



Department
for Education

Evaluation of the School Exclusion Trial (Responsibility for Alternative Provision for Permanently Excluded Children)

First Interim Report

Research Report

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**The Institute of Education, University of
London (IOE) & the National Foundation for
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Glossary

AP: Alternative Provision

CAMHS: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

DfE: Department for Education

FSM: Free School Meals

FTE: Full time equivalent

ILP: Individual Learning Plan

KS1: Key Stage 1

KS2: Key Stage 2

KS3: Key Stage 3

KS4: Key Stage 4

LA: Local Authority

LAC: Looked After Children

LSU: Learning Support Unit

MAA: Multi Agency Assessment

PPF: Pupil Profile Form

PRU: Pupil Referral Unit

SEBD: Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SENCO: Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SD: Standard Deviation

SMT: Senior Management Team

TA: Teaching Assistant

1. Executive summary

Key points

Overview

The Department for Education is running a three-year school exclusion trial, which started in autumn 2011 and continues until July 2014. It involves around 180 participating schools in 11 volunteer local authorities (LAs).

The trial sees schools taking on responsibility for placing excluded pupils in alternative provision (AP), funding the placements from money devolved from LAs; and gives flexibility for funding earlier intervention to reduce the need for exclusion in the first place.

An evaluation is running alongside the trial, with the final report due in spring 2015. The evaluation will assess the issues arising from the implementation of the trial and the impact it has on pupils, schools, LAs and AP providers.

This report is a summary of the first of two interim reports. The report focuses on establishing a qualitative and quantitative baseline for the evaluation, but also presents some early findings from the first year of the trial. It is based on schools in the eight LAs that were participating at the initial stage of the evaluation. Future reports will consider the outcomes of the trial, including the impact on pupils' attainment, and provide case studies of how particular issues have been addressed.

Key findings

Although at a very early stage of the trial, there was evidence from some trial schools that they have already started to implement changes, such as:

- changes to school processes (the introduction of new school-wide policies and strategies; the employment of new staff in specialised roles in schools; allocated budgets for AP);
- additional training for existing staff; and
- changes to the types of interventions offered (increased support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, including external AP and in-school provision).

There was also qualitative evidence from LAs that:

- partnership working between schools has increased and processes have been made more rigorous;
- some schools are directly commissioning AP;
- some pupil referral units (PRUs) have closed and the role and offer of

others has changed to meet the needs of schools more closely;

- there has been an increase of 'dual roll' where students remain on the school roll but are also registered with an AP provider;
- schools are taking increased responsibility for pupils at risk of exclusion;
- schools are preparing to offer a broader curriculum to meet the needs of all of their pupils; and
- some secondary schools are working in partnership with primary schools on transition issues to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusions.

Two issues were identified that directly relate to the trial. These were:

- ensuring that schools had the capacity and expertise to commission, manage and monitor AP; and
- increasing the extent of early intervention at the first sign of difficulties.

A more general issue that emerged was concern about the availability of sufficient, local, flexible, high quality AP to meet the needs of students, particularly at Key Stage 3 and Level 2.

These issues will be followed up in the subsequent evaluation reports.

1. Background

1.1 Context

Currently, LAs are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive such education without arrangements being made (DfE, 2012). The governing bodies of schools are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth day of a fixed period exclusion. Schools may also direct pupils off-site for education, to help improve their behaviour. Statutory guidance sets out the Government's expectations of LAs and schools who commission alternative provision (AP). To be effective, AP must be capable of providing support to all pupils in order for them to achieve their full potential (O'Brien et al., 2001).

The children and young people educated in AP are amongst the most vulnerable in society. Providing AP is complex, as those needing it have a diverse range of needs, which may extend beyond school exclusion to medical issues, lack of a school place, or an inability to thrive in a mainstream educational environment.

To meet these diverse needs, alternative provision in England can include pupil referral units (PRUs), hospital schools, further education (FE) Colleges, training providers, employers, voluntary sector organisations, community services, youth services and other local agencies (QCA, 2004). More recently AP academies and free schools have been introduced as a source of provision.

