



Haringey Council

Scrutiny Review – School Exclusions - Part One

Members of the Review Panel

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Scrutiny review into processes and procedures for reducing the number of pupils excluded from schools.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is concerned with the Panel's review into looking at what can be done to prevent pupils from being excluded from schools. It will be followed by another looking into the help given to those who are excluded.
- 1.2 The Review panel discussed good practice with head teachers, an expert from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, relevant unions, the Director of Children and Young People's Service and her staff.
- 1.3 The Panel was impressed by what was being done by local schools and the Council to try to prevent pupils from being excluded. The services provided were very good and the Panel have made the recommendations set out in Section 5 which it is hoped will help to make the services even better.

2 Reasons for the Review

- 2.1 One of the aims of the "Every Child Matters" agenda and part of the vision set out in the Haringey Children and Young People's Plan is that every young person in Haringey should be happy, healthy and safe with a bright future. To achieve this it is crucial that Haringey's pupils are encouraged to attend and enjoy school, to achieve national standards and to engage in further/higher education employment or training when they leave school. It is clear that young people who are excluded from school find it harder to gain worthwhile employment and are more likely to get into trouble. According to the Government's White Paper entitled "Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment", almost half of male prisoners had been excluded from school.
- 2.2 Haringey's Children and Young People's Service, local schools and other agencies involved in this area of work do take exclusion very seriously. Their efforts are acknowledged in last year's Annual Performance Assessment which stated that 'support for behaviour is effective. Permanent exclusion rates are low in both primary and secondary schools and fixed term exclusions are being reduced.'
- 2.3 In view of the importance of reducing exclusions and providing alternative education for those who have to be excluded it was decided that, despite the good services already provided, this was an area which needed to be scrutinised. It was also agreed that, because of the complexity of this issue, the review should be carried out in two stages. The first, which is the subject of this report, into what could be done to prevent young people from being excluded and that this should be

followed by one into the alternative education provision given to those excluded for more than six days.

3 The Way in Which the Review was Undertaken

- 3.1 The aim of the review is to look at what local schools do to try to prevent their pupils from being excluded. It was also agreed to look at the action taken by the Children and Young People's Service in providing support services, advice and encouragement to the schools.
- 3.2 The Panel met three times, visited Gladesmore Community School in Haringey and Bow School in Tower Hamlets and discussed with their head teachers the action they took and the various procedures they've adopted that have reduced the number of pupils excluded from their schools. The Panel also spoke to the Director of the Children and Young People's Service and to members of her staff involved in exclusion work, including the Pupil and Family Mediation Service. Expert advice was sought from an officer from the Department of Children, Schools and Families and the Panel met the Secretary of the Teachers Panel and a representative from the National Union of Teachers to discuss their views.
- 3.3 The Panel would like to thank all those who advised and assisted them during the course of their review.
- 3.4 It must be emphasised that the aim of the review was to find ways of improving behaviour so that a pupil does not have to be excluded. It was not about finding alternative ways of managing those who needed to be excluded as this would not have achieved anything.

4. Findings from Presentations and Visits

General

- 4.1 The Panel was pleased that schools were following Government policy and using permanent exclusions as a last resort. They were, however concerned that procedures should be followed for reporting exclusions so that accurate statistics were available for use both by schools and local authorities.

School Visits

- 4.2 The two schools the Panel visited, Gladesmore and Bow, were both in their own ways regarded as models of excellence. It was clear to Panel members that the best way of tackling or reducing the need for exclusions was to encourage a 'whole school' approach and to ensure that the ethos of the school was one where there were high, shared expectations and where pupils knew that staff were interested in them. The Head teacher of Gladesmore School, for instance, told the Panel

that he regarded it as important that the average pupil looked to the successful ones as their role models rather than following the example of those who caused trouble. This was done in a variety of ways including, learning skills lessons, publicising achievements, providing help to those who had particular problems or were stressed and by encouraging student participation in the school through school councils, and so on. Fathers were also invited to attend events at the school with their children.

