

# SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS TRACKER

A termly analysis of official data

**3,715**

The number of permanent exclusions from school has decreased by 11 per cent on Autumn 2023. In Autumn 2024, there were 3,715 permanent exclusions, a rate of 0.04 per 100 pupils. This compares with 4,168 permanent exclusions in Autumn 2023, equating to 453 fewer permanent exclusions.

**335,671**

School suspensions have decreased by 3 per cent since Autumn 2023. There were 335,671 suspensions in Autumn 2024, a rate of 4.02 per 100 pupils. This compares to 346,279 suspensions in Autumn 2023.

**626,216**

626,216 days were missed due to suspensions in the 2024 Autumn term, a decrease of 34,247 on the 2023 Autumn term with 3.78 days lost on average per suspension during the 2024 Autumn term.

# Contents

Headline statistics .....	1
About the Centre for Social Justice .....	2
Executive summary .....	3
Permanent exclusions .....	4
Suspensions .....	5
Reasons for exclusion .....	6
Breakdown of exclusion data .....	8
<i>Exclusion by school type</i> .....	8
<i>Exclusion by region</i> .....	8
Exclusion by pupil characteristics .....	11
<i>Exclusion by Free School Meal eligibility</i> .....	11
<i>Exclusion by special educational needs/disabilities</i> .....	12
<i>Exclusion by sex</i> .....	14
<i>Exclusion by ethnicity</i> .....	16
<i>Exclusion by age and year group</i> .....	16
<i>School exclusion tracker</i> .....	18
Our plan for reform .....	19

# Headline statistics

**There were 3,715 permanent exclusions in Autumn 2024.**<sup>1</sup> This is a decrease of 11 per cent on Autumn 2023.

**It is vulnerable children who are affected most.** In Autumn 2024, the rate of permanent exclusion for children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) was 5.6 times the rate of children who were not eligible for FSM.<sup>2</sup>

**School suspensions have also decreased compared to the previous year.** There were 335,671 suspensions given in Autumn 2024. This is a decrease of 10,608 per cent on Autumn 2023.<sup>3</sup>

**626,216 days were lost to suspensions in Autumn 2024.** There were 3.78 days lost on average per suspension during the term.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department for Education, *Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England: Autumn term 2024/25*, November 2025

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

# About the Centre for Social Justice

Established in 2004, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think-tank that studies the root causes of Britain's social problems and addresses them by recommending practical, workable policy interventions. The CSJ's vision is to give people in the UK, who are experiencing the worst of multiple disadvantages and injustices every possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

The majority of the CSJ's work is organised around five "pathways to poverty", first identified in our ground-breaking 2007 report *Breakthrough Britain*. These are: educational failure; family breakdown; economic dependency and worklessness; addiction to drugs and alcohol; and severe personal debt.

Since its inception, the CSJ has changed the landscape of our political discourse by putting social justice at the heart of British politics. This has led to a transformation in government thinking and policy. For instance, in March 2013, the CSJ report 'It Happens Here' shone a light on the horrific reality of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. As a direct result of this report, the Government passed the Modern Slavery Act 2015, one of the first pieces of legislation in the world to address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century.

Our research is informed by experts including prominent academics, practitioners and policymakers. We also draw upon our CSJ Alliance, a unique group of charities, social enterprises, and other grass-roots organisations that have a proven track-record of reversing social breakdown across the UK.

The social challenges facing Britain remain serious. In 2025 and beyond, we will continue to advance the cause of social justice so that more people can continue to fulfil their potential.

# Executive summary

The CSJ has been investigating the issue of school exclusions since 2018.

Our initial report, 'Providing the Alternative', investigated the reasons behind why a pupil may end up excluded from school and considered the support that is available for excluded pupils. This was followed in 2020 by 'Warming the Cold Spots of Alternative Provision', which uncovered a postcode lottery in access to high-quality Alternative Provision (AP). More recently the CSJ has conducted expansive research into what is causing the recent high levels of school exclusions and suspensions, in 'Suspending Reality'.

New government figures reveal that while there has been a welcome decrease in exclusions and suspensions since the previous Autumn term (2023), the number of exclusions is 17 per cent higher than pre pandemic, with the number of suspensions 88 per cent higher. Our analysis shows that, in the latest term we have data for, there were 3,715 permanent exclusions and there were 335,671 suspensions.<sup>4</sup>

Disadvantaged children continue to be disproportionately affected. In Autumn 2024, the rate of permanent exclusion for children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) was almost six times the rate of children who were not eligible for FSM. Similarly, the rate of permanent exclusions for children in receipt of SEN support was nearly six times the rate of children with no identified SEN.<sup>5</sup>

The recent Curriculum and Assessment Review marks a positive step towards embedding enrichment more firmly within the curriculum. Likewise, Ofsted's new 2025 framework places inclusion and pupil development at the heart of school evaluation, with a dedicated focus on how all learners, particularly those with additional needs, are supported to thrive. These developments reflect a shift in national priorities. However, while these measures are welcome, they must go much further to truly address the ongoing crisis in falling behavioural standards, school exclusions and missed opportunities for disadvantaged pupils.

The Centre for Social Justice continues to call for urgent, nationwide action. This means raising standards of behaviour, securing an enrichment guarantee so every pupil has equitable access to opportunities, introducing a new Right to Sport for all secondary-age pupils, empowering families through a practical engagement toolkit, and establishing robust national standards for internal alternative provision. Only with comprehensive, system-wide reform can we ensure no child is left behind and that every young person receives the support and enrichment they deserve.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

# Permanent exclusions

Permanent exclusion is when a child's name is removed from the school's register and they are no longer allowed to attend the school. It is the responsibility of the local authority to arrange suitable alternative full-time education from the sixth school day following said permanent exclusion.

In Autumn 2024, there were 3,715 permanent exclusions. This represents a 3 per cent increase on the 3,608 children permanently excluded in Summer 2024 and an 11 per cent decrease on the previous Autumn term, Autumn 2023.<sup>6</sup>

The number of permanent exclusions is higher than pre-pandemic levels. In Autumn 2019, the last full term before schools closed for the pandemic, 3,167 pupils were permanently excluded. The number of permanent exclusions therefore has increased 17 per cent relative to pre-pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

The rate of permanent exclusion in Autumn 2024 was 0.044 per 100 pupils. This is a decrease from 0.050 in Autumn 2023 and a slight increase from 0.039 in Autumn 2019.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 1 – Termly number of permanent exclusions