The White Paper, *'The Importance of Teaching'* (2010), set out the aim to improve the quality of AP, by increasing autonomy and encouraging new providers. The Ofsted report on AP (2011) showed that the quality of AP is varied. In 2011, Charlie Taylor, at the time the Government's advisor on behaviour, was asked to conduct a review of AP. His review confirmed that the quality of AP was variable; the system failed to provide suitable education for pupils; and that there was a lack of accountability in relation to outcomes.

1.2 The trial

The school exclusion trial is a pilot programme implementing a proposal set out in the 2010 White Paper. This reiterates the authority of head teachers to permanently exclude pupils where this is warranted, but balances that authority by proposing that schools should have greater responsibility for the quality of education that those pupils receive and the attainment levels they achieve.

The trial started in autumn 2011, with volunteer LAs and schools rolling out the changes in processes and financial responsibility for AP from this date until April 2013. The trial continues until July 2014.

The trial sees schools gaining responsibility for finding and funding AP, by shifting money from LAs to schools, so that they can purchase the AP that they think will best meet the needs of their pupils. This might include collaborating with other schools to provide suitable places or buying them from the LA, the voluntary sector or local colleges. The purpose of the trial is to test the workability of the approach, identify issues and barriers, develop solutions and ensure that the incentives work effectively.

1.3 The trial evaluation

The main aims of the evaluation are to:

- assess the impact on schools, pupils (including those most vulnerable to exclusion) and LAs of devolving the responsibility for AP for excluded pupils to schools;
- assess whether the trial has increased the use of early intervention and family support and whether this has had any impact on pupil outcomes for those at risk of exclusion;
- identify the lessons for any future implementation of the approach; and
- assess the cost effectiveness of the new approach and the impact on the AP market.

This report is the first of two interim reports, the second to be delivered in spring 2014 with a final report in spring 2015. It is based on data collected from schools relating to the academic years 2010/11 or 2011/12 and therefore provides baseline data for the subsequent years of the trial. Some tentative findings relating to progress and the forward trajectory of the trial were gathered in interviews undertaken in the summer term 2012 with local authority (LA) and school staff.

Given this early stage in implementation of the trial these findings need to be interpreted with caution. Some LAs reported participating in the trial because they had already implemented a

range of strategies that they believed reflected the spirit of the trial and they wanted validation of their approach.

Future reports will consider the outcomes of the trial, including impact on pupils' attainment, and provide case studies of how particular issues have been addressed.

2. Methods

2.1 Overall design

A mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) longitudinal (over three years 2012-2015) and comparative (trial and comparison schools) design was adopted for the research. This report presents baseline findings on the LAs and schools that had agreed to participate and were able to return data by 31 October 2012. Any participants who joined after this point will be included in future reports.

2.2 Instruments and their use

Several data collection instruments have been developed and versions sent to the trial and comparison schools and LAs at the start of the evaluation.

A pupil profile form (PPF) was used to collect information about pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in trial and comparison schools and the interventions adopted to support them. This was completed by schools throughout the summer and autumn of 2012. It will be completed again during each year of the trial and will enable identified pupils to be followed up throughout the course of the trial.

The national pupil database was used to:

- model the national profile of permanently excluded pupils;
- enable a comparison of the characteristics of the pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in trial and comparison schools and the national profile; and
- provide additional information about pupils designated as at risk of permanent exclusion by trial and comparison schools (this will continue through each year of the trial).

Questionnaires for lead teachers in trial and comparison schools reflected the position in schools as a whole and were used to establish:

- levels of permanent exclusion;
- availability and perceived effectiveness of in-school provision to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion;
- availability and perceived effectiveness of AP for such pupils;
- processes for commissioning and monitoring AP;
- strengths and issues relating to these processes; and

- financial information relating to in-school and AP resourcing.

In addition, lead teachers in trial schools were asked about changes occurring as a result of the trial.

Questionnaires were developed for lead staff in trial LAs to establish current provision for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, changes resulting from the trial and financial information.

Telephone interviews were undertaken with lead staff in trial LAs to follow up questionnaire responses in more depth.

Lead teacher questionnaires (in trial and comparison schools) and LA questionnaires with follow up LA telephone interviews (in the 11 trial LAs) will be repeated annually during the course of the trial.