- 4.3 The NUT representatives were concerned that schools might not be reporting all physical assaults by pupils on staff. Although Health and Safety regularly discussed such issues it was agreed that schools should be reminded of their responsibilities. .
- 4.4 In Bow School the improvements had again been achieved by ensuring behaviour was seen as a whole school issue and that every member of the school had a part to play in establishing consistent messages about expectations. The school used a software program that enabled any member of staff to input instances of good and poor behaviour around the school and this could be analysed by year group, individual pupil, location in the school or time of day and this was informing policy changes in both teaching & learning and behaviour.
- 4.5 The Panel did consider looking at issues such as the need to have someone from the same background as the pupil being engaged in the exclusion process. It was considered, however, that such issues were really a matter for the school and needed to be dealt with by them. If necessary, Councillors should be raising these issues in their role as school governors.
- 4.6 The following sections are, therefore, concerned with good practice in specific areas and the ways in which they impact on pupil behaviour and exclusion.

5. Protocol for Managed Moves

- 5.1 In certain circumstances it maybe in the interest of all concerned to transfer a young person to another school in order to reduce the risk of permanent exclusion. Head teachers in Haringey were concerned that there should be a protocol for doing this and so one has been developed by the Local Authority and Secondary School Partnership. Under the protocol, Managed Moves are monitored by the In-Year Fair Access panel of head teachers,
- 5.2 This issue did concern the Panel because the easiest place to put any un-accommodated pupil is into a school which is under subscribed. Members were concerned about the need to develop a process for tracking changes under the Managed Move protocol so that the situation could be monitored. They were assured that there was already a process in place to monitor Managed Moves – which is clearly set out in

the protocol. The whole purpose of the protocol and the In-Year Fair Access Procedures was also to ensure that there was an equitable distribution of such pupils across the borough.

6. Out of Borough Pupils

- 6.1 The expert from the Department of Children, Schools and Families indicated that, in common with other adjoining boroughs, Haringey schools host many children who live in other boroughs and many Haringey children are at out Borough schools.. In the case of fixed term exclusions, the Council are not always aware of action taken by out Borough schools and so are not able to support active behaviour management for these children. The creation of new school places in Haringey both in the recent past and in the future should improve this situation
- 6.2 This is a serious issue because the Council are responsible for providing alternative education for any pupil living in the borough irrespective of the location of the school from which they have been excluded. It is, therefore, recommended that existing links with out of borough schools who take Haringey pupils be strengthened to ensure that there is an 'early warning' system in place. Early discussions may not only help to prevent exclusion but will ensure that appropriate alternative education arrangements are in place when exclusion is the only option.

7. Behaviour Improvement Programme

- 7.1 The Borough's Local Area Agreement confirms that Haringey is part of the national Behaviour Improvement Programme which focuses on four secondary and eight primary schools. The Safer Communities Partnership as a whole is supportive of parenting and would like to see more investment in this area with support programmes for parent and carers more closely linked to any parenting orders and contracts. Work is well under way involving schools and the Children and Young People's Service to develop plans to provide for excluded pupils facilitated by the Building Schools for the Future programme.
- 7.2 The Panel saw the success of this approach when they visited Gladesmore, in that school pupils who behave badly are sent to an on-site Suspension Centre. The building is away from the main school area and the pupils sent there are not allowed to leave it in school hours during the period of their exclusion. Last year about 485 pupils attended this Centre, normally just for one day but occasionally for two. Whilst they were there they discussed with experienced staff the ways in which they had behaved, why they had been sent there and agreed guidelines for improvements.
- 7.3 Gladesmore also had a facility which aimed to help students whose behaviour at times interfered with their learning and/or the learning of

others. It was not considered a punishment, but experienced staff work with individual students and counsel them on their behaviour. They are also given help in areas such as social skills, anger management, social support, self esteem, gender attitudes and their attitudes towards education. Music and drama therapy was available as was a programme of academic and pastoral mentoring.

- 7.4 Gladesmore also had links with the primary schools which sent their pupils to it. This was helpful as it enabled strategies to be in place where needed for pupils entering the school. As an extended school they are also able to provide parental support and courses.
- 7.5 The School also organised meetings involving students, parents and teachers to discuss and review issues. Generally parents were supportive of the action being taken by the school but the aim was to encourage students to understand that their behaviour was something which they could control and which they alone were responsible for. Last year over three hundred pupils attended this facility.
- 7.6 As an additional help at Gladesmore School, there were three learning mentors who were on call to assist with early intervention when pupils were causing problem.