6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Ibid

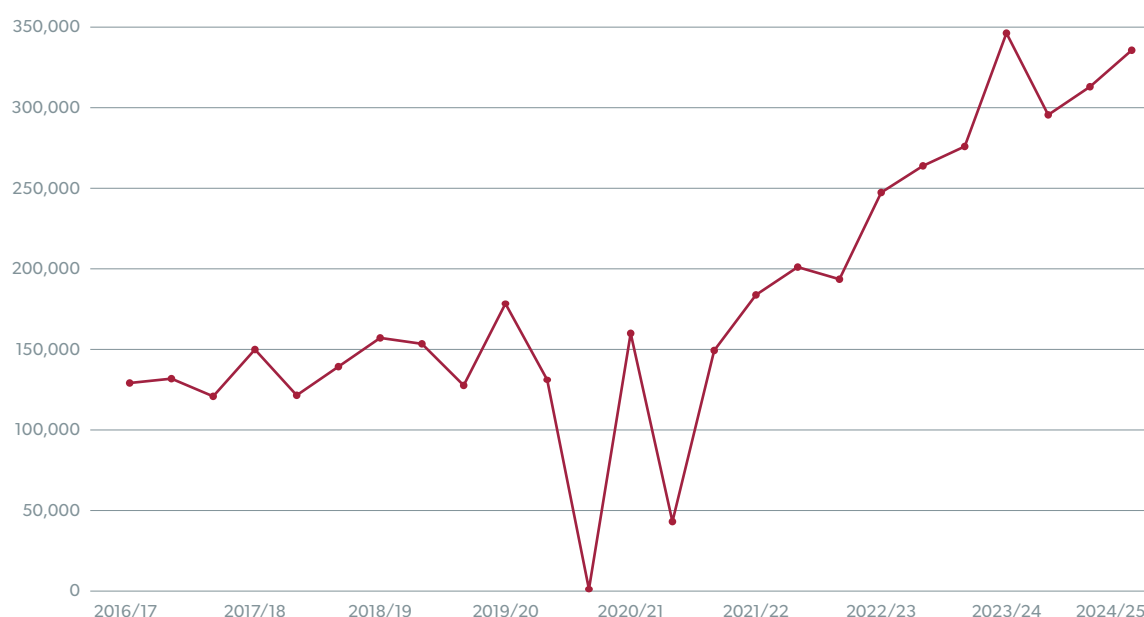
# Suspensions

A suspension is a time-limited exclusion. The term “suspension” has been used by the Department for Education (DfE) in recent years, but in previous years the term “fixed-term exclusion” (FTE) was used. A pupil who is suspended is removed from school for a set period, which can total no more than 45 days in one school year. For context, there are a total of 190 days in each school year. If a child has been suspended, the school is required to set work for the first five school days and then, from the sixth day, to arrange suitable alternative full-time education.

In Autumn 2024, there were 335,671 suspensions. This is higher than the previous term, Summer 2024, when there were 313,008 suspensions but lower than the previous Autumn 2023 term, when there were 346,279 suspensions.<sup>9</sup>

The number of suspensions is higher than pre-pandemic levels. In Autumn 2019, there were 178,412 suspensions. Compared to pre-pandemic, the number of suspensions has increased by 88 per cent.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 2 – Termly number of suspensions



In Autumn 2024, the rate of suspensions was 4.02 per 100 pupils compared to 4.13 in Autumn 2023, rising from 2.17 in Autumn 2019.<sup>11</sup> The rate of suspensions, however, does not indicate how many pupils receive a suspension. It is therefore useful to consider the number of pupils receiving one or more suspensions.

165,649 pupils received one or more suspensions in Autumn 2024, compared to 171,788 pupils in Autumn 2023. The proportion of pupils with one or more suspensions was 1.98 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

9 Ibid

10 Ibid

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid

# Reasons for exclusion

When a pupil is excluded from school, schools are required to record the main reason for exclusion in the Schools Census, choosing from a set of 16 codes.

In Autumn 2024, the most common reason for both permanent exclusions and suspensions was “persistent disruptive behaviour”, cited in 37.6 per cent of reasons given for permanent exclusions and 51.2 per cent of suspensions. DfE guidance describes “persistent disruptive behaviour” as challenging behaviour, disobedience or persistent violation of school rules.<sup>13</sup>

Concerning permanent exclusions, the second most common reason was “physically abusive towards pupils”, at 16.2 per cent. For suspensions the second most common reason was “verbally abusive towards adults”, accounting for 15.0 per cent of suspensions.<sup>14</sup>

Table 1 – Permanent exclusions by reason

Reason	Percentage of permanent exclusions
Persistent disruptive behaviour	37.6
Physically abusive to pupils	16.2
Physically abusive to adults	13.0
Verbally abusive to adults	11.5
Drugs and alcohol	5.1
Offensive weapon	5.0
Verbally abusive to pupils	4.6
Damage	2.9
Sexual misconduct	1.0
Media technology	0.8
Racist abuse	0.7
Public health	0.6
Bullying	0.5
Theft	0.5
Abuse - sex, gender	0.1
Abuse - disability	0.0

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

Table 2 – Suspensions by reason

Reason	Percentage of suspensions
Persistent disruptive behaviour	51.2
Verbally abusive to adults	15.0
Physically abusive to pupils	12.5
Physically abusive to adults	6.2
Verbally abusive to pupils	4.0
Damage	2.8
Drugs and alcohol	2.0
Racist abuse	1.4
Offensive weapon	1.3
Media technology	0.9
Bullying	0.7
Sexual misconduct	0.6
Theft	0.5
Public health	0.4
Abuse - sex, gender	0.3
Abuse - disability	0.0

# Breakdown of exclusion data

## Exclusion by school type

In Autumn 2024, 3,128 children in state-funded secondary schools were permanently excluded. The rate of permanent exclusion in secondary schools was 0.09 per 100 pupils.<sup>15</sup>

524 children in state-funded primary schools were permanently excluded in Autumn 2024, a rate of 0.01 per 100 pupils. The rate of school exclusion was 0.04 per cent in special schools. In Autumn 2024, 63 children educated in special schools were permanently excluded.<sup>16</sup>

In Autumn 2024, there were 287,306 suspensions given to pupils in secondary schools, a rate of 7.81 per 100 pupils. There were 39,914 suspensions given to pupils in primary schools in Autumn 2024, a rate of 0.89. In Autumn 2024, there were 8,451 suspensions given to pupils in special schools, a rate of 5.07.<sup>17</sup>

## Exclusion by region and local authority

Patterns of exclusion vary across England.