Six LAs have also been selected for in depth case study with three of the LAs visited in the summer of 2012 and the other three LAs to be visited in the summer of 2013. Semi-structured interview schedules were developed for use with a range of school staff including members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and support staff. Interviews were also undertaken with managers of AP, and pupils and parents. The interviews were designed to gain deeper insights into current practices, changes underway and the experiences of pupils and parents.

In the summer of 2012, questionnaires with open questions paralleling the case study interviews were sent to staff in the three LAs who will be involved in face-to-face fieldwork visits during 2013. These questionnaires will be sent to staff in the other three case study LAs (those involved in face-to-face fieldwork visits during 2012) in summer 2013.

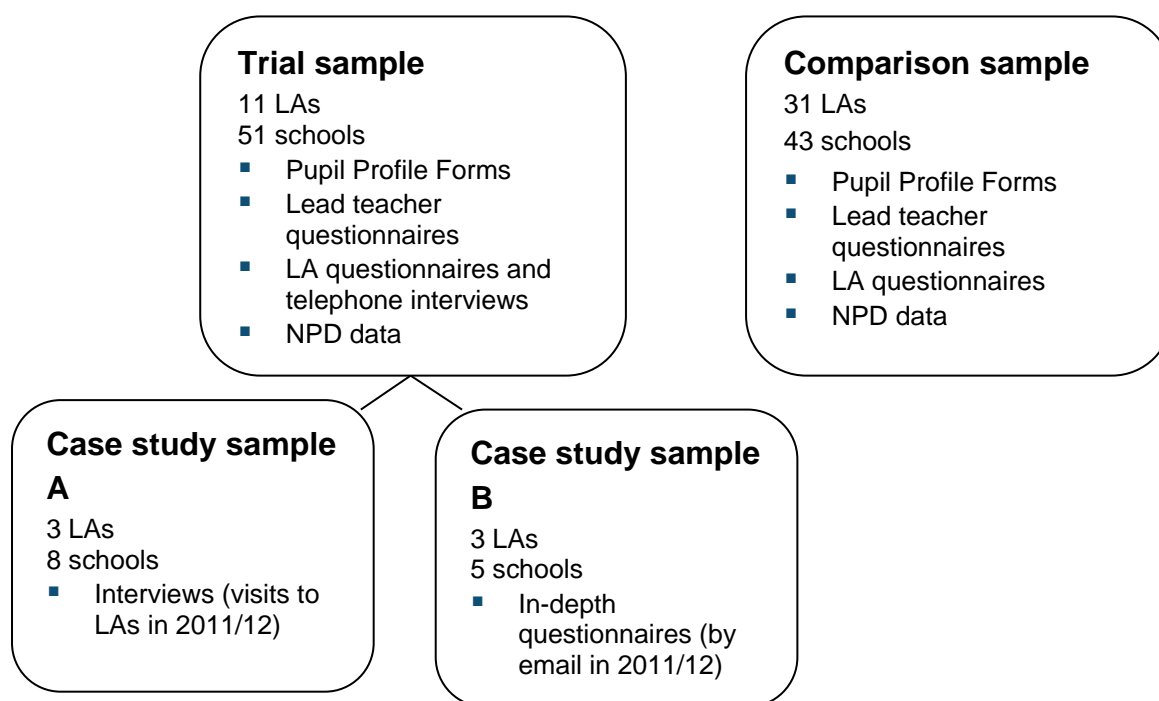
2.3 The sample

At this initial stage, 11 LAs in total are participating in the trial, with 51 schools from eight of these LAs participating in the evaluation as of October 31 2012. The comparison group, selected from LAs where practices were not considered likely to confound the findings¹, consisted of 43 schools and 31 LAs at the end of October 2012.

The overall structure of the sample as of 31 October 2012 is depicted in Figure 1.

¹ This includes some comparison LAs that completed the LA questionnaire but none of their schools are participating, and the reverse situation whereby some comparison schools are participating but their LA has not completed a questionnaire.

Figure 1 The structure of the sample



The numbers of participants for the baseline data collection are presented in Table 1.

Table 12 Participants in baseline data collection as of 31 October 2012

	LAs in evaluation	Schools in trial	Schools in evaluation	Pupil Profile Form	Lead teacher questionnaire	LA questionnaire
Trial sample	8	144	51	43	49	7
Comparison sample	31	N/A	43	31	42	31

Note: One PPF was returned per school with details of **all** pupils at risk of permanent exclusion recorded on each form.

