices without questioning their legitimacy. The absence of detail about what happens to the child after removal indicates a lack of follow-up support, implying that exclusion is used as a punitive measure rather than part of a restorative process. This inconsistency in policy implementation suggests that the behaviour policy is not functioning as a cohesive institutional framework. Instead, it appears subject to individual interpretations, allowing teachers to exercise discretion that may not align with the school's official guidelines.

This variation in how the policy is applied can result in unequal treatment of children, particularly those with behavioural difficulties. IE is helpful in exploring how this inconsistency affects the lived experiences of children, particularly those at risk of exclusion. IE reveals how institutional policies, even when well-intentioned, can be subverted through inconsistent practices, contributing to exclusionary outcomes.

The interview highlights the significant gap between policy and practice in **School 1.** Inconsistent application of the behaviour policy not only leads to exclusionary practices but also undermines the ethical responsibility of the school to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all children.

9.23.3 Observation of School 2 - Language: 18/01/2022

I spent three lunchtimes observing in the dining hall. Two lunchtime supervisors appeared brusque and sharp with the children. The children at this school came from various ethnic backgrounds, and many were unfamiliar with the food offered at lunchtime. A significant number of the children exhibited a quiet disposition, clearly unsure about the unfamiliar food and often taking very little. The language used by the lunchtime supervisors and those serving the food was sharp and intolerant, making the experience unpleasant for many of the children. Notably, there were no teachers present during this time.

This observation is crucial to the thesis, highlighting how institutional practices affect the everyday experiences of children, particularly those from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The brusque, sharp language used by lunchtime supervisors suggests a lack of cultural sensitivity, potentially creating an unwelcoming environment for children already navigating unfamiliar food and social settings.

IE provided the framework for analysing how the institutional culture, as enacted by the supervisors, influenced the children's experiences. Their behaviour reflects broader institutional norms that may not prioritise inclusivity or cultural competence. The absence of teachers during

lunchtime exacerbates the situation, indicating a lack of oversight and support during a potentially stressful time.

This observation shows how exclusionary practices can emerge in subtle, everyday interactions. The supervisors' language may contribute to a sense of exclusion and alienation, particularly for minority ethnic children (Gazeley et al., 2020; Ball, 2021). By focusing on the children's lived experiences, IE reveals how institutional practices impact their sense of belonging and underscores the need for culturally responsive approaches (Smith, 2005; Graham, 2021).

9.23.4 Diary notes of School 2 - Language: 19/01/2022

The language of adults is very clear and direct – clarity/simplicity. Is this because of the high number of children who have EAL (English as an Additional Language). There appears to be natural simplicity in the relationships between adults and children as a result of the use of language? CT supporting individual children (is this because of all children's compliant behaviour)?

Interestingly, although the language was clear and direct, there was an assumption of implicit compliance from the children.

Lunchtime conversation in the staffroom. I started the conversation by stating what a lovely school it is. One adult replied, "*It's the culture, children are very respectful here*". I asked why they thought that. Two adults replied, "*The parents are respectful towards us, as teachers and people who work in the school*."

When I asked about the use of language, a staff member replied "*It is the first thing we all do when planning, we ask, will all the children understand us. How do we make the language clear to all children*".

This observation highlights the relationship between language use and behavioural expectations in a diverse educational setting. The clear, direct language used by adults in School 2 is a strategic adaptation to meet the needs of children with EAL. However, this simplicity may also reinforce a power dynamic that assumes compliance rather than encourages negotiation or dialogue. This dynamic may limit opportunities for children, especially those still developing their language skills, to engage critically or express themselves (Smith, 2005; Ball, 2021).

The assumption of compliance aligns with the school's behaviour policy, where behaviour is managed through clear directives rather than collaborative problem-solving. This approach may contribute to exclusionary outcomes for children who face language barriers (Gazeley et al., 2020).

IE uncovers how language subtly exercises power within the school environment. This observation emphasises the need to critically assess communication strategies in diverse settings to ensure they promote inclusion and participation for all children (Graham, 2021).

9.23.5 Interview with SLT member, School 2 – language: 20/01/2022

This member of staff had joined the school in the September. The impact of covid had meant they had spent considerable time covering classes for other teachers. This will have had an impact on their induction into the comings and goings of a new school.

> *"Year 1 I would probably say is probably our huge issue with, I mean as huge as it is with behaviour."*

The language used by the SLT member was exaggerated and did not align with my observations. The behavioural issues in the class were likely exacerbated by inconsistent teaching due to frequent staff absences. The newly qualified teacher (NQT) had insufficient time to establish routines, further complicated by pandemic disruptions. Therefore, attributing the behavioural challenges solely to the children overlooks the broader contextual factors beyond their control.

In contrast, behaviour policies in **Schools 3, 4, and 5** were more inclusive and child centered. For instance, in **School 3**, my diary notes 07/02/2022, indicate a welcoming and structured environment, with teachers, teaching assistants, and the headteacher greeting children: *Children confident coming into school, demonstrating clear understanding of routines. Adults engaging with enthusiasm and reinforcing appropriate behaviour, such as, 'Well done, you're sitting beautifully."* This inclusive discourse, reflected in **School 3**'s behaviour policy, was evident in adult-child interactions during key transitions like the start of the day, lunchtime, and dismissal.

9.23.6 Interview with SLT in School 4 – language: 15/03/2022

> *"We didn't want to fail these children, and we felt absolutely helpless because we couldn't, it just felt like we didn't know where to go."*
>
> *"We've got such a simple behaviour policy now, erm, everybody can follow it, it's not bitty, its, you know, right."*

The SLT member's language conveys staff frustration before 2018 and the relief after the revision of the behaviour policy, which now guides consistent actions across the school. The policy's simplicity and ease of use suggest it has been effectively tailored to the school's needs while adhering to government guidelines.

These observations highlight the importance of consistent, context-sensitive behaviour policies in promoting positive outcomes and preventing exclusion. The inconsistencies in behaviour management observed in **School 2**, influenced by COVID-19 disruptions and the inexperience of the NQT, show how external factors can impact policy implementation.

In contrast, **Schools 3 and 4** consistently apply inclusive, child-centered policies, supported by clear leadership. The SLT member in **School 4** reflects on the positive impact of a simplified, cohesive behaviour policy, showing how properly contextualized policies lead to a more consistent and positive environment, reducing exclusionary practices and fostering inclusivity (Ball, 2021; Graham, 2021).

9.23.7 Clara, child 2 in School 4 – language: 15/03/2022

> *"So that's like over time the behaviour of children has got a lot better like going back years ago in classes children were just out of class not doing what the teacher wanted now its like they do it and they don't mind doing it"*

Clara's statement reflects her understanding of the positive changes in the school's behaviour support. She notes that while there were historical challenges with disengaged and non-compliant children, recent improvements have led to greater willingness among children to follow instructions and engage positively. Her observation provides insight into the effectiveness of **School 4**'s behaviour management strategies, aligning with the thesis's focus on how institutional practices can mitigate or exacerbate exclusionary tendencies. This supports the argument that consistent, well-implemented behaviour policies result in positive behavioural changes. From an IE perspective, Clara's experience illustrates how institutional discourse, shaped by the school's behaviour policies, has been effectively enacted in daily interactions. The shift in behaviour management reflects a broader transformation in institutional culture, reducing the potential for exclusionary practices (Smith, 2005; Graham, 2021).

Clara's remark also highlights the importance of children's perceptions in evaluating policy effectiveness. When children recognise improvements in their environment, it suggests the policies are not only implemented well but also positively impacting them, aligning with the thesis's focus on the lived experiences of children as key indicators of institutional success (Gazeley et al., 2020).

9.24 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: Roles

9.24.1 Observation - School 1: Diary note, School 1 'Reflections of my first day' – Roles: 04/10/2021

Adult to adult conversations seem to happen a lot and are at an operational level. Often carried on in class and 'over the heads' of the children. There is a lack of clarity of the roles of individual members of staff – confusing!

The observation in **School 1** reveals a significant lack of clarity regarding staff roles during classroom interactions. Adult-to-adult conversations were frequent, often carried out over the children's heads, indicating a disconnect between staff responsibilities and the needs of the children. This suggests an ambiguity in the enactment of the school's behaviour policy, where role definition is unclear, leading to inconsistent practices. The absence of clearly defined roles not only muddles professional boundaries but also risks creating a disjointed learning environment, which can disproportionately impact vulnerable children and increase the likelihood of exclusion.

The lack of role clarity observed here reflects an institutional gap in School 1's behaviour management structure. IE is helpful in tracing how this ambiguity allows for individual interpretations of policy, resulting in inconsistent application and a lack of accountability. The operational conversations that occur "over the heads" of children suggest that staff are disengaged from their immediate duties, reducing their responsiveness to the children's needs during critical moments. This disengagement could undermine the children's educational experience, particularly for those already vulnerable to exclusionary practices.

The thesis aligns with this by focusing on how unclear institutional practices, like undefined staff roles, contribute to the marginalisation of children. Gazeley et al. (2020) and Ball (2021) argue that ambiguous institutional norms can lead to fragmented practices, further marginalising children who require more structured support.

In contrast, schools that provide well-defined roles for their staff promote a consistent and supportive environment. When responsibilities are clearly outlined, staff are better equipped to manage children's behaviour in a unified and effective manner. Graham (2021) emphasises that clearly delineated roles in behaviour policies help ensure a consistent approach to behaviour management, reducing the risk of exclusion by fostering a more inclusive environment. This observation in **School 1** underscores the importance of role-specific guidelines within behaviour policies to create an accountable and cohesive system for managing behaviour.

9.24.2 Diary note, School 2, initial conversation with headteacher – Roles: 17/01/2022

Headteacher gave me a tour of the school and a 'potted history of the school – 30 different languages spoken by the children. Change of culture in the school recently due to an increase of Eastern European children which has created a different dynamic. There was a need for adults in the school to be strong role models for the children and encourage independence due to the role of the children's mothers role in the home and the need to 'mother children' resulting in a lack of independence.

There was a clear understanding among all teaching staff, including teaching assistants, regarding their roles. However, the attitude of the staff towards the children seemed somewhat unusual. The children were generally very compliant, and this compliance was also observed in

the interactions between the children and their parents or caregivers during school pick-up times. This deference and compliance warrant further investigation to fully understand the underlying factors. Referencing this back to the text within the school behaviour policy it is interesting to note the use of dialogue. The role of parents is highlighted but they are problematic and with a direct request to support the school if a child needs to be 'punished'.

9.24.3 Interview with Inclusion Manager, School 4 - Roles: 16/03/2022

> *"Then J (HT) arrived, and J did something completely different to the other heads that had come in J didn't change everything in 5 mins erm and to be perfectly honest Susie it didn't feel like he was changing this and changing that. It was just so calm and gradual, you'd think this is different erm the support now. J won't have anybody praise him up (no). J is very much this is our team but Susie, this is down to him it really is because going back three years that man walked into this school and things started to change. He didn't come in and say I don't like that I don't like that I'm changing this, it was just done very, very gradually and J supports every member of his team he praises them every week every day every minute he will say thank you and you could see the way things were it was just lovely, (laughter) honestly I can't and I thought my god look at our kids now and they hold their heads up. I'd love him to be cloned."*

This interview highlights the significant impact of the new headteacher on the school. The Inclusion Manager's relaxed, confident tone suggests a more positive day-to-day experience, likely due to supportive leadership and the new behaviour policy, which has guided clear actions within the school.

The observations underscore the role of leadership in shaping the school environment and influencing children's behaviour. In **School 2**, the headteacher's focus on modelling

independence and adapting to demographic changes demonstrates culturally responsive leadership. However, the behaviour policy's portrayal of parents as problematic suggests a need for more inclusive practices that view parents as partners.

The interview with the Inclusion Manager in **School 4** reinforces the critical role of leadership in driving positive change. The headteacher's gradual, supportive approach to policy implementation aligns with IE, showing how institutional texts like behaviour policies are enacted in daily school practices (Smith, 2005). The resulting improvements in school culture and children's self-esteem indicate successful policy integration.

These observations illustrate how leadership and institutional practices can either mitigate or exacerbate exclusionary practices, with supportive leadership fostering a more positive and equitable learning environment (Gazeley et al., 2020; Graham, 2021).

9.24.4 Observation, School 1 - Roles: 05/10/2021

Part of this observation has already been used in the language section of this chapter, however I felt strongly that there was more than language that was at play during this session, demonstrating how a child, at a very young age, responds to behaviours which might, by the adults initiating them, seem appropriate. However, this results in the child behaving in a way which puts them at risk of exclusion.

Day one. YR RE lesson – How God made the world. Joe responding well to a teaching assistant (TA). During 10 minutes of CT talk Joe listened attentively. Possible risk is that all of the children in class are expected to conform to 'set' and potentially rigid principles.

Day two. On going into YR I positioned myself to the left of the door in the construction area, there were no children there. I sat on the floor and remained quiet. Children were having 'free play' as well as being able to engage in adult led activities e.g. painting/active nursery rhymes on screen.

Joe came to me at 9.30 and started to build a Lego house. He had a direct (including eye contact) conversation with me, telling me he was going to build a house for superman. I interacted with Joe and supported him to make a house. He was dextrous and able to build a house with a ramp.

Whilst I was doing this, two adults in the class were having a conversation with each other which appeared to be unrelated to anything children were doing. A third adult joined in. There was no observable interaction with any child in the classroom by adults during this time (approx. five mins). One adult left to interact with a child and then went back to S (boy), then was called out of the class by an adult coming to the door. One adult was on an iPad, no interaction with any child.

Three adults talking together CT had come in from outside play area. Joe went up to them to show them his Lego house. They all had their back to him and were engaging in an adult conversation. Joe got one adults attention by patting her. She acknowledged him. Class teacher

(CT) - no acknowledgement. Joe persisted, tapping CT. CT said "amazing, I love it." She walked outside.

9.50 CT sharpening pencils, interacting with TA, both went into the store cupboard. Joe went outside. Two adults on the art table.

10.00 CT and TA still no interaction with any child. Joe still outside. Another adult comes into class and interacts with CT. Four adults in the classroom.

10.02 CT still talking to TA, three adults now talking to each other.

10.04 CT found a child and sat at a table one to one. TA and CT having a conversation – child tapping CT for attention.

10.06 CT stood back up, child left.

10.07 YR girl (O) standing next to me, TA came over to her having noticed her and started talking to her.

10.07 CT at table, moving books, went outside. TA left girl (O).

10.09 3 TA's engaging with children, two singing 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' 1 engaged with O but left to distract S who was becoming agitated.

10.12 2 TA's no engagement with children. TA came from outside play area and immediately engaged with CT who was sitting at the table with the children's books. Another TA joined in conversation. One TA on carpet with boy (N). N holding broom, no interaction and then went outside. Job share CT came into classroom and spoke to other CT. TA came back into room and told N to 'check schedule' "busy bee has finished, check schedule. It felt like pressure was being put on N to 'check schedule' (He is four)! S and N plus girl and three TA's left room, CT out of class, no adult in classroom (other than me). CT then came into classroom. CT cleaning up paint, no interaction with children.

10.20 Joe outside, came in at 10.21. CT engaged with Joe and asked him if he wanted to paint. Joe put an apron on and started to paint. TA came back into the classroom. CT and TA engaged in conversation. At this point there was a Michelin tyre advert on the screen. CT was on the table with children's books, child left table having been there for under two minutes. TA came in from outside – engaged with class teacher.

Joe and TA engaged on painting table. Joe left to watch screen but did not engage. Left classroom with his coat on.

10.30 CT left table went into stock cupboard. Joe came back from outside and watched the other children then went outside. CT went outside and came back with Joe and took him by the arm to the table with the books on. Joe does not want to do the task. CT used puppet to encourage Joe. Joe started to hit the puppet. CT – "If you finish you can go outside." Joe pushed the book away. CT "You've had a good morning." Joe continued to hit the puppet. CT – "Stop" Joe refusing to do

the task, knocked books off the table and then stood on the chair he had been sitting on. He was asked by CT to get down. Joe refused. CT physically took him down from the chair and held both of Joe's arms and moved him over to the sink area. A TA also went over to the sink area. Both adults were standing over him. As CT was holding Joe, TA removed his shoes. Another TA went over to the sink. Three adults were standing over him. The TA's then moved away to engage with the other children on the carpet by the screen. Joe climbed onto the sink. He was removed by the CT (at no time were distraction techniques used). Joe started to hit CT. Joe seemed in control at this time. 10.38 Joe still in corner of the classroom by the sink and blocked by CT. CT then carried Joe out of the classroom and was taken to an internal exclusion room. (I found this incident distressing and left).

11.10 I went back to YR. CT activity – children sitting in a circle on the carpet – numbers to seven. Joe sitting next to a TA. Joe not engaged in activity and looked tired. TA – "Sit up please." Joe had his head on TA's lap. TA physically moved him to sitting position.

Joe had a question and was trying to engage CT, I didn't hear Joe's question but the reply was "we're learning about seven today." Joe got up and held out his hands to show ten fingers. Not acknowledged by CT. S and N were not in the classroom. Joe attempting to lie on TA (incident of exclusion from classroom seems to have made Joe tired). TA looked at Joe "You need to look." TA took hold of Joe's arms to touch his lap seven times. Joe didn't want to do this. Children had been asked to stand by the CT and to stamp seven times. Joe not engaging or conforming. CT "straight across and straight down is how we write the number seven."

Three adults than went to the sink for handwashing. Adults talking to each other, children on the carpet watching the screen.

Other class teacher entered the classroom, four adults engaged in conversation, children watching the screen.

11.36 Another adult entered the classroom and left with a TA.

TA – "Shall we take our three down?". Four children (S, N,E and M) were taken out of the classroom. Joe also taken out of the classroom by a TA.

Lunchtime S, N, E and M sitting separately from their peers. Joe ate most of his food and coped well at the table, sitting quietly after he had finished. I felt he was getting bored, so I engaged him in a conversation and walked back to the classroom with him, he held my hand – wanted to engage with me and took something by the Headteachers door. We went outside to the YR playground. Played by himself on a bike but chose to ride bike into another child. There was only one supervisor with YR. S, N, E and M were not outside. Joe interacting with older girls by the gate to the playing field. Left playground and went for lunch.

This observation highlights several interactions in **School 1** that reflect a lack of engagement and child-focused action, placing Joe, a young child, at greater risk of exclusion. While Joe demonstrated his ability to engage in creative tasks, such as building a Lego house and painting, his interactions with adults were often met with indifference or dismissive behaviour.

Throughout the morning, the adults appeared disengaged, frequently conversing with each other rather than with the children. At one point, three adults talked among themselves, leaving Joe with no meaningful adult interaction as he attempted to show them his Lego creation. The lack of eye contact and minimal verbal engagement from staff, such as a cursory “amazing, I love it” from the class teacher, signalled disinterest and undermined Joe’s efforts to engage.

More concerning was the physical handling of Joe. At multiple points, the class teacher (CT) physically moved him, first taking him by the arm to the table, then removing him from a chair, and finally carrying him out of the classroom when he became un-cooperative. These actions reflected an over-reliance on physical intervention rather than using distraction techniques or offering emotional support, which escalated Joe’s frustration and resistance.

IE offers a lens through which these interactions can be understood as institutionally embedded practices that marginalise children like Joe. The behaviour policy, although likely well-intentioned, becomes enacted in ways that reduce children’s autonomy and increase the risk of exclusion. The body language and verbal exchanges between adults reflect a lack of professional responsiveness to Joe’s needs, reinforcing a narrative where his behaviour is seen as the problem rather than a response to inadequate support.

The curriculum, such as the topic "How God made the world," seemed particularly inaccessible to children of Joe’s age, and the expectation that children conform to rigid principles while seated on the floor added unnecessary difficulty. When Joe struggled to participate, the adults

appeared to view him through a lens of behavioural deviance rather than addressing the systemic factors at play.

The disengagement of the staff, along with the physical handling of Joe, demonstrates how institutional practices contribute to exclusionary outcomes. The lack of meaningful interaction or support during key moments in Joe's day led to him being positioned as a problem child, despite the fact that the institutional structure, in terms of both the behaviour policy and the staff's attitudes, played a significant role in creating these situations.

In IE, the day-to-day practices in schools often reflect institutional norms that marginalise certain children. In Joe's case, the expectations placed on him were neither realistic nor supportive, leading to a series of interactions where his behaviour was pathologized. This observation underscores how institutional discourse and practice operate together to label and ultimately exclude children like Joe, despite their capacity for positive engagement when offered the right support.

9.24.5 Interview with SLT member, School 2 – Roles: 20/01/2022

> *"Whenever they are going up or down there should be a clear explanation of why it's happening because I think that's important for them to understand, I hate it when you say to a child "Well why is your teacher not very happy?" "I don't know".*
> ***"****Think it's a mix of there are some children who are not doing what they understand so there are children who haven't learnt the right thing and there are children who are choosing not to do the right thing, and they are very different. You can't blame a child actually yeah if a is developmentally not able to sit still for five minutes that's not naughty they're just not able to do it whereas another child they can sit still and choose*

not to that's naughty yeah erm and I also think it comes down to high expectations and being really, really consistent and I think we've got a little bit of an issue with inconsistency with behaviour expectations across the school."

"And it's interesting the classes that cos my measure of my behaviour management is if I'm not there they should still be behaved well if I've taught them to understand what good behaviour is it's not about whether there's someone there staring at them No If I leave the room they should behave in exactly the same way and that's and if there's a supply teacher in there they should behave in the same way."

"*If a child in a class is just silent it's not, they're just sat there they're not learning. It would be interesting for you to go to S (a SLT member at previous school) because the classrooms are much noisier but it's because a lot of the children are engaged and they're questioning and they're thinking out loud and a visitor may think that the behaviour is more challenging much more challenging and there is more bad behaviour there but in terms of their learning behaviour it is much better."*

There is an expectation that some children are being deliberately 'naughty' which requires a different response and that some children are choosing not to do the 'right thing'. This could potentially mean that an adult is making very different responses towards a child because of their feeling/attitude towards them, rather than following policy.

This statement highlights the importance of consistency and clear communication in managing behaviour. The interview suggests that inconsistencies in how behaviour is managed may result from different expectations and attitudes among staff, leading to varied responses to similar behaviours.

9.24.6 School 4 Interview Inclusion Manager – Roles: 16/03/2022

"I couldn't work with them because we were battling, it was a battle. Now you can enjoy them. Three, four years, well four or five years ago we couldn't enjoy them Susie, now we can enjoy the children, and they learn, and they are learning and they're interested in everything around them because they see things more clearly. They haven't got other children hanging off rafters trying to stab them with scissors! It is, its just, its great, its lovely because you know for a while, you think how long can we go on like this, but the children keep you here and we knew, I think the children the people the staff that are still here now, knew that it couldn't go on any longer so they knew there had to be somewhere, light at the end of the tunnel and in he walked."

"No expectation Susie of our children it was, they were expected to mess up, you know now we expect our children to follow the rules and to follow this and to work hard for what they want out of life, we expect that. Every child has that right to get the best education they can but it wasn't expected all those years, it was they were just, it was, well they've had a crap time, so let them do what they want."

9.24.7 School 4 – Interview (Teacher) – Roles: 15/03/2022b

"Actually, half your class are running up and down the corridor and playing on a computer there's, there's no incentive to be part of your class is there and I think that was what was really hard. You knew there were children who shouldn't be part of it who were getting drawn in wasting their time and their education and really losing out when they shouldn't have been."

"You're just able to get on with your job and do it to properly and do it to the best of your ability. We're focussing on teaching; we're focussing on learning and children are learning and you're seeing progress in a different way and you're not going home and thinking there are 8 children I didn't speak to today or you know we didn't really didn't do anything in that maths lesson because such and such is under the table biting someone's ankle."

"But we're patient with those children we don't write them off. You'll say you'll never be able to do any maths, yet with behaviour, we're almost expecting them to be perfect after we've said 3 times - sit in the classroom and be quiet the whole lesson - well that that doesn't teach them anything."

"You are not going to have children who are ready-made who come to school reading where education is not particularly valued at home."

These interviews highlight the significant shift in expectations within **School 4** following changes in leadership and behaviour policy. The staff now hold higher expectations for children, focusing on both academic and behavioural standards, while also recognising the need for patience and understanding in managing behaviour.

9.24.8 School 4 Interview Child - Roles: (Florence, Child 1) 15/03/2022

Florence had received numerous Fixed term exclusions pre-2018. Florence was being kept back at school at the end of the day to complete her work and it shows that home-life was difficult during this time.

"I started to change around my behaviour because I didn't want to stay at school for longer. My mum was getting really stressed. One year I actually got excluded."
"Actually, I have no clue, maybe it was just because I had loads of things going on like my dad left and stuff like that, so that's why it happened."

Florence's account shows how external factors, such as family issues, influenced her behaviour at school. She recognises that she needed to change her behaviour to avoid further exclusion, indicating a level of self-awareness and a desire to remain engaged in her education.

9.24.9 School 5 Interview with Teacher: 15/03/2022

> *"I mean he's; I suppose you know, he was kind of that child that came up that you know, there was a lot of talk about him, even before he came in that, oh, this is going to happen you know. Everyone had something to say about him and it was almost like the rest of the class didn't even get a look in. It was everyone was saying oh you've got that the class with him and so you know he sort of came up with this sort of reputation."*

This observation highlights how preconceived notions about a child can influence the behaviour of staff and potentially lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy where the child is expected to misbehave.

9.24.10 Interview with HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) School 5: 04/04/2022

> *"The trouble is we don't have a behaviour policy or any awareness in the school about what should happen and the process that should happen when a when a child is physical. There is a lot of bureaucracy around the processes and training available to staff in this school. We are told to go and get a member of the senior leadership team which is absolutely useless in the moment."*

The behaviour policy in place was overly complicated, with an over-reliance on senior staff for difficult situations. This diminished professional autonomy, preventing individuals from effectively implementing the policy in their daily school interactions. The inconsistent application of behaviour policies in **Schools 1, 2, and 5** highlights a broader issue of how institutional texts, like behaviour policies, are interpreted and enacted. IE provided a framework for understanding how these texts shape the experiences of students and staff, revealing a gap between policy intentions and outcomes (Smith, 2005).

In contrast, the changes in **School 4**, following the introduction of a clear behaviour policy, demonstrate how consistent expectations positively impact staff and children's behaviour. This supports the thesis's argument that well-implemented behaviour policies are key to fostering an inclusive environment and reducing the risk of exclusion (Ball, 2021; Gazeley et al., 2020).

These observations underscore the importance of clear communication, consistent policy enactment, and high expectations in managing behaviour and preventing exclusion, as explored through IE (Graham, 2021).

9.25 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: Systems

9.25.1 Interview with SLT member, School 1: 04/12021

> *"We also so do it that they earn reward time. Well in the past its been violent, throwing things at the teacher, breaking fights up, disruptive behaviour, I can very often go into a class where there's been a disruptive child and say "Right, would you like to come out with me for 10 minutes. You can bring your work." And just the fact that I've removed them from the classroom, and we sit down and we'd talk about the work and they'd do it and they go back to class and they can cope. It's taken them away from the situation really. That can help. Not everyone's consistent."*

This statement reveals an inconsistency in the approach to behaviour management, with systems not being uniformly applied. The practice of removing a child from class appears to be a common strategy, but it lacks a formal process to help the child remain in the classroom, highlighting potential gaps in the system.

9.25.2 Interview with SLT member, School 2: 20/01/2022

> *'Ok in my limited experience in this school we have, I call it a peg chart system a name chart system so the children all start on the, I can't remember what it's called but the green, and their expectations, so if they do something over and above what is expected they'd go up and could end up on a pot of gold. But also the same if they're going up, that's really brilliant I can see that you've thought really hard about that that's good, put your name up. I think that's quite good for the other children to hear that because then they know how to up and how to go down. Alongside that it's making sure that the child that go down had every opportunity to go back up again.'*

Although the explanation is somewhat unclear, it is evident that a behaviour management system is in place and actively used. The system is designed to reinforce positive behaviour through recognition and provides opportunities for children to improve their behaviour, reflecting a constructive approach to behaviour management.

9.25.3 Classroom Observation, School 3: 07/02/2022

8.55 a.m. All children ready to learn (behaviour chart on the wall). Reading quietly or finishing outstanding work. L, (girl) reading with knees up on the table. CT (class teacher) giving clear instructions as to lesson – 2-minute target. Some movement of children. Boy left class during introduction to the lesson. Direct instruction to L to put her pen down, which she did. Another boy taken out of the class for 1 to 1 maths. Another child comes in with a TA. Another adult entered the classroom and went up to TA and spoke to them. Another adult enters and goes and sits with a child (support for EHCP) 4 adults in the classroom.

The behaviour policy in place was overly complex and relied heavily on senior staff to handle difficult situations, which undermined professional autonomy and prevented staff from effectively implementing the policy in their daily routines. The inconsistent application of behaviour policies in Schools **1, 2, and 5** reflects a broader issue of how institutional texts, such as behaviour policies, are interpreted and enacted. In contrast, School 4's implementation of a new behaviour policy shows how clear and consistent expectations can positively impact both staff and student behaviour.

9.26 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: Rewards and Sanctions

9.26.1 Observation in school 2, Reward: 18/01/2022

Girl (who had not done well in phonics) confident to use number bonds – I felt it was far too easy a task for her and she looked bored. CT to girl "well done -move your name up.

This observation suggests an inconsistent application of the reward system across the school, with some classes using it infrequently and others potentially overusing it. The next interview with a senior leadership team (SLT) member further corroborates this inconsistency.

9.26.2 Interview with SLT member School 2, Rewards: 20/01/2022

> *"Around that you need to do a lot of work, because some children think - well I haven't got onto the gold - pot of gold they call it here, we called it I think at S something, but they've just called it different names. Some children think that if they don't get to that, then they're done, they've not had a good day, so you need to do a lot of work around if they're still on the green."*

"So that it might be that if you're finding getting started quicker, I would make a big deal of you, brilliant, you are one of the first so, I'd have a good idea particularly if there's an issue, it might be that actually when we are thinking about the peg chart I call it the peg chart, the name chart, I'm only asking you to do one thing. Ok, so I'm not going to worry about if you've not sat in your chair, if you're looking around, there's not going to be any negativity around that. I'm looking, I want you to be looking at me so that would be the positive or the negative.

"I think what I've just said about them if they're not on the pot of gold they feel like they haven't had a good day so that can have quite a negative impact, it did in my class, I did quite a lot of work on explaining how, if you're still there, you can feel really proud." "There's a child in Y2 who's really struggling at the moment, he just doesn't get anything done. So just making sure at the beginning, he's just so slow, literally picking up his pencil takes him about 20 minutes, so making sure the next, if they've has a session where it's right, brilliant! What we're going to do is this we're going to try really hard so, with him it's like I'll make sure he's not the last person on the table to pick up his pencil, so making it really positive because otherwise you get into a nagging cycle."

"That child still doesn't quite understand because he's still very egocentric, but I want to play. Whereas he's got a friend who just think it's fun not to tidy up - I don't want to. The child who hasn't quite worked it out did have some discovery time because he was reminded, so he missed a little bit, we had a little chat - so why were you in trouble this morning, you didn't tidy up. So, at tidy up time I'm going to be looking really carefully and make sure what you're going to do, tidy up, and he did. The other one didn't have any because he chose to be a pain he chose to hide, like no, I'm not having it."

I questioned the use of the reward system and that I had observed some inconsistencies in its application across the school.

"I don't know, ok, because I've come from a system that I introduced that system at my previous school, we called it a peg chart because there children had pegs so then every time I say peg here they same name, but I don't know to be honest ok because of the rapid change in my job and then the covid situation. I think, I would hope so and I think some of the TA's would be more eloquent than some of the teachers, yeah I would imagine probably its fairly used, fairly inconsistently I would say, yeah I'd probably agree with you there I'd imagine so because those sorts of things are and you lose the value of them cos one of that's interesting, my questions is what happens when you get to the pot of gold, I make a big deal out of it that's amazing, you're really good."

The SLT member's insights reveal a lack of understanding and inconsistent application of the current rewards and sanctions system across the school. This inconsistency may be partly attributed to disruptions caused by COVID-19, which affected staff roles and responsibilities. The interview also acknowledges the positive impact of using the reward system to encourage good behaviour and how staff members have interpreted the behaviour policy to support individual children.

9.27 School 4: Pre- and Post-2018 Behaviour Policy Implementation

9.27.1 Interview, Teacher: 15/03/2022

"The thing the Senco encouraged was this constant rewarding so if you've had a good day at school, you could have half an hour on the laptop and those kind of rewards didn't really work because there again if you didn't get the reward it was the end of the world."

9.27.2 Interview, Child 1 Florence 15/03/2022

"A toy, erm, well back then I had a load of things on my mind, and as for my ADHD, I had to have something to fiddle with. I had, it was a unicorn, so I kept it on my finger the whole day and liked it as it had hair, I would twirl it around my finger.

"It made me feel … because I didn't stand around the people that would make me upset, I also was sad because I did want to learn but it was just difficult with the people that are in my class that made me not like it"

"I, maybe, because when we had our headteacher, the woman, it was quite a long time ago. She was not strict at all, she was loose and she would, if someone would be naughty, she'd say -its fine go back to learning."

"But with me, the classroom says, like the front of the door says safe room and as me I like loving learning if I go in there, I would love it I would just sit relax do some learning and then boom."

Florence's comments provide a window into her lived experience of **School 2's** behaviour policy and its impact on her ability to learn and manage her ADHD. She describes how the use of a toy, specifically a unicorn she twirled, helped her cope throughout the school day, explaining: *"I had to have something to fiddle with."* Florence's reliance on this object highlights how children with SEN often develop coping strategies in response to a school environment that may not fully support their needs. Her statement, *"I did want to learn but it was just difficult with the people in my class,"* reflects a classroom climate where disruptive social dynamics further hindered her learning experience.

Florences' memory of a former headteacher who was less strict, allowing children to return to learning after being disruptive, suggests that her understanding of leniency by the former headteacher was not as a result of an appropriate response to behaviour management. Children were being returned to the classroom to continue to disrupt the learning of other children. She was now able to call her classroom a "safe room", where she could *"sit, relax, do some*

learning," representing a turning point for Florence, as it provided a structured, supportive space for her to learn without the pressures of a disrupted classroom environment.

These observations illustrate that consistent and well-understood behaviour management systems are critical for positive child outcomes. Florence's comments reflect how the inconsistency in the behaviour policy at **School 4** pre-2018 led to varied experiences for children. The SLT members' reflections suggest that individual staff members adapted the policy differently, contributing to inequitable outcomes. This inconsistency, as noted in IE, creates a disconnect between the intended policy goals and its practical implementation, leading to confusion among children and staff alike. As Florence indicates, such inconsistencies exacerbate feelings of frustration and inadequacy, particularly for children with additional needs like ADHD.

In contrast, Florence's reflections on her experiences in **School 4** post-2018 reveal the positive effects of a revised and consistently applied behaviour policy. The structured implementation of the new policy, offering both supportive spaces and clearer behavioural expectations, improved Florence's engagement with learning and her emotional well-being. This shift illustrates how a well-designed, consistently applied behaviour policy can support a more inclusive educational environment, aligning with the thesis's focus on the institutional impact of effectively implemented practices (Gazeley et al., 2020; Ball, 2021).

Florence's experiences highlight the importance of clarity and consistency in behaviour management policies. When staff interpretations diverge, as in **School 2**, children may experience uneven support. However, when policies are applied with uniformity and

thoughtfulness, as in School 4, children benefit from a more stable, supportive learning environment that fosters both academic and emotional success.