The North East had the highest rate of permanent exclusions in Autumn 2024 (0.08) followed by the North West (0.07).<sup>18</sup>

The South East had the lowest rate of permanent exclusions in the Autumn 2024 (0.02), followed by London (0.02).<sup>19</sup>

---

15 Ibid

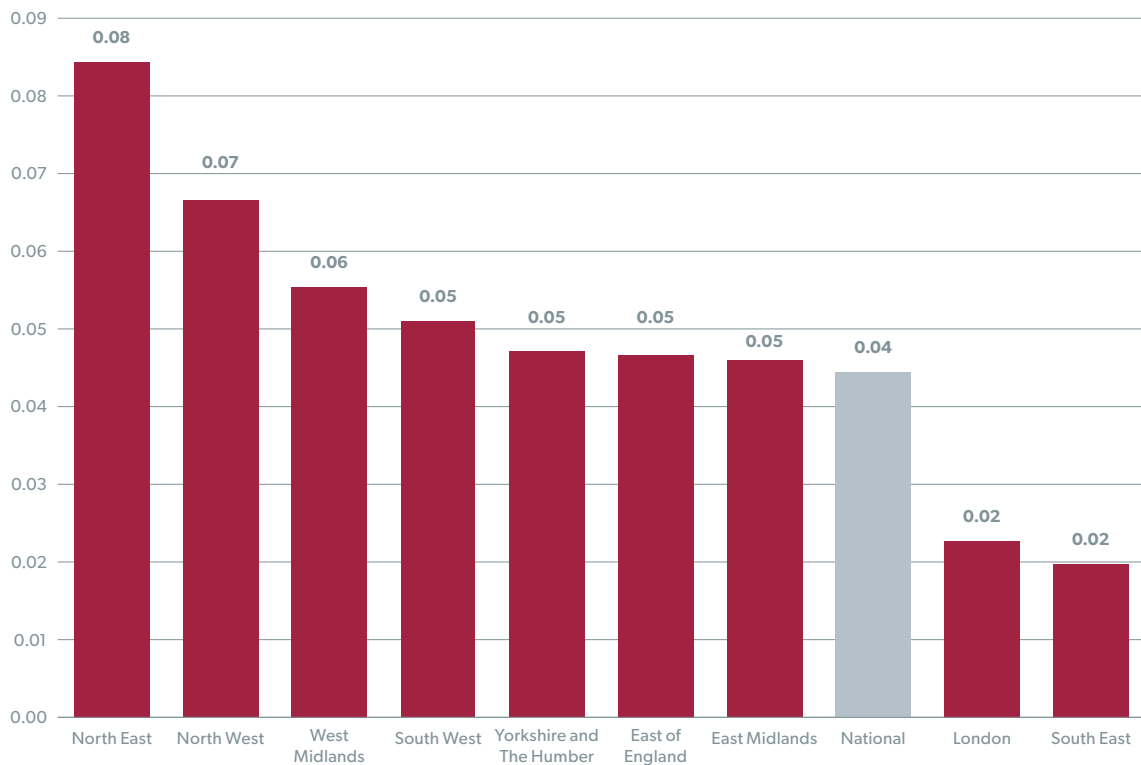
16 Ibid

17 Ibid

18 Ibid

19 Ibid

Figure 3 – Permanent exclusion rate by region



The local authority with the highest rate of permanent exclusion in Autumn 2024 is Rochdale (0.16). The local authorities with the lowest rate of permanent exclusion are, Brighton and Hove, and the Isles of Scilly, both of which had no permanent exclusions in Autumn 2024.<sup>20</sup>

Table 3 – Local authorities with highest rates of permanent exclusion

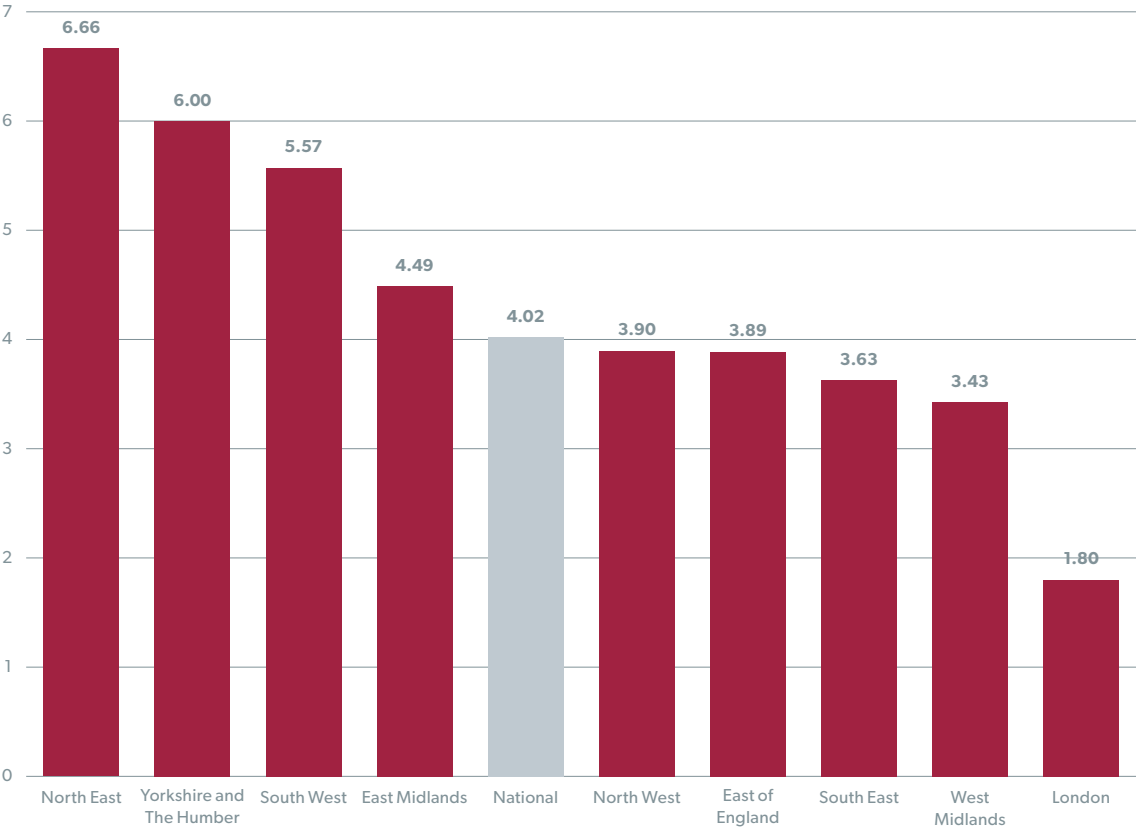
Local authority	Permanent exclusion rate
Rochdale	0.16
Blackpool	0.15
North Tyneside	0.13
Halton	0.12
Liverpool	0.11
Cornwall	0.11
Hartlepool	0.11
Nottingham	0.11
Country Durham	0.10
St. Helens	0.10

The North East had the highest rate of suspension rate in Autumn 2024 (6.66) followed by Yorkshire and The Humber (6.00).

