

Scrutiny Review of Fixed-term Exclusions

Report 7 – Fixed-term exclusions by ethnicity

Introduction

1. Appendix 1 to this document gives a breakdown by ethnicity of secondary fixed-term exclusions for the last three academic years and Appendix 2 similar data for primary schools. Note: each appendix is as a separate excel file. They also detail the exclusions by ethnicity for each school making such exclusions.
2. The spreadsheets gives not just the actual numbers of fixed-term exclusions by ethnic group but also detail the percentage of those exclusions as a percentage of all exclusions for 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07. Additionally, the details for 2006-07 are given as a percentage of those ethnic groups on roll according to the PLASC data for each school.
3. The final three columns indicate the number of exclusions that could be expected if exclusions were equally spread across all the ethnic groups, the actual number of exclusions made for each ethnic group and the number that this was over or under the expectation made, assuming that exclusions would be spread equally across all ethnic groups.
4. No assumptions should be made one way or the other about the actual numbers over or under the 'expected' number as there are a range of factors which are known to impact on behaviour and certain ethnic groups are known to be represented differently in these impact situations. Rather, the analysis of such data enables the schools and the local authority to look at their exclusions and take steps to address any findings that drilling down into these figures might find.
5. For example, research indicates that the presence of a strong male role model has a positive impact of boys' behaviour. Similarly, good health is more likely to be associated with good attendance at school, which is more likely to impact positively on engagement with education, and thereby a more positive feeling of self-worth and increased aspiration and therefore an increase in positive behaviour.
6. Analysis therefore by ethnicity is only useful when the reasons behind the exclusions are examined and measures put in place to address what may be a whole range of underlying causal factors. Nevertheless, the data shows some interesting differences for different ethnic groups across the local authority as a whole and in individual schools.
7. When interpreting the data it is also important to recognise that where there are small numbers in any one group the statistical relevance of that data is less reliable, particularly when looking at individual school data, and any number needs to be viewed in relation to the actual size of the cohort in question.