NAUGHTY OR NEEDY?
EXCLUSIONS: A STUDY OF ONE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY.

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Abstract

This thesis uses data collected in one local educational authority to explore issues surrounding the exclusion of pupils from school. The main aims of the study were to:

- discover what were the perceptions of senior staff in schools with regard to difficult children within their schools and to follow this through by gathering data within their schools on two of their most difficult pupils (part 1).

- collect information with regard to indefinitely or permanently excluded pupils (over a two year period), and to discover what happened to these pupils and how long they were removed from the education system (part 1).

- gather data from attendance at a selection of case conferences in order to supplement the information about pupil exclusion, and to view the process involved in coming to a decision about an individual's future education (part 1).

- explore the relationship between the exclusion of pupils and the effectiveness of collaboration between the pastoral and Special Educational Needs (SEN) areas within schools (part 2).

The study employs a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data based on the following methods of data collection:

- semi-structured interviews;

- questionnaires;

- observation;

- compilation of factual information on pupil exclusion to form a database.

The key findings for part 1 are firstly that many of the patterns for exclusion from school within the local educational authority studied follow the national trends and so have added weight to the existing literature. Secondly, many excluded pupils (around two thirds) have Special Educational Needs. Thirdly, some older pupils have identified that they need a context other than school in which to complete their education. Fourthly, the headteacher has a great deal of influence on the pattern of exclusion within the school.

The key findings for part 2 are that where there is collaboration between the Special Educational Needs and pastoral staff within a school, there can be success in delaying or halting the exclusion process for individual youngsters. However, each school must search for its own responses to exclusion and this must include the will to retain difficult youngsters in school, as in some

schools the exclusionary processes which occur can sometimes be politically motivated.

The original contribution to the body of knowledge which this thesis makes centres around:

1. the detailed examination of one local educational authority;

2. a consideration of the Special Educational Needs/ pastoral interface;

3. the use of case conference material;

4. the development of a model of 'risk' to describe the exclusion process within a school.

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Introduction

<u>Origins of the Study</u>

This study is concerned with the exclusion of pupils from school, using information gathered within one local educational authority. The setting of one local educational authority was used to form a context for the study to enable an exploration of the area of exclusion from school to be carried out in some critical depth. I did consider using data collected from a range of local education authorities but the data was collected in different ways which were impossible to reconcile in any meaningful way. The only way of gaining serviceable data was to amass it myself so that the data was internally consistent. The study therefore does have features of a case-study approach.

The study was carried out in two parts; in part 1 the main aims were to:

- discover what were the perceptions of senior staff in schools with regard to difficult children within their schools and to follow this through by gathering data within their schools on two of their most difficult pupils;

- collect information with regard to indefinitely or permanently excluded pupils (over a two year period), and to discover what happened to these pupils and how long they were removed from the education system;

- gather data from attendance at a selection of case conferences in order to supplement the information about pupil exclusion, and to view the process involved in coming to a decision about an individual's future education.

The idea for part 1 of the study developed from a desire to:

- examine the types of behaviour of the most difficult pupils within the high schools;

- evaluate the provision of the LEA in terms of its usefulness to mainstream schools in the light of recent legislation.

Four methods of gathering data were used. These were:

- semi-structured interviews;

- questionnaires;

- observation;

- compilation of factual information on pupil exclusion to form a database.

Interviewing staff was decided upon as a means of access to the opinions of a sample of headteachers regarding the research question:

> What are senior staff perceptions on the nature of provision for
> children exhibiting the most difficult behaviour within the school?

The term "Senior Staff" was used because although in most instances it was possible to interview the headteacher, in some schools a deputy was delegated to deal with the matter.

However, another aspect worthy of investigation was that of individual case study material, the more specific detail on particular children and young people from the sample schools complementing the more general information given by the senior staff. Therefore a second research question emerged:

> What has been provided by the mainstream school in order to meet the needs of the most difficult pupils within that school?

Interviews were therefore arranged with either pastoral staff, (i.e. heads of school, heads of year), Special Needs co-ordinators, or the unit teachers according to which person was seen as most appropriate within the particular school.

This second aspect gave the study a more rounded picture (of perspectives and provision within the sample schools) as it meant that specific practical considerations and particular outcomes were investigated in addition to the more general issues raised by the senior staff. It also gave an indication to whether the practice of the school reflected the perspectives held by the senior staff.

The third research question centred around extending the knowledge base of the patterns and numbers of exclusions within the authority:

> What are the numbers and patterns of exclusion across the local educational authority?

The fourth research question posed in part 1 of the study was concerned with the local educational authority response to the exclusion of pupils from mainstream and special schools:

> How are decisions reached about the future of excluded pupils, and what are the outcomes of permanent and indefinite exclusion for pupils within the local educational authority?

This was an important question to ask of the local educational authority since most studies addressing the area of exclusion from school have concentrated mostly on the role of schools, families and support agencies. It led to some interesting findings (see chapter 5; Mitchell, 1996).

The most important finding from part 1 of the study was the high proportion of excluded youngsters who had Special Educational Needs. None of the previous literature had explored this area in great detail, therefore part 2 of the study was based around an exploration and extrapolation of the links between Special Educational Needs and exclusion. The aim of part 2 of the study therefore was to:

- explore the relationship between the exclusion of pupils and the

  effectiveness of collaboration between the pastoral and Special

  Educational Needs areas within schools.

Two research questions were formed to address the relationship between

Special Educational Needs and exclusion. These were:

> Is there a relationship between the rate of exclusion of a school and the effectiveness of collaboration between the Special Educational Needs and pastoral staff?

> Are there specific instances when collaboration between the Special Educational Needs and pastoral staff has led to a reduction in the number of excluded pupils?

Contextual Information

The local educational authority in which the study was conducted is an

authority consisting of three main parts: East, West, and Central. There are

19 secondary schools, plus all the feeder middle, junior, infant and first

schools.

At secondary level, there are at the moment three ages of transfer; at 11, 12,

or 13 years, depending upon the area of residence and the wishes of the

parents. The western area has just undergone a reorganisation so that transfer

at 11 years is uniform across the district. The central area is shortly to follow

suit.

Running alongside the mainstream reorganisation which will be carried through eventually to the rest of the LEA is a system of special schools, which likewise underwent reorganisation during 1993. Instead of a system whereby moderate learning difficulties special schools take children from the ages of 5-16, there is specialisation of those schools to either primary or secondary education. The LEA has currently reorganised the schools for moderate learning difficulties in this way, resulting in two primary MLD schools and two secondary MLD schools. The schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties were reorganised at the end of July 1997, resulting in a closure of two severe learning difficulties schools and the opening of a new purpose built school; the other SLD school remained largely unchanged, as did the hospital schools.

With such a fundamental restructuring of the education system, changes to some individual schools have been radical, whilst some schools have remained virtually untouched. Some schools have been closed, mainly to respond to reduced demand for places in some sectors, others have closed and opened as a different phase school.

Rationale

The particular circumstances of the LEA within the study at this time are

therefore conducive to a consideration of the provision for educating those

children with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, some of whom

are at present catered for by residential schools outside the authority since

their needs are so special that they cannot be catered for within the LEA; and

others whose problems are not so severe, are catered for within the

mainstream schools until these schools can no longer contain them.

Rapidly changing events, beginning with the 1981 Education Act, introduced

the concept of all teachers assuming responsibility for children with SEN.

Not only does this concept abolish the previous remedial regime, it also

redefines the term "remedial" to include those children who need special

access to the curriculum, (through resources, facilities, equipment, teaching

techniques or a modified teaching environment): those children who need a

special or modified curriculum: and those children who need attention

directed to the social structure and emotional climate in which education

takes place. Thus as Postlethwaite and Hackney (1989), state:

> Special educational needs lie on a continuum. There is no clear-cut
> distinction between pupils who have special needs and those who do
> not. (p. 2)

Such definition of SEN, including children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, leads to the conclusion that any authority provision needs to be on a continuum, beginning in mainstream schools which provide for the vast majority of children and young people, progressing towards more specialised educational facilities for those few children and young people whose needs cannot be adequately met within the mainstream.

The concept of a continuum has been recently reinforced by the Education Act (1993) and the associated Code of Practice (DFE, 1994d). These two significant influences on schools' practice with regard to special educational needs reiterate the previous concepts of the Education Act (1981), and stipulate various forms of good practice which now must be addressed by schools and LEAs in their provision for pupils with SEN (for instance, every school must have a named coordinator of SEN; there must be a policy in place, which should be reviewed by the governors annually; there should be a staged approach to meeting SEN within the school). Like the Children Act (1989), the Education Act (1993) places emphasis upon the needs of the whole child within a particular context, so as a consequence of the recent legislation there may be more integration in terms of learning and behaviour needs, with more pronounced intermeshing of the pastoral and SEN systems within schools.

The legislation surrounding the exclusion of pupils from school changed

during the period of the study. The data collection in part 1 of the study was

influenced by the Education Act 1986 (no. 2), whilst the data collection of

part 2 was influenced by the Education Act 1993. The main procedural

changes are outlined by Blyth and Milner (1996a). They have been to:

> limit fixed-period exclusions to a maximum of fifteen days in any single
> school term and to abolish indefinite exclusions while the guidance is
> designed to clarify both the circumstances warranting exclusion from
> school and the powers, rights and duties of headteachers, governing
> bodies, local education authorities, pupils and their parents/guardians.
> ...the priciple of funding following a pupil has been extended to
> excluded pupils. (p. 16)

Challenging Behaviour

'Challenging', 'difficult' or 'poor' behaviour are words used within the

study, rather than the 'bad' behaviour referred to in some of the government

texts (e.g. Circular 8/94, DFE, 1994a; DES, 1989). Emerson (1995) makes a

useful contribution to the definition of challenging behaviour:

> Severely challenging behaviour refers to behaviour of such an intensity,
> frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is
> likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to
> seriously limit or deny access to and use of ordinary community
> facilities. (p. 44, quoted in Russell, 1997, p. 60)

This definition has been expanded to include:

...behaviour which is likely to impair a child's personal growth, development and family life and which represents a challenge to families and to the children themselves, however caused. (Department of Health, 1993, p. 12, quoted in Russell, 1997, p. 60)

Russell goes on to discuss the impact of challenging behaviour:

For the child. Some behaviours, such as self-injuries, can threaten health, even life, and may rapidly lead to rejection and exclusion. Behaviours such as overactivity or stereotypical behaviours may restrict personal growth and seriously impair personal relationships. For the family. Caring for a child with severe challenging behaviour is likely to have a profound impact upon day-to-day lives. The Committee heard powerful messages from families who felt isolated and exhausted, and often as residential provision as the only solution. For education, health and social services. Children who pose a danger to themselves or others often challenge schools and other services. All too often, the response to the child's demands is exclusion and the use of a specialist residential provision. The current debate about the legality of the use of certain controls and treatments has further reduced the confidence of many professionals in actively working with children who challenge. For the wider community. Socially unacceptable behaviours are likely to elicit avoidance by and exclusion from the community. (p. 61)

The term 'the most difficult behaviour' was used in the study to identify those pupils whose behaviour represented the most challenging behaviour that was faced by the school. In the case studies which followed up the senior staff interviews, schools were asked to identify those pupils displaying the most persistently difficult behaviour as opposed to those pupils presenting some behaviour difficulties. This was an attempt to identify those pupils who were most troublesome to their schools.

'Disaffection' is a much broader term which is used to indicate alienation of

the pupil from the school, suggesting that a rupture or breach has occurred

between the pupil and the school. Lloyd-Smith (1984) and Kinder et al.

(1995) view disaffection as truancy and disruption and the latter link truancy

and disruption together in a complex relationship:

> exclusions and the application of severe sanctions can exacerbate
> disaffection and may lead to non-attendance; inadequate handling of re-
> entry after non-attendance problems may encourage disruptive
> behaviour; and truancy and exclusions may result in failing to keep
> abreast of course work (and/or affect peer and friendship groupings),
> which in turn encourages further alienation and disaffected behaviours.
> (p. 4)

Bird (1984) describes disaffection as a term which is more appropriate to use

with older secondary-age pupils and includes those pupils who also display

withdrawn behaviour:

> There was less disaffection amongst the younger pupils, but what there
> was gave rise to much concern amongst the teachers, who could less
> easily find reasons for their truancy, disruption or withdrawn
> behaviour. (p. 21)

Bird (1984) also emphasises the temporary nature of some of the disaffection:

> Many of these younger pupils moved in and out of disaffection during
> their early school careers. In fact, some pupils, defined as disaffected
> by their teachers at the beginning of our fieldwork, had by the end of
> our two years in the schools settled completely into their school
> routines and rartely caused any further trouble. (p. 21)
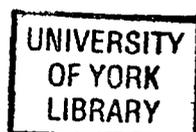
Kinder et al. (1995) demonstrate the complex causes of disaffection in the

accounts of educational professionals who took part in their study:

> close reading of these accounts also demonstrates that causes of
> disaffected behaviours have, in fact, included **stimuli** (such as pupil
> friendship problems), **external exacerbation** (such as current
> curriculum imperatives), **correlation** (such as social class issues),
> **characteristics** (such as low self-esteem), and **inducements** (such as
> parentally condoned absence, peer culture). (p. 5)

The complex causes of disaffection are complemented by the work of Bird

(1984) who commented on the responses of schools to disaffection:

> In one school the dominant approach was to see all disaffection as
> irrational. There was a general belief that any pupil showing signs of
> anti-school behaviour did not fully appreciate the education that the
> school offered to him.
> In a second school, disaffection was seen as a consequence of the
> limited educational expectations held by most of its working-class
> pupils. Teachers saw their role primarily as one of constantly striving
> to overcome the lack of motivation, the low expectations and the
> limited aspirations of their pupils.
> In contrast to these two schools, a third school's interpretation of
> disaffection was based on the assumption that the majority of
> disaffection arose from the pupil's personal problems of adjustment to
> the school. Emotional disturbances were seen primarily as a product of
> difficulties in their homes. (p. 18 - 19)

The way in which the term 'disaffection' is used within the study reflects the

complexities of cause and response and is used mainly in referring to the

disruptive and non-attendance behaviours which occur to a greater degree but

not exclusively within the 14+ age group.

Exclusion from School

The underlying reasons for all types of exclusion can be likened to the normal curve of distribution (see chapter 1, Reasons for Exclusion). At one end there are a small number of exclusions which are related to low-frequency behaviours which some schools need to identify as being unacceptable because they are challenges to the authority of the school. These consist of students making fashion statements or identification with a sub-group for example by a particular hair style. The main bulk of the exclusions are formed by the persistent disruptive behaviours (defined by the school) which are usually high-frequency behaviours exhibited by pupils. The third group at the other end of the curve are again low-incidence behaviours which are illegal but not necessarily disruptive per se. An example may be selling illegal substances, or a person in possession of cannabis. Schools resort to exclusion for a variety of reasons:

- to gain the support of parents;
- to gain the support of outside agencies;
- to protect the majority of pupils from the acts of an individual, where these are violent;
- to indicate a point of principle;

- as a punishment;

- to give space for calm to return to a heated situation.

The original contribution to the body of knowledge which this thesis makes centres around:

1. the detailed examination of one local educational authority;

2. a consideration of the Special Educational Needs/ pastoral interface;

3. the use of case conference material;

4. the development of a model of 'risk' to describe the exclusion process within a school.

The contribution made to the understanding of the theoretical issues surrounding exclusions from school by this thesis relies on the premise that exclusion is not just the final act but is a process which can be encouraged by some schools and discouraged by others. The area of exclusion is much more complex than much of the existing literature indicates. Some of the studies which rely on quantitative research alone are not able to explain exclusion in terms of direct causal linkages.

The idea of a model in chapter 3 (see **figure 2**) is helpful to our understanding of exclusion as it shows the interactive nature of some of the factors in the exclusion process. These factors may not necessarily be the same for each

pupil or each school, but the model reflects the wider context of the exclusion (school, home, culture) as well as the within child factors.

Attitudes towards pupils with Special Educational Needs in the school are crucial as these determine whether the overall ethos is punitive or supportive and will enable the school to look more effectively for individual strategies which will keep the child within the school.

Schools can have a major influence on the exclusion process which occurs within the school, but the will to be inclusive as opposed to exclusive, must be present within the staff and the senior management team, notably the headteacher.

Chapter 1

What do we Mean by Exclusion?

The Historical Context

Studying exclusion of pupils from schools is a complicated business. There
are varying definitions of what constitutes exclusion and the recent changes in
the legislation have done little to clarify the situation, as there are issues
related not just to the formal, reported exclusions but also to the informal or
illegal exclusions. Historically, the situation with regard to exclusions has
been a somewhat muddled one.

Responsibility for encouraging good behaviour, self-discipline and proper
standards of conduct are given in law to the headteacher in conjunction with
the governors, and the headteacher is conferred with the sole authority within
the school to exclude (although the governing body has the right to order
reinstatement).

Prior to the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 there were differing definitions and
procedures adopted by LEAs (see Galloway et al. 1982 pp. 12 ff. for
discussion of the difficulties raised by the lack of clarity). The Education (No.

2) Act laid down the legislative framework with regard to exclusion procedures in voluntary, county or maintained special schools. Between 1986 and 1993 the terms 'suspension' and 'expulsion' were replaced by exclusion, of which there were two categories: temporary and permanent. Temporary exclusions were further divided into fixed term and indefinite.

Fixed term exclusions ran for a predetermined period of time, decided at the time at which the pupil was excluded and communicated to all interested parties. If the exclusion totalled less than 5 days in any one term, the LEA were not required to be informed (unless the exclusion would have precluded the pupil from participating in a public examination). If the cumulative total exceeded 5 days, then schools were required to notify the LEA. This did not always happen in practice. The situation was confused: some schools reported every exclusion, some schools tried to report an excluded pupil when the five days was exceeded. The flexibility in the system meant that some pupils who were permanently excluded had no history of exclusion with the local educational authority but had been previously excluded by the school. There was no legal requirement for the exclusion to end after a maximum period, but some LEAs imposed their own time limit on fixed term exclusions (e.g. 20 days).

Indefinite exclusions were introduced as a form of temporary exclusion with the intention that the pupil would eventually return to the excluding school. The category was introduced for special cases where there was some reason why the pupil could not be educated, for instance if the LEA were in the process of assessing the student under the Education Act 1981 or if other professionals were involved in assessment procedures. However, some schools tended to use indefinite exclusions for other reasons for instance as a 'stepping stone' on the way to permanent exclusion, or as a device to try to involve reluctant parents in the education of their wayward offspring. ACE, (1992a), went further and said that ' indefinite exclusions... are always a prelude to permanent exclusion' (p. 4). Indefinite exclusions were therefore used more frequently than was the original intention of the legislation, and in many cases increased the length of time the pupil was outside the education system.

Permanent exclusion is a statement by the school indicating that the relationship between the pupil and the school is no longer tenable, and that the school wishes the child to be educated in an alternative educational environment.

Permanent exclusions were required to be notified to the LEA, who must provide alternative education. However, the permanent exclusion could be

overruled by either the governors or the LEA, and the parents had a right of appeal to the LEA.

The governing body needed to be informed of all exclusions totalling 5 days or more in any one term (although all exclusions had to be recorded in the exclusions book which was available for inspection at governors' meetings). Parents had to be informed of any exclusion, and, if the exclusion totalled 5 days or more, about their right to make representation to the governing body or the LEA if they so desired.

Prior to the Education Act 1993, Ofsted produced a paper (1993a) which states:

> there is extensive evidence of the need for change to the exclusion provisions of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986. Too many children are being excluded from school, particularly for trivial offences and for indefinite periods. The criteria for exclusion are unclear and unsatisfactory. Action on these latter matters is needed whether or not the Education (No. 2) Act is amended. (p.1)

The changes made to the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 and appearing in the Education Act 1993 are a result of the response to this consultative paper, made by LEAs and other professional and advisory bodies. These changes include the demise of the indefinite category of exclusion and the requirement that the headteacher may not exclude a pupil for more than 15 school days in any one term unless the pupil is excluded permanently.

that the headteacher may not exclude a pupil for more than 15 school days in

any one term unless the pupil is excluded permanently.

This study spans both legislative frameworks as part one of the study was

conducted under the auspices of the Education (No. 2) Act, whilst the part

two data collection took place after the introduction of the Education Act

1993; consequently also after major changes to Special Education which will

be discussed in chapter 8.

Blyth and Milner (1996b) begin their book with comments which provide a

useful starting point for a definition of exclusion:

> Exclusion is the means by which the headteacher of a school can
> prevent a child or young person from attending the school, either for a
> fixed period (not exceeding fifteen days in any single school term) or
> permanently. It is, therefore, school driven. It does not refer to a child
> or young person absenting him or herself from school, for example by
> truancy, although the school can achieve this outcome by excluding a
> truant. (p.3)

This definition of exclusion emphasises the legal context under which pupils

are excluded and as such is useful to this study which focuses particularly in

part one upon the exclusions which were reported to the LEA during the two

academic years 1990 - 1992. It does not, however, refer to the many types of

informal exclusion which have been documented in particular by Stirling

(1992a), and which include:

- pupils sent home for a "cooling off" period, either for a specified length of time or until they return with a parent or guardian;

- parents asked to keep their child at home until arrangements can be made with the LEA for alternative provision to be made;

- parents persuaded that it would be advisable to seek an alternative school for their child;

- schools delay re-entry of an excluded pupil for an unreasonable length of time after the exclusion has been officially terminated (this may be the original school or an alternative where a permanent exclusion has been upheld).

As Stirling (1992a), comments:

> My inquiries in two local education authorities suggest that unofficial exclusions may far outnumber those which are officially recorded and reported. Any figures of permanent exclusions which the National Exclusions Reporting System might publish would be the tip of the iceberg. They would reveal only a small proportion of the total number of pupils who have been excluded and who may never attend school again. (p.128)

All these types of illegal exclusion exist even though due to their intrinsic hidden nature they remain largely undocumented. There is some evidence to suggest that illegal types of exclusion greatly exceed the exclusions which go through the formal recording procedures (ACE, 1993; Gillborn, 1996;

Stirling, 1992a). Certainly these exclusions do have an effect upon those individuals who are at the receiving end of such practices, particularly since the advent of the current 'market economy' has encouraged a climate of competition between schools for the 'best' pupils. It is now not so easy for some pupils to find a place at an alternative school, particularly a pupil of secondary school age with a history of challenging behaviour. A pupil may therefore be asked to find a place at another school, who may refuse to accept the pupil, who then spends time outside the jurisdiction of any school. Considering that the pupils who are excluded are some of the most vulnerable sections of society with either parents who do not know how to support the pupil's re-entry to a school, or who condone the pupil's absence from school, it is likely that some pupils are able to spend considerable amounts of time out of school before the system catches up with them. As Parffrey (1994) comments:

> The parents of many of these children are themselves sometimes uncoordinated and ineffective. Often they are not *au fait* with procedures and bureaucracy. Almost always they themselves are disempowered to make a fuss, or to appeal: they often feel guilty or made to feel to blame for their children's behaviour. (p. 108)

In addition to the illegal exclusions by schools are the high costs in terms of hidden time introduced by the LEA and/or parents who are complacent or not actively opposing the exclusion (Mitchell, 1996).

Booth (1996a) takes the definition of exclusion one stage further to include

not only the Stirling 'unofficial' exclusions but also the attitude of the school

within the exclusion process:

> We cannot allow our definition of the problem of 'exclusion' to be
> constrained because it is given an official definition in terms of
> breaches of discipline in the Education Acts 1986 and 1993........ I
> suggest that for most purposes it is more useful to think of exclusion as
> a process. I now think of integration or inclusion in education as
> involving two processes; the process of increasing the participation of
> pupils within the cultures and curricula of mainstream schools and the
> process of decreasing exclusionary pressures......... Exclusion, like
> segregation, can be conceived of as *the process of decreasing the*
> *participation of pupils in the cultures and curricula of mainstream*
> *schools.* (p.34)

This definition supports the argument developed below that pupils become

used to exclusionary processes within school(s) over a period of time and as a

consequence participation in all aspects of school decreases. Stirling (1996)

views exclusion as 'a process of marginalisation' and as 'a process of

disempowerment' (p. 53). Such exclusionary processes include not only the

illegal or internal exclusions but all methods of devaluing academic

attainment and other contributions made by pupils to the school community.

The league tables at present value most highly the attainment of 5A - C

GCSE grades. One school within the study adopted a 'random shoot' policy.

This was a phrase used by a deputy head and meant that if enough bullets are

fired around in a random fashion then the targets will be hit at some stage.

The greater the number of targets, the greater the chance of a high score. I

would have thought that schools had reached a greater sophistication in their

thinking than this, as the argument takes no cognisance of the necessity for

the active involvement of pupils in their own learning or of their innate

abilities or motivation or personal goals.

Exclusionary processes, marginalisation, disempowerment, all lead to an

increase of disaffection within vulnerable members of the school community

and increase the probability that the culmination of many years experience of

these processes will be that of permanent exclusion.

Repeated Exclusions

Stirling (1996) writing of looked after children, found that repeated

exclusions often result in long term truancy:

> once a pattern of being out of school was introduced, this predisposed
> the youngster to long-term non-attendance, particularly where the peer
> group within a children's home was largely out of school. (p. 56)

This link between truancy and exclusion (expressed by Kinder et al., 1995, as

a fight or flight response) was particularly displayed in the case conference

data as some excluded pupils were patently not interested in attendance at

any school and expressed a desire for home tuition as a legal alternative to

school. The discrepancy between the genders in terms of exclusion figures may also be partially explained by this link. The question arises as to whether girls are more likely to indulge in flight rather than fight as they are intrinsically less aggressive. Certainly repeated exclusions may be partially responsible for shifting the fulcrum which tips the balance for some pupils so that the world outside school becomes more important than anything which school has to offer. Once this happens for a young person it is almost impossible to tip the balance back. One Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator commented:

> This boy has outgrown school: he's been permanently excluded and that's what he wants. He's got a job.

Cullingford and Morrison (1996) comment on the need for a greater exploration of the 'social processes and relationships that occur within and outside school' in an attempt to redress the balance before it tips too far for the individual concerned.

Internal Exclusion

Schools often use internal exclusion as a last ditch effort to keep particular students in the school. It is a common strategy usually used when the student

is reaching the end of the disciplinary process which culminates in permanent exclusion from school. Internal exclusion includes the following:

- use of a room which is usually staffed continuously and to which pupils are sent for specific incidents within a lesson;

- exclusion from particular lessons for a period of time;

- the use of an isolation room for individual pupils;

- limitation in the choice of options for years 10 and 11;

- part time attendance;

- withdrawal from lessons for specific purposes e.g. counselling;

- behaviour modification unit, usually as a temporary measure.

The use of such strategies and resources is not an issue in itself, but the way in which these strategies are used is of concern. If the school is seeking to develop methods of supporting the pupils with the most challenging behaviour within the school as opposed to introducing punitive, rigid structures, then they are more likely to influence the rate of exclusion from the school in a positive way. They must be viewed within the context of the school's ethos and attitude towards working with difficult pupils as to whether they are negative or positive influences within the school. They must also be

considered in the light of individual pupil entitlement to an education of

similar quality to the rest of his peers.

Adams (1992) distinguishes between two forms of discipline in American

schools: punitive and rehabilitative. Punitive discipline refers to those

procedures such as exclusion which separate the student and the school,

whereas,

> rehabilitative forms of discipline include in-school suspension
> programs, special day-long classes for disruptive students, and
> establishing behavior contracts between students and teachers. (p.2)

The factor which seems to be important in making the distinction between

punitive and rehabilitative forms of discipline seems to be the attitude of the

school:

> This form of discipline punishes students for behaving inappropriately,
> but also recognises and rewards appropriate behavior. Rehabilitative
> disciplinary practices are believed to offer an array of hope,
> compassion, and sensibility in dealing with students who are important
> human resources. (p.2)

Therefore schools with high exclusion rates are likely to be those using

punitive forms of discipline; conversely, those schools with low exclusion

rates are likely to use rehabilitative forms of discipline.

Disaffection

Kinder et al. (1995) identify a category of pupils who are disaffected which include pupils involved in truancy and disruption as well as excluded pupils. Their preliminary research suggested that truancy, disruption and exclusion are inexorably interlinked and explore disaffection as a complete entity (see also Cullingford and Morrison, 1996; Parsons and Howlett, 1996). Certainly some pupils who are excluded are disaffected, but this study (and evidence from Moore, 1996) shows that a large proportion of the excluded population also have SEN, and some pupils have neither SEN nor are disaffected; for instance the pupil in this study who was involved in substance distribution.

Disaffection has long been a recognised problem for schools; particularly those pupils who are nearing the end of their school careers. One reason why the exclusion figures peak in year ten may be because in year eleven pupils know that they can truant without being bothered by the Education Welfare Officer. In some schools there is open agreement that year eleven pupils are not a priority when resources are stretched. This is particularly an issue when the pupils concerned are those who may have been excluded in the past and may have only survived permanent exclusion because they have not attended school regularly. There is no doubt that the school can have an effect on

attendance during year eleven in particular (see Gillham, 1984; Rutter et al., 1979 and Visser, 1983, for general discussion of the school effect). One school within the local educational authority studied decided to tackle this problem in order to try to improve the number of 5 A - C GCSE passes. After much discussion amongst staff and pupils, it was decided to have single sex tutor groups for year eleven. The number of 5 A - C GCSE increased from 13 - 22%, though whether there is a causal relationship would need further investigation; but the effect on attendance has been dramatic. From attendance levels of around 68%, this year group has gone to around 97%, with attendance for some weeks running at 100% and never less than 96% over a period of one and a half terms.

There are a number of issues like this which could be tackled by individual schools including pupil motivation, relationships with peer group, other year groups and with staff. There is a common saying in Special Educational Needs circles: 'if you improve things for Special Educational Needs pupils, you improve things for all pupils'. Perhaps schools could take the initiative and improve the educational experience through improving the social integration of its older pupils in particular (Carlen et al., 1992; Cullingford, 1993; Cullingford and Brown, 1995; Cullingford and Morrison, 1996; Measor and Woods, 1984).

As Parsons and Howlett (1996) comment:

> Exclusion is part of the wider disaffection with school felt by pupils.
> This disaffection can include disruptive behaviour, truancy,
> underperformance, failure to achieve and alienation. (p. 112)

Reasons for Exclusion

The reasons for exclusion, when analysed by number of incidents, fall mainly

into a variety of categories which will be discussed in more detail in chapter

5. Most pupils are excluded, whatever their particular last offence may be, for

persistent disruption of the running of the school. Some pupils are excluded

for violating specific school codes of conduct such as a haircut in the 'wrong'

style, or for making a fashion statement which is inconsistent with the

school's dress code. At the other end of the spectrum, other pupils may be

excluded for a one-off event which is illegal but not continually disruptive of

the day-to-day running of the school. These types of incidents (one-off

events) are represented within my own study as one pupil who sold cannabis

resin in school, and another pupil who burnt part of the school down.

If exclusion is to be used only 'as a last resort' (DES, 1989, para 15/5)

schools ought to begin to analyse why they use exclusion and what happens

in the long-term to those pupils who were excluded in order that they may

then consider whether, with a more informed opinion about the consequences

of exclusion, exclusion is the most appropriate response to the particular

individual circumstances. This is particularly important in the light of

Gillborn's (1996) comments:

> There is good reason to believe that the proportion of exclusions that
> are confirmed bears no direct relationship to the strength of the case
> against the pupils. (p.3)

(see also Blyth and Milner, 1993.) The above claim is substantiated by

McManus (1990) who found that:

> Schools with higher than expected suspension rates tended to have a
> rapid referral system where even the head of department or head of
> year might be left out of the decision making. (p. 22)

There is enough flexibility within the system as it stands for schools to be

able to exclude pupils without a great deal of accountability; governors will

usually back the headteacher's decision to exclude (McManus, 1993); the

local educational authority is unlikely to order reinstatement of a permanently

excluded pupil, and in some cases is unable to do so (see also DFE, 1992a;

DFE, 1993a; SHA, 1992).

Similarly, LEAs generally are not assuming responsibility for pupils who are

excluded by being systematically accountable for those pupils for whom it is

legally obliged to make alternative provision (Jones, 1991).

Exclusion is a process

An exclusion begins, technically, with the student being sent home from school. But the process for the majority of permanent exclusions begins much earlier than the precipitating incident which is usually the culmination of a series of interactions between the school and the student and the parents, where they are willing to be involved. A characteristic pattern of behaviour may be typified by an illustration from the pupil case studies. Shane was admitted to the high school with a record from the middle school which indicated that he had 'an explosive temperament' and had presented 'problems on occasions'. He was permanently excluded at 15 years of age, and the records during the nine months leading up to exclusion detailed over 40 incidents including refusal to do as asked by staff, swearing at staff, walking out of lessons, destroying his and other pupils' work, showing resentment of authority, physical violence to other pupils, self-abuse (e.g. headbutting the wall, smashing his fist into the wall), threatening teachers with violence. There seemed to be no pattern to the behaviour (such as teachers, lessons or time of day), but most of the incidents happened in classrooms. The strategies used by school included the use of a contract; letters to parents; change of timetable; monitoring of behaviour; time out;

referral to the GP, a clinical psychologist, the Schools' Psychological Service;

a case conference; short term exclusion (including one 20 day exclusion) and

an indefinite exclusion. Statementing procedures began 3 months after the

permanent exclusion began and Shane finished his education on home tuition.

Shane was identified as having below average ability, and had remedial help

for maths whilst he was at the middle school. The school identified that

Shane's educational needs centred around the fact that he had low self-

esteem. The education system as it presently stands did not allow the school

to access effective help for Shane. As Parsons and Howlett (1996) argue,

exclusion cannot be left the sole responsibility of the school, but needs to be a

multi-agency response to a society with an increase in psycho-social

disorders:

> schools cannot be expected alone to bear the burdens, meet the
> challenges and effect a solution in a caring society concerned for the
> welfare and well-being of all its members. (p.111)

The Consequences of Exclusion

The consequences of exclusion are not simply a time out of mainstream

education followed by a return. Even in the case of fixed term exclusions the

outcome is not always a return to the excluding school (Mitchell, 1996). The

most simple of exclusions cannot stand isolated; what has happened to the child prior to the exclusion, and what follows the exclusion? If the pattern of exclusion was that every child who was excluded for a fixed period went back into school and was never excluded again, then the situation would be much simpler. What most exclusion data masks is the propensity for the same pupils to be excluded more than once, becoming involved in a spiral of exclusion and eventually perhaps being permanently excluded (for further details of the consequences of long and short-term absence from school see Carlen, 1995; DFE 1992; Hibbett and Fogelman, 1990; Hibbett et al., 1990). Once a pupil becomes trapped into the exclusion spiral, the education system and procedures become more and more exclusive in nature and the child becomes more and more detached from school: the excluding school in particular and the education system in general. The balance moves from being involved and included in the education system to becoming less socially and psychologically attached. This may eventually lead to permanent exclusion, depending how much detachment from the system occurs. Gillborn (1996) estimates that only one in three permanently excluded primary school pupils return to school, and less than one in five secondary excluded pupils. He goes on to point out that these figures represent only those pupils who are excluded

officially, and that the figures may be much worse in reality. The consequences of being excluded are therefore at a minimum, having the curriculum entitlement significantly reduced particularly bearing in mind the internal exclusionary processes which also take place within schools. Other more serious consequences may follow from the amount of time spent out of school, such as involvement in criminal or illegal activities which may be psychologically or physically damaging to the child or young person. As the numbers of excluded pupils continue to grow, there are growing consequences for society as a whole. Community groups such as the Institute of Race Relations and the Advisory Centre for Education are involved in raising awareness of the issues involved in the exclusion of pupils from school. Some headteachers, notably Chris Searle (1994) have been bucking the trend to exclude.

There are financial implications for exclusions as more agencies are necessarily involved in the process; particularly the police and social services when excluded pupils are not full-time in an alternative educational establishment (as most Pupil Referral Units or home tuition schemes offer only part-time provision at best).

Issues of accountability are intermingled with the entitlement of the majority of pupils to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which is in line with

the national curriculum requirements (Blyth and Milner, 1993) which

excluded pupils have no right to expect. In like manner, the parents of

excluded pupils have forfeited their right of choice of school. Exclusion does

not sit easily side by side with such philosophies.

Parffrey (1994) argues:

> we are actually increasing the likelihood of delinquent behaviour by:
>
>> (a) increasingly excluding adolescents from the very means by which some of this awareness and behaviour could be learnt;
>> (b) alienating them even more from society by underlining their non-acceptability and by modelled intolerance and exclusion as a solution to problems; and
>> (c) giving them so little to do with their time that vast amounts of their week are spent aimlessly....
>>
>> ...What we have then, I would suggest, is a scandal of systemic abdication of responsibility. Certain children, it would seem, are not wanted. They do not fit, behaviourally, socially or emotionally. Schools, successfully, get rid of them. (p.116)

Society as a whole will have to face the consequences of excluding and

marginalising young people, and society as a whole, and the education system

in particular, has a moral obligation to think through the consequences of

excluding a section of society from such a basic human right as education.

The exclusion of pupils dates back to the Education Act 1944; surely a

sophisticated western society ought to be able to educate all its young

people?

Blyth and Milner (1994) make the point that 'exclusion from school is

portrayed as an essentially educational issue' (p. 300). Maybe at one stage in

the country's history it was just that. However, the nature of education has

changed so much, and the expectations of society have altered from group

responsibility (e.g. belonging to a church or a small community), towards the

rights of individuals to live their life in the way in which they want without

recourse to anyone else, that exclusion now has changed its course; hence the

increasing numbers of pupils who are seen as failures of not only the

education system, but also of society. Marketing for schools is all about

creating a positive corporate image for the school. Such an image does not

include pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties although Pardey

(1991) remarks:

> This does not prevent the school having a highly successful programme
> for pupils with Special Educational Needs or providing for its less
> academic pupils; the image reflects the dominant characteristics of the
> school and cannot cover every detail or nuance. (p. 209)

The implication of this is clear; although a good corporate image can

incorporate the more acceptable pupils with Special Educational Needs, the

school would do well to minimise the effect that such pupils have on the

school as a whole.

Searle (1996) debates the 'striking similarities' which exist between those

pupils who are excluded in Britain and the street children of Brazil

(Dimenstein, 1992), and stresses the need for our society to abolish exclusion:

> We should do this in the same spirit and with the same resolve that we
> generated when we campaigned against and saw the end of that other
> sanction - corporal punishment in schools - despite the anxiety this
> creates for teachers. (p.41)

Chapter 2

The Extent and Causes of Exclusion

The Nature of the Excluded Population

The Education (No. 2) Act 1986 defines what constitutes an exclusion, and

the procedures which pertain to each type of exclusion, including information

which is required to be given to parents, governors and the LEA.

Modifications to this were made in the Education Act 1993, which are

referred to below. What is more difficult to characterise is the excluded

population as a whole. McManus (1993) comments:

> Surveys indicate that most excluded pupils are male, working-class
> teenagers whose lives are characterised by domestic deprivation and
> disorder, erratic parental discipline, and poor attainment and ability.
> This is no help whatever in formulating policy as there are many more
> pupils with this profile within the ordinary school system than excluded
> from it. (p. 219)

Stereotyping can now be taken a stage further: factual information from a

variety of studies indicates that the excluded population consists of the most

vulnerable sections of our society. The profile of a pupil most at risk of

exclusion could now be specified as a working class black boy with SEN who

is being looked after by the LEA. Such a stereotype is by definition too

limiting, but supports the viewpoint as expressed by Booth (1996a) in asking

the question whether Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) should be accessed through

the provision of statements as they constitute special provision designed to

meet the needs of pupils which schools indicate cannot be met within the

mainstream setting.

Much discussion has taken place regarding the nature of the excluded

population, including much research over many years indicating the

importance of the school in influencing the behaviour of its pupils (McManus,

1990, 1993; Mortimore et al., 1988; Reynolds and Cuttance, 1982). Galloway

(1985) underlined the importance of internal school factors in influencing the

pattern of exclusion for any particular school when he commented that 'the

cause of exclusion, if not the disruption itself, lies to some extent in the

attitudes, policies and practices of the school. An understanding of the factors

involved in exclusion requires the study of school processes as well as pupil

characteristics.'

McLean (1987) studied the exclusion patterns of 57 schools in the Strathclyde

region and argued that the exclusion rate of a school was more influenced by

the policies and beliefs held by the school than by its level of disruption. He

concluded that low-excluding schools had some common features:

The schools shared a child-centred ideology. They operated flexible discipline systems and a positive pro-active style of pupil management. They took an incorporative approach to pupil involvement and an appreciative perspective towards pupil difficulties. (p.309)

Galloway and Goodwin (1987) also pointed out the futility of trying to predict the individual pupils who will be eventually excluded, thus dismissing the argument that early intervention would be an effective way of reducing the exclusion rate:

First, as the Warnock Report pointed out, the problems presented by many pupils are temporary, and clear up without specialist provision. Second, there is evidence that just over half the pupils assessed as displaying signs of psychiatric disorder in adolescence present problems for the first time in adolescence. Just under half have also presented problems as children (Rutter et al. 1976). This alone makes nonsense of any argument that resources should be concentrated in younger age-groups in order to prevent more serious problems later. (p.60)

Mitchell (1993) comments:

No-one can say that the majority of pupils who are excluded are intrinsically different from some of those who remain in the system. So the system itself is unfair, often working against those who are the most disadvantaged. (p. 58)

Cullingford and Morrison (1996) link truancy and exclusion together as outcomes which are symptomatic of the failure of the school to meet the needs of all its pupils, and discuss the fact that pupils 'have been

needs of all its pupils, and discuss the fact that pupils 'have been

psychologically excluding themselves long before the school formally

excludes them' (p.130). They argue that pupils who truant or who are

eventually excluded go through a process of alienation from the school.

Other authors also make the link between disruptive behaviour and truancy

(Galloway, 1985; Kinder et al., 1995). Lloyd-Smith and Dwyfor Davies

(1995) perceive disruptiveness of pupils as: 'their truancy, bullying,

aggression, deliquency or their inability to conform to the behavioural

demands of their schools.' (p. 1). Kinder et al. (1995) explore the links

between the external or contextual factors which may exacerbate or intensify

the particular response of pupils so that the school which a child attends

becomes an important issue if disaffection (defined by them as 'Truancy,

Disruption and Exclusion' p. 3), is going to be exhibited:

> exclusions and the application of severe sanctions can exacerbate
> disaffection and may lead to non-attendance; inadequate handling of re-
> entry after non-attendance problems may encourage disruptive
> behaviour; and truancy and exclusions may result in failing to keep
> abreast of course work (and/or affect peer and friendship groupings),
> which in turn encourages further alienation and disaffected behaviours.
> (p.4)

Similarly, the opportunities for truancy vary from school to school, depending

upon the systems and procedures that are in place in order to check the

attendance and to follow up the absence of pupils, and how actively those

procedures are adhered to (DES, 1989).

The opportunities for disruption vary from classroom to classroom and from

teacher to teacher, and are different over time according to such factors as

teacher tolerance on an individual or on a collective basis. Galloway (1985)

states:

> A conventional topic on in-service courses for teachers is what can be
> done about disruptive pupils. The trouble is not so much that the
> question is unanswerable as that it is based on the premise that
> something needs to be done to, or for, the pupils. Their behaviour may
> well suggest that they have special needs but their needs are intricately
> bound up with those of their teachers. The question can be re-worded
> to ask what experiences pupils derive from school which facilitate
> behaviour that teachers find disturbing. (p.101)

The attitude of the child over time in responding to school demands may be a

factor in influencing the school's decision to exclude. If a child is repeatedly

'unrepentant' and therefore unable to show the necessary remorse for his or

her actions, then the school is more likely to exclude the child than if the child

apologises, even if the staff realise that the apology is little more than lip-

service. One head of year commented:

> If pupils are badly behaved but make the right noises and show
> remorse, they will last much longer.

Further discussion of the school influence on disruption will be explored in the section below on differences between schools.

Differences Between Schools

The fact that exclusion rates vary between schools which have similar catchment areas is well documented in the existing literature (see Galloway, 1982; McManus, 1989), and the rate of exclusion may vary according to the internal practices within schools. It is suggested by McManus (1990), that:

> Schools with higher than expected suspension rates tended to have a list of suspension-worthy offences. (p.23)

The routes taken by individual pupils through the pastoral system were identified by McManus as important factors in the exclusion rate; the faster a pupil reaches the deputy or headteacher, the more likely that pupil is to be suspended.

Evidence from my own research, supported by the Panorama programme of March 15th 1993, suggests that exclusion rates may be influenced by a philosophical belief by senior management that exclusions are either an entirely appropriate way of dealing with difficult pupils as the education of the other pupils in the school is at risk, or that difficult pupils can only be properly educated within the mainstream, and that to exclude them is to

abdicate the overall responsibility for every pupil which rightfully belongs to

the school.

These two opposing philosophical stances are embodied in the following

comments made to me by a headteacher and a deputy headteacher from

different high schools in relation to the use of exclusions:

> I wouldn't remove (Fred) from school, ... I've got to think about the individual, and if I take him out of school and put him onto the streets which is what the authority are saying, the lad hasn't a chance, and I won't do that because we care, and so long as we care we cope.

> How far can the learning and teaching be compromised by the tiny minority?

Most pupils are excluded for a series of disruptive incidents with a particular

precipitating incident. Some pupils are excluded for a particularly serious

"one-off" offence, for instance one boy in my study was permanently

excluded for carrying and selling cannabis resin in school. The exclusion was

upheld by the authority and so the year 11 boy, who was able, in the view of

his teachers, to pass several GCSEs lost his chance to sit all those

examinations and was given home tuition instead.

Some schools may use the exclusion system in order to remove pupils from

the school, carefully collecting the necessary "evidence" which the LEAs,

with half an eye on potential appeals by parents, are so keen to have documented; a very good case can usually be made for regularly disruptive pupils.

Schools' patterns of exclusion are also significant. The usual pattern of exclusion for any child in theory should include at least one short term exclusion before permanent exclusion is contemplated by the school, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This should therefore mean that the pattern for each school should include a number of fixed term exclusions for each registered permanent exclusion. However, schools tend to develop trends over a number of years, some producing many more indefinite or permanent exclusions than fixed term (see chapter 5). This may be partially due to the "unofficial" exclusions as outlined above, and the use of such exclusions not notified to the authority would give the individual pupil concerned the necessary increasing intensification of sanctions usually employed in disciplinary systems.

Lawrence, Steed and Young (1984) differentiate between three levels of disruption within a school: child, class and school. There has been much written on how to reduce disruption within the classroom, concentrating on various techniques available to the teacher such as behaviour modification,

presentation of lessons and other classroom management strategies in order to minimise disruption by individuals or by a group of individuals within a class. School disruption, however, is not within the sole control of the individual teacher, and Lawrence et al. point to major issues which face teachers in "difficult" schools. The first feature is that much time is spent by individual teachers in classroom control and in following up incidents and truants. This has implications for preparation and marking time. A school with a high proportion of difficult pupils will have difficulty with vandalism and the upkeep of the general appearance of the school, and also with movement of pupils around the school in terms of aggressive behaviour, thefts, lateness to lessons etc. A spiral of low expectations, disaffection, teacher stress, etc. therefore develops. Although such schools do exist, it does not necessarily follow that the exclusion rate for such a school will be a high one.

The concept of a 'healthy school' is an interesting one (see for instance Kyriacou, 1981 on ways of reducing whole staff stress levels), with the mental capacity to cope with the pressures of difficult behaviour. Thus a combination of features such as; an established school, with progressive staff who work well together and have well-established communication routes and procedures; strong leadership and management (Ofsted, 1995) are likely to contribute to the health of a school. Conversely, when two schools with

deprived catchment areas, with grant-maintained and a church comprehensive

school competing for the same children, merge, with staff who had left the

first school to join the second combined with promises of large capital

spending which never materialised, the state of the school could be described

as less than healthy, and in Ofsted terms is in fact failing, as happened with

the Ridings school in Calderdale. The amount of stress which staff are under,

and the proportion of staff within a school who feel under stress is an

important indicator of the general health of the school. As Kyriacou (1989)

indicates:

> It is important, however, to take account of the prevailing climate in schools as a whole; it would appear that if individuals feel they are doing work that is well-rewarded (in terms of salary), is regarded as worthwhile, and is respected by the community, this can mitigate the experience of stress. When teachers perceive this is not the case,..... morale in schools tends to drop and in consequence stress is likely to increase. (p. 196)

Elsewhere, Kyriacou (1981) has highlighted the importance of social

interaction between school staff as a way of reducing the collective stress

levels that the staff feel. He has argued that

> the degree of social support available in a school is a crucial factor in mitigating the level of stress. Such support may be direct, in terms of colleagues positively supporting or assisting those having difficulties, and monitoring the school's organisational and management practices accordingly, or indirect, through, for example, good staffroom facilities

and communication channels which facilitate friendly social relations and exchanges. (p. 197)

(see also Rogers, 1991). Pupil misbehaviour and poor working conditions are major sources of teacher stress, (Kyriacou, 1989; Neilson, 1995). So, if there is a high level of pupil misbehaviour in a school, combined (as is often the case), with vandalism and a building which is in a poor state of repair, the circumstances for creating increased levels of staff stress and decreasing levels of staff morale become a distinct possibility and the capacity of the school as a whole to cope with pressure decreases.

A factor which is related to the stress of staff within schools is the stress which is also felt by the pupils:

> It could reasonably be argued that teacher stress and pupil stress are not unconnected and that a stressed teacher can help induce stress in pupils and vice versa. (Neilson, 1995, p. 21).

People, whether staff or pupils, do not perform at their best when working for a prolonged period of time under a great deal of stress; the teaching and learning within an institution will be affected by the stress level of its population (Neilson, 1995).

Booth (1996b) involved in studying a high school in an urban area,

commented upon the importance of teacher attitudes in influencing the

behaviour of the students:

> There were a number of references by teachers to 'class' and the
> desirability of 'middle class' students in the school, in order to raise
> standards of attainment and behaviour. Schools were seen by some to
> be in competition to attract the middle class students and to avoid other
> students. The co-ordinator of the behaviour policy attributed a decline
> in standards of behaviour to a 'haemorrhage' of outer city families to
> schools in surrounding villages and a corresponding 'infilling' from the
> inner city estates. Another teacher referred to the children from the
> 'nice middle class families' as watering down the children from the
> more 'grotty' council estates. Such attitudes are present in many
> schools and they must have some effect on the way students regard
> themselves and each other and are viewed by teachers. (p. 97)

It is easy to condemn such attitudes but how many people, given a choice,

would work in an inner city school, as opposed to a rural community? If the

answer is the latter, what does this say about our values as a society and our

views about the people who do not hold those same values?

Ofsted (1996a) comment on one of the positive features of low-excluding

schools being 'a good behaviour policy':

> Three-quarters of the low-excluding school had good behaviour
> policies... Few high-excluding schools had good behaviour policies...
> Good policies are those which embody values of respect and
> responsibility and set out their implications in clear language,
> accessible to all. They are implemented in such a way as to make staff
> and pupils clear about expectations and about the sanctions and
> rewards to be used. They are followed with consistency by *all* staff,
> and are known to, and supported by, parents. (p.17)

Hayden (1997) comments on the differential opportunities which schools

have, due simply to school type. Exclusion 'rules' are different for voluntary

aided or grant-maintained schools whose governors have the power of

exclusion and the local educational authority have no right to order

reinstatement of the excluded pupil. She also points out that such schools,

along with popular schools which are full to overflowing, are in a good

position to be able to resist attempts by the local educational authority or by

parents or carers to admit pupils excluded from other schools (see also

Sasson, 1992).

A crucial issue in the differential ways that schools exclude involves how the

school engages in the issues surrounding exclusion. Schools which are aware

that exclusion is an unsatisfactory answer to dealing with a large varying

range of difficulties faced by the interaction of school and pupil are on their

way to reducing exclusion levels. The process of addressing exclusion is part

of the solution and although the wider, structural factors such as socio-

economic background of the pupil and of the catchment area of the school are

important, what schools do positively to reduce exclusion is crucial. Solutions

must fit the circumstances in which schools are working, and a positive

atmosphere for inclusion is important. There are well-defined rules and

procedures governing processes for excluding a pupil from school; there are

no such processes to ensure successful reintegration or for avoiding exclusion

in the first place. There has been much research focusing upon excluded

pupils as a group (although like pupils with Special Educational Needs all

have individual needs some of which vary according to the educational

environment into which they are placed); the focus for research should now

move to look at the processes within schools which are directed at creating

the circumstances that are calculated to prevent exclusion, concentrating on

the policies and practices which lead to the inclusion of all pupils, thereby

creating conditions within schools where exclusion becomes increasingly

unnecessary (Cooper et al., 1997).

How Many Pupils are Excluded?

There are various estimates as to how many exclusions are occurring. The

NUT carried out a survey in May 1992 which revealed that a total of more

than 5,300 pupils were excluded in 26 of the 117 LEAs in England and Wales

- a rise of 20% in one year. This survey included all notified exclusions

(except where the LEA figures were not available), both temporary and

permanent, and extrapolation of these figures to cover the whole country

would give a total of 25,000 exclusions for England and Wales in any one year. The NUT state that they believe this to be an underestimate.

A MORI poll carried out for the Panorama programme of March 15th 1993 indicated that the joint total of temporary and permanent exclusions is 66,000 per year, with a rise of 50% over a two year period.

Parsons (1996a) estimated the total numbers of permanent exclusions for England during 1995/1996 as over 13,500. In the local educational authority I studied, the rate for primary during 1995/1996 was 0.044%, in secondary 0.42% and for special 1.9%. The question then arises as to whether some of the special school placements are inappropriate. This is particularly apposite in view of the claims of the headteachers within the secondary schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties that pupils have been inappropriately placed especially at key stage 4 when it has been impossible for the local educational authority to gain pupils a place in mainstream schools. That is, pupils whose placement ought to have been in mainstream but have been excluded from a school have not been able to gain a place in another mainstream school within the authority, despite the LEA's attempts to provide mainstream education. In turn, these same pupils were excluded from special provision. Parsons (1996a) gives the overall exclusion rate for 1995/1996 as 0.193%, and concludes:

> The rates of exclusion from all types of schools and in most LEAs are on a continuing upward trend. Action needs to be taken at the levels of legislation, resources and practical intervention to deal more effectively with the problem which recent reports suggest is costing the public purse dearly. (p. 4)

However, although there is a consensus that exclusions are on the increase, any statistics given should be treated with caution, as there is little doubt that illegal exclusions far outweigh those which are either reported to the LEA or written in the suspension book kept in every school (Blyth and Milner, 1996b; Mitchell, 1993).

Why do Schools Exclude?

There are no simple answers as to why schools exclude. Some schools truly see exclusion as the very end of the discipline chain, whilst others may exclude to give a 'cooling off' period, ostensibly for the pupils to 'cool off', but in some cases for the staff to 'cool off' also (Gale and Topping, 1986). Another reason for exclusion is to bring a pupil to the head of the queue for assessment or to gain more resources if a pupil has already been statemented.

At one case conference, the school had excluded a year 7 boy because 'the

school cannot cope with Scott adequately within its resources.' The school

had taken legal advice, and the outcome was that the boy was referred to the

Special Educational Needs panel which was responsible for the allocation of

resources to statemented pupils.

The conflicting reasons for schools to exclude pupils have not been clarified

by government debate on the issue. The Taylor Report (DES, 1977)

recommend that: 'Suspension is not a punishment, but a means of allowing a

school to be carried on in an orderly fashion while constructive solutions are

sought'.

In contrast, Ofsted (1993b) state:

> There is a case, also, for using the term 'expulsion' in place of
> 'permanent exclusion' in order to underline the severity of this sanction
> in the minds of all those involved in the decision making. (p. 1)

The confusion is exacerbated by the tendency for fixed term exclusions to be

used for different reasons to permanent exclusion. Schools often use fixed

term exclusions to try to secure a discussion with a parent and would specify

that when the child returned to school they should bring a parent with them in

order to discuss the situation. Schools within the study often stated the need

for parental support and involvement:

> Parents are the key factor in behaviour. Breakdown is likely to be when parents won't support the school. (Headteacher)

The same headteacher went on to comment that provision should be:

> centrally for youngsters who are anti-school with flexible timetables with a team who are trained in dealing with such children and who can **offer support to parents.**

A school will exclude permanently when the relationship between the school and the pupil and/or parent(s) has broken down to what the school believes is an irretrievable level. There are a number of factors which influence the school's interpretation of what constitutes an irretrievable breakdown, some of which are rehearsed below.

The tolerance threshold of the school is a vital factor in the decision on whether or not to permanently exclude a pupil, and comprises:

- teacher tolerance levels within individual classrooms;

- the corporate will of the school;

- parental support;

- the philosophy and will of the headteacher;

- the speed of the route taken by the pupil in reaching the senior management;

- other agency support;

- seriousness of the offence.

Many of the above factors are inter-connected: for instance the speed of the route taken by the pupil in reaching the senior management can be affected by teacher tolerance levels within individual classrooms. One headteacher commented that how behaviour is handled within school by individual teachers:

> depends on the expertise of staff and their ability to separate the behaviour of the child from the child itself and inevitably with some children that's quite difficult.

This headteacher recognised, however, that the situation was a great deal more complex than this explanation which only held half of the truth. He went on to say:

> We have occasionally had children who, I remember one who was particularly difficult, particularly maladjusted really, who had been abused, who had sexual hang-ups, whose behaviour was totally irrational, who in that sense was totally unreliable and the staff liked him. There was something very likeable about him, but as far as his behaviour was concerned and his future, then he is going to have severe problems and yet in some ways because of his nature, staff were able to relate to him and that is in many ways what saved him. Then you get other children who are not very likeable at all and I think it's difficult then for staff to separate the two.

A number of people recognised the difficulty of teachers 'at the chalk face' facing difficult behaviour on a daily basis:

> The most difficult thing, the thing that really stresses the staff is the constant drip, drip, drip. (Headteacher)

This was contrasted by the comments of a deputy head who felt that teachers ought to expect to be dealing with difficult behaviour:

> Trouble is an everyday part of a teacher's life.

Stress from sources other than the pupils themselves can have a big effect on teacher tolerance; government requirements; school requirements such as adherence to a wide range of whole school policies which are in a constant state of flux; administration of normal school routines and communications to other members of staff in a short space of time; relationships with other members of staff; pressures which are external to the school (see for instance Dunham, 1984; Kyriacou 1986a, 1989). Lovey (1993) takes a rather less sympathetic view of the way in which certain teachers deal with challenging behaviour within the classroom:

> Lloyd-Smith (1984) concluded that the home experiences suffered by the majority of those youngsters made them especially vulnerable to a particular type of 'intolerant hyper-critical teacher who is content when dealing with able, conforming and well-motivated children but has little desire or ability to appreciate the personal problems of pupils' (p.95). This view was based largely on descriptions of ex-grammar school teachers who found themselves, for the first time in their careers, teaching low-ability pupils and mixed-ability classes. (p. 13)

Ofsted place great emphasis on the response of pupils in individual lessons and indicate that there are fewer behaviour difficulties where the teaching in lessons is good. (Ofsted, 1996b). The inter-relationship between the curriculum and the individual delivery of that curriculum can also play a part in the tolerance levels of individual staff (Kyriacou, 1989). As one headteacher said:

> There is another factor in this as well. Over the last ten years our methodology has become much more child-centred. It's become much more, if you like, problem-solving, question and discussion. Children have been put in a situation where they are urged to question what's going on and some of the children cannot cope with that and that methodology, which is one which will allow children to actively make progress, is one which sets the authority of a teacher when it is put into question, at risk.