London had the lowest rate of suspensions in the Autumn 2024 (1.80), followed by the West Midlands (3.43).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

Figure 4 – Suspension rate by region



Hartlepool had the highest rate of suspensions in Autumn 2024 (12.09) followed by Redcar and Cleveland (11.22). The City of London had the lowest rate of suspensions in Autumn 2024 with zero suspensions.<sup>21</sup>

Table 4 – Local authorities with highest rates of suspensions

Local authority	Suspension rate
Hartlepool	12.09
Redcar and Cleveland	11.22
Doncaster	8.58
Sunderland	8.47
Middlesbrough	8.21
Wakefield	8.14
Stockton-on-Tees	8.04
Newcastle upon Tyne	7.93
Barnsley	7.87
Bradford	7.72

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

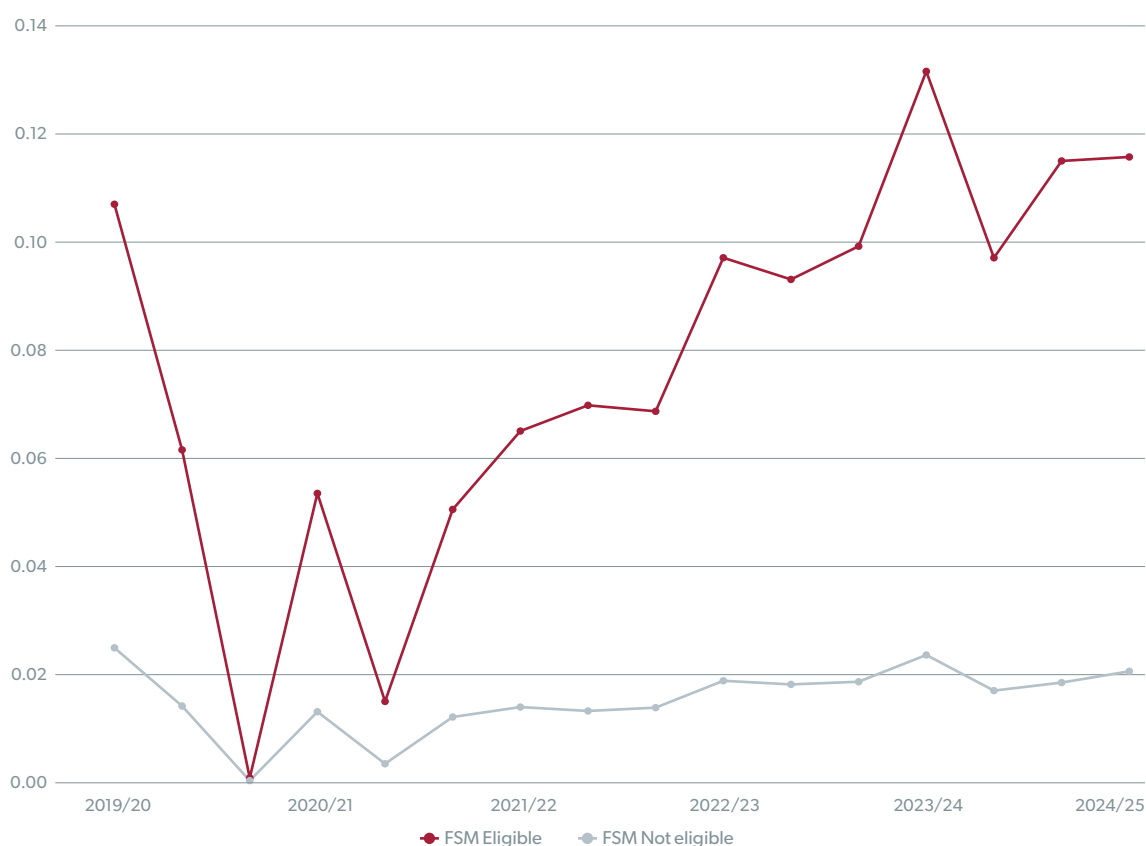
# Exclusion by pupil characteristics

## Exclusion by Free School Meal eligibility

Children who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) have consistently higher rates of permanent exclusions and suspensions than their peers.

In Autumn 2024, the rate of permanent exclusion for children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) was 5.6 times the rate of children who were not eligible for FSM. The rate of permanent exclusion for children eligible for FSM was 0.12, compared to 0.02 of children not eligible.<sup>22</sup> Following the pandemic, the gap in permanent exclusions between pupils on FSM and their peers has widened, with this data revealing that this widening gap has persisted.

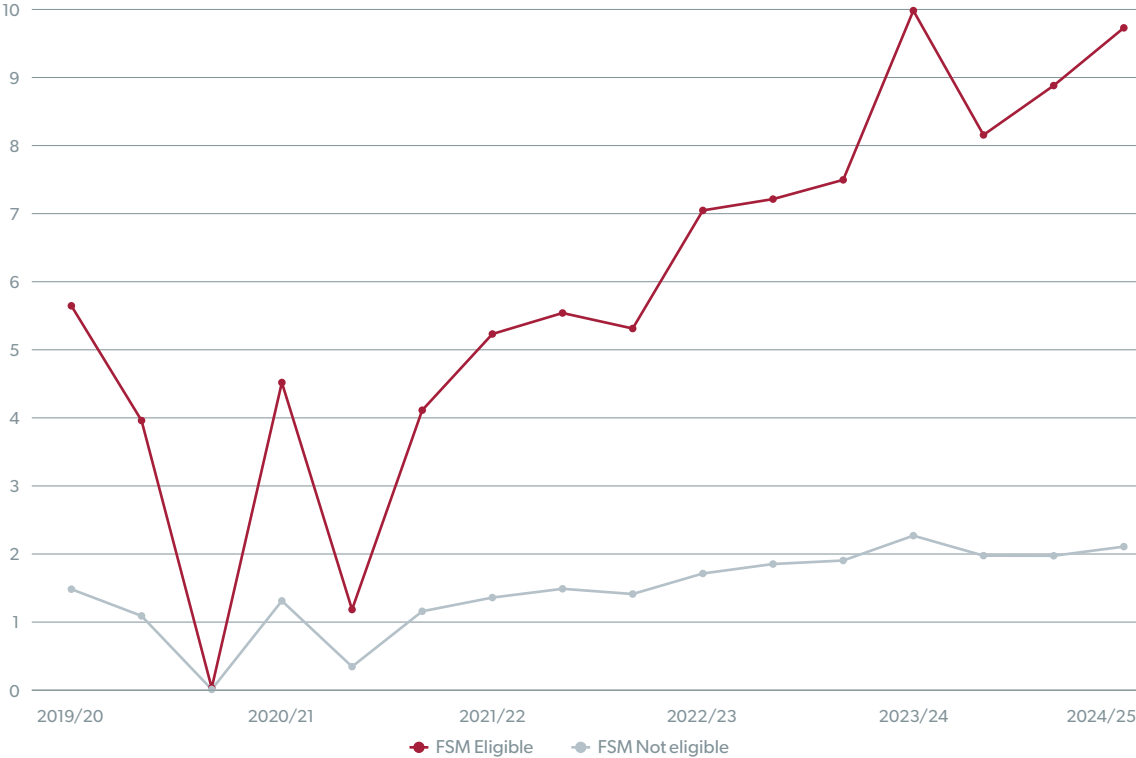
Figure 5 – Permanent exclusion rate by Free School Meal eligibility



22 Ibid

In Autumn 2024, children eligible for FSM had a suspension rate which was 4.6 times the rate of children who were not eligible for FSM. The rate of suspensions for children eligible for FSM was 9.73, compared to 2.11 of children not eligible.<sup>23</sup> More starkly than for permanent exclusions, the gap in suspensions for pupils on FSM and their peers has widened since the pandemic.