9.28 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: Consistency and Fairness

9.28.1 Observation in school 2: 18/01/2022

Incident between Tom and Sky. CT put boy on 'Thunder and Lightning' and given a 'Time Out' -he had to go and sit on the floor at the back of the class. When Tom had returned to his seat and I went and spoke to him, he looked despondent. He said that Sky had said he was touching the sofa that she was sat on (a reading sofa in the class) and he said he wasn't. He then said she said it again and he wasn't, so he slapped her. CT was out of the classroom. CT came back into the classroom and made contact with Tom – language felt negative "we will not" "do not" "we're not".

This immediate assumption of Tom's guilt demonstrates a lack of consistency and fairness in how the school's behaviour policy was applied. The teacher reprimanded Tom without hearing his side of the story or consulting Sky. This approach not only upset Tom but also left him feeling unjustly blamed. The teacher's response, lacking an impartial assessment of the situation, reinforces the notion that certain children are quickly labelled as problematic, regardless of the context. In this instance, the behaviour policy, represented by the 'Thunder and Lightning' chart, was enacted without room for discretion or dialogue, and was applied based on the teacher's preconceived notions rather than the specific dynamics of the situation. Smith (2005) argues that institutional texts, like behaviour policies, can become tools for reproducing power

dynamics when enacted in this way, with certain children more likely to be punished based on assumptions rather than facts.

This incident illustrates the inconsistencies that can arise when behaviour policies are not applied fairly or with due consideration of individual circumstances. The teacher's actions, particularly her assumption of Tom's fault, reflect an institutional tendency toward discipline over dialogue. This lack of fair process risks exacerbating feelings of injustice and marginalisation among children like Tom, who are not given the opportunity to explain their side of the story.

9.28.2 Observation in school 4 Inclusion Manager: 16/03/2022

> *"It's taken 3 years. What I love is the consistency. Now the consistency, the simplicity, it is simple, but it works. What he's put in place, we can follow it. All the behaviour policy."*

This statement highlights the confidence in the school's new behaviour policy, emphasising its effectiveness and how it has become an integral part of daily school life.

9.29 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: Training

9.29.1 Interview, School 1, Inclusion Manager: 04/10/2021

> *"People having to step in and they do it differently. Erm, but on the whole since we've got the new headteacher and new deputy head the behaviours much better managed. Ok. Exclusions are less, yep, erm, we haven't had anything this term."*

In this interview, the Inclusion Manager reflects on the changes in behaviour management since the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy head. While there is an acknowledgment that behaviour is being better managed, the Inclusion Manager's comments suggest that these improvements are largely attributed to the headteacher and deputy, rather than to a school-wide shift in behaviour management practices. This highlights an important issue: although exclusions have decreased, it appears that there has been little improvement in the training or capacity-building of other staff members, who continue to manage behaviour inconsistently.

This reflects a broader institutional issue where the focus is on leadership rather than on equipping all staff with the skills and knowledge to manage challenging situations.
The Inclusion Manager's comment that *"People having to step in and they do it differently"* reinforces the notion that there is no consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. This observation aligns with other findings that indicate a lack of training in positive behaviour strategies. The reliance on senior leadership to manage behaviour overlooks the need for whole-school professional development, where all staff are trained in consistent, positive approaches to behaviour management. This lack of a unified approach can undermine the school's efforts to create an inclusive environment, as it fails to address the role of adult behaviour in shaping children's responses.

9.29.2 School 2, SLT: 20/01/2022

> *"Since I've been here, we haven't had any work on behaviour. We've got a lot of quite new teachers here; quite new teachers and I think because they haven't had to work on their behaviour management skills, they don't have them when you had a challenging class that's how you sharpen your teeth on behaviour management skills."*

The lack of training on behaviour management, coupled with the impact of COVID-19 on staffing, makes it difficult to assess the situation definitively. However, it is notable that there was no reference to behaviour management training in **School 2's** behaviour policy.

9.29.3 School 4 teacher (17/03/2022) reflected in her interview:

> *"(Pre 2018) You know in desperation people weren't behaving in a way that was as professional as it could be because we didn't have the training and we didn't have the support within the school as staff we then had the training, we needed that was appropriate in term of things like de-escalation skills so that immediately stopped some people chasing children up and down corridors."*

Again, this provides clarity about the way it was and the way it is now. This reflection highlights the improvement in staff professionalism and behaviour management following targeted training and support. These observations are crucial to the thesis as they emphasise the importance of consistency, fairness, and proper training in implementing behaviour policies. The incident in **School 2** demonstrates how inconsistent behaviour management can lead to unjust outcomes. In **School 4**, the clear and consistently applied behaviour policy has fostered a more positive environment, suggesting that well-supported policies can shape staff interactions and lead to better outcomes for children. The teacher's reflection on the pre-2018 period underscores the importance of training in equipping staff to manage behaviour effectively. The lack of behaviour management training in School 2 is particularly concerning, especially for new teachers. This supports the thesis's focus on the need for comprehensive training to ensure all staff can positively influence childrens' behaviour (Gazeley et al., 2020; Ball, 2021).

9.30 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: Engagement

9.30.1 Observations, School 1, Engagement: 04/10/2021

*Day one**.** Sam (Y1 boy) not engaged with others (sitting on carpet with class teacher (CT) choosing to play outside with tyres. One teaching assistant (TA) left as required in another classroom. Sam responded to CT to put tyres away. Positive reinforcement by CT "go and put your name up." Sam went in and stayed inside. Adult to adult conversations being had without engaging children. Sam pushing pen (stabbing motion) very hard on a piece of paper having moved away from a table with two girls – checking CT wasn't looking. Stabbing paper with pen, still checking he was not being observed and went outside.*

Children went to sit on the carpet for a story (on screen) Sam finding it very hard to sit still. Sam appears aimless and wandering around the classroom – not engaging with other children, watching them rather than relating to them. Sam came to sit down next to me (I had been helping 2 girls make a necklace). Without prompting Sam said "My dad's coming out of prison today" I smiled, he continued "I'm really excited." We then chatted about him having a little party for his dads return. My initial feeling that there is a difficult dynamic in the classroom, appears pressured but hard to say why.

The fact that Sams's dad is in prison will make him more vulnerable to exclusion. There appeared to be a lack of acknowledgement about the need to directly engage with Sam at this difficult time. I later found out that the class teacher was unaware of Sam's situation at the time of my observation.

This conversation revealed Sam's vulnerability, likely exacerbated by his father's being in prison. The classroom dynamic felt pressured, though it was difficult to pinpoint why. It later emerged that the CT was unaware of Sam's situation during the observation, indicating a lack of communication and engagement with Sam during this challenging time.

9.30.2 Observation School 2: 17/01/2022

I had an odd feeling that some of the children were adept at reading the adults and watching for 'their' moment to distract or engage other children – boys working on rhyming words – check this out tomorrow.

YR positive feeling in the room children playing freely and accessing good quality resources. Confident play.

Staff seem very flexible in terms of supporting each other – adults engaging positively with children -playing with children. I spent 3 lunchtimes observing in the dining hall.

Two lunchtime supervisors appeared brusque and unusually sharp with the children. The majority of the children had a school lunch however what seemed to be a very high proportion of the children ate very little, some almost nothing. They were not encouraged to eat, and their food was thrown away. The range of food was very limited, and I felt it did not support the dietary requirements or preferences for the ethnic diversity in the school. Couldn't rice be a staple every day? I felt a sense of emotion and it made me feel quite upset that a lot of children

could be feeling hungry for an afternoon and the impact this might have on their learning/concentration etc.

This observation raised concerns about whether all adults were engaging with the children in line with the school's behaviour policy.

9.30.3 Interview School 4, Inclusion Manager: 16/03/2022

"*We would try and diffuse the situation if we couldn't, we would then look towards SLT to support and to guide us through what our next steps were, unfortunately that wasn't forthcoming, so we'd try and deal with that ourselves, we weren't in the position to. Sometimes we were told to phone a parent other times we were told we couldn't phone parents. So, we didn't really know erm it sometimes we well I would take on myself to phone the parent just to say not a good day this has happened that's happened."*

9.30.4 School 4: (Child 2 Clara) 16/03/2022

"*so I think back then I think the way we learn now is much more different like I think it's more interesting (ok) I think it's interesting I know some people may not find it interesting but I think it's more interesting than what it was like I think its although you are getting a task done it also like you see your teacher smiling you see a smile on the face of teachers which always makes you happy to makes you more focused as well. Like we have all like school core values in our school that are like be a learner be respectful be responsible and be safe those are our 4 core values."*

"And also like kindness we talk about so Mr W will like reads us a story that always has a moral to it like a good moral in the story in assembly and we'll have ….kindness.
"It's more exciting like so in PE for instance we now do real PE like so you have different things and different activities and …its always different each lesson

These interviews highlight the significant change in engagement between adults and children in **School 4** before and after 2018, supported by a clear and well-understood behaviour policy. These observations and interviews illustrate how the implementation and interpretation of school policies significantly influence the engagement of children. In **School 1**, Sam's disengagement during a difficult personal time highlights the need for more attentive and informed educator interactions. The lack of communication and understanding between the teacher and Sam highlights the importance of a well-executed engagement policy that considers individual circumstances.

IE provides a framework for analysing these observations, showing how institutional texts, such as behaviour and engagement policies, are enacted in practice. In Sam's case, the absence of a consistent engagement approach may increase his vulnerability to exclusion. Similarly, in **School 2**, varied staff engagement levels highlight how inconsistent policy implementation affects children's well-being and performance (Smith, 2005).

The positive changes in **School 4** after 2018 demonstrate how a clear, consistently applied behaviour policy enhances engagement and creates a supportive learning environment. The improved engagement, described by Clara and the Inclusion Manager, highlights the role of leadership and well-understood policies in fostering a positive school culture (Gazeley et al., 2020; Ball, 2021).

9.31 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: SEND

9.31.1 Observations, School 1: 04/10/2021

Ben (YR) with complex needs having 1 to 1. 10.35 a.m. The same child with 1 to 1 was in a room with 2 adults.

Despite this support, there appeared to be little positive or well-defined action from the adults to effectively support Ben's needs.

9.31.2 Interview School 1: Inclusion Manager: 04/10/2021

> ***"****I think it created complexities (relationship between teacher and child)but I think education for that particular boy was a problem."*

This comment reflects a perception that places the onus of the problem on the child rather than addressing potential shortcomings in the support provided by the school.

9.31.3 Interview School 2: SLT: 20/01/2022

> *"I think I think the only time I would use it (fixed term exclusion) would be when there needs to be a break, as in, it's got so out of control that it's that it's not fixable. I think sometimes relationships break down, that could be with a parent. I think sometimes, just some time away. I also think occasionally, thinking of my last class, sometimes a class needs a break.*
>
> *I had a child last year who was basically aggressively manipulative and threatening and that's not fair on the rest of the class he was, they were scared to death of him, literally, didn't even have to say anything, just a look made them shiver with fright so but I'm not*

sure it should be out of school. I mean he needed to be in a special school but taken away from his mother.

I taught his mother as well yeah, parenting? But she has ADHD and depressed she doesn't have the parenting skills she was doing the absolute best she can she just wasn't good enough I mean that child went through he had a stepdad who went into prison during covid came out he didn't particularly get on well with him. So, a break yeah, a break. I think sometimes children need but also with him he knew eventually when once J started to exclude him, he knew if he wanted to go home for the afternoon all he had to do was to punch someone in the face, so he just punched someone in the face.

It's really hard isn't it so for him it had completely broken down he needed a psychologist, so he was using the system He could work the system. So, he's been having these issues had them in YR and so he was we knew before he came to school, he was going to be a problem his mum was a problem, and we knew his mum had said he'd be a problem. Wasn't too bad in YR he had lots of SEND stuff the Advisory Outreach Service come from special school. They come in and make suggestions I mean it's difficult because I'm a more mature teacher I've been through the process before so all the things they suggest putting in place I've You've already done I've already tried yeah but you have to go through the process.

He was eventually diagnosed he was diagnosed not Christmas just gone but before Christmas before for ADHD he was then seen was seen for medication the next Christmas, that's how long it took. I knew mum and had the history, and it was to do with either Mum or Dad was in a refuge, children who've witnessed domestic abuse and stuff.

This narrative highlights how adult perceptions and a lack of timely interventions can compound the challenges faced by children with SEND, placing them at greater risk of exclusion. The story

illustrates the complexity of managing SEND children, especially when external factors such as family issues are involved.

9.31.4 Interview School 4, Inclusion Manager: 16/03/2022

"I remember we had a child here who was quite volatile he was autistic, and he just needed to be understood, and we understood him, and we went through a lot. He was never excluded but one day he it wasn't a thump it wasn't done you know with sheer aggression it was just like that, to the headteacher, and he was excluded, not to come back anymore. I thought well we've done this every day you know (it's sad) we've done it every day and I did get really upset because that boy by this time was in Y6 he had about 3 weeks left and we couldn't say goodbye to him, yet he'd been here all that time and there was one thing, and he was gone."

"I've got erm a list of children vulnerable children that I see every single day and erm I'll sit in class with them for 10 15 minutes and erm work with them and have a little chat how are you and children that are on CPs and (yeah) CIN plans."

This case underscores the importance of understanding and supporting children with SEND, and how a single incident can overshadow years of positive engagement, leading to exclusion.

9.31.5 Interview School 4, Teacher: 17/03/2022

"Labelling children and I think that's where a lot of our undoing came, we kind of labelling them we kept creaming them off into little groups."

"I had a very severely autistic boy who had already been in 4 classes and the only way he could stay in class he had a little tent under my desk it was his safe space and this particular teacher took over from me and like within half an hour had moved all his stuff ripped his tent out said you don't need that and all the things that we'd built up that had

made this lovely boy able to stay in class he was gorgeous he was absolutely amazing but you had to help him cope and no one wanted to he went to Y3 completely failed got excluded about a million times and it was just heart-breaking that there wasn't anyone other than at that point one or two of us fighting his corner and you shouldn't be fighting corners you should have a school policy shouldn't you that protects every child's education."

"Our TA's are mainly one to ones with our EHCP children."

This observation highlights the negative impact of labelling and the failure to maintain supportive practices for children with SEND. The teacher's frustration points to the lack of a consistent, child-centered approach within the school pre-2018.

These findings are critical to the thesis, emphasising the need for well-implemented policies that effectively support SEND children. In **School 1**, minimal proactive support for Ben suggests a gap between policy and practice. The Inclusion Manager's comment reflects a tendency to view the child as the problem, rather than addressing systemic issues in educational support.

Using IE as a framework provides insight into how institutional texts like behaviour and SEND policies are enacted in daily practices. In **School 2**, exclusion is seen as a necessary response to unmanageable behaviour, reflecting a failure to provide adequate support before escalation. The reliance on exclusion and delayed diagnoses highlights the need for timely interventions addressing root behavioural causes, not just symptoms (Smith, 2005).

In **School 4**, the inconsistent application of policies pre-2018, such as removing a severely autistic child's safe space, underscores the importance of maintaining consistent supportive practices. Despite existing policies, inconsistent application can lead to significant inequities**.**

9.32 School Policy Enactment and Interpretation: COVID

9.32.1 Observations School 2 Covid: 17/01/2022

The school is managing 20% staff absence due to covid and other infections. HT is 'on the ball' and is very much hands on, happy to teach and take classes if necessary.

Although COVID-19 was not explicitly mentioned in most school policies, its impact was evident in my observations, with heightened anxiety and stress among both children and adults. These emotional and behavioural responses to the pandemic merit further investigation.

These observations are crucial to the thesis as they show how the pandemic has subtly influenced the enactment and interpretation of school policies, even without direct references. The headteacher's hands-on approach in managing COVID-related staff shortages highlights the need for adaptive leadership during crises. However, the increased stress among staff and children reflects how COVID-19 has shaped school environments.

IE offers a framework for understanding how institutional practices are influenced by external factors like the pandemic, even when not formally integrated into policies. The absence of direct COVID-19 references in behaviour and operational policies points to a gap in institutional

responsiveness (Smith, 2005). This highlights the need for flexibility and real-time adaptability in institutional practices.

Increased anxiety and stress observed among staff and children align with broader research on the pandemic's psychological impact (Graham et al., 2021; Lee, 2020), underscoring the need for emotional support in schools during crises.

Overall, these observations support the thesis's focus on how institutional practices must adapt to support the well-being of school communities during crises like COVID-19**.**

9.33 Findings

The analysis of school policy enactment reveals how institutional practices shape children's educational experiences, particularly those at risk of exclusion. Key areas of influence include:

- **Inconsistencies in Policy Implementation**: Across schools, behaviour policies were applied inconsistently. In **Schools 1 and 2**, variability led to inequitable outcomes, with some staff adhering to policies and others exercising personal discretion, creating confusion for children. These inconsistencies reflect gaps between policy intent and practice, as individual interpretations by staff result in unequal experiences for children, particularly those vulnerable to exclusion (Ball, 2021; Gazeley et al., 2020).

- **Leadership's Role**: Effective leadership was pivotal in ensuring consistent policy application and fostering inclusive environments. **Schools 3 and 4** post-2018, with strong leadership, had lower exclusion rates and greater equity in policy enactment. In contrast, schools with weaker or changing leadership, exacerbated by the pandemic, struggled with consistency, often resulting in exclusionary practices. Strong leadership is essential for setting the tone and reinforcing consistent behaviour management across the school (Gregory et al., 2011; Roffey, 2017)

- **Language and Communication**: The language used in behaviour policies significantly influenced school culture. Schools with punitive language were more prone to exclusionary practices, while those with supportive language created environments better suited to meeting children's needs. IE shows how the discourse in policy documents subtly guides staff behaviour and attitudes towards children (Gazeley et al., 2020; Graham, 2021). Careful language choices are critical in shaping inclusive school environments.

- **Training and Professional Development**: Ongoing staff training in behaviour management and cultural responsiveness is crucial for creating inclusive environments and reducing exclusion rates. In **Schools 1 and 2**, inconsistent training led to unpredictable outcomes, as staff often relied on individual interpretations of the behaviour policy. Schools investing in staff development saw more consistent policy implementation and improved relationships between staff and children (McCluskey et al., 2019; Smith, 2005).

- **Socio-Cultural Context**: Schools that failed to consider cultural differences in their behaviour policies contributed to the alienation of children from diverse backgrounds, increasing exclusion risks. Policies perceived as rigid and disconnected from children's lived experiences reinforced exclusionary practices. In contrast, culturally responsive policies fostered better engagement and lower exclusion rates, aligning with IE's view that institutional practices must reflect diverse realities to avoid reinforcing inequalities (Ball, 2021; Gazeley et al., 2020).

- **COVID-19 and Policy Adaptation**: The pandemic intensified stress and anxiety, complicating behaviour management. Schools that adapted their policies by incorporating crisis management strategies and offering emotional support maintained more stable environments, whereas those that did not saw increased disruptive behaviour and exclusion rates. This highlights the need for flexible, responsive policies that can adapt to external challenges (Graham et al., 2021).

The findings show that consistent, well-communicated policies, strong leadership, and ongoing professional development are key to creating inclusive school environments. Inconsistent policy implementation and lack of cultural responsiveness exacerbate exclusionary practices.

9.34 Implications for Practice

The findings offer several implications for improving educational practice:

- **Consistent Policy Application**: Behaviour policies must be applied consistently by all staff to avoid inequitable outcomes, particularly for vulnerable children. IE shows that inconsistencies in policy application reflect broader institutional structures that shape staff behaviour. Strong leadership is essential to ensure that policies are clearly communicated and consistently enacted, promoting inclusive behaviour management practices.

- **Ongoing Professional Development**: Schools must prioritise continuous training in behaviour management and cultural responsiveness. Gaps in training lead to inconsistent policy application and unprepared staff, particularly in managing challenging behaviour. Professional development should focus on addressing the diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts of children, preventing the alienation of disadvantaged groups and fostering inclusion.

- **Crisis Management Strategies**: The pandemic highlighted children's vulnerability to exclusion during times of heightened stress. Schools must incorporate flexible crisis management strategies into their behaviour policies to meet the emotional and social needs of children during such events. Supportive environments are crucial for helping children cope with crises while preventing exclusion.

- **Holistic Approach to Behaviour Management**: Educators, policymakers, and researchers must critically assess how behaviour policies are enacted in daily practice. A more reflective, holistic approach ensures that behaviour policies support inclusive and equitable environments for all children, particularly those at risk of exclusion.

9.35 Summary

The findings emphasise the need for consistent and culturally responsive behaviour policies, supported by strong leadership and ongoing staff training. Institutional flexibility, particularly during crises, is essential for maintaining inclusive and stable school environments.

In summary, schools must focus on ensuring behaviour policies are clear, consistent, and adaptable to the diverse needs of children. Regular monitoring, strong leadership, and continuous professional development are critical to fostering inclusive environments where all children feel valued and supported.

9.36 Discussion

The enactment of school policies is shaped by broader institutional contexts and local school dynamics. IE reveals how institutional texts, like behaviour policies, are enacted in daily school life and contribute to exclusionary practices. For example, in **School 1,** the use of punitive language mirrored staff-child interactions, reinforcing exclusionary outcomes. This aligns with research by Gazeley et al. (2020) and Graham (2021) on how language can marginalise vulnerable children.

Leadership plays a critical role in policy enactment. In **Schools 3 and 4** post-2018, strong leadership led to consistent, inclusive behaviour management, resulting in lower exclusion rates. In contrast, policy inconsistencies in **Schools 1 and 2**, coupled with inadequate staff training, contributed to disjointed learning environments and increased exclusion risks (Ball, 2021; Gregory et al., 2011).

The socio-cultural context also significantly impacts exclusion risks. In **School 2,** cultural insensitivity during social interactions exacerbated feelings of exclusion among minority children, highlighting the need for culturally responsive practices (Gazeley et al., 2020; Ball, 2021).

9.37 Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of consistent, well-implemented behaviour policies, supported by strong leadership and ongoing staff training. Institutional Ethnography offers valuable insights into how these policies are enacted and how they shape children's everyday experiences. Policy inconsistencies, a lack of cultural responsiveness, and insufficient training contribute to exclusionary practices, particularly affecting vulnerable children.

To foster inclusive environments, schools must ensure that behaviour policies are clear, consistent, and aligned with the goals of equity and inclusion. Leadership plays a crucial role in this, as does regular policy monitoring and professional development. Schools must also address the socio-cultural context of their communities to ensure that all children feel valued and supported, particularly those from marginalised groups.

In conclusion, a holistic, inclusive approach to behaviour management, grounded in consistency, cultural responsiveness, and strong leadership, is key to creating school environments that reduce exclusion and promote children's well-being.

Chapter 10: Thesis Discussion

This chapter synthesises the key findings from the data chapters (6, 7, 8, and 9), critically engaging with the theoretical framework of Institutional Ethnography and the literature explored in earlier sections (1, 3, 4, and 5). It addresses the research questions by examining factors driving the rise in suspensions and how institutional processes and practices increase exclusion risks in primary schools. Through integrating the findings, this chapter explores their significance for educational theory, policy, and practice. Additionally, it reflects on how the results advance current understanding of exclusionary practices, particularly regarding leadership and behaviour management strategies. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations and areas for future research.

10.1 Variability in Exclusion Rates Across Primary Schools

One of the most significant findings of this study is the marked variation in exclusion rates across primary schools, both within the Mercia LA and nationally. This variability aligns with findings from other studies, such as Tawell and McCluskey (2022), who documented considerable differences in how schools apply exclusions. In some schools, despite similar catchment area demographics, the exclusion rates were ten times higher than the national average, while others had minimal exclusions. This disparity points to the influence of contextual factors such as leadership, school ethos, and the interpretation of behaviour policies.

The variation suggests that exclusion is not simply a response to children's behaviour but is influenced by how schools manage and interpret behaviour policies. Schools with a cohesive leadership approach and consistent staff engagement were found to exclude fewer children,

supporting Gazeley et al. (2012), who highlight the importance of leadership in shaping inclusive school environments. Conversely, schools with less cohesive leadership showed higher exclusion rates, often resorting to exclusion as a first response rather than a last resort. This indicates that exclusionary practices are not uniformly applied and are shaped by the institutional culture within each school.

10.2 The Influence of Government Guidance on Exclusion Practices

The study's findings also highlight the impact of government exclusion guidance on how primary schools manage behaviour. The analysis of the 2017–2022 statutory guidance showed that it is predominantly designed for secondary schools, with little attention given to the developmental needs of younger children. This reflects the concerns raised by McCluskey et al. (2022), who argue that primary schools are often forced to adopt behaviour policies that are inappropriate for the age group they serve.

The lack of age-appropriate sanctions in government guidance is a significant issue identified in this research. Thus Primary school children are subjected to the same exclusionary practices as their older counterparts, even though their social, emotional, and cognitive development differs significantly. This one-size-fits-all approach to exclusionary policy fails to account for the different needs of primary-aged children, which may lead to higher exclusion rates in schools that do not have alternative behaviour management strategies in place.

The research also found that, despite government rhetoric advocating exclusion as a last resort, many schools still use exclusion as a primary behaviour management tool. This misalignment

between policy intentions and actual practice suggests that more work is needed to ensure that exclusion guidance is both relevant and implementable in primary school settings. The current framework does not adequately address the unique challenges of managing young children's behaviour, which can lead to unnecessary exclusions.

10.3 Role of Institutional Texts and Age Appropriateness

A critical finding from this study is the role of institutional texts, such as statutory guidance and Government directives, in shaping the everyday experiences of young children. Many of these policies were not tailored to the developmental needs of primary-aged children, resulting in practices that were often inappropriate for their age. For instance, **VS22** failed to provide clear guidance on age-appropriate disciplinary measures, leading to a disconnect between policy and practice. The blanket application of exclusionary practices, typically designed for older children, was found to disproportionately affect younger children, particularly those with SEND, as they struggled to meet rigid behaviour expectations. These findings emphasise the importance of developing behaviour policies that align with the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of younger children to prevent unnecessary exclusion.

10.4 Leadership and Policy Enactment

The role of leadership in shaping the school environment emerged as a critical factor in the consistent and inclusive application of behaviour policies. In **Schools 3 and 4** post-2018, strong and supportive leadership led to the consistent application of clear, inclusive behaviour policies, fostering a positive school culture that reduced exclusion rates. In contrast, schools with less effective leadership, or those experiencing leadership transitions, struggled with inconsistent

policy enactment, often resulting in exclusionary practices. The headteacher's active role in ensuring that policies are both understood and effectively implemented was shown to be crucial in creating a supportive environment for both staff and children.

10.5 Consistency and Application of Behaviour Policies

Another key finding relates to the consistency in the application of behaviour policies across schools. In schools with lower exclusion rates, policies were applied consistently across all staff members, from senior leaders to teaching assistants. In contrast, schools with higher exclusion rates often demonstrated inconsistencies in how aware staff are of the polices and hence, how the policies were implemented. This inconsistency can lead to confusion among children and staff, making it more likely that exclusion will be used as a quick solution to behaviour problems.

Consistency in the application of policies is critical for maintaining fairness and reducing exclusions, as supported by research from Wright (2019). When policies are consistently applied, children are more likely to understand the consequences of their actions, and staff are better equipped to manage behaviour without resorting to exclusion. However, the study found that schools with less cohesive staff teams, or where training on behaviour policies was inadequate, policies were implemented inconsistently, contributing to higher exclusion rates.

10.6 The Role of Leadership and School Culture

This study highlights the pivotal role of leadership in reducing exclusion rates. Schools where the leadership was strong, proactive, and engaged in creating an inclusive school culture, were more successful in minimising exclusions. This finding aligns with the conclusions of the Timpson

Review (2019), which identified school leadership as a key determinant in shaping behaviour management strategies. Leaders who foster a school ethos of inclusivity, fairness, and support are better able to prevent the need for exclusion by addressing behaviour issues early and collaboratively.

The research also found that schools with high exclusion rates often had leadership teams that were more reactive than proactive. In these cases, exclusions were used as a disciplinary tool without sufficient consideration of alternative strategies, such as restorative practices or early intervention. This reactive approach to behaviour management contrasts with the leadership styles seen in schools with lower exclusion rates, where behaviour policies were applied consistently, and staff were trained to address issues before they escalated to exclusion. This supports Gazeley et al. (2015), who argue that leadership training should focus on fostering inclusive practices and supporting at-risk children through proactive interventions.

10.7 Training and Professional Development

The findings highlight the importance of ongoing staff training in ensuring the effective and fair enactment of behaviour policies. Schools with comprehensive training programmes in behaviour management, particularly in de-escalation and cultural responsiveness, saw marked improvements in both the interactions of staff and children. Conversely, in schools where such training was lacking, staff were ill-equipped to handle challenging behaviour, often resorting to the use of exclusion as a disciplinary tool. This gap in professional development not only contributed to inconsistent policy application but also heightened the risk of exclusion for vulnerable children, particularly those from minority backgrounds or with SEND.

10.8 Socio-Cultural Sensitivity in Policy Application

The socio-cultural context of schools also played a significant role in shaping how behaviour policies were enacted. Schools with culturally diverse populations, such as **School 2**, demonstrated a lack of cultural sensitivity in managing behaviour, particularly during key moments such as lunchtime interactions. This lack of engagement with the cultural backgrounds of children exacerbated feelings of exclusion and alienation, particularly among minority ethnic children. In contrast, schools that actively integrated culturally responsive practices into their behaviour management saw more positive engagement and reduced exclusion rates. This finding aligns with broader research, which emphasises the need for behaviour policies to be adaptable to the socio-cultural contexts of the children they serve.

10.9 Exclusion and Crisis Management

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a significant external factor that shaped the enactment of behaviour policies in schools. Although the pandemic was not explicitly mentioned in many school policies, its impact was evident in heightened anxiety and stress levels among both staff and children. Schools that adapted their policies to address these challenges, particularly through crisis management and emotional support strategies, were better able to maintain a stable and supportive environment. This finding highlights the importance of integrating crisis management into school policies to support staff and children during times of disruption.

10.10 Findings

The findings of this thesis highlight the importance of clear, consistent, and culturally responsive behaviour policies in fostering inclusive educational environments that minimise the risk of exclusion. Institutional texts play a crucial role in shaping behaviour management practices, but they must be tailored to the developmental needs of primary-aged children. Leadership, staff training, and socio-cultural sensitivity are key factors in ensuring the successful enactment of these policies. As the study demonstrates, exclusion is not merely a result of individual behaviours but is deeply embedded in the institutional practices and policies that govern schools. Addressing these systemic issues is essential to reducing exclusionary practices and promoting equity within primary education.

10.11 Data Discussion

This chapter explores the key findings from the research, tying them back to the broader institutional and theoretical frameworks while highlighting the implications for practice, policy, and leadership within primary schools. Through the use of IE, the thesis has provided a unique lens to understand how institutional texts shape and mediate the daily practices of schools, with significant implications for exclusionary practices, particularly for vulnerable children.

10.12 Institutional Texts and Behaviour Policies

One of the central findings of the thesis is the critical role that institutional texts, including behaviour policies, play in shaping school culture and practices. The study shows how these texts, often crafted in compliance with national guidelines, fail to account for the nuanced, age-appropriate needs of children, especially in primary settings. Policies that emphasise punitive

measures and rigid compliance frameworks, as seen in schools with higher exclusion rates, do not adequately cater to younger children's developmental stages. These policies are frequently out of sync with the emotional and cognitive needs of young children, reinforcing exclusionary practices rather than promoting inclusion. This finding resonates with earlier research on the need for behaviour policies that are flexible and sensitive to the social and emotional needs of children.

10.13 Leadership and Policy Enactment

The role of leadership in the effective enactment of behaviour policies is another crucial finding. In schools where leadership was proactive, supportive, and consistent, policies were enacted in ways that reduced exclusionary practices and promoted a more inclusive environment. The headteacher's influence in **School 4** post-2018, where a change of headteacher was followed by a shift from punitive to child-centred approaches significantly lowered exclusion rates, exemplifies the importance of leadership in embedding inclusive practices. The findings underscore the necessity for school leaders to interpret institutional texts in ways that align with the school's cultural and socio-economic context, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

In contrast, schools with inconsistent leadership or where policy implementation was left to individual interpretation, experienced higher exclusion rates and more significant gaps between policy intention and practice. This inconsistency often led to unequal treatment of children, particularly those with SEND, as the policies were not adapted to meet their specific needs. The findings call for a re-evaluation of leadership training and support, ensuring that school leaders

are equipped to implement behaviour policies that align with inclusive practices and promote equity across diverse school settings.

10.14 The Socio-Cultural Context and Vulnerable Children

The analysis highlights that exclusionary practices disproportionately affect vulnerable children, including those with SEND and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The absence of explicit references to these groups in key statutory texts, such as **VS22**, exacerbates this issue, as schools lack clear guidance on how to adapt policies to support these children. The findings also show that schools with more culturally responsive and inclusive practices reported better engagement with children from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds, leading to fewer exclusions.

IE provided a framework to explore how institutional texts often reinforce existing social inequalities, particularly when they fail to account for the socio-cultural contexts of schools. This is particularly concerning in schools serving diverse communities, where a lack of cultural sensitivity in behaviour management strategies can alienate children and increase their risk of exclusion. By failing to engage with the specific needs of these children, behaviour policies can inadvertently reinforce the marginalisation of vulnerable groups.

10.15 The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the enactment of school policies, particularly in behaviour management. The study found that the pandemic exacerbated stress and anxiety among both staff and children, leading to an increase in behavioural challenges in

some schools. However, the response to these challenges varied significantly between schools. In schools where leadership was adaptable and policies were adjusted to account for the unique stresses of the pandemic, there was greater stability and fewer exclusions. Conversely, in schools where leadership failed to adapt, the pandemic amplified existing issues, resulting in more punitive responses to behavioural issues.

This finding emphasises the importance of flexibility in school leadership and policy enactment, particularly in times of crisis. The rigid application of behaviour policies, without considering the broader social and emotional impacts of external events like the pandemic, can lead to negative outcomes for children, particularly those already vulnerable to exclusion.

10.16 Training and Professional Development

A lack of comprehensive training for staff in behaviour management was identified as a significant contributor to exclusionary practices. Schools with low exclusion rates were those that prioritised on-going professional development, particularly in areas such as trauma-informed care and de-escalation techniques. In contrast, schools with higher exclusion rates often lacked this training, leaving staff ill-equipped to handle challenging behaviours constructively. The research suggests that training should not only be comprehensive but also tailored to address the specific needs of different school communities, ensuring that all staff, including teaching assistants and support staff, are aligned in their approach to behaviour management.

10.17 Summary

The findings of this thesis provide a critical lens through which to view the enactment and interpretation of behaviour policies in primary schools. Institutional texts, when rigidly applied without considering the socio-cultural context and developmental needs of children, contribute to exclusionary practices. Effective leadership, ongoing professional development, and the creation of culturally responsive environments are key to reducing exclusion and fostering inclusivity.

The thesis calls for a re-evaluation of exclusion policies at the national level, with a focus on ensuring that they are flexible, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse needs of all children. There is a pressing need for schools to adopt trauma-informed, child-centred approaches that prioritise early intervention and support instead of relying on exclusionary discipline measures.

10.18 Comparing Findings with Existing Literature

The findings of this study are consistent with the broader literature on school exclusions but also provide new insights, particularly regarding the role of leadership and the age-appropriateness of behaviour policies.