In addition, telephone interviews were undertaken with LA officials in each of the eleven LAs involved in the trial.

Three out of the six case study LAs were visited during the 2011/12 academic year (case study sample A) with 47 participants involved in semi-structured interviews during the fieldwork. Questionnaires were sent to staff in the other three LAs (case study sample B) and five responses were received to these questionnaires.

3. Findings

3.1 Implementation of the trial

Baseline interviews demonstrated that LAs took a range of different approaches to implementing the trial. Despite this, LA staff held similar expectations. They perceived that the trial would increase headteachers' awareness of their responsibilities in relation to exclusion and the challenges involved. As schools took responsibility for permanently excluded pupils, staff believed this might:

- reduce the need for exclusions;
- create clearer funding streams;
- guarantee appropriate funding to meet often complex needs; and
- increase levels of in-school provision.

Through the Power to Innovate initiative the Secretary of State for Education is able to temporarily suspend, or modify, education legislation that may be holding back - or even stopping - innovative approaches to raising standards. It allows schools, foundations, FE colleges and LAs, to think innovatively, to test ideas on how best to tailor education provision in order to raise educational standards and improve outcomes for pupils and students. In the case of the trial it would enable LAs to transfer budgets to schools in the absence of legislation. Most LAs have not adopted the Power to Innovate as a means of implementing the changes in the trial. However, there were examples where LAs were putting in place shadow or ghost budgets so that schools could have some measure of control over their AP funds.

Some LAs joined the trial because they felt that the approach that they were already adopting reflected the principles of the trial. As a result some change was already underway prior to the start of the trial and for these LAs the evaluation constitutes the documentation of an on-going journey.

Within this overall picture, the research revealed a wealth of information which provides the baseline against which later findings will be measured. This includes data about pupils at risk of permanent exclusion; the practice in providing for them; the attitudes and opinions of the staff involved; and issues and concerns that have arisen.

3.2 Baseline quantitative findings

These findings are based on the evidence from the pupil profile forms, lead teacher questionnaires and national pupil database analysis.

Numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion: Lead teachers in trial and comparison schools reported very low numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion (one to four per year group on average) with more pupils identified as at risk of permanent exclusion in the older year groups. In the trial schools the number increased from 2.2 to 3.9 from Year 7 to Year 11 and in the comparison schools from one in Year 7 to 3.3 in Year 10, declining to 2.8 in Year 11.

Characteristics of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in trial and comparison schools:

Using the characteristics of pupils identified as at risk of permanent exclusion from trial and comparison schools, four types of analyses were conducted:

- comparison between pupils identified 'at risk' and other pupils in their school;
- a comparison of the differences between 'at risk' pupils in trial schools and comparison schools;
- analysis of the national pupil database (NPD) and school administrative data to identify pupils with characteristics historically associated with permanent exclusion;
- comparison between pupils identified by schools and those identified using the NPD.

When all other factors were taken into account, the 'at risk' pupils' prior attainment was not significantly different to their counterparts' in the same schools. Nevertheless, pupils' current teacher assessment levels in English were consistently below that expected in each year group, typically by around two National Curriculum levels. The most common reasons given for pupils to be identified as at risk of permanent exclusion were school based, with poor behaviour in school being a factor (amongst others) in the vast majority of cases. All else being equal, trial schools were more likely to include pupils on the PPF as at risk of permanent exclusion than comparison schools.

There was a reasonable correspondence between the group of pupils identified by schools as being at risk of permanent exclusion, and the group with characteristics associated with a high risk of permanent exclusion based on historic national data. Both groups shared similar characteristics. However, there were fewer children from ethnic groups in the evaluation sample than in the sample identified using the NPD based on assumptions informed by trends in exclusions in previous years.

In-school support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion: Schools in trial and comparison schools offered multiple supports for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. No lead teacher indicated having fewer than five interventions in place and the average across the whole sample was 15. There were no significant differences between trial and comparison schools. The most commonly available interventions were behaviour management, teaching assistants and using a revised school timetable (all more than 90%). Of a list of 22 possible interventions most were commonly adopted.