The importance of individual teacher tolerance with regard to exclusions is summarised by McManus (1993):

> However, teachers in low-exclusion schools clearly have a broader menu of strategies, a confidence to tackle their problems rather than pass them to seniors, and the more cautious and scientific approach that is the mark of an experienced professional. (p. 221)

Parental support can have a significant effect on whether a child is excluded from school (see above). Searle (1996) talks of the benefits of involving parents in school when pupils are being particularly disruptive:

> We have also invited parents of pupils displaying disruptive behaviour into school to spend a day going from lesson to lesson with their son or daughter. This strategy had a particularly sobering effect on one very

volatile and disruptive boy whose father, an elder at the local mosque, exerted considerable influence over the conduct of many of his son's peers too! Such visits have often had very fruitful consequences in settling down these pupils to their work and calming their behaviour for a period long beyond the parental visit. (pp. 49 - 50)

A school in the study has found great benefits in terms of pupil behaviour in general from having adults on site by running a fully equipped gym and courses for local employers in computer skills. The role of parents was highlighted by the Elton Committee (DES, 1989), who made eleven recommendations which were directed at parents. McManus (1993) and Stott (1978, 1982) both highlight the deficiencies of parents which children pick up:

> Hostility to adults is almost always a reflection of hostility to parents who have failed from the child's point of view. (McManus, 1993, p. 223)

Little has been written in the literature on exclusions regarding parental involvement, perhaps because parents of excluded pupils tend to form, like their children, part of the more vulnerable section of society and are therefore not empowered to be able to help their children without a great deal of support themselves (Parffrey, 1994).

Brodie and Berridge (1996) include the views of parents as being an important factor which the headteacher has to balance with other

considerations when deciding whether or not to exclude a child. The parental

viewpoint can be particularly important in primary schools especially in

smaller schools where one disruptive pupil can have a disproportionate effect

on the other children. One chair of governors (echoing the head's earlier

statement), expressed concern regarding the exclusion of a KS1 girl:

> I am worried regarding:
> a) children are frightened of Jill;
> b) parents are threatening to take their children away from school unless something is done;
> c) teacher morale has been lowered.

The teacher perspective of the important role of parents in the exclusion

process was a theme which came through the data repeatedly. A good,

supportive intervention by a parent can at least, in many cases, delay the

exclusion process, if not avoid it altogether. Within the case study sample,

parents or carers were referred to as being 'co-operative', but, for various

reasons, all were ineffective. The important factors seemed to be:

- whether there was a 'significant adult';

- whether the parents or carers were effective in changing their child's behaviour;

- whether there were two parents, in particular, a father.

If the pupil was in care, there was quite often no significant adult to which the child could relate and trust. Where parents were divorced, the mother was often said to be co-operative and supportive of the school, but there were also comments about the trauma which the children had to go through:

> Mum is separated; John is very close to his father who is Scottish and lives in Scotland. (Mum is) very supportive; has often been in (to school) and has grounded him etc. She has done everything she has been asked. (Deputy Headteacher).

The effectiveness of the influence on the pupil is repeatedly brought out through the case studies in particular, for instance the same deputy head said of a year 10 girl:

> Dad has been in, we haven't seen mum. (They are) superficially supportive, but then would go back on decisions. Mother is the dominant character.

The head of a behaviour unit stated:

> Parents had been involved but he is largely unsupervised. They say they send him to school so what more can they do? Mother is quite supportive.

The key to whether parental support is effective in diverting exclusion is not simply whether parents respond to school requests and appear supportive, but whether they are genuinely supporting the school, and where they are, whether they are a significant adult in the eyes of the child. One headteacher said of pupils who reach exclusion:

>Often, one finds with children who reach that stage, that there is a lack of parental control or consistency in handling.

The philosophy and will of the headteacher in the role of the exclusion process within the school is an important feature and one to which I will return later in the study. The headteacher holds the power to exclude and that power cannot be delegated (DFE, 1994a). The opportunity therefore presents itself for the headteacher to directly influence the policy not only in philosophical terms but also in practice, as by definition, no pupil can be excluded without the headteacher's consent. The ethos of the school has been emphasised by a number of commentators as being a factor in whether a school is a high or low excluding school (McManus, 1990). Charlton and George (1989) suggest that characteristics of more successful schools specifically include:

1. Good leadership by senior management in consultation with colleagues, and sensitive to opinion of parents and pupils.

2. Shared staff policy on academic and behaviour expectations, which are meaningful to pupils, and consistently (though not necessarily inflexibly) enforced.

3. A curriculum which is matched to pupils' present and future needs.

4. Academic expectations which are high, though not unreasonable.

5. An emphasis upon effective use of rewards for good behaviour and good work, rather than the application of punishments.

6. High professional standards by staff in terms of planning, setting and marking of work; starting and ending lessons on time.

7. Pedagogical skills which arouse pupils' interest in the subject material, and motivate them to work well.

8. Classroom management skills which help prevent problem behaviours from arising.

9. Healthy supportive and respectful relationships amongst teachers, between teachers and pupils, amongst pupils, school and parents, and school and outside agencies.

10. Opportunities for pupils to become involved in, and share responsibilities for the running of the school.

11. An effective system of pastoral care. (pp. 35 - 37).

McManus (1990) suggests that at best 20% of exclusions can be explained by school catchment variables and concludes that what happens within the school is of more importance to the numbers of pupils excluded from that school. What happens within the school is usually directly influenced by the philosophy and fundamental beliefs of the headteacher (Benson, 1996). If a headteacher decides that the school should be exclusive in its attitudes, the chances are that it will be, as to exclude pupils who are causing a great deal of difficulty to individual members of staff is not likely to run up against a great deal of opposition from staff. However, if a headteacher's basic beliefs are inclusive, s/he may experience some opposition (as for example did Chris Searle at Earl Marshal School in Sheffield).

The corporate will of the school may therefore be something which is in accordance with the headteacher's will or something which the headteacher is struggling against. The corporate will of the school is concerned with the concept of the healthy school, which is well able to deal with most of the challenging behaviour of its pupils without resorting to passing difficulties higher up the hierarchy of command. It also includes such things as the fundamental beliefs of the staff as a whole; whether they work to include a whole range of individuals within the school, or whether they are concerned to teach the most able and compliant pupils. Hart et al. (1995) commented:

> student suspension rates were not related to student misbehaviour, but could be predicted on the basis of a school's discipline policy and the self-esteem of teachers. (p. 27)

> The results suggest that Student Suspension Rates are lower when schools have discipline procedures that are agreed upon, understood by teachers and students, and consistently enforced, as well as when teachers are less critical of themselves. (p. 42)

Is one message here essentially one of role-modelling? Where headteachers and senior management teams are seen to be supportive of staff, are staff then more supportive towards the students?

The speed of the route taken by the pupil in reaching the senior management

is a factor in the exclusion process which has been highlighted by McManus

(1990). It is based on the premise that if a child is picked up earlier by the

headteacher or deputy for example for bad behaviour on the corridor in-

between lessons, then the faster the child will be excluded because some of

the usual routes for behaviour difficulties will have been bypassed e. g.

referral to tutor or to head of year. It also depends on how willing tutors or

class teachers are to deal with the behaviour themselves rather than passing

the problem on to a more senior member of staff.

Other agency support is increasingly being highlighted within the literature as

a failure within the current system and a way which could be explored in

order to reduce the numbers of pupils excluded from school (Firth and

Horrocks, 1996; Parsons, 1996b; Stephenson, 1996; Stirling, 1996). It is

becoming increasingly obvious that excluded pupils are not solely the

responsibility of schools and that other agencies such as the police and social

services often contribute to the costs of such pupils. Stephenson (1996)

comments:

> The broad thrust of reforms since the mid 1970s in health, social
> services and educational provision *has been to include groups of*
> people in need within the *mainstream of services but the pace of*
> change for children and *young people with multiple problems, who*
> often display challenging behaviour, *has lagged behind those children*

with, for instance, physical disabilities. ...Their chaotic educational and care careers are often an indictment of the fragmented response of the relevant agencies and can in part be caused by organisational inadequacies. (pp. 250 -251)

The role of the support services can be a key factor in the exclusion of some

pupils. The perception by some staff that outside support holds the key to the

child's difficulties lies in the 'myth of the child with Special Educational

Needs', that an 'expert' can treat the 'problem' and the child will be 'better'.

This medical model for pupils who were deemed by the schools to have

Special Educational Needs was echoed throughout the study, particularly in

the comments of some of the senior staff such as:

There has actually got to be more support, real support in schools.

Schools who exclude in order to gain more help for the child in terms of

outside agency support are sometimes motivated to do this through a desire to

move the child from a mainstream school to a special school placement or to

have the child assessed under the 1993 Education Act. One third of the

children within the case conferences were excluded in order to gain more

outside intervention or assessment. So the presenting reason is sometimes not

the main reason for the exclusion of a child. There is a need for outside

agency involvement when the school is considering the use of permanent

exclusion. However, the question needs to be asked whether the school is

looking for a solution to the 'problem' (the 'magic wand' syndrome), or

towards a more realistic expectation of what the support services can do? The

evidence of this study suggests that where there is successful collaboration of

agencies to support the child, there is less risk of exclusion. For example, in

the evaluation of the joint social services/education scheme to work with

pupils in high schools who were in danger of exclusion (the In-School

Support Scheme described in chapter 7), it was concluded that the

collaborative work slowed down the exclusion of pupils by around two terms

on average. During this scheme, work was focused on counselling for the

child, inservice for the members of staff within the school, contact with

parents and other agencies when appropriate. Kyriacou and Normington

(1994) found that:

> Successful co-operation was perceived to depend crucially on good
> interagency communication, clear and specific action plans, and regular
> monitoring. This accords with the view developed by Lane (1990),
> who has highlighted the importance of regular personal contact
> between individuals in different agencies so that they know each other
> personally, are aware of each other's procedures, and know with whom
> and when to make contact. (p. 14)

They also maintain that effective collaboration is difficult to attain. This was

also evident within my own study, particularly in terms of co-operation

between Social Services and the Education departments, often because of

tensions over the funding of pupil placements (see also Normington, 1994). It

was shown through the In-School Support scheme that direct support for the

pupil succeeded in reducing the chances for exclusion of that child whilst the

support was in place. As soon as the support was removed, the situation

within the school reverted to the way it was before the intervention (see

chapter 7). The intervention was directed at the child rather than the causes of

exclusion within the school which are seen as too complex to tackle or in

many cases, not within the remit of the outside support agencies. More and

more, schools are becoming autonomous in the use and direction of in-coming

support staff, often because the schools now directly or indirectly control the

purse strings to payments for specific services. The role of support services in

particular have changed over the last ten years or so (Diamond, 1993;

Humphreys and Collins, 1992).

The case conferences attended during the two-year period often emphasised

the role which outside agencies took within the school, but very often there

had been no active collaboration between these agencies where there was

more than one agency involved with a child (see also Cohen et al., 1994;

DoH/Ofsted, 1995; Hayden, 1997). Brodie and Berridge (1996) found that:

> The nature of the involvement of other agencies was frequently significant; where this was especially proactive it appeared that schools' tolerance levels had been increased.... It was also agreed that, if priority is to be given to maintaining children in mainstream schools, then they must have access to support both in terms of resources and expertise. (p. 14)

Therefore it appears that external support in itself is not a factor which inhibits a school's response to exclude; but where the agencies work together they can be successful in reducing exclusion. Effective collaboration of support services is a time-consuming and often thankless task which often falls to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, certainly within the high schools.

There are no agreed criteria for the exclusion of pupils from school. For some schools, the exclusion system forms part of the behaviour policy and fixed term exclusions are given as an automatic 'punishment' for those pupils who transgress in particular ways. A common example is two days for smoking on the premises or within the grounds of the school. McManus (1990) indicates that such schools who impose a kind of tariff for certain offences tend to be schools with higher exclusion rates. It was not foreseen by the legislation that exclusion would be used in this way; in fact, it is positively discouraged:

> Exclusion should be used sparingly in response to serious breaches of school policy or law.... Permanent exclusion should be used as a last resort, when all other reasonable steps have been taken, and when

allowing the child to remain in school would be seriously detrimental to the education or welfare of the pupil or of others. (Circular 10/94, p. 3)

The adjectives 'reasonable' and 'seriously' are, as in law, open to interpretation. That interpretation is however, the responsibility of the governors and not of an independent panel; the Elton Report (DES, 1989) recognised that it is not in the best interests of the child or of the school for the local educational authority to reinstate pupils once they have been permanently excluded from that school:

> The strongest argument for removing the power of LEAs to direct the reinstatement of pupils lies in the damage which may be done to the authority and morale of the head and staff if pupils whom they wish to see permanently excluded are reinstated. We also recognise that reinstatement under these circumstances is unlikely to be successful in most cases, as the events leading to exclusion and the exclusion process itself may have done irreparable damage to relationships between staff and the pupil involved. (p. 201)

The whole cycle of exclusion eventually leading to permanent exclusion is one of conflict; between pupil and staff, between pupil and authority, between parents and school, between parents and pupil, often between the school and the local educational authority, or the parents and the local educational authority and/or the local educational authority and the receiving school. The end of the process is therefore the worst place to start as the conflict has usually developed over a period of time and any intervention at the time of

exclusion is not likely to be very productive. The basic emphasis should be upon developing an ethos within the individual school of not excluding; this does not mean that the school will necessarily stop excluding altogether, but will actively try not to exclude. This kind of strategy can only be adopted as a whole school measure and logically would be an extension of the whole-school behaviour policy becoming a focus for whole school discussion and dialogue.

Reasons for the Increase in Exclusions

The NUT give 5 reasons which are stated when pupils are excluded (in priority order); disruptive/negative attitude to school (including verbal abuse, defiance, bad language, insolence and refusal to obey instructions); assaults/bullying; pilfering; malicious damage; absconding from school/poor attendance. This roughly corresponds to my own research in the LEA studied which indicates the following reasons for exclusion during the academic year 1991-1992:

- Physical abuse, including assault on children, teachers and other adults.

- Verbal abuse, including insolence, swearing, disobedience etc. to staff;

  also abusive language to other pupils.

- Disruption, including disruption in lessons, refusal to accept punishments

  given as a result of poor behaviour, breaking contracts and other general

  poor behaviour which disrupts the smooth running of schools.

- Criminal; mainly falling into 3 categories: drug-related activities,

  vandalism and theft.

- Truancy, plus other attendance problems including absconding.

From the evidence obtainable it seems that specific reasons for the exclusion

of individual pupils has not altered significantly during the study; it would

appear that the underlying trend for the increasing numbers of exclusions

must lie within a context-related rather than a child-related rationale. ACE

(1992b) found that the highest proportion of permanent exclusions reported to

it involved children with special educational needs, and concluded:

> With increasing pressure on decreasing resources, schools may find it
> more expedient to regard a child as naughty rather than needy. (p.9)

Ofsted (1993b) indicated a number of possible hypotheses for the increase in exclusions as follows:

- increased stress in families being reflected in difficult behaviour in schools;

- reduced levels of teacher tolerance in the face of repeated minor misdemeanours;

- a form of punishment on a tariff;

- to bring parents into schools to discuss a child's behaviour;

- a self-imposed pressure to raise the image of schools by being seen to be tough on discipline issues;

- a response to those pupils who fail to turn up regularly to school;

- a consequence of staffing difficulties in inner-city schools;

- headteachers no longer willing to make informal arrangements between each other when they are considering indefinite or permanent exclusion;

- to secure special educational needs placement or additional support for individual pupils - reflected in a growing number of requests for statementing. (p.3)

The evidence recorded by the NUT as a result of information gathered from schools via 14 LEAs places a rather different emphasis upon the underlying causes for the increases in exclusions:

1. Insufficient resources under LMS - A variety of factors were identified. .....

2. The impending publication of competitive school test and general performance league tables.

3. Deteriorating home circumstances and lack of parental discipline. (p.5)

'Insufficient resources' included a lack of central LEA resources such as alternative provision, psychological service support and a reduction in home tuition provision, in addition to poor funding for special needs pupils and pressure due to the national curriculum, testing and assessment.

The Financial Implications of Exclusions

The actual costs in monetary terms is very difficult to quantify. Parsons et al. (1996) were able to provide an estimate of the costs which may be incurred

Service	% of permanently excluded pupils using service	Average cost per pupil (£)
health	10	93
social services	20	1,128
police	25	2,062

Table 1: Costs to other agencies of permanent exclusion (source Parsons et al., 1996 pp. 28 - 29)

by the health service, social services and the police (see **Table 1**). Lloyd-

Smith (1993) and Parsons (1996b) point to a 'policy vacuum' which needs to

be filled in order provide for pupils who are excluded:

> In a policy vacuum, agencies are not mobilised to cater for the excluded child who then becomes debris outside the system. Services move slowly to deal with this ejected 'problem' and try to make improvements in a situation which has been made worse by the suddenness of the exclusion into a context where there is no prepared support. (Parsons, 1996b, p. 114)

Within such a vacuum, the costs to education are high. The average cost of an

excluded pupil in 1994/95 was over £4,300, compared to £2,500 for a

secondary pupil and £1,750 for a primary aged pupil (Parsons et al., 1996).

The report goes on to state:

> The cost of exclusion is a small part of the education budget, but it is
> significant and growing. Arguably, it offers very poor value for money.
> (p. 27)

The average cost of exclusion when it progresses into the following year rises

from £4,300 to £5,134: as exclusion rates continue to grow, the potential for

rising costs is reminiscent of that for the statementing budgets within LEAs

which has been rising to phenomenal amounts in recent years causing some

LEAs to take draconian measures in order to control it (for instance, cutting

all resources attached to statements by 25% at a stroke). The costs of

exclusion can therefore be much higher than maintaining the pupil in a

mainstream school:

> Costs were calculated for six pupils who were kept in their schools.
> The case studies are shown in Appendix 3. Most of these pupils
> received additional resources. These cost from nought to £6,300, at an
> average of £2,815. These children received full-time education.
> Providing this was sometimes difficult and costly to the teachers, but
> the amount of education the pupils received was nearly 100 per cent.
> Also, the young person was not left unsupervised, the family stress was
> minimised, and the difficulties of reintegration were avoided. The
> cases, though only a small number were investigated, show that
> keeping pupils in school by providing additional support can be cost
> effective. (Parsons et al., 1996, p. 34)

The difficulty with introducing such a system of support formally is that if

money is tied to individual pupils, as at present with statements, then schools

which exclude more pupils are rewarded for excluding those pupils.

Philosophically, therefore, and practically, there are difficulties with this kind

of maintenance within the excluding school.

The legislation which allowed LEAs to recoup the funding for the pupil when

permanent exclusion occurred has made very little difference to whether

schools exclude a pupil as such pupils cost more to support in school than the

average cost in terms of staff time and therefore resources. Therefore pupils

exhibiting very challenging behaviour are not cost effective for the school.

The costs of exclusion may in fact reach further than supporting the pupil

whilst they are excluded or of an age to be educated. McManus (1995) links

exclusion from school with the likelihood of later conviction, thus leading to

costs to the legal system:

> there is evidence that exclusion itself is associated with later offending,
> irrespective of the severity of the reason for it. For example, in
> England, school reports influence magistrates' sentencing policies and
> excludees are twice as likely to receive custodial sentences; in
> Scotland, all the excludees in a sample of 678 offenders were referred
> to hearings (Graham, 1988, p. 65)

There are often financial costs to the parents as well as to outside agencies;

for instance, a parent sometimes has to give up work in order to look after the

excluded son or daughter. Other costs may include the loss of scheme of aid or free school meals which can be a large loss to those families who rely on them for help with feeding and clothing their family, or from the costs of keeping their child occupied whilst excluded (Parsons et al., 1996).

Other Costs of Exclusion

Other costs of exclusion can be measured in terms of human distress. An excluded child within a family brings stress to the child, parents and to other children within the family.

The disproportionate exclusion of black pupils (Parsons et al., 1996 indicate that black pupils are up to six times more likely than white pupils to be excluded), means that:

> exclusion is unfair to large numbers of children from ethnic minorities and the trend towards it is contributing to an unemployable, alienated underclass... So we have injustice as well as expense to contend with. (Pickering, 1997, p. 6)

It may also be pertinent to insert 'exclusion is unfair to large numbers of pupils with Special Educational Needs' into the first line of the quotation above, especially since:

> three-quarters of all children who are excluded are below average intelligence. In secondary schools excluded children on average have a reading age of between 8.5 and 10. (Dean, 1997a, p. 6)

Moore (1997) uses more stark language in order to focus upon the human

costs of exclusion:

> No society can afford to throw away thousands of children. If you
> dump children on the streets, they will become street children and they
> will come back and haunt the rest of society. It is imperative to manage
> more effectively the education of all our children and ensure they are in
> the mainstream (quoted in Dean, 1997b, p. 6).

This attitude is reflected through the Birmingham City Council Report (1995)

which gives as part of its rationale for its joint working party on exclusions:

> We believed from our different vantage points..... that every excluded
> teenager represents potentially both a waste of human talent, and long-
> term an increased likelihood both of personal unhappiness and large
> cost to society. The Police told us of their evidence that absence from
> school and crime is closely associated. We know also of the evidence
> which links extreme cases of emotional behavioural disturbance among
> teenagers with subsequent prison sentences.
> Apart from the moral imperative, it is not too fanciful to suggest that, if
> collectively we allow the problem to grow, we are creating a "fifth-
> column" in our midst which will threaten all our future prospects. (p. 2)

The human tragedy which exclusion reinforces can be seen in this case study

from a report on a year 11 student in one of the schools involved in my study.

The boy concerned was eventually permanently excluded:

> Nature of Behaviour
> Refusal to do as asked by staff, swearing at staff, walking out of
> lessons, destroying his and other pupils' work, resentful of authority,
> physical violence towards other pupils, taken overdose of paracetamol,
> self-abuse - head butting wall, smashing fist into wall, threatening
> teachers with violence. Between April 1989 and May 1990 there have
> been over 40 serious incidents reported and recorded. The incidents
> have mainly happened in classrooms although some have occurred on

the sports field, in the dining hall, at (the local college) and generally around school. There appears to be no pattern as to teachers, lessons or time of day, all these factors being variable.

The incidents were all documented by the school, with a list of 16

interventions which had been tried by the school in order to modify his

behaviour. 'To exclude or not to exclude' in such a case becomes a very real

dilemma for some headteachers as the circumstances for the child and the

school are very traumatic. Brodie and Berridge (1996) indicate that schools in

practice do not allow the future of the youngster to impact upon the decision

to permanently exclude as they do not:

> evaluate the effects of their policies on exclusion - for example in
> relation to the subsequent educational career of a young person (p. 13)

Further research needs to be done to explore the possibility of whether there

is a causal type of relationship between the act of exclusion and the

employment future for the youngster, specifically to establish whether there is

some intervention which would redirect the young person away from the

criminal existence that appears at the moment to be his lot.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework for Exclusion

Introduction

The interaction which occurs between the school and the pupil during the

exclusion process is very complex. The act of exclusion is not usually a

simple direct cause and effect, but is usually a culmination of events and

relationships within the school which eventually climaxes in the permanent

exclusion of the pupil from the school, and increasingly also from the

education system. In the USA and Canada, there are many fewer exclusions.

For instance, in the city of Vancouver in 1995 there had been only 12

exclusions, of which 6 had been revoked (Passmore, 1996). Cozens (1996),

states:

> In the United States, they start with a right to education... Here we
> have none, and excluded pupils may only get two to three hours of
> home tuition. (quoted in Passmore, 1996 p. 31)

The main differences between North America and Britain were characterised

(Passmore, 1996) as:

- a 'bringing together' of various agencies, e.g. educational

  psychologists, social workers, the Salvation Army;

- an emphasis on dealing with problems within the school; more

  intensive work by educational psychologists, counsellors, and

  behaviour support teams;

- projects funded by the government involving schools, the juvenile

  justice service and social services, focusing on the school;

- work with parents on themes such as relationships with school and

  on positive behaviour management;

- use of praise and certificates to encourage difficult youngsters;

- tailoring the curriculum to suit disruptive pupils.

It must be noted however, that the North American school population exclude

themselves on a huge scale by truanting (see Kinder et al. 1995 for a

discussion of the links between truanting and exclusion). The differences in

approach and in funding arrangements (funding is local therefore each local

board of governors is responsible for the education of all the students within

its boundaries), indicates that the locus of responsibility is kept with the local

people rather than being shifted to the education authority. In Australia, the

headteacher has the responsibility for providing alternative education for

pupils excluded from the school, but very few seem to do so and there is very

little external pressure to conform to the law. There is also no Education

Welfare equivalent, so no one has a specific brief to follow up truancy either.

A Model for Exclusion

The response of the disaffected pupil in school may depend upon the interplay

of the following factors:

- the cultural and personality traits of the individual pupil;

- the strengths of the relationships built up with significant adults;

- the strengths of the relationships built up with peers;

- the school response to disruptive behaviour.

Figure 1 shows the interaction of these factors and the effect they may have

upon the individual's response to the education system. This model can help

us to see different influences on whether a pupil is excluded. To use an

analogy, the pupil may be viewed as being on a continuum of behaviour,

inside a 'lift' (or elevator). The lift is represented by the box surrounding the

individual pupil. Where the lift is placed upon the continuum will vary

according to the reaction of the child to a combination of influences. Any

At risk of Exclusion

School factors

- opportunities for disruption
- intervention by pastoral staff
- philosophy of headteacher
- level of inclusivity
- effectiveness of SEN/pastoral interface
- parent/carer support
- speed of route to exclusion
- healthy school?
- good communication systems
- effective behaviour policy
- individual strategies
- outside agency joint work

Cultural and personality factors

- degree of assertiveness
- social skills
- value of schooling
- low self-esteem
- genetic factors
- home background
- ethnicity

Behaviour

Individual Pupil

Continuum

Adult influence

- support to school
- rewards/sanctions in home
- amount of individual attention
- deprivation of significant adult
- adult views on education

Peer group influence

- sub-culture
- acceptance

Figure 1.
Movement up & down
the behaviour continuum

Reduced risk of Exclusion

change in one of these influences, for instance the loss of a significant adult

(e.g. through bereavement, divorce, by being placed into care), may result in a

change in the status quo within the child and therefore result in a change in

position on the continuum.

One of the headteachers in my study, in answer to the question, 'Could you

pinpoint, say half a dozen individuals that you would consider to present the

worst problems?' commented:

> I would personally be very wary about that, mainly because that's not a
> constant in a high school. I could see possibly in a primary school,
> where there is a one to one and a teacher has them all day, but you
> would probably find and I find here, that in one lesson the child is a
> pain, whereas in another lesson they are not and the trouble is you get a
> bit of a halo effect, a ripple effect that can sometimes happen and you
> can get inter-teacher talk in places where expectations and things start
> to grow up around a certain individual. So I think..., if you look at...
> their behaviour, it's not a constant thing.

Later in the interview, the same headteacher said:

> We could give you half a dozen names now. We have a week off now
> and then if you ask us again two weeks back (after the holiday), it will
> probably not be the same half dozen, because at this phase 11 - 16, we
> have got more rapid development; physical, social, emotional, than at
> any other phase.

All children will move up and down the continuum over time as their

particular circumstances change, although most pupils will never reach the

top of the continuum which would result in exclusion but would stay near the

bottom which indicates behaviour which is acceptable to schools. As the 'lift'

travels towards the 'top floor', the school will stop the lift at each 'floor' so

that the progress of the pupil towards exclusion is slowed down. The

intervention of the school, if more effective, may even ensure that the pupil

moves down one or more floors in the lift. The more effective a school is in

intervening, the fewer pupils will reach the top floor and fewer pupils will

therefore be excluded. A school which is not very effective in its interventions

may be a school which cannot stop the lift at each floor but can only watch as

the lift travels past each level without stopping on its way to the top floor. A

referral of a pupil to senior management, especially the headteacher

(Lawrence et al., 1977; McManus, 1995), may well result in the pupil by-

passing several floors and reaching the top floor very quickly indeed.

Positive Approaches, Individual Solutions

Schools place exclusions on varying priority levels; for some, the exclusion

rate will be near the top of the whole-school agenda, for others it will be

towards the bottom. The National Association for Pastoral Care in Education

(1993), commented:

> Data on exclusions has always given evidence of school differences.
> Part of the explanation must lie in school differences in ethos,
> curriculum, management and resourcing. Less effective schools have
> an excluding style, and this characteristic is now describing an
> increasing number of schools. (p. 1)

The 'excluding style' which is developing in increasing numbers of schools could be due to a deliberate choice by a school towards the exclusion of pupils or by default, because, for one or more reasons, the school has other priorities or is less able to respond to difficult behaviour because there is less flexibility within the system. For those schools which have developed a positive approach to difficult behaviour, some of the interventions and attitudes which have been considered to be effective are (not in priority order):

- a more responsible role for the form tutor (McManus, 1989);

- an effective positive behaviour policy (Ofsted, 1996);

- an examination of the attitudes, policies and practices of the school (Galloway, 1995);

- a flexible discipline system (McLean, 1987);

- pro-active style of pupil management with pupil involvement (McLean, 1987);

- the development of oracy skills across the curriculum (McManus, 1995);

- improving provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (McManus, 1995);

- improving the attendance levels, where these are poor (Elton

  Report, DES, 1989; Kinder et al., 1995; McManus, 1995);

- development of a restrictive policy with regard to exclusion

  (McManus, 1989);

- developing support systems for teachers experiencing difficulty

  (McManus, 1989);

- developing the social and non-academic areas of school life

  (McManus, 1989);

- reorganisation of classes (McManus, 1989);

- developing positive staff attitudes (Booth, 1996b);

- reducing the levels of stress staff and pupils are working under

  (Neilson, 1995);

- developing a positive atmosphere for inclusion (Booth, 1996a;

  Cooper et al., 1997);

- effective collaboration between agencies (Kyriacou and

  Normington, 1994);

- the use of exclusion as a positive way of helping pupils rather than

  as a sanction (Franklin-Stokes, 1991).

These interventions highlight the conclusions of writers such as Booth,

Galloway, McLean and McManus who all place responsibility on the school

to influence the rate of exclusion from their school and emphasise that within-

child factors are not the only causes of exclusion. There is an implied

responsibility upon schools to analyse their exclusion rates as a first step to

curb their use of exclusion as a school and to find alternatives to the exclusion

route where possible. Such an analysis should enable schools to insert their

own 'floors' into **figure 1** thus slowing down the rate at which pupils are

permanently excluded. A good starting point could include such information

as:

- types of exclusions;

- length of exclusions;

- which children are involved;

- at what time of year;

- reason(s) for exclusions;

- strategies used prior to exclusion;

- which staff are involved in precipitating incidents;

- how reintegration for pupils excluded for a fixed term was effected;

- whether there has been effective parental support;

- attitude of the student towards the exclusion.

An analysis of that kind would mean that the school is collecting systematic data on pupils who are excluded and are therefore in a position to suggest possible in-school strategies which would form positive alternatives to the exclusion. Until there is more analysis of exclusion data by individual schools, there can be limited progress in restricting the use of exclusion by preventative work. All schools are different in their 'inner workings' and therefore need to work towards finding their own solutions to the puzzle of exclusion. This is exemplified by the following examples. A 13 - 18 comprehensive school taking part in the Positive Alternatives to Exclusion Conference (Cooper et al., 1997) has highlighted the importance of the individual pupil file in planning effectively for the prevention of exclusion. Individual files were found to be so confusing and in such haphazard order that when exclusion of a pupil came it was somewhat a surprise, but when the file was considered in more detail, the signs were there that this child could be in danger of exclusion. The school's conclusion was that a file summary could be done for those pupils who were being considered for permanent exclusion or who had had a short term exclusion. This task would not be too onerous for the form tutors to pick up. Another school from the same project had devised a checklist for use within the school for all pupils who were

being considered for permanent exclusion so that the school could be sure

that all avenues of keeping the child within school had been tried, and what

the effects of different strategies were upon the behaviour of the child. One

strategy used at a school where I was a teacher grouped years 10 and 11 into

small groups (of around 3 or 4 students) to be the responsibility of one

member of staff and time was given to small group discussion or to individual

discussion as appropriate to all matters pertaining to school, but in particular

to progress within subject areas.

Hanko (1990) highlights the efficacy of staff support groups for teachers

encountering pupils with difficulties in increasing the school capacity to cope

and therefore increasing the tolerance threshold of the school, thereby

slowing down the lift's progress towards exclusion of the pupil.

One of the difficulties of schools counteracting exclusionary processes is that

the system works on a least intervention principle. This means that if a

strategy is satisfactory for the majority of pupils it does not need changing, as

a higher level of intervention inevitably costs more money. Much of the

difficulty for schools in preventing exclusions is based around the fact that

individual strategies are required. Rutter (1983) asks:

> whether schools effective for one group of pupils are also effective for
> other different groups. Thus, one might ask whether the school features
> that facilitate good outcomes for the intellectually most able children

are the same as those that lead to success for the least able; or whether the schools that are effective for socially favored white children are also those most effective for socially disadvantaged black children; or whether the school policies that help older children are the same as those helpful to younger children; or whether the practices that "work best" with boys are similarly effective with girls. (p. 9)

The Susceptible Pupil

Much can be done within the school to reduce exclusions and to find suitable ways of educating pupils who are in danger of exclusion. There are many opportunities for pupils with challenging behaviour to be kept within the mainstream education system. There are, however, some in-child factors and associated context-related factors which make certain pupils more susceptible to exclusion than others. Galloway (1982), states:

> On the present evidence, pupils 'at risk' of suspension have educational, and possibly constitutional, problems which would cause concern at any school. Nevertheless, it appears that these problems only lead to suspension in a small minority of schools. (p. 211)

Figure 2 shows some of the 'constitutional' and context-related factors which appertain in relation to the exclusion of pupils from school. In the middle of

CONTEXT

FACTORS

Symptoms of disaffection e.g. lack of motivation truancy

Lack of parental/ carer support to school

Looked after

Desire to be within sub-culture

Lack of parental/ carer influence

Poor adult/peer relationships

Poor social skills

PUPIL

Personality traits Disposition

FACTORS

Ethnicity

Low self esteem

Desire to be excluded

SEN not met within school

Serious 'pattern of difficulty'

Key

.... Pupil/culture interface

- - - - - Culture/school interface

———— Into the exclusion zone

Figure 2: Within pupil factors and associated context related factors which make a pupil more susceptible to exclusion

the diagram is the pupil. Around the pupil is a circle which represents some

environmental factors over which the pupil has little control. The environment

in which a pupil is nurtured can have a big influence on the child's chances of

eventually becoming excluded, for instance by ethnicity (Searle, 1994), or by

being looked after (Stirling, 1996), or by being in a sub-culture in which the

adults do not value education. If the pupil is in a culture where people have

low-self esteem (e.g. if parents are unemployed for long periods, or feel that

they have little to offer society), or where social skills are at a low level, then

this can also have an effect upon the child's chances of becoming excluded.

The combination of pupil disposition and personality factors can then interact

with cultural and school factors appertaining at the time to produce a situation

where the pupil is more susceptible to enter the 'exclusion zone' (Stirling,

1991); whether that consists of temporary exclusion, permanent exclusion or

illegal forms of exclusion is not significant, as once the child enters that zone

there is little chance of retrieving the situation (Advisory Centre for

Education, 1992a).

What needs to be done is to look at ways in which the boundaries into the

exclusion zone can be pushed further away from the pupil (see Hrekow and

Barrow, 1993, for an outline process for school-based support). This is not

only a function for the school but for the outside agencies (see Docking,

1980), as many of those agencies would be appropriately involved with both

the pupil and the parents. Williams (1996) reports on a project by the

National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO):

> The project,... aimed to explore methods for reducing youth crime and
> claims to have contributed to a significant reduction in crime levels in
> the areas involved, a marked improvement in pupil/teacher relations
> and a number of pupils being reintegrated into mainstream schooling.
> Among its conclusions the report argues that schools can make a
> significant contribution to reducing youth crime, and disaffection, by
> "Working with other organisations particularly the youth services to
> develop whole-school approaches and specific initiatives." In particular
> the report calls for the relationship between schools and youth services
> to be developed and targeted towards work with disaffected young
> people. (p. 8)

For a pupil to be in danger of exclusion a number of factors from each area

(i.e. pupil, culture and school) would need to be in operation. This model

would be appropriate for most types of exclusion where the exclusion is the

culmination of events and processes, but not necessarily for the pupil who is

excluded for one serious misdemeanour. So for example, the desire by a pupil

to be excluded from school would need to interact with pupil personality

factors which would lead the school to recognise that the pupil was

developing a serious 'pattern of difficulty' in terms of behaviour. Similarly,

poor social skills in themselves would not provoke an exclusion, but if this

factor was combined with a pupil disposition which was extrovert and poor

relationships developed as a result of this interaction, then the pupil may be in

danger of exclusion. From this diagram it is possible to say that the response

of the school in particular, and of outside agencies can either contract or

expand the outside circle in order to increase or reduce the pupil's chances of

exclusion, respectively. Parsons et al. (1994b), writing about primary aged

pupils who are excluded, comment:

> It is surprising, given the law on the age of legal responsibility, that the
> attribution of fault can be applied so easily to the child. The child has a
> 'problem', not a 'need', and this renders him or her ineligible for extra
> help. (p. 11)

Surely a child has a right to grow up in an environment which is supportive

and cushioned rather than punitive and harsh in order that he or she may

reach the 'full potential' which is often referred to in the aims of schools or in

their mission statements. If this is so, then there certainly needs to be a more

co-ordinated approach by the external agencies as often it is not only the

educational environment of the child which needs adjustment, but also the

home life of the child. The North American approach of basing a number of

support services within a school, and of reaching the parents as well as the

pupil, (see the introduction to this chapter), is a logical response to the model

in **figure 2**, as it recognises that the parental culture and influences on the

pupil are as important as factors within the child or within the school,

although I would argue that the school and associated outside agencies are in

a much better position to promote change than the parents or carers, for

several reasons:

- they are professionals, and therefore should be more able to take the

  initiative;

- they are more in control of the school environment than either

  parents or pupils can be;

- they are more susceptible to external pressure for change e.g. by

  government legislation;

- they can effect more change within the educational environment

  than either parents or pupils;

- they have a moral and legal responsibility to develop academic and

  social skills within each individual.

Mongon, (1987) argues that a model which looks at within-child factors is

nonsensical, as the child has to be considered within the context of the

school:

> That model was consistent with the view that the only factor in the
> equation which was not reasonable, constant and satisfactory was the
> pupils. Any element of the curriculum and organisation of schooling
> can contribute to the production of difficulties and is therefore a
> reasonable subject for intervention. (p. 96)

McDermott (1984) supports this view:

The label 'disruptive pupil' seems to imply certain basic assumptions:

1. That there are children who are disruptive per se, and once recognised as the devils they are, they simply need to be excluded from the classroom.

2. That the 'disruptive pupil' can be clearly recognised as a special case and is therefore obviously different from the 'normal learner' in any classroom.

3. That disruption is always a bad thing and what is being disrupted is always good.

4. That a major school problem will be solved if the classroom teacher identifies the disruptive child and gets him excluded. (pp. 46 - 47)

(see Lawrence, Steed and Young, 1984, for a discussion of factors which make up a 'difficult' school).

Garner (1993) views the area of exclusions as a challenge to schools and supports the view that when students reach the 'exclusion zone' they need:

> a network of inter-agency support if they are not to fall even further through the net. Refined procedures for communication between educational welfare and social work professionals need therefore to be given high priority. (p. 100)

There is evidence surrounding the lack of service provision for vulnerable pupils, in particular social services and educational psychologists (see also Parsons et al., 1994b). Smith and Thomas (1993) support this view in their study of psychological support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. They conclude that there is:

sufficient evidence to identify a serious situation in which

1. the pupils and their families are receiving inadequate services;

2. staff in school for emotional and behaviourally disordered pupils are not getting the psychological support they require; and

3. the provision of input from school psychological services is inappropriate and/or inadequate.

The combination of these three factors raises serious questions about the present level of psychological support for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. (p. 106)

Parsons et al. (1994b) also question whether the organised intervention by schools in response to behaviour difficulties is adequate as it is 'generally not designed as a response to the child's needs and difficulties' (p. 49). It is more to do with the containment of the pupil rather than an assessment of the needs of the child and therefore is unlike the attention that a child would get if his/her needs were recognised as being purely learning needs and as such would be directed through the Special Educational Needs department. Schools therefore should look at the root causes of the behaviour difficulties and maybe what should be provided to schools is similar support to those children who have Special Educational Needs. The most pertinent current example is what often happens with ethnic minority pupils who have English as their second language, who are allocated support teachers under Section 11

according to which stage of English acquisition they have reached. Pupils

who are supported in this way do not have Special Educational Needs as

defined by the legislation (in fact the legislation specifically excludes them

from being classified as having Special Educational Needs), but in practice,

the support they receive is often similar to the support which Special

Educational Needs pupils receive, and in some schools the Special

Educational Needs department and the Ethnic Minorities Support Service

teachers often function as a coherent team or in tandem with parallel support

systems in place. Although ethnic minority pupils do not have Special

Educational Needs, they do have a barrier to learning which needs some

attention. Similarly, those pupils who are excluded and who do not have

emotional and behavioural difficulties nevertheless have a barrier to learning

which needs to be recognised and given some attention. The difference

between using a model such as the Ethnic Minority Support Service rather

than the behaviour support service engendered within many LEAs as a

response to behaviour difficulties is that the behaviour support service is seen

by schools to be external to their own resources, whereas ethnic minority

support teachers are frequently based in one or two schools and are seen as

belonging to the school. They are therefore in a position to be able to use

strategies which are likely to be effective within that environment, and to be able to identify the staff who are likely to be empathetic to the work they are doing, harnessing their talents in a way which is inaccessible to the outsider. Garner (1993) issues nine challenges to schools which he considers to be essential in order to push the boundaries of the exclusion zone away from the pupil, and reaches an interesting conclusion:

> What is particularly important, in considering them (the challenges), is that attending to the needs of a student who is prone to be excluded from school on account of his or her disruptive behaviour is as likely to benefit the whole school community as it is to assist the excluded student in question... Amidst so many other burning issues in education in the 1990s, how schools deal with those students who are prone to exclusion, whether fixed period, indefinite or permanent, should be an indicator of their quality. (pp. 102 - 3)

The idea of a whole school community benefiting from meeting the needs of someone who is susceptible to exclusion will be one which is familiar to all teachers of pupils with Special Educational Needs as it is often said within Special Educational Needs circles that improvements made to the working environment for Special Educational Needs pupils often benefit the rest of the class. There is a need for further research into the attitudes of teachers who have disruptive students within their classes, as this has implications for how the school as a whole can respond to challenging behaviour. It would be interesting to compare this to work which has been done by Taverner et al.

(1997) on the attitudes of English and mathematics teachers towards the

integration of students with Special Educational Needs. They were looking

for differences in attitude between the teachers of the two disciplines but

what they actually found was different:

> the findings of this study therefore suggest that the decisions as to
> whether students with Special Educational Needs should be integrated
> are more likely to be determined by the number of years' service than
> by subject discipline. (p. 42)

The younger teachers with less than 11 years service were more positive in

their attitudes about placing a child with Special Educational Needs into a

mainstream class, and were also more likely to have received the relevant

training. It would be interesting to see whether these results are mirrored by

the placement of disruptive pupils within mainstream classes and to follow up

the research with some qualitative research in order to delve into the reasons

for the differences observed.

Parsons et al. (1994a) suggest that there is a reluctance for primary school

pupils with behavioural difficulties to be issued with a statement of Special

Educational Needs, but in many cases this is what needs to happen as the

result of this is that:

> Schools tend to rely on disciplinary measures to cope with disruptive
> behaviour, rather than examining the individual problems of children
> and offering appropriate support. (p. 2)

The fact that children, particularly at primary level were seen to need

individual support suggests that the correct mode of referral should be

through the Code of Practice stages and hence eventually through the

assessment and statementing route (Parsons et al., 1994b) or through a

separate system of support allocated through the school.

The whole climate of education has mitigated against schools looking to keep

pupils in school, pushing back the boundaries of the exclusion zone.

Arguments which are rehearsed elsewhere such as the league tables, the

quasi-market system for education, the decreasing tolerance of politicians and

of society in general towards non-conformity, have all contributed to the rise

in exclusions. As Stirling (1996) comments:

> Schools are encouraged not to tolerate bad behaviour. The sanction
> system exercised by schools allows for the child to be excluded.
> Therefore, the government's education policy gives schools the
> ideological rationale to exclude difficult pupils. The increased
> population of excluded children and young people is policy generated. I
> question the sincerity of government concern on school exclusion
> because diversity (or disparity) is *necessary* in the competitive system
> of schooling. (p. 61)

Lloyd-Smith (1993) expresses the view that there is 'an ambivalence' in the

legislation for pupils with Special Educational Needs that reinforces the

ability of schools to exclude because there is no clear guidance about whether

a child with behaviour difficulties has Special Educational Needs:

This Act (the 1981 Education Act), makes a distinction between Special Educational Needs which can be met using 'educational facilities of a kind generally provided' and those which cannot. In the latter case, the statementing procedure is activated and an undertaking is made on the part of the local educational authority to provide additional resources either within a mainstream setting or, more usually, in a special school. However, the Act specifically excludes those pupils who are referred to special units on the grounds of their problem behaviour in school. (p. 23)

Lee and Henkhuzens (1996), in their research project focusing on the integration of pupils with Special Educational Needs into ordinary schools, identified (amongst others) two barriers to integration as perceived by the local educational authority which are significant in considering the inclusion of pupils with challenging behaviour:

- mainstream schools' reluctance to increase the numbers of pupils with statements in their school, because of the perceived effect on their image within the community (particularly for pupils with behaviour and emotional difficulties) or their effect on league tables (particularly for pupils with learning difficulties);

- mainstream schools' reluctance or unwillingness to allow the local educational authority to establish a unit or resource base within their sites (particularly for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties); (p. 12)

Held in tension with these views were the views of the teachers who expressed these concerns with regard to pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties:

- Teachers were worried about the levels of resources available to meet pupils' needs.

- Some subject teachers felt that schools should not take on pupils who were highly disruptive or violent because they could not cope with the difficulties created.

- Some subject teachers thought that mainstream schools could cope with most pupils but were not equipped for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, who would be better off in a special school. (p. 18)

Stirling (1991) highlights the philosophical tensions which present themselves to schools when considering whether a child with a 'serious pattern of difficulty' should be statemented or excluded:

> Compare the two following alternatives.
>
> 1. If a school considers statementing a pupil, there is firstly the problem of educational psychologist accessibility. In the inner city at present they offer 'emergency cover only'.
> Should this support be achieved, the psychologists are reluctant to initiate statementing on the grounds of emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a principal educational psychologist said: "We resist statementing from this channel."
> Further, in the city at present statements can take up to two years to complete. Finally, in the event of this obstacle course being successfully negotiated, it is possible that the school could be expected to integrate the pupil and would need to make resources available.
> For this reason, statements are considered usually only where identified provision exists. As my contributors pointed out, there is very little provision.
>
> 2. On the other hand, since the disciplinary sanction route is largely an internal matter, it has the advantage of being both speedy and almost autonomous. I have found that in practice, the local educational

authority ratifies the governor's decision on permanent exclusions. The pupil then becomes the responsibility of the local educational authority; the school, however, retains the LMS funding for the pupil who remains on their roll. Thus being speedily relieved of the pupil and keeping the money. (p. 10)

Some may say that this is a particularly cynical viewpoint, but the evidence from Stirling's work supports it. There have been some changes to the financial situation but the overall situation with regard to statementing still exists (even if it is completed on time under the new procedures a statement takes six months to complete).

Despite Stirling's viewpoint, I believe that there is some evidence that there is beginning to be a move away from the competitive, financial, atmosphere which has prevailed because of concern for those pupils who are the losers within the current educational climate. There is an increasing spotlight on pupils who are excluded because their numbers are growing as are the financial costs to services and to society. There are examples within at least two neighbouring authorities of the development of a policy for secondary schools which have agreed to take pupils who have been excluded from other mainstream secondary schools; this has been achieved by negotiation with the group of headteachers as a whole, as a matter of good practice and principle rather than with a market-driven focus. Could this mark the swing of the

pendulum, not to the 'good old days' prior to LMS (did they ever exist?), but

away from a necessary focus upon financial considerations (as schools and

LEAs grappled with the practical implications of financial freedom), towards

a more philosophical balance of the quasi-market with the needs of the most

vulnerable and therefore most expensive children within the education

system?

Ethnic Exclusions

The question posed by pupils from ethnic minorities being excluded from

school can be included in the model above (**figure 2**). However, ethnic

exclusions have to be treated in a different way to the majority of other

exclusions. The fact that ethnic minority pupils have been and are still being

excluded in far greater numbers than their total population numbers would

indicate that they should be, is of great concern to a number of writers (see

for instance, Blyth and Milner, 1996c; Bourne et al., 1994; Parsons et al.,

1996).

Peagam (1994) found that the tendency for a high proportion of excluded

pupils towards Afro-Caribbean origin was reflected in the population of

schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties:

by November 1992, Afro-Caribbean children formed over 35 per cent of the Authority's 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' population (in some schools, as high as 50 per cent), with permanent exclusions reflecting the same level of over-representation. Clearly, therefore, by the yardstick of children whose behaviour was seen as uncontainable in mainstream schools, Afro-Caribbeans were up to four times more likely than white European children and more than ten times more likely than black Asian children to be identified as presenting such difficulties. (p. 34)

The differences shown in the exclusion of black Caribbean pupils was highlighted by Ofsted (1996a). In their study, they identified that:

Very few excluded pupils were of above-average ability; in the main, excluded pupils were evenly divided between average and below-average. (p.9)

They continue:

The case-histories of most of the Caribbean children differed markedly from those of others studied for this survey. For example, most of them were of average or above-average ability, but had been assessed by the schools as under-achieving. Although many of them had been excluded several times, their disruptive behaviour did not usually date from early in their school career, nor was it so obviously associated with deep-seated trauma as with many of the white children. Sometimes the inference was that these children were capable of "rescue" and some schools had succeeded in doing so. (p. 11)

The observation that black students are being excluded for reasons which are different to those of white pupils needs further exploration (Brodie and Berridge, 1996). Since black Asian children are less likely to be excluded than either white European or Afro-Caribbean children (Peagam, 1994) the explanation is not likely to be one with a purely racial motive, but may be an

indication that the curriculum or organisation of learning within the education

system needs to be altered for some pupils (Coard, 1971 identified that black

pupils who were seen as 'educationally subnormal' within the British system

were not necessarily so but had been identified by tests which were culturally

biased). Bourne et al. (1994) take up the issue of the educational diet which is

fed to ethnic minority pupils:

> it is notable that Ofsted and government guidance are silent on the
> questions of multicultural and anti-racist teaching and equality of
> opportunity. Many of the best initiatives in this field have been
> sacrificed on the altar of a standardised, all-embracing national
> curriculum and legal requirements for a predominantly Christian
> religious education syllabus, leaving many black children feeling that
> their histories, cultures and experiences of racism within British society
> are regarded as of little value or relevance to their education. (p.47)

They go on to suggest that schools should adopt 'positive curricular

measures' plus clear guidelines within the whole-school behaviour policy on

dealing with racist incidents. Blyth and Milner (1996c) suggest that the

exclusion of black pupils is confined almost exclusively to Afro-Caribbean

males, and suggest that black masculinity issues and communication with

white teachers may help to explain the disproportionately high exclusion

rates. What is clear is that the process of exclusion for some black pupils is

considerably different in nature to that of some of their white counterparts,

and needs more in-depth specific study of individuals who are excluded in

order to dispel some of the myths regarding the homogeneity of the excluded

population as a whole.

The Involvement of Parents

The role which parents take in the exclusion process can often be crucial in

averting an exclusion (see 'Why do Schools Exclude?' in chapter 2), if they

are genuinely involved in the processes leading up to exclusion (see Searle,

1996). The emphasis is thus upon the school plus outside agencies (such as

the Education Welfare Service), to build up communication with parents.

There are a number of voluntary bodies which have been established, most

notably the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), but these normally become

involved when communication has broken down between the school and

parents or carers. ACE (1992b) point out the importance of maintaining

communication with parents as much as possible as the child nears exclusion:

> When parents first choose a school, they try to choose a place that they
> can trust. Discipline issues put the trust between home and school to
> the test. Exclusion procedures are unpleasant for everybody. Ill-thought
> out and idiosyncratic approaches to discipline make things worse. Our
> survey shows that schools need to pay attention to racism, bullying,
> support for children with special needs, liaison with parents and the
> legal entitlements of all involved. Failure to establish a proper
> discipline code and procedure is an abuse of trust. (p. 10)

The onus therefore cannot just lie with parents to become involved, but with the schools to ensure as much dialogue as possible in an attempt to secure the active support of parents in seeking to maintain the child within the school environment. Wolfendale (1986) differentiates between the way in which schools view the parents, either as 'clients' or as 'partners'. This basic philosophy may make a difference in the ways in which parents are involved in their child's education, particularly as a child is approaching exclusion. Parents who are viewed as 'partners' have the following 'characteristics':

- parents are active and central in decision making;

- parents have equal strengths and 'equivalent expertise';

- parents contribute to, as well as receive services;

- parents share responsibility, so they and professional are mutually accountable. (Wolfendale, 1986, p. 33)

Docking (1980), working in an off-site unit setting, comments:

> behaviour patterns are, to a large extent, formed as a consequence of control strategies used in the home; and success in off-site units may well be due as much to the special efforts taken to develop links with parents as to work with the pupils directly. (p. 165)

It may be that using strategies to try to secure the involvement and active support of parents in the run up to exclusion would help to prevent some exclusions from occurring. However, there can be no assumption within this

of cause and effect, as many schools already do their utmost to secure the

help of parents before exclusion with little success. So it may be that the

parents of the children who are excluded are the parents who are least likely

in any case to become involved in partnership with the school. Gale and

Topping (1986) in their study of exclusions state:

> parents were much more likely to be involved directly by the school
> rather than via an intermediary, but the parents were twice as likely to
> be involved *after* suspension had occurred than before. No data was
> gathered on the nature of parental involvement, but it may be
> significant that after parental involvement a subsequent parental
> commitment to a particular form of action was rare. (p. 220)

If parents are involved after exclusion, the relationship between the pupil and

school is necessarily at a low ebb, and therefore it is likely that the parent will

be on the defensive and less likely to co-operate with the school. One of the

conditions for re-entry after a fixed term exclusion is often that the child is

accompanied back to school by a parent or carer. Some parents may co-

operate with this request but after reintegration, may not see the need to

continue their involvement. Gale and Topping (1986) tentatively suggest that

parental involvement in fixed term exclusion may be a major factor in

impacting upon the child's subsequent behaviour:

> It remains unclear which of the several events associated with the
> suspension of a pupil actually have an impact on the child's behaviour,
> in those cases where there *is* an impact on the child's behaviour. It may
> be that the parental contact associated with suspension, and the

concomitant disapproval expressed by the parents towards the child, is a major factor, but it is also interesting to speculate as to whether such contact might not be effective without the need for the administrative paraphernalia of suspension itself. (p. 222)

Kinder et al. (1997) indicate the importance of parental response to exclusion

(particularly fixed term exclusion):

> Most significantly, reference to parental reaction and subsequent reinforcement of the exclusion as reprisal at home was a feature of some 23 (nearly one in five) pupils' stories of discomfort and unwishing...(these pupils) could 'fast-track' to reform. In this way, the possible success of exclusion as some kind of remediating sanction was evident - as long as the pupils showed themselves socially and/or academically motivated, and were backed by authoritative and pro-authority parents. (pp. 22 - 23)

There is an instance of group parental action being taken for pupils being

educated at home. The group included some disaffected pupils and a few

excluded pupils (Goodchild and Williams, 1994), but the project was

regarded as a failure, 'because it wasn't a proper school' (p. 75 - 76).

However the flexibility displayed by the project to adapt to a disparate group

of youngsters on a short-term basis did have a measure of success: 15 out of

the 19 who attended integrated back into the mainstream system at the end of

the project. The authors concluded:

> With modest financial support, similar ventures throughout the country could provide a viable, inexpensive solution to *informal exclusion* for many children. (p.76)

The scheme depended a lot on parental support, and was not primarily for

excluded pupils but for those who were disaffected in other ways, with

'uncertainties within their home life and bullying at school' (p. 74). However,

since the level of parental support is a factor in the exclusion of some pupils

from school, it may be beneficial for schools with high non-attendance and

high exclusion rates to look at some partnership initiatives with parents in

order to keep pupils within school who are in danger of being excluded, or to

reintegrate those pupils who are having difficulties in attending school, for

whatever reason. What is needed is a spirit of co-operation with parents,

however difficult that is to achieve; what is unhelpful are the kind of

comments which do not recognise the difficulties that some families face, and

that some pupils face within the education system, such as those by Hulme

(1996):

> All too often the first help children receive is when their bad behaviour
> worsens with the onset of adolescence and erupts at secondary school
> leaving their teachers with the problem of stemming as best they can
> the spread of such **pernicious influence** by the limited means available
> to them. Such late help is seldom enough - and usually ends in
> exclusion. (p. 14, my emphasis)

Schools, and the individuals who make up the body of teachers within those

schools should seek to react in a professional manner which is thought

through and which rises above blaming the child or the parents for the

challenging behaviour. Parsons et al. (1994b) recommend that:

> Schools must liaise closely with parents however difficult those parents
> may be and however much the parents might themselves be in need of
> support. Attributing blame, either to the child or to the child's family,
> does not help progress towards the best provision for the child. (p. 49)

Greenhalgh (1996) comments on the usefulness of partnership with parents

where children with emotional and behavioural difficulties are involved:

> *Partnership with parents* helps contain parental anxiety and to give the
> child the experience of adults collaborating in his/her best interests. (p.
> 18, figure 1)

He puts forward a number of principles for working with children with

emotional and behavioural difficulties which move away from considering the

child as dysfunctional per se, but to considering the child within the social

and educational context of home and school.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

I was interested in exclusions and in order to have some critical depth to the study I decided to focus on one LEA. The study itself did not follow a case study approach (see Corrie and Zaklukiewcz, 1985, for an introduction to case study approaches), but all the data centres around one LEA. The research is based mainly on interviews with some questionnaire data and some quantitative data derived from a database.