8. Off Site Provision For Pupils In Danger Of Being Excluded

- 8.1 An excellent initiative in this area was the 'Sports Academy' at Tottenham. This initiative had been developed by Gladesmore School and made use of The Boxing Academy facilities. Young people who are in danger of being excluded, are encouraged to apply to go there and have to 'win a scholarship' to do so. The facility caters for twenty young people and normally about twelve places are taken by Gladesmore pupils. Other schools are also able to send pupils there as well but few did so.

9. Pupil and Family Mediation Service

- 9.1 This service works closely with schools to support and identify pupils who are at risk of exclusion. Referrals to the service by schools are made through the Common Assessment Framework system. The Service involves the pupil, the family, the school and, where appropriate, community groups. It provides support by:
- monitoring, mentoring and tracking the pupil and reporting regularly to the school on their social, personal and behavioural development;
 - meeting weekly with pupils - either one to one or in a class or collectively in groups;
 - helping families to support the school in the development of their child by making regular contact with the home;
 - supporting the school in its communications with the pupil's parents/carers;

- involving parents/carers, teachers, learning mentors, the community and others working with the pupil in the development of an appropriate behavioural development plan;
- encouraging parents/carers to develop learning and behaviours in the home that can be coordinated with the pupils learning and behaviours in the school;
- attending reviews and behaviour planning sessions.

9.2 The Panel was impressed by the work of this Service and wishes to praise and endorse what it does as a model of good practice. It is essential that the service should continue to be developed and to be available to all communities in Haringey. The panel were particularly concerned that:

- adequate resources are made available to meet the needs of the mediation service;
- the Service ensures all communities are aware of the provision;
- schools and parents/carers should be encouraged to use the service in a pre-emptive manner rather than after the event;
- drop-in surgeries are accessible to all communities in Haringey across the Networks.

10. Sleuth

10.1 When members visited Bow School they were impressed by the use of the computer software programme 'SLEUTH' to monitor incidents, sanctions and rewards. The school indicated that it enabled them to know how effectively their behaviour policy was working and it was also used to identify staff needing support.

10.2 This software system did seem to be very effective and the Panel would recommend that all schools in the Borough consider purchasing it and training all staff in its use.

11. Haringey Behaviour Support Teams

11.1 The Haringey Behaviour Support Teams advocate for the most vulnerable children and young people to make sure they get the support they need to manage their behaviour to enable them to enjoy the same opportunities as other children and young people. As part of this process the teams have developed a model behaviour policy for schools to adopt and this was circulated to every school in the Borough.

11.2 They work as part of a multi-agency team and offer central and school based training to all school staff and parents/carers on promoting inclusion and emotional literacy as well as dealing with issues around behaviour, bullying and discrimination. The Panel would like to see these strategies and practices embedded in the practice of Haringey schools and that the national SEAL programme for secondary schools is implemented consistently across the Borough's schools.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Director of Children and Young People's Service be requested:

- a. to investigate the possibility of strengthening links with out of borough schools to enable greater consultation about Haringey pupils in danger of being excluded and to inform members of the Panel of the outcome. (Paragraph 6),
- b. to write to all secondary schools in the Borough encouraging them to make use of the "Sports Academy" at Tottenham. (Paragraph 8.1),
- c. to report to the appropriate Cabinet Member on ways of developing the Pupil and Family Mediation Service including ensuring all communities are aware of the provision, encouraging schools and parents/carers to use the service in a pre-emptive manner with drop-in-surgeries accessible to all Borough residents. (Paragraph 9.2),
- d. to circulate the report to all Borough Schools informing them that;
 - exclusion should only be used as a last resort and only when the school is able to demonstrate that all other options have been exhausted, (Paragraph 4.1)
 - that procedures for reporting exclusion data to the council are followed so that it may be properly analysed, and suitable strategies put in place.(Paragraph 4.1)
 - the best way of tackling or reducing the need for exclusion was to encourage a whole school approach as happened at Gladesmore and Bow Schools, (Paragraph 4.2),
 - they should consider purchasing SLEUTH and training staff in its use. (Paragraph 10.2),
 - the strategies and practices of the Haringey Behaviour Support Teams be embedded in school practices and that they should implement the National SEAL programme for secondary schools (Paragraph 11.2),
 - they had a responsibility to ensure that assaults by pupils on staff were reported. (para 4.3)