Overall, lead teachers rated the effectiveness of in-school interventions relatively highly, although the most common interventions were not necessarily perceived to be the most effective. Interventions were rated differently according to different outcomes. Generally, interventions were perceived as more effective for preventing exclusions, than for improving attainment. Interventions that were rated relatively highly overall, e.g. inclusion coordinators and learning mentors had lower ratings for attainment than other outcomes. However, Learning Support Units (LSUs) were rated highly by more than half of teachers for all outcomes.

Alternative provision for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion: On average, schools reported that five forms/types of AP were in place for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The most commonly used types of AP were specialist support (such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Services (CAMHS)); pupil referral units (PRUs); individual work placements; additional services provided by the LA, for instance, Traveller Education; and time spent at an FE college. AP was less common than in-school interventions. The more common types of AP were not necessarily perceived to be the most effective. Individual work placements were quite common (50%) and rated highly for most outcomes. Training providers were less common (25%) yet rated almost as high on most outcomes. Some types of AP were rated differently according to outcome. PRUs were rated highly for preventing exclusions, poorly for improving attainment, and moderately for improving attendance and behaviour. The disparity between the perceived impact of AP on attainment, as compared with the other outcomes, was even more pronounced than for in-school interventions.

Lead teachers in trial schools were more likely than comparison schools to comment negatively on individual work placements as effective in terms of academic attainment.

Very few pupils designated by trial and comparison schools as being at risk of permanent exclusion were actually being provided with AP at the time of the research. In some schools none of the identified pupils were in receipt of AP. Provision of AP was more common for the older year groups in both trial and comparison schools.

Overall success factors for AP placements included: the level of information about the pupil; developing successful relationships; strong and trusting partnerships between schools and AP providers; and the provision of maths and English tuition.

Schools used AP to meet individual or complex needs; to provide a much needed alternative setting which gave students a fresh start; and to improve pupils' behaviour, motivation and engagement in learning. In some cases, AP was used to reduce disruption to other pupils, to avoid health and safety issues or when all else had failed.

Across both trial and comparison schools, senior school staff often had responsibility for arranging AP. Almost one-third of teachers in comparison schools reported that an individual or group external to the school had responsibility for arranging AP, for instance, LA or multi-agency teams. However, only 3% of teachers in trial schools reported external involvement. In trial schools, LAs and schools were responsible for commissioning.

In trial schools, 71% of lead teachers reported that arrangements for AP typically involved collaboration with providers. This was much less the case in comparison schools (38%). In trial schools, the collaborative nature of the process was seen as a strength.

Amongst trial schools, 37% reported having a dedicated budget for in-school provision and 59% reported having a dedicated budget for AP. In comparison schools the percentages were 42% and 38% respectively.

About one-third of lead teachers mentioned working with parents, carers or pupils when arranging AP. Smaller proportions of lead teachers also mentioned working with external agencies.

Changes due to the trial: Although the data were collected at a very early stage of the trial, 47% of lead teachers in trial schools indicated that their school had made changes. Most common in changes relating to school processes was employing new staff in specialised roles, for instance, Behaviour for Learning Mentors and careers advisors. Partnership working had increased; new

school-wide policies or strategies had been introduced; budgets for AP had been allocated; and there was more training for existing staff. About two-thirds of lead teachers who indicated changes mentioned increased support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion including external AP, in-school provision, internal exclusions and managed moves.

3.3 Qualitative findings

These findings are based on the evidence from the 11 LA interviews and the case study research.

Expectations of changes to be made during the trial: The interview data revealed expectations that the trial would raise the profile of issues relating to exclusion and as such make headteachers more aware of the challenges and their responsibilities; create clearer funding streams; and increase the level of in-school provision.

3.3.1 Issues relating to alternative provision

Meeting the needs of children at risk of permanent exclusion: Existing practices meant that where AP was full-time pupils could lose contact with the school and miss out on their core education. This issue is being addressed as part of the trial. AP offered on a part-time basis and combined with in-school provision was viewed as particularly successful.

Interviewees reported that when they attempted to tailor AP to meet their pupil's needs, there were sometimes difficulties in finding the right provision. In some schools evidence was collated relating to the pupil's needs when arranging alternative provision for them. Other schools submitted the request for AP to a panel, while some used individual plans for pupils in the arrangement process.