The methodology for the whole study is divided into two parts following the structure of the study. Part 1 of the study was concerned with the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. This part of the study was carried out in three sections:

- to discover what were the perceptions of senior staff in schools with regard to difficult children within their schools and to follow this through by gathering data within their schools on two of their most difficult pupils.

- to collect information with regard to indefinitely or permanently excluded

  pupils (over a two year period), and to discover what happened to these

  pupils and how long they were removed from the education system.

- to gather data from attendance at a selection of case conferences in order

  to supplement the information about pupil exclusion, and to view the

  process involved in coming to a decision about an individual's future

  education.

Part 2 was concerned with the follow-up to strands identified within the initial

data, most notably the relationship between the pastoral care and Special

Educational Needs interface. The aim of part 2 was to:

- explore the relationship between the exclusion of pupils and the

  effectiveness of collaboration between the pastoral and Special

  Educational Needs areas within schools.

There were therefore two cycles of data collection and analysis which will be

considered separately in this chapter. Walker (1986) provides further details

on the ethics, theory and procedures of case study research.

The Qualitative versus Quantitative Debate.

The philosophical debate between qualitative and quantitative methods of

data collection and evaluation is an area which needs to be discussed as it

fundamentally affects not only the research and evaluation methods but also the philosophical school to which the research project belongs.

Positivists follow a research route which is similar to that of the natural scientists, looking for causal relationships. They therefore begin with a hypothesis which they wish to test and take large representative samples in order to conduct surveys or experiments. They deal in quantitative data using measurement of variables and statistical analysis.

People using the interpretative/naturalist approach believe that reality is socially constructed so that the way in which people interpret situations is an important function in the analysis of data. Meanings and interpretations of events are essential contributions to the data, and research is conducted within "natural settings" using methods such as ethnography or case study. Hypotheses within qualitative research are derived from the grounded data and are constructed by language and the interaction between groups of people. There are different constructions of reality with conflicting viewpoints so investigations must be based upon interactions between people. Typical research techniques include participant observation, interviews, document analysis, diaries, video recordings and open-ended questionnaires.

Vulliamy and Webb (1992) argue that quantitative studies do not address the realities of what happens in human interactions, thereby adding little to the

existing body of knowledge. One needs to delve deeper into issues than is

usual with quantitative studies to examine what lies beneath the layer of

numbers.

The historical development of both these strands of research can be traced

back many years. Within the qualitative sphere Blumer (1969) moved away

from the school of thought that psychological influences were the basis of

human behaviour, and moved towards "symbolic interactionism" which

looked to the processes of interaction and interpretation as being important.

Philosophically, symbolic interactionism lies at the opposite end of the

continuum to positivism.

The second sociological development in terms of qualitative study was

ethnomethodology which places more emphasis upon the interpretations of

actions within a context than does interactionism.

Positivists like Reynolds (1994) and Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) argue that

there has been a recent significant development in the positivist school of

thought creating two strands in the history of school effectiveness research:

those authors like Goldstein (1986, 1987) and Moss and Goldstein (1979)

who look at intake and outcome data for instance but do not enter into the

process data; and those who look at school improvement in terms of the

process data, such as Rutter et al. (1979), Reynolds (1991) and Mortimore et

al. (1988). Reynolds argues that the latter group of researchers do in fact

combine the two strands of research and there is now an emergence of a new

blend which combines the traditions of qualitative and quantitative data. The

intake data consists of variables such as academic achievement in reading or

mathematics, social class, ethnicity with outcomes measured in terms of

examination achievements, verbal reasoning tests, attendance, delinquency,

etc. The process data includes resource variables such as expenditure per

pupil, class size, equipment adequacy, school size. Processes are measured at

school level and at classroom level, the main advantage of this approach

being a reduction in the number of independent variables. Reynolds argues

that the process data is measured by different techniques from the intake and

outcome data including observation and questionnaires, thus giving more

flexibility to the rigidity of quantitative tools used in isolation. The logical

implication of Reynolds' argument is that the two traditions of research are

moving closer together, reinforced by Davies et al. (1988):

> observations, interviews, questionnaires, documentary analysis, and so
> on, are neither inherently qualitative nor quantitative. All quantification
> involves judgement as to qualities and all qualitative statements invoke
> hierarchy, number and amount to give shape to meaning. (p.290)

Hammersley (1986) comments upon the growth within these sociological

approaches and the importance of that growth in fostering the move away

from a positivist approach using large samples to more detailed investigation

of much smaller quantities of data. Hammersley's work would therefore

imply that Reynolds' amalgamation of the two research traditions is actually a

movement away from pure positivist techniques and thus a validation of the

qualitative genre.

Webb (1990) argues that a third area of research is that of practitioner

research. Bassey's (1986) work centres around pedagogic rather than

disciplinary research whilst other practitioner researchers grounded their

work within a particular discipline. This led to claims of a divorce between

educational theory and practice as studies were linked in to the disciplinary

framework (Cave and Maddison, 1978; Wedell and Roberts, 1981).

Types of practitioner research include action research (see Hustler et al.

1986, for examples of action research), case study or an evaluation of a

particular incident or occurrence. There are suggestions within the work of

Stenhouse (1975) that valid research can only be conducted by professionals

within the education system (viz. mainly teachers), as there needs to be an

analysis of what is happening in a classroom which is followed by some

action and reanalysis of the situation.

There are three views of the relationships which exist between epistemology and data collection techniques. The first of these is put forward by Guba and Lincoln (1985) who believe that positivist and interpretative strategies are fundamentally incompatible with each other. Reichardt and Cooke (1979) in contrast, believe that there are no essential differences between quantitative and qualitative techniques and they are therefore fully compatible with each other. Patton (1980) holds the intermediary position, believing that Guba and Lincoln are right at the epistemological level, but pragmatically a range of approaches can be used and justified.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) discuss the various definitions of the different types of research (pure, basic, applied or action). They point out the growing number of research techniques and methodologies and the difficulties of choosing the type of research which best suits the stated aims of the research. Constraints on particular techniques and the ways in which these can be used are imposed by the working context of the teacher researcher.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research are systematic, rigorous and analytical, employing a whole set of paradigms within which the work is conducted. McNiff (1988) comments:

> I take scientific to mean 'principled action based on rational thought'.
> Perhaps you take scientific to mean 'controlled". (p 124)

Researchers are eclectic therefore (Davies et al., 1988; Vulliamy and Webb, 1992a) choosing a range of methods which are appropriate to their own particular area of study. Consequently a positivist researcher may use qualitative data, such as a survey followed by interviews in conjunction with quantitative research methods. Similarly, qualitative researchers may use quantitative methods such as Spearman's rank correlation. Practitioner research will tend to use qualitative research strategies.

The way in which the particular methods are used is different dependent upon the philosophical background. A positivist researcher may have a hypothesis, a representative survey, analysis and conclusions drawn from the study. Interviews may then be used in order to collect quotations to illustrate causal connections which, it will be argued, have already been demonstrated in the research data.

A qualitative researcher uses data to produce a theory and then will use illustrative quotations from the interviews. A qualitative researcher will also use quantitative techniques if there is no ambiguity in what is being quantified (e.g. boys' versus girls' performance in physics GCSE), and if the quantification used is of relevance in the real world. Quantitative data may be used in order to provide breadth to the depth of qualitative research.

Many positivist studies are macro-studies as they aim to test a hypothesis by taking a large sample which then will throw up generalisations which can be applied to the population as a whole. Conversely, many qualitative studies are micro-studies which examine a small part of the whole and look for explanations for the interactions encountered within the area of the study (see Webb, 1994 pp 3-4 for the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research). Quantitative researchers are therefore seeking generalised conclusions reduced from statistical data, whereas qualitative researchers pursue insight into interactive situations. Vulliamy and Webb (1992b) argue that the latter is more useful as teachers can relate the interactive situations to their own work in classrooms whereas generalised conclusions are not necessarily directly relevant to their own practice. However, McNiff (1988) points out some similarities between qualitative and quantitative research (pp. 124 - 125):

- clear logic;

- procedural analysis;

- formation of hypotheses;

- testing of hypotheses rigorously against the data;

- drawing conclusions;

- holding up the results for public scrutiny

The qualitative approach to analysing data in classrooms has been adopted

by Ofsted (1995) with its detailed lesson observation forms used during

school inspections. These are then analysed by the relevant subject or aspect

inspector who then contributes to the final report. Much of the evidence of the

work of the school is gained through lesson observation and by interviews

with staff and pupils. This is added to the quantitative information re:

exclusion figures, attendance, exam results to formulate a snapshot of the

whole school's effectiveness.

There are three stages of research whichever research tradition is used:

research design, data collection and data analysis. There is some evidence to

suggest that between the extremes of positivism and symbolic interactionism,

there are complex patterns of research developing overlaps as individuals

struggle to employ the strategies which most suit the kinds of information

appropriate to the particular study.

Human behaviour is so complex and there are so many variables in terms of

decision making: what influences particular decisions varies from person to

person, with circumstances and over time. The positivist approach places

constraints upon research by practitioners who do not have time or resources

enough to collect data on a large scale.

A qualitative approach allows a consideration of the differences in the human

conscience, allowing people to reflect upon interactions which they have with

others and to respond in a deliberate fashion, whereas the positivist approach

emphasises the mechanical and passive view of human behaviour. Elements

of choice, influenced by feelings, emotions and intellectual reasoning appear

as opposed to the stance that people always react in the same way to the

same stimulus.

Although there is a place for quantitative techniques within educational

research, the sheer growth in the number of qualitative studies appears to

indicate that quantitative study per se is an outdated mode of research.

Furthermore, positivist researchers are now beginning to acknowledge the

importance of qualitative techniques in reinforcing the interpretation which

they give in statistical analysis.

It is appropriate, given the weight of evidence in favour of qualitative

research, that this study mainly follows the methodologies and techniques

employed by that tradition, although in part 1 there are some quantitative data

which are supported by several strands of qualitative data. Thus the study is

firmly embedded within the qualitative interpretative mode, linking to the

quantitative mode where applicable (Seiber, 1993) but essentially following

the premise that the grounded theory emerges from the data as opposed to

using data to test pre-conceived hypotheses.

Part 1: Main Aims and Research Questions

The first part of the study proposed to consider the education of children and

young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties within the LEA.

The idea for the study developed from a desire to:

- examine the types of behaviour of the most difficult pupils within the high

  schools;

- evaluate the provision of the LEA in terms of its usefulness to mainstream

  schools in the light of recent legislation.

The main aims were:

- To discover what were the perceptions of senior staff in schools with

  regard to difficult children within their schools and to follow this through

  by gathering data within their schools on two of their most difficult pupils.

- To collect information with regard to indefinitely or permanently excluded

  pupils (over a two year period), and to discover what happened to these

  pupils and how long they were removed from the education system.

- To gather data from attendance at a selection of case conferences in order

  to supplement the information about pupil exclusion, and to view the

process involved in coming to a decision about an individual's future education.

Interviewing was decided upon as a means of access to the opinions of a sample of headteachers regarding the research question:

> What are senior staff perceptions on the nature of provision for children exhibiting the most difficult behaviour within the school?

The term "Senior Staff" was used because although in most instances it was possible to interview the headteacher, in some schools a deputy was delegated to deal with the matter.

Another aspect worthy of investigation was that of individual case study material, the more specific detail on particular children and young people from the sample schools complementing the more general information given by the senior staff. Therefore a second research question emerged:

> What has been provided by the mainstream school in order to meet the needs of the most difficult pupils within that school?

Interviews were therefore arranged with either pastoral staff, (i.e. heads of school, heads of year), Special Needs co-ordinators, or the unit teachers according to which person was seen as most appropriate within the particular school.

This second aspect gave part 1 of the study a more rounded picture (of perspectives and provision within the sample schools) as it meant that specific practical considerations and particular outcomes were investigated in addition to the more general issues raised by the senior staff. It also gave an indication to whether the practice of the school reflected the perspectives held by the senior staff.

The third research question which emerged at this time was based around gaining knowledge of individuals who had been excluded and of the pattern of exclusions from particular phases and schools:

What are the numbers and patterns of exclusion across the LEA?

The last research question which relates to part 1 of the study was concerned with the response of the LEA towards excluded pupils:

How are decisions reached about the future of excluded pupils, and what are the outcomes of permanent and indefinite exclusion for pupils within the LEA?

Senior Staff Interviews

This part of the research was carried out by means of semi-structured interviews. Time restraints limited data collection, so ten high schools were chosen across the authority.

An initial letter was sent out to each sample school introducing the project

and indicating the various areas of investigation. This was then followed up

by a telephone call with a five or ten minute outline of the work and

explanation of what questions the interview would contain, and what kinds of

information would be useful for the research. The interviews took place over

a period of five weeks in October/November during 1990, at a time

convenient to each head or deputy. The interviews lasted approximately

forty-five minutes. Walker (1985) indicates one of the advantages of using

interviews:

> Interviews rely on the fact that people are able to offer accounts of
> their behaviour, practice and actions to those who ask them questions.
> (They) hinge on the assumption that people are to some degree,
> reflective about their own actions, or can be put into a position where
> they become so. It places a degree of authority on the subject and to
> some extent at least takes for granted that the account which is given
> has truth and value. (pp. 90-91)

A semi-structured interview was used, in order to probe a number of areas, to

allow respondents to elaborate on their ideas, and to enquire as to the reasons

for the practice of those ideas. The interview schedule was developed in

conjunction with an educational psychologist. See Appendix 1 for a copy of

the interview schedule.

The Ford teaching project (Elliott and Adelman, 1976) outlined some of the advantages of interviews as a method of gathering data. Direct contact gave the opportunity of gaining information directly, and of being able to follow up any problems immediately while the information is still in context.

Interviewing is a good method of identifying variations between individuals; the discussion of points, and two-way flow of ideas could produce interesting developments. Interviewing is also a more personal way of gaining data, thus the depth of information should be broader than that received from a questionnaire.

The problems of interviewing were as follows:

(a) Arranging a suitable time. Headteachers are extremely busy and so much time was spent in making contact and organising a convenient time.

(b) The length of time concerned with transcribing. Most of the interviews were tape-recorded, as there was too much information to record accurately by note-taking either during or after the interview. The pressures of time in school are considerable, so it was better to record the conversation and play back the interviews later where possible.

Use of the tape recorder also meant that the responses to the questions could be fully concentrated on during the actual interview, leading to a better quality of information. Some people found the tape recorder off-putting, and

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said so, at which point the tape recorder was abandoned in favour of rapid

note taking. Others were not bothered by its presence when they knew that

no-one else would listen to the tape. Interviews with special needs/pastoral

staff were not recorded as the information needed was of a more factual

nature and so could be recorded on the interview schedule at the time of the

interview. **See Appendix 2 for a copy of the interview schedule used.**

The interviewing technique was similar to that described by Walker and

Adelman (1975, p 140).

Measor's (1988) method of interviewing is particularly interesting, and

provides a valuable insight into the technique. She highlights several

important factors:

(a) access

(b) building relationships

(c) listening beyond

(d) order in the interview

(e) 'topography' of an interview

(f) strategies for validating data

(g) images of the researcher.

Access was more of a problem when interviewing senior staff as opposed to

pastoral or special needs staff, as headteachers tended to be out of school or

have pre-arranged meetings as well as dealing with routine and unexpected

matters. The pressure of time was a great issue; teachers quite often worked

through their lunch break, and those who did not felt that the lunch break was

the only time they had in which to sit and relax; it was therefore easier to

arrange to interview pastoral/special needs staff during their non-contact time.

Access in terms of available staff to interview was also a problem. Many

interviews had to be rearranged at least once, some several times before the

interview was completed.

Access to a place where interviews could take place was not a problem, as

interviews always took place within the sample school, not the research

office.

As Burgess (1988) states:

> In our research, we operated with the idea that the quality of the data is
> dependent upon the quality of the relationships you build up with the
> people being interviewed. (p.57)

This is one aspect of interviewing which improved with the special

needs/pastoral staff interviews as relationships were generally established

before the research began.

The interviewer must also remain critically aware of what the interviewee is

saying, looking into the meaning of what is being said; and to bring in themes

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relating to the data. One way of doing this is through "respondent validation", whereby the interviewer returns an analysis of data to the person concerned and asks for comments on it. This was done for 18 out of the 19 senior staff interviews (one of the headteachers retired before the data could be returned to him).

There is a need to develop strategies to gain the information needed; but there is also benefit from allowing a certain amount of "rambling". It gives the interviewee more confidence, and builds up a more positive working relationship.

On occasions it could be beneficial to arrange two interviews and use the second to gain all the information missed in the first. However, this is a luxury which could not be afforded in this instance, due to time restrictions, and would perhaps be more useful in a situation where the interviewer and interviewee needed to form a working relationship.

The topography of an interview is important. The interview should begin and end with fairly innocuous questions which place the interviewees at their ease. Measor states that one of the best strategies for validating data is to "build good relationships in the first place, so people feel free to talk to the interviewer". There is a sense of what is correct and what is not when there is a well-established relationship.

The image of the researcher is an important aspect in gathering data. There is a need to be "neutral but nice" as the interviewer's opinions could obstruct data collection. The temptation to contradict the interviewee, or to turn the interview into a discussion was ever present in some of the interviews and had to be fiercely resisted.

The second interview in the school was arranged through the head or deputy either at the first interview, or by ringing later for an appointment. A contact name was always given by the head or deputy. In most cases, however, it was possible to speak to the contact person directly in order to give a briefing about the project and the information needed, and also to arrange a mutually convenient time. The direct contact was a much better starting point than interviews arranged by the first interviewee.

Sampling

The sample was an opportunistic sample and took into account the following factors:

1. The authority is divided into three administrative areas: east, west, and central; each having distinctly local characteristics. Therefore a spread of schools across the whole authority was taken.

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2. The age of secondary transfer differs across the authority, so schools in which children transferred at 11, 12, and 13 were all represented.

3. Schools varied in their leaving ages, so schools with leaving ages of 16 and 18 were chosen.

4. The size of schools within the authority varied from just over 200 children to nearly 2000. The largest and the smallest schools were included within the sample, with a range in between.

5. Five High Schools possess "units" for the most difficult pupils (none of which now function as a separate unit in the accepted sense of the word). See Chapter 7 for further details. A range of schools with and without units was chosen for the study.

6. There are at present two church high schools within the authority, so one of these was chosen to be included within the study.

7. The type of catchment area was taken into consideration so that there were some schools who had catchment areas consisting mainly of council estates, others where private housing predominated. The church school took from all areas of the authority.

The sample of schools taken was thus haphazard rather than random, so the results from the study cannot be used in order to generalise to the wider population of schools because of the problem of possible bias (see

Hammersley and Scarf, (1990, Ch. 4) for a discussion of validity and

extrapolation to a wider population). Bias may also be introduced by

researcher over-familiarity. Vulliamy and Webb (1992), Delamont (1981,

1992) and Becker (1971) debate this theme and suggest that the

interpretations placed on the data may be biased as the researcher is too close

to the situation. Hopefully, the fact that the initial analysis of interviews was

deliberated upon by a group of people would help to counteract any bias

introduced in this way. However, it is likely that since I have been employed

by the same LEA for almost ten years, there may be some bias within the

study from this source. Non-response, however, was not a problem, as all the

schools approached were willing to participate. Ten schools out of a

population of nineteen were used as sample schools, and these were as

representative as it was possible to make them under the circumstances. As

Bell (1989) points out:

> All researchers are dependent on the goodwill and availability of
> subjects, and it is likely to be difficult for an individual researcher
> working on a small-scale project to achieve a truly random
> sample.(p.74)

One issue which needed particular attention within the senior staff interviews

was that of bias due to the fact that my role as researcher was complemented

by my role as an LEA official appointed to delve into the realms of school philosophy and practice surrounding the most difficult and challenging behaviour in schools. Given the climate of ever shrinking budgets and the growing interest in improving the quality of teaching and learning within schools, and the relationship of behaviour to the ethos of the school led by the Elton Report a few years earlier in 1989, there was a great deal of scope for headteachers and deputy headteachers to be politically motivated in their answers to some of the questions. It was therefore necessary not only to speak to the senior staff within a school but also to consider how the school responded to individual pupil behaviour, and preferably to speak to another member of staff from middle management as these are the people who carry the responsibility for putting much of the philosophy of the school into practice.

Case Study Pupils

The second strand of the phase 1 study consisted of the individual case studies of some of the most difficult pupils, taken from each of the schools which took part in the senior staff interviews. These were conducted after the senior staff interviews, and where possible, involved other member(s) of staff such as special needs co-ordinators or heads of year. The case studies

comprised a total number of 19 children from 9 out of the ten schools. The

tenth school nominated the special needs co-ordinator to be the contact

person, and she subsequently left the authority before the case studies were

completed. The gender and age of the pupils is detailed in **table 2**.

AGE	12	13	14	15	16
BOY	1	5	2	2	3
GIRL				4	2
TOTAL	1	5	2	6	5

Table 2: Gender and Age of Case Study Pupils

The case study information was collected using the proforma in Appendix 2,

one proforma being completed per child. An appointment was made with the

contact person, and the proformas were sent in advance of the meeting, in

order that information may be gathered, where appropriate, in preparation for

the meeting. Some staff did not want to identify the child by name. With

respect to the case study data on individual children, notes taken during the

interviews were the mainstay of the information, with invitations to return to

the school to clarify or for the school to supplement any of the information as

necessary.

Exclusion Data

The third strand of part 1 of the study involved the collection of mainly quantitative data which was held on a database in order to monitor which pupils were excluded from which school, the type and date of the exclusion and the reason given for the exclusion. Information was also kept on those pupils who were indefinitely or permanently excluded with the date of the case conference and the decision reached at the conference (or later by the LEA officer in consideration of all the evidence). This data was later followed up on an individual basis in order to ascertain whether the decision reached at the case conference was actually carried out, and how quickly pupils were given provision.

Data was collected on a data base over two academic years, beginning in September of 1990 and continuing through until July of 1992. Much of the data was obtained from the Special Services section which deals with all areas pertaining to exclusions and to all aspects of children's special educational needs within the authority. Some information was also provided by individual schools, the Professional Assistants, the School Psychological Service and by the Education Welfare Service.

All exclusions which were notified to the authority are included in the analysis, with particular attention being paid to indefinite and permanent exclusions. Recorded fixed term exclusions ranged from one day to thirty-one days in duration (though in the latter case since the authority impose a limit of 20 days for any fixed term exclusion, a case conference was called and the child in question was returned to school within 20 days).

Over the period of the study, if the total number of days per pupil per term was less than five, then the school was not required by law to notify the authority. Such exclusions are therefore not included in the data, neither has there been any attempt to quantify the number of illegal exclusions (i.e. those exclusions which are either not recorded in the school exclusion book or those exclusions totalling 5 days or more per individual per term which are not notified to the authority), which occur within the area studied. This is an important omission in the data as there are generally considered to be more illegal exclusions than legal ones (see Stirling 1992a and 1996 for example) therefore bringing a significant amount of bias to the data. However, other researchers into the area of exclusions have not yet been able to quantify the exact numbers of exclusions; indeed, there has been much debate into the numbers of recorded exclusions with various bodies putting forward widely differing estimates of the rates of exclusions nationally.

Another source of bias within this section of the study came through the storing of information on a database. This constrained the parameters of the data collected in order to conform to the fields which were established, through necessity, prior to the data collection. Thus there was a compromise between the amount of detail available and the ease of access which is promoted by the use of a database.

Case Conferences

During a period of two academic years, from October 1991 I was able to observe 30% of the exclusion conferences which were held within the authority, a total of 57 conferences in all. The majority of these were pupils who had been excluded from high schools (45), six had been excluded from middle schools, five from the special sector, and one from a first school. The particular case conferences which were observed were those which fitted into my timetable, and involved representation from the various areas of the authority. Like the sample of high schools chosen for the senior staff interviews the sample was an opportunistic one which was constrained mainly by time: time within the research timetable and within the school day as some case conferences occurred simultaneously in different sectors of the authority. The importance of the case conference data lay in the insight it gave into the

perspectives of individuals and professional bodies and the process which it encompassed of finding the "best" solution for a student who had been either indefinitely or permanently excluded given the individual set of circumstances. The data from the case conferences also provided details of the events leading up to an exclusion plus evidence of any Special Educational Needs which the student had experienced, some of which were catalogues of intractable learning or behaviour difficulties, or more likely, a combination of both. An element of subjectivity was involved in determining who led the decision making process within (or sometimes external to) the case conferences. In an endeavour to limit the subjectivity of this exercise pointers were used in making the determination. These included how views were put forward, for instance were they logical, well thought out, extensive, or very forceful in nature. The relationship between the CEO representative and the headteacher of the school was also important and dependent to some extent upon the reputation of the school within the LEA and how the school was viewed in terms of what they did for pupils before exclusion was seen as inevitable. Although such measures help to reduce the subjectivity involved, there is no way of completely eliminating such bias within the data.

Part 2: Main Aims and Research Questions

Part 1 of the study gave a comprehensive view of exclusions within the LEA over a two year period. There was one issue which emerged as being central to the data. A large proportion of excluded pupils had been identified as having Special Educational Needs. None of the previous literature centring on the area of excluded pupils had explored this issue in much depth. The aim for part 2 of the study therefore was to:

- explore the relationship between the exclusion of pupils and the effectiveness of collaboration between the pastoral and Special Educational Needs areas within schools;

A questionnaire seemed to be the most appropriate way of gaining an overview within the authority's schools from Special Educational Needs co-ordinators and pastoral staff with regard to the research question:

> Is there a relationship between the rate of exclusion of a school and the effectiveness of collaboration between the Special Educational Needs and pastoral staff?

This was followed up by a more detailed semi-structured interview of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, pastoral staff and LEA personnel in order to ascertain the following:

Are there specific instances when collaboration between the Special Educational Needs and pastoral staff has led to a reduction in the number of excluded pupils?

Special Educational Needs/Pastoral Interface Questionnaires

I began by designing a questionnaire to explore the interface in high schools between Special Educational Needs Departments who usually carry responsibility for pupils' learning difficulties and the pastoral systems who have responsibility for pupil behaviour and through whom the sanction of exclusion is frequently accessed. That is, pupils who are excluded are customarily dealt with by pastoral teams rather than Special Educational Needs teams.

The questionnaire consisted of a mixture of open and closed questions which explored the nature of the SEN/pastoral interfaces within the high schools (see appendix 3 for details). It was piloted using a head of year 7 in a high school and a Special Educational Needs teacher from a high school (see Munn and Drever, 1993 and Bell, 1993). After modifications were made where necessary, three versions were produced following a similar format and the questionnaire was sent out to each Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (18 in total as one high school was without a SENCo at this point) and each head or acting head of year 10 in the 19 high schools within the

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authority (year 10 being the peak age for exclusions to occur). Five were also sent to relevant officer personnel within the LEA. The questionnaires were sent to named individuals on 6th October 1994 with instructions and a return date of 21st October. Eventually a number of questionnaires were returned: 8 from Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, 6 from pastoral staff, 0 from LEA personnel. The data seemed to indicate that in schools where the Special Educational Needs departments and pastoral staff worked together, there was a greater chance of keeping pupils with very challenging behaviour within school for a longer period. This view was upheld by evidence gained from an evaluation of the work of the In-School Support Service who worked as an education/Social Services joint team in order to prevent the exclusion of pupils with very challenging behaviour. In order to explore this area in more depth, interviews were arranged with 3 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and 3 heads of year 10.

Special Educational Needs/ Pastoral Interface Interviews

The people chosen for interview were selected mostly by prior knowledge of where there were dynamic SEN/pastoral interfaces within schools, so that they would be more likely to exhibit a range of behaviours centring upon the interface. Webb (1994) indicates that this is theoretical sampling in order to

generate rich quality data. It was also considered important to gather data

from an LEA perspective, so an LEA officer and a head of a Pupil Referral

Unit pilot scheme were chosen to fulfil that function. Interviews were

conducted as for part 1 of the study (**see appendix 2 for a copy of the**

schedule used) with each interview lasting between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Interviews on this occasion were not taped, but notes were taken during the

interview and were read back to the interviewees immediately after each

interview to check content and give an opportunity to revise opinions or

correct any errors.

Overview

There are a number of issues which are pertinent to the whole study rather

than to either part 1 or part 2 per se. These will therefore be discussed below.

Ethical Issues

At the beginning of the data collection during the first year, exclusions had

not come to the forefront of the political arena, as has increasingly happened

during recent years. The first annual report for the LEA was circulated around

the authority with very little comment or feedback even though figures within

the LEA had begun to increase. However, by the end of the second year the

political situation had changed dramatically. The exclusions figures had

continued to rise and only selected personnel were allowed access to the

report at the end of the second year. This illustration exemplifies the

sensitivity which needed to be exercised in the collection, interpretation and

publication of the data.

Ethical issues were addressed from the beginning in that the senior staff who

were interviewed were spoken to before the research commenced and were

also guaranteed anonymity for the information offered. In addition they were

sent copies of the summary of the conversation taken from the interview

transcripts and asked to check the accuracy of the contents and of the views

which they expressed. This was a very useful exercise as it not only served

to confirm opinions and to give an extra period of time in which to consider

responses to the questions asked during interview, (as some people, although

advised previously about the topics which were going to be involved had

done little or no preparation for the interview), but also was a source of

further data particularly for one respondent who found that what he actually

said did not totally reflect his views and he therefore added a significant

amount of data which would not otherwise have been generated (see

Vulliamy and Webb, 1992, p 28). Other respondents were able to verify their

views, and two brought forward some relevant documentation to add to what

they had said in terms of school policy and practice. Tentative validation of the data was also taking place through this process, with either a written response or telephone conversation taking place about each interview except one (as the headteacher concerned had retired). Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) provide an overview of ethical considerations within school-based research. The sensitive nature of the subject area meant that in order to be able to be involved in seminars or conferences, my line manager had to be consulted, and when a chapter was written for a book, it was first read by the Chief Education Officer before going to print.

Ethical issues were addressed during the data collection in part 2 by sending a letter to secondary schools through the LEA rather than as an individual researcher. This was in order to declare a dual interest as I had then just taken up a new post within the Advisory and Inspection Services and did not want to mislead anyone into giving information that they would not have given to an adviser of the LEA. This did in turn raise an issue of the introduction of bias into the questionnaire answers as respondents may not have been as frank as they may otherwise have been. However, it was important that people felt comfortable with their replies and with the research environment as a whole. One school did write back and say that they did not wish to take part in the research.

It was especially important to resolve ethical issues before beginning the observation of case conferences (see Ball, 1988 pp. 39-50 for a rehearsal of the ethics of participant observation), as vulnerability of all the main parties was apparent i.e. the pupil, parents, school. Why was a researcher observing them, their child, their school? Therefore schools were given written information from the LEA in advance of the observations; before attendance at any case conference I also telephoned the LEA representative and the school to let them know that I wished to attend. In addition, I made it clear that I had no wish to contribute to the discussion as it was not my job to influence the outcome. This made it possible for me to attend all the case conferences that I wished to attend, even one where the proceedings were highly confidential as the police were involved in making a prosecution.

An important issue arose whilst collecting information about pupils from the schools where senior staff had granted me interviews. Some staff I spoke to did not wish to reveal the names of the students whom they had picked out for the case studies, which restricted my ability to follow up those pupils to see whether they were later excluded from the school. I could have found out who the pupils were but chose to respect the wishes of the teachers involved as it would have been unethical to have done otherwise. Schindele (1985)

makes an important point concerning the vulnerability of students with

Special Educational Needs:

> For such people any decision about their treatment may have a
> significant - positive or negative - effect; because of their small number
> and their dependence on specialist provision, they risk being misused
> by research. (p 9)

(See also Jonsen, 1978; Haywood, 1976; Hersen and Barlow, 1976;

Revenstorf, 1979.)

The vulnerability of all participants in research is an issue which Sieber

(1993) addresses in his ethical principles and which I have tried to echo

within this study:

> The application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or
> wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair.
> (p. 14)

Confidentiality was a major issue which had to be addressed throughout the

study. Concerns about confidentiality ran as a theme throughout the study in

terms of individual pupil details, individual staff interviews and

questionnaires, individual school identities and personnel interviews within

the LEA. It was vitally important that confidentiality be maintained in each

area of data collection especially considering the sensitive nature of the

subject area.

I include all the information about the ethical considerations because as Punch

(1986) points out in his argument to have openness in methodology:

> Increasingly, then, people are beginning to appreciate that a truncated,
> flippant, or anodyne account of the project's development is not
> sufficient, and that a serious and deep analysis of the research role, and
> the research project, must form a prominent part of observational
> study.

As Holdaway (1980) states:

> we should avoid the impression that research ethics are a clear-cut
> matter, based on a residual, all-embracing type of social scientists'
> natural law.

In considering the ethical issues for this study, I have tried to be detailed in

order to help the reader to have a clearer understanding of my approach.

Data Analysis

Howard and Sharp (1985) provide a good definition of the role of analysis

within the research study which is:

> to supply evidence which justifies claims that the research changes
> belief or knowledge and is of sufficient value. This is done through the
> ordering or structuring of data. (p.120)

Part of any analysis process is to explore the meaning of data which has been

structured and ordered into various categories and begins whilst data is still

being collected so as not to lose either time or focus for this study.

This role applies whether the data is quantitative or qualitative in nature, although there are differences in the processes involved. The quantitative data involved the monitoring of exclusions within the LEA and the follow-up exercise of determining whether what the authority or the case conference decided about the future was what actually happened to individual students. The first stage in the data analysis was to look for patterns within the data and then to use the data in order to generate a series of graphs and tables using a spreadsheet programme. Some data presented itself in numerical form so that patterns were easily detectable when converted into graphical forms of representation, for instance types of exclusion per annum as a percentage or type and number of exclusions per sector or per school. The database also contained textual information which derived from the information given by schools or the information collected from case conferences. Such data needed to be developed into categories prior to being used in graphical format; for example, the reasons for exclusion needed to be codified into the various categories of disruption, verbal abuse, physical abuse, truancy and criminal activities before being used on the pie chart.

A second stage of analysis involved the description of the data in order to aid classification and the formulation of concepts appertaining to the data, in terms of the local LEA picture and comparisons with national data. Only

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general comparisons could be made with the national data due to the lack of

common data collection techniques; similarly, few direct comparisons could

be made with data previously collected within the authority due to the

differences in the data collection parameters although it was possible to

recognise the general trend in the rise of exclusions. (see Howard and Sharp,

1985, Bell, 1993, Ary et al., 1972, for details on the analysis of quantitative

data).

Qualitative data by its nature is more complex in terms of its treatment in the

analytical phase of the study because of the volume of textual information to

be structured. The focus must be open at the beginning of analysis in order

not to impose pre-conceived ideas about what should arise from the study.

Judgements on the data must be based within the data, not value judgements

superimposed on the data. After the completion of interviews, the tapes were

transcribed, or notes re-written immediately following the interview in order

that data may not be lost or misinterpreted at a later date. Summaries of the

main issues discussed were sent to the participants and then analysis proper

began. As Powney and Watts (1987) point out, quite a large amount of data is

inaccessible to the reader of the research report due to the reliance upon the

researcher to present a balanced and true picture of the interviews. The data

was coded according to the research questions giving a basis for deriving an

overall picture of the interviews. Patterns then began to emerge from the data, and these were grouped in terms of how often they had been repeated by the different interviewees. (See Bentley and Watts, 1986 for details on reporting interview transcripts.) The main themes were highlighted in this way, within these themes being several sub-themes which are then explored in more detail within the main body of the thesis.

The questionnaire data were divided into open and closed questions. The answers to the closed questions were first summarised on a grid in order to gain an overall representation of the data gathered. The open questions were treated in a similar way to the interview data i.e. categories were derived from the data. The main advantage in treating the data from the open questions in this way is that any theory derived from the data originates from within the data itself, rather than being imposed by the researcher. (For a discussion of the codification of questionnaire data see Munn and Drever, 1993.) Following the codification of answers the closed questionnaire data was described and then analysed in terms of emerging patterns which are incorporated into the main body of the analysis.

Data Validation

Data validation is an important part of the research process. It is concerned

with the confidence which can be placed on the analysis both by the

researcher and by others reading the research. Vulliamy and Webb (1992, pp.

222 - 228) give an overview of three ways in which data can be validated.

These are triangulation, the saturation of categories and the search within the

data for negative instances of a particular category so that the exception

proves the rule.

Validation of the quantitative data is relatively easy to deal with: the work of

data collection was part of a study for the LEA and so I was working with a

member of the Special Needs Group and we were able to check with each

other the formative process of data collection and the summative process of

data analysis. Cross-checking was carried out at both these stages.

The qualitative data is less easy to validate. There are different schools of

thought as to how the process should be managed. Miles and Huberman,

(1984) suggested a process which is very similar to those for quantitative

data, so that data can be presented and analysed in such a way that another

researcher should be able to reach the same conclusions. Lincoln and Guba,

(1985) disagreed with this treatment of what is essentially different data, and

so devolved a vocabulary and techniques which emphasised how the data could be shown to be trustworthy. Walker (1986) opposes the two forms of research as looking for the truth in differing ways: 'He (the educational researcher), may enter the system in order to seek truth through explanation, or alternatively he may enter it to seek truth through the portrayal of reality.' (p.202). The truth of quantitative research is embodied not only in the interpretation of the results but also within the results themselves which are often presented so that the reader can fit the interpretation to the numerical data. Qualitative research, however, uses only selections of the data in order to illustrate the findings. Much of the validation of the data lays in the presentation of the processes of analysis so that the reader can see how the interpretation of the data has been achieved. This kind of validation is termed an audit trail. The validation of much of the part 1 data occurred through a steering group which assembled for the process of looking at the data which had been collated and drawing conclusions from it, and through respondent validation which was discussed in the 'Ethical Issues' section above.

Philosophical and General Issues

The whole study reflects the general growth in qualitative research which has appeared in recent years within the educational forum. Within the sphere of

Special Educational Needs there has been a move away from the positivist

tradition towards the interpretative tradition (Vulliamy and Webb, 1992) as a

result of the change of emphasis from the medical model of within-child

factors (pre-Warnock), to the more context-related factors emphasised first by

the Education Act 1981 and subsequently by the Education Acts 1993 and

1996. Although some quantitative methods are used, the study is based firmly

within the qualitative arena in order to develop themes and give a more in-

depth rounded picture of the exclusion of pupils within one LEA. As the main

chapters are read it is hoped that the reader will discover the depth of

information which qualitative research can add to quantitative material, which

in itself, provides only a partial answer to the research questions.

I have tried to be as open as possible in the collection of data, and have tried

to honestly reflect the patterns which the data provided. This is interpretative

because social reality is constructed by individuals and the interactions

between them. The researcher's job is to interpret those interactions in a way

that makes sense. The issues contained within part 1 of the study gave rise to

the direction which the study then took in part 2. One issue which I hope to

have addressed in this chapter is the ways in which I have sought to ensure

the trustworthiness of the data. Kyriacou (1990) suggests that as yet there is

no consensus amongst researchers as to a common way of establishing

trustworthiness in qualitative studies and asks how to progress towards a

more general agreement. As Morrow and Richards, (1996) state:

> Researching children, then, raises interesting methological and ethical
> issues that all researchers face, at least implicitly, when collecting
> people's stories: issues of appropriate ways of collecting data and
> appropriate and honest ways of analysing and interpreting data and
> disseminating findings, as well as issues of protection of research
> participants. (p. 103)

Chapter 5

Exclusion Data

Methodology

Data was collected over two academic years, beginning in September of 1990

and continuing through until July of 1992. Much of the data was obtained

from the Special Services section which deals with all areas pertaining to

exclusions and to all aspects of children's special educational needs within the

authority. Some information was also provided by individual schools, the

Professional Assistants, the School Psychological Service and by the

Education Welfare Service.

All exclusions which were notified to the authority are included in the

analysis, with particular attention being paid to indefinite and permanent

exclusions. Recorded fixed term exclusions ranged from one day to thirty-one

days in duration (though in the latter case since the authority impose a limit of

20 days for any fixed term exclusion, a case conference was called and the

child in question was returned to school within 20 days).

Over the period of the study, if the total number of days per pupil per term

was less than five, then the school was not required by law to notify the

authority. Exclusions which are not notified are not included in the data,

neither has there been any attempt to quantify the number of illegal exclusions

(i.e. those exclusions which are either not recorded in the school exclusion

book or those exclusions totalling 5 days or more per individual per term

which are not notified to the authority), which occur within the area studied.

Numbers of Exclusions

In the academic year 1990-91, there were 157 exclusions recorded; 76 of

which were fixed term, 46 indefinite and 35 permanent. This was followed by

248 exclusions recorded by the authority for the academic year 1991 - 92;

123 of which were fixed term, 73 indefinite and 52 permanent. See **figure 3**

which shows the proportions of fixed term, indefinite and permanent

exclusions for the year 1991-92. Both years showed roughly the same

proportions of around half fixed term, just over one quarter indefinite and just

under one quarter permanent exclusion.
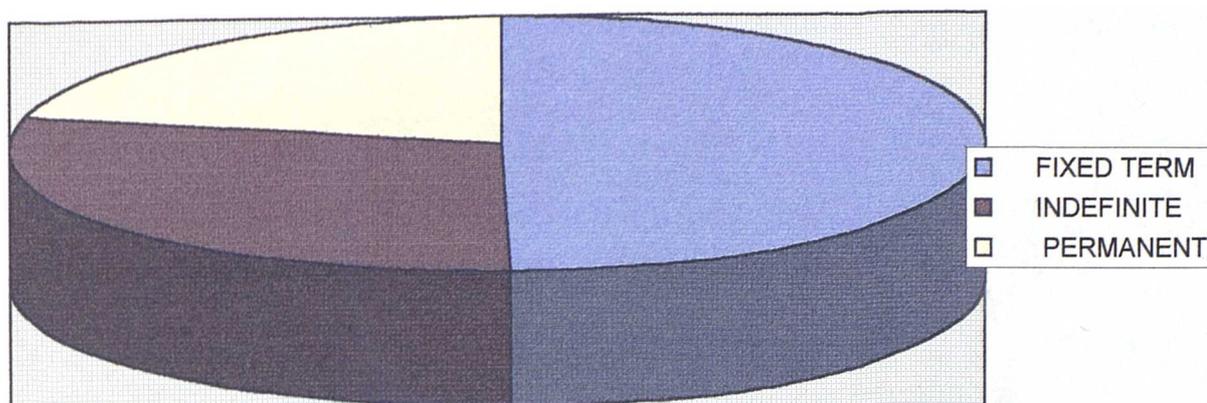
Figure 3: Types of Exclusion for the Academic Year 1991-2

In 1990-91, 6 of the indefinite exclusions and in 1991-92, 15 were converted to permanent within the academic year, so these exclusions are counted separately (i.e. 1 indefinite and 1 permanent exclusion for each of these pupils).

Although the total number of exclusions in 1991-1992 rose by 91 (a rise of 58%), above the total for 1990-1991, the proportion of fixed term: indefinite: permanent remains roughly the same. The number of exclusions in each category (fixed, indefinite, permanent) increased 62%, 59% and 49% respectively.

The average number of exclusions per month, excluding August, for the academic year 1990-91 is 14.

The average number of exclusions per month, excluding August, for the academic year 1991-92 is 23.

This rise in exclusions is reflective of the rise in the national exclusion statistics; anecdotal evidence suggests that one neighbouring authority saw an increase of 300% in the total number of exclusions during the same two-year period. It was impossible to compare exclusions across a number of LEAs because of differences in methods of data collection and categorisation. **Figure 4** gives a monthly comparison for academic years commencing September 1990 and September 1991.
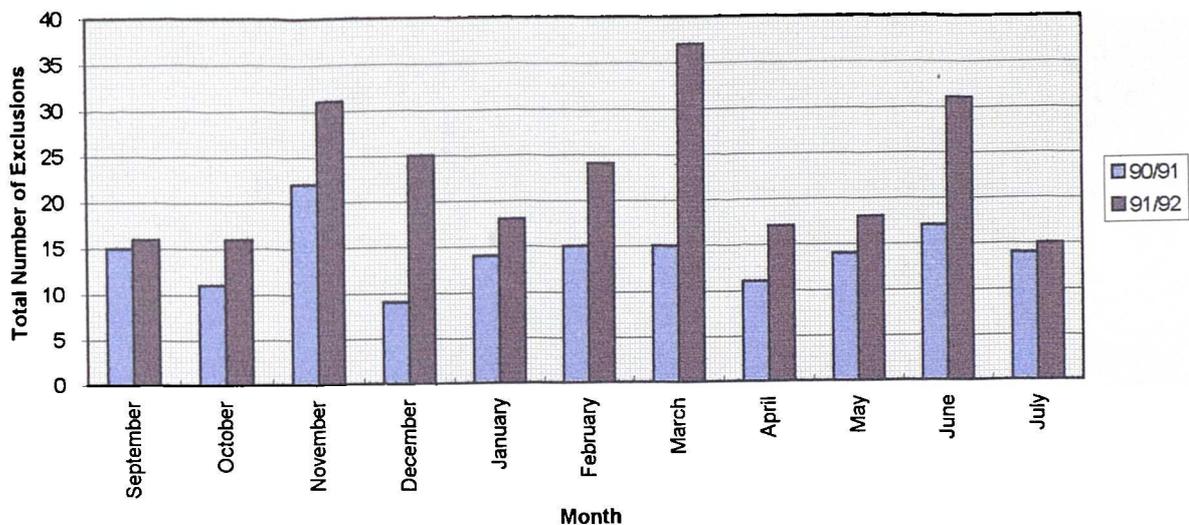
Figure 4: Total Monthly Exclusions for Academic Years 1990-91, 91-92

There are notable increases in the numbers of pupils excluded near the end of each term during the academic year 1991-92 (Easter Sunday was April 19th

1992), which may be indicative of cumulative factors such as the frequency of

incidents recorded for each excluded child, the overload of work generated by

the National Curriculum, and the general increase in teacher stress and

tiredness during the approach to the end of term (see also chapter 2, Reasons

for the Increase in Exclusions). As one headteacher commented during an

interview:

> the most difficult thing, the thing that really stresses the staff is the
> constant drip, drip, drip.

Ages of Pupils

Total numbers of exclusions for all categories gradually build up with

significant increases in years 8, 9 and peaking in year 10. This peak in

exclusions during year 10 is generally mirrored in many other areas across the

country (see also Galloway et al., 1982, p.19). Year 10, being the penultimate

year of compulsory schooling, leaves the student with between six and three

terms left to complete, with a great deal of pressure beginning to build up

with regard to course work assignments and preparations for examinations in

particular, and is possibly the most pressurised time in terms of academic

achievement: most teachers want to cover the majority of the examination

syllabus and to ensure that students complete a good number of assignments

during this year, as the following year is not a full academic year with study

leave and the examinations during the summer term. Also, by the time a

student reaches year eleven, it is unlikely, unless that student is on course for

a good number of good examination passes, that absences from school will be

followed up as stringently as in previous years. Therefore it is easier for the

student in year eleven to absent him or herself from school, particularly

towards the end of the year.

The vast majority of exclusions occur with pupils of High School age (i.e. NC

years 7-11) See **Figure 5** for details.
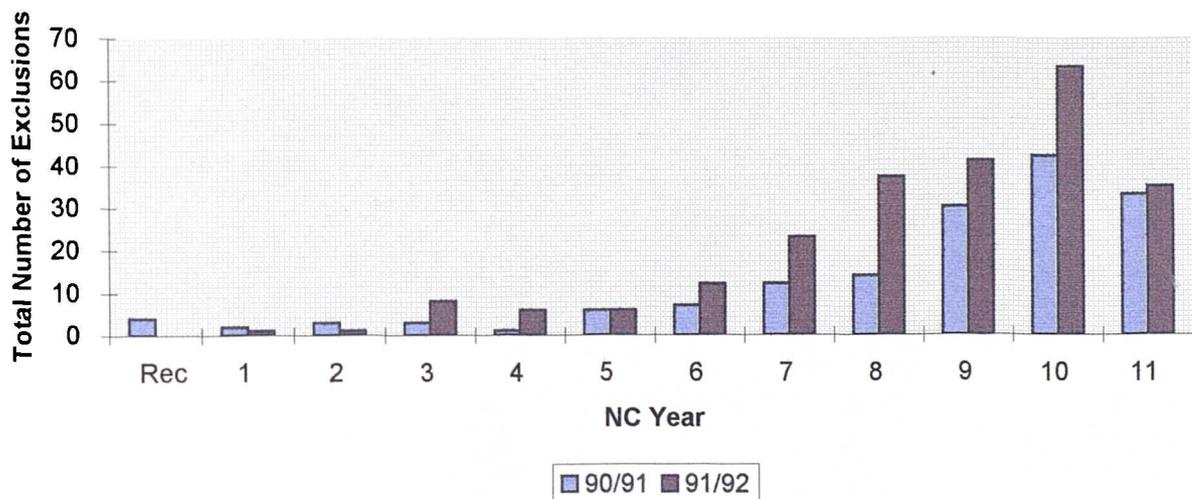
Figure 5: Total Exclusions by NC year for 1990-91, 91-92

Figures 6 and 7 show further details of the types of exclusion for each year.
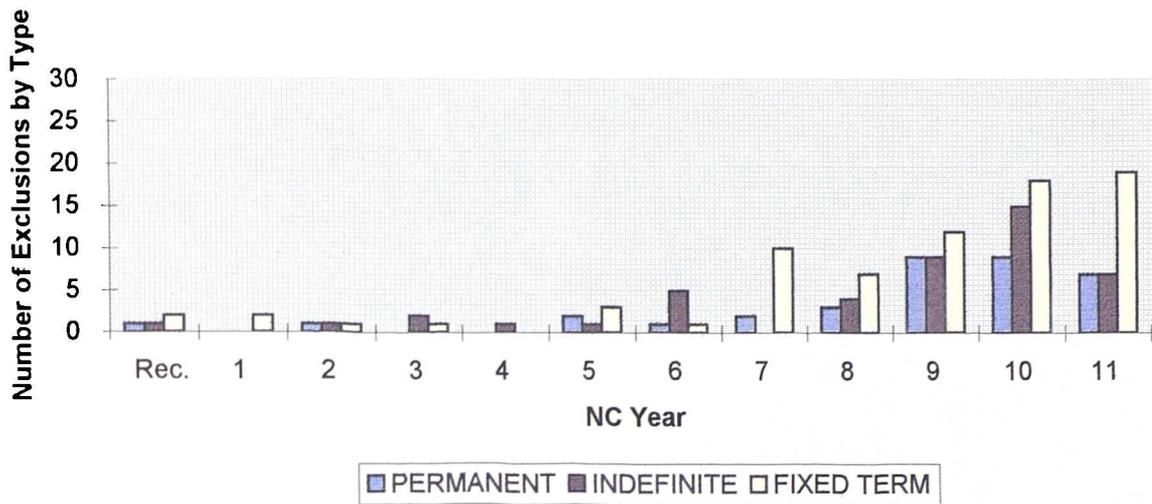
Figure 6: Types of Exclusion by NC Year 1990-91
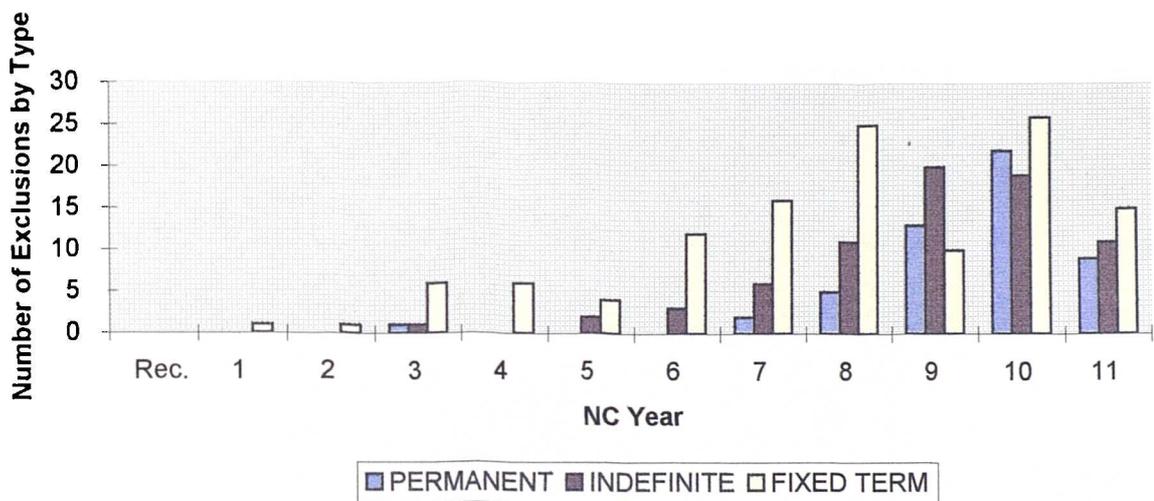
Figure 7: Types of Exclusion by NC Year 1991-92

Patterns are roughly similar for the two years. The pattern for the local

educational authority may be affected by the numbers of middle schools

which are in the authority. In years 6 and 7 middle schools may be more

likely to exclude as pupils have been with the school a long time and the

school may be running out of strategies to keep individuals within the system.

(NB One exclusion is not recorded on **figure 7** as it involves the Fixed Term

exclusion of an 18 year old from a Special School).

Age Ranges of Pupils

The youngest child excluded indefinitely or permanently during the two year

period was aged 5 years 8 months at the time of the exclusion. The whole

school age range was represented within the figures; the oldest pupil to be

excluded indefinitely or permanently being 16 years 4 months. The chance of

exclusion increases generally with age, and with the approach of a transition

time (for instance before transfer to secondary school, or before exit from

secondary school).

Gender

YEAR	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
1990-91	100	20	120
%	83	17	100
1991-92	162	23	185
%	88	12	100

Table 3: Gender of Excluded Pupils

The above table indicates similar proportions of boys: girls excluded during

both years. A slightly different distribution pattern appears for girls in 1991-2,

as in the first year of the study the girls were exclusively of high school age,

and only one girl was excluded from a middle school (aged 12). However, the

distribution of girls by NC year in 1991-2 is as follows:

No. of girls	NC Year
1	3
1	5
1	6
1	7
3	8
4	9
8	10
4	11

Table 4: Distribution of Girls by NC Year (1991/92)

The slightly increased chance of exclusion for a younger girl shown in **table 4**

may be a function of the general increase in overall numbers of exclusions as

the proportion of exclusions remains roughly similar. The gender pattern

found within the LEA has been reflected in other studies such as that of

McManus (1987, see p.263).

Exclusions by School Sector

During both years of the study, high schools were responsible for excluding

the majority of pupils (See **figures 8 and 9**). 66.2% of pupils were excluded

by high schools in the academic year 1990-1991, 58.5% in the academic year

1991-2.

The percentage of all exclusions which were accounted for by the high

schools and middle schools combined remained approximately the same

(83.1% in the academic year 1990-91; 84.7% for the academic year 1991-

92).

A further breakdown of exclusion by school sector is given in **figures 10 - 14.**

Note that the Y-axis scale differs for each graph. **Figure 10** shows the types

of exclusion by school sector. It can be seen from this graph, taken from the

1991-92 statistics, that the primary sector, including middle schools, are more

likely to exclude on a fixed term basis, and less likely to exclude either

indefinitely or permanently. However, the high school is more likely to

exclude either indefinitely or permanently than to use fixed term. There may

be a number of contributory explanations for this scenario. As the pupil

progresses through the education system, fixed term exclusion may have been

used on a number of occasions, so to increase the severity of sanction it may

be necessary to move to a longer term exclusion. This would be exacerbated

by the fact that there is no evidence to suggest that excluding a child has a
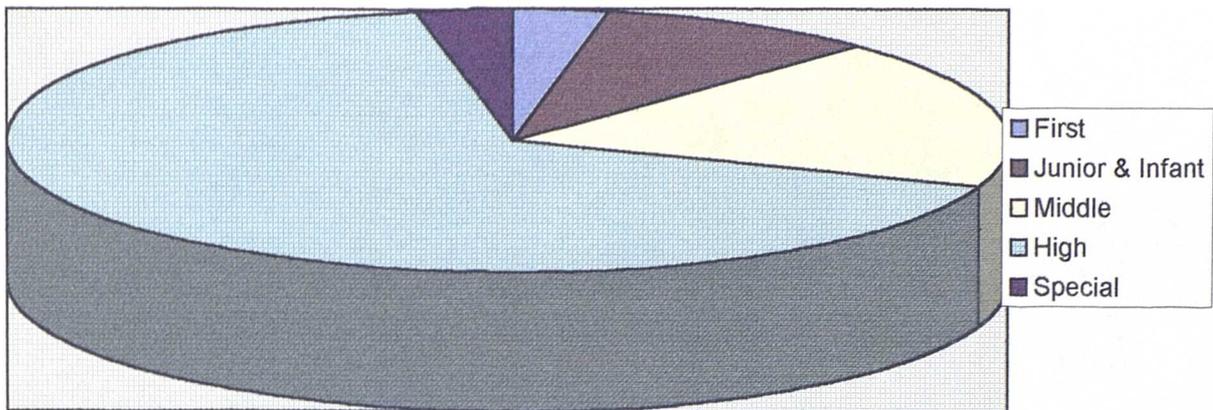
Figure 8: Exclusions by School Sector, 1990 - 91
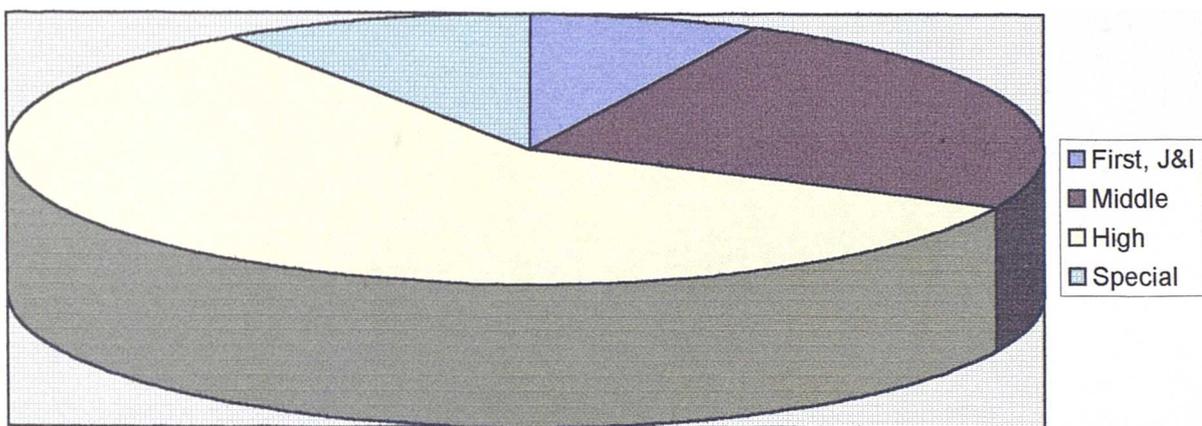
Figure 9: Exclusions by School Sector, 1991 - 92

prolonged or permanent effect on his or her behaviour (see for example the

Elton Report, DES, 1989; Imich, 1994), except perhaps to make the

consequences of the behaviour worse as the student may have the opportunity

to be involved in more criminal activities than if he or she had been in school.