1. **Leadership and Exclusion**: The role of leadership in shaping school culture and reducing exclusions has been well documented in the literature. The Timpson Review (2019) and Gazeley et al. (2015) both emphasise that schools with strong leadership are less likely to rely on exclusion as a disciplinary tool. This study reinforces that conclusion but adds

new evidence regarding the importance of leadership in creating age-appropriate and context-sensitive behaviour policies.

2. **Government Policy**: The study's findings echo concerns raised by McCluskey et al. (2022) that government guidance on exclusion is biased towards secondary schools and does not provide sufficient support for primary schools. The call for age-specific behaviour policies aligns with growing calls in the literature for a more differentiated approach to exclusion, recognising the developmental differences between primary and secondary school children.

3. **Consistency in Policy Application**: The importance of consistency in applying behaviour policies is a theme that resonates with other studies, such as Wright (2019), who found that inconsistent policy application leads to higher exclusion rates. This study contributes further by showing that schools with more cohesive staff teams and clearer communication about behaviour policies tend to exclude fewer children.

10.19 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of exclusion in primary schools by applying Institutional Ethnography to explore how school policies are shaped by broader institutional relations. The research highlights how exclusionary practices are not only influenced by individual school leaders but also by ruling relations, the texts, policies, and procedures that govern schools. By using IE, this study has shown how the institutional

discourse on behaviour management, particularly government guidance, contributes to exclusionary practices in primary schools.

The study also challenges the prevailing discourse around exclusion, which often frames it as a necessary response to poor behaviour. Instead, this research suggests that exclusion is a product of broader institutional factors, such as inconsistent policy application and inadequate support for vulnerable children. This aligns with Smith's (2006) argument that ruling relations shape everyday practices in ways that can disadvantage certain groups, in this case, young children at risk of exclusion.

10.20 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into exclusionary practices in primary schools, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted within a specific geographical area (Mercia LA) and a neighbouring LA, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other regions. Second, the reliance on self-reported data from staff questionnaires may introduce bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable responses. Finally, while this study highlighted both formal and hidden exclusions, future research could further investigate the broader impact of these informal exclusionary practices, such as off-rolling, the use of Alternative Provision and informal suspensions, on vulnerable child populations in Primary schools, particularly in terms of their long-term educational trajectories.

The analysis from previous chapters highlighted several key issues surrounding the implementation of behaviour policies in primary schools. Central to the discussion was the

inconsistent policy implementation across schools, which contributed to inequitable outcomes for children. For example, in **Schools 1 and 2**, policies were applied differently by staff, leading to varied and often exclusionary outcomes, particularly for vulnerable children. This inconsistency can be explained by a lack of leadership and insufficient professional development, themes that emerged strongly across the research.

In contrast, **Schools 3 and 4** post-2918, had more cohesive environments due to stronger leadership, which fostered a shared understanding of behaviour management policies. These schools demonstrated how inclusive practices, and cultural responsiveness can significantly reduce exclusion rates. However, the research also highlighted the age-inappropriateness of certain behaviour policies, particularly those shaped by institutional texts such as **VS22**, which often imposed punitive measures designed for older children on younger, primary-aged children.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the disparities between schools, as institutions with flexible policies and supportive leadership were able to adapt to the increased emotional and behavioural challenges, while those with rigid structures and untrained staff saw a rise in exclusions.

10.21 Theoretical Engagement

The findings align with Institutional Ethnography by revealing how behaviour policies, as institutional texts, organise the social relations within schools and influence day-to-day practices. This study has shown that behaviour policies are not neutral; they are embedded

within broader power structures that often reinforce exclusionary outcomes. In line with Smith's (2005) work on IE, this research highlights the ruling relations that govern teachers' responses to behaviour, which are shaped by institutional norms rather than the individual needs of children.

This discussion also situates the findings within the socio-political context outlined in Chapter 3. The increasing reliance on punitive measures in education, as noted in government documents such as **VS22**, reflects broader political trends that prioritise discipline and control over support and inclusion. This creates a disconnect between policy intentions and the realities of classroom practices, which disproportionately impact vulnerable groups such as children with SEND and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

10.22 Critical Examination

The inconsistent application of behaviour policies, especially the failure to adapt them to the developmental needs of primary-aged children, supports the literature discussed in Chapter 4 regarding the one-size-fits-all approach to discipline. Studies by Gazeley et al. (2020) and Ball (2021) have similarly highlighted the consequences of rigid policies that do not account for children's diverse needs, leading to increased exclusion rates.

Furthermore, the research fills a significant gap in the literature by focusing on the often-overlooked issue of hidden exclusions. As highlighted in Chapters 6 and 9, many schools engaged in informal exclusionary practices, such as removing children from the classroom without formally recording the exclusion. This finding expands upon earlier research that

predominantly focuses on formal suspensions and exclusions, offering new insights into how schools manage challenging behaviours without proper accountability.

Additionally, the findings reinforce the importance of cultural sensitivity in behaviour management, as discussed in Chapter 4. Schools that failed to engage with the cultural backgrounds of their children, as observed in **School 2**, saw higher rates of exclusion among minority ethnic groups. This supports the argument that culturally responsive policies are essential for fostering inclusion and preventing marginalisation.

10.23 Practical and Policy Implications

The findings have significant implications for both policy and practice. First, schools must ensure that behaviour policies are age-appropriate and take into account the developmental stages of primary-aged children. As discussed in Chapter 8, punitive measures designed for older children are often ineffective and harmful when applied to younger children, particularly those with behavioural challenges or SEND.

Second, the role of leadership is crucial in ensuring that behaviour policies are consistently applied. The study showed that schools with strong leadership were able to foster more inclusive environments, where staff shared a common understanding of behaviour management and exclusion rates were lower. This accentuates the need for leadership development programmes that equip school leaders with the skills to promote inclusive practices.

Third, professional development for staff is essential in ensuring that behaviour policies are enacted in a way that supports children rather than punishes them. The findings suggest that schools with comprehensive training programmes in cultural responsiveness and de-escalation techniques were better able to manage challenging behaviours without resorting to exclusion. Finally, the study highlights the need for behaviour policies to be flexible and adaptable, particularly in response to external crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools that incorporated crisis management strategies into their policies were better able to maintain stable, supportive environments, while those with rigid policies struggled to cope with the increased stress and anxiety faced by both children and staff.

10.24 Addressing the Research Questions

The findings directly address the research questions by revealing the factors that contribute to the increasing use of suspensions and exclusions in primary schools, as well as the institutional processes that heighten the risk of exclusion for vulnerable children. The key factors identified include:

1. **Inconsistent policy application**: The variability in how behaviour policies are enacted across different schools.
2. **Lack of age-appropriate interventions**: Behaviour policies that are not tailored to the developmental needs of younger children.
3. **Weak leadership and insufficient staff training**: Contributing to the uneven implementation of policies and the reliance on punitive measures.

The findings also demonstrate that institutional processes and practices, such as the reliance on formal and hidden exclusions, disproportionately impact vulnerable children. This supports the research objectives, which aimed to explore the institutional mechanisms that contribute to exclusion and provide recommendations for reducing exclusionary practices.

10.25 Conclusion

This discussion has synthesised the key findings with the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the study, critically examining how behaviour policies are enacted in primary schools and how they contribute to the risk of exclusion. By applying Institutional Ethnography, the study has revealed the ruling relations embedded within behaviour policies and their impact on vulnerable children. The findings have significant implications for policy, practice, and future research, emphasising the need for age-appropriate, culturally responsive, and consistently applied behaviour policies that promote inclusion and equity in primary education.

This study has demonstrated that the exclusion practices of primary schools are heavily influenced by leadership, school culture and ethos, and the application of government guidance.

The findings suggest that schools with strong, consistent leadership and a whole-school approach to behaviour management are more successful in reducing exclusion rates. The lack of age-appropriate sanctions in government guidance poses a significant challenge for primary schools, as current exclusion policies are not suited to the developmental needs of younger children.

Moving forward, there is a need for policymakers to develop age-specific exclusion guidance that reflects the unique challenges of managing behaviour in primary schools. Schools must also invest in leadership training and ensure the consistent application of behaviour policies across all staff members. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of exclusion on children's educational outcomes and to investigate the prevalence of hidden exclusions.

Chapter 11: Thesis Conclusions

This thesis offers a deep and critical examination of the exclusionary processes and practices in primary schools, focusing on how institutional policies and practices disproportionately affect the most vulnerable children. Taking the standpoint of those living in the everyday of five schools my research focussed on understanding why primary schools in England are increasingly using suspension and why there is such a wide variation in its use across them. The problematic was to explore and identify if there are processes and practices in primary schools that may lead to certain children being at greater risk of exclusion and to identify factors that may contribute to a school culture that reduces the risk of suspension Through the lens of IE, I have explored the hidden dimensions of exclusion, revealing the complex interplay between statutory guidance, local policies, and the everyday experiences of staff and children. It also highlights the implications of intentional or unintentional exclusionary practices which can mask the data in respect of high or low excluding schools according to government statistics.

11.1 Key Findings and Implications

One of the most significant findings of this research is the inconsistency in how behaviour policies are enacted across different schools. While some schools have clear, inclusive policies that prioritise support and intervention, others rely heavily on punitive measures, often without considering the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour. This inconsistency is exacerbated by the lack of comprehensive staff training and inadequate leadership in some schools, which leads to a disconnect between policy intentions and actual practice.

Jack's story exemplifies how compassionate, informed leadership can change the trajectory of a child's life. His aggressive outbursts, initially seen as cause for exclusion, were addressed through a more supportive and understanding approach, allowing him to thrive both academically and emotionally. Similarly, Sarah's experience as a young carer, whose needs were misunderstood by her school, highlights the importance of recognising the individual circumstances of children to prevent unjust exclusion.

The positionality of the researcher as both a practitioner and a scholar brings a unique passion and perspective to the findings. My own experiences working in schools, particularly my interactions with children like Jack, Josh, and Sarah, fuel this research. These children are not mere statistics; they represent the real, human cost of exclusionary practices.

This thesis also critiques the language used in statutory texts and school policies. The authoritative, compliance-driven language found in documents like the DfE Behaviour in Schools guide tends to perpetuate exclusion by framing behaviour management in punitive terms rather than focusing on child-centred, supportive strategies. Furthermore, these texts often fail to account for the developmental needs of younger children, assuming a "one-size-fits-all" approach to behaviour management that is neither age-appropriate nor inclusive. The stories of Jack, Josh, and Sarah demonstrate the profound impact of such policies on individual lives.

11.2 A Call to Action: Ban Exclusions in Primary Schools

There is solid evidence that shows complete parallelism and overlap between the factors that put a child at risk of being excluded (ACE, poor socio-economic background, ethnicity and SEN)

and that mark the child's life trajectory as destined for poor outcomes. Hence it is clear that inflicting exclusion on young children is basically guaranteeing poor life outcomes with the consequent heavy burden for both the child and society. Therefore the culmination of this research leads me to make a passionate plea: it is time to ban exclusions in primary schools. The evidence is clear, exclusion disproportionately affects the most vulnerable children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those facing socio-economic disadvantage. Exclusion is not merely a reaction to behaviour; it is a systemic failure to address the root causes of that behaviour.

The current exclusionary policies fail to account for the complexities of children's lives. They overlook the trauma, adversity, and developmental challenges that often underlie disruptive behaviour. Exclusion does not solve the problem; it merely shifts it elsewhere, often leading to long-term disengagement from education, social isolation, and further marginalisation. The consequences for children like Jack, Josh, and Sarah are devastating.

By banning exclusions in primary schools, we can begin to shift the focus from punishment to support. Schools must become places where all children are given the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their background or the challenges they face. This requires a fundamental change in how we view behaviour management, moving away from punitive approaches and towards inclusive, compassionate, and trauma-informed practices. It is only through such a shift that we can truly support the educational and emotional development of every child, ensuring that no child is left behind.

In closing, this thesis stands as a call for systemic change. We cannot continue to exclude children based on behaviour that often stems from unmet needs. Instead, we must embrace a more humane, inclusive approach that recognises the complexities of childhood, supports the well-being of all children, and fosters a truly equitable education system. Exclusion in primary schools must end. Let us champion a future where every child is seen, heard, and supported.

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The Process of Formal Exclusion

Under Statutory guidance, schools are required to have a Behaviour policy. This behaviour policy is the legislative requirement that provides the purpose of exclusion. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the headteacher must determine measures with a view to:

- Promoting, among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority,
- Encouraging good behaviour and respect for other on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils,
- Securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable,
- Securing that pupils complete any tasks reasonably assigned to them in connection with their education, and
- Otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils

Education and Inspections Act, 2016, section 89 (1)

The law requires the head teacher to inform the parents, give the period and reasons for the exclusion and inform them of their right to make representation to the governing body, and how that representation is to be made and their right to attend the governing body review meeting and that they can be represented or bring a friend. The head teacher must also inform the parent of any alternative provision is to be provided.

If a pupil is excluded for more than one day the school must provide work, which must be marked by the school. From the sixth consecutive day of the fixed-term exclusion, the school has the responsibility for funding appropriate alternative education provision for the pupil.

The schools governing body has a duty to consider the parents representation and must also review the headteachers decision where exclusion is permeant or where the exclusion will result in the pupil missing an exam or the exclusion will take the pupil to more than 15 school days in a term.

The governing body must conclude whether the decision to exclude was 'lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair taking account of the head teacher's legal duties'. The governing body can either uphold an exclusion or direct reinstatement of the child immediately or on a particular date.

An Independent Review Panel is used when a parent has a dispute about the decision by the governing body not to reinstate a permanently excluded child. All parents have a right to request that a SEN expert attend the panel hearing even if the child does not have any perceived SEN need. This panel can make the decision to uphold the exclusion or recommend the governing body reconsiders the decision or quash the decision and direct the governing body to consider the exclusion again if the decision was flawed. The decision of the Review Panel is binding on all parties and the panel has the power to direct that the governing body place a note on the pupil's educational record. The review panel cannot however reconsider the matter again. This does not however necessarily end the matter, as the governing body can choose to either not reconsider re-instatement, or simply fail to reconsider reinstatement within a ten-day timeframe; or decide not to re-instate the pupil at which point the review panel can direct that the school's budget is reduced by £4000. Ultimately, parents or carers may seek a judicial review and/or claim disability discrimination if appropriate

Initial search terms

Research question	The lived experience of exclusion for young children, is there an alternative?			
	Population	Issue	Context	Outcome
PICO term	Pre-secondary children	Exclusion	School	Change in the law
Alternative terms (synonyms)	Primary, Early Years, YR, KS1, KS2, 3 to 11-year olds, Pupils LAC, SEND, Ethnicity, Gypsy, Roma, Black Caribbean, Family Parents/Carers	Permanent exclusion, Fx, Formal exclusion, Informal exclusion, Managed move, Educated at home, Home education, Inclusion, Alternative provision, PRU Anxiety Social exclusion, Social disadvantage, Low income, Educational inequality, Behaviour problem, Behaviour difficulties Disadvantage, Education policy,	Maintained schools, maintained academies, Free schools, Primary school, Early Years settings, Nursery School culture Teacher Headteacher Parent	Illegal Human rights

Other key words extracted

Children, Child, Education, Learning, Pedagogy , Cognitive, Non-cognitive, Low achievement, Student outcomes, Pupil Outcomes, Early Years education, Ethics, Childcare, Participation, Engagement, Interventions, Experiences, Disaffection, Educational psychology, Pupil voice, School discipline, Behaviour Policies, Zero tolerance, Curriculum, Social disadvantage, Child development, Childhood, Risk factors, Academic attainment, Social and Emotional development, School transition, Language and Communication, Relationships, Connection, Meaning, Control, Enabling spaces, EHCP, Statement, Off the record, Off roll, Disengagement, Non-attendance, Mental Health, Gender, Epidemiology, Psychiatric disorder, Psychopathology, Truancy, Demographics, Suspension, Youth crime, Children's Rights, Inequality, Academisation, School autonomy, Pastoral Care, Strategic response, Primary School Children, Development, Attainment, Disruption, Persistent disruption, Autism, Isolation, internal exclusion

Examples of initial searches undertaken in February 2019 are given below:

Accessed Discover

- ⇨ School exclusion and Child development ⇨ 478,993 results found
- ⇨ Peer reviewed ⇨ 416,563 results found
- ⇨ Academic journals ⇨ 394,193 results found
- ⇨ English only ⇨ 390, 426 results found
- ⇨ Great Britain ⇨ 8,753 results found

Accessed Discover

⇨ School exclusion and Child development and Children's Rights ⇨ 309,860 results found

- ⇨ Replaced 'and' with Boolean AND ⇨ 1,880 results found
- ⇨ Peer reviewed ⇨ 1,569 results found
- ⇨ Academic journals ⇨ 1,519 results found
- ⇨ English only ⇨ 1,510 results found
- ⇨ Great Britain ⇨ 158 results found

Data extraction

Article/Book	Was the article written between 1996 and current date?	Was the article peer reviewed?	Did the article refer specifically to children in Primary school or Early Years settings?	Was the article relevant to children living in the UK and specifically in England?	Was a judgement made about the relative strengths/ weakness of the paper?	Concepts or theories or themes	Research method/ design	Gaps	Primary focus Key themes findings	Include
PEx1	2018	Y	Not in sufficient detail	N (Wales)	Y	Inclusion can be misleading	Interviews with HTs	Understanding different forms of exclusion	Hidden forms of exclusion	Use for overview
PEx2	2018	Y	Y Primary settings	Y	Y	Inclusion/ Intervention	Use of longitudinal data Doc search Interviews	Is this a managed move without safeguards? Punitive?	Partnerships Inclusion Reducing Fx term exc	Y
PEx3	2017	Y	Y 5-16 Yrs	Y	Y	Bidirectional relationship	Secondary analysis of survey Questionnaires	Lack of research in this area	Relationship btwn psychiatric disorder & exclusion	Y
PEx4	2017	Y	Y 8-16	Y	Y	Exclusion as a disciplinary tool	Secondary analysis of survey (ALSPAC)	Analysis of existing large cohort studies Changes in Ed policy Risk factors in school enviro	Predictors of exc Multi-disciplinary support	Y
PEx5	2016	Y	Y 6-16	Y	Y	Marginalisa-tion of parents	Thematic analysis		Appeals system Parent experience	Y
PEx6	2016	Y	N	N (Wales) but pertinent and transferable	Y	Inequality Recognition of Difference	Statistical and policy analysis Interviews	Use of data to factors known to intersect with exclusion	Multiple disadvantage Disproportionality of exc	N Use for overview
PEx7	2016	Y	Y 7 and under	Y	Y	Statutory presumption against permanent exclusion in Primary aged children	Calls from parents re child being excluded Data analysis		Unlawful exclusion Legal and Policy frame-work	Y
PEx8	2016	Y	Y 5-12	Y	Y	Complex journey of exclusion	Part of SKIP Data collection and analysis	Teacher and child views of exclusion	Parents perspectives on exclusion in Primary School	Y

						Continuum of coping Wider impacts	Interviews			
PEx9	2016	Y	Y 8+	Y	Y	Integrated care pathways	Use of ALSPAC	Investment in secondary prevention in the early years	Mental health/development issues Risk factors for excluded children	Y
PEx10	2015	Y	Y 4-8	y	y	Development of feedback form	Control study Assessments & data analysis	Resource and provision Implementa-tion of standardised assessments	Psychopath-ology and exclusion	Y
PEx11	2015	Y	Y Primary	Y	Y	Disproportionality	Small scale qualitative study Ethnographic Shadowing	Rigour in exclusion process	Changes to education system and exclusion appeals process	Y
PEx12	2014	Y	Y Primary	Y	Y	Rurality Class Belonging Exclusion	Ethnographic research		Role of schools in their community	N Refers to social exclusion
PEx13	2014	Y	Y 7-10	N(Wales) transferable	Y	Children's rights	Analysis of secondary study	Quality and quantity of alternative provision	Children's rights Use of isolation as punishment	N
PEx14	2013	Y	Y 4+	Y	Y	Relationship between ADHD/Mental health and being excluded	Systematic review	Limited primary research in this area + methodological weaknesses	Psychiatric disorder or impairing psychology of excluded children	Y
PEx15	2013	Y	Y 9-14	Y	Y	Neo-Liberalism Parents as customers Perspectives	interviews with parents whose children have been Perm' excl from AP Interviews from service providers	Funding	Complexity of inter-relationships btwn service providers and parents of excluded children	Y

PEx16	2013	Y	Y Primary and Junior	Y	Y	Disciplinary exclusion Responsibility Clarity Consistency Behaviour Management Inclusion	Inductive – semantic thematic analysis Multivariate analysis Critical realist Mixed methods	Impact change in Gov' policy has on management of challenging behaviour Decline in LA support	Influence of school ethos on exclusions	Y
PEx17	2013	Y	Y Primary	Y	Y	Association of beliefs/behaviour and exclusion	Collection & analysis of school and demographic data Questionnaires	Better understanding of efficacy beliefs	Relationship btwen teachers beliefs and classroom behaviour	Y
PEx18	2012	Y	Y 4-5	Y	Y	Discursive framing of behaviour	Analytic frame-work		Behaviour & reputation in the classroom	N Useful for info
PEx19	2011	Y	Y 9yrs7mth	Y	Y	Mixed provision Poor trajectories Respect	Longitudinal study	Inadequate conceptual resources	Pupils exc from Special schools & PRUs	N Too narrow
PEx20	2010	Y	N	Y	Y	Social class Low educational attainment	Small scale qualitative study	Gaps at practice level in consistent provision	School exclusion and social disadvantage	N Excellent paper for use later
PEX21	2009	Y	Y	Y	Y	LA as a strategic force Implicit exclusionary culture	Development project (2yrs) Data collection/ analysis Needs assess' Auditing Workshops	Use of funding	Strategic alternatives to exclusion	Y
PEx22	2008	Y	Y	Y	Y	Disproportionality Institutional racism	Data analysis Fieldwork	Lack of awareness	Race relations legislation	Y

PEx23	2007	Y	Y 4-12	Y	Y	Multi-disciplinary intervention	Randomized controlled trail	Lack of longitudinal studies	Early intervention	Y
PEx24	2005	Y	Y 8-16	Y	Y	Expressive problems linked to emotional symptoms	Multiple assessments	Relation btwn verbal expression and emotion symptoms	Patterns of language impairment in excluded boys	Y
PEx25	2004	Y	Y (Yr6)	Y	Y	Pathologizing and objectifying children	Interesting discourse on why not to use ethnography but I think it is!		Inclusive school cultures	N No focus on exclusion
PEx26	2004	Y	Y	Y	Y	Inclusion Exclusion Social justice	Sociocultural theoretical framework Ethnography		Inclusion and exclusion practices in the classroom	N No focus on exclusion
PEx27	2003	Y	N	Y	Y	Exclusion as an indicator of unacceptable behaviour Violence	Overview of evidence from authors empirical research	National system of educational support	Policy tensions and social inclusion agenda	N Good for backgroun d info
PEx28	2001	Y	Y Primary	Y	Y	Joined up solutions	Case studies	Scarcity of longitudinal data	Outcomes of excluded children	Y
PEx29	1998	y	N	Y	Y	Inter-relationships	Secondary data analysis		Anti-social & criminal behaviour & school exclusion	N Useful for back-ground
PEx30	1997	Y	y	Y	Y	Preventative input	National questionnaire Case studies	National data collection systems for Primary	Primary school exclusions	Y
PEx31	1996	Y	Y	Y	Y	Ethical and methodologica l consideration when working with children	Interviews Booklet	Counselling for excluded children	Interviews with children excluded from Primary school	Y

Range of Themes and Concepts for Literature review

The articles were imported from new RefWorks and for each file a memo was created to use for notes and quotations. Nodes (or themes) were then developed as a result of reading each article. The nodes are a repository for storing text of a given theme from all articles under review. These themes can then be used to highlight and give a better understanding of exclusion and the potential gaps in research and identify themes that may have gone unnoticed (O'Neill et al 2018). The themes identified were:

> Assessment, child, behaviour, discipline, disproportionality, early intervention, fixed term exclusion, exclusion general, further research, health, hidden and unofficial exclusion, inequalities, language and communication, long and short-term effects, mental health, methodology and methods, official guidance, parents and family, patterns of variability, policy, primary school, reasons, risk and protective factors, school, school effectiveness, school ethos, school inclusion, SEN and teachers.

These themes were then grouped according to connection and similarities to help shape the review.

University of Bedfordshire Institute of Applied Social Research Dept of Applied Social Studies
Park Square
Luton LU 1 3JU

FAO Susan Wallis-Maclean

6th September 2021

Dear Susie

Re: IASR_14/20

Project Title: How to reduce Fixed Term Exclusions in English Primary School – Identifying school related factors that contribute to Fixed Term Exclusion

The Ethics Committee of the Institute of Applied Social Research has considered your application and are happy to inform you that the proposed research project has been approved with one point to action:

- The consent letters to parent, school and pupil do not mention that observations will take place or give any information about how observation will be carried out. Please add this information to the consent letters

Please note that if it becomes necessary to make any substantive change to the research design, including sampling or data collection methods, this will require further review. Please complete Form 4: "Change of research design that require ethical approval".

Some research will also be subject to ethical scrutiny by other specialist ethics panels. This includes research that involves NHS organisations in England; participants aged over 16 years that lack capacity to consent as defined under the Mental Capacity Act 2005; prisons, youth offending or probation services; and research involving four or more local authorities. Local authorities and other organisations may also have their own research governance arrangements where approval will be required before data collection commences.

In all cases, **it is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of proof of all necessary authorisations before any fieldwork commences**. Once received, please send proof of approval to **Hemlata.Naranbhai@beds.ac.uk.**

I hope the above is clear. Please get in touch if you require further clarification. We wish you very best wishes with your research.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Bostock

Dr Lisa Bostock
IASR Staff and PGR Ethics co-ordinator and Chair of IASR ethics panel

Appendix 5 to
Susan Wallis-Maclean
Student number: 1802598
An Institutional Ethnography of exclusionary processes in English Primary Schools
20 Oct 2024

Research Protocol

How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary Schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion.

Introduction/Background:

Exclusion of children from primary school is a big and increasing problem. In 2016/17, 1,255 were permanently excluded and 64,340 children were excluded on a fixed- term basis. In 2017/18, 1,210 children were excluded permanently from primary school while 66,105 were excluded temporarily. Although there was a reduction in permanent exclusions in 2018-19, fixed term exclusions are still increasing with 66,463 fixed term exclusions.

The importance for children excluded at primary school level is that a significant proportion go on to be excluded at secondary school level. Research has provided considerable evidence that excluded children have significantly poorer life chances including feed-in to later criminality. Therefore, if we could find ways to reduce the exclusion rates in primary schools, it is likely this would translate into knock-on beneficial effects with fewer exclusions from secondary school and the associated societal consequences.

The question that arises is what ways might there be to help reduce exclusions? Important clues may be found in schools that have low exclusion rates. Obviously, socio-economic factors are critical influences, but within equivalent socio-economic settings, some schools have lower exclusion rates than others.

The aim of the proposed research study

The aim of the study is to analyse the processes by which schools with low exclusion rates generate an ethos/culture which enables them to avoid excluding children and to explore if there are practices that make a child more vulnerable to fixed term exclusions. If successful practices and approaches that reduce the risk of exclusion can be identified, this will open the way to sharing such approaches across schools.

Identification/Selection of participating Schools

Within a given catchment area with similar/matched socio-economic profile, schools with low and with high exclusion rates will be identified by reference to National Statistics. The Head teachers will be approached and invited to participate.

Methodology

This research will use a mixed methods approach which includes quantitative and qualitative methods of research.

A pilot study will be undertaken to evaluate the methods and 'instruments'. After completion of the pilot study, an interim analysis will be performed to examine the quality of the data generated. If

any modifications are required to the questionnaire or the observational approaches, these will be made prior to proceeding to the definitive study. For the pilot study it is intended to use two matched pairs of schools within similar demographic areas; each pair of schools will be matched based on differing exclusion rates.

The definitive study will then be conducted in a number of pre-identified primary schools. The precise number will be determined after power calculations have been performed on the data obtained from the pilot study.

Quantitative approach

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to gain understanding of the knowledge and awareness among the staff about different aspects of the school, and how this may contribute to the overall ethos and culture. This will include exploration of awareness of behavioural codes and policies and lines of communication in relation to challenging or vulnerable children. The answers to each question are given a numerical score. The scores for each school, reflecting the presence or absence of various levels of knowledge, awareness and types of communication, will be compared with a view to identifying "best practices" that can then be shared across schools. To make meaningful comparisons, the scores will be normalised to take account of the potentially different numbers of respondents from each school. The normalisation will involve expressing the total sum of scores as a percent of the maximum potential score that would be generated by that number of respondents.

Qualitative approach

This will be conducted using an Institutional Ethnographic (IE) approach.

Institutional Ethnography looks at the complexity of relationships in hierarchical institutions, supporting inductive analysis, going from particular experiences to general analysis of social relations. The use of IE involves the researcher exploring how institutions work focusing on the organisations influence on the daily lives of those in it (Devi et al 2020) investigating what they actually do, rather than assuming what their role dictates them to do.

The main data collection methods will be:

- the observation of participants
- conversations and unstructured or semi-structured interviews
- document and text analysis
- Field notes
- Field diary

The researcher will focus on the culture of the school, how it is organised, its systems and processes and how this may contribute to the management of challenging or vulnerable children. This form of participant–observation requires the researcher to listen and observe, assessing oral and written interactions within the school. Interviews and conversations with both staff and children will help to provide rich data that will enable those living the everyday experiences within the school setting to talk about their own understanding of how their school works, in the every day. This may help in

reducing the influence of the researchers own understanding of schools and provide data on the influence of schools as an institution.

Data analysis:

Questionnaires will be analysed using nonparametric statistical methods.

Mapping, Indexing and Writing accounts will be used as part of the IE approach. Mapping enables the analysis of data by providing a 'visual coherence to findings' (Rankin, 2017). Indexing links practices in organisations to help identify what is actually going on. Writing accounts through field notes will help define how schools are socially organised.

The Field diary is to enable the researcher to reflect on observations made and to help the process of rigorous analysing the research process and how the researchers own feelings and emotions may impact on data collection and interpretation (Punch, 2012).

Confidentiality

As a researcher in schools, I guarantee confidentiality to both children and staff except in respect of anything disclosed which may be illegal or otherwise potentially harming. This confidentially will be disclosed from the outset and made clear at the beginning of any interaction with both children and adults.

Right to withdraw

Children and staff will be offered the right to withdraw at any time during the fieldwork without prejudice. All schools will be unidentifiable through the use of different names and a fictitious Local Authority. Pseudonyms will be used for all individuals involved in the research. Data will only be available to the researcher and supervisors. Written documents will be kept in a locked file and any other material will be password protected and destroyed within 12 months of completion of the Doctorate.

The researcher is aware of the potential for conflict between policy and practice and the impact this may have on individuals within schools. As a researcher I will maintain a sensitivity and respectful regard for this maintaining trust and respect to all those involved whilst being honest and fair about the research and its findings. Ethical codes and principles will be upheld at all times and if a problem does arise, advice will be sort from the researchers supervisors.

Susie Wallis-Maclean Tel: 07585906282 E-mail: Susie.Wallis-Maclean@study.beds.ac.uk

University of Bedfordshire

Information sheet for children

Hello, my name is Susie, and I am carrying out some research at your school about why some children might find it difficult to follow your school behaviour policy or school rules.

The title of my study is:

How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion

This means that I would like to understand why primary schools are using something called fixed term exclusion which is when a child who is not following school rules is sent home for a day or for up to five days in one go. I also want to know why some primary schools use fixed term exclusions and some don't.

Why am I coming to your school?

I would like to hear what you have to say. I would like to listen to you about how it feels if you are finding it difficult to learn in class and what that means for you or the other children in your class. I hope I can use the things I learn from you in my research which can then be shared with other adults working with children.

Do you need to take part?

Of course, you don't need to take part if you don't want to.

If you want to take part, you will need to sign a form which is at the end of this sheet. This lets me know that you have understood and agree to take part.

If you do not agree to take part that is completely your choice, and it is ok.

What is involved in the research project?

If you agree to take part here is some information that you should know:

- I would like to talk to you about your school rules and how they work in your school.
- I would like to talk to you about how you feel sometimes when either you or someone else doesn't follow your school rules.
- Our conversation may last just a couple of minutes but it wont last longer than half an hour and it will be up to you. If you decide at any time that you don't want to talk that is ok and you can say so and we will stop the conversation. I will give you a smiley face which you can put on the table or give back to me which will mean the conversation will stop.
- After we have talked you can talk to your teacher about it or somebody else in school you like to talk to or you can ask me any questions about it.
- Once our conversation is finished I will write about it and then show you what I have written so you can be sure that it is what you said.

If you change your mind and you don't want your conversation to be used in the research

You will be able to change your mind if you don't want to be involved in the research for fourteen days after we have had our conversation. After fourteen days your name will no longer be used so I won't be able to tell who it was I spoke to. That's because no real names of people or schools are used when I write up my research.

Who will know you have been involved in the research?

Your Parents or Carers and your head teacher will know that you have spoken to me because they agreed that it was ok for you to talk to me. In the written report all the names of teachers, children and schools will be changed so that information cannot be linked back. That means that no-one will know you spoke to me when the report is finished.

How will the information be used?

I hope that when the report is finished it will help children who might be at risk of being excluded from school and that your conversation with me has helped put across your point of view. I also hope that you will have enjoyed taking part and that you know how valuable your words and experience are.

Who makes sure I am doing my research properly?

Before I can come into schools to do my research my study has to be approved by my University's Ethics Committee. This is a group of people who make sure that what I want to research is going to be useful and that it is safe for people to take part in.

What happens next?

If you would still like to take part after you have read this information sheet then you will need to sign the consent form which is attached to this sheet. You can take time to decide and it is always good to talk to someone about it like your parents or carer or your teacher. Thank you for taking the time to read all this information, there is a lot to understand before you agree to take part.

Thank you
Susie Wallis-Maclean

Child Consent form

Title of Research	How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion
Name of Researcher	Susie Wallis-Maclean (Susie.Wallis-Maclean@study.beds.ac.uk)
Name of Supervisors	Dr Isabelle Brodie (Isabelle.Brodie@beds.ac.uk Dr Andrew Malcolm (Andrew.Malcolm@beds.ac.uk)

It is important that before you fill in this form you have read the information sheet and asked any questions you have about the study. Observations by the researcher will look at how adults and children put into effect the policies that are written and used by the school.

		YES	NO
1	I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet and I have had the opportunity to ask questions I have about the study. I confirm that I have had such questions answered.		
2	I understand that it is my choice to take part in this research and I can stop taking part at any time without reason. I know it is ok to say yes or no.		
3	I know that if I don't want to continue with a conversation I can say no at any time and that any information I have shared will not be used in the research.		
4	I understand that if I decide I don't want to be part of the study and I don't want my conversation used within 14 days I can tell my class teacher or (trusted member of staff) and that information will be deleted and not used in the study.		
5	I understand that after 14 days the information I have given will not have my name attached to it and can be included in the research.		
6	I understand that no information used in the study can be linked back to me. I know that my name and all other names will be changed when the report is written.		
7	I understand that if I share any information which may suggest that I am or somebody else is at risk of harm then the researcher will share this information with the schools safeguarding person. The researcher will tell me if this has to be done.		