Figure 6 – Suspension rate by Free School Meal Eligibility



## Exclusion by special educational needs/ disabilities

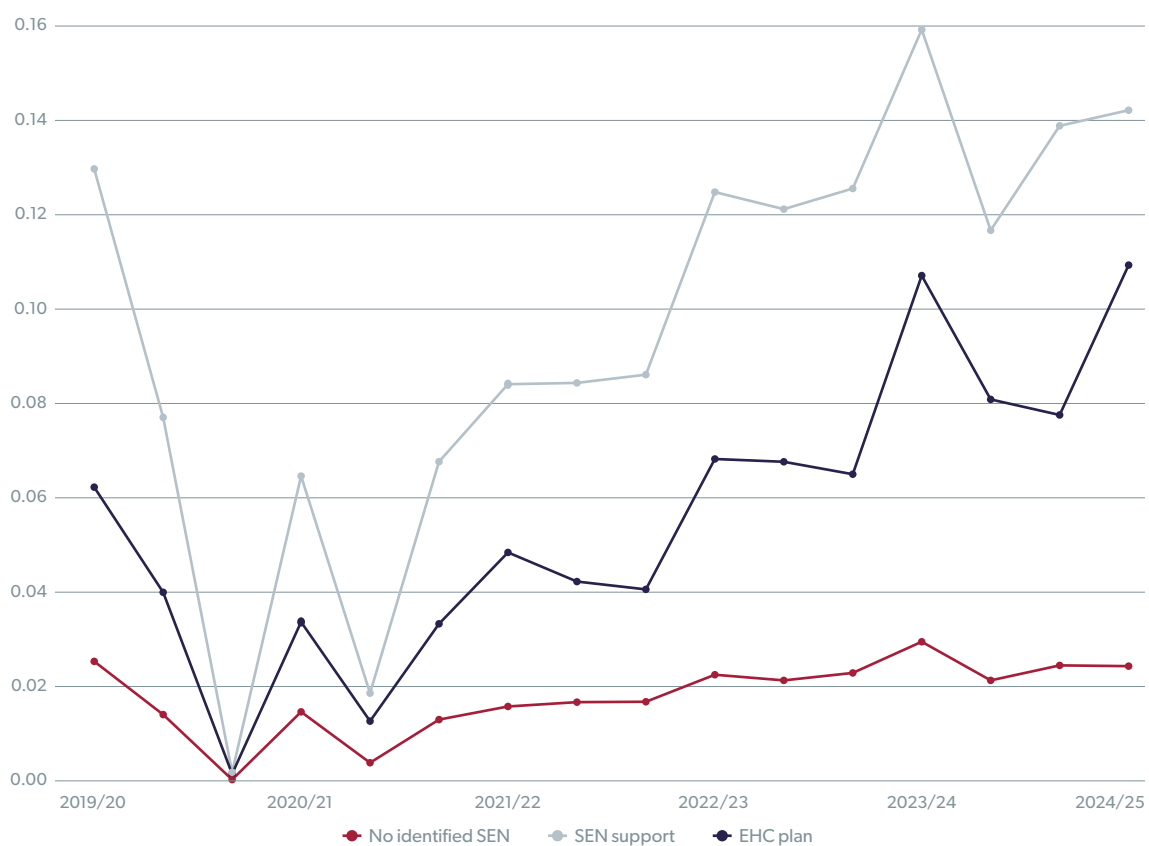
Children with special educational needs (SEN) support and Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) are more likely than their peers to be both permanently excluded and suspended. In Autumn 2024, the rate of permanent exclusions for children in receipt of SEN support was 5.8 times the rate of children with no identified SEN.<sup>24</sup>

In Autumn 2024, 459 children with an EHCP were permanently excluded and 1,601 children with SEN support were permanently excluded.<sup>25</sup>

The rate of permanent exclusion was 0.14 per 100 children with SEN support and 0.11 per 100 for children with an EHCP, compared with 0.02 per 100 children with no identified SEN.<sup>26</sup> Permanent exclusions for pupils with SEN or an EHCP remains higher than for pupils with no identified SEN, with the gap widening since the pandemic.

23 Ibid  
 24 Ibid  
 25 Ibid  
 26 Ibid

Figure 7 – Permanent exclusion rate by SEN provision



In Autumn 2024, pupils in receipt of SEN support experienced higher suspension rates than those with an EHCP and those with no SEN support. The rate of suspensions for children in receipt of SEN support was 4.5 times the rate of children with no identified SEN.<sup>27</sup>

The suspension rate was 11.09 per 100 children with SEN Support, 10.31 per cent for children with an EHCP, and 2.462 per 100 children with no identified SEN.<sup>28</sup>