The Special school pattern of exclusion bears more of a resemblance to the high school pattern than the primary, a reflection perhaps of the intervention which these pupils have had by virtue of the statementing process. It would appear that fixed term exclusions are more likely to be given than permanent or indefinite exclusions for primary aged pupils than for secondary or special school pupils.
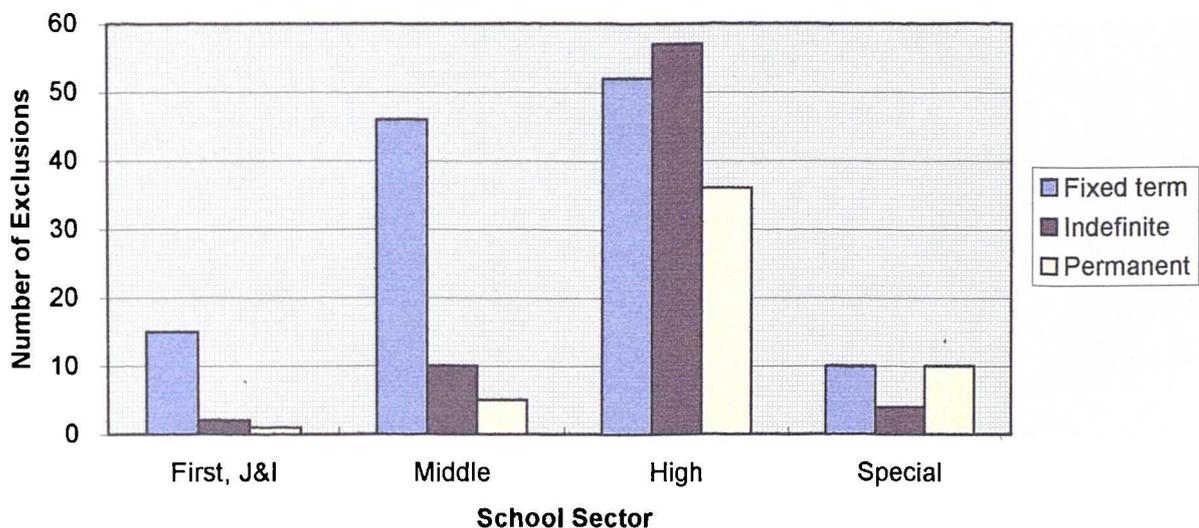
Figure 10: Types of Exclusion by School Sector, 1991-92

Figure 11 indicates that indefinite or permanent exclusion from infant, junior or first schools during the period of the study is a relatively rare event, but, bucking the trend for the general national picture, is decreasing over the two year period (see Hayden, 1997; Parsons et al., 1994b). The graph shows a marked decrease in the number of permanent /indefinite exclusions during the

second year of the study, but it is difficult to draw even tentative conclusions

for this pattern as there is not enough evidence from previous years to

indicate whether this is a trend. Except for the first school on the graph, none

of the other schools excluded during both years of the study, which suggests

that incidence of indefinite or permanent exclusion is not yet established as a

pattern in most primary schools. Only 10 out of a total of approximately 121

schools excluded permanently or indefinitely during the two year period.
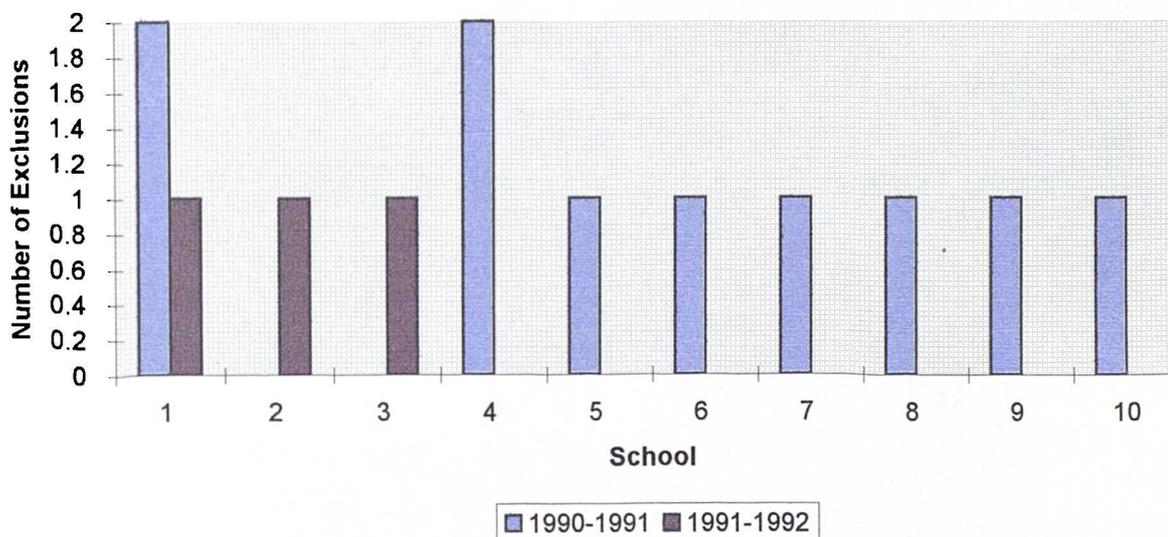
Figure 11: Junior, Infant and First School Exclusion Comparison, 1990-91, 91-92

(Indefinite and permanent)

Figure 12 indicates the numbers of exclusions from the local educational

authority's middle schools (approx. 28 schools in total). Out of the 28

schools, 12 excluded pupils permanently or indefinitely at least once during

that period. The first three schools on the graph excluded pupils during both
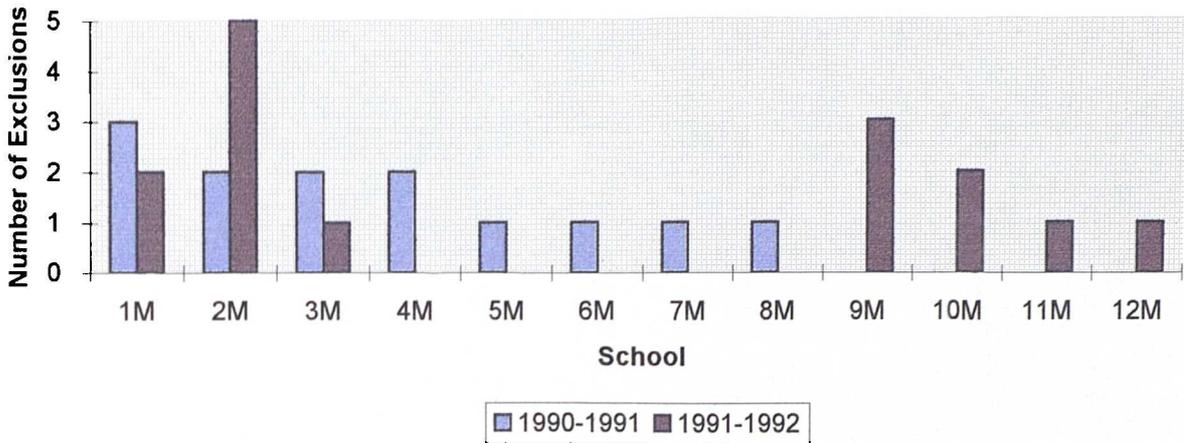
Figure 12: Middle School Exclusion Comparison 1990-91, 91-92 (Indefinite and permanent)
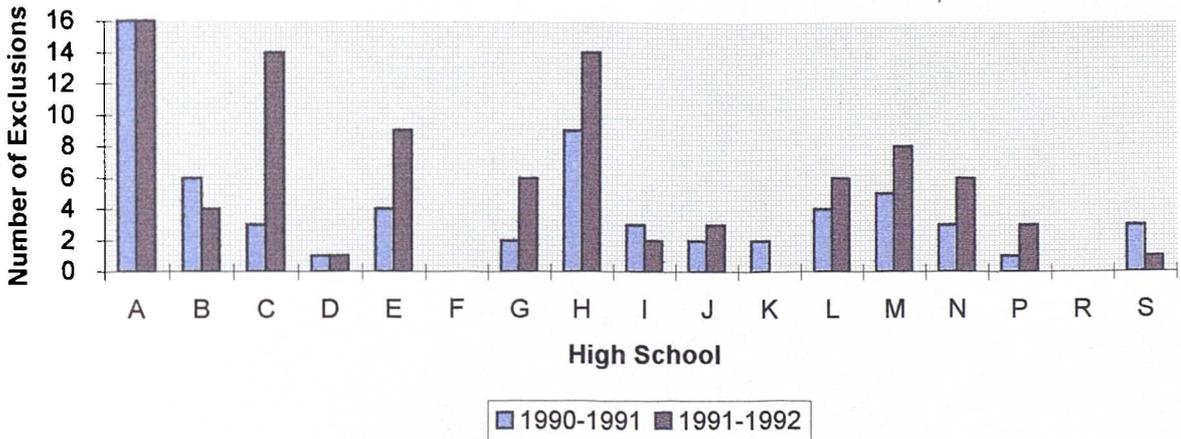
Figure 13: High School Exclusion Comparison 1990-91, 91-92 (Indefinite and permanent)

years of the study. This may indicate that there is beginning to be a pattern of exclusion established in some of the middle schools.

Figure 13 shows details of the high school permanent and indefinite

exclusions over the two years. There are 19 high schools within the local

educational authority, with 17 shown on the graph. Although two high

schools have no indefinite or permanent exclusions over the two years, they

are included because they did have some fixed term exclusions. Two schools

did not exclude at all during the two year period of the study. A large

proportion (79%) of the high schools have been involved in the permanent or

indefinite exclusion of students during the two year period. The graph shows,

however, that some schools are more likely to exclude than others (Galloway,

1985; Imich, 1994; McManus, 1989). School A has a high rate of exclusion

during both years. Even if 20% of the exclusion rate in this school is

explained by the catchment area (McManus, 1989; Ofsted, 1995) this would

leave almost 13 exclusions which could not be accounted for in this way. As

Imich (1994) comments:

> the probability of a pupil being dealt with through the exclusion
> procedures is dependent in part on the actual school which she is
> attending. (p. 7)

The high schools will be considered in more detail below, as they account for

a large proportion of the total number of exclusions.
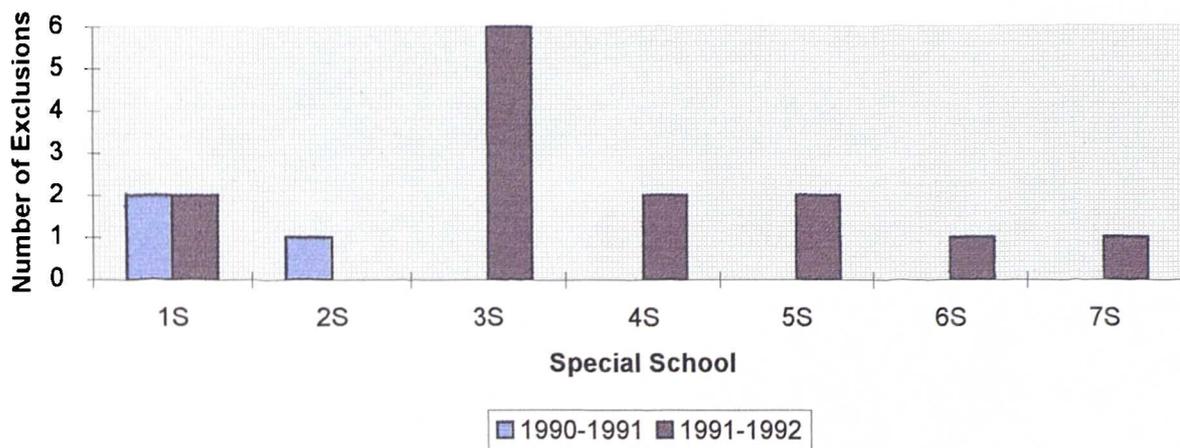
Figure 14: Special School Exclusion Comparison 1990-91, 91-92 (Indefinite and permanent)

Figure 14 gives details of the special school exclusions over the study. The pattern here is different from the primary sector, as most of the schools are represented within the graph (70%). Seventy per cent of the special schools have excluded, mostly within the second year of the study. This is consistent with other evidence, that although the total numbers of exclusions from special schools are small, the proportion is rising. Imich's study (1994) noted:

> in each of the past three years there has been a small increase in the number of exclusions used by primary and special schools. (p. 6)

The exclusions from special schools within the local educational authority has continued to rise over the subsequent years; it would be interesting to explore the reasons for the increasing trend to exclude within this sector, particularly

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within this local educational authority as the exclusion rate for special schools here is one of the highest in the country. Male (1996) reported in her study of 75 Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), schools that over 70% had excluded pupils either temporarily or permanently. An analysis of the exclusions from the special schools in 1991-92 reveals that of the 14 exclusions, 13 were secondary MLD pupils. One pupil was a secondary pupil excluded from a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD). Reasons for an increase in special school exclusions may include:

- pupils being placed in special schools as it is difficult to place excluded pupils within the mainstream (particularly affecting the secondary MLD pupils);

- pupils with more complex difficulties being placed in the special sector as more pupils with Special Educational Needs are kept in mainstream (Male, 1996);

- emphasis on the National Curriculum entitlement which has since been made more flexible in response to the needs of the pupils;

- local management of special schools, and the concomitant development of the quasi-market;

- the falling rolls evident within some of the special schools (most

  notably the MLD schools);

- the alteration in the composition of the special school population to

  include more emotional and behavioural difficulties pupils plus

  increased numbers of pupils diagnosed with autism.

From the graphs showing the comparative data (**figures 12-14**) it can be seen

that there was an increase in the total numbers of exclusions over the two

years in all phases except the junior, infant and first schools, where overall

numbers of exclusions are low taken across the large number of primary

schools relative to the smaller numbers of secondary and special schools.

Multiple Exclusions

Total number of pupils:	1990-1	1991-2
excluded	120	185
with multiple exclusions	27	48
as a % of pupils excluded	22.5	25.9

Table 5: Pupils with Multiple Exclusions

Table 5 gives details of those pupils who were excluded more than once

during the same academic year. It can be seen that although the total number

of pupils with more than one exclusion has increased over the two year

period, the proportion in relation to the total number of excluded pupils

remains roughly the same. Around a quarter of pupils at any one time have

been excluded more than once in the same academic year. The evidence

suggests that the proportion of pupils who have been excluded more than

once within their educational careers will be much higher, but I did not have

the data to be able to quantify this (ACE, 1993;). **Table 6** gives greater detail

of multiple exclusions for those pupils who were permanently excluded.

Excluded within the academic year:	1990-1	1991-2
on 1 other occasion	8	18
on 2 other occasions	7	2
on 3 other occasions	3	4
at no other time	16	23
permanently twice	2	3
TOTAL	35	*50

* This total exceeds the total of pupils permanently excluded because one child who was permanently excluded twice had also been excluded on two other occasions during the same academic year.

Table 6: Previous Exclusions of Permanently Excluded Pupils

The figures in **table 6** include those pupils who were originally indefinitely

excluded but had the status of the exclusion altered to permanent (6 pupils in

1990-1, 14 pupils in 1991-2). The likelihood of a pupil who has been

excluded permanently to have already been excluded during the same

academic year therefore rises significantly to 45.7% in 1990-1, and to 46% in

1991-2. Almost half the pupils excluded permanently over the two year

period had previously been excluded during the same academic year. It is

probable that, had the data extended to include those pupils who had been

excluded during the previous academic year, this figure would have been

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even higher. It would therefore seem possible to suggest that the act of

exclusion of a child for a fixed term increase the chances of being

permanently excluded, thus could be used as an indicator by the school that

something else needs to be done in order to prevent this occurring. It may

also suggest

> that schools may be tolerating difficult pupil behaviour for a longer
> length of time before excluding particular pupils either indefinitely or
> permanently. (Mitchell, 1996, p.122-3)

Outcomes of Exclusions

There was a change in the outcomes for fixed term exclusions over the two

year period. In 1990-1, all those pupils who were excluded for a fixed term

returned to the excluding school (76 exclusions in total). However, in the

academic year 1991-2, of the 123 fixed term exclusions:

- 2 pupils transferred to other mainstream schools

- 3 pupils returned to school with extra support

- 2 pupils began to have their needs assessed

- 1 exclusion was converted to indefinite status

- 115 exclusions resulted in a return to the excluding school.

The vast majority of permanent and indefinite exclusions had exclusion

conferences held by the LEA in order to discern the appropriate way forward

within the specific set of circumstances. Where a conference was not called, a

variety of reasons was put forward by the LEA, including factors such as the

proximity of the pupil to leaving school; the pupil being readmitted after an

internal case conference at the school; the pupil going directly to an authority

provision or for home tuition; the pupil being transferred to secure

accommodation; the abandonment of the exclusion; the headteacher finding

another school for the pupil; or when a case conference had been recently

held to consider a previous exclusion.

It was common practice within the LEA in indefinite exclusion conferences

when altering the status to permanent with all parties present to hold the

permanent exclusion conference consecutively so saving the need to convene

at a later date. This happened on 6 occasions in 1990-1 and on 15 occasions

in 1991-2.

The proportion of permanent exclusions upheld by the authority was not

significantly different over the two years studied. In 1990-1, the authority

upheld 36.4% of permanent exclusions, whilst in 1991-2 the figure was

37.6%. The Elton Report (DES, 1989) states:

> Although we do not recommend any immediate changes to the law, we
> remain deeply concerned at the possible damage that could be done to
> a school by the ill-advised insistence on readmission of a permanently
> excluded pupil against the wishes of the headteacher and governors
> (pp. 202 - 3)

Alternative Education Provision

The local educational authority provides an EBD school for boys aged 7 - 16, whose needs cannot be met within the mainstream. It provides boarding facilities on weekdays, the boys returning home at weekends and holidays, plus an increasing number of day places.

As a result of either the 1981 Statementing Procedures or exclusion case conference recommendations, in 1990-1, six new pupils were placed in this LEA resource and 4 pupils were placed on the waiting list. In 1991-2 one pupil was placed, with 6 additional pupils placed on the waiting list. By the end of the Spring term of 1992, this resource was vastly over subscribed, with a waiting list which gave the boys on it only a slim chance of gaining a place at the school; i.e. the school was full and boys were given places only as others left. This contributes to the length of time pupils were out of school as the chances of obtaining alternative interim education provision were reduced by being on the waiting list for the school. There is no corresponding provision for girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

During the period of the study there were approximately 50 pupils receiving home tuition for 2 hours daily. This was originally intended for those pupils who had a spell out of school due to medical reasons but almost half the

pupils receiving home tuition do so because they were excluded from school or have severe behaviour difficulties. For instance, of the pupils excluded indefinitely or permanently during 1991-2, 19 received home tuition after being excluded, with four on the waiting list.

There was a slight increase over the period of the study in the number of pupils offered places at the off-site Education Unit. The Education Unit is situated on a Social Services site which was heralded as a breakthrough when it was opened in 1979 as there were a number of different types of placements for children who were then able to be educated on site in the Education Unit which was staffed by the Education Department. The Education Unit currently caters for pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their last year of schooling. The Education Unit was originally established to cater for those pupils who were in care and who were being assessed by the day and residential units which are on the same site. It has subsequently reduced its age range to year 11 pupils as the introduction of the Children Act reduced demand from clients on the site. Referrals are taken from the Education Welfare Service, the Schools' Psychological Service, schools, and the LEA. In total during 1991-2, 14 excluded pupils were offered a place or were on the waiting list at the Education Unit.

See **table 7** for comparisons in the outcomes of exclusions between 1990-

1991 and 1991-1992. Outcomes are expressed in terms of the number of

excluded pupils, not by the number of exclusions.

1990-1991	Indefinite	Permanent
Returned to similar	27	12
Transferred to LEA special	2	7
Transferred to out of district special	0	0
Home tuition	5	9
LEA Education Unit	1	1
Nothing	2	6
TOTAL	37	35
1991-1992		
Returned to similar	32	15
Transferred to LEA special	0	1
Transferred to out of district special	0	0
Home tuition	6	13
LEA Education Unit	3	3
Nothing	17	20
TOTAL	58	52

Table 7: The Outcomes of Exclusions Between 1990-91 and 1991-92

There is a link between **table 7** and **figure 16**. The category 'nothing' on

table 7 includes time spent on waiting lists. This is because when pupils are

placed on waiting lists they are unable to access any kind of education.

However, the time spent out of school in **figure 16** includes the waiting time

on lists, as for the local educational authority this constitutes an acceptable

outcome to an exclusion.

Local Educational Authority Pilot Project for Excluded Youngsters

The LEA introduced a pilot project for youngsters in years 9-11 in 1991, in order to provide an interim form of education for those pupils who were excluded from mainstream school, thereby beginning to address the issue of time spent out of the education system. Its initial aims were as follows:

- To look at ways of providing out of school support to young people whose behaviour is severely disrupting the normal teaching situation.

- To offer a range of positive relationship-building experiences.

- To offer coping skills which will enable reintegration into the mainstream situation.

- To offer situations which will help the young people to examine their own attitudes and values.

- To support young people in the transition back to mainstream education.

- To provide a positive educational environment.

This provision is evolving as circumstances change and at the time of the data collection provided short-term full-time education for around 16 youngsters. The current situation is that the project became a Pupil Referral Unit catering

for increasing numbers of youngsters placed under the umbrella of the Pupil

Referral Service (see chapter 7).

Reasons for Exclusions

The National Union of Teachers (1992) list five reasons for pupil Exclusions.

In order of priority these are: disruptive/negative attitude to school (including

verbal abuse, defiance, bad language, insolence and refusal to obey

instructions); assaults/bullying; pilfering; malicious damage; absconding from

school/poor attendance. This roughly corresponds to my research which

indicates the following reasons for exclusion (not in priority order):

- Physical abuse, including assault on children, teachers and other adults.

- Verbal abuse, including insolence, swearing, disobedience etc. to staff;

    also abusive language to other pupils.

- Disruption, including disruption in lessons, refusal to accept punishments

    given as a result of poor behaviour, breaking contracts and other general

    poor behaviour which disrupts the smooth running of schools.

- Criminal; mainly falling into 3 categories: drug-related activities,

    vandalism and theft.

- Truancy, plus other attendance problems including absconding.

Information was taken from Special Services records and not directly from Exclusion 1 forms; thus there may be some bias inbuilt into this information. The categories for exclusions were not mutually exclusive as often more than one reason was given for the exclusion. Where an indefinite exclusion was converted to permanent status, the reasons for exclusion were counted only once. There was no indication of the frequency of the incidents which led to the exclusion. See **figure 15** for details of the academic year 1991-2.
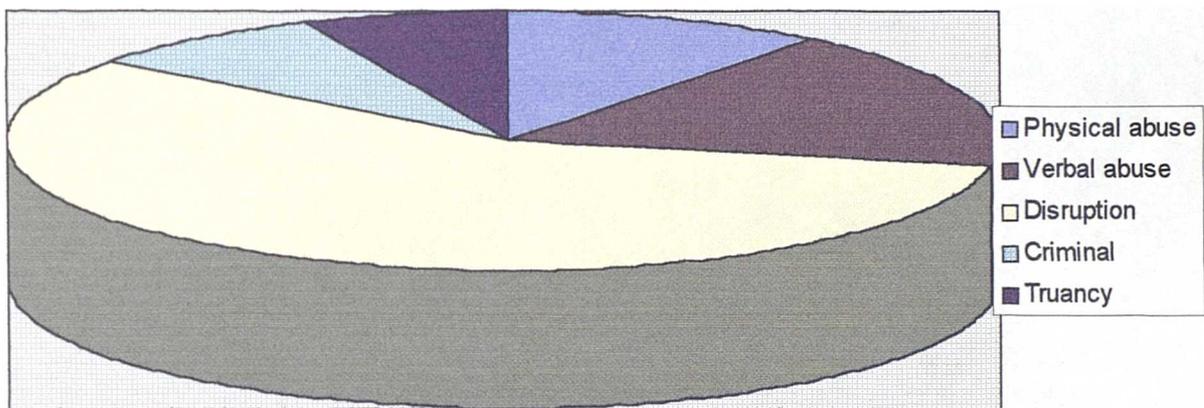
Figure 15: Reasons for Exclusion 1991-92

From the evidence obtainable it seems that specific reasons for the exclusion of individual pupils did not alter significantly over the two year period; it would appear that the underlying trend for the increasing numbers of exclusions must lie within a context-related rather than a child-related

rationale. ACE (1992) found that the highest proportion of permanent

exclusions reported to them involved children with special educational needs,

and concluded:

> With increasing pressure on decreasing resources, schools may find it
> more expedient to regard a child as naughty rather than needy. (p. 9)

Length of time out of School

For the purposes of this study, the length of time out of school began when

the pupil was excluded and ended with a return to school. For a number of the

pupils listed a return to school had not been effected by the time the annual

report was written, so the length of time spent out of school was calculated up

to the dates that the reports were written (i.e. November 1991 and October

1992 respectively).

Estimates of dates are as accurate as feasible, but where an exact date for

reinstatement to school was unobtainable, the date of the exclusion

conference has been taken as the date of re-entry. Holiday periods are

included in the length of time out of school. The length of time is calculated

for each of the pupils who were indefinitely or permanently excluded during

the academic year (as opposed to the time taken for each exclusion).
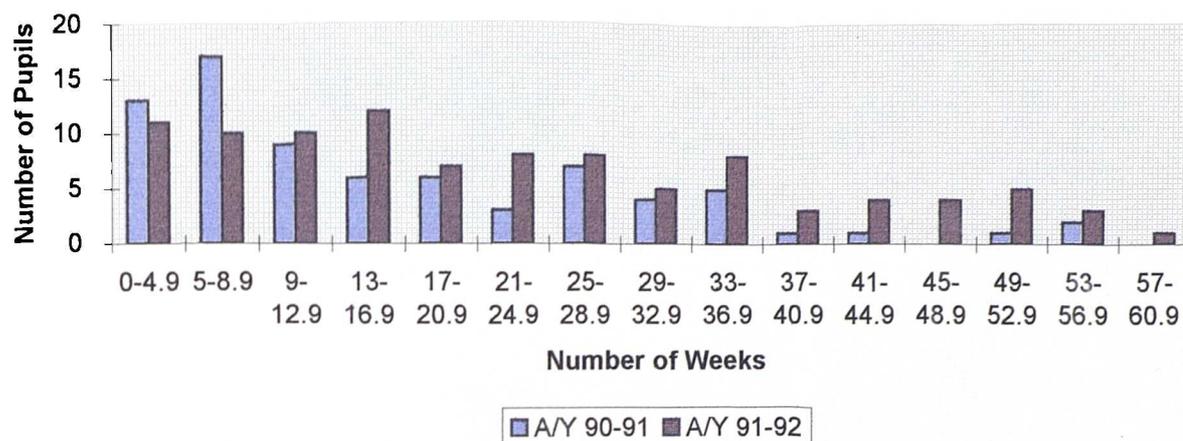
Figure 16: Time Spent out of School: Indefinite and Permanent Exclusions 1990-92

Figure 16 shows a comparison between academic years 1990-1991 and

1991-1992. The length of time pupils have spent out of school has increased

during 1991-1992. The average times taken for a return to school are as

follows:

1990/91 = 16.5 weeks (correct at 14/11/91)

1991/92 = 23.2 weeks (correct at 16/10/92)

The reasons for delays to readmissions can usefully be described for purposes

of clarity as parent-focused, school-focused and LEA focused deferments. In

practice all three are often intertwined, sometimes becoming inseparable.

Note also that the 58% increase in exclusions from academic year 1990-1991

to academic year 1991-1992 has brought undue pressure to bear on LEA

exclusion mechanisms.

Time taken between Exclusion and Exclusion Conference

The average time taken for an excluded pupil to have an exclusion case conference organised increased to 8.7 weeks in 1991-2 from 5 weeks in 1990/91. The time scale ranges from 1.7 weeks to a maximum wait of 33 weeks. The extra time taken for exclusion case conferences to be arranged is mainly due to the rise in the numbers but also to delays caused by schools and by parents.

In the cases where no exclusion conference took place, the time was measured between the pupil being excluded and appropriate provision being organised or the pupil leaving school.

Increasing numbers of pupils on long term indefinite or permanent exclusions drifted out of education; particularly those pupils aged 14 and over. Such pupils are often difficult to place in other mainstream schools; having begun courses leading to GCSE examinations; being accommodated by Social Services; requiring alternative provision which is not available; or refusing placements which are offered. Some of these factors are illustrated in the case examples below:

John was excluded indefinitely from his middle school because of truancy and refusal to work in lessons. At his case conference 5 weeks later, the status of

the exclusion was altered to permanent. The decision of the conference was that John and his mother should choose another school. The middle school which was chosen refused to admit John even though there were vacancies, finally admitting him 20 weeks later. Three weeks after admission John was indefinitely excluded for headbutting another pupil. At his exclusion case conference, 3 weeks after he was excluded from the second middle school, again the status was altered to permanent. The LEA was not empowered to direct reinstatement as it was a church aided school so the boy was given home tuition. At transfer to secondary schooling, the high school refused to admit John because of his exclusion record. Eventually he was readmitted on a part-time basis after October half term, initially with his home tutor. From John's original exclusion date to his entry to high school a total of 57 weeks elapsed.

Jack was excluded permanently aged 15 in October for disruption in lessons and serious sexual comments to a teacher. One month later at his exclusion case conference, the LEA agreed to look at resourcing and the school agreed to reinstate the pupil. In May, Jack was permanently excluded again from the school, and 3 weeks later the exclusion conference upheld the permanent exclusion. Jack was subsequently offered a place at an authority unit, which his mum refused. The consequence of this was that Jack reached school

leaving age the following spring, almost two years later, whilst waiting for home tuition to begin.

Mark was excluded from his high school in February 1992 for non-attendance, disobedience, and trouble out of school. He was admitted to a pilot project for excluded pupils in November 1992, and after Christmas transferred to a placement at another unit where he finished his education. The exclusion conference was held at the beginning of June.

Referrals to the Schools' Psychological Service

Given below (table 8) are details of the pattern of referrals for the 99 pupils excluded indefinitely/permanently during the academic year 1991-1992. The pattern for the previous year was similar. The categories within table 8 are mutually exclusive (so, for instance, a pupil listed as being referred by the excluding school will not appear as being referred by the previous school, even though this is a possibility). It is clear that almost 60% of the pupils who were permanently or indefinitely excluded during 1991-92 were known to the Schools' Psychological Service. Coupled with the knowledge about which pupils had previous exclusions, it may be possible for schools to be able to pinpoint more accurately which pupils are in danger of being permanently

22.2% had been referred by the excluding school;

26.3% had been referred by the previous school;

5.0% had been referred at some time but the case was closed at the

time of the exclusion;

7.1% were known to SPS through discussions with the school;

39.4% were not known to SPS at the time of exclusion.

Table 8: Referrals to the Schools' Psychological Service for Pupils Excluded Indefinitely or Permanently During 1991-92

excluded, and therefore to be more proactive in their strategies for prevention

of exclusion.

All pupils excluded from a special school (11 pupils), were referred to SPS by

their previous school, and are all open cases as these children have a

statement of special educational needs.

Referrals to the Education Welfare Service

Table 9 gives details of referrals of indefinitely and permanently excluded

pupils to the Education Welfare Service for the academic years 1990-1991

and 1991-1992.

	Case Open	Case Closed	Not Known	No Info.
1990-1991				
High Schools	11.6%	7.2%	33.3%	14.5%
Middle Schools	0%	1.5%	14.5%	1.5%
First, J & I	0%	2.9%	1.5%	7.2%
Special	0%	0%	4.3%	0%
TOTAL	**11.6%**	**11.6%**	**53.6%**	**23.2%**
1991-1992				
High Schools	8.1%	12.1%	48.5%	5.0%
Middle Schools	6.1%	0%	6.1%	0%
First, J & I	2.0%	0%	3.0%	0%
Special	0%	2.0%	7.1%	0%
TOTAL	**16.2%**	**14.1%**	**64.7%**	**5.0%**

Table 9: Education Welfare Service Referrals for 1990-91 and 1991-92

The information for the academic year 1990-1991 was quite difficult to obtain as many of the pupils involved had reached school leaving age by the time the data was collected. So, for approximately a quarter of the pupils indefinitely or permanently excluded during this academic year, no information was available.

Taking this into account, it would appear that the total proportion of excluded pupils who had been referred to the Education Welfare Service at some time during their education is around 25 - 30%. As around two thirds of the excluded population are not known to the Education Welfare Service, this would tend to reinforce the argument of Kinder et al. (1995) that exclusion is the result of one type of disaffected behaviour, and that truancy is the result of

a different type of disaffected behaviour. It may also be the case that some

schools do exclude pupils who persistently truant, since these pupils will

adversely affect the school attendance figures.

Pattern of Exclusions from High Schools

The high schools were chosen for more detailed analysis because of the high

proportion of exclusions in this age range.

The pattern of exclusion for each High School over the academic year 1991-

92 is shown in **Figure 17.**
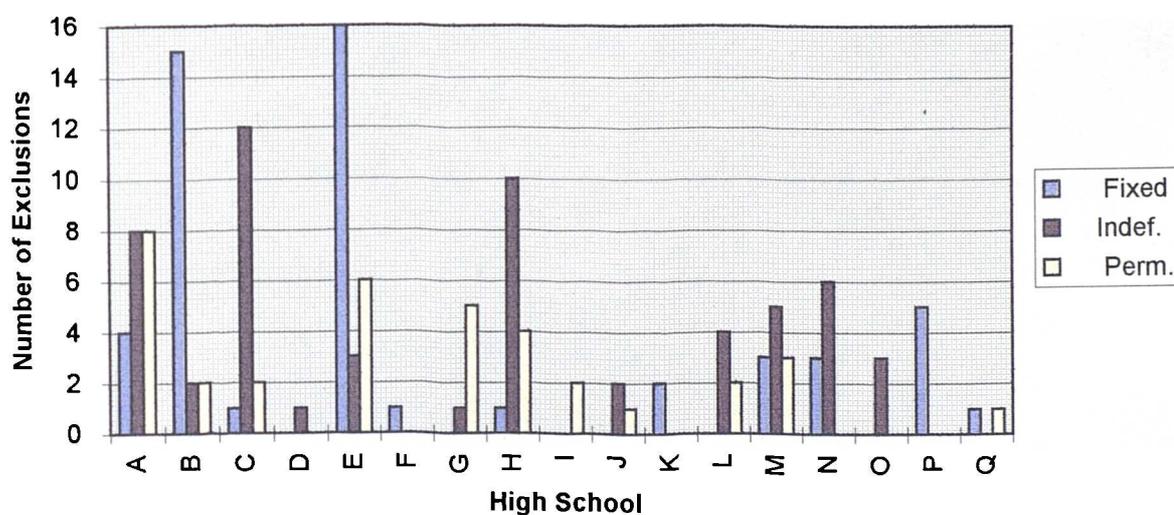
Figure 17: High School Exclusions 1991-92

It can be seen from this graph that a small number of schools are responsible

for a large proportion of the exclusions (see Galloway et al., 1985; McManus,

1989). Schools A, C and H have larger numbers of indefinite and permanent

exclusions. Schools C, H and M show similar patterns of a small number of

fixed term and permanent exclusions with a high proportion of indefinite

exclusions. This kind of pattern is indicative of a single or combination of the

following factors:

- the use of indefinite exclusion as a route to accessing other resources;

- the use of indefinite exclusion as a precursor to permanent exclusion;

- the use of illegal fixed term exclusions which would not be registered on

  the database;

- the use of indefinite exclusion to impose conditions for the return of the

  pupil;

- to involve parents in the process, where there has been a failure to bring

  the pupil back into school at the end of a fixed term exclusion.

Schools B and E notify a high number of fixed term exclusions with relatively

few indefinite and permanent exclusions. This is the kind of pattern to be

expected if schools are using an intensification of procedures.

The following schools have low exclusion rates (i.e. 5 exclusions or less in

total) for the academic year (1991-2): D, F, I, J, K, O, P and Q.

Two schools have not excluded at all during this academic year.

Five schools display a relatively high proportion of indefinite and permanent

exclusions with fewer fixed term exclusions (C, H, L, M, N), that is, an

inverted exclusions profile. This kind of profile may be indicative of a large

number of unofficial exclusions, unless the school has given a large number of

pupils a fixed term exclusion which is less than the five days total per term

thus does not need to register the exclusions with the local educational

authority. The alternative is that the school is excluding a student for the first

time indefinitely or permanently.

High School Exclusions Over a Six Year Period

Figure 18 shows the total number of exclusions over a 6 year period

beginning in September 1986. However, it must be appreciated that this data

is very crude as:

- it takes no account of the type of exclusions;

- from September 1990 data was collected in a uniform fashion but there is

   no guarantee that the methods used were exactly the same prior to this

   period.
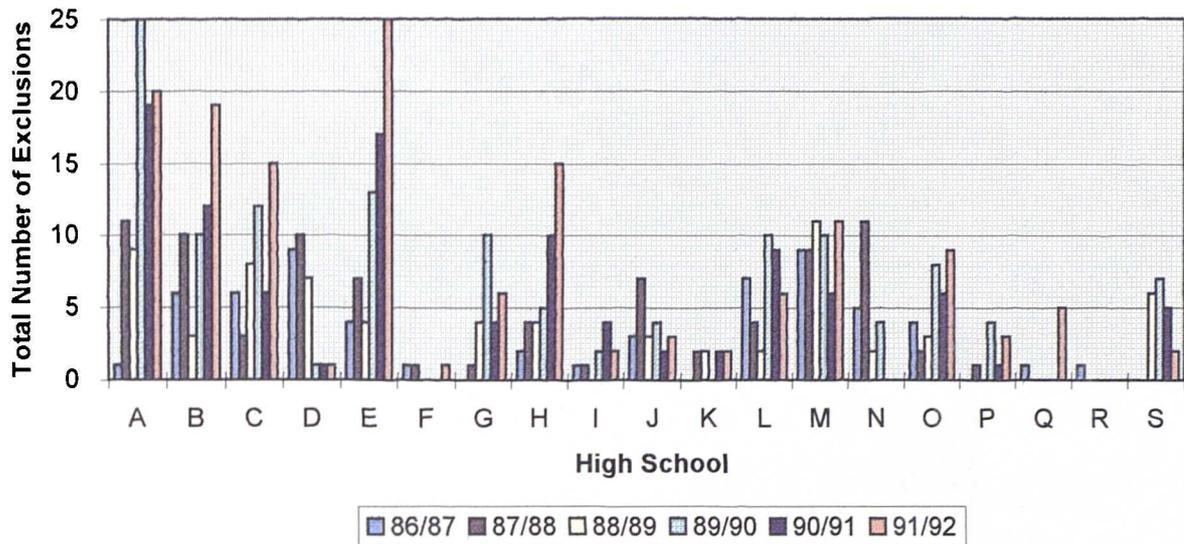
Figure 18: The Exclusion Rate for High Schools over a Six-year Period (September 1986- July 1992)

The overall patterns of exclusion for each school are similar to those in **figure 17** so that a few schools are responsible for producing a large number of exclusions. Even when catchment area is taken into consideration, these graphs indicate that exclusion is a context-related feature of the education system rather than being purely student-centred.

What is greatly concerning as it is hidden within the figures indicating that the exclusion has been resolved, is the waiting time between the various stages of the exclusion process; the time taken between the exclusion and the exclusion conference or the LEA decision; between the decision and the pupil returning to full-time education. The local educational authority's response in dealing with exclusions mirrors what is happening in other parts of the country as

schools feel increased pressure to exclude youngsters. When the pressure to

exclude is exerted, the children who are most at risk of exclusion are the most

vulnerable sections of society. Sometimes young people are out of the

education system for a period of months or years. What then is their chance

of remaining successfully in a system which has ignored their needs for so

long?

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Chapter 6

School Responses to Exclusion

Introduction

The school responses to exclusion can be categorised into two main areas:

policy and practice. The area concentrating upon policy is represented by the

analysis of data presented by the senior staff interviews; the practice by the

analysis of subsequent interviews with Special Educational Needs Co-

ordinators or pastoral staff.

In order to gain a more rounded picture of the exclusion scenario within the

LEA it was necessary to access the views of the headteachers and deputy

heads who were responsible for the policy making processes which influence

the ethos of the school and therefore the climate in which exclusions were

initiated. There have been many studies which have reflected on the rates at

which various schools exclude pupils. As the Elton Report (DES, 1989)

states:

> Researchers have noted quite large variations in the rates at which
> different schools exclude pupils which cannot be explained by the
> nature of their catchment areas. (p. 190)

The report continues:

> exclusion rates could be reduced in some schools by reorganising their internal referral systems. (p. 191)

Seven headteachers and three deputy heads were interviewed in order to gain

a picture of schools' responses to children who are difficult and disruptive,

particularly in order to identify:

a) the most difficult types of behaviour exhibited within the schools;

b) the internal school systems for dealing with disruptive and difficult

children;

c) school procedures for dealing with exclusions;

d) the usefulness of the LEA provision.

The initial letter which went to the headteachers of the schools involved

outlined the above points as areas which the interview would cover, also

highlighting the importance of a follow-up visit to talk to other members of

staff about individual pupil case studies in order to match theoretical stance

with practical outcomes.

Types of Behaviour Exhibited

The types of behaviour exhibited by the most difficult children within the

schools' populations as identified by the senior staff unsurprisingly fell into

the same categories as the exclusion data collected from the central LEA offices and were as follows:

- Physical abuse, including aggression towards other pupils and general physical violence;

- Verbal abuse, usually directed at staff;

- Disruption, including disruption in lessons, defiance, refusal to work;

- Criminal, including substance abuse, damage to property, stealing;

- Truancy, plus other attendance problems such as absconding.

That the same categories were included indicates that the possible bias outlined in chapter 5 from taking information from Special Services rather than direct from the exclusion forms should be minimal. In terms of frequency of behaviours, disruption was the most frequently reported, followed by physical abuse and criminal damage, with verbal abuse and truancy related incidents being reported the least number of occasions.

The types of behaviour exhibited by the case study children could be categorised into two main groupings; those behaviours which were overtly disruptive either of individual lessons or of the system in general, and those which were a result of relationship difficulties.

Overtly disruptive acts included throwing things in lessons, refusal to do as asked, interrupting, attention seeking behaviour, criminal behaviour including stealing, substance abuse, carrying an offensive weapon and bad language. The seriousness of some of the behaviours exhibited is indicated by one example. A boy had recorded on his file over 45 serious incidents in a 2 year period, with various members of staff including disruption of lessons by throwing things around the room, arguing with the teacher, damage to a tap in science, attacking a pupil, disruption of other people's lessons and of an assembly, and carrying a knife.

Relationship difficulties include violence towards other pupils (and in two cases abuse against self), aggression towards staff, bullying, social difficulties and lying.

Ten out of the nineteen children had exhibited very challenging behaviour since their entry to the school (at either 11 or 13 years of age), with seven children having exhibited such behaviour for a much longer time, either since their middle or first schools. One pupil had been difficult for only a year, whilst the teacher of one pupil was not sure of when the poor behaviour began. However, one could not use this information as a method of predicting pupils likely to be excluded, as for every child exhibiting such behaviour who is excluded, there are many more with similar profiles who manage to

complete their school careers without a history of exclusion. As Blyth and

Milner (1996a) comment:

> The research evidence indicates that those who are at disproportionate
> risk of exclusion are: secondary school-age pupils, boys (especially
> Afro-Caribbean boys); pupils with Special Educational Needs; and
> children and young people in local authority care. (p. 5)

A type of behaviour which was identified through the case conference data

but which has not really been put forward within the literature is that of

'exclusion behaviour' where the student actively seeks to become excluded.

This type of behaviour was exhibited by both girls and boys, particularly

when the pupil had not been identified as having Special Educational Needs

but had been underachieving for some time in school. Such students had a

'plan' and a knowledge of the exclusion process; it appeared from the way in

which they communicated that they had researched what the options were,

attended the case conference and stated what they wanted to happen as an

outcome. One boy said at his case conference, when discussing possible

outcomes:

> I don't want to go to another school because it will be the same as this
> school.... Everyone else who has been excluded from (name of school)
> has home tuition.

A girl described as being 'above average intelligence' by the school made the

same request at her case conference. The exclusion of such pupils is a

complex business, as not only is the school placing the locus of control with the pupils by excluding them, the place of education is marginalised and devalued by the exclusion. Both these pupils had alternative agendas in requesting home tuition. It was seen as a 'soft option' which would allow the pupil to continue with a lifestyle which did not include school. In the case of the boy, it would allow him to continue with the part-time job which he had obtained. The girl was associating with known criminals and was being looked after. The reason for her exclusion became apparent to the local educational authority officer at the meeting:

> Sharon has not been a problem throughout her school career, but problems have arisen when problems at home have occurred.

Another girl had a similar profile. The school commented:

> No referral on educational grounds. Her school report states that she has the talent and ability to work hard. Her attendance and punctuality are poor, but she has average ability and upwards. (head of lower school)

The police representative said of her:

> Anne heads the list of persistent juvenile offenders in (the area). She belongs to the worst family that I have come across. She is certainly the worst girl I have come across. She needs a secure placement but is not old enough. There is a suspicion of child abuse. There is something there which is good but her family has done her harm.

Exclusion Routes

There were two usual routes by which the seniority of staff increased as the seriousness of the behaviour increased and those were the 'pastoral' route via the form tutor and head of year; and the 'academic' route via faculty or department heads. Often these two routes were running side by side in the same school as outlined by McManus (1987, p.265). Additional facilities were identified in most schools. These included three schools which had an 'on call' system whereby senior members of staff were on duty in order to give support to subject teachers and deal with a developing situation promptly. This was the only support which was identified specifically to support teachers rather than the pupils. Four schools identified referral procedures which resulted in extra support being made available for the individual pupil such as that provided by an on-site unit, whilst seven senior staff specified preventative measures such as screening, developing links with feeder schools and the use of journals.

The referral route which a child takes has been identified as a significant factor in the number of exclusions which occur within a school. McManus (1990) identified one feature of high excluding schools as being the manner in which troublesome pupils travelled up the hierarchy. The more slowly a pupil

travels up through the referral route, and the more people who see him or her

on the way up, the less likely that pupil is to be excluded. McManus

comments:

> Schools with higher than expected suspension rates tended to have a
> rapid referral system where even the head of department or head of
> year might be left out of decision making. (p.22)

He goes on to suggest a possible reason for this phenomenon:

> these senior staff sometimes felt overwhelmed by a seemingly ever-
> rising tide of disorder and disruption. Delegation, or sharing, might
> have lifted their burden and reduced the number of pupils being
> rejected by their schools. (p.22)

The importance of tutors was identified within my data:

> We place individual responsibility low down, we don't have a system
> ... whereby a youngster reaches the end of the line too quickly; there
> must be a series of channels... There is a massive involvement of tutors
> on the way... Teachers with difficulties will be talking to tutors as well
> as their faculty heads and faculty heads will be talking to tutors. The
> central role of the tutors is important. It doesn't happen as well as we
> all would like it to happen, but generally speaking it operates pretty
> well. I have had a difference with a youngster this morning... I saw the
> tutor first of all and it never entered my head to see the (pastoral) head
> until I had seen the tutor. (Deputy Headteacher)

Measures for dealing with difficult behaviour within the sample schools fell

into two categories: preventative, and reactive measures. Preventative

measures included screening processes, links with feeder schools, staff

inservice training and the use of merits. Reactive measures included referral

for extra support, the use of an 'on call' system, daily report, counselling,

isolation, detentions and the calling of parents into school to discuss difficulties.

Exclusion was the only recourse identified by the staff interviewed when the school system proved to be inadequate.

How Many Pupils Exhibit Very Challenging Behaviour?

There was a variety of responses within the data as to how many children exhibit the most difficult behaviour. Some people were able to quantify exact numbers, others gave answers in percentage terms or said that there was a continuum, so the exact number was fluid and likely to change with time. The range encompassed the two extremes of one child per annum through to 10% of the total school population (which in this case was approximately 30 pupils per year group). The figure given did not appear to relate to size of school, or to catchment area. Gray and Richer (1989) acknowledge the difficulties in trying to quantify difficult behaviour:

> Most assessments have determined the numbers of individual pupils whose behaviour has had certain consequences. For example, Galloway *et al.,* (1982) determined the incidence of *suspension from school*, and came up with a figure of 0.001 per cent of the school population. Dawson (1982) on the other hand used the criterion of causing an *'unusually high degree of concern for behavioural reasons'* to the pupil's teachers as his definition, and found a rate of 1.5 per cent of pupils. (p. 1)

They go on to state that the difficulties in defining disruptive behaviour come from the fact that disruption stems from the relationships which exist within a school environment so fluidity therefore also exists over time. However, within their study, they were able to identify an incidence of around 5 per cent from schools in a

> medium size county town in which rates would be expected to be low. This figure is likely to represent the lower end of the incidence range. (p. 2)

The majority of respondents said that they had the capacity to manage most types of behaviour successfully, with the notable exception of physical abuse. This perception by schools may have been an inaccurate one as most pupils are excluded for a variety of reasons other than physical abuse (Elton Report; DES, 1989). An alternative explanation may be that schools retain many more disruptive pupils than they exclude. Four schools picked out specific behaviour which they felt particularly good at handling. These were verbal abuse, aggression, graffiti, and educational problems.

All schools involved a variety of external agencies, through from the Schools' Psychological Service and the Education Welfare Service to the church, probation officers and the specialist child care team. Regular contact was mostly confined to the Schools' Psychological Service and the Education

Welfare Service; the only exceptions to this were when the service was on

site, or, in one case, regular contact was maintained with the In School

Support Scheme which was piloting work within that school.

Typical behaviour which resulted in exclusion again fell into the same

categories as the exclusion data from the LEA, with half the schools

commenting that exclusion was usually the result of a long series of offences.

This finding is supported by Galloway (1982) as in his study of suspended

pupils in Sheffield he states:

>Almost all the pupils (92%) had been in trouble at school prior to their suspension, and 46 per cent were specifically mentioned as having an undesirable influence on other pupils. (p. 210)

There was a very mixed response to the question of what constituted the

current LEA provision for the most difficult pupils. About half the schools

were aware of the Social Services Education Unit, home tutors and the high

school units. One respondent said that he thought that exclusion was a

provision.

Half the schools commented that provision was very weak, and one third said

that it is very poor practice to admit children who are excluded from one

mainstream high school to another. However there is evidence from the study

which suggests that when there was a concerted effort by the receiving school

which resulted in a positive entry to the school rather than giving the pupil a negative message of 'get into trouble and you're out', then successful integration into the school is possible. For instance a boy was excluded from a school with a difficult catchment area to a similar school nearby. The exclusion conference was attended by the headteacher of the school which had been asked to consider taking the boy, who gave firm but positive messages about how the boy would be able to fit into the school, discussing which subjects the boy would like to take and stressing that it would not be a part-time integration but 'straight in'. The boy transferred and finished his schooling without incident. By comparison, another boy who was excluded from a middle school eventually managed to gain entry to another middle school which was an aided school, six months after the case conference. At the exclusion case conference which followed the indefinite exclusion of the pupil three weeks after admission, the headteacher said:

> John was admitted to school against my will. I didn't want him in school, but having admitted him he has had a fair chance.

He later commented:

> I am not interested in having him back in school.

The responses to this question highlight a significant issue in the area of exclusions, that is, the tension between the needs of the LEA to manage

exclusion and the needs of the pupils and schools who are finding it difficult

to live together. The LEA must be seen to be providing education for the

students who are excluded, and one effective method of achieving this is to

"shunt " the pupils from one school to another similar one, thereby slowing

down the exclusion process, keeping the children within the system without

necessarily directly addressing the needs of those pupils. This used to be

fairly well received by schools, who would frequently "exchange" difficult

pupils. However, within the present climate of marketing and LMS there has

been a dramatic alteration in schools' attitudes to receiving pupils who have

been excluded from neighbouring schools. The process of pupils re-entering

the system has thus slowed down markedly as schools refuse to co-operate

with the LEA on this issue.

One headteacher's comments highlighted the growing tension between the

school and the LEA:

> From the school's point of view, and it obviously has general
> implications, the authority lacks a system whereby they can cope with
> those children who are either permanently excluded, or who even if
> retained, are extraordinarily difficult and now they resort to the law and
> say if a child is excluded from one school another head must
> automatically accept them.

Some schools are very proficient in delaying the entry of a child even when

there is spare capacity within the year group. When asked how LEA

provision for the most difficult pupils could be improved, most interviewees

responded in terms of the need for resources, mainly teaching staff or

counsellors. Four schools also identified the need for a central LEA provision,

and three wanted support for individual pupils in order to maintain those

pupils within mainstream schooling. Three people also requested inservice

training. One deputy's comments reflected the general spirit of the remarks

regarding INSET:

> We need greater real INSET, and I don't mean the one day course and
> rubbish like that, I mean actually working alongside specialists.

The case study pupils were pupils which the school identified as exhibiting

the most challenging behaviour at the time of the study. Some staff did not

want to identify the child by name, which meant that it was impossible to

follow up whether there had been a permanent exclusion at any time. All the

pupils whom it was possible to follow up developed a history of either fixed

term or longer term exclusions. At the time of the study, all but four of the

children had a history of exclusions. Two pupils had transferred to other high

schools, three were receiving home tuition, one had gone to a detention centre

for three months, and one was indefinitely excluded. Schools are therefore

very good at predicting which pupils will be eventually excluded.

Strategies Adopted by Schools

Many strategies had been employed within the particular schools in order to attempt to improve behaviour, the most popular of which was contact with parents, closely followed by counselling or discussion time with staff on an individual basis, and the use of contracts. Other strategies included:

- behaviour modification,

- the use of a key worker within school,

- subject reviews,

- time out,

- advice to staff on "handling techniques",

- a modified timetable,

- in-class support,

- rewards and praise for good behaviour,

- the use of book-space for positive and negative comments.

By far the most popular sanction employed was the use of a daily reporting system, as 15 out of the 19 pupils had been on this system at some time. Other sanctions included the use of detentions, isolation, exclusion, exclusion from particular lessons, verbal chastisement, being sent home at lunchtime and being split up from friends.

The usual gamut of external agencies had been involved with these pupils. 16 had been referred to SPS; 11 to the EWS; and 9 had SS involvement. Three children had been referred to the Specialist child care team, with four being referred to School Health, whilst another had been referred to the family GP. One child had also been referred to DASH (the local drug and substance abuse clinic). Seven children were known to the police.

For five of the individuals, the interventions used had little or no success; in nine cases, schools reported short term or limited success. In two cases, in-class support had been successful, and in three, individual attention had proved successful. Such interventions are too expensive to schools to consider using them in all but the most extreme cases. There is a bank of evidence which suggests that there is a two-thirds remission rate for instances of disruptive behaviour (see for instance Clarizio, 1968; Eysenck, 1960; Rachman, 1971; Topping, 1976, 1983). Topping (1983) argues that there therefore needs to be at least a 66% success rate before a strategy can be deemed to be successful. Such an argument misses an important point that the schools in the study were making; that strategies cannot be viewed as a single modus operandi being applied to a homogenous group of people. Rather, the strategies need to be found for each pupil who is in danger of exclusion, as each child is an individual and treating them as part of a group has obviously

not worked, otherwise they would not be in a position where they were being excluded by the school. There are two other implications of the 'spontaneous remission' rate of 66% which Topping (1983) identifies.

> One is that the widespread belief that the most effective way of preventing serious problems is by early intervention and prevention seems to be something of a non-starter. Another is that notions of 'treatment', especially if directed at within-child 'disease' processes, seem to be nonsensical. (p. 12)

It seems apparent that children with behavioural difficulties need a different approach to the traditional early intervention, not least because some pupils' behaviour does not deteriorate until adolescence. Some authors (McManus, 1990; Reid et al., 1987) argue that schools of differing types need to find their own responses to disruptive behaviour:

> some schools do particularly well for low-ability pupils but not for high-ability pupils. (Reid et al., 1987, p. 35)

McManus notes differences in responses in relation to differences in catchment area:

> It may be the case that confrontational strategies are less likely to lead to higher suspension rates in schools with favoured catchments. A policy may be ineffective in some circumstances and effective in others. (p. 35)

Some schools used the exclusion as a final sanction within the structure of the behaviour policy:

Exclusion will be as a result of a mounting number of problems which have been discussed and, dare we say, the threat of exclusion has been used and finally is brought in. (Headteacher)

This use of exclusion is equivalent to the use of corporal punishment where

schools would use the threat of corporal punishment with the occasional

'example' to reinforce the threat. There is some evidence that corporal

punishment is useful as a short-term deterrent, (Walters et al., 1965) but like

exclusion, the same names come up repeatedly, and there is little evidence

that there are any long-term gains (Clegg, 1962; Reynolds and Murgatroyd,

1977; Rutter et al., 1979; Topping, 1983). It has been established (see for

instance Hayden 1997) that those schools which use corporal punishment on

a regular basis also use exclusion on the same basis. Searle (1996) goes on to

call for the abolition of exclusion in the same way that corporal punishment

was abolished:

Of course, the truth is that teachers themselves, when encouraged, are among the most creative of professionals and can always find solutions and creative answers to the most complex problems of school life. The abolition of corporal punishment gave teachers the opportunity to develop skills in alternative approaches and strategies of counselling and community liaison that they had not thought possible hitherto. An end to 'permanent exclusion' (except in the most dire and unavoidable circumstances) would have the same positive effect. (p. 41)

Such an approach would only work if there was a legal responsibility for

schools to educate all the children within the catchment area unless those

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children had Special Educational Needs as defined within a statement which specified an appropriate alternative special provision. The excluding school, or a consortium of schools would then have to bear the full cost of any alternative placement if the pupil was excluded. There would also have to be regular monitoring of the numbers of truanting pupils, as cost implications would drive the problem of exclusion underground with pupils leaving 'through the back or side exits'. It is already been advised that exclusion should be used as 'a last resort' (Department for Education, 1994c) but without enforceable legislation to prevent or control exclusion it is difficult to envisage how schools could be persuaded to reduce exclusion in real terms.

Within-school Tensions

There are instances outlined within the data which suggest that there are occasions when a pupil may be excluded for reasons other than the usual range. One headteacher in particular commented on the use of exclusion to support staff:

> you do get the situation, particularly behavioural problems I think, where there is a level of expectation of support from staff, which can blur... not judgement, but make it difficult to carry out a policy that promotes the best interests of the child, because sometimes there are pressures from staff who are at the end of their tether, on the head(teacher) to go through exclusion procedures.