I agree to take part in this research ☐

I would like to take more time to think about taking part in this research ☐

I do not want to take part in this research ☐

Name of participant _____

(Written by child)

Printed name of Researcher _____

Signature Researcher _____Date_____

Copies: 1 for participant; 1 (original) for researcher site file.

University of Bedfordshire

Parent/Carer Information sheet

How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion

The reason for this letter

My name is Susie Wallis-Maclean and I have worked in Primary Schools for 30 years as a teacher, head teacher, Ofsted inspector, coach and mentor. I am a student in my fourth year of a Doctorate (PhD) in Children and Young People's Services and I am asking if you are willing to allow your child to take part in my research. A consent form is attached where you can give or refuse permission for the opportunity of your child to take part in this research project.

Why is this research happening?

Fixed-term Exclusion from Primary schools is a problem which is increasing year on year and we have lots of evidence that some children are at greater risk of a fixed term exclusion. It is hoped that by listening to the views of children we can understand better how what happens at school is viewed by children, and how it can contribute to exclusion taking place.

What is involved in the research project?

If it is felt that a discussion between your child and the researcher would benefit the study and provide valuable data, a conversation will take place. It is important to emphasise that your child taking part in the study does not mean they are at risk of exclusion. The conversation may last anything from a couple of minutes to half an hour but no more than this. When the discussion is completed your child will be able to talk to their teacher or a familiar member of staff or the researcher to give them the opportunity of asking questions or gaining clarity of the project.

How will the information be used?

Notes will be made by the researcher and will be used as part of the data for the study. There will be no information about your child, the school or the staff when the study is written up.

Confidentiality

As an ethical duty of care towards all those taking part in this research, if your child shared information that might suggest they or another child was at risk of significant harm or poses a risk of significant harm, the researcher must disclose this to schools Safeguarding Officer.

What happens next?

If you are willing for your child to take part in this research, the researcher will provide your child with detailed information both in writing and verbally about what will be involved in the project. Your child will then be given a consent form to sign.

What you do next

If you are willing for your child to take part please sign the consent form and return it to school in the sealed envelope provided. If you are unwilling then please inform (name of person).

The findings from the research will be made available to schools involved as part of the project and to allow feedback and reflection of the outcomes. A generic report will then be made available to all and hopefully form the basis for publication in education literature.

If you have any further questions regarding this research please contact me at

susiewallis-maclean@study.beds.ac.uk

Thank you
Susie Wallis-Maclean

University of Bedfordshire

Parent/Carer Consent form

Title of Research	How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion
Name of Researcher	Susie Wallis-Maclean (Susie.Wallis-Maclean@study.beds.ac.uk)
Name of Supervisors	Dr Isabelle Brodie (Isabelle.Brodie@beds.ac.uk Dr Andrew Malcolm (Andrew.Malcolm@beds.ac.uk)

Overview of the Doctoral Research Project

To understand why primary schools are increasingly using fixed term exclusion and why there is a wide variation in its use by identifying if there are processes and practices in primary schools that may lead to certain children being at greater risk of exclusion, and identifying the disciplinary decisions made every day and how these decisions are organised in specific ways in schools.

Observations will focus on the culture of the school, how it is organised, its systems and processes. The researcher will listen and observe staff and children, assessing oral and written interactions within the school. Interviews and conversations with both staff and children will help to provide rich data that will enable those living the everyday experiences within the school setting to talk about their own understanding of how their school works in the every day.

1. I confirm I have read and understand the information provided and have had the opportunity to consider the information. ☐

2. I confirm that I have had such questions answered satisfactorily. ☐

3. I understand participation in this research project is voluntary. ☐

4. I understand that all data collected will be confidential, anonymised and subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended from time to time). No names or identifiable information will be written in the report. ☐

5. I understand that my consent does not mean that my child has to participate in this research project. Your child will also be asked to provide consent to participate in this study. ☐

6. I understand that all data will be stored in a secure protected location and will be destroyed 12 months after the work is completed. ☐

I, _____(name) consent to my child's participation in the research project detailed above, conducted by Susie Wallis-Maclean, University of Bedfordshire under the supervision of Dr Isabelle Brodie and Dr Andy Malcolm.

Signed:_____Date:_____

Name of Researcher_____Signed_____Date_____

Copies: 1 for parent/carer; 1 (original) for researcher site file.

University of Bedfordshire

Participant Information sheet (Staff)

How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion

My name is Susie Wallis-Maclean and I have worked in Primary Schools for 30 years as a teacher, head teacher, Ofsted inspector, coach and mentor. I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Children and Young Peoples' Services at the University of Bedfordshire, Institute of Applied Research. This self-funded research will form the central part of a doctoral (PhD) thesis, but also aims to generate new knowledge that will contribute to learning for schools and local authorities.

Fixed-term Exclusion from Primary schools is a problem which is increasing year on year. This project aims to understand some of the factors that lead to the increase in children being excluded from primary school and what could be done to reduce these numbers. In 2017-18, 66,105 primary school children were excluded on a fixed term basis while in 2018/19, the figure was 66,463.

The importance for children excluded at primary school level is that a significant proportion go on to be excluded at secondary school. Research has provided considerable evidence that excluded children have significantly poorer life chances including feed-in to later criminality. Therefore, if we could find ways to reduce the exclusion rates in primary schools, it is likely this would translate into knock-on beneficial effects with fewer exclusions from secondary school and the associated societal consequences.

We are asking you to help us find out how schools may differ in the way they support children at risk of exclusion. Hopefully the findings of the research will provide guidance which may be helpful to schools in supporting those children and families at risk of exclusion.

We are inviting you to help by completing a questionnaire aimed at indicating some of the factors that contribute to how things work in your school. We are hoping to get information from a range of staff and governors. If you agree to help us with this research by completing a questionnaire, you will not be asked to identify yourself by name but by the type of work you do in school. The research will be anonymised and no personalised details will be stored or recorded.

The findings from the research will be made available to schools involved as part of the project and to allow feedback and reflection of the outcomes. A generic report will then be made available to all and hopefully form the basis for publication in education literature.

If you have any questions please discuss them with the researcher, Susie Wallis-Maclean.

Thank you
Susie Wallis-Maclean (susanwallismaclean@gmail.com)

University of Bedfordshire

Staff Consent form

Title of Research	How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion
Name of Researcher	Susie Wallis-Maclean (Susie.Wallis-Maclean@study.beds.ac.uk)
Name of Supervisors	Dr Isabelle Brodie (Isabelle.Brodie@beds.ac.uk) Dr Andrew Malcolm (Andrew.Malcolm@beds.ac.uk)

Overview of the Doctoral Research Project

To understand why primary schools are increasingly using fixed term exclusion and why there is a wide variation in its use by identifying if there are processes and practices in primary schools that may lead to certain children being at greater risk of exclusion, and identifying the disciplinary decisions made every day and how these decisions are organised in a specific ways in schools.

We are inviting you to help by completing a questionnaire aimed at indicating some of the factors that contribute to how things work in your school. We are hoping to get information from a range of staff and governors. You will not be asked to identify yourself by name but by the type of work you do in school. The research will be anonymised and no personalised details will be stored or recorded.

Observations will focus on the culture of the school, how it is organised, its systems and processes. The researcher will listen and observe staff and children, assessing oral and written interactions within the school. Interviews and conversations with both staff and children will help to provide rich data that will enable those living the everyday experiences within the school setting to talk about their own understanding of how their school works in the every day.

Your role in school:

Headteacher	☐	Teaching Asst	☐	Class teacher	☐
NQT	☐	NQT+1	☐	SENDCo	☐
Catering staff	☐	Admin staff	☐	Lunchtime supervisors	☐
Cleaning staff	☐	Senior Leader	☐	Governors	☐
	☐				

School Nurse

		Participant initials.
1	I confirm that I have read the Participant Information Sheet dated for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions about the study. I confirm that I have had such questions answered satisfactorily.	
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without reason, and without affecting my subsequent treatment or legal rights.	
3	Subject to clause 4 below, I understand that all data collected will be confidential, anonymised and subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended from time to time).	
4	I understand that data from the study may be reviewed by the researchers supervisors. These supervisors will adhere to the same confidentiality and data protection policies as the researcher. I give permission for this access.	
5	I understand that the outcomes of this research may be disseminated at appropriate national and international conferences and may be published in scientific journals for wider reading. All data in presented in this way will be anonymised.	
6	I understand that all data will be stored in a secure protected location and will be destroyed 12 months after the work is completed.	
7	I agree to take part in this study.	

Participant Name Date Participant Signature

Name of Researcher Date Signature

Copies: 1 for participant; 1 (original) for researcher site file.

Participant Information sheet (Staff)

How to reduce fixed term exclusions in Primary schools: Identifying school-related factors that contribute to exclusion.

My name is Susie Wallis-Maclean and I have worked in Primary Schools for 30 years as a teacher, head teacher, Ofsted inspector, coach and mentor. I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Children and Young Peoples' Services at the University of Bedfordshire, Institute of Applied Research. This self-funded research will form the central part of a doctoral (PhD) thesis, but also aims to generate new knowledge that will contribute to learning for schools and local authorities.

Fixed-term Exclusion from Primary schools is a problem which is increasing year on year. This project aims to understand some of the factors that lead to the increase in children being excluded from primary school and what could be done to reduce these numbers. In 2017-18, 66,105 primary school children were excluded on a fixed term basis while in 2018/19, the figure was 66,463.

The importance for children excluded at primary school level is that a significant proportion go on to be excluded at secondary school. Research has provided considerable evidence that excluded children have significantly poorer life chances including feed-in to later criminality. Therefore, if we could find ways to reduce the exclusion rates in primary schools, it is likely this would translate into knock-on beneficial effects with fewer exclusions from secondary school and the associated societal consequences.

We are asking you to help us find out how schools may differ in the way they support children at risk of exclusion. Hopefully the findings of the research will provide guidance which may be helpful to schools in supporting those children and families at risk of exclusion.

We are inviting you to help by completing a questionnaire aimed at indicating some of the factors that contribute to how things work in your school. We are hoping to get information from a range of staff and governors. If you agree to help us with this research by completing a questionnaire, you will not be asked to identify yourself by name but by the type of work you do in school. The research will be anonymised and no personalised details will be stored or recorded.

The findings from the research will be made available to schools involved as part of the project and to allow feedback and reflection of the outcomes. A generic report will then be made available to all and hopefully form the basis for publication in education literature.

If you have any questions please discuss them with the researcher, Susie Wallis-Maclean.

Thank you
Susie Wallis-Maclean (susanwallismaclean@gmail.com)

University of Bedfordshire

School Questionnaire

I am a (tick more than one if appropriate):

Teacher ☐ Member of Senior Management Team ☐ Teaching Assistant ☐

SENDCo ☐ Inclusion/Welfare Officer ☐ Admin/Support staff ☐

Governor ☐ Gender Female ☐ Male ☐ School Nurse ☐

Other role (please state) _____

Ethnicity

Please use your own words to describe your ethnicity. This is optional.

Beside each statement below, please indicate if you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree(you are not sure either way), Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Don't Know (you don't know enough about the issue to form an opinion).

In this school…..	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
1. There is a behaviour policy.						
2. The behaviour policy was developed in collaboration with staff.						
3. The behaviour policy was developed in collaboration with parents.						
4. Staff understand the behaviour policy.						
5. Staff receive training in the behaviour policy.						

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
6. Staff are trained to be consistent in implementing the behaviour policy.						
7. Staff are trained to be consistent in rewarding good behaviour.						
8. Staff are trained to be consistent in managing challenging behaviour.						
9. Staff are trained to treat children with respect.						
10. Children are taught about understanding and managing their behaviour and learn self-control.						
11. Children understand the behaviour policy.						
12. Children understand the school rules.						
13. Children understand some behaviours result in a reward.						
14. Parents are told when their child has received a reward.						
15. There are different reward systems in each classroom.						
16. Parents are informed when their child receives a sanction.						
17. Children understand some behaviours result in a sanction.						
18. Children are treated differently based on their circumstances.						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know

			nor disagree			
19. During lesson time children can receive a 'time out' for not following school rules.						
20. There is a room where children are taken to calm down.						
21. During lesson time children can get sent to another teacher for not following school rules.						
22. During lesson time children can get sent out of their classroom to stand outside for not following the school rules.						
23. If children's behaviour becomes challenging they do their learning in a different room from their class-mates.						
24. During lesson time children can get sent to the headteacher for not following the school rules.						
25. During lesson time children can get sent to a senior member of staff for not following the school rules						
26. Children can lose a lunchtime or playtime for not following the school rules.						
27. Children can be sent home at lunchtimes for not following the school rules.						
28. Parents are involved if their child's behaviour becomes challenging.						

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
29. Exclusion from school is an effective strategy to address behavioural challenges.						
30. The needs of some children would be better met in a specialist setting.						
31. Exclusion from school teaches children consequences for their actions.						
32. Exclusion from school encourages parents to take responsibility for their child.						
33. Exclusion from school is a signal that further support is needed.						
34. The needs of all children are met in this school.						

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please return sealed in the envelope provided to the school office.

Tables for National Documents 1 and 2

National Document 1		**National Document 2**	
Exclusions from maintained school, academies and pupil referral units in England – statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion -September 2017 (VS17)		**Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England September 2022 (VS22)**	
Summary		**There is no summary in these documents**	
VS17 (p3-4)	**VS17 Comments**	**VS22**	**VS22 Comments**
Document begins: [1] 'This document from the Department for Education provides a guide to the legislation that governs the exclusion of pupils from maintained schools, pupil referral units (PRU's), academy schools (including free schools, studio schools and university technology colleges) and alternative provision academies (including alternative provision free schools) in England' (p3).	No reference to **children in Nursery settings.** It may benefit the reader to be provided with the age range of children that is covered in the guidance. That all maintained schools are combined means the reader is not given any signals of how schools may interpret some of the 'should' guidance that may be more appropriate for younger children.	**Document begins:** 'Good behaviour in schools is essential to ensure that all pupils benefit from the opportunities provided by education. Therefore, the government recognises that **school exclusions, managed moves and off-site direction** are **essential behaviour management tools** for headteachers and can be used to establish high standards of behaviour in schools and maintain the safety of school communities.' (p 3) **And:** 'This document provides a guide to the legislation that governs the suspension and permanent exclusion of pupils from all maintained schools (including special schools) pupil referral units (PRUs), academy schools (including free schools, special schools, studio schools and	There is no Summary in this document. There is some recognition of the challenges faced by schools when dealing with behaviour however this positive and supportive guidance is hidden in the text which focuses on remedial action

		university technology colleges) alternative provision academies (including alternative provision free schools) in England.' (p 4).	
[2] 'This document also provides statutory guidance to which head teachers, governing boards, local authorities, academy trusts, independent review panel members and special educational needs (SEN) experts "must" have regard when carrying out their functions in relation to exclusion. **Clerks** to independent review panels **"must"** also be **"trained"** to know and understand this guidance (p 3).	What information is given regarding C&RE? Does training for Governors and others involved in the exclusion process, include a focus on vulnerable groups e.g. Who are they? Why are they vulnerable? What is an unmet need? **Clerks** to independent review panels are the only people who are referred to who **"must"** be **trained.**	'This document also provides statutory guidance to which headteachers, governing boards, local authorities, academy trusts, independent review panel (IRP) members and special educational needs (SEN) experts, social workers, and Virtual School Heads (VSHs) must have regard when carrying out their functions in relation to suspension and permanent exclusions. **Clerks** to IRPs must also be **well-versed** in this guidance.' (p 4).	As with VS17 those who need to carry out their functions in relation to exclusion must have regard to the statutory guidance. **Clerks** in 2017 guidance must have been trained. In 2022 they need to be **"well-versed"** in it. This language does not appear to echo the government's commitment in response to the Timpson Reviews. In the 'DfE Consultation on Revised Behaviour in Schools Guidance and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance' (p 3) - Launch date 03 February 2022 it promised to 'publish clearer, more consistent guidance' (p3).
[3] 'The phrase 'must have regard,' when used in this context, does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance must be followed in every detail, but that they **should be followed unless there is a good reason not to** in a particular case. (p 3) **And** 'The term 'must' - refers to what head teachers/governing boards/academy	(see VS22 comments). This provides headteachers with professional discretion to look at the content of individual cases allowing for a child's age to be acknowledged.	'The term **must** - refers to what headteachers/governing boards/academy trusts/local authorities/parents and others are **required to do by law** and must have regard to when carrying out their duties. The term 'should' - refers to recommendations for good practice as mentioned in the suspensions and	Both documents highlight the use of the words "must", however there is a subtle difference in the wording of VS17 and the later document. VS22 provides information on the difference between the use of ''must" and "should". In VS17 "should" refers to recommendations.

trusts/local authorities and parents are required to do by law. The term 'should' - refers to recommendations for good practice as mentioned in the exclusion guidance.' (p 4)		permanent exclusions guidance and should be followed unless there is good reason not to.'VS22 (4)	
[4] 'This guidance is for: Head teachers, governing boards, local authorities, academy trusts, independent review panel members, independent review panel clerks, and individuals appointed as SEN experts.' (p 3)	**No mention of parents** or signposting where they could find information on exclusions.	'This guidance is for: Headteachers, governing boards, local authorities, academy trust, IRP members, IRP clerks, social workers, VSHs and individuals appointed as Special Educational Needs (SEN) experts.' (p 6)	As well as the key stakeholders already stated in VS22 the consultation document included: Parents; pupils; teaching unions; unions representing other staff (p4). Information provided to parents and pupils has been reduced in VS22.
[5] 'Except in relation to pupils in PRUs, or where stated, the requirements of the guide apply in relation to all pupils, including those who may be **below** or above **compulsory** school age, such as **those attending nursery classes**…' (p4)	This makes it clear that the guidance applies to children attending Nursery classes.	'The guidance and the law described applies to all pupils, including those who may be **below** or above **compulsory school age,** and **those attending nursery classes**…' (6)	There is insufficient reference to young children in both VS17 and VS22. There is still limited research focused on the exclusion of children as young as 2 and primary aged children and whether exclusionary processes are used in a different way to secondary schools.

1. About this guide/guidance: The heading is the same in both documents but in VS22 the section has been expanded

VS17 (p 5)	VS17 comments	VS22 (p 3-7)	VS22comments
[6] **'Further information for parents** on exclusion can be found in annex C to this guidance entitled 'a guide to parents/carers' (p 5)	Key legislations remain unchanged. Annex C provides information to parents about the process of exclusion.		Key legislations remain unchanged. This signposting of separate guidance to parent was included in the January Guidance (VJ22) but does not appear in VS22.

[7] 'Legislation on exclusion gives clarity and certainty to schools, local authorities, academy trusts and review panels, in terms of how they discharge their obligations to parents.' (p 5)	This comes under 'Definition of 'parent' in this guidance.		No reference under definition of parent of the how the legislation provides clarity and certainty about the obligation to inform parents. There is insufficient guidance to parents particularly in the of content in the guidance on legislation and schools. E.g. The requirement for schools to be anticipatory in providing reasonable adjustments prior to implementing punitive sanctions.
2. Key points VS17		**2 What has changed in this edition VS22**	
VS17 (p 6-7)	**VS17 Comments**	**VS22 (p 8)**	**VJ22 Comments**
[8] 'This statutory guidance has been updated in a small number of areas, in particular to provide **greater confidence** to headteacher **on their use of exclusion** and to provide greater clarity to independent review panels and governing boards' on their consideration of exclusion decisions.' (p6)	Highlights the change from the 2012 guidance about giving headteachers' **greater confidence on the use of exclusion** and the government's support to exclusion. Existing research has highlighted that there is a lack of robustness of governing bodies to critique the decision of the headteacher in the exclusion process. This could potentially give licence to an abuse of a headteacher's power and authority.	'This guidance has been updated to be a **companion** piece to the Behaviour in Schools guidance, which provides advice to headteachers, trust leaders and school staff on implementing a behaviour policy which creates a school culture with high expectations of behaviour. Therefore, this guidance should only be necessary when strategies, practices and interventions set out within the Behaviour in Schools guidance have not been successful in improving a pupil's behaviour or the use of more significant intervention or sanctions are required' (p3) This guidance has been updated to reflect the government's ambition to create high standard of behaviour in schools so that children and young people are	This suggests to the reader that they must follow the Behaviour in Schools guidance. What is deemed to be 'high standards of behaviour'? There is no reference to high standards for adults in school. What if the school hasn't got the right learning environment? There is no reference to what the school should 'be like' e.g. How they respond to challenging behaviour. Due to pressures faced on schools there tends to be a one size fits all curriculum which does not adequately consider the range of starting points for young children as well as meeting the needs of vulnerable children already at risk. There is no mention that the guidance sets out what schools are required to do to be

		protected from disruption and can learn and thrive in a calm, safe, and supportive environment'VS22 (p 8)	lawful when considering the exclusion process.
[9] 'in particular to provide greater confidence to headteacher on their use of exclusion '(p 6) 'The Government supports headteachers in **using exclusions as a sanction where it is warranted.'** (p6)	See VS22 comment.	'It is important for schools to consider the following guidance…as part of their approach to **using school suspensions and permanent exclusions well'** (p 6). And 'This guidance provides schools and other bodies involved in this process with information so that they can **continue to use suspensions and permanent exclusion appropriately**.' (p 8) and 'This government supports headteachers in using suspensions and permanent exclusion as a sanction when warranted… To achieve this, **suspension** and permanent exclusion **are sometimes a necessary part of a functioning system**, where it is accepted that not all pupil behaviour can be amended or remedied by pastoral processes, or consequences within the school.' (p 11)	How can **exclusions be used 'well'** for primary aged children? The tone of language intimates the strength of conviction in the use of exclusions as a means of managing behaviour.
[10] 'However, permanent exclusion should only be used as a **last resort**, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's		'However, if approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be	The term behaviour management is used – why is there no reference or examples of support to the child. There is no consideration to what

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.' (6)		necessary as a **last resort**. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm, and supportive environments.' (p 3)	might exacerbate a child's difficulty in managing their behaviour or what the impact the school's conduct or practice might have on the child's behaviour.
[11] 'Schools have a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability or race. Schools should give particular consideration **to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion**' (p 6)	Provides clarity to schools about their duty not to discriminate against protected characteristics.	'The 'relevant protected characteristics' in this context are the characteristics mentioned above. Age is also a relevant protected characteristic, but not when carrying out a function which provides education, benefits, facilities, or services to pupils.' 'These duties need to be complied with when deciding whether to exclude a pupil. **Schools must also ensure that any provision, criterion, or practice does not discriminate against pupils by unfairly increasing their risk of exclusion**.' (p1 0)	Is there an argument that age needs to be a 'relevant protected characteristic'? We can hold a child criminally responsible at a certain age. Therefore, when considering exclusions, why is age not a factor and not a considered a protected characteristic. In the context of schools, age should be a protected characteristic. Existing disadvantage and differences experienced by some young children may be exacerbated by some of the strategies advocated by the government.
[12] 'Disruptive behaviour can be an indication of **unmet needs**. Where a school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, it should try to identify whether there are any **causal factors and intervene early in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion**.' (p 6)	See VS22 comment.	'Where necessary, school should work	No reference to unmet need. Existing evidence recognises that challenging behaviour is often mis-interpreted as "naughty" and even in very young children criminalised rather than being seen as an unidentified unmet need.

[13] 'schools should consider whether a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond the pupil's educational needs is required.' (p 6)	Acknowledgement of the potential multifaceted nature of challenging behaviour which can be a result of factors other than school.	with relevant staff and multi-agency organisations to identify if the pupil has any SEND and/or health needs (para 28, p 17)	This guidance seems to come late in the document and to the reader might translate as a factor after a suspension or permanent exclusion has taken place. Timing of multi-agency assessments are crucial and should be initiated as soon as a child is seen to be vulnerable to exclusion.
[14] 'Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a fixed-period exclusion and for managing their future behaviour.' (p 6)	See VS22 comment.	'They should design a reintegration strategy that offers the pupil a fresh start; helps them understand the impact of their behaviours on themselves and others, teaches them how to meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with school culture; foster a renewed sense of belonging with the school community and builds engagement with learning.' (para 26 p 17) **VJ22** 'Schools should support pupils to reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education following a suspension or period of off-site direction (see paragraphs 35 to 46). They should design a reintegration strategy that offers the pupil a fresh start; helps them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others; teaches them to how (sic) meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with	VJ22 is different in tone to VS22 'Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a suspension or after a period of being educated off-site and for managing their future behaviour. This is so pupils can be supported to successfully readjust back into a normal routine. This should include ensuring a re-integration meeting takes place…' (para 25, p 16) **And**: 'As far as possible, the school should work with the pupil…' How does this expectation translate when considering children between the ages of two and ten?

		the school culture; fosters a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and builds engagement with learning.' (para 26, p 17) **And:** 'To ensure ongoing progress, the strategy should be regularly reviewed and adapted where necessary throughout the reintegration process in collaboration with the pupil…' (para 27, p 17)	
[15] All children have a right to an education (p 6).	This is the discourse of democracy which is not predominately reflected throughout both documents.		What is the value we place on education in primary schools and on the education of young children.
[16] 'Excluded pupils should be enabled and encouraged to participate at all stages of the exclusion process, taking into account their age and ability to understand.' (p 7)	Who is the child's advocate – should there not be statutory guidance ensuring that a child/parent receives the same support as the professional bodies involved in the process. Reference to age/ability is mentioned but there is no guidance as to how.	'Further guidance on the practice of involving pupils so that any excluded pupil is enabled and encouraged to participate at all stages of the suspension or permanent exclusion process, considering their age and ability to understand.' (p 8/9)	There is limited acknowledgement of the importance of a child's voice in both documents which then reduces or negates ownership of any intervention reducing its capacity to be effective.
3.The head teacher's power to exclude		**3. The head teacher's power to suspend or permanently exclude for head teachers, academy principals and teachers in charge of pupil referral units**	
VS17 (p 8-11)	**VS17 Comments**	**VS22 (p 11-18)**	**VS22 Comments**
[17] 'Only the head teacher at a school can exclude a pupil and **this must be** on disciplinary grounds.' (para 1, p 8)	This section goes straight to 'A guide to the law' unlike VS22 which starts with a direct statement from the government regarding its support of the use of suspensions	'This government supports headteachers in using supervision and permanent exclusion as a sanction when warranted as part of creating a calm, safe and supportive	The phrase 'and **this must be'** has been removed. See [1} for comments.

	and permanent exclusion.	environment in which pupils can learn and thrive. To achieve this, suspension and permanent exclusion are sometimes a necessary part of a functioning system, where it is accepted that not all behaviour can be amended or remedied be pastoral processes, or consequences within the school.' VS22 (p 11) 'Only the headteacher of a school can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds.' VS22 (p 11)	
[18] 'A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year) or permanently.' (para 1, p 8)	See VS22 for comment.	'A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently excluded.' (p 11)	This means that children as young as two could miss up to 9 weeks of being in school, when it has already been established that not only is this critical in terms of their future development but also puts them at a potentially greater risk than being at school. VS22 para 57, p 24 states: 'When children are not in school, they miss the protection and opportunities it can provide, and become more vulnerable to harm.'
[19] 'A fixed-period exclusion can also be for parts of the school day. For example, if a pupil's behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive, they may be excluded from the school premises for the	See VS22 for comment.	'A suspension can also be used for parts of the school's day. For example, if a pupil's behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive, they may be suspended for the duration of the	The impact of removing young children from lunchtime and from their peers is not considered.

duration of the lunchtime period.' (para 2, p 8)		lunchtime period.' (para 9 p 12)	
[20] 'The headteacher may withdraw an exclusion that has not been reviewed by the governing board.' (para 5, p 8)	See VS22 comment.	'Headteachers may cancel an exclusion that has not been reviewed by the governing board.' (p 8)	VJ22 'Headteachers cannot end a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun…' (p 7) Evidence was provided during the consultation process of the negative impact this change could have had therefore it was not implemented. It does however show the intent of the government to not allow heads to be discretionary if for example new evidence came to light.
[21] 'Any decision of a school, including exclusion, must be made in line with the principles of administrative law, i.e. that it is: lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to exclusions and a school's wider legal duties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the Equality Act 2010); rational; reasonable; fair; and proportionate.' (para 6, p 8)	See VS22 for comment.	'Any decision of a headteacher, including suspension or permanent exclusion, must be made in line with the principles of administrative law…reasonable; fair; and proportionate.' (p 11)	Replaced 'school' with headteacher' Removed the word 'rational' in VS17 (reasonable; fair; and proportionate). This surely disadvantages the child. (See comment VS22 [26]
[22] 'The headteacher must take account of their duty of care when sending a pupil home following an exclusion (para 7, p 9)	The young age of primary aged children may make them more vulnerable when they are out of school in a number of ways and should be taken into	'The headteacher must take account of their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following and exclusion.' (para 3, p 11)	Separating young children from their peers to address behaviours may result in children feeling more alienated potentially increasing what already

	consideration. No advice is given.		deemed to be challenging behaviours.
[23] 'When establishing the facts in relation to an exclusion the headteacher must apply the civil standard of proof; i.e. 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal stand of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. This means that the head teacher should accept that something happened if it is more likely that it happened than it did not happen'. (para 8, p 9)	See VS22 comment.	'…headteacher applies the civil standard of proof 'on the balance of probabilities it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal stand of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. This means that the headteacher should accept that something happened if it is more likely that it happened'. (p 11)	This does not account for the complexities of local politics within individual primary schools. Issues can arise almost instantly due to the daily proximity and connectedness of communities. Parents at the school gate will see things differently and will often get a picture from their child of something that happened in school which is the polar opposite of how another parent may see it or has been told what happened by their child. Very young children are not good judges or relaters of facts.
[24] 'Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), schools must not discriminate against, harass or victimise pupils because of: sex; race; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; …For disabled children, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments to policies and practices and the provision of auxiliary aids.' (para 9, p9)	See VS22 comment.	'Duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014 'For disabled children this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments to any provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a substantial disadvantage.' (p 9)	Many disabled children at risk of exclusion may already be substantially disadvantage to their peers in primary school. This does not convey the anticipatory expectations of the Act and that reasonable adjustments that should be made prior to any sanction. There is no guidance in how to take a proportionate response.
[25] 'Schools must ensure that their policies and practices do not discriminate against pupils by unfairly increasing their risk of exclusion.' (para 11, p9)	See VS22 comment.	'A suspension, where a pupil is temporarily removed from the school, is an essential behaviour management tool that should be set out within a school's behaviour policy.' (p12)	Due to the individualised writing of behaviour policies there is evidence to show that there are children disproportionately affected by primary

			school behaviour policies.
[26] 'Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages, needs or low participation affecting one group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.' (para 11, p 9)	This briefly takes regard of the pre-emptive action that must be taken.		There is a comparative comment in VS22.
[27] 'The headteacher and governing board must comply with their statutory duties in relation to SEN when administering the exclusion process. This includes having regard to the SEND Code of Practice.' (para 12, p9)	See VS22 comment.	'The school's legal duties to pupils with disabilities or special educational needs remain in force, for example to make reasonable adjustments in how the support disabled pupils during this period.' VS22 (p 12)	Although this reiterates the legal duties of the school it feels as if it is condoning the use of suspension for disabled pupils.
[27] 'It is unlawful to exclude for a non-disciplinary reason.' (para 13, p9)	See VS22 comment.		There are complex issues surrounding the safeguarding of young children and the difficulties and sensitivities of child-on-child abuse when supporting very young children. More advice is needed to ensure robustness of action.
[29] '…a pupil who repeatedly disobeys their teachers' academic instructions could be subject to exclusion.' (para 13, p 10)	See VS22 comment.		This does not appear in VS22 but is present in VJ22. (para 18, p 14)
[30] 'Informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions, such as sending a pupil home 'to cool off', a are unlawful, regardless of	See VS22 comment.	'An informal or unofficial, such as sending a pupil home 'to cool off' is unlawful when it does not follow	There is considerable evidence to suggest that many children are still subject to informal

whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for a short period of time, must be formally recorded' (para 14, p 10)		the formal exclusion process and regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents.' (para 19, p 15)	and unofficial exclusions.
[31] 'Maintained schools have the power to direct a pupil off-site for education to improve their behaviour. A pupil at any type of school can also transfer to another school as part of a 'managed move' where this occurs with the consent of the parties involved, including the parents and the admission authority of the school. However, the threat of exclusion must never be used to influence parents to remove their child from the school.' (para 15, p 10)	See VS22 comment.	'It also includes the use of behavioural strategies such as managed moves and directing pupils off-site to improve behaviour to help prevent a suspension or permanent exclusion' (p 4)	Information provided on the use of managed moves and directing pupils off-site as strategies to be used to prevent suspension or exclusion. There is no information to the reader as to what this may look like for pre-secondary aged children.
[32] 'A decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken: in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and were allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education of the pupil or others in the school.' (para 16, p10)	See VS22 comment.	'The decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken: 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 such as staff or pupils in the school.' (p13)	There is no reference made here to using exclusion as a last resort.
[33] 'The decision on whether to exclude is for the headteacher to take. However where practical, the	See VS22 comment.	'Headteachers should also take the pupil's views into account considering these in the light of their age and	There is insufficient clarity on how this can be achieved.

headteacher should give the pupil an opportunity to present their case before taking the decision to exclude.' (para 17, p 10)		understanding, before deciding to exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so.' VS22 (p 11)	
[34] 'Whilst an exclusion may still be an appropriate sanction, the head teacher should take account of any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred. For example, where it comes to light that the pupil has suffered bereavement, has mental health issues or has been subject to bullying.' (para 18, p10)	If an alternative to an exclusion has been found, then surely this alternative should be used regardless of the contributing factors, particularly when considering young children.	'A suspension may be used to provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour and show a pupil that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion.' (p 12)	When considering primary school aged children this terminology could be seen as a threat. Many young children will not have developed the capacity to understand the link between suspension and permanent exclusion. It could also be seen as a threat to parents to do something about their child's behaviour. There is no acknowledge that the school, its ethos and practice could play a role in the child behaviour.
[35] 'Early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any SEN or disability that a pupil may have. The head teacher should also consider the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour.' (para 19, p 10)	See VS22 comment.	'In addition to the strategies set out in initial intervention, page 29 of the Behaviour in Schools, guidance, headteachers should also consider the following: a) an off-site direction (temporary measure that maintained schools and academies for similar purposes can use) or b) managed moves (permanent measure) as a preventative measure to exclusion.' (para31, p 19)	The Behaviour in Schools Advice (referred to as guidance by the government) does not make any reference to whether the school could be a factor in the child's behaviour referring to them as 'persistently mis-behaving' (sic) (para 96, p 28). Although some of the interventions are positive the text suggests that the child is choosing not to conform to the behavioural expectations set by the school because they are misbehaving. It also suggests removing them from their classroom to support

			them to meet the expectations required.
[36] 'Where a pupil has received multiple exclusions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 school days of fixed-period exclusion in an academic year, the headteacher should consider whether exclusion is providing an effective sanction.' (para 20, p 11)	See VS22 comment.	'Where suspensions are becoming a regular occurrence for a pupil, headteachers and schools should consider whether suspension alone is an effective sanction for the pupil and whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour.' (p 12)	Informs the reader that exclusion is the accepted way a pupil can get the support they need. If this is seen in the light of Primary schools, it goes against much of the literature regarding the use of exclusions in pre-secondary settings. Also, if you adopt the use of 'should' as laid out in this guidance it assumes that it is to be followed unless there is good reason to. Would a good reason be to acknowledge the research over several years which highlights the detrimental effect of exclusion on young children (provide articles).
[37] 'The exclusion rates for certain groups of pupils are consistently higher than average. This includes: pupils with **SEN; pupils eligible for free school meals; looked after children; and pupils from certain ethnic groups. The ethnic groups with the highest rates of exclusion are: Gypsy/Roma; Travellers of Irish Heritage; and Caribbean pupils.'** (para 21, p 11)	See VS22 comment.	'Variation in exclusion rates: There are longstanding national trends which show that particular groups of children are more likely to be excluded from school, both for a suspension or permanent exclusion. (para 52, p23)	These groups are not specifically mentioned in VS22.
[38] 'As well as having disproportionately high rates of exclusion, there are certain groups of	See VS22 comment.	All of these factors will differ for each child, and the influence of out-of-school factors	There is no mention in VS22 that headteachers should avoid excluding children who have an

pupils with additional needs who are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of exclusion. This includes pupils with EHC plans and looked after children. The head teacher should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with an EHC plan or looked after child.' (para 23, p 11)		will vary according to local context, so it is important that schools, local authorities and local partners work together to understand what lies behind local trends.' (para 52, p 23)	EHC plan or looked after children.
4. The head teacher's duty to inform parties about an exclusion		**4. Factors to consider before making a decision to exclude (not in VS17)** **5. The headteacher's duty to inform parties about exclusion**	
VS17 (p 12-15)	**VS17 Comments**	**VS22 (p 19 -26)**	**VS22 Comments**
[39] 'Whenever a head teacher excludes a pupil they must, without delay, notify parents of the period of the exclusion and the reason(s) for it.' (para 26 p 12) [40] 'When notifying parents about an exclusion, the head teacher should draw attention to relevant sources of free and impartial information. This information should include: Link to the guidance. Link to impartial advice for parents: Coram Children's Legal Centre: Ace Education Links to local services: Travellers Education Services. Information Advice & Support Services		'When headteachers suspend or permanently exclude a pupil they must, without delay notify parents.' (p 8) Every LA has a SENDIAS service who provide information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND, including on exclusions. https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/about-us-0/networks/information-advice-and-support-services-network Coram's Child Advice service Ace education Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) (para 75, p 29)	**VJ22** 'When headteachers suspend or permanently exclude a pupil they must, without delay, and no later than three days after their decision, notify parents.' (p 7) VJ22- [to be updated](sic) - link to the guidance Coram's Child Law Advice service Ace education Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) Autism Education Trust (AET), vis the National Autistic Society (NAS) SEN Information Advice & Support Network (formerly known as the local parent partnership) (para 67, p26) SEND based information insufficient

Network (formerly known as the local parent partnership); The National Autistic Society (NAS); School Exclusion Service; Independent Parental Special Education advice (ipsea) (para 38, p 14)			signposting to specific websites such as the autistic society – look at this in practical terms and how it should work.