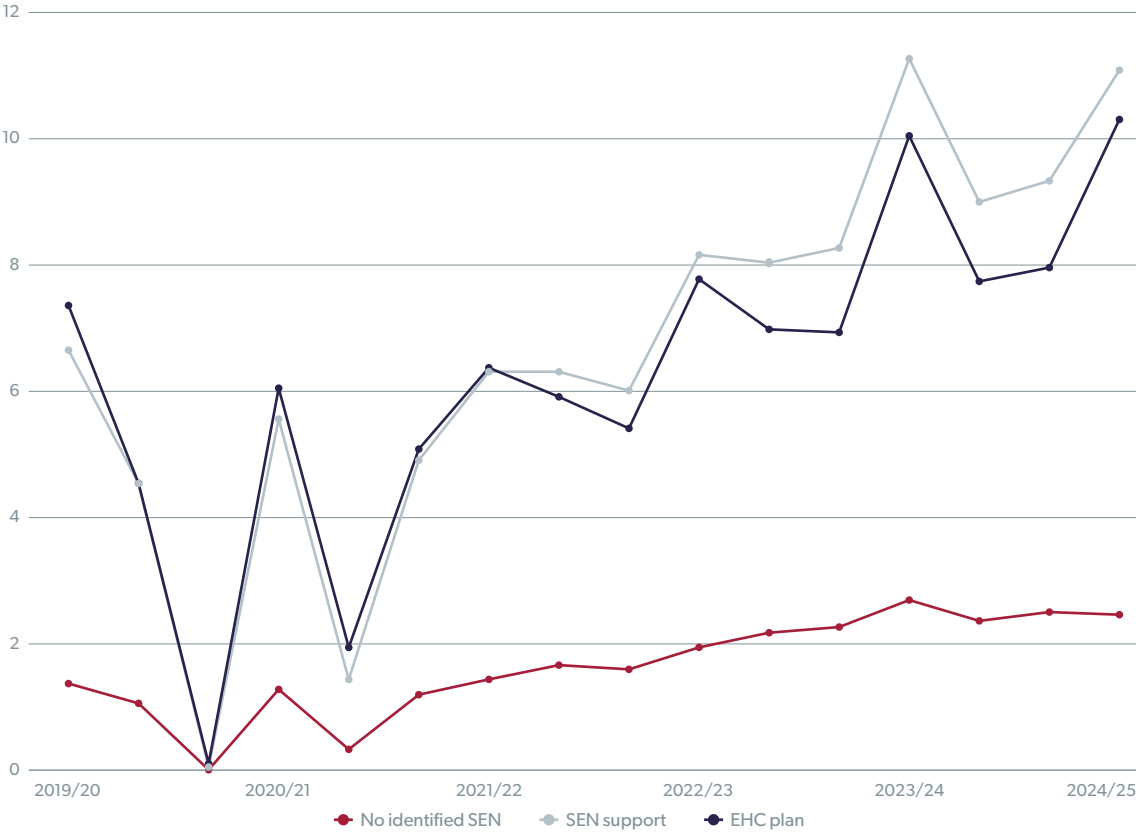
In Autumn 2024, there were 43,267 suspensions for children with an EHCP, and 124,861 for children with SEN support.<sup>29</sup> Suspensions for pupils with SEN or an EHCP remains higher than for pupils with no identified SEN, with this data revealing a sustained rise since the pandemic.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

Figure 8 – Suspension rate by SEN provision



## Exclusion by sex

Male pupils are more likely to be permanently excluded and suspended. In Autumn 2024, the rate of exclusions of male pupils was 0.06, compared to the rate of 0.3 exclusions for female pupils. The rate of permanent exclusions for male pupils was 2.4 times the rate for girls.<sup>30</sup>

In Autumn 2024, there were 5.1 suspensions per 100 male pupils. For female pupils there were 2.9 suspensions per 100 pupils.<sup>31</sup>

Between Autumn term 2019/20 and Autumn 2024/25, the gap between the rate at which boys were excluded compared to girls has risen.<sup>32</sup>

30 Ibid

31 Ibid

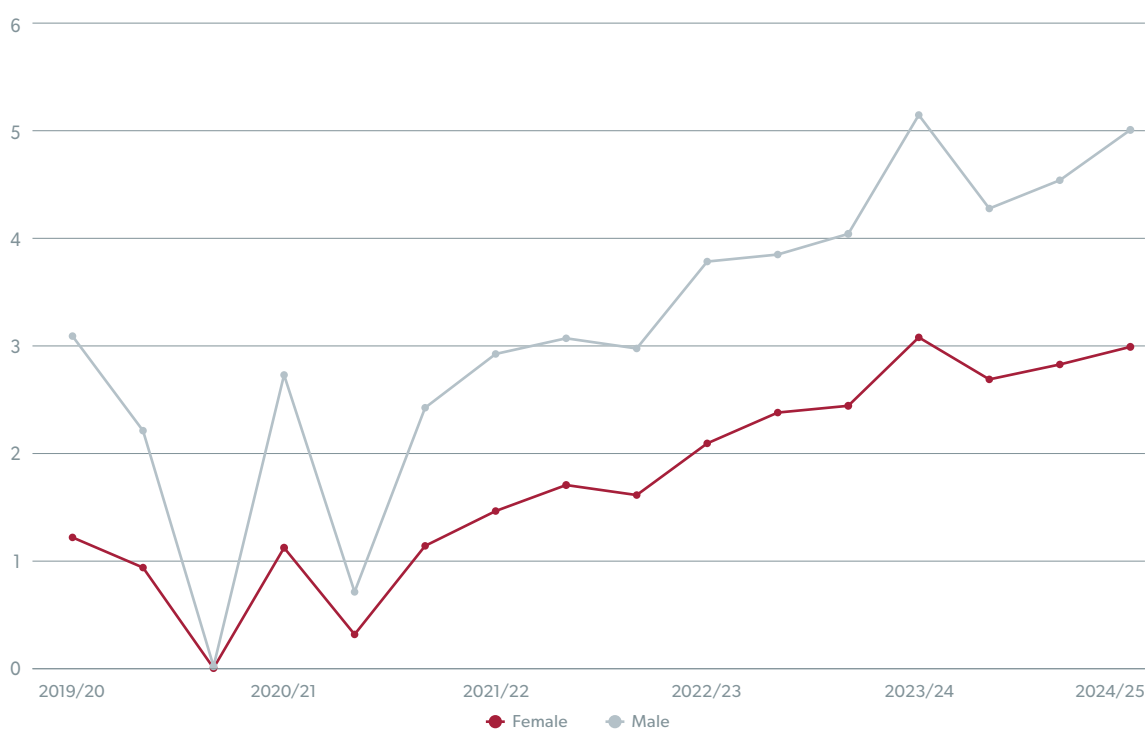
32 Ibid

Figure 9 – Exclusion rate by gender, Autumn 2019/20 to Autumn 2024/25



Similarly for suspensions, the rate at which boys were suspended was 1.7 times the rate of girls and has been rising alongside the rise in the number of pupils.<sup>33</sup>

Figure 10 – Suspensions rate by gender, Autumn 2019/20 to Autumn 2024/25



33 Ibid

## Exclusion by ethnicity

Pupils who are 'Gypsy/Roma', 'Traveller of Irish heritage' or 'White and Black Caribbean' have the highest rates of school exclusions and suspensions.

In Autumn 2024, the rate of exclusions for 'Gypsy/Roma' pupils was 0.20. For 'Traveller of Irish heritage' and 'White and Black Caribbean' pupils, the rate was 0.18 and 0.01 respectively. For comparison, the rate of exclusions was 0.05 for 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' pupils over the same period.<sup>34</sup>

In Autumn 2024, the suspension rate was 15.16 for 'Gypsy/Roma' pupils, 11.75 for 'Traveller of Irish heritage' pupils, and 7.21 for 'White and Black Caribbean' pupils. For comparison, the suspension rate for 'English/ Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' pupils was 4.97.<sup>35</sup>

## Exclusion by age and year group

The year group with the highest rate of permanent exclusion in Autumn 2024 was Year 10 (0.13), followed by Year 9 (0.12). The year group with the lowest rate of permanent exclusion is Year 12 and above (0.004), followed by Year 1 and below (0.005).<sup>36</sup>