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The same headteacher goes on to explain the tension that can be felt between

the interests of the child and the educational opportunities that can be

influenced by the teachers who have reached the end of their range of

strategies for coping with difficult behaviour:

> If there is a basis of negotiation you can mend the bridges; if there isn't
> in the... perception of the staff, then in a sense that child virtually has to
> be excluded again and there is an ultimate, if you like, on the number of
> times you can exclude a child. So I am very, very unhappy about
> exclusion procedures because once you have embarked upon them if
> it's not going to work (and dare I say like caning it won't necessarily
> work), then you reach an ultimate situation where a child is excluded
> permanently or indefinitely and ... you are paddling a canoe one way...
> the flexibility to change direction is denied and there is the inevitability
> that (for) some children one can only foresee a permanent exclusion.
> Or the staff, not necessarily being up in arms but unable to see that
> there is a system which will support them, when quite honestly the
> chips are down.

This tension between the needs of the pupils and the needs of the staff is

taken up by Watkins and Wagner (1991):

> It would be contradictory on the part of any pastoral team to pay great
> attention to the needs and position of pupils without also giving
> attention to the needs and position of staff... The feelings, satisfactions
> and aspirations of the staff group are of crucial importance in
> understanding the successes of a school. (p.50)

(see also Gillham, 1984).

There were also a number of comments in the interviews which suggested that the rights of the other pupils to access education had to be held in tension with the needs of the individual child:

> What we would try to do to protect the teaching and the learning... (would be) to remove the youngster obviously and then we have got a range of sanctions that we might bring into operation after we have talked it through with the youngster. (Deputy Headteacher)

Coulby and Harper (1985) make an interesting point concerning this tension between the rights of individuals and those of the majority:

> It is assumed that pupils who are not sent to special classes, units or schools, can only benefit from the exclusion of those who are. Teachers can now get down to the business of engaging pupils with the curriculum, without everything being spoiled by one or two trouble makers. We have suggested that once one head is lopped off the Hydra of disruption, others may spring up to take its place. Nevertheless, the evidence of segregated provision does have an influence on the education of those never sent to it which might not, however, be entirely for the good. At the very least mainstream pupils live their school lives under the overt or covert threat that, if they do not conform to the requirements of teachers, there are other, less congenial institutions to which they can be summarily sent. (p.20)

The argument that once disruptive pupils are removed from the system others move up to take their place is well documented in the literature (see Watkins and Wagner, 1991 for a discussion of pupil roles in classroom groups), and is demonstrated by the fact, that the local educational authority, recognising the growing numbers of pupils with behaviour difficulties has made plans to open a new enlarged facility for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties

and before the school is built it is already full to overflowing. One of the

headteachers in the study commented:

> If you wanted to exclude your worst five or six (pupils) and send them
> some three or four miles away then another five or six will grow into
> the situation and I was unhappy with the fact that, in a sense, there
> wasn't a continuum of support within the school, and it was one
> extreme to another.

If schools choose to segregate pupils with behaviour difficulties, there are

implications for the school and for the education system as a whole. Schools

do not need to adapt to accommodate the range of needs displayed, and

pupils remaining in mainstream do not learn to cope with the full range of

society that they will be presented with on leaving the education system

(Coulby and Harper, 1985).

One headteacher commented on the way some teachers create or exacerbate

difficulties with some pupils in the classroom:

> Some teachers don't reveal the problems as much as they might, but
> we certainly have some problems in some classrooms with lack of
> motivation. In some cases of course it's not just a child, it's an
> inappropriate teacher, style or perhaps the wrong type of expectations.

The amount of 'cohesiveness' within the staff team as a whole has been

identified by writers such as Bird et al. (1980) and Watkins and Wagner

(1991) as being an important factor in controlling the response of teachers in

'working through' presented disaffection:

> This quality of coherence is no doubt built up over a period of time and
> reflects much about a school's practices for working together:
> teamwork perhaps of a cross-curricular nature. It is unlikely to be
> imposed - that would be uniformity or conformity of a superficial
> nature. Its opposite is akin to the difficult school described by
> Lawrence et al. (1984) in which the environment has come to feel
> unstructured, with apparently random irregularities to the programme
> of school life, and with the general instability triggering off incidents
> which themselves perpetuate the instability. This description suggests
> that the feeling of coherence in a school may well be associated with
> another important quality, that of purposefulness. (pp. 52 - 53)

The Role of Parents

Parents of 18 out of the 19 children in the study had some involvement with

school regarding their child's behaviour. Sixteen children had parent(s) into

school for discussion purposes; eight had letters home; and one child's

parent(s) was seen at home by a member of the Schools' Psychological

Service. The important question with regard to the intervention of parents is

whether the parent or carer is effective in supporting the school. Very rarely

are pupils who have supportive parents or carers who work in genuine

partnership with the school excluded. This is understandable as Dowling and

Pound (1985) indicate:

> The central function of both schools and families is the nurture and
> education of children, a common task which should ensure their close

co-operation and mutual support. When a child is developing well, both socially and educationally, this is indeed usually the case. However, when he has social or educational difficulties, is unhappy or disobedient or slow to learn, each side of the school-family partnership can relieve its disappointment and sense of failure by judging the other to have been deficient in its task. (p. 91)

Good home-school liaison with the concomitant benefits to the children has been documented within the literature (Dowling and Pound, 1985; Kaplan, 1971; McGeeney, 1974) as has the observation that effective communication with school declines with transfer to the secondary sector (Schools Council, 1968) so that school appears to be more inaccessible to the parents:

> This perceived distance between the home and school can lead to interactions between parents and school staff, characterised by defensiveness, lack of co-operation and, at times, open aggression and conflict. (Dowling and Pound, 1985, p. 92)

One of the difficulties in working with parents closely is that since parental-school contact decreases on entry to secondary school, parents or carers are not normally asked for their co-operation until there is a problem to be solved. For a summary of the work of writers such as Aponte (1976); Freund and Cardwell, (1977); Hobbs, (1975); Tucker and Dyson (1976), who have all worked on intervention strategies, see Dowling and Pound (1985):

> All of these writers express the common views that: facilitating collaboration between home and school is the mainstay of a successful approach; one should avoid prematurely identifying the child as a patient and elicit a commitment of the family and the school staff to a joint problem solving effort; the joint resources of teachers and parents

should be used to try to find solutions rather than to dig for causes of trouble which can be experienced as blaming or scapegoating. (p. 93)

They go on to comment on the fact that there may be differences in perception between the parents and the school on the nature of the problem but that these negative attitudes are likely to be attributable to differences between the two systems (i.e. the school and the family), rather than to be so intractable as to be irreconcilable. One headteacher gave a comment which was typical of a number of views that a multi-agency support group was necessary for many children with the most difficult behaviour:

> All these problems or 90% of them are family problems and in a sense, it's families who need support and advice rather than individual children.

Effects of Poor Behaviour in School

There were a number of effects of the behaviour of these particular youngsters upon the staff involved with them. These ranged from the difficulties presented by the pupils being too costly in terms of staff time, through to frustration and exasperation because strategies did not appear to be working. The most common effect upon staff was that they were frightened or intimidated by such pupils. Concern was also raised with regard to the safety of other pupils in practical subjects.

The effects of school organisation on behaviour is discussed in Coulby and

Harper (1985) who suggest that:

> even if all the activities of school organisation could be specified, it
> would still need to be acknowledged that a further important variable
> would be the spirit in which these tasks were carried out. A highly
> efficiently organised school in which people communicated in a cynical
> or apathetic way might well generate disruptive behaviour by alienating
> pupils. It is, then, necessary to see school organisation and school
> ethos as being inseparable, despite the unfortunate vagueness of the
> notion of ethos. (p.135)

Ofsted (1996) also comment on the way in which resources are used within

the school is important in either promoting good behaviour or encouraging

poor behaviour:

> eight schools (four high, four low excluders) made use of some form of
> internal exclusion or referral room. Where not monitored, such rooms
> constituted hardly more than a dumping ground for difficult pupils.
> Where such rooms were properly monitored and staffed, as in two low-
> excluding schools, they could be used to diagnose and remedy some, at
> least, of pupils' difficulties. (p. 18)

Disruptive pupils can affect the teaching which takes place within a school:

> Attention-seeking children, in a group, find it easy to get teachers into
> an indecisive mode when they become embroiled in long and fruitless
> discussions or pleadings, in front of the class. (Rogers, 1991, p. 27)

If teachers become involved in such wrangles, they obviously cannot be

teaching as effectively as a teacher whose lessons are not disrupted by poor

behaviour. It is then a matter of time before the disruption of the lesson

becomes a pattern of learned behaviour which it is difficult for the teacher to

escape from. The control of pupil behaviour is a complex matter and it is

hardly surprising that the reactions of teachers can compound the behaviour

rather than reduce it:

> Once pupil misbehaviour has occurred, the teacher's recourse to
> reprimands, punishments and counselling must involve the careful and
> sensitive selection of an appropriate course of action which maximises
> the chance that future misbehaviour will not occur, but at the same time
> attempts to ensure that this course of action does not undermine the
> mutual respect and rapport upon which a sound working relationship
> needs to be based. (Kyriacou, 1986a, p. 177)

When pupil misbehaviour is combined with the associated induction of

teacher stress (Galloway et al., 1982; Kyriacou, 1986b; Kyriacou and

Sutcliffe, 1978; Laslett and Smith, 1984; Pratt, 1978), it becomes apparent

that a spiral of disaffection and stress can become the norm and teachers

spend more time in disciplining pupils and less time teaching them effectively.

Poor pupil behaviour can therefore become cumulative in its effects and

render the school less effective in teaching in general and over time there can

be a serious demoralisation of the teaching staff leading to an 'unhealthy'

school. The Department for Education (1994b) underline the importance of

the school context:

> There is a substantial body of evidence which shows that schools in
> general have a significant effect on children's behaviour. Schools vary

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widely in the extent to which they successfully help children to overcome their difficulties and the extent to which they either create, minimise or exacerbate the levels of disruption or distress associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In short, the school can make the situation better or worse according to how it acts or responds. It may, through appropriate action, be able to keep the difficulty within manageable limits or even prevent it developing in the first place. (p. 8)

The whole school level must be supported by a majority of teachers who are able to be effective in reducing difficult behaviour and promoting appropriate behaviour in the students. McManus (1990) summarises the teacher's role as an interface which falls between the pupil and society:

> Teachers stand on the boundary where pupils' problems and society's contradictions meet: to them falls the task of motivating those who have the skills that will be rewarded and mollifying those who do not. Some of the bad teachers blamed for indiscipline in schools are those who find this task beyond them. (p. 11)

(see Kyriacou (1991) for a discussion of how effective teaching strategies can reduce pupil misbehaviour).

Effects of Poor Behaviour on Other Pupils

The effects on other pupils were categorised in terms of interference such as frightening or intimidation tactics, disrupting others' work, and generally being offensive. Reid (1986) comments on the strength of the peer-group relationships particularly with regard to adolescents:

> The influence of peers and friendship groups on behaviour in schools, inside classrooms and within the local environment should never be

underestimated, especially amongst teenagers who are at a vulnerable age. Sociologists have found that deviance is often associated with the prevailing neighbourhood culture. (p.65).

The needs of such pupils as viewed from the schools' perspective, are

summarised in **figure 19** below. The needs of the pupils as seen by the

schools were taken from the case study schedule in **Appendix 4**. The

categories of social interaction, education and medical needs emerged from

the data and were outlined by the individual teachers. The social interaction

classification included the need to be able to form and maintain ongoing

relationships both with peers and with adults; attention-seeking behaviour

particularly within a classroom situation; the ability to predict possible

consequences of specific behaviours; the competence to handle aggressive

behaviour by others without resorting to physical violence; and the issue of

female rights, both in relation to female members of staff and female pupils.

The needs of the pupils within this category can therefore be summarised in

terms of the development of what would appear to be very embryonic social

skills.

A second major area of concern involved the environment in which successful

access of the curriculum could be ensured. For instance, the suggestions of

small groups and a tightly structured environment would represent a

---
SOCIAL INTERACTION

Relationships (peers/adults)

Adult attention

Consequences of behaviour

Handling aggression

Female rights

EDUCATION

Small groups

Support in basic work

Tightly structured environment

Realise academic potential

MEDICAL

Psychiatric help

Stability

Figure 19: The Needs of the Most Difficult Pupils (Schools' Perspective).

methodology which was completely compatible with the ideas of

underachievement and SEN encompassed within the needs of some pupils to

realise their academic potential or to gain support in basic skills.

Schostak (1991) makes an important distinction between schooling and education:

> Schooling refers to all those processes of control, coercion, and socialisation through which the values, attitudes, behaviour and common knowledge of individuals are moulded to produce shared 'realities'. ...Education, by contrast, provides a critical perspective on the processes of schooling with the object of liberating individual expression and action in the exploration of experience in order to draw out alternative possibilities. (p. 12)

The first two categories of social interaction and education applied to almost all the students involved in the case studies; the third category was limited to a small number of pupils. The division, however, appeared to be a significant one in that it indicated that some intervention outside the scope of educationalists was necessary before the students could make progress, whilst the former two categories reflected that a more context-related, developmental sequential process would be able to meet the individual needs expressed. Indeed, the Social interaction category of needs as expressed by the school (**figure 19**), could alternatively be viewed as the needs of the school and of society rather than as the intrinsic needs of the child; the effects of Schostak's 'schooling' as opposed to education.

This is taken further with the work of Dowling and Osborne (1985) who develop the theme of a systems approach for children experiencing problems and state:

The influence of general systems theory, with its emphasis on context, has infiltrated the thinking in the social sciences.... Likewise, the problems in schools, once fatally attributed to 'bad' or 'mad' children are being seen in the light of the organisation or the system structure in which they occur. (p. 1)

The Department for Education (1994c) state that pupils should be excluded

when allowing the child to remain in school would be seriously detrimental to the education or welfare of the pupil or of others. (p. 3)

The implication of this is that there will be significant disruption to the normal running of the school before it may be deemed necessary to exclude a pupil. A school will therefore need to ensure that the balance of the needs of the individual pupil and the needs of the majority are tipped too far towards the needs of the school as a whole.

Chapter 7

LEA Responses to Exclusion

School/ Local Educational Authority Tensions

Local education authority responses to the rising numbers of excluded pupils

need to be held in tandem with the school responses to exclusion and to the

tensions which exist within the relationship between the local educational

authority and the schools' provision. Traditionally the local educational

authority has had a controlling function particularly in terms of finance; even

the advent of the local management of schools has not ensured the total

independence from the local educational authority which many secondary

schools would welcome (see Richardson, 1993 for an account of the changes

introduced by the Education Acts 1986 and 1988). Pupils with Special

Educational Needs are still supported by the local educational authority

through the statementing process; other pupils who are out of school for

whatever reason are also the legal responsibility of the local educational

authority. Schools and the local educational authority must work together to

support these children, the one not being able to function independently of the

other. However functions are different, the local educational authority giving

a strong steer in terms of overall philosophy and aims for education in addition to the administration functions which it has in terms of admissions for instance. Indeed with the new legislation there are requirements that local educational authorities should take a lead in the philosophical development by having policies for Special Educational Needs, behaviour plans and development plans. The latest requirement within the White Paper 'Excellence in Schools' (DFEE, 1997a) is for a literacy development plan. So there are beginning to be clear criteria and targets to be met by local education authorities. Therefore accountability and communication become more of a focus for local education authorities. In many of the schools within the study there were perceptions expressed by some that the central local educational authority personnel lacked any real knowledge about how schools function and how children are educated. For instance, one deputy headteacher commented at length about a document which came from the local educational authority entitled ' Guidelines on the Management of Disruptive Behaviour':

> I'm sorry, and I'm not being cynical or critical, but I didn't believe it because really, and I don't know who put it together but do people really feel that in the pressure of running day to day schools that they are able to do the following... 'when difficult behaviour occurs, the school should monitor a number of key aspects of the problem including the type of behaviour, where and when it occurs, with whom it occurs, how often it occurs, what happened before and what

happened after the incident.' They have got to be joking....It is of course the type of suggestion that one would find in many text books that are out, but I often wonder if people who write text books have ever been in school and I did not find, quite frankly, that particular document particularly helpful.

Some schools expressed a lack of faith in the authority as when children were

(eventually) statemented the funding was not as much as was wanted:

> seemingly some people would have said that the authority are opposed to statementing youngsters etc., in a sense led to many staff saying, 'Well what's the point of this, we don't seem to get much funding.' I obviously see it in a different light, in that they didn't actually give us physical resources but they were a useful mechanism for sounding out etc. (Deputy Headteacher).

Fairness by the local educational authority seemed to be an issue not only in

terms of funding through the statementing process but of access to the

provision which the authority funded centrally, particularly in terms of the

unit provision within the local educational authority, as only five schools had

behaviour units. Most of the deputies or headteachers interviewed commented

on the lack of financial support from the local educational authority:

> the general level of funding of schools historically has been abysmal in the last decade in (this authority). You are retaining too much centrally. (Headteacher)

The same headteacher (a comment echoed in some form by half of the sample

of senior staff interviewed) goes on to say of provision within the local

educational authority for the most difficult pupils:

I think it's very weak. I think there is a lack of back-up.

There is a dichotomy here in that schools (particularly in the secondary

sector) want to have the money delegated but still want the local educational

authority to maintain central services. Quite a lot of those interviewed

appeared to think that the local educational authority is driven by financial

motives, in contrast to the schools which are driven by what is best for the

child:

> they (the local educational authority) have no intention of working to a
> child's behavioural need, they work on the monies available to them
> and try to distribute those or use them as effectively as possible but as
> far as an education service goes, from the point of view of the children,
> it's totally the wrong end. (Headteacher)

The same headteacher demonstrates that actually things are not so simple by

the way in which he is treating a particular young person:

> From the school's point of view and it obviously has general
> implications, the authority lacks a system whereby they can cope with
> those children who are either permanently excluded or who are even if
> retained extraordinarily difficult and now they resort to the law and say
> if a child is excluded from one school, another head must automatically
> accept them. I'm in the process of resisting that at the moment and
> unfortunately a child is being used if you like as a ping-pong ball...

One third of the senior staff interviewed expressed the opinion that pupils

who are excluded from one high school should not be admitted to another

high school, with the implication therefore that excluded pupils should be

given special provision. The tensions which exist between the local

educational authority and the schools' section are tensions which exist in my

experience within any local educational authority and are a factor in the

education of pupils with very difficult behaviour, whether those children have

Special Educational Needs or whether they are going through a difficult and

turbulent adolescence period. Schools and local education authorities have

traditionally been in a dependency culture which has been loosened by the

implementation of LMS and the market economy. Hayden (1997) refers to a

'quasi-market economy' for the reason that education can never really work

as a free economy when services are free and there are no profits. The idea of

a quasi-market is particularly relevant in describing the relationship between

the local educational authority and the schools as the ties can never be

completely broken between them and there will always be some

interdependency between them; indeed the White Paper 'Excellence in

Schools' (DFEE, 1997a) appears to indicate a renewed strengthening of these

bonds. Thomas (1992) argues for the complete withdrawal of local

educational authorities from the education of children with Special

Educational Needs on the grounds that they hinder the movement towards

integration. However, his arguments are difficult to sustain in the present

climate; the integration of pupils with Special Educational Needs and

education in mainstream for youngsters displaying difficult and challenging

behaviour may be an ideal, but most schools are asking for more support from

local education authorities, not less. For example one headteacher in the study

asked for provision:

> centrally for youngsters who are anti-school with a flexible timetable
> and a team who are trained in dealing with such children and who can
> offer support to parents.

Some authors have put forward evidence that the weakening relationship

between the local educational authority and the schools' sector has been a

factor which has increased the number of pupils out of school (BBC, 1993;

Blyth and Milner, 1993; Bridges, 1994; Stirling, 1992a, 1992b). SHA (1992)

comment:

> The rate of admission of excluded pupils [to other schools] declines
> steeply as ties with local education authorities become weaker (p. 4),
> [quoted in Blyth and Milner, 1996a, p. 13].

The ability of local education authorities to introduce new services and

initiatives is partly dependent upon the working relationship with schools.

Brodie and Berridge (1996) found a similar issue within their work:

> The issue of the relationship between the school and the local
> educational authority is especially important in view of the increased
> independence of the school from the local educational authority.
> Management of this relationship can be a sensitive matter. Tensions
> can, for example, emerge over the admission to another school of

pupils who have previously been excluded. More generally, it was
reported that schools frequently do not feel supported by local
education authorities in a number of areas. Not only do they consider
that the resources available for dealing with pupils who present
extreme behavioural problems are inadequate, but that exclusion
procedures are unnecessarily complex. Nor is there sufficient
encouragement for the exploration of in-school alternatives to
exclusion. (p. 14)

Like schools, the central budget has become ever-more stretched in a climate

where the rights of the individual have been (rightly) stressed leading to a

statementing rate within the local educational authority in the study of around

3.75% (as opposed to an expected rate of around 2%) (see Mitchell, 1996, for

a discussion of how the local educational authority contributes to the time

which excluded pupils spend out of school). Like other local education

authorities monies have been tied to individual students' needs and therefore

the statementing budget has been uncontrollable (see Copeland et al., 1993,

for a discussion of the rate of change which has been imposed onto local

education authorities even prior to the Code of Practice). Other services

within the council have been cut to pay for the costs of the statements and

many local education authorities are now struggling with the consequences of

individual funding and the implications for the education of other pupils

within the district. The local educational authority within the study chose to

go down the route of consultation and seconded a primary headteacher in

order to direct a period of review within the authority for schools and for the

local education authority. Local education authority initiatives are dependent

upon a number of factors which work together including the development of

more effective provision, changes in central services, GEST (grants for

education and training, now the standards funds) monies from the DFEE and

the numbers of pupils out of school or statemented.

The development of more effective provision implies greater value for money

and therefore a reduction in costs per capita; a more efficient use of the

money which is allocated, rather than an increase in the total spent. It may

therefore result in a poorer level of service as the budget is stretched further

and further. Linked with this factor is the role of central services which is

discussed more fully in Diamond (1993, 1995). In stating the role of central

services more clearly, it may be that the flexibility which is valued so much

by Diamond and others may be lost.

Much of the flexibility which local education authorities possess in terms of

financial support for youngsters is contained within the GEST budgets. These

monies are unreliable as a source of income as their function is not to sustain

the day to day work of the local educational authority but to 'kick-start' or

pump-prime initiatives which the local educational authority may then choose

to support when the funding ceases. Funding is allocated in this way by the

DFEE on an annual basis, with most of the grants being dependent upon the willingness of the local educational authority to fund 40% of the total expenditure of the grant. The functions and conditions of grants and the amounts allocated vary annually so that the response to these grants is only possible on a annual basis.

Analysis of Case Conferences

The system of case conferences for excluded youngsters which was developed initially as a response to the Education Act 1986 and modified with the introduction of the Education Act 1993 formed an important first step in the provision which was ultimately given to excluded youngsters. It was instrumental in deciding whether the youngster should be going down the Special Educational Needs route or whether there were other factors in the child's life which were influencing the behaviour up to and including the period of exclusion. During a two year period, I was able to attend 30% of the exclusion case conferences which were held within the authority. It soon became clear that many of the children and young people who were being excluded had special educational needs. SEN include not only some young people who had been assessed under section 5 of the 1981 Education Act, but also youngsters with emotional and behavioural difficulties or with learning

difficulties which were either mild or moderate plus associated behavioural difficulties. Many of the youngsters were not previously at the Code of Practice stages 4 or 5 (as defined in the 1993 Education Act), but are students who should now be registered within the school based stages 1, 2 or 3 as outlined in the Code of Practice.

An analysis of the case conferences showed that 56 exclusions were represented by 49 children, and of those 49, 33 were considered to have SEN. This represents 67% of the total number of excluded pupils. SEN were defined in terms of:

- those children who already had a statement of SEN;

- those children who were in the process of being assessed under the 1981 Education Act;

- those children for whom the exclusion process triggered the beginning of an assessment;

- those children who had been involved with the Schools' Psychological Service (SPS)/ an outside agency for a significant length of time;

- those children who had been referred to SPS by their school because the school was not meeting their SEN.

It needs to be noted that SPS referrals are made after the initial consultation meeting between the school psychologist and the school: at this meeting, priorities are set and psychologist involvement is negotiated for named individuals before any referral is made.

There are a number of issues surrounding the process of the case conference for excluded pupils. The method for reaching a decision within a case conference is very "ad hoc", depending on factors such as the representation of outside agencies at the meeting, the presence of the student and/or parents, the background knowledge of the people present in terms of the availability of specialist places within the authority, the attitude of the parents and/or student to the provision suggested and the details which the schools put forward to support the exclusion.

There were a number of occasions when one of the significant outside agencies involved could not attend the meeting. Although the LEA representative endeavoured to seek the views of the professional involved, there could of course be no discussion or exploration of alternatives with the student or parents during the duration of the meeting thus possibly limiting the quality of the outcome.

Similarly the presence of the parents and/or student was a great help in achieving a positive outcome from the meeting in terms of the way forward

for the particular individual concerned. The LEA places an emphasis upon co-operation with parents' wishes where possible; therefore the presence of the parents or student at the exclusion case conference could influence the outcome. There was evidence of this happening in around 15% of the case conferences attended.

An extreme example of an exclusion conference being influenced by the student occurred at a middle school where the student was indefinitely excluded. The boy involved was not expected to attend, but in the event, arrived late. The decision had been made to lift the indefinite exclusion in order that 'mum' could return the boy to school quickly. His mother was involved in the decision and the boy was brought into the conference after the decision had been made. As soon as he heard that he was readmitted, he ran out of the room and hit a child who happened to be in the corridor, broke a glass display cabinet and kicked a door on his way out of the school. Therefore the decision had to be altered and the child was permanently excluded. Although this is an extreme example it is quite typical of the kind of influence which the student has on the meeting, hardly surprising since the relationship between the school and the youngster is at breaking point. Indeed, some pupils did not want to be in the particular school or the education system. There was evidence from the conferences attended that

39% of pupils fell into this category. For instance, one boy had previously

expressed a desire to return to school, but changed his mind at the meeting.

The response from the deputy headteacher was:

> We can't readmit because Charles cannot support his original decision
> to return. We are not here to persuade. The offer of a return stands, but
> Charles is not taking advantage of it.

There was evidence from the data that in addition to the 39% of pupils who

disliked the education system, 24% of pupils actively tried to get themselves

excluded by their behaviour. One deputy headteacher commented:

> It seemed like he was deliberately trying to get himself excluded from
> school,

whilst one pupil had been heard to exclaim;

> wouldn't it be good to be excluded and on home tuition!

The desire for home tuition which consists of two hours teaching a day by a

tutor who usually comes to the home was a wish that was expressed by

several of the students. One boy commented:

> Everyone else who has been expelled from .... high school has home
> tuition.

Even though this was not true, the boy clearly had expectations of what

would happen as a consequence of the exclusion and there was some

evidence to suggest that there exists a sub-culture of "excludees" who were

actively seeking the freedom that exclusion would bring:

> This year Adrian has a more deliberately provocative manner; belongs
> to the sub-group who doesn't give a damn: if excluded, then so be it.
> (Deputy Head)

Connected with this sub-culture were the excluded pupils who had also

offended. Most of this group of students had had more opportunity to offend

whilst excluded although there was no evidence that offending had actually

begun because the student was excluded. It was clear that at least 43% of

pupils whose case conferences I attended had offended at some time, with

most of these pupils having repeated offences. A police officer commented of

one girl:

> Anne heads the list of persistent juvenile offenders in (the area)...... She
> is certainly the worst girl I have come across. She needs a secure
> placement but she is not old enough.

Due in some part to the pressure of rising numbers of exclusions within the

LEA there was a lack of updated knowledge about the provision which was

available or appropriate for individual children, plus current information on

the lengths of waiting lists. This led to some "fumbling in the dark" on the

part of the meeting and on some occasions it was difficult to make progress in

the meeting because of this.

The information which was given by the schools in support of their actions in

excluding the pupil varied enormously. Some schools had a thick file which

was summarised, with information about parental involvement or the

strategies which had been used and the success (or otherwise) of those

strategies. Other schools gave a brief verbal description in general terms of

the reason for exclusion, with no written evidence of specific incidents or

strategies and their outcomes, considering that their judgement could not be

questioned or pertinent issues raised within the discussion. In around 25% of

the case conferences observed, the school (sometimes in conjunction with

another party), was particularly influential in the decision reached during the

case conference.

Similarly, there were different attitudes displayed by schools to the purpose

of the exclusion case conference. Some schools used indefinite exclusion in

order to impose conditions upon the pupil's return:

> School want guarantees of:
> a) no disruption
> b) no threat to other pupils (or physical aggression)
> c) the safety of staff is not prejudiced (either actual or threatened)
> d) evidence of parental support
> (Deputy Head)

At another exclusion conference the same teacher said:

The head is adamant that the boy will not further damage the reputation of the school and will not affect other pupils.

This kind of comment is indicative of the tension which exists in the

relationship between the school and the pupil and which is exhibited during

some conferences.

Other schools viewed the exclusion case conference as being an indicator to

the student of the seriousness of the situation, and wanted to use the

conference in order to negotiate with the pupil and parent(s) in order to

ensure a successful return to school:

> As a caring school we would not wish to permanently exclude. (Deputy Head)

> The indefinite exclusion was not to punish David but to give him some help. (Governor)

> School can say, "We can do this, this and this", but Adam must play his part. (Head of upper school)

In such cases the attendance of the parent(s) and/or pupil is particularly

important:

> If the parents/ George had come to the exclusion conference, they had an opportunity to convince the meeting why he should be readmitted. (Headteacher)

The attitude of the school during the meeting was important in setting the tone. If a confrontational attitude was assumed, it was difficult for the meeting to achieve the most positive outcome for the child. Some schools seemed to take a confrontational line as a political move in order to ensure that the CEO representative understood that the relationship had completely broken down and was irretrievable so that there would be less chance of the child being readmitted. Other schools were anxious to show the LEA that everything had been done to keep the child within the school but that the time had come for the child to move on:

> Lewis always feels there is another chance, but things have broken down too many times for another chance to succeed. (Deputy Head)

There was a tendency for schools in particular but also for outside agencies involved to blame the child for the breakdown of the relationship rather than to share the blame:

> Jane is hard-faced; I have no effect on her. (Education Welfare Officer)

> John has great difficulty with authority. (Senior Social Worker)

> When Peter transferred (from middle school) he was using the pastoral system as a refuge because of problems with peer relationships. (Deputy Head)

A number of the youngsters had been involved with substance abuse or in drug-taking (16% in the sample of exclusion conferences attended). Some of these pupils were also involved in selling, and where this was evident the schools took a much firmer line in wishing to permanently exclude the pupil:

> (This is) a clear incidence of what the school cannot tolerate and would affect the credibility of the school with other parents. (Deputy Head)

There was also a tension between the perceived needs of the LEA and those of the school. The school views the "problem" of what to do with permanently excluded pupils as an authority dilemma; the LEA regard most of its resources as being in mainstream schools and therefore see the excluding school as the best provision for the vast majority of excluded children.

There were some objections by schools to the practice by the LEA of moving permanently excluded pupils to another mainstream school:

> Problems with this boy won't go away with the transfer to (another) school as there will be people he knows and who will latch onto him. (Headteacher)

Actually, this boy went on to the other high school and completed his schooling almost without incident.

Some children were excluded for the reasons other than disruptive behaviour.

For instance, one child had been excluded from a high school 'as a last resort

- a cry for help,' said the headteacher, 'it was the quickest way that we could

think of for getting help for this child'. The case conference can be used in

order to initiate statementing procedures, or indeed to persuade parents that

statementing is a good idea and in the interests of their child. One

psychologist commented of one student:

> Educationally his needs cannot be met within the ordinary school.
> Because of his background and patterns of behaviour he has begun
> developing John already had intensive support in a high school so he
> needs formal assessment under the '81 Act.

On occasions, headteachers have also used case conferences to bring

reluctant parents into school. ACE (1992) found that the highest proportion of

permanent exclusions reported to them involved children with SEN, and

Hayden (1997) commented:

> it appeared that the school regarded the child as 'naughty' rather than
> in need of special educational support. (p. 57)

She later argued that:

> many (even the majority?) of these children should be viewed as
> 'needy' rather than 'naughty'. (p. 63)

The length of time between the exclusion and the exclusion case conference

was a cause for concern, particularly if the decision was not taken at the case

conference, or if it involved further waiting for the child for instance on a waiting list for specialist provision (see also Mitchell, 1996). The decision regarding the student's future may not be taken at the case conference if the legal requirements of the exclusion guidelines could not be met, for example if the chair of governors was not present as this would mean that the parents' right to make representation to the governors could not be given. A gap of 6+ weeks between the exclusion and the case conference was typical, with the maximum wait during the study period being 33 weeks. Students could then be waiting for provision for a good number of weeks after the conference, either on a waiting list or whilst trying to enter another mainstream school. Although schools are legally bound to accept students if there are places available, in practice what commonly happens is that the school employs delaying tactics such as giving an appointment which is not necessarily convenient for the student and parents to attend or which is a number of weeks away rather than immediate in the hope that the parents will seek an alternative school. Schools may also enter into "discussion" with the LEA regarding the particular individual, or may request additional resources before accepting the student. By acting in like manner, the schools may delay the instatement of a student for up to six months.

In around 66% of exclusion case conferences observed, the student had some representation by parents or guardians and in 34% the student was also present.

In only 2 case conferences were there no external agencies present; one of these was a permanent exclusion of a student in year 11 for the possession of drugs . This student had no previous involvement with any external agency although the incident was being dealt with by the police. The other exclusion involved a student who was indefinitely excluded and had his exclusion withdrawn at the meeting.

Table 10 shows the "sphere of influence" in terms of decision making during conferences. The assessment of the leading decision maker within the conference necessarily is a highly subjective judgement which needs further explanation. The judgement was made after each case conference by a consideration of the contribution made by each person present and the effect which that contribution had on the final outcome of the conference as reported in the notes of the conference produced by the Chief Education Officer's (CEO) representative. It can be seen from this table that the school leads the decision making process in one quarter of all conferences. "The school" includes the headteacher or headteacher's representative, the governor(s) plus any other staff who were present at the conference.

Typically there was more than one person representing the school, sometimes

as many as four or five. The school are also involved in presenting much of

the documentation supporting the exclusion, so it is not so surprising that they

lead the decision making process in so many instances.

The second most important influence upon the case conference outcome was

where a consensus was reached whereby the majority of contributors agreed

upon a certain course of action which was then implemented.

Agency:	% decisions influenced:
School	25
Consensus	22
CEO representative	20
Student	5
School Psychological Service	4
Education Welfare Service	3
Parent/guardian	3
Social Services	2
Police	1

Table 10: Leading Decision Making in the Exclusion Case Conference

The CEO's representative steered around 20% of the case conferences and

had a direct influence on the outcomes of those conferences. The CEO

representative is the person responsible for chairing the meeting, writing the

notes and negotiating the outcome for the student which was agreed at the

conference. The influence of this person is therefore considerable, particularly

if there is some reason why the recommendation of the meeting cannot be

accomplished for instance if home tuition could not be obtained due to lack of home tutors.

The exclusion case conference fulfils the legal requirements in terms of the current legislation as defined in the Education Acts (1986 and 1993). It also provides the possibility of a discussion between all the parties involved although the outcome can be influenced by a particularly strong viewpoint or personality.

The high numbers of pupils who were either offending or taking drugs or doing both of these things would confirm the views of other authors including McManus (1993) who comments that:

> Surveys indicate that most excluded pupils are male, working class teenagers whose lives are characterized by domestic deprivation and disorder, erratic parental discipline, and poor attainment and ability. (p. 219)

Many of the excluded pupils did have special educational needs (see the following chapter). This information did not necessarily appear on the written documentation initially provided with the exclusion and made available to the LEA. Thus the exclusion case conference performs a role in terms of the presentation of relevant evidence. In the light of the large percentage of pupils who were identified as having special educational needs, an important area to investigate further would appear to be the interface which exists in schools

between the pastoral system (which deals with many behavioural difficulties leading to exclusion and the actual exclusion procedure itself), and the special needs department (which may or may not be involved with children exhibiting behaviour difficulties but who would normally be involved with statemented pupils or with pupils who have learning difficulties). It may be that this interface holds some of the "answers" in terms of providing more appropriate educational experiences for children who will eventually be excluded.

It is also visible from the exclusion case conference evidence that a high proportion of pupils who are excluded (63% in total) either actively tried to become excluded or did not wish to remain in the education system. These are pupils who are "voting with their feet", plainly indicating that the education system as it stands is not adequately meeting their needs. A further question which needs to be asked is therefore whether there can be any response by the education system as a whole and therefore mainstream schools in particular in order to respond to these pupils' needs in a more effective and positive way.

In-School Support Service

Part of the authority's response to the growing tide of excluded pupils, particularly within the high school sector, was to pilot a support service which

was committed to supporting individuals who were at risk of exclusion in

years 7 - 10, and one of its stated aims was to 'reduce the numbers of young

people who are excluded from ... schools.' The team comprised teachers and

social workers who had experience of working with youngsters exhibiting

difficult behaviour. The joint venture sprung from an historical link on a

particular site within the LEA and was different to a behaviour support

service in that it was able to look at the young person as a whole, visiting

home, offering counselling and giving intensive support to the young person

for approximately one term, before decreasing the time commitment and

gradually withdrawing support. Another difference was the intensive support

given to the young person, and in some cases, the parents or carers.

> The primary aim of the scheme is to offer a period of support to the
> school and the student which allows them the opportunity to work
> together to resolve difficulties and so remove the danger of a
> potentially more damaging period of exclusion or permanent removal
> from school. (Support Scheme Aims Document)

In an evaluation of the scheme, this aim was frustrated in that the common

pattern was for the young person to remain in school whilst the workers from

the scheme were working alongside him or her, but that shortly after work

ceased, the young person would once again be in difficulties in their

relationship with school which often led to exclusion.

So the net effect of the scheme was to slow down the exclusion process but not to influence the eventual outcome.

The High School Units

The high school units were originally established as a response to the abolition of corporal punishment within the LEA. High schools were asked whether they would want such a response, and 5 of the high schools responded positively. As a result, the high school units were established as discrete centres within the high schools, and a behaviour support teacher was appointed for each. The behaviour support teacher had a specific brief to run the unit as a separate entity.

With the alteration in the overall provision for children with SEN from the remedial department to a whole school approach, several changes occurred within the mode of operation adopted by the units. Three out of the five were fully incorporated into the SEN provision of the particular school as the practice of in-class support developed. In these schools therefore the unit as a geographical place disappeared. The unit teacher then tended to share the preparation, marking and teaching with the subject teacher.

Withdrawal disappeared completely in two units; in another two units withdrawal was used as a short term measure only; in the remaining unit there

had been organised an alternative curriculum plus 'sheltered groups'.

Sheltered groups were formed by targeting particular pupils with behaviour

difficulties and the two teaching groups which formed the basis of the

teaching block were divided into three with the unit teacher taking one of the

resultant groups. The philosophy surrounding this provision was that an

important part of supporting children with behaviour difficulties was felt to be

the daily contact with pupils and with staff in order to build up relationships

and skills in dealing with difficult pupils (as one aim was not to have all the

difficult pupils within one group but to split them equally between the

groups). When applying a sanction to pupils in a sheltered group the staff

aimed, as Hargreaves (1975) suggests, to 'label the act rather than the person,

thus giving the person the chance to normalise his conduct'. The sheltered

groups were used to provide a temporary facility promoting a therapeutic

environment for those pupils for whom mainstream school was considered

inappropriate, 'sufficiently different from mainstream school to provide a new

start yet similar enough to maintain basic standards of dress, language and

conduct' (school Special Educational Needs policy). Exceptionally, this

school Special Educational Needs policy also contained a statement

concerning exclusion:

Exclusion or suspension - to be used as a last resort. This may destroy what little of a pupil's commitment to school remains and it deprives them of a secure place to go each day.

This school is a low-excluding school, and I would like to suggest that the above positive statement within the Special Educational Needs policy and the way in which provision has been carefully thought out to show commitment to the education of all pupils indicates a positive asseveration by a good number of staff at least in order to be workable as a whole school policy.

Behaviour modification was used in the two units with short term withdrawal.

Four out of the five unit teachers did some work with pupils on an individual basis, and three worked with difficult pupils who transferred from other schools.

Three out of the five teachers worked with pupils throughout the age range, one with years 9, 10 and 11, and the other with years 10 and 11.

Two of the units had timetables which ran for the whole academic year, whilst the other three were reviewed during the course of the year.

In four units, the unit teachers had daily contact with various staff and the difficult pupils provided for.

All five schools felt that the behaviour unit in its evolved form was an efficient way of providing for the most difficult pupils.

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At the beginning of the 1993/94 academic year, the local educational authority disbanded the units completely for three main reasons:

- the units had ceased to function as independent units in the majority of cases;

- there was a growing feeling especially amongst secondary school headteachers who did not have a unit surrounding the inequality of provision available (i.e. only five units had been set up);

- there was insufficient central funding to allow all the high schools to develop unit provision.

Historical Development of Off-site Provision

The development of provision for pupils excluded from school has been interwoven in the authority with the care of those pupils looked after and those pupils who for some reason were not receiving full-time mainstream education such as school phobics, those pupils with attendance problems and those with family problems so severe that they were not able to access mainstream education. The historical development can be seen in **figure 20** below. The original education unit began as a unit which was part of an integrated provision for those children of school age who were in care and was situated on the site of a social services complex which encompassed a

1979 Education
Visit
(all age, pupils in care)

1990 Formation of
Leavers' Group ·································
(Y11 pupils only)

1991 Pilot project
School Support
(Y7-10 pupils)

1992 Excluded Pupils'
Unit (KS4)

1995 Excluded
Pupils' Unit ··················
(KS3)

1996 Excluded Pupils'
Unit (KS3 & KS4)

1997 Restructuring : formation
of P.R.S.S. KS3 Unit, KS4 Unit,
School Support Service plus
service manager
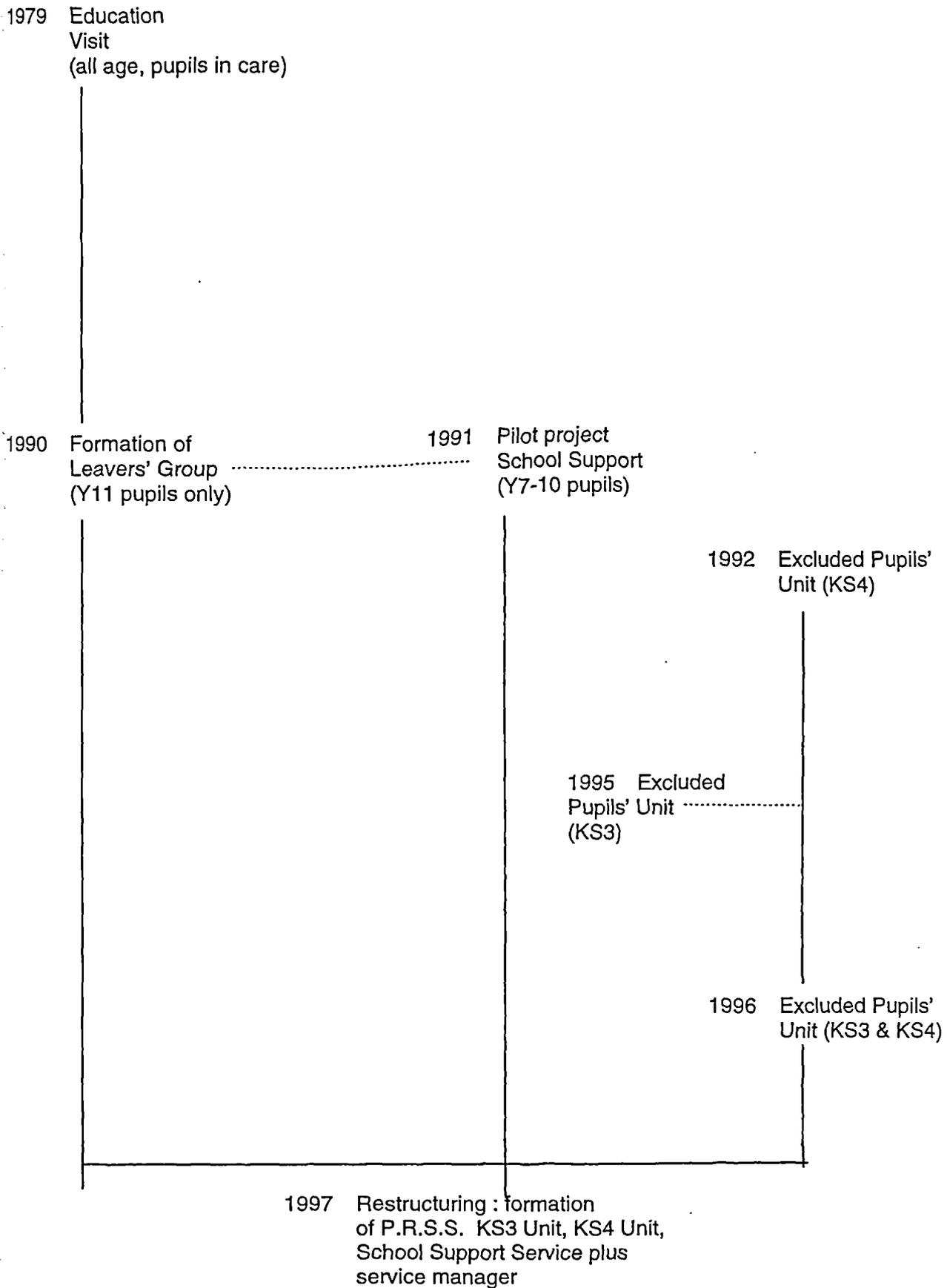
Figure 20 : History of provision within the LEA.

number of residential and day-care centres for children. With the introduction

of the Children Act in 1989 the use of the day assessment unit was redundant

and so staff from social services created a joint initiative with education staff

seconded from the education unit and the basis of the school support team

was formed.

The other strand of the provision was constructed through a youth service

initiative which was partially funded through the youth service who provided

most of the staffing and premises and through the GEST initiative which

provided equipment, secretarial help and resources. Initially a development

for key stage 4 pupils, a key stage 3 unit was added on a separate site which

aimed to reintegrate pupils more quickly than had proved possible with key

stage 4 pupils. In 1996 due to staffing difficulties, the two projects merged to

form a key stage 3 and key stage 4 provision. A year later the staff from all

the provisions joined together, a restructuring was completed and the

formation of the PRSS (pupil referral and support service) gave two separate

units for key stage 3 pupils and key stage 4 pupils plus a school support

service which involved a social services input and a service manager. An

additional element was introduced to the school support service at this point

whose function became not only to support the maintenance of children in

danger of exclusion within the mainstream sector, but also to support the

reintegration of those pupils who have attended the key stage 3 unit. The

service is run jointly by local educational authority officers and

representatives from the various services within the local educational

authority such as the Schools' Psychological Service, Education Welfare

Service, youth service, headteachers from the primary, secondary and special

sectors with an interdisciplinary approach to its work. Its aims are:

> to provide a comprehensive educational support and assessment
> service for all children out of school other than for those who are home
> educated. It will work from the principle that the best educational
> interests of all children are served by full time mainstream or special
> schooling and will work to ensure that time out of school is minimised,
> consistent with the needs of the child. It recognises that for some older
> children return to full time schooling may not be possible and so it will
> aim to develop alternative strategies which help prepare them for
> transition into adult life. (PRSS aims and objectives document, p. 1)

It is hoped that the service will provide a coherent provision for the authority

which will meet the needs of the youngsters it serves and the secondary

mainstream and special schools within the authority. The fast rate of change

which has been evident over recent years within the provision has been

mainly the product of the increase in the exclusion rate within the local

educational authority which has ensured rapid change and a state of flux in

order to accommodate the needs of as many youngsters and schools as

possible.

Chapter 8

Exclusions and Special Educational Needs.

Historical Factors

> When examining the issue of Special Educational Needs, the way in
> which and by whom such need is defined is a matter of immense
> importance. This is a theoretical problem which nevertheless has
> practical implications for the way in which interventions take place.
> Indeed, our understanding of this may well have significance for our
> perception of exclusion. As it was pointed out, the very idea of EBD is
> both value-laden and context-specific. It is therefore unsurprising that
> rates of EBD, as with exclusion, will vary among schools. (p. 10)
> (Brodie and Berridge, 1996)

Margerison (1996) argues that there needs to be a much more fundamental

assessment and recognition of the Special Educational Needs of pupils with

emotional and behavioural difficulties particularly with regard to increasing

the low self-esteem or confidence of such pupils. The direct link between

pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and low self-esteem was

made by Lund (1986). Margerison (1996) comments on the lack of strategies

employed by schools to:

- assess the self-esteem of individual pupils;

- systematically address the building of self-esteem in such a way that

  it is monitored and reviewed in the Individual Education Plan

  process.

Any other Special Educational Needs would be addressed through the Code

of Practice stages, but there seems to be a mystique surrounding emotional

and behavioural difficulties which should begin to disappear with the advent

of more specific teaching targets on Individual Education Plans (see below).

Prior to the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) there was research evidence to

suggest that pupils with Special Educational Needs were disproportionately

represented within the excluded population. Rutter et al (1977) stated:

> Exclusion was invariably precipitated by seriously aggressive and
> disruptive behaviour at school; boys outnumbered girls five to one;
> only half of the children, whose mean age was 12 years, were also
> delinquent; two-thirds were severely backward readers. One in seven
> of the children was handicapped (mental subnormality, childhood
> psychosis, gross neurological disease). Socio-economically the children
> were deprived and in one sixth of the families a parent had been in
> prison. (p.494)

Rapidly changing events, beginning with the 1981 Education Act, introduced

the concept of all teachers assuming responsibility for children with SEN.

Not only does this concept abolish the previous remedial regime, it also

redefines the term "remedial" to include those children who need special

access to the curriculum, (through resources, facilities, equipment, teaching

techniques or a modified teaching environment): those children who need a

special or modified curriculum: and those children who need attention

directed to the social structure and emotional climate in which education

takes place. Thus as Postlethwaite and Hackney (1989), state:

> Special educational needs lie on a continuum. There is no clear-cut
> distinction between pupils who have special needs and those who do
> not. (p.2)

Such a definition of SEN, including children with emotional and behavioural

difficulties, leads to the conclusion that any authority provision needs to be on

a continuum, beginning in mainstream schools which provide for the vast

majority of children and young people, progressing towards more specialised

educational facilities for those few children and young people whose needs

cannot be adequately met within the mainstream.

The Education Acts 1981 and 1993 were seen to be positive moves in terms

of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs. However, in-between

these two Acts came the Education Reform Act 1988 which was viewed by

commentators at the time as a negative step forward in the development of the

ideology which the Education Act 1981 promoted (Bash and Coulby,1989;

Jones and Docking, 1992; Haviland, 1988; Parffrey, 1994; Simon, 1988;

Wragg, 1988). There were five sections of the Education Reform Act which

had features considered unhelpful to the development of Special Educational

Needs:

- the National Curriculum

- national tests

- opting out

- local management of schools

- parental power

The National Curriculum has many benefits to pupils with Special

Educational Needs in terms of entitlement. Pupils who are statemented can be

disapplied but this has tended not to happen in large numbers as people had at

first feared it would. The full curriculum entitlement does not however,

extend to Pupil Referral Units and therefore to excluded pupils. This is

because disaffected pupils are not considered to have Special Educational

Needs in the conventional sense, and are specifically excluded from being

statemented. This is a moot point which I shall discuss at greater length later.

It is just worth saying at this point that all other groups of pupils, from those

with moderate learning difficulties to those with profound and multiple or

complex learning difficulties, have an entitlement to the national curriculum.

Pupil Referral Units very often have limited numbers of staff and therefore

limited curriculum expertise, varying roles according to local educational authority policy typically including part-time attendance. It would therefore cost too much per pupil to develop provision in line with the curriculum entitlement of other pupils.

The national testing of pupils at various chronological intervals and the publication of SAT results has encouraged an ethos of competition between schools which militates against the sensitive treatment of pupils with Special Educational Needs. In free competition, pupils with Special Educational Needs are always losers. This has not been helped by the inclusion of SAT results in the pre-inspection documentation which is required by Ofsted inspectors.

Opting for grant-maintained status is now enabling some schools to select some of their school population. Which school is going to opt to take pupils who are more time consuming and who are challenging in their behaviour? Because of the difficulties in defining Special Educational Needs, the local management of schools can provide no consistent or fair way of giving money to schools for such pupils. The funding element which LEAs manage and devolve to schools is insufficient to make pupils with Special Educational Needs financially attractive to schools. Until this is resolved, most schools will not opt to accept pupils with Special Educational Needs.

The emphasis has been upon parental rights and not parental duties, emphasizing the rights of the individual as opposed to the common good. The concept of a continuum has been recently reinforced by the Education Act (1993) and the associated Code of Practice. These two significant influences on schools' practice with regard to special educational needs reiterate the previous concepts embodied in the Education Act (1981), and stipulate various forms of good practice which now must be addressed by schools and LEAs in their provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs. As a result of the Education Act 1993 every governing body must have:

- a named co-ordinator of SEN;
- a policy in place, which should be reviewed by the governors annually;
- regard to the Code of Practice.

The last bullet point above restricts the freedom of schools to respond to Special Educational Needs in an ad hoc or unstructured way. If a school chooses not to follow the Code of Practice there must be an alternative system in place and schools must be ready to be accountable for that system. Most schools have decided to follow the Code of Practice or a system that closely resembles it (such as collapsing two of the school-based stages

together or by adding an extra stage). The Code of Practice is divided into six

sections:

- Principles and Procedures;

- School-based Stages of Assessment and Provision;

- Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs;

- Statement of Special Educational Needs;

- Assessments and Statements for Under Fives;

- Annual Review.

Sections one, two and six focus mainly on the school responsibilities; sections

three, four, five and six concentrate upon the LEA responsibilities for meeting

the Special Educational Needs of pupils within its remit. Although the Code

of Practice is not itself legally binding it does contain sections (in lined boxes

with blue text), which are excerpts from the legal regulations (see for instance

p.8 for the legislation on the information which schools must provide within

the Special Educational Needs policy). (See Bentley et al., 1994 for an

overview of key roles and responsibilities within the Education Act 1993).

Like the Children Act (1989), the Education Act (1993) places emphasis

upon the needs of the whole child within a particular context, so as a

consequence of the recent legislation there should be more integration in

terms of learning and behaviour needs, with more pronounced intermeshing of

the pastoral and SEN systems within schools.

What are Special Educational Needs?

The legal definition of Special Educational Needs within the Education Act

(1993) :

> A child has *Special Educational Needs* if he or she has a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for him or her.

> A child has a *learning difficulty* if he or she:

> (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age

> (b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local educational authority

> (c) is under five and falls within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do if special educational provision was not made for the child.

> A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.

> (p. 5, Code of Practice)

As the above definition is a legal one it is rather circular and is not much use

in providing clear guidelines for schools to follow as it cannot give examples;

these must be established in case law. What is clear from the above definition

is that Special Educational Needs are not simply concerned with factors

within the child such as low IQ or a specific disability, but are a complex

interaction between the child and the context and circumstances of the child.

Swann (1983) believes that special educational provision:

> is a useful response to individual needs that enables the child to
> function within the settings we all live in; on other occasions, and for
> other children, special provision reflects fundamental, structural
> problems in ordinary education and in our society. It can be said that
> some children fail in school, but it can also be said with equal force
> that schools fail some children. (p. x)

The above quotation echoes Holt (1972) indicating the subtleties involved

when dealing with a child within an educational context (see Thomas and

Feiler, 1988). Many authors have also commented on the fact that what

schools do for all their pupils is very important for pupils with Special

Educational Needs, and that some schools are responsible for creating Special

Educational Needs in some pupils (see Reynolds, 1985, 1991; Galloway,

1985; Reid et al., 1987). Many authors have commented on the central

paradox of pupils with Special Educational Needs which is that defining

Special Educational Needs in order to attempt to meet them works to the

disadvantage of the pupils with Special Educational Needs (Ainscow, 1991;

Bogdan and Kugelmass, 1984; Dessent, 1989; Dunn, 1968; Dyson, 1990; Heshusius, 1989; Lilly, 1971; Tomlinson, 1982).

The Involvement of Other Agencies

Of the case conferences observed in part one of the study, 27% had either no involvement from outside agencies, or had only the involvement of the Schools' Psychological Service, whose policy at that time was to attend as many case conferences as possible as a matter of course. 73% of the case conferences had one or more outside agencies (not including the Schools' Psychological Service), involved, typically Social Services, the police or the Education Welfare Officer. It is therefore unreasonable for the local educational authority or the schools themselves to bear the entire burden of providing for the most difficult pupils. The Commission for Racial Equality (1997) highlights the real cost of exclusion:

> Approximately 20% of permanently excluded pupils use social services, costing on average £1,100 each, which amounts to only 10% of costs borne by education. Another one in ten excluded pupils use health service resources, at an average cost of less than £100 while a little over a quarter of these pupils incur a cost to the police of average £2000 each. In fact, costs to the police and criminal justice services take the major share (70%) of the total costs to external agencies. (p.6)

Such a graphic description of actual costs incurred by these agencies promotes the view that excluded pupils need an integrated approach as advocated within the Code of Practice and the Children Act (1989). (See also the case studies appended to the DFE report, 1995; Galloway et al., 1989; Lowe, 1989; Normington, 1996.)

The importance of the involvement of outside agencies is highlighted particularly by the plight of 'looked after' children, who probably most need the coherence of a multi-agency approach. Fletcher (1995) estimates that around 40% of looked after pupils are not in school for 'reasons other than sickness'. Maginnis (1993) concluded after a regional survey that a child who is looked after is eighty times more likely to be excluded from school than a child living with his or her family. Jackson (1987) indicated that 50 - 75% of care leavers have no qualifications, compared to 6 - 11 % of the population as a whole. Firth (1995) examined the stability of care placements in relation to looked after pupils who were excluded from school. He established a strong association between the number of times a child changed care placement and permanent exclusion. Firth and Horrocks (1996) go on to comment:

> A picture is emerging of the corporate parent failing to shape successfully the futures of children and young people who are 'looked after'. (p. 78)

Although the legislation points to the necessity of a multi-agency approach (the Children Act, 1989; Education Act, 1981; Education act, 1993), this is not yet happening. There are still disagreements over residential school placements for pupils, especially between education and social services departments which are exacerbated, if not caused, by the joint funding arrangements which need to be made (see Kahan, 1977). A true multi-agency approach will only be achieved when funding comes from one source responsible for the total care of young people who are looked after. The Audit Commission (1994) echoed the pleas of many individuals and bodies when it commented:

> Social services and education need to accept joint ownership of the problem of disrupted education of children 'looked after' and work together to find solutions. (p.25)

This is easier said than done in a climate of ever-shrinking budgets and an emphasis on results: schools and other agencies are forced into a position of spending money in most cost-effective ways; multi-agency working is certainly not easily justifiable in terms of outcome as these are the young people who have the most intractable difficulties (see also Kyriacou and Normington, 1994; Hayden, 1996; Parsons 1996b).