Commissioning of AP: In relation to the commissioning process, trial LAs expected that schools would become more involved in commissioning as the trial progressed.

The AP offer: There were issues relating to the availability of AP in terms of types of AP and the number of placements on offer, in particular a lack of provision at Key Stage 3 and at Level 2. Generally, academic provision was seen as weak.

Other issues included the cost of AP, the logistics of travel arrangements for pupils, and the breakdown of placements where they were found to be unsuitable.

Monitoring of AP: The interviews revealed that arranging and monitoring AP was time consuming for schools. Schools reported that the monitoring of AP was effective when shared data were detailed, accurate and timely. Having good relationships was important. Monitoring enabled problems to be identified early and was valuable in contributing to pupil success by acting as an incentive. Weaknesses included the quality and quantity of data (particularly attendance and attainment), schools not being informed of problems quickly enough to take action and the lack of consistency across providers. Monitoring provision was perceived as expensive and time consuming.

Quality assurance of AP: Typically, in the interviews, rigorous quality assurance processes were in place relating to LA or ex-LA provision. Where this was the case, school staff had increased confidence in the provision.

The role of PRUs: The interviews revealed that LAs had adopted very different approaches to the role of PRUs from the closure of a PRU at one extreme through to seeing their role as being critical to the success of how collaborative working operated in the LA. There was considerable evidence of schools wanting more flexibility in the working of PRUs and of such flexibility being delivered in some LAs.

Managed moves and collaboration between schools: As a result of the trial, in some cases, collaborative processes had become more rigorous. However, in some cases there were challenges including the small number of possible schools where pupils could move to; perceived inequities in the number of pupils that different schools had taken as part of managed moves; and different expectations of what behaviour might lead to a managed move. The success of partnerships was reported to rely on their stability.

3.3.2 In-school provision

The curriculum on offer in schools: The case-study interviews revealed that some schools were broadening their curriculum offer with the introduction of on-site provision of vocational programmes. A wider range of qualifications was also being made available. As the trial and the evaluation progress, it will be possible to explore the impact on the types of vocational qualifications offered by schools and their relationship to policies based on the Wolf report on vocational education (Wolf, 2011).

Early intervention and work with primary schools: The interview data indicated that early intervention was seen as key to the implementation of the trial but was not always happening. There was a perceived need for interventions at primary level which addressed the underlying causes of poor behaviour. Secondary schools were working with primary schools on transition issues.

The role of parents: Lack of parental engagement was an issue and in some cases taking account of parental preferences was a challenge.

4. Challenges to the success of the trial

Many of the challenges which emerged at this stage of the trial were related to external factors which, although not directly related to the trial itself may impact on its implementation. These are outlined below. As the trial and its evaluation progress the impact of these factors will be assessed.

Availability of AP: Concerns were expressed about the availability of AP in terms of breadth, number of placements and lack of flexibility. There were particular concerns about the lack of AP at Key Stage 3 and Level 2.

Unrealistic expectations of AP providers: Providers of AP indicated that expectations regarding attainment were frequently unrealistic given the complex problems of referrals which usually related to personal and social issues. The resolution of these issues required activities which developed trust and did not put pressure on students.

Parental and student choice: Some students wanted to remain in full-time AP and not return to school. There were also issues where parents challenged the AP arrangements made.

School capacity to manage AP: LA officers and some school staff expressed concerns that some schools may not currently have sufficient expertise to be able to successfully commission, manage and monitor AP. Assessing quality and progress in an AP provider was viewed as difficult unless there was regular training and sharing of practice. The evaluation will monitor the extent to which this changes as the trial progresses.

5. Issues to be considered as the trial goes forward

This interim report is based on data collected at a very early stage in the trial and it is intended to be used as a summary of the baseline position. Drawing conclusions about the impact of the trial is therefore premature, although the evidence to date suggests that participating schools and LAs are committed to the approach. The baseline research identified a range of issues for consideration as the trial goes forward.

Most of the issues raised were not directly related to the trial but concerned issues related to AP. These included:

- the shrinking of the AP market currently underway;
- problems in rural areas where the possibilities for managed moves and AP were limited because of geographical location;
- managing changes in demand and requests for increased flexibility when AP providers may have limited capacity;
- providing AP providers with regular income, particularly when they are not operating in highly populated urban areas, to ensure stability of provision and high quality staff;
- the current lack of AP at Key Stage 3; and
- the availability of AP at Level 2.