Table 5 – Permanent exclusion rate by year group

Year group	Rate
Year 1 and below	0.005
Year 2	0.013
Year 3	0.014
Year 4	0.013
Year 5	0.016
Year 6	0.015
Year 7	0.035
Year 8	0.093
Year 9	0.124
Year 10	0.140
Year 11	0.092
Year 12 and above	0.004

14-year-olds had the highest rate of permanent exclusion in Autumn 2024 (0.13) followed by 13-year-olds (0.13).<sup>37</sup>

34 Ibid

35 Ibid

36 Ibid

37 Ibid

Those aged 4 and under had the lowest rates of permanent exclusion in Autumn 2024 (0.002), followed by 17-year-olds (0.004).<sup>38</sup>

Table 6 – Permanent exclusion rate by age

Year group	Rate
Age 4 and under	0.003
Age 5	0.008
Age 6	0.014
Age 7	0.014
Age 8	0.014
Age 9	0.016
Age 10	0.016
Age 11	0.035
Age 12	0.095
Age 13	0.126
Age 14	0.134
Age 15	0.095
Age 16	0.006
Age 17	0.004
Age 18	0.014

The year group with the highest rate of suspensions in Autumn 2024 is Year 9 (11.12), followed by Year 10 (10.50). The year group with the lowest rate of suspensions is Year 12 and above (0.39 per cent), followed by Year 1 and below (0.51).<sup>39</sup>

Table 7 – Suspension rate by year group

Year group	Rate
Year 1 and below	0.51
Year 2	1.01
Year 3	1.06
Year 4	1.05
Year 5	1.08
Year 6	1.23
Year 7	5.00
Year 8	9.86
Year 9	11.12
Year 10	10.50
Year 11	8.22
Year 12 and above	0.39

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

13-year-olds had the highest rate of suspensions in Autumn 2024 (11.18) followed by 14-year-olds (10.56).<sup>40</sup>

Those aged 4 and under had the lowest rate of suspensions in Autumn 2024 (0.24), followed by 17-year-olds (0.35).<sup>41</sup>

Table 8 – Suspension rate by age

Age	Suspension Rate
Age 4 and under	0.24
Age 5	0.84
Age 6	1.03
Age 7	1.06
Age 8	1.06
Age 9	1.08
Age 10	1.24
Age 11	4.99
Age 12	9.90
Age 13	11.18
Age 14	10.56
Age 15	8.28
Age 16	0.47
Age 17	0.35
Age 18	0.50

## Termly analysis of official data

The sustained rise in the number of exclusions in our schools displays an education system that is in disarray. It is a system letting down the teachers who are fearful of coming into work, the pupils who are desperate for an education free from disruption, but also the pupils who are excluded needlessly, finding their life chances changed forever.

It is striking that, with every term that passes, hundreds more children are still being excluded. Ministers must grip this issue and deliver an education that makes every effort to be inclusive of pupils’ needs, while ensuring that all children receive an education in a safe and orderly environment.

We recognise the scale of the challenge – and the difficult balancing act schools must perform. But while the government has put in place some welcome initiatives, the approach so far does not meet the scale of need. Here we outline a plan for reform which would get to the root of the problem, tackle disruption, and put inclusion at the heart of the education system so that every child is able to receive the support they need to thrive.

40 Ibid

41 Ibid

# Our plan for reform

The CSJ has a plan to turn the tide on the crisis in behaviour and rise in exclusions. The plan was developed after extensive research with schools, alternative provisions, multi-academy trusts, local authorities and charities that work with children on the brink of exclusion.

In previous Exclusions Trackers, the CSJ set out a comprehensive plan for reform, placing particular emphasis on incentivising and recognising inclusive practice within mainstream schools. Among its key recommendations, the CSJ called for inclusion to be introduced as a fifth key judgement in Ofsted inspections, called for the Department for Education to launch a consultation on replacing one-word judgements with a report card, and proposed to reweight school league tables.

On 10<sup>th</sup> of November, the new Ofsted inspection Framework came into force. The CSJ welcomes the emphasis placed on inclusion throughout the new framework – a priority area the CSJ has been campaigning on. Inclusion now features as a distinct area of evaluation, requiring schools to actively monitor and measure their performance which is a huge step forward.

But there is further to go. To address the ongoing issue of schools off-rolling low-attaining pupils, school league tables should be reweighted to account for all pupils proportionately to the length of time they have been enrolled. This approach would ensure schools remain accountable for the outcomes of pupils who leave before Year 11. The CSJ will continue to monitor the implementation of these changes and advocate for any further measures that may be necessary to strengthen inclusive practice, including the reweighting of school league tables.

## 1) Deliver high standards of behaviour in classrooms, while making every effort to be inclusive of pupil needs.

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **The Department for Education should deliver an urgent review of behaviour standards.**

In March 2025, then Children’s Minister Stephen Morgan said the Department is still ‘thinking through’ its behaviour strategy. In April 2025, the Teachers’ Union published a poll which found that 81 per cent of teachers said that pupil behaviour had worsened in the last year. [insert footnote after year with “The Teachers Union, Teachers declare pupil behaviour emergency, April 2025.”] In September 2025, the Department for Education released new statutory guidance for schools and colleges – Keeping children safe in Education 2025. [Insert footnote after 2025 with “Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education 2025: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, September 2025.”] This guidance requires schools to set high standards for pupil behaviour, with a focus on early intervention. However, it falls short of tackling the ongoing behaviour crisis in England’s classrooms. The government should therefore conduct an urgent review of behaviour standards across education.

**Progress update: limited action taken**

In March 2025, Children’s Minister Stephen Morgan said the Department is still ‘thinking through’ its behaviour strategy.

There has been a delay in the publishing this year’s results of the national survey on behaviour in schools, which Skills Minister Baroness Smith acknowledged is ‘frustrating’.

In September 2025, the Department for Education released new statutory guidance for schools and colleges – Keeping children safe in education 2025.<sup>42</sup> This guidance requires schools to set high standards for pupil behaviour, with a focus on early intervention.

## RECOMMENDATION

### **The Department for Education should introduce a national inclusion framework for schools and local academy trusts.**

As part of the introduction of new national standards for the SEND and AP system and the implementation of local inclusion plans, the Department for Education should create a national inclusion framework. The framework should include a clear definition of inclusion, as well as guidance for school and MAT leaders on how to support pupils to overcome any additional vulnerabilities that may prevent themselves from engaging in education in mainstream classrooms. The framework should be designed in consultation with schools, MATs, families and other relevant experts and community groups.

The framework should include guidance on:

- Identification of additional vulnerabilities that may present barriers to learning. These will include: free school meals eligibility; special educational needs status; social service involvement; and any record of child criminal/sexual exploitation.
- Curriculum innovation and its role in inclusive education.
- Special educational needs early identification and intervention measures.
- Accessing specialised initial teacher training and CPD.
- Developing and implementing inclusive approaches to behaviour, such as relational teaching approaches and trauma informed practice.
- Appropriate use of managed moves and alternative provision – both internally and externally.