Increased involvement by outside agencies may be a factor which helps the school to keep the pupil in school. Brodie and Berridge (1996) found that:

The nature of the involvement of other agencies was frequently significant; where this was especially proactive it appeared that schools' tolerance levels had been increased. (p. 14)

Individual Education Plans

The Code of Practice suggests that pupils and parents be involved in the development of Individual Education Plans. Such a suggestion places an important element of involvement and therefore some control in the pupil's sphere of influence which is important for two reasons. Firstly it says to the pupil " You matter - what do you, as an individual, think?" therefore beginning to recognise that non-conformity towards a set of externally imposed rules does not lower the value of an individual. Secondly, it emphasises the importance of the consequences which follow particular behaviours and helps the student to develop the links between how an individual can cause specific reactions in others, particularly when viewed at a distance within the area of target-setting and in the evaluation of those targets.

The process must be made relevant and useful to the student. If the student is to be involved in target setting, then the student and all the members of staff who teach him need to know what those targets are and whether the student has reached them. This has implications for the numbers of targets on any one

Individual Education Plan (two or three at the most), plus the ability of the student to reach them. What is the point of setting unrealistic targets which are either unattainable by the student because the change in behaviour is too great (even though they may be targets which "normal" children have no difficulty reaching), or are too vague to be conceptualised by the student, or are unachievable within the time allowed for the Individual Education Plan to run?

Setting appropriate Individual Education Plan targets is a complex business as they have to be based around the needs of very complex individuals. Targets which are too easily achievable are just as pointless as targets which are unachievable because pupils need to be challenged in order to achieve something which is worthwhile.

Theoretically, Individual Education Plans which are initially implemented should become less necessary as individual teachers are able to expand their positive experience and knowledge of pupils with behavioural difficulties, developing strategies which are appropriate responses to pupils' poor behaviour thus reducing the incidence of poor behaviour within the school. Practically, this would need a commitment from most, if not all, members of staff within an individual school which is very difficult to achieve over an extended period of time. What often happens in effective schools with a high

concentration of pupils with behaviour difficulties is that the staff are

committed to finding ways to ensure the education of their pupils, all 'pulling

in the same direction', often meeting socially and thereby developing a more

coherent whole school approach to that education.

Definition of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Emotional and behavioural difficulties are even less well defined than Special

Educational Needs. Cooper (1996) attempts to provide a typology of

categories in order to begin to address the issue of clarifying what the pupils'

needs and difficulties are. He stresses that:

> Emotional and behavioural difficulties lie on a continuum between
> those that are challenging but within expected bounds and those which
> are indicative of serious mental illness. (p. 147)

The Code of Practice refers to emotional and behavioural difficulties in

several places; it does not, however, attempt to give a definition of what

emotional and behavioural difficulties are. The committee chaired by Lord

Elton (DES, 1989) went some way to defining emotional and behavioural

difficulties:

> We recognise that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between
> 'ordinary' bad behaviour and disturbed behaviour, but the distiction
> has to be made. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
> tend to present behaviour problems earlier in their school careers than
> other 'difficult' pupils, and to behave in a disturbed and disturbing way

regardless of which class or teacher they are with. The problems they present also tend to be more severe. Judgements must be made by teachers, educational psychologist and other professionals in individual cases. (p. 150)

I suggest that there are many more pupils with a history of behaviour difficulties who ultimately are permanently excluded precisely because their emotional and behavioural needs are not being recognised by the professionals around them. Pupils who are excluded permanently often have histories of severe persistent behaviour difficulties which schools have not finally been able to contain or modify (Mitchell, 1996). Lovey (1995) also comments on the fact that pupils' learning difficulties are often not recognised as such:

> The interface between behavioural and learning difficulties is so narrow that the former is often used to cover the latter. (p.67)

It can be easier for teachers to see the problem within the pupil and therefore be able to do little about it, rather than to consider the child's learning. If the so-called 'Six-pack' had been entitled 'Problems with Pupils' as opposed to 'Pupils with Problems' then the teaching staff and schools would have the problems, not the pupils. If the emphasis was this way around, then the onus would be more upon schools to find more creative ways of keeping children in school. The Elton Report (DES, 1989), supports this view:

Our evidence suggests that more attention should be given to the educational needs of pupils who behave badly. (p. 151)

The effect that the curriculum has on pupils with learning /behaviour difficulties has been well-documented (Brennan, 1986; Brighouse, 1993; Cooper, 1995; Hegarty, Pocklington and Lucas, 1986; Lambley, 1989). McManus (1993) presents a particularly perspicuous account of the influence of curriculum on behaviour.

Excluded Pupils with Special Educational Needs

HMI conducted a survey of secondary schools (Ofsted, 1996a) in which they collected data on 112 excluded pupils. They found that:

Very few excluded pupils were of above average ability; in the main, excluded pupils were evenly divided between average and below-average. (p.9)

15 of the 112 pupils studied were of Afro-Caribbean origin, and these pupils were mostly of average or above-average ability whose personal profile differed markedly from many of the white children. Other studies have found a strong relationship between Special Educational Needs and exclusion (Moore, 1996, found that two thirds of excluded pupils had Special Educational Needs). Ofsted goes on to say:

At the personal level, exclusion is associated with (not determined by) factors such as:

- poor acquisition of basic skills, particularly literacy;
- limited aspirations and opportunities;
- family difficulties;
- poor relationships with other pupils, parents or teachers;
- pressure from other pupils to behave in ways likely to lead to conflict with authority.

The above profile includes many aspects which are exhibited by pupils with

Special Educational Needs. Ofsted (1996a) further comments that:

It is important to stress that many pupils face one or more of these or comparable problems without resorting to aggressive or disruptive behaviour. For the pupils in the survey, however, the combination of stresses they faced was a factor in leading to a pattern of conduct characterised in the case of these children by:

- low attendance;
- volatility and periodic aggression, sometimes interspersed with periods of more co-operative behaviour;
- strained relationships with adults, sometimes manifested in verbal abuse;
- extreme disaffection with school, with exclusions sometimes provoked as a means of leaving school;
- alcohol, drug and substance abuse;
- poor mental health;
- inappropriate sexual behaviour, and difficult relationships with the opposite sex;
- symptoms of severe emotional disturbance, such as compulsive fire-raising or soiling;
- crime.

(p. 11)

Parsons and Howlett (1996) confirm the view that a disproportionate number

of excluded pupils have Special Educational Needs. They go further:

> It could be argued that all pupils who exhibit such unacceptable behaviour as to warrant exclusion clearly have special needs; nevertheless, the most clearly identifiable group of excluded pupils with special needs are those who have a statement of Special Educational Needs. According to the DFE (1993b), 12 - 15 % of pupils who were permanently excluded were statemented. The needs of these pupils are not being met by the act of exclusion. (p. 112)

Ofsted (1996a) also indicated some association between the rates of

exclusion and the proportion of pupils taking free school meals. This is an

interesting finding as it is one indicator for levels of Special Educational Need

within a school or local educational authority and is often used in calculating

the funding for Special Educational Needs. Knight (1995) confirms this

relationship as he found a positive correlation (0.586) between each

secondary school's number of exclusions and the percentage of pupils who

were eligible for free school meals.

The DFE (1994c) talks about 'a pattern of persistent misbehaviour' and

discourages schools from excluding for a build up of incidents which on their

own, would not be grounds for exclusion. If schools took cognisance of this

advice, many exclusions would be eliminated at a stroke:

> Some children have been excluded from school for incidents which would not normally in isolation have been considered of sufficient seriousness to lead to an exclusion had the pupil concerned not had a history of poor behaviour..... Nevertheless, it is important for the ultimate sanction of permanent exclusion from school to be reserved for serious misbehaviour. (p. 11)

Smith (1996) suggests that the 'pattern of persistent misbehaviour' should

mean that the pupil is registered on the school-based stages of the Code of

Practice, the implication being that the behaviour may be indicative of signs

of emotional or behavioural difficulties. This view reinforces that of the DFE

(1994c) who state:

> The prompt recognition of children's difficulties, and the
> commencement where appropriate of the school-based stages, may
> alleviate the child's difficulties and avoid the need for a later exclusion.
> (p. 6)

Smith (1996) suggests that the gap which exists between Special Educational

Needs and pastoral care staff within a school is an important one which needs

to be addressed:

> Beginning to bridge the gap between special needs and pastoral care
> starts from examining how departments and individuals can work
> together in developing policies and planning. (p. 152)

Some schools are beginning to develop systems whereby pupils with

persistent behaviour difficulties can be registered on the school-based stages;

but it is much easier for schools to keep behaviour and learning difficulties

with the respective pastoral or Special Educational Needs staff. This is

counter-productive (Smith, 1996) as most behaviour problems cannot be

tackled without reference to the pupil's learning:

> the problem seems to be that all pupils are exposed to a curriculum
> which, despite periodic tinkering, remains dedicated to the academic

development of about 20% of its clients. (McGuiness and Craggs, 1986, p. 16)

(See also Donaldson, 1978; Hargreaves, 1982, 1984; Hemmings, 1980; McMullen, 1978.)

A question to ask of disaffected students is: what came first, disaffection or failure within the education system? One of the Pupil Referral Units within the authority took some statemented EBD pupils as a temporary measure before the expansion of the emotional and behavioural difficulties school was completed. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator there commented:

> There is no difference between the behaviour of the pupils who are statemented and those who are not. To all intents and purposes the pupils are treated exactly the same, and perform academically and socially in the same ways.

Chapter 9

An Examination of the SEN/Pastoral Interface

The SEN/Pastoral Links

Evidence such as that presented above in the case conference material which

suggests that the majority of excluded pupils have special educational needs

should be investigated further. It therefore seemed appropriate to examine the

influence exerted by the strength of the relationship which exists within

schools between the SEN and the pastoral provisions. The research questions

which were immediately apparent were:

> Does the quality of the pastoral/SEN interface have any influence on
> the numbers of excluded pupils, or upon the rate of progress towards
> exclusion?

> Is there evidence to suggest that current legislation is beginning to have
> an effect upon the ways in which the SEN department and pastoral
> staff collaborate?

Part 2 of the study was undertaken by questionnaire (see **appendix 3**), which

was sent out to all special needs co-ordinators within the high schools, all

heads of year 10 (the peak age for exclusion) and to members of the LEA

staff who were involved with the exclusion process. One school was not

included as there was no special needs co-ordinator in post.

The response rate was almost 50% from the special needs co-ordinators (8 out of 18 schools), 33% for the heads of year 10 (6 out of 18 schools) but zero from the LEA staff. The reason for the lack of response from the LEA seemed to be that at the time the questionnaires were distributed, the central LEA services had just undergone a major reorganisation with roles and responsibilities changing. As a consequence, the staff who had previously been involved with the exclusion process were now no longer in those particular posts.

There were 3 major strands to the questionnaire responses:

- strategies used by the schools;

- communication links which had been developed;

- involvement in the process of exclusion.

Questionnaires sent to the LEA staff were shortened and modified in order to maintain relevance in the questions.

The questionnaires were followed up by semi-structured interviews in order to:

- explore in more detail data from the questionnaires;

- gain some data from the local educational authority.

The interviews involved 3 SEN co-ordinators, 3 heads of year 10 and 2 LEA staff dealing with the exclusion process. The aim of the interview was to explore the area of the SEN /pastoral interface and the resulting practices surrounding the exclusion of pupils from school. An interview schedule is contained within **appendix 2**.

The factors which were considered to be important in influencing which pupils were excluded from school varied according to the role of the respondent. The LEA tended to comment on the more philosophical areas such as the decrease of teacher tolerance levels. This was seen to be mainly as a result of money in recent years being taken out of pastoral and special needs work and put into curriculum areas in order to influence the league tables i.e. to increase the number of pupils gaining 5 A - C or A - G grades in GCSE examinations. The league table shift to include GNVQ passes is changing the situation to become more beneficial to students with difficulties whether these be SEN in terms of learning or behaviour, as the number of passes at GNVQ level are being added to the GCSE points score. As the take-up of GNVQ courses by schools increases, the school will be able to provide courses which are more relevant to pupils with Special Educational Needs, thus increasing the motivation for pupils to gain qualifications, rather

than the current situation where pupils are being put through courses which provide only a limited chance of success.

The reduction in money to be able to cater for the individual needs of students covered heads of year and SEN co-ordinators being paid less to do the same job, as both areas are seen as less important than curriculum areas, almost peripheral in nature, in some schools. One LEA staff member commented on the changes which have been imposed externally such as those outlined above as beginning to bring about a philosophical change in the attitude of schools to pupils who cannot conform to the 'norm' of what is expected:

> It's very difficult to work within the system; (the children are) square pegs in round holes. The system is stacked against them. The children have to do all the bending, the system doesn't.

The pastoral staff tended to place the emphasis for exclusion upon the students themselves, the major reason being given as behaviour of the student within the school in the long term, alongside general attitudes displayed towards the school either by the student or by the parents. The responses of the SENCos, however, were almost entirely related to the implementation of behaviour policy and differences in pastoral staff reactions to behaviour. One SENCo commented;

one head of year excludes very reluctantly, so there are personality differences (in reactions to behaviour of pupils).

Both LEA workers had evidence of schools building portfolios of incidents involving particular pupils so that a case for exclusion could be put forward to the LEA. The schools involved had actually targeted particular individuals that they wanted to exclude from school.

A possible explanation of the differing reponses by LEA, pastoral or SEN staff may be that they are reflecting their own level of involvement in the exclusion process; the pastoral staff are most directly involved as they deal with the poor behaviour of students on a day-to-day basis; the SENCo may be involved in certain elements of the decision making, and the LEA has to pick up the threads once the decision to exclude has been taken and is working more at a distance.

A range of measures was suggested to enable schools to react differently when a trigger to exclude a particular pupil had occurred, from staff inservice training in order to develop the skills of individual teachers in handling difficult behaviour through to a behaviour modification unit. The behaviour modification unit had been developed in order to keep pupils who would otherwise have been excluded within school. The unit at this particular school was a short-term strategy with gradual reintegration into mainstream school.

Both pastoral staff and SENCos agreed that individual strategies were the

most successful in avoiding exclusion. As one head of year commented:

> Not everyone has success in school. Where things go wrong is where
> things have been prescriptive and where the child has not been listened
> to. The child doesn't have to fit the curriculum; the curriculum must fit
> the child.

The Special Educational Needs department can effectively promote the

individuality of students, particularly in the type of teaching and learning

situations in which the student is placed:

> The supportive school knows that its students are individuals with
> different learning styles and motivation and who work at different
> paces. Accordingly, the supportive school will not lay its students in a
> Procrustean bed in which everybody will be cut to size, but make room
> for an approach of their own, for their own learning style and
> creativity. (Deen, 1995, p. 22)

Special Educational Needs departments are continually looking to match the

curriculum and teaching to the students' individual needs in order to promote

the best rate of progress and the highest achievement possible for each

individual. Garner (1994) reinforces this view:

> in order to develop effective systems of management and support for
> such pupils, more schools need to adopt a more collaborative stance to
> the way in which behaviour problems are dealt with. (p.8)

He further goes on to lament the passing of preventative strategies as schools

currently have

a heavy emphasis upon academic learning targets. Schools have struggled to maintain programmes of personal and social education, which may have been helpful in retaining exclusion-prone pupils within the mainstream. Amongst the skills promoted by such initiatives are those of co-operative problem-solving and self-management. These were frequently seen as preventative approaches; whilst they undoubtedly do remain a feature of pastoral programmes, however, they have tended to become measures which are adopted as a reaction to specific incidents of problem behaviour rather than as a means of anticipating them. Schools therefore need to be recognised for work that is done with problematic sections of their community, in much the same way as academic learning is celebrated by government-sponsored curriculum awards. (p. 8)

A whole-school preventative approach was also advocated by Ashford (1994) who found that the average annual exclusions for one school per type of family over a three and a half year period differed markedly, particularly for permanently excluded pupils. He graded the likelihood of exclusion for two-parent families (natural parents) as 1 for easy comparison; whilst the likelihood of exclusion for single-parent families was 7 and that for two-parent families reconstituted was 13.3. He goes on to conclude:

> While children from each family type may exhibit behaviour which will lead to exclusion, the problems that children and parents experience as a result of marriage breakdown are clearly compounded by increased likelihood of exclusion from school. Are schools further disadvantaging the already emotionally damaged? (p. 11)

One school has adopted a "no-blame" policy for bullying which it claims has prevented several pupils from being excluded who would have otherwise

been permanently excluded. This policy was in its first year of implementation and the school was pleased with the results to date. (See Whitney, Nabuoka and Smith (1992) for a discussion of how bullying affects pupils with Special Educational Needs.)

One LEA response was that statemented pupils who were in danger of exclusion could have their annual review brought forward. This suggestion was made in the light of the increasing numbers of pupils excluded from special schools.

In response to research question 2:

> Is there evidence to suggest that current legislation is beginning to have an effect upon the ways in which the Special Educational Needs department and pastoral staff collaborate?

the impact of the Code of Practice is only now becoming evident as excluded pupils are being admitted onto the role of the pupil referral and support service at stage 3 of the Code of Practice stages. However, practice is still inconsistent as some pupils do not have an Individual Education Plan when they are admitted. There is also evidence to suggest that Individual Education Plan targets for pupils with behaviour difficulties are not as precise as some of the targets for pupils with learning difficulties with the consequent inherent difficulties in stating criteria for success. The measurement of when a target has been completed is also difficult.

Exclusions and the Code of Practice

The Code of Practice was a feature in the reduction of triggers for exclusion.

The increased collaboration was viewed as being part of the Code of Practice,

not least with the introduction of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for those

students with behavioural difficulties who had not previously necessarily been

included within the school's working definition of SEN but who now must be

registered on the school's SEN register. One SENCo commented:

> The Code of Practice is going to be very important. The SENCo will
> be actively involved with pupils with behaviour problems, whereas
> before we weren't. We hope to get a shared area to put records in, so
> the child's records are not separated into Special Educational Needs
> and pastoral.

The Code of Practice philosophically promotes the development of the

SEN/pastoral interface. Pupils with behavioural and/or emotional difficulties

must now be placed on the SEN register; if they are at stage 2 or 3 they must

also have an IEP which must be reviewed at regular intervals; if they are not

meeting targets or if they are giving increasing levels of concern, they must

move up the school based stages. The whole thrust of the Code of Practice is

to bring professionals together to work for the benefit of individual pupils

who are giving cause for concern.

The financial implications of the Code of Practice are likely to seriously

inhibit this development, however. Schools are finding the administrative load

extremely cumbersome and a great burden on already stretched resources.

Stirling (1994) comments:

> in the Code of Practice, the government is passing responsibility for
> special needs, under-funded, onto schools themselves. Rather than
> helping schools fulfil their statutory obligations to these pupils. (p. 16)

The role of the SENCo is likely to change as a direct result of the Code of

Practice, away from the teacher practitioner and towards becoming a

manager. Bines (1995) states:

> The pressures in schools to conform to certain expectations under the
> Code of Practice and to increase their 'capability' may result in a
> greater policy focus for SEN, and some improvements in process and
> provision. However, given that resource issues are not addressed,
> entitlement is likely to continue to be limited, particularly given the
> belief that professional inefficiency and bureaucracy remain causes of
> ineffective provision and that 'capability' (productivity) can still be
> increased. (p.162)

The dichotomy between the philosophical aims of the Code of Practice and

the resource implications is not an inconsiderable one. Ofsted inspection

reports are commenting on the huge workload which the Code of Practice

carries for SENCos in particular, sometimes going so far as to recommend

that the SENCo be given an administrative assistant. Bines summarises this

dichotomy thus:

New procedures may improve some elements of accountability, but whether they will increase the 'capability' of schools remains a moot question. (p.168)

Flexibility in terms of the school's response to a trigger to exclude was seen as important, since the pupils concerned could not be easily categorised and given an "off the peg" response, but had such complex needs that individual ways forward had to be explored. Work has already begun on developing national standards for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) which has put out a consultation document for comments (1997). The document places emphasis on the support which is given by the management of the school as well as considering the professional knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes which a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator needs to develop in order to be effective.

Grunsell (1980) explored the difference between giving information to staff so that they have knowledge of particular children and incidents; and arousing concern in those members of staff for the pupil:

> Knowledge about pupils has to be passed on in school for concern to be effective; new relationships cannot wholly ignore previously acquired understanding - or misconception. But when knowledge is circulated which has been taken out of its context, the results may be very damaging to the pupils. (p. 80)

Where the SEN/pastoral interface is of good quality, there is evidence of

concern within the school as opposed to purely having knowledge of pupils.

For example, one head of year commented:

> Staff are a resource - the situation is now owned by staff....... Now
> everyone has to be involved for example at the pupil review. The pupil
> is not going to be taken away.

Where difficult behaviour had been handled well within a school, there was

agreement between all three parties that individual strategies must be found.

In addition, the LEA and SENCos agreed that one way would be to involve

the SEN department in implementing such individual strategies, and the

SENCos and pastoral staff identified the importance of a key person within

school who relates well to the pupil involved. Again the emphasis was upon

the flexibility which needed to be introduced in order to accommodate such

complex needs. McSherry (1996) assumes the involvement of the Special

Educational Needs department in the re-integration of pupils with emotional

and behavioural difficulties into the mainstream from either special schools,

Pupil Referral Units or other institutions. Watkins and Wagner (1995) discuss

the interactive nature of Special Educational Needs and suggest that with

regard to behaviour in particular, at least three aspects of that interaction are important for schools to address:

- pupil behaviour (that is, learning and social behaviour, individually and in groups), but is also likely to include:

- teacher behaviour (such as approaches to managing classrooms, styles of responding to difficulties, and so on); and

- school behaviour (such as the style of the organisation and how it typically responds when difficulties or concerns are raised). (p. 55)

They emphasise the importance of links with other school policies in order to provide a context for the development of an effective behaviour policy:

> Clearly the policy on behaviour has to be consistent with the goals of the school and with major school policies for example teaching and learning, Special Educational Needs, Equal Opportunities. (p. 56)

The most skilled schools were able to combine individual strategies with effective whole school approaches encouraging participation by the majority of staff. It may therefore be that a good interface between SEN and pastoral staff is promoted in schools where a corporate approach is evident. Deen (1995) writes about the supportive school:

> A supportive school will use the knowledge that its students are individuals who are not alike to make use of their differences in a positive way. Students become disaffected with rigid organisation, but a flexible organisation will retain students as a result of person-centred guidance. (p. 22)

Figure 21 shows the approaches used by the schools to endeavour to reduce

numbers of excluded pupils. Behaviour policy and curriculum are concerned

with the more formal aspects of the system, whilst the increase in flexibility

and the building of relationships are more concerned with the ethos of the

school, and are thus more difficult to quantify. The formal aspects of the

education process may well be seen by teachers as being in tension with the

more informal aspects as the more time is spent upon the formal curriculum

delivery, the less can be spent on increasing flexibility and building

relationships.

Buckley (1980) suggests that the relationship which it is so important to

build with pupils has as its main focus:

> the teaching - learning situations in the belief that for a teacher that is
> what 'care' means. The teacher who 'cares' is the teacher who teaches
> effectively, in the same way that the doctor who cares is the one who
> treats his patients effectively. Similarly nurses and social workers have
> their professional concepts of 'care'. (p. 195)

Part of the function of the pastoral care system in a school, like the Special

Educational Needs department role, is to focus on the learning which takes

place for the individual pupil and seek to maximise it when other

♦ increase flexibility   sophisticated use of SEN base,
                                e.g. SNA monitoring, links with
                                pastoral staff, 1 - 1 teaching,
                                sanctuary, in-class support;
                                co-ordination of SEN/behaviour provision;
                                individual strategies;
                                behaviour modification facility;
                                delayed entry/break/lunch;
                                specific targets/IEPs;
                                early use of outside agencies;
                                parents working in school.
♦ build relationships   communication;
                                listening;
                                influential person;
                                area of success;
                                don't challenge biggest area first;
                                parental support;
♦ behaviour policy   created/internalised/applied by
                                staff;
                                increasing level of involvement.
♦ modify curriculum   differentiation;
                                independent learning;
                                ethos of success.

Figure 21: Approaches Aimed At Reducing The Number Of Triggers

circumstances within the child's context may be pressing to minimise the

learning which is taking place. Best, Jarvis and Ribbins (1980) propose that

the pastoral care system provides the equivalent service for pupils with

emotional and behavioural difficulties as the Special Educational Needs

department does for those pupils with learning difficulties:

because pastoral care was perceived in additive terms - as the provision of emotional and behavioural first aid - its actual organisation mattered little providing it could be justified in terms of enabling teachers to care more effectively. (p. xii)

There are instances of this additive model being picked up by writers particularly in the eighties (see for instance Askins, 1984, writing on disruptive pupils in a pastoral care book) and paralleled in many secondary schools by the remedial department in order to 'correct' learning difficulties. Watkins and Wagner (1995) suggest that individual behaviour must be analysed within the wider contexts of the school:

> Difficult behaviour which appears to be related to an individual pupil may be telling us about a range of matters in the immediate context: the group, the classroom, the teacher and the organisation, as well as about the individual pupil. Therefore some diagnostic thinking is required in order to identify which behaviour should be addressed as an individual concern, and when it is more to do with the group, classroom, teacher or school. (p. 58).

As can be seen from **figure 21**, many more strategies were suggested in order to increase the flexibility of school response or to build relationships than were concerned with the behaviour policy or the curriculum, suggesting that teachers place the emphasis more upon these approaches. Kinder et al. (1995), in their study of disaffected children which included truancy-related incidents as well as challenging behaviour, summarised innovative strategies and practice as focusing upon one or more of the following:

i. maintaining and monitoring pupil attendance in school;
ii. providing direct support for emotional, social and/or behavioural needs
iii. offering an alternative learning environment and/or curriculum experiences. (p.21)

They argue a strong case for the existence of a link between truancy and

disruption, describing these links as

variations in reaction (summarised neatly as *flight or fight*) (p.3)

The existence of such a link is supported by the experience in the USA. In

each state the education system is funded through Local Education Agencies

so that the schools in a particular area are funded by the people living in that

area. Exclusion rates are therefore lower because of the pressure of local

accountability, but conversely the 'drop out' or truancy rate is high when

compared with British schools.

A theme throughout the outlined approaches was that of inservice training for

teachers in order to develop expertise in dealing with challenging behaviour.

It is interesting to note that towards the end of 1996, Italy's Education

Minister signed a pupils' charter which outlawed traditional forms of

discipline in the *scuola superiore* (upper secondary education). Teachers will

no longer be able to send disruptive pupils out of the room nor to use punitive

suspensions, although permanent exclusion remains an option. Italy's teachers will therefore need to develop alternative ways of dealing with challenging behaviour quickly.

Much of the increased flexibility which was aimed at reducing the numbers of triggers for exclusion concerned collaborative working with the SEN department, including the use of Special Needs Assistants to check the behaviour of the pupils in class by monitoring. The use of individual strategies can be facilitated by the SEN department as this is the focus of special needs work within schools.

Relationship building included comments on the quality of staff relationships in terms of communication, the development of listening skills or the use of an influential person in order to improve staff to pupil communication and the development of trust and self-esteem in the pupil by concentrating upon an area in which the pupil is having some success, or by not challenging the area of strongest concern first. Parental support was also seen as being important within this area.

The important components of the behaviour policy were concerned with the consistent implementation of the policy by all staff, with an increasing intensity of involvement up the discipline ladder.

1. Help the pupil to establish positive relations with one adult.

2. **Formalise judgements about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour using a system of rewards.**

3. **Introduce planned activities matched to pupils' strengths and weaknesses.**

4. **Focus on teaching language and communication.**

5. **Encourage language and communication for meeting individual needs in everyday settings.**

6. **Help the child to anticipate the sequence of daily events and activities.**

7. **Provide opportunities for the pupil to opt out of activities.**

8. **Convey adult expectations clearly and provide consistent feedback.**

9. **Ensure that all staff are aware of new methods of working.**

10. **Provide a written protocol which describes how to respond to each challenging behaviour.**

Figure 22: Ten Positive Approaches to Overcoming Challenging Behaviours in the Classroom

The main approaches in terms of the curriculum were differentiation of work, the promotion of independent rather than teacher directed learning and to develop the sense within all the pupils that success at school is a good experience and one which can be experienced by all. Harris (1995) supports the need for all four elements of policy, curriculum, flexibility of response and relationship building in his work with children with severe learning difficulties who also present challenging behaviour (see **figure 22**).

The benefits of working together and what could be achieved in terms of outcomes for individual pupils was recognised by staff from the pastoral teams and from the Special Educational Needs departments. One Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator placed hope in the Code of Practice that liaison would improve:

> The requirements of the Code of Practice, register, Individual Education Plans have opened communication and for things to work effectively liaison has to happen.

Another Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator used the strategy of placing the pastoral team in her school in her debt for services rendered for particular pupils:

> There are 'target areas' to latch on to, for example a really bad year intake led to more resources from Special Needs and this has led to reciprocal links.

A head of year commented (not the same school):

> I will support the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator because there are benefits long term.

The Role of the Headteacher

A key factor in determining the role of the pastoral care staff and the role of the SEN department and the interface between them in supporting individual pupils is the view of the headteacher.

A low rate of exclusion is more likely if the headteacher has a positive philosophy of saying that school will make every effort to combine the energies of the pastoral and SEN staff in order to keep the individual pupil within school.

If the headteacher has the philosophy of ensuring that the SEN department deals only with pupils who have learning difficulties, then the pupils who are excluded will be dealt with by the pastoral staff and not receive any intervention which may be a collaborative effort between the pastoral and SEN staff. The exclusion rate for such a school may therefore tend to be higher.

There is a need to differentiate between headteachers who keep the pastoral system and SEN departments separate. One reason for the separation may be that the headteacher deliberately chooses such a philosophical stance for political reasons, not wanting to have high levels of disruptive pupils within

the school. By keeping the SEN department tied to the curriculum rather than

to accommodating individual more pastoral type needs, a headteacher can

influence the system so that it becomes less flexible and the child must

conform to the "norm" or suffer the consequence of exclusion. Such action

would also have the likely consequence of moving the individual more

quickly through the disciplinary system so that the exclusion process becomes

quicker.

Other, less Machiavellian motives may pertain, however. The headteacher

may have received promotion through the academic channel and have no

background in either the SEN or pastoral areas. In this case s/he may simply

be unaware of the benefits which a close association between pastoral and

SEN staff can bring.

The Role of Parents

Parental involvement is also important in determining the speed of exclusion.

Schools try to involve parents early in the process, when behaviour

difficulties are beginning to manifest themselves. Parents who are co-

operative and try to work with school as much as possible are more likely to

keep their offspring within the mainstream education system. School staff

become more frustrated and therefore more likely to exclude more quickly

when their efforts to involve parents bear little fruit. In one extreme example,

one pupil was recorded by the school as being excluded *because* of the lack

of parental involvement .

Messages as to the seriousness of the behaviour are also sent to the parents

by the sequence of events, particularly in terms of who communicates with

them. For instance, if a head of year or the SENCo asks to see the parents,

the likelihood is that the school is seeking a positive way forward. If,

however, the headteacher or deputy sees the parents it is more likely to

indicate that the child is to be given a last chance to conform to the

expectations of the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the pastoral and Special Educational Needs

departments vary between schools. Sometimes there is a direct divide

between learning and behaviour difficulties which is not always helpful in the

prevention of exclusions as such a divide tends to inhibit the development of

effective communication. Since poor behaviour is a melee of factors

associated with the child, teachers and school, all three aspects need to be

examined in the light of any difficult behaviour encountered; separating the

functions and roles of staff will tend to accentuate the focus upon within child

and reduce the importance of the latter two factors. Watkins and Wagner

(1995) support this view:

> The tendency for schools to develop specialist roles for particular areas
> can be counter-productive in the case of behaviour. A major research
> study in US schools concluded that one of the characteristics of well-
> disciplined schools was that 'Teachers in these schools handle all or
> most of the routine discipline problems themselves'. This is not merely
> a circular definition of what routine means: it is a statement that
> teachers are not encouraged to 'refer' elsewhere as a matter of routine,
> they handle matters themselves. (p. 61)

This is in line with the findings of McManus (1990) who found that the

schools with a lower than expected exclusion rate had highly developed roles

for form tutors:

> There was an expectation that problems would be dealt with at the
> lowest level in the school's hierarchy. The group tutor was regarded as
> significant and important and decisions were not taken without
> consulting and involving them: in some schools the year team actively
> resisted attempts to refer pupils to higher authority. (p. 22)

Features of effective pastoral care were identified by Galloway (1983),

summarised by Wagner and Watkins (1995):

- principal aim of pastoral care is to enhance educational progress;

- distinguishing 'pastoral' and 'discipline' problems was seen as
  spurious;

- class teachers were not encouraged to pass problems to senior staff;

- pastoral care was based on tutors, from whom advice about pupils
  was sought;

- pastoral care for teachers was in evidence;

- climate promotes discussion of disruptive behaviour without
  recrimination. (p. 61)

The form tutor is able to have a more rounded picture of the individual and

the interaction between the individual and the school and teaching contexts.

The head of year is not able to have such a well-rounded view as the form

tutor simply because of the numbers involved and the day to day contact

which a form tutor has. For similar reasons, a form tutor is also in a better

position to collate information and to explore more collaborative ways of

dealing with the difficult behaviour. The search for collaborative solutions is

more likely to lead to a positive response to the pupil behaviour rather than a

punitive response because staff are looking for a long-term solution rather

than a 'quick fix'. This view is supported by the Elton Report (DES, 1989):

> The tradition in British schools is for teachers to combine academic, disciplinary and welfare functions. Its strength is its integration. It makes knowing and educating the 'whole' pupil possible. ....Our evidence suggests that schools in which form tutors carry out mainly administrative functions, such as taking registers and reading notices, tend to suffer from more disruptive behaviour than schools in which they are actively involved in disciplinary, counselling and guidance activities, monitoring academic progress and other pastoral work. (pp. 111 -112, paragraphs 98 and 100)

The report goes on to suggest that the function of senior members of the

pastoral teams is to advise staff 'rather than dealing with a large number of

pupils directly'.

Watkins and Wagner (1995) identify 3 areas which it is important for schools

to recognise and address in terms of developing collaborative approaches

between the Special Educational Needs staff and the pastoral staff:

- school practice on SEN which arise from behavioural difficulties should be seen as one part of the whole-school approach to behaviour for all pupils. This is in line with the Warnock report recognition that special needs relate to their context;

- a properly preventative approach to difficult behaviour in school will help to minimise the number of pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs. This is in line with the Code of Practice. With a clear whole-school approach, schools will also be able to demonstrate to others that they have followed through their general behaviour policy before special needs are identified;

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- a whole-school approach which considers behaviour at organisational, classroom and individual levels, and which develops problem-solving methods is likely to achieve these goals, especially when the methods have been tuned to the particular features of an individual school. (p. 62)

Conclusions

The data seems to suggest the following reasons for exclusion in priority order:

- the philosophy of the headteacher

- the rate of progress through the discipline route

- external pressures as a result of government policies

The philosophy of the headteacher appears to be extremely important in determining the numbers of exclusions and the reasons why pupils are excluded. The headteacher's philosophy directly influences the exclusion policy of the school in terms of whether there is 'automatic' exclusion for a number of offences, and indirectly influences the amount of collaborative work which can be facilitated via the pastoral and SEN staff working in close co-operation with each other.

The rate of progress through the discipline system has been well documented within the literature as being a major factor in the exclusion process (see for

example McManus, 1990). If form tutors or subject teachers deal with the difficulties posed by the pupils themselves, then the pupil is less likely to be excluded as the 'chain of command' will not be activated. The form tutor will also become more skilled in dealing with discipline problems as more experience is gained in this way, instead of allowing someone else to deal with the difficulty. The rate of progress up the discipline ladder can be slowed down or even halted by co-operation between the SEN and pastoral staff in searching for individual answers to highly complex situations.

Systems need to be developed in schools where they do not already exist in order to facilitate interaction and collaborative working. For example:

- clarity in the role of the form tutor, with the expectation of full . involvement in the pastoral care of their form;

- an effective behaviour policy which will take a preventative approach in an attempt to minimise the numbers of pupils identified on the Code of Practice stages;

- opportunities for staff to work together at philosophical, practical and developmental levels;

- opportunities to adopt a problem-solving stance where openness is valued and encouraged.

External pressures were commonly identified as reasons for the decreased

tolerance levels within schools; as teachers had to react quickly to more and

more new initiatives, so the time needed to sort out individual student

difficulties became more and more limited.

The combination of the factors discussed above led to the development of the

model below (see **figure 23**). The triumvirate of the headteacher, the SEN co-

ordinator and the pastoral staff form the crux of the model. The willingness of

all three to be involved needs to be present. The headteacher must want to

actively prevent exclusions from occurring in order to support the

collaboration of the middle managers. A low rate of exclusion is more likely if

the headteacher has a positive philosophy of inclusion for all members of the

surrounding community (even if the practicalities mean that inclusion for all is

not a possibility as where the pupil has profound and complex multiple

difficulties). S/he will then have a sound philosophical base from which to

explore practical possibilities in terms of keeping children in school. The SEN

co-ordinator and the pastoral care staff need to be comfortable and to have

time to work collaboratively in order to develop quality support which will

enable a flexible response to the challenging behaviour displayed by pupils

who would usually be excluded. The student is thus receiving support from all

three directions instead of solely through the pastoral care system.

Figure 23: A Support Model to Minimise Exclusion from School
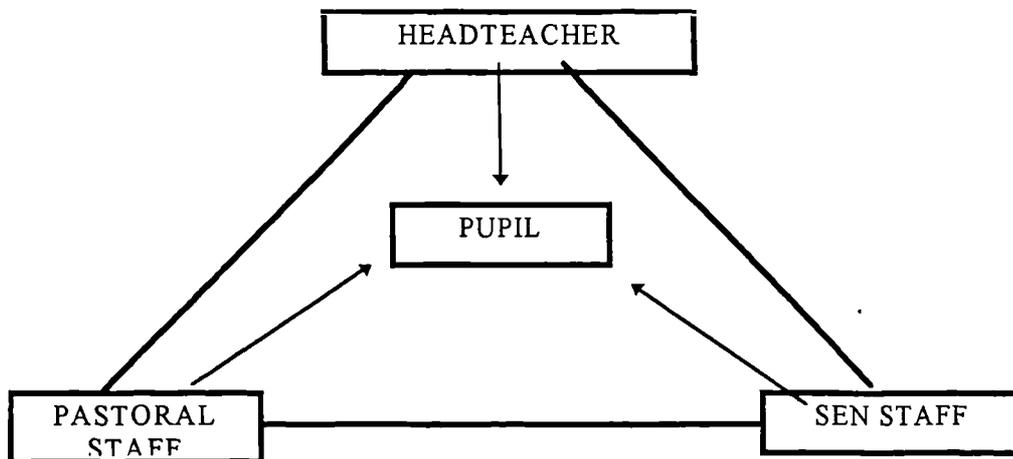
This model does not fit all exclusions. It is suitable for the majority of

exclusions where there is an escalation of either frequency or intensity of

incidents, not for those exclusions which are immediate on a first offence.

Drugs related incidents or incidents involving extreme violence as a first

"offence" may fall into this category, exclusion in such cases following the

philosophy of the headteacher.

In schools where the SEN/pastoral interface is taken seriously and where

collaborative measures are introduced then there is an effect on the exclusion

process.

Effects include:

- slowing down the process;

- reducing exclusion rates in some cases;

- raising awareness of pupil difficulties amongst staff;

- increasing the knowledge base of staff;

- improving communication procedures for pupils with challenging

  behaviour;

- improving the quality of the educational experience for youngsters;

- reducing incidence of "hidden SEN" where a pupil has been able to

  employ strategies to avoid labelling;

- increasing appropriate outside intervention such as that promoted by

  a case conference approach.

The most common effect of collaborative strategies is that of slowing down

the exclusion process, making the route to the senior management team

longer and therefore delaying the exclusion and keeping the child in school

for a longer period. The effect is similar to that described by McManus

(1990) when teachers deal with their own discipline rather than passing the difficulty to a more senior member of staff. In adding an extra rung to the "exclusion ladder" the total process is delayed.

Some instances of collaboration have resulted in the reduction of the total exclusions for the school. For instance, one school made an arrangement for a year 10 student to support lower school maths instead of being made to attend his peer group class; this continued for almost two years and the student gained a higher GCSE pass than estimated by the teacher.

SEN departments often have additional mechanisms for the distribution of information about pupil difficulties and the collection of such information for recording/assessment/reporting purposes, not least the Individual Education Plan which must be prepared for each youngster on the SEN register at stages 2 or 3 and reviewed at regular intervals. One school in the study went further in deciding to amalgamate the SEN and behaviour elements in order to capitalise on the links which would ensue. Such efforts combine to raise staff awareness, increase knowledge of pupils and improve communication about pupils with challenging behaviour.

McManus (1990) states that:

> In schools where there was a positive and preventative approach to
> troublesome behaviour there was a lower than expected rate of
> suspension. (p.22)

It is an argument of this thesis that such a positive and preventative approach

to troublesome behaviour is more likely to exist where there is evidence of

collaboration between the SEN and the pastoral staff which is often facilitated

by the headteacher. One head of year commented:

> The headteacher is very good and handles things well. He wants to
> keep children in school and will go down every avenue, as will the
> SENCo, to walk the extra mile.

The attitude which is fostered within the school towards pupils is important in

terms of the reasons for exclusion and in the willingness of the school as an

entity to endeavour to educate the pupils within their care. Most SEN

departments will attempt to make the school flexible enough to encompass

the needs of all pupils.

There were a number of instances in the case study data where collaborative

work between the Special Educational Needs department and pastoral staff

had had an effect on slowing down the rate at which individuals were

excluded. The most common strategy used was that of in-class support where

the Special Educational Needs department staff were used to help the

individual students to access the curriculum and to control or monitor their

behaviour. One deputy head commented:

> In-class support is the most beneficial. He causes no trouble so long as an extra adult is there..... He needs positive adult interaction.

Another boy was supported by the Special Educational Needs department in split groups:

> The groups are performing well. The child does not have outbursts any more in this area.

One girl had a key worker assigned to her who was a special needs teacher, with in-class support given throughout year 10:

> The girl now attends 3 options in the alternative curriculum (12 periods per week) and the rest in normal lessons. Attendance is still poor, but her behaviour is not now causing difficulties.

Similarly, one boy had been given 10 hours individual tuition in school with access to other areas of the curriculum where he was successful. Another high school had used a male Special Educational Needs teacher to support Carl:

> With this student every strategy has been used. A more positive male role model was required. Carl has had a very violent home background so he needs to be exposed to alternative ways to behave. He is leaving in a term's time and I think the fact that we've held him and that much has been positive is a success story.

The seeking of more child-centred flexible responses to the challenging behaviour such as the modification of timetable or of the curriculum in some other way helps to improve the quality of the educational experience for the student and can help to improve low self-esteem which often accompanies

challenging behaviours. Sometimes pupils 'hide' behind their behaviour in

order to disguise difficulties which they encounter with aspects of the

curriculum and which their low self-esteem will not allow them to come to

terms with. There were a number of instances in the case conference data

where support had been provided through a statement of Special Educational

Needs and the pupil had improved or been maintained within school. When

the support was then removed, the pupil could no longer be maintained by the

school and the pupil was excluded. For example, one boy had a reading age

of 7.5 and a chronological age of 11.5 when he was excluded. He had extra

support but when the statement was removed because he had improved, the

behaviour difficulties reemerged and ultimately led to his permanent

exclusion. Another boy had been given extra help in the Special Educational

Needs department by being withdrawn from German lessons. This went on

for a year then the boy stopped going to the Special Educational Needs

department and the behaviour deteriorated and so he was excluded. Duncan

was statemented and had been indefinitely excluded. As a result of this he had

had his statemented hours extended in order to help improve his basic skills.

He was then kept in school for a further year before being permanently

excluded. Harold was statemented and given extra support in the middle

school where he improved. On transfer to high school the support was withdrawn and no extra support was given. A good system of liaison had been established between the special needs teacher, the school and Harold's mum whilst he was at middle school. The sudden change from a small to a large school with changing lessons etc. had been identified as the catalyst for the behaviour difficulties to develop again. In contrast, Brian began with behaviour difficulties at middle school when he could not cope wlith the level of the work. He was supported through the Special Educational Needs department within school and in addition attended the reading development unit which was a local educational authority provision. In this way the high school was able to support him through to year 9.

Keith had reading difficulties which were identified in the first school. He was supported all through middle school and reached his last year there before he was permanently excluded.

Daniel was statemented and was indefinitely excluded for fighting just outside the school gates. The school expressed a willingness to take him back at the exclusion case conference. He had previously had a support teacher in English which the school were willing to extend to include support in maths. They also contracted to provide him with a regular one day a week work experience placement and to modify his timetable in order to avoid the 'stress

points'. The Special Educational Needs department featured strongly in the

new arrangements. In contrast to this, a deputy headteacher in one school

stated of Anthony:

The SN provision in school is not good enough to keep him in school.

Within the case conference data there were 2 examples of pupils being

excluded whilst the statementing process was continuing: Paul was excluded

because there was no interim support avialable to him before the statementing

process was completed; Gary moved from another local educational authority

where the statementing process had begun, but was excluded before the local

educational authority could begin the statementing process again. In these two

cases the local educational authority could not provide the level of support

required quickly enough.

There were numerous examples within the part 2 interview data where

Special Educational Needs and pastoral collaboration was emphasised as

being crucial in keeping pupils within the school. One head of year stressed

the importance of being able to treat people differently and how the SEN

department can help to keep people in school:

> This is difficult because staff want people to be treated in the same
> way. They are individual children with individual needs. For instance, a
> year 11 girl who was on a final warning for attendance displayed very

difficult behaviour when she was in school. So with the help of the Special Educational Needs staff she was withdrawn from the relevant subject and this took account of the needs of the child, the staff and prevented the situation from developing.

Another head of year stressed the importance of developing good communication with the Special Educational Needs department:

> There are regular meetings (half termly) between the head of year, head of school and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The face to face communication is vital.

A need was expressed by one head of year who wanted:

> A facility within the heart of a school for pupils who can't cope with the normal curriculum.

She suggested that special school staff with experience of emotional and behavioural difficulties could be employed to staff this resource, recognising the role for Special Educational Needs intervention in delaying or preventing exclusion. Similarly, another head of year suggested access to more extra help earlier and emphasised a revised role for the Schools' Psychological Service in helping pupils to stay within the mainstream school.

One school had a very close relationship between a unit provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties and Special Educational Needs. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator was also line manager of the unit which was

used as a short term placement; pupils being reintegrated into the mainstream with special needs support in-class when required to enable them to remain there.

One head of year had worked with the Special Educational Needs department with a boy called Douglas:

> Douglas had a history of being either a victim or a bully from middle school. He had been isolated from lessons, had been given a 'blue report card' for behaviour and progress; had had 1 to 1 teaching, being extracted to the library; he had had 1 to 2 teaching (with a friend) and had Special Educational Needs in-class support. He was a danger to himself and to others. Between us we kept him in school for 18 months longer than he should have lasted.

The same school provided another good example of how good collaboration can work:

> Joshua was a school phobic. It took a year to get him into school. We had 'mum' working with him in the Special Educational Needs department with partial attendance so that he could go when he wanted. Eventually, we got him to be able to stand outside the classroom where he should have been. One by one, we got the whole class to come outside to him and eventually he was able to come inside the classroom.

Collaboration is also likely to increase the discussion of student behaviour in individual terms, thus promoting the involvement of outside agencies who could help to bring a fresh perspective, time and expertise to the difficulties encountered by staff.

Collaboration is therefore more than the sum of the constituent parts. It encourages imaginative responses to perennial difficulties facing the teacher in balancing the needs of the individual against the rights of the majority, thus percolating an ethos of acceptance of students and the will to increase systems flexibility in order to ensure their right to an education is taken seriously.

Chapter 10

Disruptive Pupils: Whose Responsibility?

EBD or EBM? Disruption Considered.

There is much debate within schools and services about whether the child

cannot access the curriculum within a school because of emotional and

behavioural difficulties or whether the student, particularly at the age of

adolescence, chooses not to access the curriculum for reasons which are

connected with the development of self-image in relation to peers, or the

sense that school has been outgrown and it is time to move onto more adult

occupations. This is seen by some as being 'educationally bloody-minded'

(EBM - Lawrence, Steed and Young, 1984). The situation is not quite so

straight forward as the allocation of labels would suggest. There are complex

interactions between the education system, society and governments which

have resulted in reduced funding, fewer employment opportunities for school

leavers and a profession which is increasingly demoralised (Atkinson, 1989).

Teachers are working as hard as ever. However, the emphasis by Ofsted

(1995) on identifying those teachers who are performing less well than should

be expected has resulted in undue prominence being given to poor teachers

with the result that fear is engendered in many teachers who are modelling

good practice but have had their confidence undermined. Although there is

much which is good about the inspection process, in that it promotes school

and teacher self-examination and is an instrument for school improvement,

the focus which it places upon individuals within the system can be counter-

productive. I have inspected a range of special schools, most of which had

carefully thought out policies and practices with the interests of the children

at heart, even though of course there are always areas which are identified for

improvement. However, I have never inspected in a school where the staff

were confident about the inspection process and how they would match up to

the requirements. Some staff, usually the teachers modelling best practice,

were extremely anxious about the inspection process; if teachers are working

under such stressful conditions this surely must have an effect on the ethos

within the school and generate anxieties within the pupils as well as the staff.

Were the process a more co-operative, less threatening one it may enable the

teaching profession to address key issues for action within the school with

more integrity and vision than is promoted by the inspection system:

previously for instance by the reporting of outstanding and very poor teachers

and currently by the reporting of teachers' grades to the headteacher. There is

beginning to be a shortage of primary headteachers nationally as the teachers

who would take their places are not putting themselves forward for

promotion. Atkinson (1989) goes further:

> The scale of difficulties facing our schools goes unrecognised by too
> many in our society. The scale can be illustrated by the fact that 30
> years ago our young people were maturing at a later stage than now,
> but in many cases were leaving school at an earlier age and taking up
> employment - the gap between adolescence and employment was
> perhaps only 12 months. Today many girls and boys at school are more
> confident, articulate, mature and consequently, in some cases, more
> threatening, yet the time lapse between adolescence and employment
> could be three to four years. It is the schools, and their teachers, who
> have had to shoulder this burden, increasingly so in a climate where
> opportunities are diminished and our pupils rightly feel let down,
> frustrated and alienated from a society that appears insensitive to their
> plight. (p. 81)

There is some movement to address the difficulty of the changing needs of

adolescence by bridging the gap between pre- and post-sixteen, for example

by the 14 - 19 initiative. It is worth asking the question whether the needs of

many 14 year olds would be better met in an environment which allows more

flexibility and is less academic in nature. Some schools are offering

qualifications such as GNVQ which are more vocational in nature, but is this

going far enough? Do many youngsters need an environment such as that

provided through the further education colleges rather than schools? The

'Cities in Schools' (Stephenson, 1996) approach follows this through for a

few youngsters who are not accessing schooling because of exclusion or for

other reasons (see chapter 11) but I would suggest that this is a way which

could be used to improve the motivation of a number of disaffected teenagers

who feel that they have outgrown school. As a head of year commented:

> There is a dichotomy between being 14 with adult actions such as
> drugs, sex, etc.

This is not an indictment of individual schools and teachers but an indication

that perhaps there is a systemic failure which needs addressing in a more

positive and firmer manner rather than being tinkered with around the edges,

so that pupils can make the right choices and take some responsibility for

their own learning. Stephenson (1996) comments:

> attempts to distinguish between 'disaffection' and 'learning difficulties'
> may be of value in turf wars between budget holders but do little to
> meet the needs of the large group of children who are excluded from
> achieving their potential. (p. 253)

Surely it is not beyond the bounds of the policy-makers to design an

education system which gives access to the further education colleges for

those pupils for whom it is appropriate, building some flexibility to the system

so that the needs of more pupils can be addressed. As Stephenson further

comments:

> Behaviour is often specific to a particular situation or environment.
> Given the range of health, social welfare and education needs of
> children with multiple problems then a flexible continuum of services is
> implied. (p. 254)

The difficulty of addressing needs which are not educational within an educational setting such as a school should not be underestimated. There are many instances nationally of education and social services or health disagreeing over the provision of resources which are not under their department's remit. There are discussions within the local educational authority studied for instance about the levels of therapy provision within the special schools, and the debate about whether hydrotherapy is an educational need or a physical need rages on in many areas. Some aspects of these issues are now being picked up in some of the special school inspection reports as they impact upon the quality of education which the child is receiving. All this despite the exhortations in the legislation for agencies and departments to work together in the best interests of the child. How many school staff know about the responsibilities which they have under the Children Act 1989 and how many social services departments know of their responsibilities under the Education Act 1993?

Inevitably, with the assessment and statementing system focusing on the individual and their educational needs, there is encouragement for schools, parents, medical and social agencies particularly with primary aged children to put them forward for statementing, as statementing often brings extra resources to the child and the school. There have been instances within the

local educational authority where schools have concentrated on getting a few

children statemented so that there will be the associated resources within

school to help the school to meet the needs of a wider group of children. This

is possible within the current system, and some headteachers would argue

that in this climate of ever-shrinking budgets, it is ethical and desirable to use

support allocated to a statemented pupil in this way. It can be argued that the

reason why numbers put forward for assessment and statementing fall

towards the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in the primary sector do so

because there is little incentive for the school to push the process forward and

spend a great deal of time writing advice etc. if the benefits are going to be

reaped by the following school. Similarly, by the end of key stage 3 in the

secondary sector, it is unlikely that pupils will be put forward because of the

time taken for the assessment process to produce a statement (currently in the

local educational authority studied, only 5% of statements are completed

within the statutory 18 week period).

Hayden (1997) expresses the view that

> Special Educational Needs were likely to be associated with a large
> proportion of excluded primary age children. (p. 55)

This connection of Special Educational Needs with primary aged pupils is

supported by the profile of statements for emotional and behavioural

difficulties within the local educational authority studied, where 105 children

are statemented within the mainstream primary sector for emotional and

behavioural difficulties and 64 within the mainstream secondary sector

(where emotional and behavioural difficulties are taken as the primary reason

for statementing, correct July 1997).

Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between the learning difficulties and

the behaviour difficulties and almost impossible to decide the causes of the

difficulties as the nurturing context has a large effect on the individual

student. The nurturing context consists of all the environments which

contribute to the child's development. Hayden (1997) suggests that

> Identifying the likelihood or assessed level of Special Educational
> Need in those children was in some ways like following a moving
> target. (p. 55)

The assessment and statementing procedures are a threshold point which

identifies the children with the most severe and complex needs (notionally

around 2% of the school population). There are many more children for

whom it is the responsibility of the school to provide for their needs in

accordance with the Code of Practice. Hayden (1997) identifies 87% of

pupils in her study of primary aged pupils with Special Educational Needs as

opposed to 66% for the total population in my own study (ACE, 1993,

Hayden et al., 1996 and Moore, 1996 also identified a large proportion of

excluded pupils with Special Educational Needs). Indeed it is now becoming

apparent as the Code of Practice is implemented that more youngsters who

are being excluded within the local educational authority studied have been

placed on the Special Educational Needs register of the excluding school, as

the statistical evidence from the pupil referral service is beginning to indicate.

The idea of Special Educational Needs as a moving target is one which is not

new to the Schools' Psychological Service who regularly work with pupils

over a period of time, then close the case only to reopen it again at some

point in the child's schooling. Typically this will be at a stress point for the

child for instance on school transfer from primary to secondary. Similarly

there will be times when the student moves down the Code of Practice stages

as there are periods of improvement or stability within the child's

environment. In the primary sector this may be associated with a particular

teacher or a relatively stress-free, stable period within the home or other

environment.

Whether a child is labelled emotional and behavioural difficulties or EBM can

be a moot point. The younger the child, the more likely (s)he is to be labelled

emotional and behavioural difficulties; however, to label a pupil as EBM

implies that the behaviour is deliberate and that the student has chosen to act

in this manner. Some teachers view the behaviour as a personal challenge to

their authority; as a 'fight' to be 'won':

> One child was deliberately excluded because one member of staff
> insisted that he was excluded, so this was like a victory. (Head of year)

Stirling (1991) takes this further:

> Not all schools were attempting to accommodate their more difficult
> pupils. I visited one school described by the head of a support unit as
> 'in the big throw-out game'. The deputy head was at pains to explain
> what in effect was seen as societal expectations..."The governors will
> point blank refuse (to accommodate) these characters. This is right
> because they need more personalised attention." (p. 9)

Views within individual schools regarding difficult behaviour seem to range

from one extreme to the other, leading to philosophical conflict between

teachers. A head of year said of the readmission of excluded pupils:

> (We have to) tell staff and children not to make comments like, 'Oh,
> you're back are you?' We try not to make it into an issue.

Another head of year disagreed with the viewpoint which some of her

colleagues had expressed:

> To provide alternatives which are good equals a reward.

It is difficult to come to a useful definition as disruption means different

things to different teachers and in different schools, at different times. It is

also difficult to differentiate between those pupils who are deemed to have

emotional and behavioural difficulties and those who have not. As the Special

Educational Needs Co-ordinator in the key stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit said:

> We have pupils who are statemented for emotional and behavioural
> difficulties and those who are excluded from mainstream schools. If
> you didn't know which pupils were statemented you would not be able
> to tell the difference. For teaching purposes there is no difference.

This may be due to the fact that the pupils who enter the Pupil Referral Unit

are the ones who are the most challenging to the mainstream schools, but the

implication within the comment is that they should all be statemented or

conversely that none of them should be statemented. Inherent in the

statementing process is the inconsistency within the pattern of statements

given and the resources attached to the statements. This must always be the

case given that the educational context has an effect on the needs of the

individual. If a statemented child moves from one school to another, the

statement may not be necessary because of differences in attitudes or

provision within the school. It is therefore the intention of this thesis to

discuss disruptive behaviour as a whole rather than separating it into the two

types of the section title.

Features of Disruptive Behaviour

The first feature of disruptive behaviour is that it takes place within a context:

Disruptive behaviour in schools is not a new problem though several lines of evidence point to a recent increase in its dimensions. Clearly the nature of disruption changes with the norms of the school and what is expected of pupils. The requirements of Mr. Squeers at Dotheboys differ markedly from A S Neill at Summerhill. (Lawrence, Steed and Young, 1984, p. 8)

The above quotation serves to underline the contextual nature of disruption and the subjectivity involved in defining it. In similar vein, Reynolds (1976) likened the search for the causes of delinquency in school as the criminological equivalent of the quest for the Holy Grail. The principal of the Schools' Psychological Service within the authority studied held the following opinion:

Pupils do not have Special Educational Needs when they are no longer in the education system.