Tables for National Documents 3 and 4

Guidance: **Schools inspection handbook for September 2022**	
Document 3 Schools Inspection handbook	**Notes and links to national documents**
a) 'SEND provision has some specific factors that **should** be taken into account.' (para 248, p53)	a) Responsibility of adults is schools to act.
b) 'Pupils with SEND have a range of different needs and starting points. Pupils will have unique, individual needs. Some pupils have severe, complex or profound needs that have a significant impact on their cognitive development, especially the way that they are able to make alterations to their long-term memory.' (para 249, p53)	b) Clear awareness of the complexity of needs of children may have.

c) 'Inspectors will gather and evaluate evidence about:
• whether leaders are suitably ambitious for all pupils with SEND
• how well leaders identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils with SEND
• how well teachers ensure the curriculum is coherently sequenced to meet all pupils' starting points
• how successfully leaders involve parents, carers and, as necessary, other professionals/specialist services in deciding how best to support pupils with SEND
• How well leaders ensure that pupils' outcomes are improving as a result of any different or additional provision being made for them including any reasonable adjustments in remote education provision. This convers outcomes in:
  ○ Communication and interaction
  ○ Cognition and learning
  ○ Physical health and development
  ○ Social emotional and mental health' (para 250, p53)
	c) Identification of roles and clear expectations.
	
	c) Thoughtful language which could potentially be used by the reader to support practice e.g. a coherently sequenced curriculum which meets the needs of all children.
	
	c) Alerts the reader to the possible range of needs.

d) 'Because of the wide variety of pupils' needs, inspectors will not compare the outcomes achieved by pupils with SEND with those achieved by other pupils with SEND in the school, locally or nationally (para 251, p54)	d) How does this translate into an acknowledgement of different behaviours? d) Not comparing outcomes is the right thing to do but how does this effect adult expectations and commitment to teaching children with a wide variation of need?
e) 'Pupils with SEND often have significant and complex vulnerabilities and can face additional safeguarding challenges. This includes understanding and pre-empting increased risks that pupils may be drawn into harmful situations as a result of grooming, be more likely to experience abuse from other pupils or adults and may experience additional barriers in reporting abuse and having abuse recognised by professionals. Inspectors will evaluate the ways in which leaders have made appropriate and effective safeguarding arrangements and reflect these additional vulnerabilities, including during COVID-19 pandemic.' (para 252. p54)	e) Clear focus on prevention. This language is not reflected in the three other documents used for analysis. e) Providing clarity of the need to understand possible risks of children who are already vulnerable.
f) 'Inspectors will work closely with leaders and staff to understand how the curriculum area they are looking at is designed and implemented to meet the needs of pupils in the school.' (para 252, p54)	f) Use of language is collaboratory.
g) 'We recognise that the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic may have impacted on what children have learned. This could result in some children having a wider than usual range of starting points and gaps in their knowledge…' Inspectors will use all their evidence to evaluate **what it is like to be a child in the maintained nursery school taking account of the ages of the children…'**(para 259, p55)	g) Clear acknowledgement of the potential impact of Covid although no reference to the pandemics effect on children who were already vulnerable e.g. school refusal, mental health issues. g) Acknowledgement of age not seen in the other three documents.
Evaluating behaviour and attitudes	
h) The behaviour and attitudes judgement considers how leaders and staff create a safe, calm, orderly and positive environment in the	h) There is a focus on the adult as well as the child in the text with the responsibility of

school and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.' (para 272, p 58)	leaders coming first. This feels much more like an enabling document.
i) 'The judgement focuses on the factors that research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes, thereby giving them the greatest possible opportunity to achieve positive outcomes. These factors are: • having a calm and ad orderly environment in the school and the classroom, as this is essential for pupils to be able to learn • setting clear routines and expectations for the behaviour of pupils across all aspects of school life, not just in the classroom • having a strong focus on attendance and punctuality so that disruption is minimised • having clear and effective behaviour and attendance policies with clearly defined consequences that are applied consistently and fairly by all staff. Children, and particularly adolescents, often have particularly strong concepts of fairness that may be challenged by different treatment by different teachers or of different pupils • developing pupils' motivation and positive attitudes to learning, as these are important predictors of attainment. Developing positive attitudes can also have a longer-term impact on how pupils approach learning tasks in later stages of education • fostering a positive and respectful school culture in which staff know and care about pupils • creating an environment in which pupils feel safe, and in which bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and sexual violence – online or offline- are not accepted and are dealt with quickly, consistently and effectively whenever they occur.' (para 273, p58)	i) Use of evidenced based knowledge being used to make judgements. Bullet points could be used by the reader as a guide for primary school leaders to look at effective practice in their school. i) Differentiates age e.g. adolescents

j) 'The school may be working with pupils with particular needs in order to improve their behaviour or their attendance.' (para 276, p59)	j) Provides a sense of collaboration in the wording.
k) If a school uses suspensions, inspectors will evaluate their effectiveness, including the rates, patterns and reasons for suspensions and whether any pupils are repeatedly suspended. School should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a suspension and for managing their future behaviour. Inspectors will consider how well the school is recognising and acting to address any patterns that exist. This is because disruptive behaviour or sudden changes in behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs or a change in another aspect of a young person's life. (para 278, p59)	k) Making a statement that schools do not need to use suspensions. k) Clear reference to unmet needs and the responsibility of adults to act.
l) 'Headteachers have the right to exclude pupils when there are legitimate reasons for them to do so. Used correctly exclusion is a vital measure for headteachers to use. Exclusions must be legal and justified. Permanent exclusions should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and when allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.' (para 279, p59)	l) This paragraph feels slightly incongruous. Has there been 'political pressure' to include it because j) refers to inspection evidence and research. Therefore, if they were to use the same principle there is sufficient evidence to suggest that permanent exclusion is not a vital measure that should be taken.
m) 'Inspectors will consider whether the school is developing the use of alternative strategies to exclusion and taking account of any safeguarding risks to pupils who may be excluded. Inspectors will recognise when schools are doing all that they can to support pupils at risk of exclusion, including through tenacious attempts to engage local support services.' (para 280, p60)	m) The use of the phrase 'tenacious attempts' could lead the reader to believe that a straightforward request for external support services would unforthcoming.
n) 'Inspectors will speak to pupils from a range of different backgrounds and who have different experiences of the school's approach to behaviour. This should include pupils who have	n) Highlights the importance of the voice of the child.

experienced sanctions under the school's behaviour policy.' (para 284, p61) o) 'Inspectors will evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as pupils for whom referrals have been made to the local authority (and check, for a small sample of these pupils, how the referral was made and the thoroughness of the follow-up), pupils with SEND, children looked after, those with medical needs and those with mental health needs. In order to do this, inspectors will look at the experience of a small sample of these pupils and consider the way the school is working with the multi-agency group to ensure that the child receives the support they need. For pupils with SEND, this will include ensuring that appropriate reasonable adjustment are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND code of Practice.' (para 285, p61) **Grade descriptors for evaluating behaviour and attitudes.** **Outstanding (1)** p) The school meets all the criteria for good in behaviour and attitudes securely and consistently. q) Behaviour and attitudes are exceptional. r) Pupils behave with consistently high levels of respect for others. They play a highly positive role in creating a school environment in which commonalities are identified and celebrated, difference is valued and nurtured, and bullying, harassment and violence are never tolerated. s) Pupils consistently have highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. They are highly motivated and persistent in the face of difficulties. Pupils make a highly positive, tangible contribution to the life of the school and/or wider community. Pupils actively support the well-being of other pupils. t) Pupils behave consistently well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and consistently positive attitudes to their education. If pupils struggle with this the school takes intelligent,	o) Use of the word 'appropriate' before reasonable adjustments. r) The wording purveys a sense of the importance of inclusion. t) Responsibility of the adults in school to take action. Use of the word intelligent provides a sense of professional ownership of decisions.

fair and highly effective action to support them to succeed in their education. (p90) **Good (2)** u) The schools has high expectations for pupil's behaviour and conduct. These expectations are commonly understood and applied consistently and fairly. This is reflected in pupils' positive behaviour and conduct. Low-level disruption is not tolerated, and pupil's behaviour does not disrupt lessons or the day-to-day life of the school. Leaders support all staff well in managing pupils' behaviour. Staff make sure that pupils follow appropriate routines. v) Leaders, staff and pupils create a positive environment in which bullying is not tolerated, If bullying, aggression, discrimination and derogatory language occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively and are not allowed to spread. w) There is demonstrable improvement in the behaviour and attendance of pupils who have particular needs. x) Pupils' attitudes to their education are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively and do so , are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements. y) Pupils have high attendance, with the context of the pandemic. They come to school on time and are punctual to lessons. When this is not the case, the school takes appropriate, swift and effective action. z) Suspensions are used appropriately. The school reintegrates suspended pupils on their return and manages their behaviour effectively. Permanent exclusions are used appropriately as a last resort.' aa) Relationships among pupils and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture; pupils are safe, and they feel safe. (p91)	z) Clarity in the use of 'last resort'.

Requires Improvement (3) bb) Behaviour and attitude in the school are not good. **Inadequate (4)** Behaviour and attitudes are likely to be inadequate in any one of the following applies. cc) Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils and a consistent approach to discipline. They do not support staff adequately in managing behaviour. dd) Pupils' lack of engagement and persistent low-level and/or high-level wilful disruption contribute to reduced learning and/or disorderly classrooms. ee) A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect for each other and/or staff and a lack of self-discipline. Pupils frequently ignore or rebut requests from teachers to moderate their conduct. This results in poor behaviour around the school. ff) Pupils show negative attitudes towards the value of good manners and behaviour as important factors in school life, adult life and work. gg) Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows little sign of sustained improvement. hh) Incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, both direct and indirect, are frequent. ii) Pupils have little confidence in the school's ability to tackle harassment, bullying, violence and/or discriminatory behaviour successfully. jj) Poor behaviour means that pupil, or particular groups of pupils, are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.	Throughout cc) to jj) there is balance of focus on the child and the school. Although these judgements are used when identifying a school as inadequate which would assume that the behaviour in some way is unacceptable there is no reference to the word 'misbehaviour'
Behaviour in schools Advice for headteachers and school staff September 2022 (DfE)	
Document 4 Behaviour in schools	**Notes and links to national documents**
I. 'This publication provides advice to schools on behaviour in schools and the related legal duties of headteachers, and	I. Although it is providing advice to schools the text already does not feel inclusive.

	members of staff. It includes guidance on support for pupils to behave well and the powers of staff when responding to misbehaviour. (para 1, p4)	
II.	The term “must” and “should” are used throughout the guidance. Where the text uses the word “must”, the person in question is legally required to do something. (p4)	II. Tells the reader if “must” is used ‘’ - it does not tell you about “should”.
III.	‘Some schools need to improve their approach to behaviour…’ (para 2, p5)	III. Acknowledgement that there is poor practice in schools when dealing with some behaviour – however nothing said about the responsibility of adults to improve it.
IV.	‘Where behaviour is poor, pupils can suffer from issues as diverse as lost learning time, child-on-child abuse, anxiety, bullying, violence, and distress. It can cause some children to stay away from school, missing vital learning time. Similarly, continually dealing with misbehaviour negatively affects the wellbeing of teachers and, for some, it is a reason why they leave the profession.’ (para 3, p5)	IV. ‘Where behaviour is poor’ – what is our understanding of poor behaviour – who says so? ‘Child on child abuse’ comes second place as a result of poor behaviour. Concerns re safeguarding and very young children and how this could be interpreted. Appears to blame poor behaviour solely on the child.
V.	‘responding to misbehaviour consistently.’ (para 4, p5)	V. What is misbehaviour? The use of the word consistently – should it refer to the structures and systems in school rather to the response. Surely due to the nature of each child’s diverse needs and challenges these may present will depend on the response. It surely should not be a ‘one size fits all approach.
VI.	‘When pupils do misbehave, schools should be able to respond promptly, predictably and with confidence to maintain a calm, safe learning environment, and then consider how such behaviour can be prevented from recurring. To support these aims this guidance outlines different responses to behaviour that schools can use, including	VI. Why sanctions first.

sanctions and pastoral approaches. (para 6, p5)	
VII. 'In some cases, particularly when a pupil is persistently disruptive and support or sanctions are not deterring misbehaviour, further actions may be needed. This guidance provides advice on interventions and approaches schools may wish to take to prevent the recurrence of misbehaviour. In serious instances a pupil may need to be suspended or excluded, and schools should read the Department's specific guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion to ensure that they use these interventions appropriately.' (para 7, p5)	VII. Shouldn't this say as a last resort? There is no reference to unmet need. This seems to be a punitive response with no reference to the responsibility of adults in the school.
Creating and maintaining high standards of behaviour	
VIII. Schools should be clear about which behaviours are permitted and prohibited; the values, attitudes, and beliefs they promote and the social norms and routines that should be encouraged throughout the school community. The behaviour policy is the starting point for laying out this vision and is one of the important ways the school culture is communicated to pupils, staff, and parents and carers, It is equally important that the behaviour policy is implemented effectively to create a positive behaviour culture in which pupils are encouraged to reflect the values of the school.' (para 1, p6)	VIII. 'Social norms' – whose social norms – what do they look like in primary schools? VIII. Use of inappropriately 'hostile' language when talking about young children. e.g. prohibited. VIII. No specific or positive guidance given.
IX. 'All headteachers should take responsibility for implementing measures to secure acceptable standards of behaviour. They should ensure the school's approach to behaviour meets the following national minimum expectations: • the school has high expectations of pupils' conduct and behaviour, which is	IX. The national minimum expectations are aligned to the Ofsted 'good' grade descriptor for assessing Behaviour and Attitudes. There are some interesting differences between the two. Ofsted uses the word 'positive' when referring to children 4 times. It only appears once in this document. The words committed, pride and resilient are used when referring to children. They have been omitted in this guidance.

commonly understood by staff and applied consistently and fairly to help create a calm and safe environment; • school leaders visibly and consistently supporting all staff in managing pupil behaviour through following the behaviour policy; • measures are in place and both general and targeted interventions are used to improve pupil behaviour and support is provided to all pupils to help them meet behaviour standards, making reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability as required; • pupil behaviour does not normally disrupt teaching, learning or school routines. Disruption is not tolerated, and proportionate action is taken to restore acceptable standards of behaviour; • all members of the school community create a positive, safe environment in which bullying, physical threats or abuse and intimidation are not tolerated, in which pupils feel safe and everyone is treated respectfully; and • any incidents of bullying, discrimination, aggression, and derogatory language (including name calling) are dealt with quickly and effectively. (para 2, p6/7) X. 'The behaviour policy should be aligned with the school's legal duties and standards relating to the welfare of children. All staff should be aware of the measures outlined in the school's behaviour policy and how they should implement these measures – this is one of the key systems in place in schools which supports safeguarding.' (para 3, p7) **Developing a school behaviour policy** XI. 'A schools culture and values are manifested through the behaviour of all its members. High standards and clear rules should reflect the values of the	Ofsted writes that suspensions should be used appropriately, and permanent exclusions used as a last report. It is not mentioned in this section of this guidance. Should there be a reference to the responsibility of adults to model behaviour and should there also be a reference to age-appropriate behaviours? Is there an assumption here that behaviour is already deemed to be poor? Ofsted uses 'appropriate' before reasonable adjustments ((p), para 285, p61) Xl. Focus on all adults and children in the school and the need for a whole school approach.

school and outline the expectation and consequences of behaviour for everyone The schools behaviour policy should provide details on how staff will support pupils to meet these expectations.' (para 6, p7)	
XII. 'The headteacher must determine measures which aim to: • Encourage good behaviour and respect for others • Secure an acceptable standard of behaviour of pupils • Promote, among pupils self-discipline and proper regard for authority (how?) • Prevent all forms of bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying • Ensure that pupils completer any tasks reasonably assigned to them in connection with their education and • Otherwise regulate the conduct of pupils.' (para 7, p7/8)	
XIII. 'A behaviour policy <u>should</u> include detail on the following: • **purpose** – including the underlying objectives of the policy, and how it creates a safe environment in which all pupils can learn and reach their full potential; • **leadership and management** – including the role of designated staff and leaders, any systems used, the resources allocated and engagement of governors/trustees; • **school systems and social norms** – including rules, routines, and consequence systems; • **staff induction, development and support** – including regular training for staff on behaviour; • **pupil transition** – including induction and re-induction into behaviour systems, rules and routines; • **pupil support** – including the roles and responsibilities of designated staff and	XIII. Refers to advised contents of a schools' behaviour policy.

the support provided to pupils with additional needs where those needs might affect behaviour; • **child on child abuse** – including measures to prevent child-on-child abuse and the response to incidents of such abuse; and • **banned items** -including a list of items which are banned by the school and for which a search can be made.' (para 10, p8/9)	
XIV. 'The school behaviour policy <u>should</u> adhere to the following principles: • **accessible and easily understood:** clear and easily understood by pupils, staff and parents; • **aligned and coherent:** aligned to other key policy documents (footnote SEND, uniform, staff conduct, safeguarding arrangements in particular child protection policy); • **inclusive:** consider the needs of all pupils and staff, so all members of the school community can feel safe and that they belong; • **consistent and detailed:** have sufficient detail to ensure meaningful and consistent implementation by all members; and • **supportive:** address how pupils will be supported to meet high standards of behaviour.' (para 11, p9)	XIV. Inclusive language although included does not feel 'woven' through this document.
Communicating the behaviour policy	
XV. 'provides reassurance that expectations of and responses to behaviour are consistent, fair, proportionate and predictable.' (para 12, p9)	XV. Would it be useful to include the word 'rational' and 'intelligent' here?
XVI. 'For maintained schools, the headteacher must publicise the school behaviour policy in writing to parents, staff, and pupils at least once a year.' (para 13, p9)	

A whole school approach to behaviour	
XVII. ‘Everyone should treat one another with dignity, kindness and respect.’ (para 15, p10)	XVII. How do you teach dignity to a 4-year-old – what should this look like? No guidance is given.
XVIII. ‘Consistent implementation helps to create a predictable environment. Some pupils may require additional support to meet a school’s behaviour expectations. This support should be given consistently and predictably, applied fairly and only where necessary.’ (para 16, p10)	XVIII. Again the text re-iterates the onus on the child to do something i.e. meet the schools expectations. There is no clear reference to the responsibility of adults other than the phrase ‘consistent implementation’ and no understanding of how a system can be flexible and responsive to a wide range of different needs and behaviours.
XIX. ‘By having simple, clear and well communicated expectations of behaviour and providing staff with bespoke training on the needs of the pupils at school, behaviour can be managed consistently so that both pupils and staff can thrive, achieve and build positive relationships based on predictability, fairness and trust.’ (para 17, p10)	XIX. Clear statement but how do relate to adults’ behaviours?
The school behaviour curriculum	
XX. ‘Positive behaviour reflects the values of the school, readiness to learn and respect for others. It is established through creating an environment where good conduct is more likely and poor conduct less likely. This behaviour should be taught to all pupils so that they understand what behaviour is expected and encouraged and what is prohibited.’ (para 18, p10)	XX. The term ‘behaviour curriculum’ is new and introduced in this guidance, however there is no reference to in the text or in the other 3 documents. XX. The use of the word conduct and prohibited.
XXI. ‘Routines should be used to teach and reinforce the behaviours expected of all pupils. Repeated practices promote the values of the school, positive behavioural norms, and certainty on the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.’ (para 20, p11)	XXI. When will this be done – whole school and what about differentiation in terms of age? XXI. No mention of adult expectations towards pupils.

XXII. 'Adjustments can be made to routines for pupils with additional needs where appropriate and reasonable to ensure all pupils can meet behavioural expectations, These adjustments may be temporary. Adjustments should be made proactively and by design where possible…The adjustments needed for those pupils with Special Educational Needs and\or Disability (SEND), whose condition may at times affect their behaviour, are set out in the section 'Behaviour expectations and pupils with Special Educational Needs and\or Disability (SEND)' (paragraphs 34 -38). Schools should be mindful that not all pupils requiring support with behaviour will have identified special educational needs or disabilities.' (para 24 p11)	XXII. The word 'should' be used rather than can because it is stating that this would ensure children are supported to meet the required expectations. Also, the use of 'where possible' suggests a 'absolve yourself of responsibility phrase' if you can.
XXIII. 'Consistent and clear language should be used when acknowledging positive behaviour and addressing misbehaviour.' (para 22, p11)	XXIII. The opposite of positive behaviour is either misbehaviour or poor behaviour. What happens with children who are struggling or vulnerable and as a result are not demonstrably 'showing' positive behaviour?
The role of school leaders	
XXIV. 'all new staff are inducted clearly into the school's behaviour culture to ensure they understand its rules and routines and how best to support all pupils to participate in creating the culture of the school.' (para 24, p11)	XXIV. This is key in ensuring continuity and implementation of the behaviour policy. This is a significant factor when looking at how this works in practice.
XXV. 'School leaders should consider any appropriate training which is required for staff to meet their duties and functions within the behaviour policy.' (para 25, p11)	XXV. Clear focus on training staff and the responsibility of leaders to ensure this is done.
The role of teachers and staff	
XXVI. 'Staff should uphold the whole-school approach to behaviour by teaching and modelling expected behaviour…staff	XXVI. How is this achieved for all staff e.g. lunchtime supervisors, dinner ladies etc

	should also challenge pupils to meet the school's expectations and maintain the boundaries of acceptable conduct.' (para 28, p12)	XXVI. This all relies on clear communication and understanding – the reality of everyday?
XXVII.	'Staff should consider the impact of their own behaviour on the school culture and how they uphold the school rules and expectations. Staff should also receive clear guidance about school expectations of their own conduct at school.' (para 29, p12/13)	XXVII. This relates to the staff not the school's role in guiding and setting adult behaviours.
The role of pupils		
XXVIII.	'All pupils deserve to learn in an environment that is calm, safe, supportive and where they are treated with dignity…Pupils should be taught that they have a duty to follow the school behaviour policy and uphold the school rules.' (para 30, p13)	XXVIII. This is about other pupils – this is not said under the 'role of teachers and staff.' XXVII. Use of the word 'duty' seems inappropriate when writing about the behaviour of young children.
The role of Parents		
XXIX.	'Parents have an important role in supporting the school's behaviour policy and should be encouraged to reinforce the policy at home as appropriate.' (para 32, p13)	XXIX. Does this not go beyond the remit of a school. It feels as if the school is both culturally and socially dominant to that of the family.
XXX.	'Where appropriate parents should be included in any pastoral work following misbehaviour, including attending reviews of specific behaviour interventions in place.' (para 33, p13)	XXX. This suggests that it only after something has happened that parents are included. Would it not be preferable to engage parents as soon as there is any underlying concern with a child's behaviour, however small.
Behaviour expectations and pupils with SEND		
XXXI.	Schools should consider how a whole-school approach meets the needs of all pupils in the school, including pupils with SEND…' (para 34, p14)	XXXI. How is this being enacted?
XXXII.	'When a pupil is identified as having SEND, the graduated approach should be	

used to assess, plan, deliver and then review the impact of the support being provided.' (para 36, p14)	
XXXIII. 'schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid any substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the school's policies and practices.' (para 37, bullet 1, p 14)	XXXII. Shouldn't this approach be considered for all children who need extra support or at risk of exclusion. XXXIII. What is substantial?
XXXIV. 'relevant settings have a duty to use their 'best endeavours' to meet the needs of those with SEND;' (para 37, bullet 2, p14)	XXXIV. What does this look like?
XXXV. 'As part of meeting any of these duties, schools should, as far as possible, anticipate likely triggers of misbehaviour and put in place support to prevent these.' (para 38, p15)	
Responding to behaviour	
XXXVI. 'Sometimes a pupil's behaviour will be unacceptable, and pupils need to understand that there are consequences for their behaviour. Often this will involve the use of reasonable and proportionate sanctions.' (para 39, p16)	XXXVI. Punitive – this does not attempt to see unacceptable as an unmet need or a potential unmet need.
Responding to good behaviour	
XXXVII. 'Using positive reinforcements and rewards should be applied clearly and fairly to reinforce the routines, expectations, and norms of the schools behaviour culture. Example of rewards may include: • verbal praise; • communicating praise to parents…; • certificates, prize ceremonies or special assemblies; • positions of responsibility, such as prefect status or being entrusted with a particular decision or project; and	XXXVII. The use of the phrase 'applied clearly and fairly' when writing about rewards could be misleading. Some children due to a variety of reasons need more praise than others. The explicit nature of using rewards can often be used as an effective strategy to support vulnerable children to feel more positive and safe resulting in improved behaviour and engagement with their learning.

• whole-class or year group rewards, such as a popular activity.' (para 40, p16) **Responding to misbehaviour**	
XXVIII. 'De-escalation techniques can be used to help prevent further behaviour issues arising and recurring and schools may use pre-agreed scripts and phrases to help restore calm.' (para 41, p16)	XXVIII. Why weren't they used in the first place?
XXXIX. 'The aims of any response to misbehaviour should be to maintain the culture of the school, restore a calm and safe environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive, and prevent the occurrence of misbehaviour.' (para 42, p16)	XXXIX. This is assuming that the culture of the school is appropriate.
XL. 'To achieve these aims, a response to behaviour may have various purposes these include: • **deterrence**: sanctions can often be effective deterrents for a specific pupil or a general deterrent for all pupils at the school. • **protection:** keeping pupils safe is a legal duty of all staff. A protective measure in response to inappropriate behaviour, for example, removing a pupil from a lesson, may be immediate or after assessment of risk. • **improvement:** to support pupils to understand and meet the behaviour expectations of the school and reengage in meaningful education. Pupils will test boundaries, may find their emotions difficult to manage, or may have misinterpreted the rules. Pupils should be supported to understand and follow the rules. This may be via sanctions, reflective conversations or targeted pastoral support.' (para 43, p17)	XL. Sanctions come first as a response. There is no reference to the possible cause/triggers that may have caused the behaviour. There appears to be a lack of an intelligent professional response to provide a pro-active preventative measure rather than a punitive one.
XLI. 'Where appropriate staff should take account of any contributing factors that	XLI. So before this is looked at, a sanction is given!

are identified after a behaviour incident has occurred: for example, if the pupil has suffered bereavement, experienced abuse or neglect, has mental health needs, has been subject to bullying, has needs including SEND (including any not previously identified), has been subject to criminal exploitation, or is experiencing significant challenges at home.' (para 44, p17)	
Acceptable forms of sanction	
XLII. 'The behaviour policy should include a range of possible sanctions clearly communicated to and understood by pupils, staff, and parents. Examples of sanctions may include: • a verbal reprimand and reminder of the expectations of behaviour; • the setting of written tasks such as an account of their behaviour; • loss of privileges – for instance, the loss of a prized responsibility; • detention; • school based community service, such as tidying a classroom; • regular reporting including early morning reporting; • scheduled uniform checks or being placed "on report" for behaviour monitoring; • suspension; and • in the most serious of circumstances, permanent exclusion.' (para 45, p17/18)	XLII. Why, when evidence tells us that boys are more likely to be excluded than girls, and boys find the task of writing and engaging in the love of writing more difficult, writing is used as a punishment?
XLIII. 'Alternative arrangement for sanctions can be considered on a case-by-case basis for any pupil where the school believes an alternative arrangement would be more effective for that particular pupil, based on their knowledge of that pupil's personal circumstances and perceived fairness overall when considering any alternative arrangements.' (para 48, p18)	XLIII. By whom? Who do they mean by "school"?

What the law allows	
XLIV. ‘Teachers can sanction pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could reasonably be expected of them ‘This means that if a pupil misbehaves, breaks a rule or fails to follow a reasonable instruction, the teacher can apply a sanction on that pupil.’ (para 50, p18)	XLIV. What does this mean in the everyday and for every child?
XLV. A sanction is lawful if it satisfies the following three conditions: • The decision to sanction is made by a paid member of staff (but not one who the HT had decided should not do so) • The decision to sanction a pupil and the sanctions itself is made on the school premises or while the pupil is under the lawful charge of the member of staff; and • It does not breach any other legislation (for example in respect of equality, special educational needs and human rights) and it is reasonable in all the circumstances.’ (para 52, p19)	XLV. a) How is this right, if school follow this guidance – everyone should be trained.
XLVI. ‘In considering whether a sanction is reasonable in all circumstances, one must consider whether it is proportionate in the circumstances of the case and consider any special circumstances relevant to its imposition including the pupil’s age, any SEN or disability they may have, and any religious requirements affecting them.’ (para 53, p19)	XLVI. Reference to age.
XLVII. ‘The headteacher may limit the power to apply particular sanctions, or to sanction particular pupils or types of pupils, to certain staff and/or extend the power to discipline to adult volunteers, for example to parents who have volunteered to help on a school trip, (para 54, p19)	XLVII. This could present as a training issue and parent should then be trained.

XLVIII. 'Corporal punishment by school staff is illegal in all circumstances.' (para 55, p19)	
Responding to the behaviour of pupils with SEND	
XLIX. 'Schools should consider whether a pupil's SEND has contributed to the misbehaviour and if so, whether it is appropriate and lawful to sanction the pupil. In considering this, school should refer to the Equality Act 2010 and schools' guidance.' (para 58, p20)	
L. 'The school should also consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to the sanction in response to any disability the pupil may have. It is also important for the schools to seek to try and understand the underlying causes of behaviour and whether additional support is needed.' (para 59, p20)	L. This paragraph feels as if it is written the wrong way round would it be more helpful to the reader if it was: 'It is important for schools to seek to try and understand the underlying causes of behaviour and whether additional support is needed. The school should also consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to a sanction in response to any disability the pupil may have.'
Supporting pupils following a sanction	
LI. 'Following a sanction, strategies should be considered to help all pupils to understand how to improve their behaviour and meet the behaviour expectation of the school. These might include: • a targeted discussion with the pupil including explaining what they did wrong, the impact of their actions, how they can do better in the future and what will happen if their behaviour fails to improve. This may also include advising them to apologise to the relevant person, if appropriate; • a phone call with parents… • inquiries into the pupil's conduct with staff involved in teaching, supporting or supervising the pupil in school; • inquiries into circumstances outside of school… (para 61, p20)	LI. This feels aggressive in tone. All children are referred to as one homogenous group – currently only one reference to age. Inquiries into home factors or other relations come late in the guidance.

Detentions	
LII. 'A detention is a commonly used sanction, often used as a deterrent to future misbehaviour. 'It is typically a short period where the pupil is required to remain under supervision of school staff when their peers have been allowed to go home or to break. (para 63, p21)	LII. Language is inappropriate – we are talking about children! The use of detention for primary aged children would seem inappropriate, particularly for vulnerable children.
LIII. 'When used, it should be done so consistently and fairly by staff. This process should be well known to all pupils and staff. (para 64, p21)	
What the law allows	
LIV. 'Teachers have authority to issue detention to pupils, including same-day detentions.' (para 65, p21)	LIV. This seems to be secondary school based – but no guidance is given to the appropriateness of its use in primary schools – therefore could potentially give some primary schools a green light. What could happen in an all-through school? Does there need to be a change in the structuring of Education at a political level – surely it needs to separate Primary and Secondary schools so that guidance is appropriate reasonable and proportionate for all children from 3 -11.
LV. 'A school's behaviour policy should make clear that detention (including detention outside of school hours) can be used as a possible sanction. (para 66, p21)	LV. Due to the lack of sufficient guidance with respect to age, detentions can be legally issued to any child this document refers to. It should not be left to those responsible for writing school behaviour policies to make that decision.
LVI. 'A detention outside normal school hours will be lawful if it meets the following conditions: • the conditions outlined in paragraph 70 below; • the pupil is under 18; • the headteacher has communicated to pupils and parents that detentions outside school sessions may be used; and • the detention is held at any of the following times:	

• any school day where the pupil does not have permission to be absent; • weekends during term – except a weekend during, preceding or following a half term break; or • non-teaching days – usually referred to as 'training days'…except if it falls on a public holiday.' (para 67, p21)	
Matters schools should consider when imposing detentions	
LVII. 'Parental consent is not required for detentions that satisfy the conditions mentioned in paragraph 65 -66,' (para 69, p22)	LVII. See comments LIV. and LV.
The use of reasonable force	
LVIII. 'The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children.' (para 72, p22)	LVIII. Why is the word 'children' used here when 'pupil' is the used throughout the document?
LIX. 'Members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing and offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property and to maintain good order and discipline at the school or among pupils.' (para 74, p23)	LIX. What does this look like for a child with SEND? The language use feels dominating in tone.
Searching Screening and confiscation	
LX. 'retain or dispose of a pupils property as a disciplinary penalty in the same circumstances as other disciplinary penalties.' (para 78, p23)	LX. Is this appropriate – where is the learning for young children if they come into school with something they shouldn't have.
Removal from classrooms	
LXI. 'Removal is where a pupil for serious reasons is required to spend a limited time out of the classroom at the instruction of a member of staff…The use of removal should allow for continuation	LXI. This will potentially exacerbate the situation. Should there be more guidance to what constitutes 'limited time'. Concerns re the use of removal and its lawfulness in primary schools.

of the pupils education in a supervised setting.' (para 79, p23)	
LXII. 'Removal from the classroom should be considered a serious sanction. It should only be used when necessary and once other behavioural strategies in the classroom have been attempted unless the behaviour is so extreme as to warrant immediate removal. Parents should be informed on the same day if their child has been removed from the classroom. As with all disciplinary measures, schools must consider whether the sanction is proportionate and consider whether there are any special considerations relevant to its imposition. (see paragraphs 51 and 55) (para 80, p24)	LXII. Concerns re 'adult' led removal in primary schools. In many primary schools teaching assistants (TA's) are employed to support children who have SEND or children who are vulnerable for other reasons, Have TA's had sufficient training to make decisions to remove a child from their classrooms/peers/learning?
LXIII. 'Removal should be used for the following reasons: • to maintain the safety of all pupils and to restore stability following unreasonably high levels of disruption; • to enable a disruptive pupil to be taken to a place where education can be continued in a managed environment. • to allow pupils to regain calm in a safe space.' (para 81, p 24)	LXIII. Shouldn't a classroom be a managed environment? This needs careful consideration.
LXIV. 'Removal should be distinguished from the use of separation spaces (sometimes known as sensory or nurture rooms) for non-disciplinary reasons. For instance, where a pupil is taken out of the classroom to regulate his or her emotions because of identified sensory overload as part of a planned response.' (para 82, p24)	
Governance of Removal	
LXV. Headteachers should: • make clear in the school behaviour policy that removal may be used as a response to a serious misbehaviour;	LXV. How is this being addressed in primary schools?