**Progress update: In Progress**

In January, the government appointed a SEND inclusion expert group, chaired by Tom Rees, CEO of Ormiston Academy Trust. The purpose of the group is to advise the government on how to deliver inclusive education with SEND. Initially the advisory group was supposed to run until July 2025, but it was subsequently announced that it had been extended until April 2026.

42 Department for Education

Running alongside this, the 'Inclusion in Practice' hub was launched, aiming to gather examples of best practice. As part of this, anyone working to provide inclusive education in mainstream schools, or who work in other settings which support inclusive education in mainstream schools, are encouraged to submit examples and evidence of what works. A report was published in July 2025, summarising the evidence collected and outlining five emerging 'principles of promising practice'.

In May 2025, the government announced the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools programme (PINS) will be extended for another year across a further 1,200 schools. PINS trains teachers to identify and meet the needs of neurodivergent children.

In June 2025, the Prime Minister committed to introducing a national best practice framework on pupil engagement and inclusion, to be published by the start of 2026.

However, there is still a lot more work to be done. There is, as yet, no detail on the planned framework. The current work of the inclusion working group should be adapted to recognise that there are a wide variety of characteristics, such as socio-economic status, that can impact a pupil's ability to engage in their education. Furthermore, a recent report by the Public Accounts Committee concluded that 'The Department has not made clear what it means by inclusive education, a core strand of its approach, or how it will be achieved'.

## 2) Introduce an 'enrichment' guarantee and recognise the value of sport

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **An enrichment guarantee should be introduced, including a new 'Right to Sport'.**

The government should introduce an 'enrichment guarantee' in schools, ensuring schools have the appropriate resources to support this. All secondary pupils would be required to do at least 5 hours of extracurricular enrichment every school week (excluding weekends), with the third sector leveraged to deliver the sessions which extend the school day. Pupils who already engage in extracurricular activities on school days would be able to offset the relevant hours against the core requirements.

As part of this, the government should also announce a new 'Right to Sport' for all secondary school pupils. Of the five hours of extra-curricular activity, the Right to Sport would see all pupils participate in a minimum of two hours of extra-curricular sport per week, on top of PE time already scheduled in the curriculum.

**Progress update: limited action taken, further action planned**

In March 2025, the Government announced it is developing a new enrichment framework, in partnership with a panel of experts. This framework will highlight best practice on enrichment and provide advice for schools on how to deliver a high-quality enrichment offer.

In June 2025, the Government announced plans for new School Sports Partnerships, alongside the enrichment framework, which will aim to deliver equal access to sport and two hours of PE every week for every child.

In November 2025, the Government published their independent review of curriculum and assessment. This review highlighted the importance of sport through PE but fell short of making sport a right. The review has strengthened its enrichment offer, recognising that enrichment is valued highly by both students and parents, and recommended greater clarity on which activities should form the core of this offer.<sup>43</sup> Under Ofsted’s new framework, which came in in November 2025, a factor for the measurement of personal development and wellbeing for children is enrichment.

### 3) Overhaul parental engagement at schools

Many parents told the CSJ that when dealing with an absent pupil they often feel “on their own”.<sup>44</sup> Parenting is challenging, and arguably more so today than ever. Increasing difficulties in early years development, not least thanks to the rise of technology; growing challenges in language and literacy; a decline in family formation, especially among the poorest; and growing mental health challenges have all detrimentally impacted the landscape for parents across the country. Alongside the expansion of support, long-term relationship building between schools and parents should be enhanced.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**The Department for Education should support teachers through expanding the ‘Communication with families’ toolkit into an ‘Engaging with parents’ toolkit, including:**

- Guidance on communicating with parents, emphasising positive communication and the importance of in-person events such as parents’ evenings.
- Resources for introducing parental engagement into school Continuing Professional Development.
- Guidance on how to support the home learning environment.
- Guidance for schools on constructively managing transitions from Primary to Secondary school.
- Guidance on including fathers.
- Primary schools engaging with families in the early years as best practice where appropriate.
- Parent-friendly materials for schools on the importance of attendance.

This toolkit should be based on Parentkind’s ‘Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools’

**Progress update: No action taken**

43 Curriculum and Assessment Review: *Building a world-class curriculum for all: Final Report*, November 2025

44 CSJ, *Lost and not found*, 2023

#### 4) Ensure the use of alternative provision is suitable, in the best interests of the child and leads to progress

##### RECOMMENDATION

**DfE should publish guidance on national standards for high quality internal alternative provision, by:**

- Consulting schools and trusts in more detail on their use of internal AP, to inform best practice.
- Publishing these standards as national standards. This should be developed in conjunction with the SEND and AP national standards.
- Conduct a yearly audit on the use internal AP in mainstream schools and across trusts.

**Progress update: Limited action taken, further action planned**

In August 2025, the DfE published voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision. This guides AP in areas such as safeguarding, health and safety, admissions and induction, quality of education and outcomes for children.<sup>45</sup> This guidance could be useful for internal alternative provision, but separate guidance remains needed. This guidance is also voluntary, not mandatory. The DfE has indicated that it intends to make these standards statutory when parliamentary time allows. Until statutory, the DfE encourages local authorities and APs to align with this guidance, with some local authorities updating their quality assurance processes in response.

##### RECOMMENDATION

**DfE should review the use of managed moves.**

The government should introduce a more formalised review and a detailed system for schools and trusts for recording outcomes data around managed moves, to assess how effective they are.

**Progress update: No action taken**

While the government has yet to take any action on this, an amendment has been laid by Baroness Longfield and Lord Storey during the Lords' committee stage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. The amendment would require managed moves to be routed through the local authority's fair access protocol and local authorities to report on their use to the Department for Education. This would improve the monitoring of the effectiveness of managed moves and reduce the risk of children going missing during the process.

<sup>45</sup> Department for Education, *Non-school alternative provision: Voluntary national standards*, August 2025

## RECOMMENDATION

### **The three-tier system for SEND and AP should be implemented.**

The Department for Education should implement the move towards a three-tier system for SEND and AP, as outlined in the SEND and AP plan, as soon as possible. As detailed in the SEND and AP improvement plan, this system should focus on targeted early support in mainstream settings.

**Progress update: No action taken**

Proposals to implement a three-tier system for SEND and AP were included as part of the SEND and AP improvement plan, published in 2023 under the Sunak government. Throughout the duration of the previous government, the Department were working towards implementing various aspects of the SEND and AP plan. However, Labour have confirmed they are not progressing with the SEND and AP plan but will instead outline their own plans in a white paper in the Autumn.

In October 2025, the government announced that they would be delaying the publication of the white paper for schools until early in the new year.





The Centre for Social Justice  
Kings Buildings  
16 Smith Square  
Westminster, SW1P 3HQ

[www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk)  
@csjthinktank