What he meant by this comment was the idea that the needs of schools are responsible for creating the context in which some pupils inevitably fail. I can see his point. McDermott, (1984) in his work on the use of sanctuaries concluded that the labelling of pupils as disruptive presumes:

1. That there are children who are disruptive *per se*, and once recognised as the devils they are, they simply need to be excluded from the classroom.

2. That the 'disruptive pupil' can be clearly recognised as a special case and therefore obviously different from the 'normal learner' in any classroom.

3. That disruption is always a bad thing and what is being disrupted is always good.

4. That a major school problem will be solved if the classroom teacher identifies the disruptive child and gets him excluded.
(pp. 45-46)

Hastings (1992) puts forward a method of motivating pupils, using a case study of a primary school boy. He suggests that the teacher technique can be altered to increase the motivation of targeted pupils within the group, thus reducing the amount of failure within the class as a whole.

The importance of the context for disruptive behaviour has long been recognised and most books which address the subject have sections devoted to endorsing this (see for instance Cooper, 1995a; Furlong, 1985; Mongon et al., 1989). Ofsted (1995) also appreciate the importance of the context within which poor behaviour occurs as shown through their framework:

> Inspectors must evaluate and report on pupils' response to the teaching and other provision made by the school, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, as shown by:
>
> ■ their attitudes to learning;
>
> ■ their behaviour, including incidence of exclusions;
>
> ■ the quality of relationships in the school including the degree of racial harmony, where applicable;

- other aspects of their personal development, including their contributions to the life of the community. (p. 60)

The framework then goes on to exemplify the above criteria, in the light of what the school does to facilitate an appropriate response from the pupils. A second feature of disruptive behaviour is that it may be linked to cultural factors when the context of the school comes into conflict with the sub-culture of the pupils concerned. It is important to differentiate between culture and class. The sub-culture to which a pupil belongs is not synonymous with class. So it is possible for middle-class pupil to become involved with a sub-culture which is prevalent within the peer group, as it is equally possible for a working-class pupil to subscribe to the culture which places value on education. It was the knowledge of the sub-culture within a particular school catchment area which led a head of year to comment:

We need to instil that it's O.K. to be a winner, successful.

Some of the pupils within this particular school came from a sub-culture which did not value education per se and the staff needed to work hard to dissipate the conflict which was generated by this factor (see Bird et al., 1980 for a discussion of how conflict between home and school values can lead to disruptive behaviour).

A third feature of disruptive behaviour is that much of it disappears of its own

accord, without any sort of 'treatment'. Topping (1983) calls this

'spontaneous remission' and estimates that two thirds of pupils displaying

behaviour difficulties will fall into this category. Linked to this idea is the fact

that even the most disruptive pupil behaves in an acceptable manner for the

majority of the time in school. (S)he is labelled disruptive because incidents

are frequent enough and significant enough to disrupt the lesson in the view of

the teacher (for discussion of how labelling affects the pupil see Bird, 1980;

Docking, 1980; Furlong, 1985; Kyriacou, 1986a).

Sometimes, disruptive behaviour may be a group or whole class phenomenon,

or refer to large numbers of pupils within a single school in a difficult area

(Lawrence, Steed and Young, 1984).

As outlined above, I have not attempted a definition of either emotional and

behavioural difficulties or of what constitutes difficult behaviour. Garner and

Gains (1996) confirm the futility of trying to do so, as any definition will rely

on the professional and subjectivity of the person trying to define the terms:

> as many workers in the emotional and behavioural difficulties field are
> aware, a focus on definition is not entirely useful. There has been a
> tendency to use definitions in a negative, deficit-laden way.
> Maladjustment is a case in point, for one is bound to ask, from what is
> the pupil demonstrating a lack of adjustment to? What if the system
> (the school) is inefficient, poorly organised and in current parlance, is
> 'failing'? Is it not a good thing that the pupil is failing to adjust to such

poor standards? Looked at from the perspective of school improvement, there are powerful arguments for suggesting that a continued focus on what is 'wrong with the child' will deflect attention from those aspects of the school which are in all probability unsatisfactory for *all* children. (pp. 141 - 142)

Teacher Response

Fish (1989) criticised the practice of special education as a whole for a lack

of precision in the objectives and ways of working:

> It is often argued that a lack of resources is the main reason for the vagueness and imprecision. Later chapters will imply that the personnel in the special education field do not have the tools, the training and the experience to make more precise formulations. It will further be argued that only a more precise definition of the levels of intervention provided by a special education service and more precise job descriptions for individuals will protect resources and make a reasonable case for appropriate special educational provision in a changing school system where 'economic' considerations may be paramount. (p. 20)

The advent of Individual Education Plans has just begun to address some of

the issues of vagueness which Fish levels at special education as a whole but

could equally be applicable to the provision for excluded pupils. He asks a

number of questions which are pertinent to the youngsters who are excluded

and end their education in an alternative provision:

- What is actually being done in a setting described as providing 'special education'?

- What are the variables, for example curriculum, relationships and techniques, which determine the nature of those settings?

- What are the limits of what can be achieved in a particular setting such as a school or unit?

- How far does the location of the setting determine what can be done?

- What is the relationship between what is going on in the setting and what is being offered to contemporaries in primary and secondary schools? (p. 21)

These are important questions to answer if the education of excluded pupils is to be effective. However, these questions must be held in tandem with the teacher's own frames of reference. Gersch (1996) indicates the large part that teachers' emotional involvement takes when dealing with challenging behaviour:

> Most of the literature on behaviour management and techniques of changing children's behaviour naturally tends to focus upon methods, procedures, techniques and strategies which teachers might employ, often omitting to give sufficient weight to the emotional experiences of teachers facing challenging behaviour. Their feelings, attitudes and emotional responses, however, are critical in determining effective outcomes to any interventions. (p. 165)

The importance of teacher response to challenging behaviour has been highlighted by Atkinson (1989) who asked teachers 2 questions about the poor behaviour of pupils:

- What did you feel?
- What did you want to do to the child?

I invariably receive responses such as 'anger', 'fear', 'frustration', 'inadequacy', 'failure', 'my ideals went out of the window', 'I wanted to throttle him/her'. While I accept that these may be legitimate responses to difficult circumstances, I also reflect that these responses are from mature, talented and committed teachers. (p. 83)

The above comments show the difficulty for teachers in being able to step

back from the situation and to be more analytical, as the behaviour arouses a

strong emotional response which is often difficult to control. The teacher does

however need to adopt a professional stance which can see past the behaviour

to the pupil, and must take the responsibility for moving the relationship with

the pupil forward. De Pear (1997) in her study of excluded pupils found that

> The data show that it might not be the fact that these pupils had no wish to take responsibility in the learning situation but that some teachers dealing with these pupil-subjects, prior to exclusion, gave them little opportunity to succeed. (p. 20)

If teachers can find opportunities to give success to these pupils, then the

teacher-pupil relationship will move on, particularly in the areas of the

development of trust and the development of mutual respect. De Pear (1997)

goes on to conclude of one pupil's response to teachers:

> Like others, he reported that the respect that the teachers showed him was crucial in terms of the behaviour that he would manifest. (p. 20)

Sometimes teachers focus on the element of control rather than on the reasons why pupils are disruptive:

> Evidence from the teachers regarding the importance given to control issues is confirmed by half the pupils who report that some teachers tend to be 'deviance-provocative' (Jordan 1974) in that they presume that classroom interaction is a battle of wills and that certain pupils do not intend to work. (De Pear, 1997 p. 20)

Holt (1983) commented in his conclusion to his work:

> What have I learned from all this? That children love learning and are extremely good at it. On this matter I have no more doubts. (p. 297)

School Response

If one accepts the premise that disruptive behaviour can be reduced within a school by the ethos, approaches and attitudes prevalent within the school, the school response needs to be in terms of whole school approaches. The obvious place to start is with the behaviour policy (required in law by the Education Act 1997). HMI (Ofsted, 1996) suggest that a good behaviour policy has the following characteristics:

> Good policies are those which embody values of respect and responsibility and set out their implications in clear language, accessible to all. They are implemented in such a way as to make staff and pupils clear about expectations and about the sanctions and rewards to be used. They are followed with consistency by *all* staff, and are known to, and supported by, parents. The most important feature of policies is that they be clear and implemented. (p. 17)

Galvin et al. (1993) made a significant contribution to the debate when they

suggested that pupil involvement is crucial to developing an effective

behaviour policy. Reid (1986) identified seven causes of disruptive behaviour

which are useful to schools as they give a framework for whole school

developmental work on reducing disruptive behaviour:

- underachievement;

- the family;

- links between school and parents;

- peer group relationships

- the gulf between the general public and teachers;

- schooling per se;

- teachers.

The arguments for the effectiveness which whole-school approaches can

secure are neatly summarised by Atkinson (1989):

> By paying attention to specific recommendations of Hargreaves (1984),
> Thomas (1985) and Mortimore (1988), schools and teachers can come
> to realise that the reduction of disruptive behaviour is likely to be
> achieved, not by behaviour modification techniques, punitive sanctions
> or by delving into alleged within-child factors, but by modifying those
> school structures, and their interaction with pupils, that have such a
> significant influence on pupil attainment and behaviour. In this way
> they will be able to meet the needs of individual pupils in a more

effective manner. In short, I am stating unequivocally that effective schools do exist. (p. 87)

For the majority of pupils who are presenting the most difficult behaviour for schools to manage, by definition they should now be somewhere on the continuum provided by the Code of Practice stages. Those pupils at stage 2 or above should, I would argue, have an Individual Education Plan. In addition to the whole-school approaches outlined above, for these pupils (a very small proportion of the total numbers of pupils on the Special Educational Needs register if there is an effective school behaviour policy), it will also be necessary to consider issues of curriculum access, educational target-setting and external agency input on an individual level.

The Code of Practice suggests that pupils and parents be involved in the development of IEPs. Such a suggestion places an important element of involvement therefore of some control in the pupil's sphere of influence which is important for two reasons. Firstly it says to the pupil 'you matter - what do you as an individual think?' therefore beginning to recognise that non-conformity towards a set of externally imposed rules does not lower the value of an individual per se. Secondly, it emphasises the importance of the consequences which follow particular behaviours and helps the student to develop the links between how an individual can cause specific reactions in

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others, particularly when viewed at a distance within the area of target setting and in the evaluation of those targets.

The process must be made relevant and useful to the student and to the teachers involved. If the student is involved in target setting, then the student, the parents or carers and all the members of staff who teach him or her need to know what the targets are and whether the student has reached them. This has implications for the numbers of targets on any one IEP, which should be two or three at the most.

Another valuable aspect of IEP targets is that they are attainable by the student. What is the point of setting unrealistic targets which are either unattainable because the change in behaviour is too great (although they may be targets which are reached very easily by the majority of students), or are too vague to be conceptualised and therefore understood by the student, or are unachievable within the time allowed?

Theoretically, IEPs which are initially implemented should become less necessary as individual teachers are able to expand their positive experience and knowledge of pupils with behaviour difficulties, developing strategies which are appropriate responses to pupils' poor behaviour thus reducing the incidence of poor behaviour within the school.

Practically, this would need a commitment of most if not all staff within an individual school, beginning most significantly with the commitment of the headteacher.

An IEP is more likely to change behaviour if there is:

- Clarity about the targets by both pupil and staff.

- Enthusiasm from all people involved with a commitment to internalising the changes in behaviour.

- Achievability within the timescale and within the ability of the pupil. Build upon what the pupil can already achieve.

- Success, which initially will need to be reasonably short term in order to maintain the enthusiasm.

- Evaluation in order to clarify to all concerned the progress which has been made, and to further build upon that progress within the next IEP cycle.

The whole aim of course is for the cycle of IEPs for that particular student to cease.

Student response

The student response is an area which is beginning to command a deal of attention from researchers trying to understand the exclusion process from the student's perspective. Some writers have made the connection between

truancy and exclusion (Cullingford and Morrison, 1996; Kinder et al., 1995).

Cullingford and Morrison interviewed 25 young offenders and concluded:

> Although truancy is a concept which implies personal choice it has a
> very close relationship to exclusion. Throughout the analysis it became
> impossible to separate and study the two concepts in isolation. From
> the pupil's perception, exclusion not only exists in its formal or
> physical aspects but also includes the personal sense of social isolation
> that leads the pupil to impose exclusion on him or herself through
> truanting. In addition, it becomes evident that truancy does not
> necessarily involve physical absence from school but can be manifested
> in behaviour such as refusing to work and participate, or simply
> 'switching off' in class. (p. 147)

With such evidence, it is difficult to identify pupils within the categories as an

individual may be a truant, a disruptive pupil and excluded all within a short

space of time. It is important therefore to acknowledge the complete range of

disaffection, and the artificial nature of the categories that are used within the

research. Furlong (1985) casts further doubts on the use of artificial

categories by suggesting that there has not been the same amount of research

involving disaffected girls because their methods of showing disaffection do

not lead to conflict:

> Research on girls from different theoretical perspectives seems to
> suggest that they may be equally disaffected from school as boys but
> that their means of expressing that disaffection is less overt and
> therefore leads to less conflict. (p. 73)

Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties are more likely to suffer

from a low self-esteem. Lund (1986) found that:

> the self-esteem of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
> ... is significantly lower than self-esteem of children in ordinary
> schools... This is the first time a direct link has been demonstrated
> between emotional and behavioural difficulties and low self-esteem. (p.
> 30)

Lawrence (1988) suggests that our self-image is resistant to change, so

progress must be gradual. He puts forward a hierarchy of self-esteem (see

figure 24), and indicates that there are specific areas where we may have low

self-esteem. As a child grows into an adult (s)he develops strategies in order

to cope with these situations. In this way, our overall or 'global' self-esteem

remains unaffected. Children, however are often in a position where they

cannot control what is happening to them, so consistent failure in one

particular area may result in the lowering of the global self-esteem:

> The child is not able to compartmentalise his/her life as can the adult. If
> we adults cannot play chess, for instance, we avoid the chess club. If
> the child fails in, say, reading, he/she cannot avoid the situation... it is
> not the failure to achieve which produces low self-esteem, it is the way
> the significant people in the child's life react to the failure. (Lawrence,
> 1988, p. 5)

GLOBAL SELF-ESTEEM

ACADEMIC   NON-ACADEMIC

ENGLISH   MATHS   SCIENCE   OTHER   SOCIAL   PHYSICAL

PARENTAL   OTHERS   APPEARANCE   SKILLS
RELATIONSHIPS
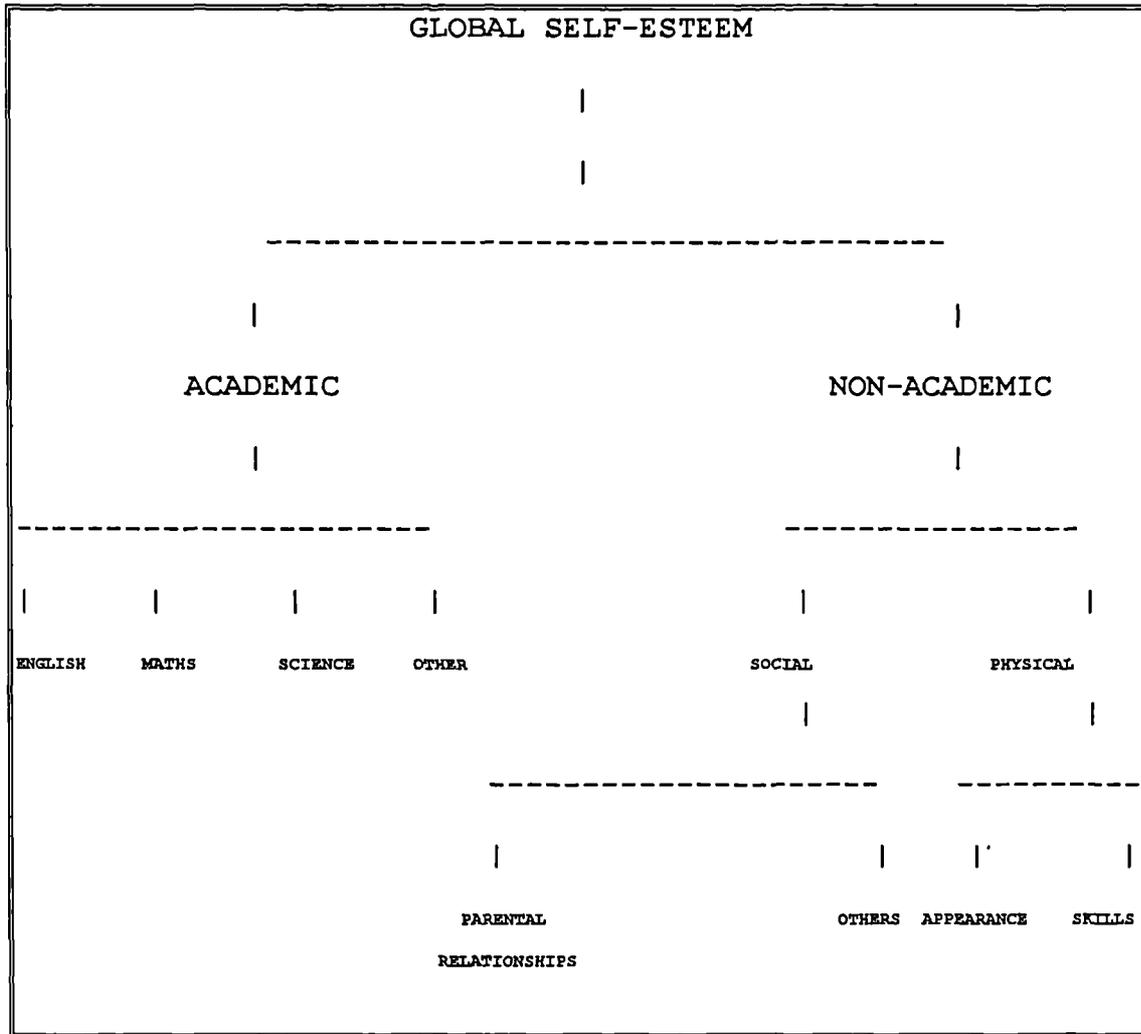
Figure 24: Lawrence's Hierarchy of Self-esteem

Szirom and Dyson (1990) list the following factors which help to shape a

self-image:

age *gender* *race* *name* *fitness* *health*
culture *religion* *social class* *personal* *achievement*
role expectations *reactions of* *others*
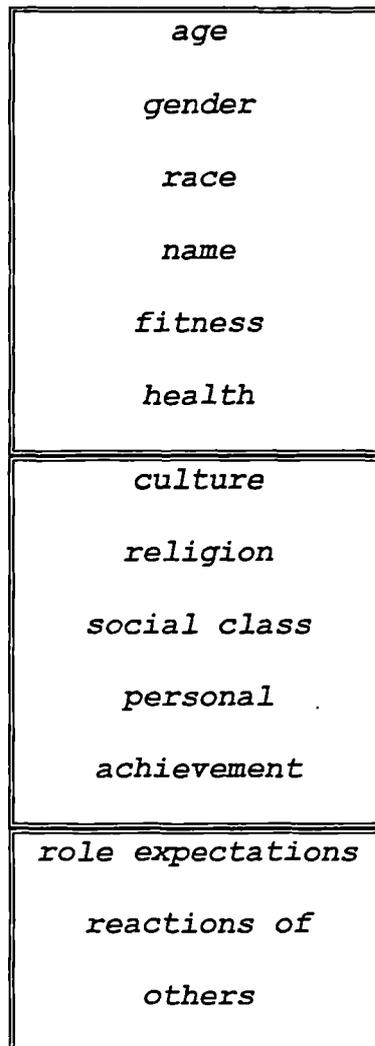
These factors combine to produce the positive and negative feelings which we

have about ourself, or self-esteem.

Robinson and Maines (1989) suggest that a person's self-esteem:

is determined by the way he interprets the messages he receives from 'significant others'. . . determines the way he behaves, learns and relates to other people.
(p.78)

Children arrive at school already labelled, with their self-image forming.

Societal influences, parental expectations and attitudes have helped the child

to form this self-image, which can incorporate a low or high self-esteem:

> A high self-esteem encourages self-respect, satisfying relationships, effective communication skills, independence, the ability to meet personal, social, emotional and economic needs and confidence in personal rights. (Szirom and Dyson, p.16)

Each new school forms a different environment; a new set of teachers give

scope to revise the self-image which can be modified through new

relationships and opportunities. Likewise, self-esteem is neither static nor

simple, but a vibrant complex melee of environmental, social and personal

interactions, which is affected by the twists and turns of the individual's life.

Labelling of others is a natural human tendency: putting people 'in boxes'

sets parameters for social interactions and is an important factor in feedback

in order to define self-perception of ability. Labelling of self also plays a part

in the discovery of aptitudes and abilities.

Labels can be used in order to reinforce self-esteem: where comments are

made about children, make them positive. As Kyriacou (1991) comments:

> If your comments to pupils are largely positive, supportive,
> encouraging, praising, valuing and relaxing, rather than negative,
> deprecating, harsh, attacking, dominating and anxiety-provoking, this
> will do much to foster pupils' self-esteem. (p.75)

Any of the following can be indications of low self-esteem:

- little or no work is produced; if there is no attempt there can be no failure

  and therefore no humiliation;

- arrogance or boastfulness is displayed, in an attempt to convince others of

  personal worth;

- withdrawn, timid behaviour.

Manifestations depend upon the temperament of the child: whether the child

is inclined to introversion or extroversion. Types of behaviour include:

- work-avoidance techniques

- compensation techniques

- short-term improvements but little long-term progress.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           RELATIONSHIP SKILLS             │
│                                           │
│               * * * * * *                 │
│                                           │
│              Label the act                │
│                                           │
│         Take the failure yourself         │
│                                           │
│                Apologise                  │
│                                           │
│              Pat on the back              │
│                                           │
│            A whisper in time              │
├─────────────────────────────────────────┤
│              CHILD SKILLS                 │
│                                           │
│                * * * * *                  │
│                                           │
│            Review work habits             │
│                                           │
│          Study skills/methods             │
├─────────────────────────────────────────┤
│              TEACHER SKILLS               │
│                                           │
│               * * * * * *                 │
│                                           │
│           Explanation skills              │
│                                           │
│         Classroom organisation            │
│                                           │
│              Teaching aids                │
│                                           │
│             Teaching methods              │
│                                           │
│          Assessment procedures            │
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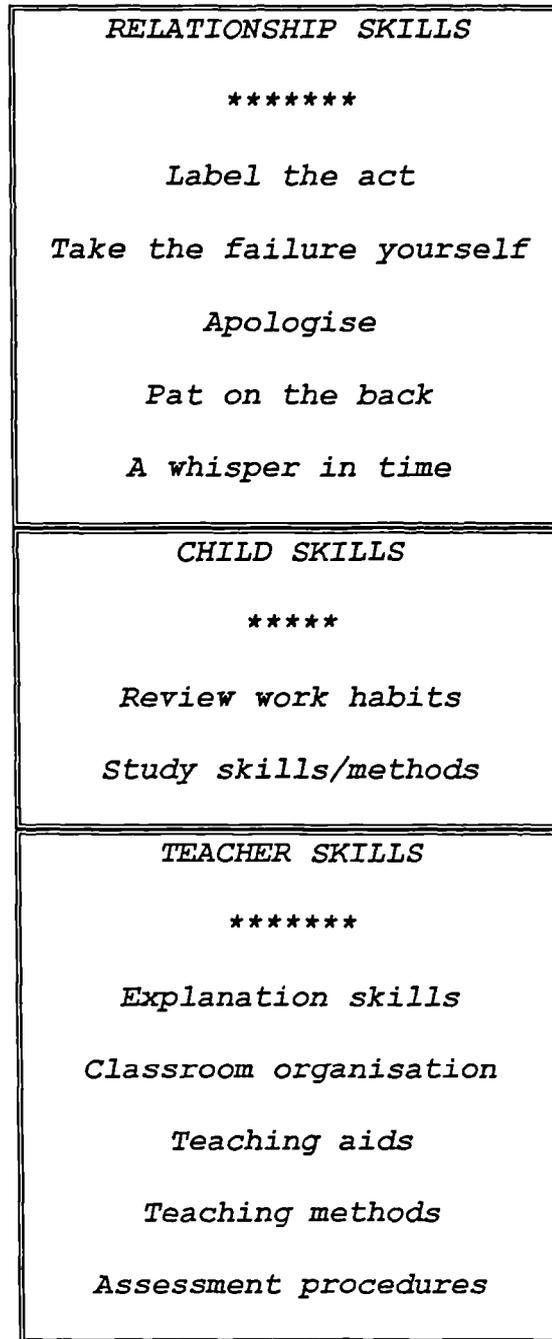
Figure 25: Important Areas for Consideration (adapted from Evans (1989) and Entwistle (1990))

For those teachers who believe that enhancing self-esteem is a 'soft option'

for the child, Lawrence (1988) states:

> it is important to emphasise that enhancing self-esteem is not inconsistent with good discipline. A concern of some teachers has been that by focusing on the quality of their relationship with the students they are in some danger of losing their authority. This is a fallacy although an understandable concern. It is only where the teacher identifies rather than emphathizes with the student that problems with discipline can occur. Teachers must remain in charge of their classroom. (p.52)

HMI (Ofsted, 1996a) support this view with their research on exclusions.

They found that the quality of behaviour in a low-excluding school was better

than in high-excluding schools. They also found a link between low exclusion

rates and an effective behaviour policy:

> Three quarters of the low-excluding schools had good behaviour policies.... Few high-excluding schools had good behaviour policies, perhaps not surprisingly since the policy.... reflected the extent of the school's determination to *affect* behaviour, rather than accept it as a given. (p. 17)

Governing Body Responsibilities

Governing body responsibilities for behaviour within school lie in two main

areas:

- being a 'critical friend' to the school;

- having regard to the legal responsibilities.

Circulars 8/94 and 10/94 (DFEE, 1994a, 1994c) place the emphasis for

governing body involvement on 'influencing the ethos of the school' and

taking a lead 'in establishing principles for the school's policy on behaviour

and discipline' (p. 3). They also point out the role of the governing body in

the exclusion process. The legal responsibilities are developed by the DFEE

(1997b).

HMI (Ofsted, 1996a) found that:

> In general, schools involved parents and governors appropriately in
> exclusion procedures. More often than not, governors were more
> reluctant than headteachers to exclude pupils. (p.7)

This evidence directly contradicted previous findings by the DFE (1992a)

reported by Blyth and Milner (1996a) that procedures were not always

followed 'correctly' or 'promptly'. This would indicate that there may have

been a change in the way in which governing bodies are operating with regard

to exclusions. Firstly that they are more aware of their responsibilities in law,

and secondly that they are becoming more sure of their role as a critical friend

to the school. Within my own study, I did not come across one example

where the governing body did not support the headteacher in the decision to

exclude. The growth of active involvement of the governing body in terms of

behaviour and exclusions practice has been mirrored in general by a

governing body which has far more control of the running and development of

the school, embodied initially in the Education Acts 1986 and 1988, more

recently encompassed within the Education Act 1996 and the forthcoming

1997 Act. The Elton Report (DES, 1989) made eleven recommendations for the governing body to consider and which included the recommendation for governors to take account the good practice contained within the report as well as following headteacher or local educational authority advice. (See Richardson, 1993, for a discussion of the role of the governing body within the management of discipline in secondary schools.) This kind of recommendation encourages governing bodies to take up the powers which have been given to them as well as to have regard for the legal duties. There has been little written on the powers of the governing body as opposed to the legal duties. However there is some good practice with regard to Special Educational Needs contained in Bowers (1984) and Harrington (1989) even though these pre-date the most recent legislation. Since governing bodies have been given legal duties and powers there is a responsibility on the educational professions to ensure that the role of governor becomes a professional one.

Chapter 11

Are There Any Alternatives?

Introduction

It is an argument of this thesis that permanent exclusion, for most of the pupils involved, is an inappropriate reaction to challenging behaviour. Evidence presented in chapter 8 suggests that two thirds of pupils who are excluded have Special Educational Needs; Hayden (1997) suggests that for primary aged children the proportion is even higher (87% within her own study). It matters little whether these children are statemented or on the school based stages of the Code of Practice: the fact that they are considered to have Special Educational Needs makes exclusion an inappropriate response to their needs, whatever the motive the school has for the exclusion. For other pupils who are excluded, it makes little sense as a considered reaction to a complex situation which involves not only the individual pupil but also the teachers and the school environment as a whole. So what are the alternatives? The alternatives which are outlined below are ones which appear to have worked in some way or which have some merit in terms of attitudinal stance which appears to be of benefit to some pupils. It is not suggested that

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schools will be able to adopt all or any of these strategies, but that they form a starting point for schools to consider their response to very challenging behaviour.

The Headteacher's Role: Choice or Chance?

It is clear that the headteacher has the ultimate role in the exclusionary processes which operate within the school. What is less clear is how the headteacher's beliefs and philosophy are transmitted through the school thereby influencing the decisions which are made about pupils within the school structure.

The relationship of pupils to the school structure is crucial in terms of the outcome of their behaviours. A school structure which is exclusionary in nature (i.e. has the features which contribute to a high exclusion rate as outlined by McManus and Galloway) is more likely to alienate and therefore distance the pupils from his or her education, apportioning blame to the pupil whilst "ensuring" that the entitlement to education is "equal" to that of other pupils at the school.

Figure 26: Features of Inclusive and Exclusive Schools

Inclusive	Exclusive
• provides 'unequal' opportunities (Fish, 1985)	• provides 'equal' opportunities
• seeks strategies which suit the individual concerned	• seeks conformity by pupils
• is flexible in its response to difficult behaviour	• has inflexible systems which are adhered to
• involves Special Educational Needs department/invokes the Code of Practice procedures	• keeps learning and behaviour separate
• seeks to educate the pupil in the widest sense	• seeks to give knowledge as information
• takes cognisance of individual pupil needs as reflected through their personal background and family context	• takes cognisance of needs of the population as a whole .
• has a problem-solving attitude throughout	• has attitude that pupils who cannot conform are wrongly placed in mainstream provision
• involvement of home/agencies is multi-purpose	• involvement of home/agencies is singular in purpose
• welcomes responsibility for the education of all pupils within the catchment area	• belief that the LEA has responsibility for the most difficult pupils

Figure 26 incorporates the extreme edges of the pendulum swing: the totally

inclusive school as opposed to the totally exclusive school.

Cooper (1995b) emphasises the role of the headteacher in bringing about

change within a school by outlining the approach taken by one headteacher in

a failing school:

> A constant theme throughout this book has been the need to create
> circumstances in schools that enable vulnerable pupils to develop a
> positive sense of self in order to have the confidence to tackle the
> demands of the curriculum. This chapter shows how one headteacher
> works collaboratively with her staff in order to bring about the
> necessary changes in school structure. (p. 117)

Cooper lists the features of a good school which the staff drew up

collaboratively. There are three aspects which relate to the school as a whole,

to the pupils and to the staff; all are important in contributing to the ethos of

the school. Throughout the study, there was strong agreement between the

views of the school staff and the views of the headteacher, and changes were

introduced not only to the curriculum but to the pastoral system in order to

reduce the academic - pastoral divide by removing the crisis management and

disciplinary function from it and replacing it with a pupil support function:

the school recognises that academic dysfunction, which can so easily lead to problems of disaffection, can sometimes be treated by adjustments in the learning environment or in teacher behaviour. The involvement of pastoral staff in the curriculum creates opportunities for such situations to be identified by an external figure, and for solutions to be sought at an early stage. (p. 128)

Such an approach is not easy, for either the staff or the headteacher or for the students and takes a great deal of hard work by all parties to achieve. It may actually be so difficult to achieve that it needs a significant event in the life of the school to bring about such a change, for instance the appointment of a new headteacher or the identification of the school as a failing school. The failure of the Ridings school is an example: the staff were prodded into action by the breakdown of discipline within the school and had no choice but to pull the school out of the jaws of closure.

Gersch (1996) indicates the stresses which senior management can feel when dealing with difficult behaviour:

> Senior staff and headteachers also experience particular tensions and dilemmas in respect of pupil behaviour which are stressful, including decisions about when to:
>
> - delegate as opposed to intervene;
> - act as a feared, strict disciplinarian as opposed to adopting a personal, supportive or counselling role;
> - back staff colleagues and still be fair to pupils and parents, when perhaps teachers have been wrong;
> - be involved directly without being intrusive. (p. 166)

The Inclusive School

A school within the north of England outside the local educational authority

studied has worked hard over the past six years in order to become an

inclusive school. The school has numbers of around one thousand pupils and

is in a local educational authority which is neither 'leafy lane' nor inner city.

To this particular headteacher whose initiative directed this venture, inclusive

is a term which means bringing access to the curriculum for all the children

within the school. The school does not claim to provide for all the children

within its catchment area as it has not the facilities such as a lift which would

make that possible. However the school were concerned about the ways in

which the students were accessing the curriculum as it seemed that many

pupils were not reaching the potential and were so underachieving:

> The aim of inclusivity must be to make sure each child reaches his or
> her potential, whether that be a 'G' grade at GCSE or a whole batch of
> 'A*s'. (Headteacher)

The school therefore redefined the role of the form tutor to give support to

the pupils, rather than having a pastoral system which was based upon

discipline. Together with a behaviour policy which has its emphasis on

rewards to which the whole school adheres, this formed the basis of the

supporting structures which were put in place. On the basis of the Cognitive

Abilities Tests conducted by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at

the beginning of the year, form tutors along with each individual student set

targets to reach within the first nine-week block. These are written in the

student planner so that they are accessible to the parents. During the nine-

week block, teachers and pupils are working towards these targets, with mini-

targets being set as a result of homework or classwork. Work is graded in

terms of NC levels for years 7 - 9, and by GCSE grades for years 10 - 11.

Since these grades are quite far apart in terms of attainment the school have

put in the minus and plus grades in addition to the 'straight' levels or GCSE

grades so that it is possible for the students to see the progression within the

time limits. The student's potential level or grade is put on a graph for each

subject within the planner and the student is able to shade in the grades or

levels achieved for particular pieces of work. Progress towards the pupil's

potential can thus be seen. At the end of the nine-week block the timetable is

suspended for a day and all the students and teachers come 'dressed up' out

of uniform and the students are given individual tutorial sessions with their

form tutor. An external evaluation by a group of M. Ed. students commented

on the usefulness of the scheme as all involved were in favour of continuing

and saw the benefits of it, although one or two students expressed their

doubts at the accuracy of the original CAT tests for defining their potential

grades. The headteacher commented:

> You certainly need a good Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
> who will co-operate with you, otherwise you are lost.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator did a lot of work on

differentiation with the staff and there had been a number of training sessions

for the staff by outside trainers so that the teachers could differentiate the

curriculum in a meaningful way and also to employ a variety of teaching

styles which would suit different ways of learning. The schemes of work

which teachers produce are now viewed by a committee which specifically

looks for a variety of teaching styles in addition to other factors.

The behaviour policy was linked to the Code of Practice stages so that stage

1 remains the responsibility of the form tutor, stage 2 becomes the

responsibility of the head of year who writes the Individual Education Plan,

whilst stage 3 involves the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. Advice

as to when pupils should be placed on the various stages is contained within

the behaviour policy.

This set of initiatives was not specifically introduced in order to reduce the

numbers of exclusions, and the school would not claim that it does not

exclude, but the effect on the pupils' behaviour and motivation has been

remarkable, although the school does not consider that the job is yet finished.

I include this school's work within this chapter because it has gone a long way

down the road in terms of listening to the students' needs as a whole

population and trying to accommodate them instead of catering for sub-

groups within the population and hoping that the rest of the pupils will be able

to conform to the general expectations. The curriculum of this school has

somehow managed to fulfil the requirements of legislation including the

national curriculum and the Code of Practice whilst creating an individual

curriculum suitable for the vast majority, if not all, of its pupils. If the school

is not quite there yet, it is well on its way.

What are the Alternatives to Exclusion?

Lawrence, Steed and Young (1984) make the point that the types of

behaviour exhibited today are very similar to how it has been throughout

history. What has changed is society's attitude to poor behaviour and

response to physical punishment. There has been a growth in the amount of

disruptive behaviour over the last twenty years or so, which has mirrored the

growth of violent behaviour in society as a whole. The change in attitude is

concerned with the balance between the rights of the individual as opposed

to the rights of the group. Historically it has been the right of the whole class

or school to receive an education and so the pupils who did not conform were

punished in the interests of the rest of the group:

> The difficulty partly arises because of the tendency to see all disruptive
> behaviour as infraction of rules requiring punishment. Thus the
> equation disruption = punishment stems from an assumption that the
> responsibility for disruption lies wholly with the child and accepts,
> without question, the framework established either by the teacher or
> the school. (Lawrence, Steed and Young, 1984, p. 12)

Now the balance has shifted the other way so that the emphasis is upon the

rights of the individual to be given a supportive education:

> A school's response to such children needs to be firmly located within
> a developed system of pastoral care and rational support rather than
> one of punishment. (Lawrence, Steed and Young, 1984, p. 11)

The term 'pastoral care' has only recently come into extensive use around the

mid-1970s (see Hughes, 1980, for a brief history of the term). Dooley (1980)

sees pastoral care as promoting a child-centred approach:

> 'pastoral care' may be seen as an overall term to cover the kind of
> work which is done to promote the personal development of pupils.
> This work, again, may be looked at by some people as leading to the
> autonomy of pupils. (p. 24)

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However, other writers disagree:

> pastoral care is conceived in terms of the meanings which teachers and others in education actually give it. We have conjectured that an empirical investigation may show 'pastoral care' to be less concerned with the problems of pupil-welfare than with the problems of *social control* and *administrative convenience* following substantial changes in the provision and organisation of secondary education. (Best, Jarvis and Ribbins, 1980b, p. 14)

HMI (DES, 1990) expressed the view that pastoral care should be seen as the remit of all teachers, not just the heads of year, in order to create a climate:

> in which pupils feel secure and are aware of their obligations. Where it is narrowly conceived in terms of coping with immediate crises and maintaining discipline solely through the application of sanctions, it can become concerned almost exclusively with a small proportion of pupils who are perceived as 'problems' rather than with the school as a community. (p. 15)

What is clear from the debates about the philosophy and practice of pastoral care is that there is no fully accepted definition of the term. Therefore the baseline from which individual teachers and schools operate may be different and consequently the outcomes will also be different. As the advent of the Education Reform Act led to fewer resources allocated in most schools to the education of those with Special Educational Needs, so the pastoral systems particularly in secondary schools where heads of year and assistant heads of year are paid on additional salary points also were reduced in order to ensure curriculum and league table requirements were met. Richardson (1993)

considers the effects on discipline between those schools which are popular

schools where parents are competing for their children to attend and those

schools which are in effect the 'sink' schools where fewer parents are

inclined to send their children:

> From the point of view of managing discipline the preferred or more
> popular school will start from the advantage that its pupils will already
> feel successful in having been admitted. Whereas the less preferred
> school will have fewer pupils with a higher percentage of them having
> parents who did not actively seek it as a preferred school, and will
> have pupils who were disappointed not to have got their preferred
> school and so already feel a sense of failure. (p. 194)

There is a need to recognise that exclusion is not a 'school problem' but a

problem for society as a whole to address. There therefore needs to be a

range of alternatives emerging that include more than the school response.

Some strategies are listed below:

- schools struggle on finding individual solutions to individual problems;

- sheltered work placements with paid work in the morning and education

  in the afternoon leading to vocational qualifications;

- family learning centres which are local, where staff are available for an

  hour after school to set tasks for the daytime which are problem-solving

  and based around developing independence;

- access to alternative educational placements such as the further education

  college (as in the Cities in Schools approach, Stephenson, 1996);

There may be a case for stating that all but a few pupils who have been

excluded have formed a pattern of difficulty within their behaviour which is

tantamount to placement somewhere within the continuum of Special

Educational Needs as the definition currently stands.

Positive Alternatives to Exclusion

The focus of some of the work in the field of exclusions is now turning to the

individual student and the experience which exclusion from school brings (see

Cooper et al., 1997; Hayden, 1997; de Pear and Garner, 1996). Cooper et al.

(1997) used the innovative technique of training students to become

interviewers and then sending them out to interview two other students each

within the school. The information from this student perspective was very

valuable. The students placed a value in staff ways of relating to students

which gives an indication of a person-centred approach as opposed to a

bureaucratic ethos. The staff were seen as problem-solving rather than

reactive or punitive in their approach to discipline problems and behaviour

difficulties were seen as manifestations of underlying problems not simply as

rule infringements. This would suggest an ecosystemic orientation where

pupils are valued within the system. The disciplinary route which was

employed within this school was used strategically, in a focused way and with

flexibility to be able to respond to individual needs. Students were sometimes

critical of the flexibility as discipline was seen to be inconsistent in its

application to individuals. It was also found that students were able to

differentiate between a therapeutic response and the disciplinary procedures.

Where discipline was imposed, students found it mostly acceptable because

the staff had a caring intention. The staff adopted a no-blame approach which

encouraged a trust ethos leading to ownership and responsibility for ·

behaviour and for academic work. An affective climate was important with

regard to the learning outcomes experienced by the students. Teachers were

prepared to listen, the students were encouraged to ask questions, individual

help was always made available to those who needed it. The approachability

of the staff in general was facilitated by the small size of the school as was

the good quality of the information from staff to students. Relationships and

talking were seen to be important with the emphasis on flexibility of response

to difficulties experienced by the students, a solution focus being the

preferred option. The school valued each member of its community, and access to a school counsellor as a resource for students reflects this. Interestingly, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator within this school was a full-time administrator who was not a trained teacher but a special needs assistant.

Another school within the study had decided to look at the way in which student files were organised as teachers believed that there were indications that the student was going to be excluded before the exclusion took place, but because the information on student incidents was placed in chronological order with all the other student information, the pattern of behaviour was hidden until it was too late and the information was then compiled after the student had been permanently excluded. The simplest idea was to go through all the student files and to do a summary of the incidents for each student within the year group. However this was found to be too costly in terms of time, and students would still be missed as they were excluded before it was time for their file to be examined. The best alternative was to do a file summary, placed at the beginning of the file when the pupil had been excluded for a fixed term so that further monitoring could take place and other strategies be put in place to try to keep the pupil in school for a longer time. Another strategy which was introduced within this school was to have

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an 'exclusion checklist' so that before a student was excluded permanently

the head of year checked that every strategy which should have been used

with the student actually had been used. This was found to work for two

reasons:

- the head of year sometimes had a subjective view of what had been done

  and this system ensured that none of the steps which should have been

  taken were left out;

- it acted as a reminder of the seriousness of the step and could stimulate

  thinking and discussion about whether there was anything else which the

  school could do for the particular student before the school-student

  relationship broke down completely.

The work of Cooper et al. is very important as it changes the emphasis of the

work on exclusions away from the negative end result towards what positive

steps can be taken by schools in order to reduce the exclusion rate.

The 'No-blame' Anti-bullying Policy

A school within the study had found that the introduction of a 'no-blame'

anti-bullying policy across the school had had an effect on the numbers of

pupils permanently excluded and excluded for a fixed term. The approach

was prompted by the Leeds anti-bullying campaign (Leeds City Council, 1992) which recommended:

- pupil negotiates own sanction (teacher moderates where required)
- calm therapeutic approaches rather than harsh, over-punitive measures
- involvement of parents
- verbal approaches to the person or people who have been bullied - reasoning with them
- supervised 'bully - victim' meetings
- counselling
- targeting the behaviour and not the individual (p. 50)

The whole approach emphasises the verbal approach which is about discussion and working through individual situations rather than the punitive approach where the victim may be bullied by the same person(s) in future. It gives the bully a way out of the situation as well as the victim and enables the bully to have an insight into the effect his or her behaviour is having.

The Family Psychotherapy Unit Approach

QED (BBC, 1997) looked at the work of the Marlborough Unit in Westminster in supporting youngsters who had been excluded from mainstream schools. The pattern of work which they established and which appeared to be effective in that pupils eventually returned to regular (although not always full-time) mainstream education, involved not only working with the pupil to which the majority of Pupil Referral Units are confined. The unit

established a pattern of attendance in the morning which the parent and pupil

were expected to attend and where other younger siblings not of school age

may also attend. The unit has access to psychotherapy support from a number

of professionals, the aim being to adjust the parent-child relationship in order

to allow the child and the parent to function in mutually supportive ways.

There was no suggestion within the programme that the parents involved

were in any way to blame for their offspring's behaviour but rather within the

pupil-parent relationship there needed to be the confidence, techniques and

strategies to enable the strengthening of the existing natural ties and

recognising the needs of each. A focus was placed upon the ways in which

parents and child communicated with each other and discussion of the

situations which arose whilst the unit was in session were explored. The

unit's work was not however confined to the relationship between the parent

and the child, but links were also kept where possible with the mainstream

school which the pupil had been attending. Most of the pupils attended during

the afternoon session. This multi-level approach ensured that as the child

changed over time, so did the parent and the teacher/ special needs assistant

involved. One of the criticisms of the Pupil Referral Unit is that pupils are

taken away from the school, are placed in a completely different environment

in which they learn to function at least adequately and then are transplanted

back to the situation in which they failed. Thus the idea of the Pupil Referral

Unit as a 'revolving door' which gives pupils short term education while

another school is found for them falls down for the vast majority of excluded

pupils (see the 1st 12 inspections). The head of the unit likened the child to a

piece of a mobile; as it moved, so the other pieces moved, as they were

inextricably linked together. Hollin (1993) supports the view of looking at the

child within the social context:

> understanding such behaviour demands an analysis not just of the 'bad'
> child, but an appreciation of the social context in which the behaviour
> takes place. Further, I have suggested that such a social analysis can be
> made at many levels beginning with the child's social skills, to the
> social judgements of those with whom the child interacts, moving then
> to peer group and family influences, and finally to the very fabric of the
> society of which child, family, school and all are members. (p. 85)

So the child was not taken away and 'treated' but a whole section of his life

was brought together at the unit and explored. This kind of approach is

advocated not only by the legislation but also by much of the literature which

suggests that Special Educational Needs are context-related as well as in-

child. Hollin (1993) supports the view that poor social interaction and

communication skills are related to difficult behaviour:

> Beginning with social perception, there is evidence to suggest that,
> compared to non-delinquents, aggressive young people search for and
> take notice of fewer social cues from their environment (Slaby and

Guerra, 1988); that they are more likely to interpret the actions of other children in a hostile fashion, mistakenly attributing aggressive intent to the actions of others (Stephanek et al., 1987); and that they are more likely to make mistakes in recognition of non-verbal cues such as facial expression (McCown et al., 1986) (p. 75)

Joint Social Services/Education Approach

Hayden (1997) emphasises the need for Social Services involvement in order to provide the relevant assistance for children who often face difficult circumstances in their family life as well as their school life:

> It would seem that social services education support services are particularly valuable in these circumstances, because they are organised in such a way that they can offer individual attention, advocate on behalf of the individual child, and provide a link between school and home (whether parental or local authority). They thus fulfil the task of supplying Utting's (1995) third ('preservation') service, which the education service or schools themselves are neither intended nor able to do. (p. 148)

The joint service which was offered within the local educational authority studied consisted of:

- individual support to students whose behaviour places them at risk of exclusion from school;

- groupwork activities for groups of pupils or staff;

- in-service training on issues surrounding aspects of behaviour, classroom management, whole school behaviour policies. (service leaflet produced for schools).

Programmes were negotiated individually with the school and included a

selection of the following:

- identifying a key member of school staff to develop a positive/special relationship with the pupil.
- the use of behaviour contracts.
- establishing regular contact with, and co-ordinating the involvement of school staff, family and any other agencies involved.
- individual counselling for the pupil.
- working with the pupil to improve inter-personal skills and relationships within school.
- parallel support programmes within the home setting to reflect approaches devised in school. (service leaflet for schools)

The extra dimension to what can be provided within a normal school

environment is the amount and type of contact with the family. The approach

used by the team was a non-threatening, non-blaming, problem-solving type

of approach which was able to gain the co-operation of most of the parents of

pupils involved. This kind of approach is still used currently by the modified

service which has extended to cover the needs of children who are looked

after in order to ensure that these children, who are particularly prone to both

informal and formal exclusion processes (Stirling, 1996) are receiving an

appropriate education where possible within a school setting. In an evaluation

of the initial pilot scheme the following features of the scheme were identified

by the schools as being the most effective aspects (the first point was

mentioned the most with the other points being mentioned an equal number of times):

- Building relationships with an adult.

- Release of pressure from class teacher and school.

- SPS involvement very quick because of team psychologist.

- Generous and reliable allocation of time.

- Pupil/parent/school triangle was completed.

These comments are important as they match with some of the reasons that schools give for the exclusion of some pupils (teacher tolerance, teacher time, no outside help for the child from the Schools' Psychological Service, no/little support from parents). They are especially important when the outcome of most of the scheme interventions with pupils was that they remained in school whilst the workers were involved but shortly after the intervention ceased the pupils were almost always excluded permanently. This gives some supportive evidence to the assertions of the NUT that there is increased stress on teachers because of the reduction in funding and the concomitant increases in class sizes, league tables and a deterioration in home discipline (see chapter 2). It was apparent within the evaluation of the scheme however that individual schools and teachers really valued the work put in by the team.

Almost all the schools had used the service more than once or intended to do

so should the need arise. A typical comment by the individual staff involved

in the evaluation was:

> The scheme was working with (this boy). He was into drugs, staying
> out all night, very disruptive in class, absconding often for a week at a
> time, and the parent had been into school. Now he is a changed boy.
> He would certainly have been permanently excluded. (head of year)

Cities in Schools Approach

The Cities in Schools (CiS) approach was founded in the UK by Stephenson

(see Stephenson, 1996 for a detailed discussion of the project and its origins).

CiS involves a community approach with a variety of staff employed from

teaching, community and youth work, residential care, social work, education

welfare and health. The work is with children and young people who are

either excluded or have not been attending school, especially those

youngsters who are looked after:

> The primary aim is to reintegrate them into mainstream education and
> training so that they can fulfil their potential. Since exclusion is often
> symptomatic of underlying problems, much of the work is concentrated
> on families and on reducing involvement in crime and drug and alcohol
> dependency and on preparation for independence. (Stephenson, 1996,
> p. 257)

Each CiS project has charitable status and a board of directors to whom the

project is accountable, and funding is drawn from a variety of sources, the

most important of which is local business which ensures the focus is kept within the local community. There is a continuum of interventions ranging through prevention and reintegration to alternative intervention with the least cost per individual being incurred at the preventative stage. The highest cost per individual is incurred when the student accesses the Bridge course. This gives an entitlement to further education training, work experience and a personal tutor to help give support, plus a structured leisure activity. The objectives of the course are:

1. Assist young people in improving their literacy/numeracy and life-skills.

2. Provide positive learning and educational experiences in their final year of compulsory education.

3. Achieve progression into further education, training or employment.

4. Prepare young people for independent living. (p. 262)

The first objective of the course acknowledges that many of the youngsters involved in the course have low literacy and/or numeracy levels and would indicate that the students have had learning difficulties at some time in the past or are still experiencing learning difficulties. The course is an expensive provision but gives a broad and balanced curriculum which is consistent with the legislation (unlike the traditional types of provision such as Pupil Referral

Units and home tuition). Stephenson (1996) outlines the deficiencies within

the traditional system of Pupil Referral Units and concludes:

> Many of these problems cannot be resolved by increasing the amount
> of resources available as the model itself, no matter how good the staff
> are, is flawed fundamentally. The fact that another 2,000 pupils receive
> on average only five hours a week of Home Tuition is a further
> indictment of traditional provision. (p. 261)

(For a further evaluation of three Bridge Courses see CiS [UK], 1994). The

Cities in School approach indicates what can be achieved with those young

people who have failed to thrive within the traditional educational contexts.

Success Within Failure

A parental response to the informal exclusion of their children from the

education system is documented by Goodchild and Williams (1994).

Although the children involved were not formally excluded from their

mainstream schools, they were all in circumstances where they could not

access education:

> who do not fall readily into standard special needs categories, would
> like to attend a mainstream school, but are deterred by circumstances
> beyond their direct control which include:
>
> - bullying;
> - racial or sexual harassment;
> - the nature of large schools;
> - unrecognised specific learning difficulties;

- relationship breakdowns between teachers, pupils and/or parents;
- home difficulties. (p. 73)

Fourteen sets of parents and nineteen children came together and were joined by a teacher and worked with the children for around a year before the experiment was abandoned. The outcomes of the intervention were interesting:

> All but four of the children went back to mainstream schools: of these two had parents who were committed to home-based education and had never sent their children to school; contact was lost with the others. Thus, in effect, all the children who had experienced *informal* school exclusion were able to cope in state schools. Was this because they were a year older, because time heals, or had something happened to equip them for *survival*? (p. 73)

The children who were not formally excluded felt as though they were excluded from the system, before they went to the 'Hanging Gardens'; they were given no 'treatment', although the children were encouraged to exercise choice, including the choice not to attend the 'school' rather like Neill's Summerhill (1985); they were given opportunities for personal growth; they were given time out of all the stresses created by the system.

Conclusions

The alternatives to exclusion can be divided into two categories:

- school-based interventions;

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- agency collaborations.

The school-based interventions are measures of self-help either because of

concerns which some aspects of pupil behaviour are arousing, or because the

school feels that there is a lack of external involvement particularly by the

educational psychologists and by social services which pushes the schools

into action. Davis (1995) states that:

> there are only three methods for change: coercion, education and
> involvement. Coercion is often used in the guise of legislation. It
> creates change but more in the way of compliance than commitment.
> Educating people as a change method follows the view of 'do this
> because you know it is good for you'. This is ineffective as it merely
> preaches to the converted and pays no attention to what stops people
> doing it. (p. 172)

Davis then goes on to indicate that the best method of instigating change is

for teachers to become involved in changing the practice through collecting

and acting upon their own data. This is in effect what schools who have

tackled the challenges of difficult behaviour have done. They have collected

information about what is the current position in school and have then thought

through the implications of changing systems, roles and responsibilities in

order to achieve the outcomes that were wanted from the interventions. The

school has thereby begun to become a 'thinking' school. Normington (1992)

states:

> Any successful intervention implies change. This may be in pupils,
> their environment and/or schools. Sometimes this necessitates a change
> of school, as in Peter's case. He successfully moved from a middle-
> class high school to a day special school for children with moderate
> learning difficulties. Sometimes attitude change is required. Once
> Larry's teachers, and Larry to a lesser extent, understood that much of
> his unfortunate behaviour could be accounted for by his hearing
> impairment and were shown ways to manage this, then Larry became
> manageable. This is not to say that any change guarantees success.
> Steven tried different high schools but to no avail. However, once we
> found the right change (to residential school for pupils with emotional
> and behavioural problems) Steven succeeded. Putting unchanged pupils
> into unchanged circumstances is unlikely to succeed. (pp. 297 - 298)

The agency collaborations which have been described have all involved the

school within the process, and by definition one or more outside agencies, in

order to initiate change. The changes initiated by external agencies which are

most likely to continue for a period after the intervention has ceased are those

such as the work of the Marlborough Unit which have involved the parent and

child over a long period of time. Normington (1992) describes the role of

parents as 'central not peripheral'. The work of the unit showed that where

there was commitment from the parents there could be change effected (QED,

1997). There are no 'quick fixes', just as the problems take a number of

months or years to develop to the stage where the relationship between the

school and the child break down irretrievably. Similarly the initiatives which

are implemented by the school alone are those which address systems issues

for the whole school and not just for parts of it. They also often indicate a

school and the child break down irretrievably. Similarly the initiatives which

are implemented by the school alone are those which address systems issues

for the whole school and not just for parts of it. They also often indicate a

change in attitude by at least some members of staff. Hayden (1997) collected

data on preventative initiatives by agencies other than the education services,

for primary aged children in order to promote good behaviour or prevent

exclusions. She discovered that most of the work in progress was either

family-based or school-based, and concluded:

> Children with behavioural problems are perhaps more traditionally seen
> as the concern of social services professionals, with teachers tending to
> view it as a social rather than an educational phenomenon and, as such,
> not really their concern. However sympathetic we may be to such a
> stance, it has become a fact of life that many teachers have to deal with
> difficult behaviour on a daily basis. If 'emotional and behavioural
> difficulty' could be accepted as another manifestation of 'learning
> difficulty' (it does after all inhibit learning), teachers might be more
> willing to accept that, as schools are unable to offer one-to-one
> attention to distressed children, social services are the obvious
> alternative to come onto site to help. The chapter has also suggested
> that schools are the best site from which to run universal family support
> services. With the recent drive to make pre-school provision universal,
> the remaining issue appears to be the acknowledgement that inter-
> agency collaboration in primary schools may be the best way to
> promote the development of positive behaviour patterns and reduce the
> incidence of school exclusion. (pp. 148-149)

Hayden's evidence suggests that rather than being at secondary school level

the interventions described within this chapter should be started within the

primary sector rather than the secondary sector as is much of the current

change in attitude by at least some members of staff. Hayden (1997) collected

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Hayden's evidence suggests that rather than being at secondary school level

the interventions described within this chapter should be started within the

primary sector rather than the secondary sector as is much of the current

practice, particularly with initiatives such as the joint educational-social

services venture and the schools described within the positive alternatives to

exclusion.

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Chapter 12

Overall discussion

Introduction

Since the study began in 1990 there have been a number of discussions within

the public forum and within the academic arena surrounding the topic of

exclusion from school, which have gradually increased as the numbers of

excluded pupils have increased. There have been a number of studies which

have collected information about the numbers of exclusions and the reasons

for those exclusions (Imich, 1994; Parsons et al., 1994b; Parsons, 1996a)

which contain similar information to that of part 1 of my own study (see

chapter 5). The rise in the numbers of excluded pupils coincided with the

implementation of the Education Reform Act 1988 which heralded a new

'era' practically in terms of the establishing the framework for the

introduction of the national curriculum, financial control for headteachers,

new powers for governing bodies, and philosophically:

> The Education Reform Act of 1988 was the most important and far-
> reaching piece of educational law-making for England and Wales since
> the Education Act of 1944.

Why? Because it altered the basic power structure of the education system.
It increased the powers of the Secretary of State for Education and Science. ...It restored to the central government powers over the curriculum which had been surrendered between the Wars, and set formal machinery for exercising and enforcing these powers and responsibilities.
Not only did it strengthen the central government's role in education, it introduced important limitations on the functions of the local education authorities, who were forced to give greater autonomy to schools and governing bodies. (Maclure, 1989, p. ix)

(See also Jones and Docking, 1992 for a resume of how the Education Reform Act has impacted upon Special Educational Needs). The shift of emphasis from school and local educational authority control towards central government control increased with such initiatives as the option of grant-maintained status, the setting up of Ofsted and all its responsibilities.within the inspection role, the attempt to standardize the provision for Special Educational Needs pupils through the Education Act 1993 and the Code of Practice, and the introduction of nursery vouchers for four year-olds (see chapter 7). The tensions between the local educational authority and the schools' sector have appeared to increase as the control of the local educational authority has decreased and the autonomy of the schools has increased. The White Paper (DFEE, 1997a) appears to be signalling the end of this form of centralisation with indications that the role of the local educational authority will be strengthened:

> We will be alert for new ways of working with others to raise standards: new forms of Public/Private Partnership; new forms of collaboration between local and central government: new ways of involving parents in education; new relationships between private and state schools; and new ways of involving volunteers and working with voluntary organisations. (p. 12)

Already the philosophical changes have begun to make practical differences

with the withdrawal of the nursery vouchers scheme and the announcement

that grant-maintained status will cease to exist in its present form. The stated

priority commitment of the new government is towards education; it will be

interesting to see whether their policies can make a difference to the numbers

of young people who are currently falling out of the education system;

whether there will be an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff or a fence at the

top. (Slavin, 1996).