• maintain overall strategic oversight of the school's arrangements for any removals, as set out in the school's behaviour policy; • make sure the reasons that may lead to pupils being removed are transparent and known to all staff and pupils; • outline in the behaviour policy the principles governing the length of time that it is appropriate for a pupil to be in removal; • ensure that the removal location is in an appropriate area of the school and stocked with appropriate resources, is a suitable place to learn and refocus, and is supervised by trained members of staff; and • design a clear process for the reintegration of any pupil in removal into the classroom when appropriate and safe to do so.' (para 83, p24)	
LXVI. 'Schools should collect monitor and analyse removal data internally in order to interrogate repeat patterns and the effectiveness of removal. Schools should make data-based decisions to consider whether frequently removed pupils may benefit from additional and alternative approaches (see the section on initial intervention in paragraphs 95-99), a pastoral review or investigation by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), or whether specific departments or teachers may require more support.' (para 84, p24/25)	LXVI. Is this happening in primary school? This is the first-time culpability of poor behaviour is directed towards teachers.
LXVII. 'Separately, schools should analyse the collected data to identify patterns relating to pupils sharing any of the protected characteristics and the removal policy is not having a disproportionate effect on pupils sharing particular protected characteristics.' (para 85, p25)	

LXVIII.	'When dealing with individual removal cases HT's and teachers should: • consider whether any assessment of underlying factors of disruptive behaviour is needed; • facilitate reflection by the pupil on the behaviour that led to their removal from the classroom and what they can do to improve and avoid such behaviour in the future; • ensure that pupils are never locked in the room of their removal. There may be exceptional situations in which it is necessary to physically prevent a pupil from leaving a room in order to protect the safety of pupils and staff from immediate risk, but this would be a safety measure and not a disciplinary sanction and there is not covered by this section; • ensure that the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 and regulations under those Acts are being complied with, and • if a pupil has a social worker, including if they have a Child in Need plan, a Child Protection plan or are looked-after, notify their social worker. If the pupil is looked-after, ensure their Personal Education Plan is appropriately reviewed and amended and notify their Virtual School Head.' (para 86, p25)	LXVIII. The use of consider should be replaced with 'as assessment is required prior to the use of removal. This sanction could have a significant impact on the learning and life chances of young children. LXVIII. Get out of jail free card – who determines what is disciplinary and what is a safety measure?
LXIX.	'Pupils should not be removed from classrooms for prolonged periods of time without the explicit agreement of the HT Those pupils should be given extensive support to continue their education including targeted pastoral support aimed to improve behaviour so they can be reintegrated and succeed within the mainstream school community.' (para 87, p25)	LXIX. This still doesn't make it right and sometimes it will be the headteacher that removes a child without providing a suitable alternative learning environment.

Suspension and Permanent exclusions
 	
LXX. 'Headteachers can use suspension and permanent exclusion in response to persistent poor behaviour which has not improved following in-school sanctions and interventions.' (para 89, p26)
 	
Managed moves
 	
LXXI. Managed moves should only occur when it is in the pupil's best interests.' (para 91, p26)
Preventing recurrence of misbehaviour
 	
LXXII. 'Schools should have a system in place to ensure relevant members of leadership and pastoral staff are aware of any pupil persistently misbehaving, whose behaviour is not improving following low-level sanctions or whose behaviour reflects a sudden change from previous patterns of behaviour.' (para 97, p 28)
 	
Paragraphs 98,99 and 100 (p28) all provide positive guidance see below in brief.
• Paragraph 98 - Examples of interventions
  ○ Frequent /open engagement with parents
  ○ Mentoring and coaching
  ○ Behaviour report cards/plans
  ○ Pupil support units
  ○ Engaging with partners to address specific challenges e.g. poor anger management /lack of resilience/difficulties with peer relationships and social skills
• Paragraph 99 - Initial interventions/assessment of appropriate provision to support SEND pupils. Use of graduated response: assess; plan\; deliver; review. Early contact with local authority if a pupil has an EHC plan plus emergency review if needed.
• Paragraph 100 - Use of a multi-agency assessment where a school has serious concerns about a pupil's behaviour.
	LXX. Sanctions comes first and interventions second. This doe does not stress that permanent exclusions should only be used as a last resort.

Pupil support units	
LXXIII. 'A pupil support unit is a planned intervention occurring in small groups and in place of mainstream lessons. The purpose of this can be two-fold. a. as a planned intervention for behavioural or pastoral reasons b. as a final preventative measure to support pupils of exclusion… the underlying ambition should be to improve behaviour and maintain learning with the goal to successfully reintegrate pupil into mainstream lessons.' (para 101, p 29)	LXXIII. What is the cost of using alternative provision in primary school both to the child and to society?
LXXIV. 'All staff should ensure that the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 and regulations under those Acts are being complied with.' (para 103, p29)	LXXIV. How is this achievable?
LXXV. 'When developing a pupil support unit schools should consider: • referring pupils based on their needs, including sharing information on previous behaviour incidents; • delivering a broad and balanced curriculum; • maintaining a positive, visible presence form school leaders; • deploying staff with the appropriate skills; • reviewing reintegration plans at regular intervals; • involving pupils and parent in reintegration discussions.' (para 104 p29/20)	LXXV. How is this achieved in primary schools?
Monitoring and evaluating school behaviour	
LXXVI. 'Schools are encouraged to collect data from the following sources: • behaviour incident data, including removal from the classroom.	LXXVI. Why are they only 'encouraged' to collect data? This would be a rigorous and effective measure to collect evidence to support effective or ineffective strategies.

• Attendance, permanent exclusion and suspension data; • use of pupil support units, off-site directions and managed moves. • incidents of searching, screening and confiscation; and • anonymous surveys for staff, pupils, governors, trustees and other stakeholders on their perceptions and experiences of the school behaviour culture.' (para 109, p31)	
LXXVII. 'School leaders and staff should analyse data with an objective lens and from multiple perspectives: at school level, group level and individual staff and pupil level. School leaders should pose questions to drill down further to identify possible factors contributing to the behaviour, system-problems or failure to provide appropriate support. Analysing the data by protected characteristics and using those findings to inform policy and practice may help a school ensure that it is meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010. (para 110, p31)	LXXVII. Would it benefit the reader of this document to have some of this information at the beginning of the guidance. This is focussing on the responsibilities of the adults in schools, not the child.
Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment	
LXXVIII. 'Following any report of child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment offline or online, schools should follow the general safeguarding principles set out in Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) - especially Part 5. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response. Each incident should be considered on a case-by-case basis.' (para 111 p32)	LXXVIII. What are 'appropriate behaviours' for young children could well be seen as 'inappropriate behaviours' for older children. There is considerable complexity in understanding the development and behaviours of young children. This area of behaviour and the potential use of sanction should require expert support, advice and guidance.

Mapping National Documents with School Behaviour Policies

Document 3 **Ofsted Schools inspection handbook** **2022**	**Document 4** **Behaviour in Schools – Advice for headteachers and school staff September 2022**	**School A** **Behaviour Policy**	**School B** **Behaviour Policy**	**School C** **Behaviour Policy**	**School D** **Behaviour Policy**	**School E** **Behaviour Policy**
Key theme: Roles						
Doc 3	**Doc 4**	**School A**	**School B**	**School C**	**School D**	**School E**
Leaders need to be suitably ambitious. (c) Role of **professionals** to understand and recognise vulnerabilities of children. (f) **Leaders** and **staff** designing a curriculum that meets the needs of all children. (f) **Leaders** responsibility to create a safe, calm, orderly environment. (h)	Powers of staff (I) Role of the **teacher** affected by poor behaviour of pupils (IV) **Headteacher (HT)** to be responsible for securing acceptable standards (IX) Role of **designated staff** (XIII) Role of **school leaders** (XXIV); **teachers and staff** (XXVI); **pupils** (XXVIII) and **parents**	**(HT)'** reserves the right to use discretion to help pupils make better choices and learn the right lessons.' No specific reference to roles	Role of **HT**: Model, implement and monitor behaviour policy (BP). For repeated or very serious acts of anti-social behaviour, the **HT** will permanently exclude a child. **Governors:** advisory, reviewing	All **staff** are collectively responsible for modelling good behaviour **Governing body**: Reviewing/approving (BP) Monitoring effectiveness **Headteacher:** Reviewing BP. Ensuring positive behaviour. **Senior Leaders:**	No specific reference to roles Role of **all** in school to treat each other with respect. **Adults** in the school to model desired behaviours. **All staff** must respond to behaviour issues. Behaviour management in	No specific reference to roles **'All** adult seeking to understand each pupils context which will inform effective responses to misbehaviour.' **Teachers** and **adults** provide time for relationships

	(XXIX) Staff should challenge pupils to meet school expectations and model expected behaviour (XXVI) **Staff** need guidance on their conduct in school (XXVII) **Parents** encouraged to reinforce the policy at home (XXIX)		effectiveness. **Pupils**: Become increasingly responsible and independent. **Parents:** Work collaboratively, informed immediately of concerns.	Support staff when needed. **Staff:** Implement BP. Provide personalised approach to individual needs. **Parents:** Support their child in upholding BP Inform school of concern talk to class teacher	the classroom is the responsibility of the **class teacher** (CT). **Pastoral support team** in place. Governors will review Px.	with individual pupils. **Adults** will explicitly teach and model learning behaviours. **Parents**: informed of serious and repeated unacceptable behaviours by the Senior leadership team **(SLT)**

National Policy Observations (Roles) **Doc 3** Focus on adult roles in school and their outcomes on children's behaviour and learning. **Doc 4** Roles are expected and refer to the measures to be taken to ensure acceptable standards of behaviour, however there is little reference to the responsibility these roles carry with regard to vulnerable children. Under the role of pupils it refers to all pupils needing to learn in a calm, safe and supportive environment – however this appears to be talking about the impact of some children on other children, not the responsibility of the roles held by adults. There is no reference to the key role of other adults in the school and the relationships they may have with C@RE. When	**School Policy Observations (Roles)** **School A:** The use of the word 'we' may have been used to define the community and whole school responsibilities, but it may confuse roles and thus some key responsibilities in school. **School B:** Home-school agreement mentioned (no longer required) Under role of parent as well as positive statements such as working collaboratively and building a supportive dialogue has a punitive comment 'parents should support reasonable sanctions to punish a pupil' Language confusing regarding threatening behaviour of parents towards staff. Unclear whether talking about child or parent. Serious acts of anti-social behaviour in many cases in primary schools should not warrant a permanent exclusion. **School C:** Clarity of roles provided, and the policy has an inclusive feel to it with the responsibility of the adults in school to respond effectively to children to support good behaviour.

considering all staff, how is the approach to managing behaviour communicated?	**School D:** No specific reference to roles provided. But clear message of adult responsibilities in modelling behaviour and supporting children. **School E:** No specific reference to roles. Positive language used but tends to be overly confusing.

Fieldwork Observations (Roles):
School A:
1. The number of adults 'in and out' of a class during a single session.
2. 1st adult (unknown status) "I'll take V (YR boy) next." 2nd adult (unknown status) "Good luck with that one."
3. 1 adult (later found out to be family support worker) walked past me 8 times.
4. A third adult joined in. There was no observable interaction with any child in the classroom by adults during this time (approx. 5 mins). 1 adult left to interact with a child but and then went back to S then was called out of the class by an adult coming to the door.
1 adult was on an iPad, no interaction with any child. 3 adults talking together CT had come in from outside play area. V went up to them to show them his Lego house. They all had their back to him and were engaging in an adult conversation. Vernon got one adults attention by patting her. She acknowledged him. CT no acknowledgement. V persisted, tapping CT. CT said "amazing, I love it." She walked outside.
School B:
1. "We're not going, I'm still waiting – why is it not in an e-mail, it should have been sent. Nothing ever is".
2. I spent 3 lunchtimes observing in the dining hall. Two lunchtime supervisors appeared brusque and unusually sharp with the children. The majority of the children had a school lunch however what seemed to be a very high proportion of the children ate very little, some almost nothing. They were not encouraged to eat, and their food was thrown away. The range of food was very limited, and I felt it did not support the dietary requirements or preferences for the ethnic diversity in the school. Couldn't rice be a staple every day? I felt a sense of emotion and it made me feel quite upset that a lot of children could be feeling hungry for an afternoon and the impact this might have on their learning/concentration etc.

Interview evidence (Roles):
School D: (Inclusion Manager)
1. it couldn't go on any longer, so they knew there had to be somewhere light at the end of the tunnel and in he walked. (new HT)
2. diffuse the situation if we couldn't we would then look towards SLT to support and to guide us through what our next steps were, unfortunately that wasn't forthcoming so we'd try and deal with that ourselves,

3. so practically we were on our own and trying to deal with it without the advice and support from SLT it was it wasn't an open door policy , erm sugar paper was put up over the doors so we couldn't see in and it was all covered over so we couldn't get to SLT to ask for anything so really it was when teachers were working so hard to teach and there were just that few in each class causing absolute havoc, we were going in and trying to resolve that erm the best way we could
4. so the H (Academy) team came in and erm SLT went they'd gone some had jumped ship when H came and then J (HT) arrived and J did something completely different to the other heads that had come in J didn't change everything in 5 mins erm and to be perfectly honest Susie it didn't feel like he was changing this and changing that it was just so calm and gradual you'd think this is different erm the support now J won't have anybody praise him up (no) j is very much this is our team but Susie this is down to him it really really is because going back 3 years that man walked into this school and things started to change he didn't come in and say I don't like that I don't like that I'm changing this it was just done very very gradually and J supports every member of his team he praises them every week every day every minute he will say thank you and you could see the way things were it was just lovely (laughter) honestly I can't and I thought my god look at our kids now and they hold their heads up.
5. I'd love him to be cloned
School D: (Teacher):
1. you have a leadership team who know what they're doing
2. think actually a school needs a leader with a clear vision who is going to make you accountable
School D: (Child 2)
1. like erm mr w being headteacher is a good thing he's helped keep like everybody in line but also have fun
2. we had a headteacher then we a different head and then a different headteacher until we had Mr W so I think that was part of the reason
3. but now we know that if you need any help at all at break or lunch or there's been an issue they'll be plenty of teachers out there who are wearing an orange high vis you can always go and speak to about it

Summary (Roles):
Only 3 schools have a dedicated section on Roles. How are roles understood in primary schools: does the hierarchy of a role influence the behaviour of a person towards a child?

Key theme: Expectations

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Expectation of ambition for all children including identifying, assessing and meeting individual need. (c) Implementation of appropriate reasonable adjustments. (c)	Misbehaviour is to be responded to consistently. (V) The following of social norms (by children) that should be encouraged. (Vlll)	Clear and high expectations of the pupils. Identity and culture significant factor	High expectations and values: Caring, Sharing, Aiming High. Elements considered of	High expectations of each other – policy starts with Behaviour Principles and includes Racism	Encourages pupils and staff to give their best. Our expectations are that people treat others the	Guiding principles of: Relationship; Responsibility; Respect; Re-engage; Recognition;

Expectation of improved outcomes for all children. (c) Involvement of parents (c) Expectation that risk factors and other safeguarding arrangements are in place for children with SEND and/or other vulnerabilities. (e) The curriculum meets the needs of all children. (f)	Response to misbehaviour to be prompt and predictable and dealt with confidently. (VI) Schools need to be clear on permitted and prohibited behaviours. (VIII) HT's are responsible for securing acceptable standards of behaviour. (IX) Schools need to meet the national minimum expectations. (IX) Visible presence of HT in managing behaviour, (IX) All staff aware of BP and how to implement it. (X) Expectation of high standards and clear rules for everyone. (XI) Unequivocal expectation of what should be included in a school BP.(XIII) BP should adhere to defined principles. (XIV)	in our expectations. Provides appendix A - Daily routine checklist for teachers. Explicit teaching of key rules and routines. 100% compliances expected that children will make the correct choices. During learning time children are expected to be silent. If expected to speak as an outcome of a question or direct instruction.	great importance: Responsibility; Mutual respect. Honesty. Self-regulation Independence Co-operation. Clear and consistent expectations - adults should speak calmly to children. HT sets standards of high expectations All classes must display 'show me 5' and behaviour ladder. All staff must use conflict resolution approach. Appendix 1 Anti-Bullying	Anti-bullying. Every child has the right to learn free from disruption. Right to be respected. Exclusions only used as 'last resort' (first page). Staff are collectively responsible. Clear consistent routines outlined. Approach to challenging behaviour differentiated. Clear statement that physical intervention is not to be used unless necessary.	way they would like to be treated themselves. Clear statement of expectations: High aspirations; Respecting property; consideration to others; physical violence is unacceptable; serious incidents may lead to suspension; severe incidents may lead to Px. Punctuality and attendance; no dangerous objects or expensive objects in school; wearing of correct uniform. Positive classroom; use of behaviour management techniques; well-	Children will be included in setting expectations for learning behaviours. Recognition charter expectations applied assertively and fairly. Bullying and other negative behaviours not tolerated. Adults will explicitly teach and model learning behaviours. Teachers to provide conditions for learning behaviours to develop.

	Publication of BP at least one a year (XVI) A whole school approach – consistent implementation and well communicated expectations (XIX) School should have a behaviour curriculum reflecting the values of the school, respect. Good conduct more likely than poor conduct. (XX) Routines used to reinforce behaviours. ((XXI) Behaviour expectations for SEND – insufficient clarity of wording 'schools should consider' (XXXI) 'best endeavours' (XXXIV)		Appendix 2 Homophobic bullying		planned environment; time out area; detailed information of vulnerable children accessible to key staff. Strategic seating. Reinforcement of core values. All classes to display core values. Verbal praise evident. Commitment to consistent responses.	Effective classroom management to be in place to reduce challenging behaviour. Children included in setting expectations for acceptable behaviours. Thrive approach to be used to support pupils with challenging behaviours. Parents informed of repeated unacceptable behaviours by SLT
National Policy Observations (Expectations) : **Doc 3** There is a clear expectation that adults in school are responsible for all children taking into account individual need with adjustments made where necessary.		**School Policy Observations (Expectations):** **School A:** Expectations of children are too high, with 100% compliance that children will make the right choices, and during lessons children will be silent unless asked a question or given a direct instruction.				

Improved outcomes expected as a result of strategies used and the curriculum meets the needs of all children. Parents should be involved in supporting their child's behaviour. **Doc 4** Use of negative language rather than positive. Misbehaviour is dealt with promptly, predictably and consistently with clear understanding by all of what are permitted or prohibited behaviours, with children following social norms. HT is visible and responsible for ensuring standards of behaviour are met. New minimum expectations in place that align, if not, somewhat negatively, to Ofsted's 'Good' judgement and the new 'behaviour curriculum' to reflect the values of the school. Clear guidance to support the writing and implementation of BP including: • Whole school approach • Clearly defined principles • High expectations from adults and children • Reinforcement of set routines. There is insufficient clarity in the wording around how schools meet the expectations of children with SEND.	The schools identity and culture are significant expectations, however this may be concerning due to the strong commitment to one faith whilst having children from different religions. Key rules and routines are to be explicitly taught and a checklist of daily routines is provided. **School B:** High expectations and values with high regard given to responsibility, respect and independence. Expectation of a calm adult voice to be used towards children. Whole school approach to rewards and sanctions and the use of a resolution approach to conflict. Information provided on anti-bullying. **School C:** BP starts providing clear guidance on expectations of everyone in the school. Inclusive and thoughtful language. Focus on the rights and collective responsibility of everyone in school and the use of clear routines. Provides clear information that exclusion is to be used as a last resort. Differentiated approach to challenging behaviour and physical intervention not to be used unless necessary. **School D:** This BP is very detailed and provides information and clear guidance as to the expectations of everyone in school, outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and the need for a consistent approach. Focus on positive behaviour management and that this is the responsibility of the class teacher to implement.

	Vulnerable children known to key staff and managed appropriately. **School E:** Guiding principles in place at the beginning of the BP. Children involved in setting classroom expectations. Whole school use of differentiated classroom recognition charters. This could be confusing as it may interfere with a whole school approach to behaviour. Adults to use effective classroom management strategies and explicitly teach and model good behaviours providing the right conditions for learning behaviours to develop. Thrive approach used to support reintegration. No reference to the early involvement of parent. Repeated, unacceptable behaviours being reported to parents by the SLT which seems to take away professional input of class teachers.

Fieldwork Observations (Expectations):
School A:
1. Day one. YR RE lesson – How God made the world. V responding well to TA During 10 minutes of CT talk V listened attentively.
2. Left classroom and returned to corridor. Sun shining, however, children were having an indoor lunchtime.
3. Possible risk is that all of the children in class are expected to conform to 'set' and potentially rigid principles.
4. Day two. V came to me at 9.30 and started to build a Lego house. He had a direct (including eye contact) conversation with me, telling me he was going to build a house for superman. I interacted with V and supported him to make a house. He was dextrous and able to build a house with a ramp. Whilst I was doing this, 2 adults in the class were having a conversation with each other which appeared to be unrelated to anything children were doing. A third adult joined in. There was no observable interaction with any child in the classroom by adults during this time (approx. 5 mins). 1 adult left to interact with a child but and then went back to S then was called out of the class by an adult coming to the door.
1 adult was on an iPad, no interaction with any child. 3 adults talking together CT had come in from outside play area. V went up to them to show them his Lego house. They all had their back to him and were engaging in an adult conversation. Vernon got one adults attention by patting her. She acknowledged him. CT no acknowledgement. V persisted, tapping CT. CT said "amazing, I love it." She walked outside. 9.50 CT sharpening pencils, interacting with TA, both went into the store cupboard. V went outside.
2 adults on the art table.
10.00 CT and TA still no interaction with any child. V still outside. Another adult comes into class and interacts with CT. 4 adults in the classroom.
10.02 CT still talking to TA, 3 adults now talking to each other.

10.04 CT found a child and sat at a table 1 to 1. TA and CT having a conversation – child tapping CT for attention.
10.06 CT stood back up, child left.
10.07 YR girl (O) standing next to me, TA came over to her having noticed her and started talking to her.
10.07 CT at table, moving books, went outside. TA left girl (O).
5. CT counting children to sit on the carpet, T (boy) waiting for CT to complete counting before sitting (stabbing paper with a pencil). Not all children standing to talk and did not appear to be expected by CT.

School B:

1. She commented on the mothers role at home and the need for mothers to maintain their position in the household by 'mothering' their children resulting in children having a lack of independence.

2. "We're not going, I'm still waiting – why is it not in an e-mail, it should have been sent. Nothing ever is".

3. CT to boy "why are you drawing a picture? Go and move your name down (this was all done quickly with no opportunity for the boy to answer her question – I felt the teacher was unnerved by my presence, she kept looking at me and did not seem to be relaxed – I smiled and made a determined effort to try and look as if I was observing children and not her by looking away and then moved quietly moved by body position so it was not facing her.

4. I spent 3 lunchtimes observing in the dining hall. Two lunchtime supervisors appeared brusque and unusually sharp with the children. The majority of the children had a school lunch however what seemed to be a very high proportion of the children ate very little, some almost nothing. They were not encouraged to eat, and their food was thrown away. The range of food was very limited, and I felt it did not support the dietary requirements or preferences for the ethnic diversity in the school. Couldn't rice be a staple every day? I felt a sense of emotion and it made me feel quite upset that a lot of children could be feeling hungry for an afternoon and the impact this might have on their learning/concentration etc.

Interview evidence (Expectations):

School A: (Inclusion Manager)

1. I'd take him into class and then it would start all over again.

2. Truthfully, lack of nurture at home. Erm, I just think it's so sad to be left in front of technology or television, this sounds awful but sometimes the parents come and pick them up and they're so busy looking at their phone they don't even ask their kids how the days gone.

School B (SLT)

1. , whenever they are going up or down there should be a clear explanation of why it's happening cos I think that's important for them to understand, I hate it when you say to a child "Well why is your teacher not very happy?" "I don't know"

2. think it's a mix of there are some children who are not doing what they understand so there are children who haven't learnt the right thing and there are children who are choosing not to do the right thing and they are very different. You can't blame a child actually yeah if a is developmentally not able to sit still for five minutes that's not naughty they're just not able to do it whereas another child they can sit still and choose not to that's naughty yeah erm and I also think it

comes down to high expectations and being really really consistent and I think we've got a little bit of an issue with inconsistency with behaviour expectations across the school.
3. And it's interesting the classes that cos my measure of my behaviour management is if I'm not there they should still be behaved well if I've taught them to understand what good behaviour is it's not about whether there's someone there staring at them No If I leave the room they should behave in exactly the same way and that's and if there's a supply teacher in there they should behave in the same way
4. If a child in a class is just silent it's not, they're just sat there they're not learning. It would be interesting for you to go to S because the classrooms are much noisier but it's because a lot of the children are engaged and they're questioning and they're thinking out loud and a visitor that the behaviour is more challenging much more challenging and there is more bad behaviour there but in terms of their learning behaviour it much better
5. right what I want you to do is there's some phrases I want you to choose the ones you like and write it out as a poem because we'd been doing poetry a few weeks before. There poems were amazing I like to do you know like literally that moment pride, full of pride and I told their teacher, and she just couldn't believe it she's like cos she's at first all she's like well they won't be able to write a poem
6. that teachers said to me but if I let them do it independently it won't look as gook in their book I said I should hope it wouldn't because if your telling me something they do on their own is a good as what they do with you then you're not doing a good job and she's like oh
7.for me it's about every child doing them doing better than they would normally do so it's that real yeah and that's about knowing those children really well so for example in my maths lesson this morning erm we were doing so we were counting they had to get they had to get 8 they had to get 8p with 2p no they had to get 10p and then they had to get 8p and one of the children looked up and went Ah I just need to put on back, yeah, which was a real breakthrough though yeah in his learning yeah he his name went up yeah ok cos really if you get to the end of the day and everyone's on green that's a blooming brilliant day
8. He has more IQ in his little in his little left foot then anyone else in the family extremely bright I've never known
School D: (Inclusion Manager)
1. ago I couldn't work with them (ah) because we were battling (yeah) it was a battle now you can enjoy them (yeah) three four years well four five years ago we couldn't enjoy them Susie (no no) now we can enjoy the children (lovely) and they learn and they are learning and they're interested in everything around them because they see things more clearly they haven't got other children hanging off of raft rafters trying to stab them with scissors its is its just its great (lovely it's so nice to see you so happy) ah its lovely (yeah) because (yeah)you know for a while you think how long can we go on like this (yeah) but the children keep you here and we knew I think the children the people the staff that are still here now knew that it couldn't go on any longer so they knew there had to be somewhere light at the end of the tunnel and in he walked.
2. no expectation Susie (no) of our children it was (poor them) they were expected to mess up (poor them yeah) you know erm now we expect our children to follow the rules (yes) and to follow this and to work hard for what they want out of life we expect that (yeah) every child has that right to get the best education they can but it wasn't expected (no) all those years it they were just oh well erm you know it was like oh well they've had a crap time so erm let them do what they want
School D: (Teacher)
1. actually half your class are running up and down the corridor and playing on a computer there's no incentive to be part of your class is there and I think that was what was really hard you knew there were children who shouldn't be part of it who were getting drawn in wasting their time and their education and really losing out when they shouldn't have been

2. you're just able to get on with your job and do it to properly and do it to the best of your ability we're focussing on teaching we're focussing on learning and children are learning and you're seeing progress in a different way and you're not going home and thinking there are 8 children I didn't speak to today or you know I we didn't really didn't do anything in that maths lesson because such and such is under the table biting someone's ankle
3. but we're patient with those children we don't right them off and say you'll never be able to do any maths yet with behaviour we're almost expecting them to be perfect after we've said 3 times sit in the classroom and be quiet the whole lesson well (yeah)that that doesn't teach them anything
4. that you are not going to have children who are ready-made who come to school reading where educations particularly valued by all children at home
School D: (Child1)
1. I started to change around my behaviour because I didn't want to stay at school for longer my mum was getting really stressed one year I actually got excluded
2. actually have no clue maybe it was just because I had loads of things going on like my dad left and stuff like that so that happened

Summary (Expectations):

Key theme: Systems

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
System of identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of all pupils (referring to SEND) (c) Systems in place to involve parents. (c) Use of effective safeguarding arrangements and pre-empting risk. (e) Curriculum design and implementation meets the needs of all pupils. (f) Systems in place to support: Orderly environment; routines; attendance; policies. (h)	When misbehaviour occurs responses in place to prevent them recurring. (VI) Behaviour policy in place to support vision and communicate school culture. (VIII) System of behaviour management in place, understood and followed by all staff. (IX) Use of targets to improve behaviour. (IX) The need for a BP (X);	Core values 'community, pride and joy'. Classes practice 'key rules and routines'. If additional support is required – behaviour management plan is written with parents. Pre-emptive: non-verbal; verbal reminders; named reminders; 100 % compliance;	**Principles:** high expectations and values: Caring, Sharing, Aiming High Show me 5! 1. Eyes on the speaker 2. Mouth quiet 3. Body still 4. Ears listening 5. Hands free Behaviour ladders displayed using 'caring, sharing, aiming high – 5 steps: red, amber, green	Starts policy with Behaviour principles: 3 basic principles linked to learning values Be ready Be respectful Be safe Aims Consistent approach to behaviour management Pupil Code of Conduct Incidents logged Analysis of behaviour patterns,	Policy starts with Aims Create and foster a safe calm environment Policy for positive behaviour a framework to establish/mainta in excellent relationships Signpost to staff, parent and pupil code of conduct. school uniform Classroom management Core values Be safe	Starts with principles and procedures GUIDE children behave in appropriate manner, shows LOVE, COURAGE AND TRUST. The children are LOVING, COURAGEOUS and TRUSTWORTHY so they become TALENTED ROLE MODEL and make a DIFFERENCE in GOD'S WORLD

Monitoring of rates, patterns and reasons for exclusions and system for reintegration. (k) Alternative systems other than exclusions in place including accessing external support. (m)	Staff induction training and responsibilities (XIII) Procedures for the prevention of child-on-child abuse, banned items. (XIII) Communicating BP to parents, staff and pupils. (XIII) Routines and repeated practices to promote the values of the school. (XXI) Systems of rewards and sanctions. (XXVII and XLII) Use of de-escalation techniques. (XXVIII) System in place to inform SLT of children not responding to low-level sanctions. (LXXII)	pupil voice. YR to use a behavioural chart. Lunchtime behaviour – behaviour to correct – consequences as a result (in table format) Reasonable force Leaving the school site Daily routine checklist for teachers Behaviour book CPOMs Identification of behaviour patterns If child leaves school without permission – police and parents informed immediately (this ends the policy)	rainbow, pot of gold class names displayed on board Classroom management carefully considered with pupil involvement and clearly communicated Related policies and appendixes: Conflict resolution to be used Reasonable Force Confiscation Searching External negative behaviour ABC forms CPOMs Refers staff to staff handbook	Potential triggers identified/addressed Pupil transition Pupil support systems protected characteristic Support for individual pupils Use of reasonable force • Always be a last resort Malicious accusations against staff Behaviour chart Behaviour and Rewards paper Report of Bullying Behaviour Incident proforma Restorative form to be completed The do's and don'ts of positive parenting	Be responsible Be respectful Be a learner Age-appropriate core values/meaning displayed. Strategy for gaining consistent positive behaviour Verbal praise Visual display Walkie talkie Use of conduct log Informing parents/carers Zero tolerance approach to bullying/prejudiced based abuse (provides info)	'Up For It' Attitude – safe 'Storm breaker' mental health programme and 'Thrive 'profiles Policy 5 principles Relationships Responsibility Respect Re-engage Recognition. Parents informed of serious/repeated unacceptable behaviours by SLT Thrive support plans for individuals

				Reference made to other related policies and websites		

National Policy Observations (Systems) :
Doc 3 Clear systems in place to assess and meet the needs of vulnerable children and children with SEND.

Policies in place to support behaviour.

Systems for the monitoring of sanctions and for reintegration.

Alternative systems other than exclusion in place including accessing external support.

Doc 4 A range of systems clearly provided including:

- BP
- Behaviour management
- Use of targets
- Staff training
- Routines and repeated practices
- Rewards and sanctions
- De-escalation techniques

School Policy Observations (Systems):
School A: Is 100% compliance achievable across the whole school – be silent – count down to silence No clear explanation of behaviour system in class- goes straight into preamble – is this an expectation of understanding
Verbal reminders always end with 'thank you' (+)?
No reference to: de-escalation; uniform checks; re-integration.

School B: Behaviour ladder explanation confusing- should be gold as the top bullet point 'ie 'put you name up' towards the pot of gold'
Doesn't include volunteers under use of reasonable force.
The policy expects staff to use the Conflict resolution approach but only gives outline signposting reader to Staff Handbook.
Engagement with parents (under 'The role of parents') 'we inform parents immediately if we have concerns about their child's welfare of behaviour.' However previously under heading 'Consequences for unwanted behaviour – last bullet
'If behaviours are of an extreme nature or continue over a period of time parent will be informed.'
Under heading Exclusions reader signposted to gov website which comes up with
{"_response_info":{"status":"not found"}}
The paragraph on searching is worrying in that it states parents do not need to be informed. Even though this is correct it could be potentially very distressing for a young child and not to inform parents could exacerbate this.

School C: Details of sanction system not in main body of text (Behaviour Sanctions chart in appendices).
Policy is referred to as a behaviour management policy
Clear description e.g. what bullying is.
Parent do's and don'ts (appendices) very useful and pro-active. Highlights the need for simple short direct requests.

	Mentions differentiated approach re protected characteristic and support systems for individual pupils. **School D:** Repeats throughout the policy that it is important that everyone follows the policy and clear focus on what adults can do to mitigate unacceptable behaviour. **School E:** Thrive approach strategies to be used (VRF) but does not inform the reader what this is. Language is confused in places e.g. 'display seriously inappropriately behaviour'

Fieldwork Observations (Systems):

School A.