Some issues, which may impact on the trial, but are not directly related to it concerned schools. These included:

- the difficulty of engaging some parents;
- the need to improve intervention in primary schools to address underlying serious behavioural problems early on; and
- ensuring that schools have sufficient accommodation to be able to provide a range of in-school provision on and off-site.

Two issues were identified which directly relate to the implementation of the trial. These are:

- ensuring that schools have the capacity and expertise to commission, manage and monitor AP; and
- increasing the extent of early intervention at the first sign of difficulties.

2. Introduction, aims and objectives

2.1 Introduction

The School Exclusion Trial is a pilot programme implementing the proposals set out in the White Paper *'The Importance of Teaching'* (2010). This reiterates the authority of headteachers to permanently exclude pupils where this is warranted, but balances that authority with giving schools responsibility for the quality of the education that those pupils receive and the attainment levels they achieve. The proposal is that schools will find and fund alternative provision (AP) for permanently excluded pupils. The trial will also explore the impact of these changes on AP which it is widely recognised needs to improve.

This is the first of two interim reports, the second to be delivered in spring 2014 with a final report in spring 2015. It is based on data collected from schools relating to the academic years 2010/11 and 2011/12 and therefore provides baseline data for the subsequent years of the trial. Some tentative findings relating to progress and the forward trajectory of the trial were gathered in interviews undertaken in the summer term 2012 with local authority (LA) and school staff. Given this early stage in implementation of the trial these findings need to be interpreted with caution. Some LAs reported participating in the trial because they had already implemented a range of strategies that they believed reflected the spirit of the trial and they wanted validation of their approach.

2.2 Background

In the White Paper *'The Importance of Teaching'* (2010) the government set out the need for improving behaviour in schools and restoring the authority of teachers and headteachers. This included:

- increasing the authority of teachers to discipline pupils;
- strengthening headteachers' authority to maintain discipline beyond the school gates;
- empowering headteachers to take a strong stand against bullying;
- protecting teachers from malicious allegations, speeding up investigations and legislating to grant teachers anonymity when accused by pupils;
- focusing Ofsted inspections more strongly on behaviour and safety as one of four key areas of inspections;
- improving exclusion processes;
- changing the current system of independent appeals' panels for exclusion to speed up processes and reduce anxiety that a student who had committed a serious offence would be re-instated;
- trialling a new approach to exclusions where schools had new responsibilities for the ongoing education and care of excluded children; and
- improving the quality of AP and encouraging new providers to set up AP Free Schools.

The White Paper confirmed headteachers' authority to permanently exclude pupils while recognising that exclusion should always be a last resort and that good schools would always seek to intervene early with pupils whose behaviour was a problem. It was recognised in the White Paper that the best schools have effective systems in place which mean that they rarely need to permanently exclude any pupil and that promoting good behaviour reduces low-level disruption and allows resources to be focused on those with serious behaviour problems who require additional support.

The new approach to permanent exclusion as outlined in the White Paper balanced headteachers' authority to exclude with the responsibility for ensuring the ongoing quality of education that excluded pupils receive and for their achievement. In other words, schools would have ongoing accountability for any pupils who were permanently excluded. This was expected to create a strong incentive for schools to avoid exclusion and ensure that where it occurred it was appropriate and that pupils received high quality alternative provision (AP).

2.3 The rationale for the School Exclusion Trial

The School Exclusion Trial and the evaluation of it are tasked with exploring the workability of this approach and issues that may emerge from giving schools responsibility for finding and funding AP by shifting the money from LAs to schools, so that they can purchase the AP that they think will best meet the needs of their pupils. This might include collaborating with other schools to provide suitable places or buying them from the LA, the voluntary sector or local colleges. The purpose of the trial is to work with LAs and headteachers to test the approach, identify issues and barriers, develop solutions and ensure that the incentives work effectively. The research will monitor the changes as LAs gradually hand over responsibility to schools.