The idea of control is intermeshed with the exclusionary processes which are

going on within some schools. Everyone likes to be in control; stress begins

to impact upon individuals when their sense of control over their lives is

threatened (Hayden, 1997). The key is that each individual student and each

teacher and each department or subject area and each school and locality

should be in control of their own sphere of influence. When that control is

threatened there begins to be a lowering of self-esteem, an inability to cope

and a reduction in threshold levels of tolerance. It matters little whether that control be at an individual level or at a systems level.

The idea of exclusion as a process is a very important one for schools to take on board. Once schools do take this idea on board and examine the reasons for the exclusion of pupils, the school is well on the way to developing a set of strategies which are rehabilitative in nature rather than punitive, thereby providing the framework which will help all pupils to succeed within the school environment. To be effective in the inclusion of all pupils, there has to be a positive choice exercised by the school, similar to that in operation when pupils with Special Educational Needs need to be able to access the curriculum. Within the local educational authority studied, the central Special Educational Needs group has asked for schools to bid to be resourced to cater for pupils with hearing impairment. The bids have to be considered carefully by the schools and the implications, as far as they can be, assessed in terms of whole school organisation and curriculum and pastoral provision. There need to be systems in place so that the needs of children with a variety of hearing impairments can be met. Only after long deliberation and discussion among the whole staff can the school in conjunction with the local educational authority, come to a decision. Children with hearing impairment are the 'acceptable face' of Special Educational Needs: what happens to the

inclusion of pupils with behaviour difficulties within mainstream school?

Since children with behaviour difficulties are so common, the question of

having one resourced school becomes a nonsense, although pupils with the

severest difficulties are catered for outside mainstream provision. So the

schools which have to cater for pupils with behaviour difficulties (the 'EBM'

pupils of chapter 11), as well as pupils with emotional and behavioural

difficulties may not be willing to acknowledge their existence within the

school population, or may pay lip-service to their needs. Such pupils also are

less likely to have the support of vociferous parents, as the parents are often

blamed by teachers and other parents, by politicians and indeed by

themselves, for their poor parenting skills which are seen to be lacking. But

think for a moment of the parents who have had well-behaved children, who

have come through the school system with few problems, have gone to

university and then have been unable to set limits for their own behaviour or

have decided to dropout of society. Why does this happen? Are their

difficulties to be associated with poor parenting skills or to the change in the

environment which can be totally alien for some students? Many people

experience such difficulties in their early twenties or late teens. Are some

students who are excluded from school going through a similar trauma but earlier than many of their peers?

Methodological Issues

The main function of part one of the study was to gain a picture of what was happening in the area of exclusion for one particular local educational authority. The study was begun in this way because the national picture at that time was confused. There was little data available which could clarify how many exclusions were taking place, who was being excluded, or what was happening to those people who had been excluded from school. There was evidence that exclusion rates were rising, but no-one could quantify by how much, or whether the rises would continue to become a trend. The best place to begin seemed to be within my own local educational authority, especially since my job at that time facilitated such work. This enabled me to establish a clear picture of what was happening over a two year period. The factual and quantitative information which was collected needed to be supplemented by qualitative information in order to explain and support the data. Despite the mis-match between policy and practice which has been identified with regard to interviewing headteachers in particular, I decided that since headteachers are responsible for the exclusion of pupils in law, it

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would be important to solicit their views. Headteachers also have a role

within the local educational authority in the development of policy.

The case studies of individual children were conducted in order to gain hard

evidence of what the school understood by the most challenging behaviour

exhibited by pupils, to establish what strategies were used by the schools and

to assess the impact of those strategies upon student behaviour and eventual

outcomes.

The initial exclusion data was further supplemented by attendance at a

number of case conferences, through which I was also able to determine the

process which was involved in deciding the future of an excluded pupil. The

process of deciding the future of an excluded pupil is as important, if not

more so, than knowledge of the actual outcome. The collection of the data

from the case conferences was very haphazard, however. Due to time

constraints it was not possible to sample the case conferences in any

structured way such as pre-determining the secondary/primary split, or the

gender split, or even by school. However, there were a large number of case

conferences attended (56 in total) representing around 75 hours of data

collection, including secondary, primary and a range of special schools

(emotional and behavioural difficulties, severe learning difficulties and

moderate learning difficulties), girls and boys, plus a large number of schools.

The only area of data collection which is missing from the entire study is that appertaining to ethnic minority pupils; all the information regarding these pupils within the study is from other sources. The reason for this is that there are very few ethnic minority pupils within the local educational authority studied, and of these, very few are of Afro-Caribbean origin. Most are of Asian or eastern European origin. It was also impossible to positively identify any of these pupils on the exclusion register kept within the local educational authority because of the legalities of the racial discrimination laws.

At this stage I decided against involving either the parents/carers or the pupils themselves. Although their views would have been interesting and would have added an extra dimension to the study, the time implication was prohibitive as the parental/carer and pupil view was not essential to the main aims of the study.

Much of the other information gathered relating to ages, gender, numbers and reasons for exclusion was in line with, supported and strengthened by the research of others during this period (DES, 1989; Galloway, 1985; Hayden, 1997; Imich, 1994; Male, 1996; McManus, 1987, 1989; Mitchell, 1996; Parsons et al., 1994b).

Having worked in the area of Special Educational Needs for over ten years, there was one main issue to be explored in part 2 of the study and this

involved the relationship between the exclusion of pupils and the

effectiveness of collaboration between the pastoral and Special Educational

Needs areas within schools. The main sources of information were therefore

the heads of year (or their equivalent) and the Special Educational Needs Co-

ordinators. In order to obtain a balance between numbers from each group I

decided to concentrate on one year group. In the light of the peak in

exclusions during year 10, it made most sense to involve the heads of this

year in the study. The questionnaires were trialled before they were sent out,

by a head of year 7 and a Special Educational Needs teacher. What I did not

know at the time was that the staff within the local educational authority had

been reallocated to jobs and therefore the timing of the questionnaires was

less than ideal. It was not possible to do anything about this. However, the

data that was collected was of high quality and was used as a basis for the

follow-up interviews, which included the local educational authority staff who

had had time to adjust to their new roles.

Ethical issues are discussed in chapter 3 but it was a consideration not only in

relation to the confidentiality of the data, but also in the design of the study

and the dissemination which has taken place. It relates to the design of the

study because the sensitive nature of the information gathered meant that

great care was needed to confirm the information which had been gathered,

hence such features as the written reports to the headteachers following the

interviews and the letters sent with the questionnaires which identified my

new role within the local educational authority. Quite a lot of time was also

spent in seeking authorisation from the Chief Education Officer for various

pieces of information which I wished to disseminate.

The Exclusion Model

The model put forward in chapter 3 which shows the movement up and down

the behaviour continuum is important in advancing the knowledge about the

exclusion process as it holds together a number of the current ideas

surrounding the exclusion process. These include:

- the individual pupil moves up and down the continuum over time as the

  balance between the peer group influence, adult influence, cultural and

  personality factors and school factors changes;

- schools can make a difference to the behaviour of the pupil;

- adults outside the school, particularly parents/carers can have a

  considerable contribution to make in effecting a change in the ability of the

  pupil to modify behaviour patterns (Docking, 1980);

- there are some in-child factors which make a child more vulnerable to
  exhibiting challenging behaviours rather than truancy or other forms of
  disaffection (Galloway, 1982; Kinder et al., 1995);

- exclusion is a process (Booth, 1996a);

- poor behaviour is a fact of life within school: exclusion does not have to
  be;

- there is no single identified cause for why pupils are excluded from
  school.

There are many interventions, strategies, systems and approaches which can

be put into place in order to reduce the risk of exclusion from school for all

pupils. However, when an individual pupil moves to the 'top floor' in the

'lift' individual strategies need to be developed.

Causes of Exclusion

Although there are no simple direct links which have been found to connect

within-child factors, family circumstances and Special Educational Needs to

exclusions, these three factors have been found to have a strong association

with exclusion. Hayden (1997) found that the three most common variables

associated with her case studies of children were family breakdown, Special

Educational Needs and social services involvement in the family. A further

breakdown is given in **figure 27**.

Hayden goes on to emphasise that stress is an important concept to associate

with pupils who display challenging behaviour (see the work by Chandler,

1981, Chandler et al., 1985; Goldstein, 1994; Quamma and Greenburg, 1994;

Rutter, 1978, 1981). Pupils who have been excluded are more prone to stress

factors (Hayden, 1997) and less able to deal with stress. The work of

Garmezey (1981) centres around the competence which is displayed by

individual children. The series of indicators which he has developed are very

useful for schools who are beginning to think about what they can do to

prevent pupils with very challenging behaviour being excluded from school:

1. *Effectiveness in work, play and love*: satisfactory educational and occupational progress; peer regard and friendship;
2. *Healthy expectations* and the belief that 'good outcomes' will follow from the imposition of effort and initiative; an orientation to success rather than the anticipation of failure in performing tasks; a realistic level of aspiration unbeclouded by unrealistically high or low-goal setting behaviour;
3. *Self-esteem*, feelings of personal worthiness, a proper evaluative set towards self and sense of 'fate control', that is, the belief that one can control events in one's environment rather than be a passive victim of them (an internal as opposed to an external locus of control);
4. *Self-discipline*, as revealed by the ability to delay gratification and to maintain future-orientedness;
5. *Control and regulation of impulsive drives*; the ability to adopt a reflective as opposed to an impulsive style in coping with problem situations;

Figure 27   **Common Variables in the Characteristics and Circumstances of Primary Age Children Excluded from School (Hayden, 1997).**

Child
- male
- SEN (usually EBD)
- underachieving
- large for age (sometimes small)
- new to school
- few or no freinds
- difficulties in peer relations
- low self-esteem
- Black (espcially African-Caribbean)/mixed race
- Behaviour Rating Scale revealed high levels of hyperactivity, conduct disorder, restless/ disorganised behaviours

School
- recent or impending budget reductions
- staffing problems (turnover, recruitment, physical health, quality, morale)
- insufficient physical space
- nature of behaviour management and discipline policies and their implementation
- school directed by LEA to take child
- school ill-informed or misinformed about the nature of a child's needs and circumstances

Home
- family breakdown/ relationship difficulties
- SSD involvement/child spent time in care
- involvement of other non-mainstream agencies
- evidence of violence and abuse in the family
- traumatic incident/accident in immediate family
- family resident in rented accommodation

6. *The ability to think abstractly*; to approach new situations and to be able to attempt alternate solutions to a problem. (Garmezey, 1981, quoted in Hayden, 1997, p. 116)

Most of the pupils who are excluded are not making satisfactory educational progress; around two thirds of the excluded population have Special Educational Needs (see chapter 8). Of the pupils within my study, only one pupil stood out as being a high-ability pupil with the ability to achieve a good range of GCSEs who was not under-achieving at the point of exclusion. Many of the pupils in the study who were excluded were identified by the schools as having poor social skills (see chapter 6). The links with other expressions of disaffection have already been made, with pupils who display challenging behaviour becoming used to the experience of failure in school (see chapter 2). Low self-esteem is an important factor in the pupils who have been excluded (see chapter 11). Poor self-discipline is a factor which is often alluded to in case conferences (chapter 7) but is rarely overtly stated as a contributory factor in the exclusion process. It was, however, identified by the School support service which encourages discussion of the situations in which children find themselves in the classroom and explores alternative courses of action which the individual student could have taken in the circumstances, and how that would have affected the outcome of the situation. This enables

the student to begin to predict the outcomes of his or her behaviour and to

consider the future as well as the present. Self-discipline links with the

control and regulation of impulsive drives, since if the student is able to

predict the outcome of his or her behaviour then this is the beginning of trying

to think through the consequences of actions before any action is taken within

a situation. Very often the pupil will react in the same way to a given

situation, so that if a teacher criticises or appears to criticise a piece of work,

the student may destroy the work, so that patterns of behaviour are formed.

The student then needs help to be able to think of other solutions to the

difficulty. It is apparent that oral communication must play an important part

in the development of skills referred to in the above quotation (see chapter 3),

which was identified by McManus (1995) as an intervention which has been

effective in reducing difficult behaviour within school. The interventions

highlighted in chapter three can be seen to give support to the individual in all

the areas which Garmezey (1981) highlights. Gaspar, a group working in the

Lille area of France (see below) had a project in 1993 which was reported as

producing 'astonishing results':

> Pour les adultes, l'aggression reside d'abord dans la violence verbale.
> Mais aucun enfant ne cite cette dimension; pas un ne considere qu'un,
> 'Nique ta mere!' ou un, 'Enfoire!' soit une aggression! Il faut
> absolument tirer les mots au clair et s'interroger sur les intentions.
> (Verfaillie, 1995, p. 43)

For adults, aggression lies mainly in verbal violence. But no child quotes this dimension; not one child considers that 'Stuff your mum!' or 'Silly sod!' is aggressive. You have to bring all the words into the open and to reflect upon people's intentions.

The School Effect

The study has highlighted the differences in schools in their rates of exclusion (identified by a number of authors - see chapter 3) and in the patterns of their exclusion. The pattern of exclusion tends to be repeated over a number of years indicating that the school may have done one or more of the following:

- established a policy for exclusions which is particular to that school (e.g. the use of indefinite exclusions as a means of bringing the parents/carers into school);

- has a fixed list of misdemeanours for which it imposes exclusions on a tariff basis (e.g. 3 days for smoking);

- has linked exclusions to the behaviour policy;

- imposes exclusion as a punishment;

- has not declared fixed term exclusions to the local educational authority (either those totalling under 5 days or those totalling over 5 days, or both);

- has a motivation to exclude in order to access external agency provision (e.g. to access the assessment and statementing procedures);

- has an inflexible approach or a fast track route to the exclusion procedures within school.

The school effect can increase or decrease the probability of exclusion for its pupils, the model put forward in chapter 3 indicates how the school can intervene on the behaviour continuum in order to bring this about. Schools are a powerful influence on the lives of children and young people: their effects and their problem-solving capabilities in the face of extreme difficulties should not be underestimated.

An issue which is raised in chapter 6 is that some pupils would not benefit from an early intervention programme, as their behaviour does not deteriorate until adolescence. These pupils are more likely to be outside the group who are labelled with a statement as having emotional and behaviour difficulties. It may be that the provision for the 14 -19 continuum needs to be considered as a coherent whole, looking to meet the educational needs of some 14 year olds within a setting other than school.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The high proportion of excluded pupils who have Special Educational Needs indicates that schools are not yet able to meet the needs of these pupils as outlined in the Education Act 1993 and the Code of Practice (chapter 8).

Exclusion is not a way of meeting their needs, but a way of compounding them. Some schools do not recognise this fact and openly state that they are excluding the pupil *because* of the Special Educational Needs.

The role which the Special Educational Needs department can play within the exclusion process (chapter 9) relates to the:

- communication between the pastoral and Special Educational Needs staff;

- collaboration which is an indication of a child-centered ethos within the school;

- the individual solution which can often be facilitated by the use of Special Educational Needs support staff;

- the rate of progress of the pupil towards the final act of permanent · exclusion which can be slowed down;

- the rate of progress towards permanent exclusion which can sometimes be halted;

- links between the Code of Practice and the behaviour policy of the school;

- the writing of Individual Education Plans which can be shared e.g. the pastoral staff take the lead at stage 2 and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at stage 3.

The single most important finding from part one of the study was the

information that 67% of pupils who were excluded had Special Educational

Needs. There had been no previous statistics on the proportion of pupils

excluded with Special Educational Needs and although I was aware that the

Special Educational Needs students were over-represented in the exclusion

figures, I had guessed at around 30%. The discovery of 67% was enough to

send me scuttling back through my data to find the mistake. However, this

proportion was later confirmed by Moore (1996). A higher rate for primary

excluded pupils was subsequently identified by Hayden (1997) (chapter 10).

Jerome (1996) reports on an initiative which is taking place within the Pas-

de-Calais region of France which challenges the French ideal of   .

republicanism in particular for pupils with Special Educational Needs. The

group is putting together a charter against exclusions and suggests that

differentiated teaching should be established, with learning methods which

are adapted to different pupils. Jerome suggests:

> Pour parvenir a un accord, la chatre devrait rappeler que 'la premiere
> des exclusion est celle de l'ignorance', et que la premiere mission de
> l'ecole est d'enseigner. (p.42)

> To reach agreement, the charter should remind people that 'the first
> among exclusions is to be excluded by ignorance' and that the prime
> mission of a school is to teach.

In France the meaning of 'exclusion' is more akin to the English meaning for

'disaffection', being used to include those pupils who truant from school as

well as those who are actively excluded by the school. The issue of whether

pupils with very challenging behaviour have Special Educational Needs is

discussed in chapter 10. So much of the definitions of Special Educational

Needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties rely on context that it is

impossible and undesirable to make a definitive distinction. If the evidence

shows that the needs of excluded pupils, whatever their label, are individual

then the labels are irrelevant. This is particularly pertinent if, as one teacher

indicated, the educational needs of the statemented excluded pupils are

indistinguishable from those of the non-statemented excluded pupils.

The green paper 'Excellence for all Children' (DFEE, 1997c) places an

emphasis on the expectations which teachers have of pupils with Special

Educational Needs:

> Good provision for Special Educational Needs does not mean a
> sympathetic acceptance of low achievement. It means a tough-minded
> determination to show that children with Special Educational Needs are
> capable of excellence. (DFEE, 1997c, p. 4)

The last chapter is devoted to emotional and behavioural difficulties;

alongside the Standards funds to be introduced in the academic year 1997 -

1998 (previously the Gest funds) and the emphasis on Lifelong Learning

(DFEE, forthcoming) priorities have been identified as disengaged pupils and

excluded pupils, with or without identified Special Educational Needs:

> By 2002,
> - A national programme will be in place to help primary schools tackle emotional and behavioural difficulties at a very early stage.
>
> - There will be enhanced opportunities for all staff to improve their skills in teaching children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
>
> - There will be a national programme to offer support to emotional and behavioural difficulties special schools experiencing problems.
>
> - There will be expanded support for schemes designed to renew the motivation of young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties at key stage 4. (DFEE, 1997c p. 88)

The Role of Parents

The role which parents play in the behaviour of their children is a crucial one

but is not due to poor parenting skills per se. Although some pupils' poor

relationships with parents may not be the basis on which positive role models

can be built, some pupils with poor behaviour also find difficulty in forming

relationships with other adults or with peers. Such an explanation does not

consider the fact that some pupils with poor behaviour have siblings who do

not display the same behavioural characteristics. Parenting skills must be

emphasised as the relationship with parents or carers is of crucial importance

to the child, but a deficit model must not be employed if the help of parents is

to be enlisted. The Marlborough Unit shows that a positive approach can

enable the child and parent to work together and to effect a change in the

behaviour. Garmezey (1981) comments:

> despite the harshness of life that the families encounter, some parents
> appear to be able to foster or enhance in their children the confidence,
> self-control, determination, flexibility and cognitive skills that
> accompany the development of competence and positive adaptation.
> These appear to be important precursors to the establishment of stress-
> resistance in children. (quoted in Hayden, 1997, p. 116)

Within the study (chapters 2 and 6) there is evidence to suggest that schools

are apt to blame parents for the pupil's behaviour; this is a behaviour on the

part of the school which is unhelpful, whether or not this appears to be true

for individual cases. What is more important is that the student's behaviour is

improved and if the parent/carer has the key to effecting this change with

support then the parent should be seen as a resource to the school, not as a

hindrance. In addition, parents can often hold the key to slowing down the

rate at which the pupil is excluded from school (chapter 9).

External Support Agencies

Chapter 2 begins the debate as to whether external support hinders the

school's response to exclude. Linked with the specific examples in chapter 11

it becomes clear that where external support agencies are genuinely working

in collaboration with the school and with each other, it becomes possible to

reduce the number of exclusions from individual schools. What is more

common practice, certainly within some of the schools within the study is that

although a range of services may be involved in the particular individual,

there is no true collaboration, and in some cases it became clear that social

services had held a case conference about a particular individual and not

involved the school. There is a role here in line with the Code of Practice

which it would be appropriate for the school Special Educational Needs

Coordinator to fulfil. Lloyd-Smith (1993) identified a policy vacuum in which

costs soar over time and which could be reduced by a coordinated attempt to

address the needs of the student before exclusion becomes the only viable

option (chapter 2). In some cases the school is inadvertently collaborating

with the wishes of the student in the act of permanent exclusion, indicating

that some pupils not only felt that they had outgrown school but were

prepared to act on their convictions, planning their exclusion and expressing a

viewpoint about what they wanted to happen next (chapter 6). For such pupils

it may be that they require something other than what school can provide:

more independence, more responsibility, being treated like an adult within a

restricted environment. Something similar to the Bridge Course operated by the Cities in Schools project would perhaps be an appropriate response.

There is evidence that schools, in particular the high schools, are reluctant to accept pupils who have been excluded from other schools. This factor alone will tend to create blockages and add to the culmulative time which pupils spend out of school. Every day out of school adds to the marginalisation process and the devaluing of the pupils involved.

Exclusion from school is an area which is coming to prominence in other countries of Europe. For instance, in Italy at the end of 1996, sending pupils out of the room and punitive suspensions were made illegal (chapter 9). The experience of an academic group of support and prevention (Gaspar) based in Lille, France suggests that violence and aggression in youngsters can be controlled except for those with psychopathic behaviour, as in an incident where a fourteen year old strangled a fellow pupil (Verfaillie, 1995). This supports the data taken from the individual case studies of pupils contained within chapter 6. Teachers identified three categories which together expressed the needs of the most difficult pupils from the schools' perspective. The first two categories of social interaction and educational needs applied to almost all the students involved in the case studies: the third category of

medical needs was restricted to a small number of pupils. Verfaillie goes on

to quote one of the Gaspar group:

> Entre des jeunes qui ne croient plus a la reussite par l'ecole et des
> enseignants accroches a une conception revee, ideale, de leur fonction,
> il arrive que les fils se rompent. La mefiance mutuelle se transforme en
> peur. Un climat de violence, assorti ou non d'actes, s'installe: on est en
> plein dans l'emotionnel: et s'il y a une dimension que l'ecole ne sait
> pas maitriser, c'est bien celle-la. (p. 43)

A loose translation of the above reads as follows:

> Between some youngsters who don't believe in success through the
> school route, and some teachers, hung up on an idealised, dreamlike
> concept of their role, the threads sometimes snap. Mutual mistrust is
> transformed into fear. A climate of violence is established; emotions
> take over; and if there is one dimension that school cannot overcome,
> that's it (the emotional dimension).

The medical adviser to the group is against blaming the ills of society on

national education. He says that it is not a question of blaming teachers but of

asking oneself how the school, within its own resources, can influence the

situation.

Conclusion

The study of exclusions is very complex as it deals with human relationships

rather than with unambiguous factual information. There is a high level of

emotional involvement on the part of the student, the teacher(s) and parents,

sometimes external agencies and to a lesser extent by the governors and the representatives of the local educational authority. Excluding a pupil from school touches every level of society: the individual who very often loses the right to a comprehensive education, the family, the school and the education system, the external agencies and services who may become involved as a response to criminal activity or health needs and the society both as a local community area and as a national entity. An important question to ask is whether the pupils who are permanently excluded are the only pupils who are considered to be incapable of being educated by the schools which exclude them. All the evidence suggests that they are not. Exclusion appears to be the last stage in a continuum of difficult behaviour, with pupils being subjected to a number of exclusionary processes which inures them to the final act of exclusion which would appear to be their fate. Exclusion has been likened to segregation as opposed to integration (Booth, 1996a) and it seems that those schools who focus on student conformity and 'the good of the whole' are schools which are more likely to exclude pupils. Those schools who seek for ways to increase participation of pupils in the curriculum and in the informal aspects of school life are less likely to exclude pupils as they are viewing the pupils as individuals rather than as groups. Exclusion should be used as a

'last resort' (DFE, 1994c). There is disagreement in schools as to what is the last resort. Some schools will only exclude a pupil after a very long period of working with that pupil and involving a large range of professionals along the way. Other schools see fit to exclude for reasons of hair style, dress or ornamentation. Unless the presenting reason for exclusion is the straw across the camel's back and the situation really is intractable, there is a large difference in the attitude of schools to the definition of what constitutes a 'last resort'. Similarly, the purposes of exclusion differ from school to school. Lawrence, Steed and Young (1984) comment:

> For many, exclusion need not, and should not perhaps, carry a necessary implication of punishment. Most schools make obvious exceptions in respect of children suffering from major and easily recognised traumas such as loss of a parent: it requires only an extension of this notion to acknowledge a wide range of lesser circumstances for which the appropriate first response might be understanding sympathy and acceptance. This does not imply condoning or ignoring disruption but it does suggest the need for a system of control which is more responsive to and understanding of children's needs. (p. 12)

Many schools use exclusion, particularly fixed term exclusion, as a sanction which may be incorporated into the behaviour policy and so be explicit to the pupils and parents, as well as to staff. If it is viewed as a punishment by school, there is evidence to suggest that it is not always viewed in this way by the students. In fact to some students it is a positive advantage, with fixed

term exclusions being the equivalent of a holiday, permanent exclusions being

viewed as an opportunity to gain employment (either in the legal or illegal

work markets). All the behaviour modification literature would suggest

rewarding the desired behaviours and avoid reinforcing the undesired

behaviours (see for instance Galloway and Goodwin, 1987 which also gives

an overview of the behaviour modification literature). Mongon et al. (1989)

ask some interesting value-laden questions about attitudes to pupils who are

not able to access the curriculum:

> Is it possible that some learning difficulties arise from the ways in
> which schools are organised and managed? For example, what
> messages are we conveying when we separate some children from
> others? How does the language we use to describe certain children
> reflect our own values and assumptions? How do schools transmit
> value judgements about children who succeed and those who do not?
> ...What messages are we transmitting to children and their peers when
> we exclude them from participation in some school activities? (p.xii)

One of the key areas which distinguishes schools which are striving to keep

pupils within the education system and therefore within the school, is the

approach taken towards disciplinary procedures. The approach described by

Adams (1992) embodies the idea that it is not what is done within the school

per se which is important, but the way in which it is done. So that if pupils are

made to feel that something is a punishment, this causes a divide between the

school and the pupil which may ultimately lead to permanent exclusion or

another expression of disaffection. The same strategy may be used as a way

of supporting the pupil. For instance, many schools have internal isolation

rooms or units. Some schools use them as a way of punishing the student for

misbehaviour in the class, and the use of the room in this way is quite clearly

punitive. Some schools with the same provision use it as a mechanism for

helping the student to develop strategies for coping within the classroom. This

would be a rehabilitative form of discipline. One school within the study had

in its behaviour policy a section on behaviour management programmes:

> In cases where the behaviour of a student falls seriously or persistently
> outside the accepted norm, a behaviour management programme
> should be devised in response to the needs of the individual in context.
> Behaviour management programmes should be positive, and should
> maximise the opportunity to develop the student along with the desired
> improvement in behaviour.
> Staff need to be familiar with a range of acceptable approaches to
> behaviour management so that they can select appropriately from them
> in response to need, and be skilled, through participation in in-service
> training, in the application of such approaches.

This kind of approach was displayed in this school with the use of a

behaviour modification unit, to which pupils were sent after a member of staff

had applied for a place for the student and only after negotiation had taken

place. The student was withdrawn as little as possible, certainly for no longer

than a three week period completely off timetable, often for a limited number

of lessons, with a phased return accompanied by support in the classroom.

Contrast this with another school which had an isolation unit which was manned by whoever was not teaching and therefore available, with no programme for re-entry to the lesson, where pupils were sent if they were too disruptive within a particular lesson. If a child's name appeared in the book three times within a half term, the child had a letter sent home and a detention. The message from the first school must surely be 'we are interested in you as a person and would like to work with you'. From the second school the message to the student must surely be one of keeping them out of the way whilst other pupils who are clearly interested in learning get on with it: the implication being that the student who is regularly sent to the isolation room has less intrinsic value than pupils who are never sent there. An experiment which was conducted in a school in Florida benefitted from the work of Whelage and Rutter (1986) who

> looked at the locus of control and self-esteem of students before and after they dropped out and compared these attributes with those of peers who continued on to graduation and beyond. They found that dropouts began with slightly higher self-esteem than the non-college-bound who stayed in school and that the dropouts actually increased the differential over time. The overall increase in self-esteem in dropouts matched that of the highest group, the college-bound. For at risk students, it seems, school can actually inhibit personal growth. Dropping out apparently had beneficial effects on the self-images of these students. (p. 364)

It may be possible that this was the same effect as was described in the

parental initiative 'Success within failure' in chapter 11. The school in the

study decided to give 15 minutes individual tuition time per week with a

volunteer teacher who acted as an advisor. In the short term the experiment

worked: whilst the students were given the attention they appeared happier,

more relaxed and more motivated towards school. There was no long-term

follow-up detailed. The authors concluded:

> Explaining the success of the programme is really quite simple. All
> people need to know that they are valued and loved. Who wants to
> spend 180 days a year in a place where one does not feel successful or
> needed? A school may provide the best instruction in the world, but, if
> a segment of the school population is not present physically or is
> feeling alienated or absent mentally, of what value is excellent
> pedagogy? Secondary schools can no longer limit themselves to the
> cognitive realm and ignore the affective domain. They must attend to
> the head and the heart, especially with those students who find school a
> less-than-appealing place to learn. (p.365)

Kadel and Follman (1993) working in Florida comment on the

appropriateness of using suspension even for the most violent pupils because

of the consequences of so doing:

> Schools have a right and a responsibility to remove students whose
> behaviour presents a danger to others. Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
> is a common form of discipline because it removes the violent student
> from the school, is easy to administer, requires little planning or
> resources, and can be applied for a number of infractions... There is no
> question that OSS is the appropriate school response to many serious
> violent incidents. But whilst OSS is sometimes a **necessary** solution,
> other times it is more of a **convenient** solution. Furthermore, the

school's solution may create a larger community **problem** by placing dangerous kids on the streets. In addition, OSS has little chance of preventing future problems at the school if it is not coupled with long-term preventive and rehabilitative strategies. (p.11)

I pose the question: are we looking at the situation in the UK at twenty or thirty years time if we cannot get to grips with the collaborative strategies which are necessary to give value and confidence to a growing number of disaffected youngsters? This is particularly pertinent if the assertions of Gillborn (1996) and other authors such as Blyth and Milner (1993) and McManus (1990) (see chapter 1) are correct in saying that a good number of the exclusions which take place are not directly related to the strength of the case against the pupils. The evidence suggests that there is an unacceptable level of subjectivity in the way in which schools exclude, and one headteacher within my study admitted that he had excluded because of pressure from staff rather than as a professional judgement. However it is difficult to see how this can be resolved in the light of the importance of attitudes within the school. Legislation can be implemented to iron out anomalies in the reasons presented for exclusion, but it would be very surprising if it had any effect at all upon the rates at which school exclude, or upon their pattern of exclusion. A number of authors are now calling for the abolition of exclusion in the same way that corporal punishment was

abolished (Hayden, 1997; Searle, 1996). They argue that exclusion seems to be a sanction which is now outdated. Teachers were able to find an alternative to corporal punishment; they are inventive and positive enough about teaching to be able to find solutions to replace exclusion; particularly as those pupils who are excluded from the system need stability, security and guidance more than the majority of pupils who remain within the school system.

Chapter 13

Conclusions

Focus of the Study

The study began at a time when there was little data available to describe

numbers, patterns, reasons for exclusion or outcomes for excluded pupils.

The main focus of part one of the study was therefore to gather such

information. In order to gather and analyse the data in a coherent form the

most discerning approach was to use one local educational authority so that

data could be compared over a 2 year period and related issues could be more

easily explored. The aims of part 1 are:

- to discover what were the perceptions of senior staff in schools with

  regard to difficult children within their schools and to follow this through

  by gathering data within their schools on two of their most difficult pupils.

- to collect information with regard to indefinitely or permanently excluded

  pupils (over a two year period), and to discover what happened to these

  pupils and how long they were removed from the education system.

- to gather data from attendance at a selection of case conferences in order

  to supplement the information about pupil exclusion, and to view the

  process involved in coming to a decision about an individual's future

  education.

The second focus emerged from part one of the study and involved the

relationship between the exclusion of pupils and the effectiveness of

collaboration between the pastoral and Special Educational Needs areas

within schools. The aim for part 2 was to:

- explore the relationship between the exclusion of pupils and the

  effectiveness of collaboration between the pastoral and Special

  Educational Needs areas within school.

The aims of the study were reflected in the research questions which emerged

to address the issues:

1. What are senior staff perceptions on the nature of provision for
   children exhibiting the most difficult behaviour within the school?

2. What has been provided by the mainstream school in order to meet
   the needs of the most difficult pupils within that school?

3. What are the numbers and patterns of exclusion across the local
   educational authority?

4. How are decisions reached about the future of excluded pupils, and
   what are the outcomes of permanent and indefinite exclusion for
   pupils within the local educational authority?

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5. Is there a relationship between the rate of exclusion of a school and the effectiveness of collaboration between the Special Educational Needs and pastoral staff?

6. Are there specific instances when collaboration between the Special Educational Needs and pastoral staff has led to a reduction in the number of excluded pupils?

Study Resolutions

Resolutions are given in bullet point format below.

- Exclusion is a process.

- Exclusion is the end of a continuum of response by a school.

- The presenting reasons for exclusion from school are usually the culmination of a long series of events and incidents within the school.

- Schools can be effective in reducing the number of exclusions, through organisation, procedures and an examination of staff roles and attitudes towards the most vulnerable sections of society.

- Differences between schools can be intentional.

- Schools need to make a conscious decision to address issues of behaviour and exclusion; effective behaviour policies need a commitment from the whole staff.

- Schools cannot properly address issues of exclusion until they have collated all the relevant data: this is the starting point.

- All schools are individual, and although there are ideas which can be adapted for use in individual schools, not every strategy outlined will be appropriate for every school.

- The headteacher has a central role in promoting attitudes towards pupils with very challenging behaviour, and in promoting the communication between the pastoral staff and the Special Educational Needs staff in the development of collaborative strategies.

- Special school exclusions were all from the secondary phase, mainly from MLD schools.

- The local educational authority has a responsibility to minimise the amount of time that pupils who are excluded spend out of school.

- External agency involvement can make a huge difference to the way in which the individual copes with the demands of school, when working in a collaborative manner with the school and parents/carers.

- The majority of excluded pupils have Special Educational Needs and exclusion is a sign that school is not meeting their needs (see also John, 1993).

- The Special Educational Needs department can make a significant contribution to slow down or halt the rate at which some pupils are excluded, when working in collaboration with pastoral staff.

- The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice should help to slow down the rate of exclusions when used in conjunction with an effective behaviour policy and whole school systems for Individual Education Plans.

- Exclusions are not an appropriate response to the needs of individual students, as they compound not ameliorate those needs.

- There are alternatives to exclusion which can be implemented on at least two levels; the school, within its own resources (as required for pupils on the Code of Practice stages 1 - 3), and the local educational authority which can be instrumental in promoting collaborative working.

- Costs in monetary terms for excluded pupils rise in proportion to the time out of school; initially, most of these costs are borne by the education service, but eventually there will be cost implications to such services as the police and the justice system, to social services and/or the health service.

- Parents can hold the key to changing behaviour of individual students if they are seen as a resource and not as a reason for the challenging behaviour of their offspring (see also Cohen et al., 1994).

- There are some within-child factors which contribute to the challenging behaviour, but these must always be considered within the contexts of home, culture and school.

- Some pupils appear to have outgrown school and exhibit exclusion-promoting behaviour. Their needs may be better met outside school but within mainstream education (see also Brodie and Berridge, 1996 for a description of a project finishing in 1997 which reaches a similar conclusion).

- The 14 - 19 continuum of education should become more flexible in order to meet the needs of those pupils for whom school is no longer an option.

- Exclusion should be replaced by a response suitable to the individual needs of the child.

Key Research Areas

One area which was highlighted within the study which is not evident within the literature to date was the notion of the student wishing to be permanently excluded. There was evidence within the data that some secondary school

pupils had engineered the exclusion and were clear that they wanted the exclusion to continue. What was less clear was the reaction of the parent/carer to exclusion. It was certainly true that some parents failed to turn up to the exclusion case conference. It would be interesting to discover the reasons why this was so. Was it due to the disaffection that the parent felt with regard to the education system or the school or was it due to a more practical reason such as a lack of literacy or oral communication skills or simply that there was no baby-sitter available for any younger siblings? The area of parental contribution to reducing exclusions is certainly a valuable research topic which should be explored in further detail.

Little work has been done in this study or in others to ascertain the role of governors within the exclusion process. How can governors help to reduce the numbers of pupils excluded from school and what can they contribute to the overall ethos of the school? If their role is to be a 'critical friend' is it time that there was more of the 'critical' and less of the 'friend' in terms of the challenges that sometimes need to be given to the school? Is there a role for the local educational authority to play in educating the governing bodies about their responsibilities as well as their powers?

There have been a number of studies relating to the views of students who

have been excluded (Cullingford and Morrison, 1996; de Pear, 1997; de Pear

and Garner, 1996; John, 1996). As Cullingford (1992) states:

> Children are as much a part of society as adults. We may have created
> separate institutions for them and even tried to suggest that 'childhood'
> is almost a separate status or category. But they live in the same
> context, observe the same things. They think, analyse and question.
> They hold views on politics, on the economy and on the environment.
> And yet their views are almost always ignored. Surveys of attitudes
> and polls of political opinions cover small samples of the adult
> population as if they could represent all others. But there are few
> explorations of the developing ideas of children in their analysis of the
> world they live in which will influence the future. Why? (p. 1)

What would be valuable to ascertain would be the long-term effects on

students who have been excluded in terms of life-chances and employment

opportunities. Is there a causal relationship between the act of exclusion and

the future which awaits the youngster in adulthood? There has been some

research conducted for specific groups of pupils in terms of outcomes (see for

example Kendrick 1995a, 1995b, 1995c for work with pupils in care). Devlin

(1995, 1996) has also contributed some way towards this by her study of

prison inmates in which she found that almost 40% of the prisoners had been

excluded with a quarter being permanently excluded from secondary school.

Her conclusions (1996) incorporate a set of suggestions which she believes

could prevent criminal behaviour in the future:

Training and staff development

Courses at pre-service and in-service level should:

- raise awareness of the full range of Special Educational Needs
- emphasise the importance of avoiding labels and perpetuating self-fulfilling prophesies
- increase sensitivity to problems arising from family trauma such as separation, divorce, re-marriage and death
- alert staff to the early signs of physical and sexual abuse
- stress the importance of communication skills
- increase general proficiency in classroom management techniques

School management

School management should put into place systems that:

- improve record keeping, particularly at phase transfer
- standardise teaching methods and approaches throughout a school
- provide a mentoring or 'buddy' service
- ensure more effective collaboration with other services
- have clear policy requirements e.g. on bullying
- identify and counteract truancy at an early stage
- introduce or expand personal and social development programmes
- deal with the growth of the gang mentality and other anti-social tendencies (figure 2, p. 16)

The role of the headteacher is crucial in establishing the working ethos of the school and the attitudes engendered within the staff towards pupils with behaviour difficulties. Does the attitude of the headteacher change over time? What is likely to influence the headteacher's philosophical stance towards exclusion? There should be more research into the processes within schools which are directed at creating the circumstances for inclusion rather than exclusion (Cooper et al., 1997). The headteacher holds much of the initiative in stimulating the development of such processes.

A further area of research which needs to be developed further is that which

looks into the ways in which the artificial divide at age 16 can be successfully

blurred to cover an age range, so that age 14 - 16 in particular can be viewed

as a transition period with a 'ramp' rather than a series of 'steps on a

staircase'. This area is beginning to be addressed by the government funded

initiative 'New Start', which is currently supporting 17 pilot projects in order

to focus on 14 - 17 year olds who are not in learning or who are at risk of

leaving early; 'disengaged' pupils. Parsons (1997) identifies approaches

which were taken into account when awarding funding for the projects:

- the development of effective partnerships such as education, the
  youth service, the Training and Enterprise Council and the voluntary
  sector;

- research on the extent of the problem;

- mapping of the existing provision;

- delivery of an innovative scheme.

The focus of the work may be upon particular groups most vulnerable, for

instance looked after children or ethnic groups. The aim of the projects is to

develop an overall strategy which will reduce the overall level of non-

participation by pupils in the education system. However, in true

governmental style, the monies available are for pump-priming the projects

not for the maintenance of those projects long-term. The New Start strategy is

a 'strategic approach to tackling disengagement' (Parsons, 1997). The DFEE

(Lifelong Learning, forthcoming), is beginning to focus on increasing the

participation of disengaged pupils which, although starting with the 16+

group of pupils, should ultimately be of benefit to the 14+ group of pupils

who are either out of the education system or at risk of leaving it (including

those involved in truancy and/or exclusion).

The Current Position

There is now much more data and research relating to exclusions as the area

has become increasingly relevant as more and more pupils have fallen outside

the education system. Much of the current research is related to three areas:

- what can schools do to help to prevent exclusions?

- what are the effects of exclusion on the youngsters?

- how can collaborative inter-agency work affect exclusion?

The forthcoming work by Cooper et al. at the Cambridge Institute of

Education will focus on what schools can achieve within the resources which

they currently have available, and is piloting work on the positive alternatives

to exclusion in a number of different schools. Some strategies which are

useful have been outlined by Kinder et al. (1995) and consider the whole-

school level, school-based roles for staff and pupils and external support.

de Pear's work (1997) on the views of excluded youngsters and how

exclusion has affected them is particularly sobering:

> One might surmise that the exclusion from mainstream has so
> marginalised some youngsters that it has made it difficult for them to
> trust anyone else - especially in terms of a close interpersonal
> relationship. Others, with a poor grasp of the curriculum and resultant
> deviant behaviour, form small splinter groups of disaffected pupils
> lending each other moral support in the classroom. (p. 21)

The view that pupils who are excluded somehow deserve what they get is one

which does not appear in any of the literature; sadly, however, it is one which

is still prevalent in mainstream schools. Some teachers are unwilling to admit

that there are other factors at work in the creation of challenging behaviour

relating to the ethos of the school and to the teaching methods used, and

therefore dismiss the fact that they can contribute to the marginalisation of the

pupils they teach. A particularly useful concept which has been put forward

by a number of authors (notably Cullingford and Morrison, 1996; Kinder et

al., 1995,) is that of exclusion being an aspect of disaffection, alongside

truancy and disruption. This link emphasises the fact that what schools do is

important in terms of reducing disaffection and increasing the participation of

students within the whole school environment (Booth, 1996a), and the need

to draw 'spurious' distinctions between the needs of disruptive students and

disturbed students is minimised (Galloway et al., 1982).

The work which has been developed in the area of exclusions from school is

just beginning to filter down into practice. The work of Cities in Schools

(Stephenson, 1996) particularly with the Bridge course is spreading across the

country with a number of projects on-going. The National Assocation for the

Rehabiltation of Offenders has a number of projects involving excluded

pupils (Williams, 1996). One of these, the Education and Prevention of

Crime, has:

> aimed to explore methods for reducing youth crime and claims to have
> contributed to a significant reduction in crime levels in the areas
> involved, a marked improvement in pupil/teacher relations and a
> number of pupils being reintegrated into mainstream schooling.
> Among its conclusions the report argues that schools can make a
> significant contribution to reducing youth crime, and disaffection, by
> "Working with other organisations particularly the youth services to
> develop whole-school approaches and specific initiatives". (Williams,
> p. 8)

The success of the project seems to have hinged around the fact that schools

were unable to pick up the signs of pupils who were developing disaffection.

Through a survey of pupils and the gathering of other data such as

information regarding crime and offenders within the area, the researchers

were able to build up a profile which related to each individual school.

Schools were then encouraged to look at what they provided in terms of the

non-curricular aspects of schooling such as facilities and ethos. The report

concluded:

> The EPOC programme suggests that given a structured and co-
> operative framework schools can work effectively on a multi-agency
> basis in order to tackle disaffection. (Williams, p.10)

Some of the best practices in Pupil Referral Units are those which are

beginning to place the emphasis of the work on partnership with schools and

the reintegration of pupils into mainstream. Normington and Boorman (1996)

promote an ethos of short-term involvement with the Pupil Referral Unit and

the provision of mainstream education where possible:

> The schools' inclusion in planning has emphasised the PRU's role as a
> service to schools and their pupils and ensured that the Pupil Referral
> Unit is perceived as helping with, rather than relieving them of,
> problems. ...Work with individual pupils is co-operative and
> mainstream teachers are partners in developing, following, reviewing
> and monitoring Individual Education Plans. (p. 171)

The 'mainstream is best' philosophy for pupils who are in danger of exclusion

or otherwise at-risk is also present in the USA where Blake's (1996) work

suggests that:

> Generally those interventions amongst at-risk students that could claim
> some success fell into the following seven categories of learning
> support.
> • Alternative opportunities and provision to give a structural
>   alternative through the use of magnet schools, schools-within-
>   school, etc. in the hope of making schools more worthwhile
>   institutions

- Special social services and counselling programmes, such as those for pregnant girls
- Modifications in curriculum and instruction to make education more appealing to at-risk students
- Smaller classes and schools to create a greater sense of community ownership
- The selection of dedicated teachers who were willing to work with difficult students
- Experimental learning that sought the use of active engagement of students in their work
- Mentoring and advocacy assistance from sympathetic adults

What these interventions shared was a sense of support for at-risk students and an optimism in American education's capacity to meet their needs; in short, they provided a 'carrot' for at-risk students. (pp. 173 - 174)

Hayden (1995) outlines the three levels at which positive approaches to challenging behaviour can be developed within the education service:

- *nationally*, through enquiries and policy documents from the DFE as well as through the funding of innovative projects (e.g. via GEST) to address identified aspects of behaviour problems;

- at *local educational authority* level in their interpretation of national policies and in the support and guidance they give schools e.g. through behaviour support services, INSET and the like, and within local education authorities, where groups or clusters of schools work together on the issue;

- at *school* level many institutions are developing whole school behaviour policies. (p. 5)

These initiatives are now being complemented by some joint services initiatives (see chapters 7 and 11). Both these ranges of initiatives are important in order to prevent not only the excluded pupils from reaching the top of the 'lift' on the behaviour continuum (chapter 3), but also to address the needs of those students lower down the continuum and adapt the education system, mainly via individual school and service contributions in order to improve the society in which we must all, in the end, live side by side.

Hopefully, the focus which will come in to take research into the millennium in this area is a multi-faceted joint services approach which will recognise the value of the family, whatever that term may mean to society:

> Within the last decade parental choice, parent power and now family responsibility have been prominent on the political agenda. There is not much doubt that schools and parents should work together for the common good of the children. In Britain many schools have been working hard for some time at fostering strong relationships with parents so as to provide better opportunities for the pupils. What has become increasingly clear in recent years *is that raising educational attainment is a highly complex activity which schools cannot carry out by themselves*....This is important for all children, but crucial to any identified as having Special Educational Needs. Appropriate early childhood experiences would considerably reduce the occurrence of mild and moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. (Richardson, 1997, p. 37)

The White Paper 'Excellence in Schools' (DFEE, 1997) promotes this view:

Parents are a child's first and enduring teachers. They play a crucial role in helping their children learn. Family learning is a powerful tool for reaching some of the most disadvantaged in our society. It has the potential to reinforce the role of the family and change attitudes to education, helping build strong local communities and widening participation in learning. We want to encourage more effective involvement of family learning in early years and primary education. (p. 53)

The current debates surrounding inclusion which are international in nature are extremely pertinent to the education of pupils with very challenging behaviour, as this group forms one of the fastest growing sectors of Special Educational Needs in terms of those pupils with statements of educational need and those without. Pupils with very challenging behaviour are the pupils which some teachers, schools and local education authorities would like to see segregated; the picture is similar in Finland (Ruoho, Ihatsu and · Happonden, 1997). Positive attitudes towards inclusion as opposed to exclusion are necessary to push forward the innovative practice which is currently occurring:

> The mechanism of educational segregation is complicated. Its function and stability are partly based on the prevailing attitudes in society. Positive attitudes towards inclusion prepare the ground for integrating the school system. Positive attitudes towards segregation serve to maintain the previous separate structures of schools and can also prepare the way for new decisions which strengthen segregation. (Ruoho, Ihatsu and Happonden, 1997, p. 34)

The final words in this study belong to Kulesza (1997), writing on the

perspective from Poland:

> Every human being has the same needs. Among them we can
> distinguish a need to be loved and accepted and to feel warmth and
> contact with other members of society. The satisfaction of these needs
> helps us to form a healthy personality. There are no exceptions. (p. 35)

Appendix 1: Senior Staff Interviews

1. What types of behaviour are exhibited by the most difficult children within your school population?

    a) disruption of lessons - specific behaviour such as calling out in class, verbal/physical aggression, etc.

    b) behaviour out of classes - breaks, lunchtimes, inbetween lessons, pre- and post-school.

    c) attitudes to peers and staff.

2. What are the usual school procedures for dealing with difficult and disruptive behaviour?

3. What happens to children for whom the school system proves inadequate?

4. How many children exhibit very poor behaviour at the moment/in a school year?

5. What types of poor behaviour do you feel that you have the capacity to manage successfully?

6. Which agencies do you involve in school?

7. What is the school procedure with regard to exclusions?

8. What is the current LEA provision for the most difficult pupils?

9. How could LEA provision be improved?

10. Any other comments?

Appendix 2: Special Educational Needs/ Pastoral Staff

Interview Schedule

1. What factors do you feel are important in influencing which pupils are excluded from a school?

2. When schools get a trigger to exclude a youngster, how could they react differently in order to keep the youngster in the education system?

3. What can schools do to lessen the number of triggers for exclusion?

4. Can you give any examples of good practice where the school has handled very difficult behaviour well?

5. Can you give any examples of poor practice where the school has handled very difficult behaviour badly?

6. I want to examine the liaison between pastoral care staff and S.N. staff. What role can this liaison play in carrying out good practice when dealing with pupils in danger of being excluded?

7. Are there steps which could be taken in order to facilitate the re-entry of pupils who have been excluded (either permanently from another school, or on a fixed term basis from the same school)?

8. Are there any realistic alternatives to mainstream education for excluded pupils?

9. Would you like to see any changes to the LEA's involvement in the exclusion process?

10. Any other comments.

Appendix 3: Questionnaires

<u>Special Needs Co-ordinators.</u>

1. List 3 strategies which have been most successful in preventing or delaying pupil exclusion.

2. List 3 strategies which have been least successful in preventing pupil exclusion.

3. What links have you developed with pastoral staff? *(Tick all which apply)*

regular meetings between SN & pastoral staff	
liaison re: individual pupils	
joint consultation meetings with outside agencies *(please specify)*_____	
provision made by SN dept. for pupils with essentially pastoral difficulties	
information giving sessions for all teaching staff	
other *(please specify)*_____	

4. When are meetings with pastoral staff organised? *(tick all which apply)*

	V. frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
non-contact time					
breaks					
lunchtimes					
arranged with cover administrator during contact time					
after school (non-directed time)					
as part of directed time after school					
INSET days					

5. What are the benefits of developing such links:

a) to you?

b) to the pupils?

6. Please outline the ways in which the SEN department can be involved with

pupils who are in danger of being excluded. *(Tick all which apply).*

	Should always be involved	Could sometimes be involved	Never needs to be involved
part time attendance			
counselling			
individual attention			
withdrawal from particular lessons			
extra help with basic skills			
support in class			
case conferences			
discussions with parents			
home visits			
contracts			
internal school meetings			
testing			
liaison with outside agencies (eg SPS)			
other *(please specify)* _____ _____ _____			

7. How often does informal (unscheduled) contact with pastoral staff take place? *(tick one only)*

V. frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never

8. Give 2 examples of children who are in danger of exclusion where you would expect to be involved.

9. Give 2 examples of children who are in danger of exclusion where you would not expect to be involved.

10. How much involvement do feel you have in the exclusion process within your school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Ability to take decision is yours				
Head takes your advice				
Discussion with head & other staff				
Joint decision at middle management level				
You are not involved in the decision				
The prime responsibility is with the pastoral staff				
Other_____				

11. What factors do you feel are important in influencing which pupils are excluded from your school?

	V. important	Important	Fairly important	Not at all important
Ethos				
League tables				
Image of school				
Head's directive				
Guidelines on excludable offences				
Persistent disruption				
Serious "one-off" incident				
Lack of parental support				
Other_____				

12. What strategies do you use in school before exclusion becomes inevitable?

	Would certainly use	Would usually use	May use	Would not use
Counselling				
Individual attention				
Withdrawal from particular lessons				
Part time attendance				
Daily report				
Outside agencies eg SPS, EWS, I.S.S.S.				
Internal school meetings				
Case conferences				
Testing				
Extra help with basic skills				
Support in class				
Letters to parents				
Discussion with parents				
Detentions				
Contract				

Isolation				
Other (specify) _____ _____				

13. Any other comments.

Thank you very much.

Pastoral staff.

1. List 3 strategies which have been most successful in preventing or delaying

pupil exclusion.

2. List 3 strategies which have been least successful in preventing pupil

exclusion.

3. What links have you developed with special needs staff? *(Tick all which*

apply)

regular meetings between SN & pastoral staff	
liaison re: individual pupils	
joint consultation meetings with outside agencies *(please specify)*_____ _____ _____	
provision made by SN dept. for pupils with essentially pastoral difficulties	
information giving sessions for all teaching staff	
other *(please specify)*_____ _____	

4. When are meetings with special needs staff organised? *(tick all which apply)*

	V. frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
non-contact time					
breaks					
lunchtimes					
arranged with cover administrator during contact time					
after school (non-directed time)					
as part of directed time after school					
INSET days					

5. What are the benefits of developing such links:

a) to you?

b) to the pupils?

6. Please outline the ways in which the SEN department can be involved with pupils who are in danger of being excluded. *(Tick all which apply)*.

	Should always be involved	Could sometimes be involved	Never needs to be involved
part time attendance			
counselling			
individual attention			
withdrawal from particular lessons			
extra help with basic skills			
support in class			
case conferences			.
discussions with parents			
home visits			
contracts			
internal school meetings			
testing			
liaison with outside agencies (eg SPS)			
other *(please specify)* _____ _____			

7. How often does informal (unscheduled) contact with special needs staff

take place? *(tick one only)*

V. frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never

8. Give 2 examples of children who are in danger of exclusion where you

would expect to be involved.

9. Give 2 examples of children who are in danger of exclusion where you

would not expect to be involved.

10. How much involvement do feel you have in the exclusion process within

your school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Ability to take decision is yours				
Head takes your advice				
Discussion with head & other staff				
Joint decision at middle management level				
You are not involved in the decision				
The prime responsibility is with the pastoral staff				
Other_____				

11. What factors do you feel are important in influencing which pupils are

excluded from your school?

	V. important	Important	Fairly important	Not at all important
Ethos				
League tables				
Image of school				
Head's directive				
Guidelines on excludable offences				
Persistent disruption				
Serious "one-off" incident				
Lack of parental support				
Other_____				

12. What strategies do you use in school before exclusion becomes inevitable?

	Would certainly use	Would usually use	May use	Would not use
Counselling				
Individual attention				
Withdrawal from particular lessons				
Part time attendance				
Daily report				
Outside agencies eg SPS, EWS, I.S.S.S.				
Internal school meetings				
Case conferences				'
Testing				
Extra help with basic skills				
Support in class				
Letters to parents				

Discussion with parents				
Detentions				
Contract				
Isolation				
Other (*specify*) _____ _____ _____ _____				

13. Any other comments.

Thank you very much.

LEA Staff

1. List 3 strategies which seem to be most successful in helping schools to

prevent or delay pupil exclusion.

2. List 3 strategies which seem to be least successful in helping schools to

prevent pupil exclusion.

3. What are the benefits when schools develop links between the pastoral and

Special Needs staff within a school?

a) to the LEA?

b) to the pupils?

c) to the school in general?

4. Please outline the ways in which the SEN department can be involved with pupils who are in danger of being excluded. *(Tick all which apply).*

	Should always be involved	Could sometimes be involved	Never needs to be involved
part time attendance			
counselling			
individual attention			
withdrawal from particular lessons			
extra help with basic skills			
support in class			
case conferences			
discussions with parents			.
home visits			
contracts			
internal school meetings			
testing			
liaison with outside agencies (eg SPS)			
other *(please specify)* _____ _____ _____			

5. Do you consider that there is a link between the quality of the Special Needs/pastoral interface within a school and the number of pupils excluded from the school? *(Please give reasons).*

6. Give 2 examples of children who are in danger of exclusion where you would expect Special Needs staff to be involved.

7. Give 2 examples of children who are in danger of exclusion where you would not expect Special Needs staff to be involved.

8. What factors do you feel are important in influencing which pupils are excluded from a school?

	V. important	Important	Fairly important	Not at all important
Ethos				
League tables				
Image of school				
Head's directive				
Guidelines on excludable offences				
Persistent disruption				
Serious "one-off" incident				
Lack of parental support				
Other_____				

9. What strategies are used in school before exclusion becomes inevitable?

	Would certainly use	Would usually use	May use	Would not use
Counselling				
Individual attention				
Withdrawal from particular lessons				
Part time attendance				
Daily report				
Outside agencies eg SPS, EWS, I.S.S.S.				
Internal school meetings				
Case conferences				
Testing				.
Extra help with basic skills				
Support in class				
Letters to parents				
Discussion with parents				
Detentions				
Contract				
Isolation				

Other (specify)				
_____ _____				

10. Any other comments.

k you very much.

Appendix 4: Case Study Schedule

School:	Date:
Contact person:	
Name of child:	
DoB:	Age:

Types of behaviour exhibited (include dates where possible):

For how long has the child exhibited poor behaviour?

What strategies/ sanctions have been used with the child?

What were the outcomes of interventions (indicate successes and failures):

What parental involvement has there been?

| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

Which outside agencies are involved with this child?

| SPS: |
| EWO: |
| SS: |
| Police: |
| Others: |
| |
| |
| |

What are the effects of the child's behaviour on:

a) other pupils?

----

b) the staff?

Put the child's needs in priority order:

1)---

2)---

3)---

4)---

Any other comments about how this child's needs should be met?

History of exclusions:

Where is the child currently being educated?

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