1. Day one. 1st adult (unknown status) "I'll take V (YR boy) next." 2nd adult (unknown status) "Good luck with that one."

2. Day two. 3 TA's engaging with children, 2 singing 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' 1 engaged with O but left to distract S who was becoming agitated. TA's no engagement with children. TA came from outside play area and immediately engaged with CT who was sitting at the table with the children's books. Another TA joined in conversation. One TA on carpet with boy (N). N holding broom, no interaction and then went outside. Job share CT came into classroom and spoke to other CT. TA came back into room and told N to 'check schedule' "busy bee has finished, check schedule. It felt like pressure was being put on N to 'check schedule'. S and N plus girl and 3 TA's left room, CT out of class, not adult in classroom (other than me). CT then came into classroom. CT cleaning up paint, no interaction with children. V outside, came in at 10.21. CT engaged with V and asked him if he wanted to paint. V put an apron on and started to paint. TA came back into the classroom. CT and TA engaged in conversation. At this point there was a Michelin tyre advert on the screen. CT was on the table with children's books, child left table having been there for under 2 minutes. TA came in from outside – engaged with class teacher.

3.Lunchtime S, N, E and M sitting separately from their peers. V ate most of his food and coped well at the table, sitting quietly after he had finished. I felt he was getting bored, so I engaged him in a conversation and walked back to the classroom with him he held my hand – wanted to engage with me and took something by the Headteachers door. We went outside to the YR playground. Played by himself on a bike but chose to ride bike into another child. There was only one supervisor with YR. S, N and M were not outside. V interacting with older girls by the gate to the playing field. Left playground and went for lunch.

4. Felt that the CT was working to create 'whole class feel' and there was clarity of instruction throughout.

School B:

1. The language of adults is very clear and direct – clarity/simplicity. Is this because of the high number of children who have EAL – 'a natural simplicity in the relationships between adults and children as a result of the use of language'? **2.** Children encouraged to work independently – no peer collaboration. **3.** Boy in blue (not in school uniform) who had been taken out of the class by came back in whilst the TA was reading a story (he had missed most of it). **4.** I spent 3 lunchtimes observing in the dining hall. Two lunchtime supervisors appeared brusque and unusually sharp with the children. The majority of the children had a school lunch however what seemed to be a very high proportion of the children ate very little, some almost nothing. They were not encouraged to eat and their food was thrown away. The range of food was very limited, and I felt it did not support the dietary requirements or preferences for the ethnic diversity in the

school. Couldn't rice be a staple every day? I felt a sense of emotion and it made me feel quite upset that a lot of children could be feeling hungry for an afternoon and the impact this might have on their learning/concentration etc.

Interview evidence (Systems):

School A: (Inclusion)1. generally, a safe adult 2**.** We also so do it that they earn reward time. Erm, well in the past it's been violent, throwing things at teacher, the breaking fights up, erm, disruptive behaviour, I can very often go into a class where there's been a disruptive child and say "Right, would you like to come out with me for 10 minutes. You can bring your work." And just the fact that I've removed them from the classroom, and we sit down, and we'd talk about the work and they'd do it and they go back to class and they can cope so it's taken them away from the situation really. And you think that can help? Oh yes. Yeah. Yeah, very much so.

3. Not everyone's consistent **4**. would throw him out of class or he'd leave class himself

School B. (SLT)

1. Ok in my limited experience in this school. Ok so se have a, I call it a peg chart system a name chart system so the children they all start on the, I can't remember what it's called but the green, and their expectations, so if they do something over and above what is expected they'd go up and could end up on a pot of gold

2. so but also the same if they're going up, that's really brilliant I can see that you've thought really hard about that that's good, put your name up and I think that's quite good for the other children to hear that cos then they know how to up and how to erm go down, also alongside that it's making sure that the child that goes down had every opportunity to go back up again

3. I'm not a huge fan of children missing whole playtimes because it just impacts on their behaviour afterwards but I think children need to be need to be understanding when they've done something wrong and some children it will be the look on their face they'll be like Oh ok I know I've done the wrong thing I' happy with that Ok If you understand what you've done wrong I don't need to go any further whereas there are a couple of children who just think it's funny

4. I think we've got some challenging behaviour in terms of their passivity towards their learning, and I think that's widespread

5. Yeah, yeah and it's not that these children don't want to be stimulated it's that I don't know they just they haven't been No it's weird because all I hear here is we've got high expectations, we've got high expectations, but you haven't they haven't No I feel like they're killing them with kindness.

6. So I'm hoping that as part of the named chart the clear explanation of what they're doing right or wrong helps them to support that.

7.Wasn't too bad in YR he had lots of SEND stuff we went and had SAOS. Do you know SAOS Southampton Advisory Outreach Service come from special school, They come in and make suggestions I mean it's difficult because I'm a more mature teacher I've been through the process before so all the things they suggest putting in place I've You've already done I've already tried yeah but you have to go through the process we'd had I can't remember what they call it with the Ed Psych service where you're not talking about a particular child your talking about it's like a behaviour clinic or something yeah, yeah, we went through all of that and the we then went to the Heads panel they then said try this it's like yeah we've tried that and you know he was eventually diagnosed he was diagnosed not Christmas just gone but before Christmas before for ADHD he was then seen was seen for medication the next Christmas, that's how long it took like what we're meant to do in the meantime and he's then gone through so they also talked about Oppositional Defiance Disorder yeah and the weren't willing to do anything about that until he'd had his ADHD diagnosis and medication his medication because apparently once you get an ODD diagnosis

School D. (Inclusion Manager)

1. I was working in a school where children were being failed, that's how I felt (yes) erm There was no boundaries, there wasn't any structure, erm children would come in every day and basically if they wanted to run around the school they ran around the school and children weren't able to learn in that environment we had children erm who were violent we had children who would totally refuse and different strategies were put in place, we had a behaviour chart and we had this and that it was very, very bitty, unfortunately it only lasted a couple of weeks and then it was forgotten (ok) erm so there were high risk of exclusions there were erm children who couldn't learn wanted to, because our children have always had a voice and the children I spoke to screamed out we want boundaries we want structure, we want to know who's going to teach us when we walk into our school because outside of school they didn't have boundaries and structure, they didn't know who was going to meet them at the end of the day.
2. I felt there wasn't the strong leadership (mm) there definitely wasn't and we as practitioners had no support there wasn't very much support for us at all so unfortunately you could we were coming in and it was just the norm we would come in and try and battle through every day if it was everybody tried so hard but when new strategies and procedures and policies were changed and put into place we would follow that but then it would change again the goal posts were being widened constantly so the staff didn't really know where we all were we could go back to the policies but then they'd change again.
3. I remember we had a child here who was quite volatile he was autistic and he just needed to be understood and we understood him erm but unfortunately and we went through a lot he was never excluded erm but one day he it wasn't a thump it wasn't done you know with sheer aggression it was just like that to the headteacher and he was excluded, not to come back anymore erm and I thought well we've done this every day you know (it's sad) we've done it every day and I did get really upset because that boy by this time was in Y6 he had about 3 weeks left and we couldn't say goodbye to him yet he'd been here all that time and there was thing and he was gone.
4. its taken 3 years what I love is the consistency now if J says right this is what we are going to do we will do it and because of the respect he's got (mm) and how he respects us we just do it because it works not because its what J says we know that it works (yeah)we've got such a simple behaviour policy now erm everybody can follow it it's not bitty it's you know right
5.the consistency the simplicity it is simple, but it works what he's put in place it we can follow it all the behaviour policy
6. we know like our behaviour policy and our safeguarding policies and we all work with them you know with it's just a simple it's simple it's understood we're all onboard with it because and that's what we feel that J wanted he involved us all with everything so we're all onboard none of us disagree with anything we all agree with it, it wasn't I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that it was a whole school
7. right the challenging behaviour is child's not following instructions or becoming unsafe in class, I get a radio call I go down see if I can diffuse that situation I will they usually go on to reflection table out there and we'll have a chat little bit of restorative justice have our chat and settle them back into class if that doesn't work then SLT are called and J or C D will deal with that and erm they'll lose they could lose their break and lunch or it could be an after-school detention where there parents are informed and given lots of notice so that's that side of it usually and more than likely we can resolve that and diffuse the situation its most of its very low level stuff
8. it's all put on a conduct log, we've got conduct logs that every teacher or every adult in the school if they radio it has to be logged so we have a low level conduct log and a high level conduct log and what we've what we notice is that we can see patterns on there so that's looked at the data's looked at weekly and we can see if there's a pattern a child's behaving more misbehaving on a Monday could it be the weekend erm who are they with etc so we can look at that erm and pick bits out from there so that's where we are on there and you know our behaviours you know
School D: (Teacher)

1. then we had another change of head and things kind of got quite bad and then in my fourth year here I had quite a challenging Y6 class I had children who jumped out of windows who ran away hadn't seen that at all in the school before children with a lot of personal problems who I don't think we really had the skills to deal with we had a bit of a one size fits all so if you were doing something wrong you got a sticker chart and everything was about earning stickers and however much you talked to people about the fact that actually these children can't cope they're very proud stubborn year 6 boys with difficult home lives and not getting a sticker makes them think they've failed and every single day they're failing we're not helping them.
2. I'm not blaming that person but the thing they encouraged (the Senco) was the Senco was this constant rewarding so if you've had a good day at school, you could have half an hour on the laptop and those kind of rewards didn't really work because there again if you didn't get the reward it was the end of the world
3. we didn't really have any proper behaviour plans in place
4. then we started labelling children and I think that's where a lot of our undoing came we kind of labelling them we kept creaming them off into little groups here there and everywhere we had children in rooms with adults rather than us looking at that inclusive approach (right) and we needed to be inclusive apart from a few children who actually weren't in the right setting and weren't erm because of both their learning behavioural emotional needs weren't really in the right school in the main we were trying to get rid of children rather than looking at how they could be included in the classroom (so getting rid of them internally) yes internally they weren't being excluded (but they were just being put somewhere) yeah they were being put somewhere so they didn't actually ever learn how to be in the classroom (right) and if you didn't really believe in that you would just be keeping them without any support which then actually impacts on the rest of your class
5. we did a lot of work with H on how we actually wrote behaviour plans that worked we started which you would have seen that kind of erm green, orange and red behaviour system
6. so we had those children who just needed to do something so we had children that on their behaviour plan if if we didn't get to them quickly enough one of the things they might do is rip up some boxes so there was a there was something in place where none of us were interacting them, but they were getting into a calmer place
7. if you look through behaviour plans you can see all of the all of the de-escalation techniques that those children knew would work for them so we were giving them a chance to become calm rather than actually winding them up even further and that's probably a little bit strong language but I do think we did I really think children were being wound up rather than calmed down
8. framework that we constantly come back to so it is part of the everyday its not a policy that lives on a computer or in a folder it's a policy that supports you within your classroom if you need to so I actually don't have any children on behaviour plans in my class at the moment just following that normal behaviour policy so if you look at our behaviour and reward system you know if someone isn't following instructions then obviously we move them to reflection table that's like the most I will get to at the moment someone will sit at the reflection table it's a big deal because it happens very very rarely most people are actually following that first instruction or remember we're not going to talk in this lesson generally doesn't need to be more than that
9. (a child) thinking ooh yesterday when I was really badly behaved, I got a laptop and on Thursday when I was really badly behaved I went home you know with 20 stickers its actually oh this always happens and I think this makes a difference to the children they absolutely know the framework
10. we're not really any different people we haven't suddenly become better teachers overnight we were never terrible literally we didn't have those systems to enable us to be what we want, and I think that was the joy of ofsted that actually finally everything had come together and all of us were in a position to give our best

11. if you'd talked to me 4 years ago I would have talked to you all the time about behaviour and I probably wouldn't have mentioned learning once whereas learning is completely at the forefront of my mind now (how lovely) coming to school is for that (how lovely) learning it is what it should be (absolutely) erm you don't see fearful of doing their jobs you don't see people or children getting hurt as much

School D: (Child 1)

1. he would let me bring in anything from home he was the greatest

2. and one day it was actually 10.00 we'd just got in I was in for 1 hour someone said you put your hand up and he put his middle finger at me so just had enough so I walked out the classroom stayed out the classroom till 12 o'clock at lunchtime and that's why I got excluded

3. lots of children were being excluded here and now they're not) about like 10 people that would get excluded in one week

4. when I would leave the classes I would come back, we would be on a different topic, and I wouldn't have a clue so say it would be English and then I leave and then I come back it would be like reading and I would have missed the whole lesson

5. but mr w mr w he is strict …so when he is strict so people that are being naughty he will get a little bit cross he will put his grumpy face on and shouting voice but he wouldn't be shouting and then basically he would be shouting at people and then they would turn round and then they would ….straight away and then after that it would just go back to normal so I think our school has

School D: (Child 2)

1. so it could be very distracting at times, but I think now it's very much you're on task and I know what I'm doing and it's much easier to concentrate

2. like our behaviour system so we've now got red orange light green dark green and then gold and obviously you start the day on light green it goes it goes it resets at lunchtime so you've got a morning and afternoon but if you obviously if it gets dark green that's good if it gets gold amazing if you move down to orange they're going to ask you to get a reflections period if you move red they are going to ask you to leave and they might have to radio call

3. would have been teachers out there but it wasn't always easy to spot sometimes so now they have high viz so you can spot them

4. erm I think for some reasons yes and some reasons no erm sometimes I didn't necessarily agree with why they had been excluded but sometimes I think maybe it was maybe they should have been for what they did

Summary (Systems):

Key theme: Rewards

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
No specific reference to rewards. Comments that the judgement on behaviour and attitudes is based on research and inspection evidence and are the main contributors to	Under the heading of what a behaviour should have there is no reference made to rewards referring to 'rules, routines and consequence systems'(XIII)	Valued roles: Faith council School council Head student, House captains Play leaders Headteachers award	Behaviour ladder rewards positive behaviour towards pot of gold The Golden Book used for particular	Range of rewards Direct praise Marvellous me app (allows teachers to message a certificate home)	Celebrating and communicating success Positive praise Positive postcards Stickers	Recognition systems: Whole class recognition charter children recognised for positive learning behaviours

this. This does not directly refer to rewards but lists a number of bullet point that may include the use of rewards e.g. • Calm and orderly environment • Clear routines and expectations • Good attendance and punctuality • Developing motivation and positive attitudes • Promoting respect (i)	Using positive reinforcements and rewards referred to on p 16. Use of praise, certificates, assemblies, positions of responsibility, class or group activities.	Star of the week and House winners Shout outs In class recognition and House points	rewards; examples given related to values. All children to be nominated at least once per academic year. Golden ticket given in assemble to give to family Children taken to HT for good learning/behavio ur Rewards given must be honoured, rewards cannot be withdrawn	Excellent work charts (earn bronze, silver, gold) Golden book assembly – each week child chosen from each class to receive award in special assembly – parents of child invited House points Attendance award Lunchtime award Praise board	Friday celebration assemblies	Teachers and adults will place emphasise on praising pupil's efforts using growth mindset observations. 'you worked hard on this' you persevered brilliantly learning his challenging new skill' and 'try to avoid fixed mindset labelling that praises intelligence or talent i.e. 'you're so clever' you're so talented' Two more bullet point included both wordy (see Language) Friday vision worship Class vision treat Headteacher award
National Policy Observations (Rewards): **Doc 3** No specific mention to rewards.		**School Policy Observations (Rewards):** **School A:** Are the 'valued' roles difficult for vulnerable or C@RE children to achieve?				

Doc 4 Reference to rewards, however, some of those mentioned such as positions of responsibility may be difficult for some vulnerable children or children with SEND to achieve without a focused and thoughtful approach.	**School B:** 'Any reward earned cannot subsequently be withdrawn'. Clear links made to reward systems. Inclusive – every child to be nominated for the Golden book during academic year. **School C:** Comes before sanctions in the policy. Focus on positive behaviour **School D:** Comes before sanctions in the policy – focus on inclusion and positive behaviour **School E:** Recognition systems appear unduly complex

Fieldwork Observations (Rewards):

School A:

1. Use of thumbs up by adults in class.

School B:

1. Girl (who had not done well in phonics) confident to use number bonds – I felt it was far too easy a task for her and she looked bored. CT to girl "well done - move your name up.

Interview evidence (Rewards):

School B: (SLT)

1. around that you need to do a lot of work on, cos some children think well I haven't got on to the gold, pot of gold they call it here, we called it I think at S something, but they've just called it different names. Even some children think that they don't get to that then they're done they've not had a good day so you need to do a lot of work around if you're still on the green

2. Ok so that it might be you know that if you're finding getting started quicker, I would make a big deal of you, a brilliant, your are one of the first so so, I'd have a good idea it might be if particularly if there's an issue it might be that actually when we are thinking about the peg chart I call it the peg chart the name chart, I'm only asking you to do one thing Ok so I'm not going to worry about if you've not sat in your chair but if you're looking around, I'm not going, there's not going to be any negativity around that thing I'm looking at for might be that I want you to be looking at me so that would be the positive or the negative

3. I think what I've just said about them if they're not on the pot of gold they feel like they haven't had a good day so that can have quite a negative impact I did in my class I did quite a lot of work on explaining how if you're still there you can feel really proud

4. there's a child in Y2 whose really struggling at the moment with he just doesn't get anything done so just making sure at the beginning so I said he's just so slow literally picking up his pencil takes him about 20 minutes so making sure the next, if they've has a session where they've gone down making sure the next session it's right, brilliant what we're going to do is this we're going to try really hard so with him it's like I'll make sure you're not the last person on the table to pick up your pencil, so making it really positive cos otherwise you get into a nagging cycle

5. That child he still doesn't quite understand cos he's still in that very egocentric, but I want to play mmm whereas he's got a friend who just think it's fun not to tidy up, I don't want to. The child who hasn't quite worked it out he did have some discovery time because he was reminded so he missed a little bit we had a little chat so why were you in trouble this morning, I didn't tidy up, so at tidy up time I'm going to be looking really carefully and make sure what you're going to do, tidy up, and he did. The other one didn't have any because he chose to be a pain he chose to hide, like no, I'm not having it

6. I don't know, ok, cos I've come from a system that I introduce that this system at my previous school we called it a peg chart cause their children had pegs so but then every time I say peg here the same name then erm but I don't know to be honest ok because of the rapid change in my job and then the covid situation I think I would hope so and I think some of the TA's would be more eloquent than some of the teachers ok yeah I would imagine probably its fairly used, fairly inconsistently I would say, yeah I'd probably agree with you there I'd imagine so because those sorts of things are and you lose the value of them cos one of that's interesting, my questions is what happens when you get to the pot of gold I make a big deal out of it that's amazing, you're really good.

School D: (Teacher)

1. the thing they encouraged (the Senco) was the Senco was this constant rewarding so if you've had a good day at school, you could have half an hour on the laptop and those kind of rewards didn't really work because there again if you didn't get the reward it was the end of the world

School D: (Child 1)

1. a toy (no you could bring a toy in sorry did you think that was a good idea or) erm well back then I had a load of things on my mind an as for my adhd I had to have something to fiddle with (ok) I had it was a unicorn so I kept it on my finger the whole day and like as it hair I would twirl it around my finger

2. it maked (sic) me feel … because I didn't stand around the people that would make me upset I also was sad because I did want to learn but it was just difficult with the people that are in my class that made me not like it

3. I maybe cos when we had our headteacher the woman it was quite a long time ago erm she was not strict at all she was loose and she would if someone would be naughty she'd say its fine go back to learning …

4. but with me classroom says like the front of the door says safe room and as me like loving learning if I go in there, I would love it I would just sit relax do some learning and then boom

Summary (Rewards)

Key theme: Sanctions

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Consequences are fair and consistently applied (i) Sanctions need to evaluated for effectiveness, including rates, patterns and reasons. (k)	Clearly outlines use of sanctions. (VI) The need to go further when sanctions are not working. (VII)	Consequences given to 'Behaviours to correct' hierarchical: Name on board.	Consequences for unwanted behaviour – hierarchical Moving names down the ladder	Where behaviour falls below expectations system of warnings in place including:	Verbal warning Warning Zones Please note that if a child is in the dark green or gold zone and they make the	There are sanctions associated with unacceptable and unsafe behaviours – proportionate

Exclusions must be legal and justified and Px only used as a last resort. (l) Use of alternative strategies to exclusion is encouraged. (m) Listening to children who have received sanctions or been excluded. (n)	In serious instances a pupil can be suspended or excluded permanently. (VII) BP should include consequence systems and certainty in the consistent use of them (XXI) (XIII) Use of sanctions as a deterrent, to protect the child or children and to help children understand how to meet behaviour expectations. A range of sanctions deemed at acceptable are provided: • Verbal reprimand • Written tasks • Loss of privileges • School based community service • Regular reporting • Uniform checks • Placed on report • Suspension • Permanent exclusion. (XLII)	Name on 'turn it around'; Missing proportion of break-time (5 to 10 mins); Series of break-time missed. Removed to different class. External exclusion. Child regularly receiving sanctions: Letters of reflection. Restorative conversations ELSA support. Class provision to prevent poor behaviour. If 1 to 4 doesn't work: Work with parents/behaviour support plan. Implement necessary support Liaise with Primary	for non-compliance 2 verbal warnings then on 3rd move to red on ladder, class adults speak to parents after school Time-out in class 5 min timer/class designated time out area Pupils speaks to another teacher Pupil speaks to member of SLT ABC forms completed and CPOMS entry made) Unwanted behaviour outside classroom time-out dinner-hall/playground Timeout followed by logical consequences Extreme or violent	Time out in another class – restorative form may be completed If warnings are not heeded – child sent to senior teacher, parent informed. May miss playtime – make up lost learning time Unacceptable behaviour including extreme aggression; persistent disruptive behaviour; non-compliance or fighting, following will/may be applied: Severe clause given and pupil sent to H/t. Letter to parents breaktime and/or	wrong choice they would be verbally warned and move directly to the orange zone if the behaviour persists. Please note the chart is not a ladder. Examples of behaviours given (look at examples across all schools) Child moved to another classroom Internal suspension (formerly) exclusion (?) Reflection time – children may be requested to remain in school after 3.15 due to poor or disruptive behaviour Reflection time – break/lunchtimes	and consistent based on child's emotional development and understanding. Internal and external exclusion – as a result of inappropriate behaviour/threat to the safety of others HT may decide to internally/externally exclude. Parent will be informed. If external school will follow its exclusion policy.

	Provides information on the use of alternative sanctions. (XLIII) Provides guidance on the provision of sanctions allowed by law. (XLIV) (XLV) Refers to age when considering proportionality of sanctions. (XLVI) HT can limit who delivers sanctions. (XLVIII) Contribution of SEND and reference to the Equalities Act when giving sanctions (XLIX) The need to consider reasonable adjustments when issuing a sanction (L) After receiving a sanction children should be helped to consider how to improve their behaviour through: • Target discussion • Apology • Phone call to parents	Behaviour Support (PBS)	behaviour referred to SLT immediately, recorded on ABC and CPOMs tracked and analysed Extreme behaviours parents informed and invited into school to discuss with a member of SLT Extreme behaviour and Pupil with challenging behaviour: Phone call/letter to parents with invitation to come and discuss; Support to parent to ensure child receives a consistent approach and boundaries. Diary to record recurring	lunchtime detention Internal exclusion under the supervision of SLT Severe disruption-child's parent/carer meeting with a senior leader, prior to the child being allowed to re-integrate with their class. Three strike system adopted for pupils displaying persistent disruptive behaviour. The first two incidents will involve an internal exclusion and discussion with the child's parent/carer. On the third occasion the pupil will receive	Fixed term suspension (?) – provides examples	

	• Inquiries involving staff involved with the child. • Inquiries out of school. (LI) Other sanctions include: Detention • Used as a deterrent • Used consistently/fairly • Known to staff and children • In the BP • Can be used out of school hours • Parental consent not required. (LII to LVII) Use of reasonable force and the actions staff can use to control or restrain children. (LVIII) The power of staff to use reasonable force to prevent children from committing an offence, causing injury, damaging property and maintaining good order. (LIX)		incidents for possible use with parents/outside agencies. Very disruptive pupils/those diagnosed with behaviour difficulties written behaviour plans by CT supported by SENCo Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP) shared **Exclusions** Rare and last resort Exclusion kept as short as possible, and reintegration must be the aim Reader directed to gov guidance on exclusions	a fixed term exclusion In more sever or repeated cases, the headteacher (or member of the SLT deputising for the head) can sanction a fixed term or permanent exclusion. In the case of all exclusions parents/carers are informed in writing of the reasons for the exclusion and their right of appeal. Excluded pupils are provided with work for the duration of the exclusion and parents/carers will be invited in to discuss the incident/s. along with their child, before returning		

	Searching, screening and confiscating a child's property. (LIX) Removal from classrooms as a serious reason and a child's learning should continue in a supervised setting. (LXI) Only used when other strategies have failed, and when a child's behaviour is sufficiently severe to need immediate removal. (LXII) Parents should be informed of removal on the same day. (LXII) Removal should be considered whether it is proportionate. (LXII) Should be used to maintain safety, restore stability and allow a child to continue to learn and to become calm in a safe environment. (LXIII) Removal is not the same as children accessing safe spaces as a result of identified need. (LXIV)			to the classroom. The duration of the fixed term exclusions will increase in length if persistent behaviours are displayed		

	Governance of removal requires heads to make it clear it is a response to a serious misbehaviour; it is included in the BP; reasons are transparent; length of time is provided; location of removal is appropriate and stocked appropriately and there is a clear reintegration process. (LXX) Data should be collected and used to analyse the use of removal. (LXVI) Analysis of removal data should be used to see patterns relating to children with protected characteristic. (LXVII) With individual cases of removal HT's and teachers should: • Consider whether an assessment is required. • Facilitate reflection • Ensure a child is never locked in a room • Ensure Children and Families Act 2014 and					

	Equality Act 2010 are complied with. • Inform Virtual HT or social work if the child has one. (LXVIII) Children should not be removed for prolonged periods without the agreement of the HT. (LXIX) Suspension and permanent exclusion can be used in response to persistent poor behaviour no reference to Px being used as a last resort. (LXX) il support units used as a planned intervention and preventative measure to exclusion – this means it can be used as an alternative to a suspension. (LXXIII) Data collection to be used to monitor sanctions. (LXXXVI)					
National Policy Observations (Sanctions): **Doc 3** There is focus on the effectiveness and fairness of sanctions. The legality of them and that Px to be used only as a last resort. Listening to children who have received sanctions.		**School Policy Observations (Sanctions):** **School A:** 'Child will be reflecting' Reflection tasks Can sanctions (given in the positive column) potentially be a negative approach for a child e.g. Letters of reflection				

Doc 4 Clear guidance on the use of sanctions, use of suspension and Px plus alternative arrangements, managed moves and pupils support units. Sanctions can be used as a deterrent which questions whether a sanction can be given to a child who hasn't, at the point of receiving the sanction, done anything wrong. Provide examples of possible sanctions, some of which, could exacerbate a problem e.g. writing tasks. Provides legal information regarding giving sanctions plus the need for reasonable readjustment to them for children with SEND. Sanction include detention; use of reasonable force and removal.	Restorative conversation Class provision to prevent poor behaviour • Short tasks • Class positioning • Individual table 'Schools generally use force to control pupils or restrain them' dominant sentence Removal being used Heading – 'Consequences for not following the schools expectations – the table below outlines the behaviours to correct and then the consequences. If this was to be followed at no point in the process are parents informed prior to exclusion. Reasonable/proportionate/appropriate not referred to. **School B:** Under the role of the headteacher-'For repeated or very serious acts on anti-social behaviour, the Headteacher will permanently exclude a child.' However, under the heading Exclusions further on it states, 'Exclusion is used very rarely and as a last resort' This could appear contradictory. **School C:** Tone of writing changes when children display severely disruptive behaviours e.g. 'three strike system' seems punitive – advice re children who are struggling to manage the systems outlined in the policy are discussed later under 'NOTE' **School D:** Suspension and exclusion information incorrect. 'however, in extreme cases the school will use suspensions (formerly exclusion)' Reflection given to children out of school hours – this is not reflection time this is detention **School E:**
Fieldwork Observations (Sanctions): **School A:** **1.** a.m. E (Y1 girl) on 'turn it around'. **2.** p.m. E's name was still on the 'turn it around' board from this morning.	

3. CT went outside and came back with V and took him by the arm to the table with the books on. V does not want to do the task. CT used puppet to encourage V. V started to hit the puppet. CT – "If you finish you can go outside." V pushed the book away. CT "You've had a good morning." V continued to hit the puppet. CT – "Stop" V refusing to do the task, knocked books off the table and then stood on the chair he had been sitting on. He was asked by CT to get down. V refused. CT physically took him down from the chair and held both of V's arms and moved him over to the sink area. A TA also went over to the sink area. Both adults were standing over him. As CT was holding V, TA removed his shoes. Another TA went over to the sink. 3 adults were standing over him. The TA's then moved away to engage with the other children on the carpet by the screen. V climbed onto the sink. He was removed by the CT (at no time were distraction techniques used). V started to hit CT. V seemed in control at this time. (Is this use of reasonable force?)
4. TA "Shall we take our three down?" 4 children (S, N, E and M) were taken out of the classroom. V also taken out of the classroom by a TA.
School B:
1. Boy (same year group) came into the class at 9.37 and was then sent out – there seemed to be no explanation for this. **2. 1** CT to boy "why are you drawing a picture? Go and move your name down (this was all done quickly with no opportunity for the boy to answer her question. I felt the teacher was unnerved by my presence, she kept looking at me and did not seem to be relaxed. I smiled and made a determined effort to try and look as if I was observing children and not her.)
2. Incident between a boy (K)and girl. CT put boy on 'Thunder and Lightning' and given a 'Time Out' -he had to go and sit on the floor at the back of the class.
3. Boy in blue (not in school uniform) who had been taken out of the class by came back in whilst the TA was reading a story (he had missed most of it).
4. Boy (who CT had told me was the most difficult child she had in class) was sitting at a table by himself (while others were listening to the story) completing his learning. Boy (who CT had told me was the most difficult child she had in class) was sitting at a table by himself (while others were listening to the story) completing his learning.
5. Class went to the library changing over their books – one boy not allowed a book because he hadn't returned his because he couldn't find it at home

Interview evidence (Sanctions):
School A: (Inclusion Manager)
1. Sometimes they lose reward time.
School B: (SLT)
1. Year ones miss the whole of their discovery time, it was only about 20 minutes because I know for a fact on previous experience if another child might have just I'd make them miss 2 mins and they'd have understood they've missed 2 minutes they've done the wrong thing they what they need to do right, the can go and do discovery time but if I'd let them have any discovery time they wouldn't have learnt.
School D: (Inclusion Manager)
1.myself and another colleague trying to do the school at that time we were in a nurture in the Rema block erm with children who found it very very difficult to access the curriculum and access the classroom, so they'd be put in there with myself and another colleague basically out of the way and it was absolute hell,
2. J or C D will deal with that and erm they'll lose they could lose their break and lunch, or it could be an after-school detention
School D: (Teacher):
1. the main we were trying to get rid of children rather than looking at how they could be included in the classroom (so getting rid of them internally) yes internally they weren't being excluded (but they were just being put somewhere) yeah they were being put somewhere so they didn't actually ever learn how to

be in the classroom (right) and if you didn't really believe in that you would just be keeping them without any support which then actually impacts on the rest of your class
2. a group of girls who were very violent 3 or 4 girls quite emotionally damaged and if something went wrong, they would flip out and I don't think we were handling them properly people were quite quickly going to restraint
3. so there was quite a lot of restraining in that becomes a pattern doesn't it I've been a bit violent I'm going to be restrained I'm going to bite and kick some adults when its SLT rather than class teacher so it's going on within actually people who were in supporting us got quite badly hurt and the pattern never got broken because nobody really knew what was behind it (so ….) because following endless pattern I do this this happens I hurt an adult I get excluded and and there patterns like that the same with the children who were running corridors and all of things were just a continuous pattern where no one had a breaking point
4. a child who is currently having difficulties and has been excluded

Summary (Sanctions):

Key theme: Language

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Clear understanding of the multiple and complex needs of children particularly those who have SEND or those who are vulnerable. (b, c , d ,e) Language remains positive throughout. The role of adults and their accountability to provide an environment that encourages good behaviour is dominant throughout the text. Feels as if it has been written by educationalists.	Authoritative. At times it can convey the feeling that there is one author of the text who has strong feeling about how behaviour is to be perceived, particularly in the use of some negative words and phrases. There appears to be a focus on the responsibility of the child to 'fit in' and behave well, rather than the responsibility of the adults to be key enablers in providing the right environment for all children to flourish.	School is aware of recent finding around peer-on-peer abuse. Appendix B – Child friendly Behaviour Policy provided.	Use of positive language to foster positive attitudes and atmosphere Praising school rules whenever observed Pupils encouraged to walk in a quiet and orderly line Respectful behaviour Classroom rules discussed and agreed	Children learn best in a secure, orderly and happy environment Unacceptable behaviour is largely prevented by recognising and rewarding good conduct.	Under 'consistent' heading: children have a need for the world to be as reliable as possible Staff must follow the schedule of sanctions for unacceptable behaviour	Use of language which reflect the children's emotional landscape Behaviour is a form of communication – adults to support child with underlying difficulties Reconnect, Repair, Restore Every day is a new start for every child When dealing with child's

	It feels as if the text has been written to address the behaviours of older children. The interchange of the word 'advice' and 'guidance' could be confusing.		Adults on duty must model activities Uses behaviour for learning			challenging behaviour they must be respected

National Policy Observations (Language):
Doc 3 The language used throughout the sections used for analysis feels positive providing clear guidance on the roles of adults in schools to support children who are at risk.

The text is authoritative but comes from an educational standpoint.
Doc 4 Conveys the feeling there is one author of the text with strong feelings about how they perceive behaviour.

Use of some negative words and phrases.

Focus on the responsibility of the child to 'fit in' and behave well, rather than the responsibility of the adults.

It feels as if the text has been written to address the behaviours of older children.

The interchange of the word 'advice' and 'guidance' could be confusing.

School Policy Observations (Language):
School A: Refers to all 'staff' by implication in that they are to read 2013 DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force.
'All members of staff, including volunteers, have a legal right to use reasonable force'
Uses the word 'we'
'every day we praise the children'
'we know that we must be clear in what we must expect'
'we will write a behaviour management plan.'
Also 'the school will be in communication'
Has a feeling of authoritative/punitive language.

School B: Use of punitive language under 'the role of parents' – 'If the school has to use reasonable sanctions to punish a pupil, parents should support the actions of the school.'

School C: Language is predominantly positive with use of key words such as consistent; encourage.

School D: Language is thoughtful and authoritative. Clear guidance in straightforward language. Feels inclusive with a strong sense of professional responsibility of adults.

School E: Language is inclusive and positive although can seem overly complicated and confused.

Fieldwork Observations (Language):

School A:

1. First impressions on arriving – calm atmosphere with positive language being used naturally by a number of adults.

2. 1st adult (unknown status) "I'll take V (YR boy) next."2nd adult (unknown status) "Good luck with that one."

3.Strong feeling of the relationships of the adults in the class – a lot of language directed towards each other, speaking 'over' the children. Is this because of the behaviour of some of the children in this class?

4. 1st adult (CT) comment re a YR boy (S) "Have you seen him have one." 2nd adult (ELSA) "No" 1st adult "Well when he does he's dirty." (I think the phrase dirty was to refer to his potential outbursts, but I am not sure.

School B:

1. Greeted by the headteacher who gave me a tour of the school. An inner-city school that currently has children speaking 30 different languages.

2. use of positive language. CT's and TA's using the work 'please' a lot.

3. The language of adults is very clear and direct – clarity/simplicity. Is this because of the high number of children who have EAL – 'a natural simplicity in the relationships between adults and children as a result of the use of language'?

4. CT supporting individual children (is this because of all children's compliant behaviour)?

5. CT to a girl "very disappointed in your phonics" – gave a negative atmosphere "what should you be doing – look at your learning partner**.**

6. CT to boy "What should you be doing?" (he was the boy who came in late) "You should have one in your pack (pencil)"

7. CT came back into the classroom and made contact with K – language felt negative "we will not" "do not" "we're not".

8. Issue with access to the library "We're not going, I'm still waiting – why is it not in an e-mail, it should have been sent. Nothing ever is."

9. She replied that it was the was the adults were with the children – positive, caring and kind. Another adult commented "It's the children, it's the culture, children are very respectful here." I asked why they thought that 2 more adults commented. "The parents are respectful towards us, as teachers and people who work in the school." There were nods of agreement from a lot of the people in the room. TA (K) said "Yes, it is, but it is also what we do, we are proactive and supportive."

Interview evidence (Language):

School A: (Inclusion Manager)

1. lots of talking round the issues, lots of unpicking.

2. we had a boy who was internally excluded and then eventually excluded because of his violent behaviour to another boy or other children in the class and it wasn't safe to have him here, erm, but his teacher would throw him out of class, or he'd leave class himself.

3. we had a boy who was internally excluded and then eventually excluded because of his violent behaviour to another boy or other children in the class and it wasn't safe to have him here, erm, but his teacher would throw him out of class, or he'd leave class himself

School B: (SLT)

1. I think I don't like the word consequences but there needs to be a consequence to a behaviour.

2. Y1 I would probably say is probably our huge issue with I mean as huge as it is with behaviour I'd say I'd think just they're really inconsistent I've just I'm not going to start until you're listening. The ECT that's not here at the moment A, she's struggling with behaviour and I'm working with her on that they've already got better, still a way to go, erm
3. She's got some right cheeky monkeys that know how not to tidy up they hide.
School D: (Inclusion Manager)
1. it was so sad because we didn't want to fail these children and we felt absolutely helpless because we couldn't it just felt like we didn't know where to go with it, you know we didn't know well I didn't just didn't know how to deal with that I could deal with the children but I didn't know how I could stop these children being failed and that was the frustrating thing we were coming in every day and we wanted to be here every day for the children but we were failing them
2. I'm passionate about this school and the children that I work with erm so I just I just think if we can't have J forever, we know that we know like you say he's going to and be snapped up I'd love him to be cloned
3. we can do the best we can in 6 hours (yeah) you know to make their little lives (yeah) happier
4. it was lovely yesterday (ahh) to see them out here with their magnifying glasses for their um science lessons and everything you know it was and you go into a classroom now and you've got teachers who are bouncing counting you know 2 times tables and 5 times its great
School D: (Teacher)
1. amazing y6 class 21 children we bonded immediately
2. we will find ways around it and those no chance to wriggle out and give up on children I think there were people most of those people have left now who'd be like no this child's too hard for and me I'm not going to teach them
3. where teachers really felt their class was unteachable and that's never the case and that's never the children's fault
4. the conviction of what they believe in and is willing to say nope we're not wriggling from this
School D: (Child 1)
1. I used to be really really naughty
2. you're kind of weird and then we got to know each other more and were both weird so its ok
3. but I do love to come to school even though I had covid I wished I was at school (mmm) yeah which made me really upset because I couldn't go to school at all, and I want to learn
4. they were nice if you actually I think she's in 5 today miss t she was the best teacher in the whole school so was miss g miss g was also the best teacher (mmm) best teacher miss g (shouting) (hahaha) (yey) so she was the best and so was miss t miss t actually understanded me and miss k even though she had a little problem with her hand and her hand was locked it was completely fine

Summary (Language):

Key theme: Consistency and Fairness						
Doc 3	**Doc 4**	**School A**	**School B**	**School C**	**School D**	**School E**
The need for staff to be equally ambitious for all children (c) Acknowledges that children have a strong concept of fairness and this needs to be understood by adults when dealing with behaviour issues. (i) Consequences are clearly defined and consistently applied in line with the schools BP. (i)	Consistently responding to misbehaviour (V) Focus on the use of routines. (VIII) (XXI) Clear focus on high expectations of behaviour which is understood and applied consistently. (IX) Consistent support of leaders. (IX) The BP should be consistent and detailed. (XIV) Responses to behaviour are consistent and fair. (XV) There is a strong thread throughout the document for a whole school approach to behaviour is followed which is implemented consistently (XIX) Fair application of rewards. (XXXVII)	Does not refer to consistency or fairness explicitly Checklist in place to support teachers to remind and support pupils of daily routines Behaviour management plan used to support children with additional needs – supporting the child to be 'safe in school' Pre-emptive reminders to support pupils to make the correct choices Reflection tasks to support child in understanding why their	Behaviour will be maintained when there is consistency across the school. Clear and consistent expectations Consistency of expectations required by all staff. Relationships btwn adults and pupils are positive and supportive, particularly pupil well-being. Behaviour ladders – 'all classes across the school to have the same.'	Consistent approach to all matters related to behaviour and its positive management. Closely monitored by the leadership team to ensure the policy in implemented consistently. Consistent routines and expectations are in place across the school. These are closely monitored by SLT to ensure classroom management strategies are appropriate and consistently used.	Policy describes the structures and strategies which, observed consistently at all times, will enable us to manage the children's behaviour and support the ethos of the school. Being consistent When staff act consistently and reliably they make the children feel safer and therefore less anxious – less likely poor behaviour will occur. At break times and lunch times there must be a consistent	Children involved in setting learning behaviours, and these will be agreed and applied fairly. Sanctions are proportionate and consistent, based on the child's development and understanding.

	Detentions should be used consistently and fairly. (LIII)	behaviour was unacceptable Visual Behaviour chart in YR to support in recognising choice/consequences Support for pupils Letters of reflection Restorative conversations Elsa support Class provision Short tasks Class positioning Individual table If unsuccessful Work with parents/write an IBP Implement necessary support Liaise with PBS			approach in line with the Core Values.	
National Policy Observations (Consistency and Fairness): **Doc 3** Staff to be equally ambitious for all children and acknowledges that children have a strong concept of fairness which needs to be understood by adults when dealing with behaviour issues.		**School Policy Observations (Consistency and Fairness):** **School A:** Does not refer to consistency or fairness explicitly.				

Consequences are clearly defined and consistently applied in line with the schools BP. **Doc 4 The** need for a consistent response to misbehaviour with a focus on routines and high expectations of behaviour which is understood and applied consistently. There is a strong thread throughout the document for a whole school approach to behaviour is followed which is consistently implemented through BP including: • support of leaders • Fair application of sanctions • Fair application of rewards	**School B:** Clear and consistent expectations required by all staff. Behaviour will be maintained when there is consistency across the school. **School C:** Consistent to behaviour and its positive management, closely monitored by the leadership team to ensure the policy in implemented consistently. Consistent routines and expectations are in place across the school, closely monitored by SLT to ensure classroom management strategies are appropriate and consistently used. **School D:** Policy describes the structures and strategies, observed consistently at all times, to manage children's behaviour and support the ethos of the school. When staff act consistently and reliably, they make the children feel safer and therefore less anxious – less likely poor behaviour will occur. **School E:** Children involved in setting learning behaviours, agreed and applied fairly. Sanctions are proportionate and consistent, based on child's development and understanding.

Fieldwork Observations (Consistency and Fairness):
School A:
1. Day one. Consistent positive language from CT in Y1 class.
2. Day two. Focus on V (yesterday as they were lining up to go home, V went straight to the front of the line and was told to go to the back by the CT. V stuck his tongue out at CT and then refused to leave the classroom. Other CT, who was in doing assessments (2 CT job share in YR) encouraged him to go out and meet his mum, talking about her bike and showing him it outside. V sat on the floor and mum had to be asked to fetch him. Mum arrived and placed a wrist strap on V, she talked calmly and positively t him.
School B: 1. incident between a boy (K)and girl. CT put boy on 'Thunder and Lightning' and given a 'Time Out' -he had to go and sit on the floor at the back of the class. When K had returned to his seat and went and spoke to him, he looked despondent. He said the girl has said he was touching the sofa that she was sat on (a reading sofa in the class) and he said he wasn't. He then said she said it again and he wasn't, so he slapped her. CT was out of the classroom. . CT came back into the classroom and made contact with K – language felt negative "we will not" "do not" "we're not".

Interview evidence (Consistency and Fairness):
School B: (SLT)

1. It's difficult isn't it cos you can't have different rules for different children, but I think I would those who find it more challenging I would catch them doing the right thing quicker.
2. Y1 I would probably say is probably our huge issue with I mean as huge as it is with behaviour I'd say I'd think just they're really inconsistent I've just I'm not going to start until you're listening. The ECT that's not here at the moment A, she's struggling with behaviour and I'm working with her on that they've already got better, still a way to go, erm

School D: (Inclusion Manager)
1. it's taken 3 years what I love is the consistency now the consistency the simplicity it is simple, but it works what he's put in place it we can follow it all the behaviour policy
2. we weren't in the position to sometimes we were told to phone a parent other times we were told we couldn't phone parents erm so we didn't really know erm it sometimes we well I would take on myself to phone the parent just to say not a good day this has happened that's happened
3. consistency here because we know if we take our foot off the break, we'll lose it so we don't we know that through all this experience we've gone through as a school if we become complacent, we can't do that Susie none of us want to, J has brought this school to good for the first time in its history, we can't let that go

School D: (Teacher)
1. so that lack of consistency made it a if you moved from teacher to teacher, it would depend on what your teacher believed and erm that was really the start of a few children running round the corridor
2. when you looked to the bigger picture you knew there wasn't the consistency
3. and immediately we began to get that consistency with our behaviour plans with that consistency and balance in understanding the children's needs caring for them properly but having a structure
4. we're much better at catching them early now I think because there's consistency you will see in YR what you'll see in Y2 what you'll see in 4 and 6 every teacher whatever year group there in they know what they're doing there are checks that we are doing it properly so that consistency I think comes from us checking
5. so I think that's made the difference you know staff are secure with consistency pupils are secure they know whoever they go to however they however they act our reactions are going to be exactly the same there is no chance to be playing people off each other which there was before you know who'd wait to find a person who would open a laptop for you to keep you quiet well that's not education
6. I really do think the whole key is consistency and expectations I know that seems overly simple

Summary (Consistency and Fairness):

Key theme: Training

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
No reference to training	When developing a BP it should include staff induction, development and support including regular behaviour	No reference to training other than daily	Appendix 1 Anti-Bullying information	Behaviour management strategies and expectations are	Ensures staff are familiar with formal procedures for	No reference to training.

	training for staff and bespoke training on the needs of the children in their school (XIX) (XIII) (XXIV) Any appropriate training for staff should be considered so that all staff can meet the duties and functions of the BP. (XXV) Monitoring and analysing of removal data may alert senior leaders for training of specific departments or individuals. (LXVI)	routine checklist for teachers.	Appendix 2 Statement on the prevention of Homophobic Bullying In line with our policies on encouraging mutual respect for each other regardless of differences, any instances of homophobic bullying will be logged in the racism/homophobic logbook and will be dealt with in a sensitive manner in accordance with the guidelines on racism	part of the induction process for all staff and also part of the Teachers' Standards. Opportunities provided throughout the year for staff to update their knowledge/skills and share good practice as part of continuing professional development. All staff have had training on: • Attachment disorder • Developing self-awareness and self-esteem • Strategies to support vulnerable pupils	recording incidents.	

				Policy based on (list of guidance given)		

National Policy Observations (Training):	School Policy Observations (Training):
Doc 3 Is there time given to provide training to adults that have had no training on child development and how adult behaviours can have a direct/immediate response on a child's behaviour. **Doc 4** BP it should include staff induction, development and support including regular behaviour training for staff and bespoke training on the needs of the children in their school. Appropriate training for staff should be considered so that staff can meet the duties and functions of the BP. Monitoring and analysing of data on 'removal' alerts SLT to training need of staff.	**School A:** No reference to training other than daily routine checklist for teachers **School B:** No reference to training. Appendix provides information on bullying, **School C:** Behaviour management strategies and expectations part of the induction process for staff and part of the Teachers' Standards. Opportunities provided for staff to update their knowledge/skills and share good practice as part of continuing professional development. All staff have had training on: Attachment disorder; developing self-awareness and self-esteem; strategies to support vulnerable pupils. **School D:** Ensures staff are familiar with formal procedures for recording incidents. **School E:** No reference to training.

Fieldwork Observations (Training):
School A: TA working 1to 1 had no understanding of exclusion in primary school when talking to me at lunchtime.

Interview evidence (Training):
School A: (Inclusion Manager)
1. people having to step in and they do it differently. Erm, but on the whole since we've got the new headteacher and new deputy head the behaviours much better managed. Ok. Exclusions are less, yep, erm, we haven't had anything this term.
School B. (SLT):
1. since I've been here, we haven't had any work on behaviour
2. we've got a lot of quite new teachers here; quite new teachers and I think because they haven't had to work on their behaviour management skills they don't have them when you had a challenging class that's how you sharpen your teeth on behaviour management skills.
School D: (Teacher)

1. you know in desperation people weren't behaving in a way that was as professional as it could be because we didn't have the training, and we didn't have the support within the school 2 as staff we (then) had the training we needed that was appropriate in term of things like de-escalation skills so that immediately stopped some people chasing children up and down corridors						
Summary (Training):						
Key theme: Engagement						
Doc 3	**Doc 4**	**School A**	**School B**	**School C**	**School D**	**School E**
Engagement and involvement of parents. (c) (n) (o) Engagement of inspectors with all adults and children in the school. (f) Engagement of adults in the school to work with individual children based on their needs. (j) Engagement of other professionals(c) (o) (m)	The BP is key to engage the school community in communicating the schools' vision and culture. (VIII) Engagement of governors and trustees. (XIII) Parents to be included in pastoral work following a child's misbehaviour, where appropriate. (XXX) Engagement of other professionals. (XXXIV) (L)	Engagement with parents.	Positive and supportive relationships with pupils particularly children with additional or special needs. Raising awareness of the behaviour policy through: School handbook; Meeting with parents; School website; Staff handbook. Communications with home; H/T report to governors.	Children should be praised for their successes and achievements including behaviour. Engagement with parents. Engagement of external professionals.	Foster an inclusive school community Model desired behaviour. Engagement with parents.	All adults seek to understand each pupil's context. Provide small amounts of time working on relationships with individual pupils. Teacher will encourage pupil self-reflection, giving opportunities for talking about behaviour and reasons for it. Use of Thrive approach to help children re-

			The curriculum is engaging and matched to individual needs			engage with their learning.
National Policy Observations (Engagement): **Doc 3** Engagement and involvement of parents. Engagement of inspectors with adults and children in the school. Engagement of adults in the school to work with individual children based on their needs. Engagement of other professionals. **Doc 4** The BP is key to engage the school community in communicating the schools' vision and culture, including the engagement of governors and trustees. Parents to be included in pastoral work following a child's misbehaviour, where appropriate. Engagement of other professionals.		**School Policy Observations (Engagement):** **School A:** Engagement with parents. **School B:** Positive and supportive relationships with pupils particularly children with additional or special needs. The curriculum is engaging and matched to individual needs. Communications with home, raising awareness of the behaviour policy through: School handbook; meeting with parents; school website; staff handbook. H/T report to governors. **School C:** Children should be praised for their successes and achievements including behaviour. Engagement with parents and external professionals. **School D:** Fosters an inclusive school community, modelling desired behaviours and engaging with parents. **School E:** Adults seek to understand each pupil's context, providing time to work on relationships with individual pupils. Teachers will encourage pupil self-reflection, giving opportunities for talking about behaviour and reasons for it. Use of Thrive approach to help children re-engage with their learning.				

Fieldwork Observations (Engagement):
School A:
1. Day one**.** K (Y1 boy) not engaged with others (sitting on carpet with class teacher (CT) choosing to play outside with tyres. One teaching assistant (TA) left as required in another classroom. K responded to CT to put tyres away. Positive reinforcement by CT "go and put your name up." K went in and stayed inside. Adult to adult conversations being had without engaging children. K pushing pen (stabbing motion) very hard on a piece of paper having moved away from a table with two girls – checking CT wasn't looking. Stabbing paper with pen, still checking he was not being observed and went outside.
Children went to sit on the carpet for a story (on screen) K finding it very hard to sit still. K appears aimless and wandering around the classroom – not engaging with other children, watching them rather than relating to them. K came to sit down next to me (I had been helping 2 girls make a necklace). Without prompting K said "My dad's coming out of prison today" I smiled, he continued "I'm really excited." We then chatted about him having a little party for his dads return.
2. My initial feeling that there is a difficult dynamic in the classroom, appears pressured but hard to say why.
3. Day two. On going into YR, I positioned myself to the left of the door in the construction area, there were no children there. I sat on the floor and remained quiet. Children were having 'free play' as well as being able to engage in adult led activities e.g. painting/active nursery rhymes on screen.
V came to me at 9.30 and started to build a Lego house. He had a direct (including eye contact) conversation with me, telling me he was going to build a house for superman. I interacted with V and supported him to make a house. He was dextrous and able to build a house with a ramp.
Whilst I was doing this, 2 adults in the class were having a conversation with each other which appeared to be unrelated to anything children were doing. A third adult joined in. There was no observable interaction with any child in the classroom by adults during this time (approx. 5 mins). 1 adult left to interact with a child but and then went back to S then was called out of the class by an adult coming to the door.
1 adult was on an iPad, no interaction with any child.
3 adults talking together CT had come in from outside play area. V went up to them to show them his Lego house. They all had their back to him and were engaging in an adult conversation. Vernon got one adults attention by patting her. She acknowledged him. CT no acknowledgement. V persisted, tapping CT. CT said "amazing, I love it." She walked outside.
9.50 CT sharpening pencils, interacting with TA, both went into the store cupboard. V went outside.
2 adults on the art table.
10.00 CT and TA still no interaction with any child. V still outside. Another adult comes into class and interacts with CT. 4 adults in the classroom.
10.02 CT still talking to TA, 3 adults now talking to each other.
10.04 CT found a child and sat at a table 1 to 1. TA and CT having a conversation – child tapping CT for attention.
10.06 CT stood back up, child left.
10.07 YR girl (O) standing next to me, TA came over to her having noticed her and started talking to her.
10.07 CT at table, moving books, went outside. TA left girl (O).
10.09 3 TA's engaging with children, 2 singing 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' 1 engaged with O but left to distract S who was becoming agitated.
10.12 2 TA's no engagement with children. TA came from outside play area and immediately engaged with CT who was sitting at the table with the children's books. Another TA joined in conversation. One TA on carpet with boy (N). N holding broom, no interaction and then went outside. Job share CT came into classroom and spoke to other CT. TA came back into room and told N to 'check schedule' "busy bee has finished, check schedule. It felt like pressure was being put

on N to 'check schedule'. S and N plus girl and 3 TA's left room, CT out of class, not adult in classroom (other than me). CT then came into classroom. CT cleaning up paint, no interaction with children.
10.20 V outside, came in at 10.21. CT engaged with V and asked him if he wanted to paint. V put an apron on and started to paint. TA came back into the classroom. CT and TA engaged in conversation. At this point there was a Michelin tyre advert on the screen. CT was on the table with children's books, child left table having been there for under 2 minutes. TA came in from outside – engaged with class teacher.
V and TA engaged on painting table. V left to watch screen but did not engage. Left classroom with his coat on.
10.30 CT left table went into stock cupboard. V came back from outside and watched the other children then went outside. CT went outside and came back with V and took him by the arm to the table with the books on. V does not want to do the task. CT used puppet to encourage V. V started to hit the puppet. CT – "If you finish you can go outside." V pushed the book away. CT "You've had a good morning." V continued to hit the puppet. CT – "Stop" V refusing to do the task, knocked books off the table and then stood on the chair he had been sitting on. He was asked by CT to get down. V refused. CT physically took him down from the chair and held both of V's arms and moved him over to the sink area. A TA also went over to the sink area. Both adults were standing over him. As CT was holding V, TA removed his shoes. Another TA went over to the sink. 3 adults were standing over him. The TA's then moved away to engage with the other children on the carpet by the screen. V climbed onto the sink. He was removed by the CT (at no time were distraction techniques used). V started to hit CT. V seemed in control at this time.
10.38 V still in corner of the classroom by the sink and blocked by CT. CT then carried V out of the classroom and taken to an internal exclusion room. (I found this incident distressing and left).
11.10 I went back to YR. CT activity – children sitting in a circle on the carpet – numbers to 7. V sitting next to a TA. V not engaged in activity and looked tired. TA – "Sit up please." V had his head on TA's lap. TA physically moved him to sitting position.
V had a question and was trying to engage CT, I didn't hear V's question but the reply was "we're learning about 7 today." V got up and held out his hands to show 10 fingers. Not acknowledged by CT. S and N were not in the classroom. V attempting to lie on TA (incident of exclusion from classroom seems to have made V tired). TA looked at V "You need to look." TA took hold of V's arms to touch his lap 7 times. V didn't want to do this. Children had been asked to stand by the CT and to stamp 7 times. V not engaging or conforming. CT "straight across and straight down is how we write the number 7."
3 adults than went to the sink for handwashing. Adults talking to each other, children on the carpet watching the screen.
Other class teacher entered the classroom, 4 adults engaged in conversation, children watching the screen.
11.36 Another adult entered the classroom and left with a TA.
TA – "Shall we take our three down?" 4 children (S, N, E and M) were taken out of the classroom. V also taken out of the classroom by a TA.
Lunchtime S, N, E and M sitting separately from their peers. V ate most of his food and coped well at the table, sitting quietly after he had finished. I felt he was getting bored, so I engaged him in a conversation and walked back to the classroom with him he held my hand – wanted to engage with me and took something by the Headteachers door. We went outside to the YR playground. Played by himself on a bike but chose to ride bike into another child. There was only one supervisor with YR. S, N and M were not outside. V interacting with older girls by the gate to the playing field. Left playground and went for lunch.
School B.
1. (I had an odd feeling that some of the children were adept at reading the adults and watching for 'their' moment to distract or engage other children – boys working on rhyming words – check this out tomorrow.

2. YR lovely feeling in the room children playing freely and accessing good quality resources. Confident play. There was a little boy with a black eye who looked very sad – check out.
3. Staff seem very flexible in terms of supporting each other – adults engaging positively with children -playing with children. **4.** I spent 3 lunchtimes observing in the dining hall. Two lunchtime supervisors appeared brusque and unusually sharp with the children. The majority of the children had a school lunch however what seemed to be a very high proportion of the children ate very little, some almost nothing. They were not encouraged to eat, and their food was thrown away. The range of food was very limited, and I felt it did not support the dietary requirements or preferences for the ethnic diversity in the school. Couldn't rice be a staple every day? I felt a sense of emotion and it made me feel quite upset that a lot of children could be feeling hungry for an afternoon and the impact this might have on their learning/concentration etc.

Interview evidence (Engagement):
School D (Inclusion Manager)
1. diffuse the situation if we couldn't we would then look towards SLT to support and to guide us through what our next steps were, unfortunately that wasn't forthcoming so we'd try and deal with that ourselves, we weren't in the position to sometimes we were told to phone a parent other times we were told we couldn't phone parents erm so we didn't really know erm it sometimes we well I would take on myself to phone the parent just to say not a good day this has happened that's happened
School D: (Child 2)
1. so I think back then I think the way we learn now is much more different like I think it's more interesting (ok) I think it's interesting I know some people may not find it interesting but I think it's more interesting than what it was like I think its although you are getting a task done it's also like you see your teacher smiling you see a smile on the face of teachers which always makes you happy to makes you more focused as well
2. like we have all like school core values in our school that are like be a learner be respectful be responsible and be safe those are our 4 core values
3. and also like kindness we talk about so Mr w will like reads us a story that always has a moral to it like a good moral in the story in assembly and we'll have ….kindness
4. its more exciting like so in PE for instance we now do real PE like, so you have different things and different activities and …its always different each lesson

Summary (Engagement):

Key theme: SEND

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Acknowledgement of the range of needs that children with SEND may have and the impact this may have on their cognitive development. (b)	Adjustments to be made to routines where appropriate (XXII)	Some children may need additional support	Acknowledges legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 for	Note: some children will not find it easy to succeed in the context of this	There will be children who need a personalised approach to	No specific reference to SEND

Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children with SEND. (c) The need to make reasonable adjustments. (c) Outcomes of children with SEND not compared. (d) Understanding of greater risk and vulnerabilities. (e) Curriculum meets the needs of children with SEND (f)	Whole school approach should be adopted to meet the needs of all children. (XXXI) Use of a graduated response: assess; plan; deliver; review. (XXXII) Steps to be taken to support children with SEND to avoid substantial disadvantage. (XXXIII) Use of 'best endeavours' to meet the needs of children with SEND. (XXXIV) 'As far as possible' schools should anticipate likely triggers of behaviours of children with SEND' (XXXV)		safeguarding and pupils with SEND Positive and supportive relationships with pupils particularly children with additional or special needs	policy. These children will need individual behaviour targets and a specially formulated set of rewards and sanctions. These will be provided by the class teacher in consultation with the SENCo and senior leaders. The targets will be part of the child's EHCP or IBP and as such will be discussed with their parents/carers Additional transition meetings arranged with children who find transition stressful. The SENCo will evaluate a pupil who exhibits	their specific behavioural need which is supported via Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP).	

				challenging behaviour to determine whether they have any underlying needs that are not currently being met. If targeted provision is required advice/support may be requested: Education Psychologist Medical practitioners Specialist teachers Advisory outreach service Primary heads inclusion group LA's SEN team Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Permission from parents sought		

				before accessing services		

National Policy Observations (SEND):	School Policy Observations (SEND):
Doc 3 Acknowledgement of the range of needs that children with SEND may have and the impact this may have on their cognitive development. Understanding of greater risk and vulnerabilities. Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children with SEND and the need to make reasonable adjustments. Curriculum meets the needs of children with SEND Outcomes of children with SEND not compared. **Doc 4** Adjustments to be made to routines where appropriate (XXII) Whole school approach should be adopted to meet the needs of all children with the use of a graduated response: assess; plan; deliver; review. Steps to be taken to support children with SEND to avoid substantial disadvantage. Use of 'best endeavours' to meet the needs of children with SEND. 'As far as possible' schools should anticipate likely triggers of behaviours of children with SEND'.	**School A:** Some children may need additional support **School B:** Acknowledges legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 for safeguarding and pupils with SEND. Positive and supportive relationships with pupils particularly children with additional or special needs. **School C:** Acknowledgement that some children will not find it easy to succeed in the context of this policy, needing individual behaviour targets and specially formulated rewards and sanctions, provided by the class teacher in consultation with the SENCo and senior leaders. Targets part of the child's EHCP or IBP and discussed with their parents/carers Transition meetings arranged with children who find transition stressful. The SENCo will evaluate a pupil who exhibits challenging behaviour to determine whether they have any underlying needs that are not currently being met. If targeted provision is required advice/support may be requested from external agencies. **School D:** There will be children who need a personalised approach to their specific behavioural need which is supported via Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP). **School E:** No specific reference to SEND

Fieldwork Observations (SEND):
School A:
1. Boy (YR) with complex needs having 1 to 1. 10.35 a.m.
2. The same child with 1 to 1 was in a room with 2 adults.

3. K finding it very hard to sit still. K appears aimless and wandering around the classroom – not engaging with other children, watching them rather than relating to them.

Interview evidence (SEND):

School A: (Inclusion Manager)

1. I think it created complexities (relationship between teacher and child) but I think education for that particular boy was a problem.

School B: (SLT)

1. And what are you're feelings about Fx or suspension as it called now?

I think I think the only time I would use it would be when there needs to be a break as in it's got so out of control that it's that it's not fixable. I think sometimes relationships break down that could be like with a parent I think sometimes just some time away I also think occasionally thinking of my last class sometimes a class needs a break if you've I had a child last year who was basically aggressively manipulative and threatening and that's not fair on the rest of the class he was they were scared to death of him literally didn't even have to say anything just a look made them shiver with fright so but I'm not sure it should be out of school. Right, that what I was going to say it should Do you think that there is a way we could enable those children to fear him less or her less by managing the situation in a different way? I mean he needed to be in a special school but taken away from his mother, ha! I taught his mother as well ha ha yeah, parenting? Yeah she yeah she was I know doing the NVR all that stuff was going through it but she has ADHD and depressed she doesn't have the parenting skills she was doing the absolute best she can she just wasn't good enough I mean that child went through he had a step dad who went in to prison during covid came out he didn't particularly get on well with him because his step dad actually said you're go do this you're going to do that Dad who was with someone else had twins with someone else so pushed him down a peg. He has more IQ in his little in his little left foot than anyone else in the family extremely bright I've never known what the boy that was difficult? Yeah I've known I can I I'm quite good at having an argument or not having an argument, he was he was my equal I've never known a child like him never known yeah like he's going to do something and I don't know if it going to save the world or end the world but he'll do it we'll hear about him in 10 years' time I think erm so I think very occasionally there is yeah but not as a but there needs to something so a break yeah a break I think sometimes children need but also with him he knew eventually when once J started to exclude him he knew if he wanted to go home for the afternoon all he had to do was to punch someone in the face so he just punched someone in the face, so I'm going now then ha! Over my dead body you're staying ha ha ha ha It's really hard isn't it so for him it had completely broken down he needed a psychologist, so he was using the system? Yeah, he was using I mean He could work the system He knew the system he had on the never they so for him a background of what S' is like. So, he's been having these issues had them in YR and so he was we knew before he came to school he was going to be a problem his mum was a problem and we knew his mum had said he'd be a problem. Wasn't too bad in YR he had lots of SEND stuff we went and had SAOS. Do you know SAOS Southampton Advisory Outreach Service come from special school, They come in and make suggestions I mean its difficult because I'm a more mature teacher I've been through the process before so all the things they suggest putting in place I've You've already done I've already tried yeah but you have to go through through the process we'd had I can't remember what they call it with the Ed Psych service where you're not talking about a particular child your talking about it's like a behaviour clinic or something yeah, yeah, we went through all of that and the we then went to the Heads panel they then said try this it's like yeah we've tried that and you know he he was eventually diagnosed he was diagnosed not Christmas just gone but before Christmas before for ADHD he was then seen was seen for medication the next Christmas, that's how long it took like what we're meant to do in the mean time and he's then gone through so they also talked about Oppositional Defiance Disorder yeah and the weren't willing to do anything about that until he'd had his ADHD diagnosis and medication his medication because apparently once you get an ODD diagnosis we're then talking about the guns like he would be going to see

a psychologist and psychologists never had a child diagnosed with that before I would say probably he has because he is something else that he's on the pedestal all on his own I absolutely love him he absolutely loves me he was heartbroken when left, literally, I'd I'd come her for the morning and I and I he like if I'm not in the building I have to tell him I'm not going to be int the building and he said he saw what I said I'm going to another school and he ah he and I never lied to him we had that I had he would know I said I'm going to visit a school because I might be going to a new school that's the relationship we had and cos by now he's in Y2 so I had in YR had lots to do with him in Y1 because I was the phase leader and then I had him in Y2 and I knew mum and yeah, yeah, had the history so and the we were doing do you know the healthy hands programme no it's the programme it was erm made in Liverpool and it was to do with parent who either Mum or Dad was in a erm oh god forgotten the work a refuge oh right, for for children who've witnessed domestic abuse and stuff we think he has as well well we're yeah yeah yeah, he has so he was doing that programme he was ex? he could deliver it to another child but if as sook as you asked it about himself he just kicked off completely and so what we had very honest and so I when we're doing this it would be he would pick one to the statements, there's 5 statements there's things like You have the right to remain safe and that sort of thing and he knew them off by heart erm and so I had to talk about them as well cos that was part of the programme and I said well I'm a little bit worried going to my new school I don't know it they're going to like me and this and when I came back he said did they like you I said oh yeah I think they really liked me and he said oh bless him yeah and then a few months later he said he said don't worry he said if they don't like you you can still come back (laughter) so really sad.

School D: (Inclusion Manager)
1. I remember we had a child here who was quite volatile he was autistic and he just needed to be understood and we understood him erm but unfortunately and we went through a lot he was never excluded erm but one day he it wasn't a thump it wasn't done you know with sheer aggression it was just like that to the headteacher and he was excluded, not to come back anymore erm and I thought well we've done this every day you know (it's sad) we've done it every day and I did get really upset because that boy by this time was in Y6 he had about 3 weeks left and we couldn't say goodbye to him yet he'd been here all that time and there was thing and he was gone.
2. I've got erm a list of children vulnerable children that I see every single day and erm I'll sit in class with them for 10 15 minutes and erm work with them and have a little chat how are you and children that are on CPs and (yeah) CIN plans
School D: (Teacher)
1. labelling children and I think that's where a lot of our undoing came, we kind of labelling them we kept creaming them off into little groups
2. I had a very severely autistic boy who had already been in 4 classes and the only way he could stay in class he had a little tent under my desk it was his safe space and this particular teacher took over from me and like within half an hour had moved all his stuff ripped his tent out said you don't need that and all the things that we'd built up that had made this lovely boy able to stay in class he was gorgeous he was absolutely amazing but you had to help him cope and no one wanted to he went to Y3 completely failed got excluded about a million times and it was just heart-breaking that there wasn't anyone other than at that point one or two of us fighting his corner and you shouldn't be fighting corners you should have a school policy shouldn't you that protects every child's education
3. well everyone's got a right to a TA our TA's are mainly one to ones with our EHCP children

Summary (SEND):

Key theme: Covid

Doc 3	Doc 4	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Additional risks and safeguarding issues, particularly to children with SEND, as a result of the pandemic. Recognition of the disruption to learning, and what this might mean to vulnerable children, as a result of the pandemic.	No reference to Covid	Reviewed in light of Covid Lunchtime – protective measures and routines	No reference to Covid	No reference to Covid	No reference to Covid	Due to covid Recognition Charters may include safety statements

National Policy Observations (Covid):
Doc 3 Additional risks and safeguarding issues, particularly to children with SEND, as a result of the pandemic. (e)

Recognition of the disruption to learning, and what this might mean to vulnerable children, as a result of the pandemic. (g)

Doc 4 No reference to Covid

School Policy Observations (Covid):
Doc A: Reviewed in light of Covid
Lunchtime – protective measures and routines

Doc B: No reference to Covid

Doc C: No reference to Covid

Doc D: No reference to Covid

Doc E: Due to covid Recognition Charters may include safety statements

Fieldwork Observations (Covid):
School B:
1. phonics groups (school is managing 20% staff absence due to covid and other infections. HT is 'on the ball' and is very much hands on, happy to teach and take classes if necessary.

Interview evidence (Covid):
School B:
1. but I don't know to be honest ok because of the rapid change in my job and then the covid situation I think I would hope so and I think some of the TA's would

be more eloquent than some of the teachers ok yeah I would imagine probably its fairly used, fairly inconsistently I would say, yeah I'd probably agree with you there
Summary (Covid) **Covid was on the minds of staff and pupils. It has affected behaviours**