Exclusion arrangements

Currently LAs are responsible for arranging suitable education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such arrangements being made (DfE, 2012). The governing bodies of schools are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth day of a fixed period exclusion. Schools may also direct pupils off-site for education, to help improve their behaviour. Statutory guidance sets out the Government's expectations of LAs and maintained schools who commission AP from PRUs and other providers.

2.3.1 The nature and quality of alternative provision

A further aim set out in the White Paper was the need to improve the quality of AP by increasing autonomy and encouraging new providers. The children and young people educated in AP are amongst the most vulnerable in society. Providing AP is complex as those needing it have a diverse range of needs, which may extend beyond school exclusion to medical issues (e.g. health problems, school phobia), lack of a school place, or an inability to thrive in a mainstream educational environment. To be effective AP must therefore be capable of providing support to pupils facing any or all of these barriers to achieving their full potential (O'Brien et al., 2001). To

meet these diverse needs, AP in England can include pupil referral units (PRUs); hospital schools; home tuition services; further education (FE) colleges, training providers, employers, voluntary sector organisations, community services, youth services, and other local agencies (QCA, 2004). More recently, AP academies and free schools have been introduced as a source of provision.

For excluded pupils and persistent absentees, the main provision is in PRUs. While the standards of education in PRUs have improved, attendance remains poor and less than half of the pupils gain a single General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Ofsted, 2005). Recent data indicates that attainment for pupils collectively in AP, PRUs and hospital schools which includes that for excludees is comparatively poor. In 2011/12, only 1.3% achieved five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics (DfE, 2013).

The Ofsted report on AP in England (2011) showed that the quality of the AP studied was variable. The process of finding and commissioning AP also varied widely. There were particular concerns raised over the quality assurance and monitoring of AP. There was a lack of clearly defined success criteria at the outset in most cases, and monitoring was also weak. Attendance was monitored by email or telephone although behaviour and attitudes were not routinely monitored. Few schools and units systematically monitored students' progress in the specific skills being learnt or the impact on personal development.

In 2011, Charlie Taylor, at the time the Government's advisor on behaviour, was asked to conduct a review of AP. He confirmed the issues highlighted in the Ofsted survey indicating that the quality of AP was variable, that the system failed to provide suitable education for pupils and that there was a lack of accountability in relation to outcomes. The report identified the need for improvements in the effectiveness of commissioning and identified the following areas for improvement:

- better commissioning by schools - including the identification and assessment of pupils' needs;
- the need for appropriate and challenging teaching in English and mathematics;
- the sharing of information between schools and AP providers;
- schools to take over responsibility for commissioning AP for excluded pupils;
- Ofsted to inspect schools on their use of AP;
- most PRUs to become AP Academies and intervention where PRUs underperform; and
- PRUs and AP Academies to be involved in teacher training.

2.3.2 The qualities of effective alternative provision

While there is limited data about the availability and quality of AP and the nature of the AP market in the UK, there is evidence regarding the elements that contribute to effective AP (Kendall et al., 2007). This review indicated that at the strategic level AP needs to be seen as part of the core provision of LAs, being linked to other LA strategies and policies thus emphasising its equal status with other types of learning opportunities. It should be regularly reviewed, clear and formal contracting arrangements set up and clear systems should be in place for referral and information sharing. These are enhanced where there is collaborative decision making through multi-agency panels or forums. To support pupils in AP effectively close links between AP and mainstream

schools are crucial and parental involvement is important although this can be particularly challenging for AP providers. Pupils engaged in AP also need regular access to a range of other services including Connexions, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and counselling support. High quality staffing is key to effective provision and an ethos of respect with pupils involved in negotiating the content of their learning (Kendall et al., 2007).

NFER's recent research into, and evaluation of, the *Back on Track* AP pilots (2009-2012), adds further to this evidence base: findings indicate that AP delivered within a school setting can be highly successful in providing social, emotional, behavioural, and academic support to pupils, who can be prevented from disengagement through the provision of early and ongoing support at school, enabling them to succeed in a mainstream environment (White et al., 2012). Related to this is the report 'Engaging the Disengaged' (Kettlewell et al., 2012) which found that the support offered in school tended to integrate two or more approaches to preventing disengagement such as employer involvement, alternative curricula and careers guidance. The students identified as at risk of disengagement were not achieving their potential academically, had mild behavioural issues or a combination of these. Particularly effective in helping them were one-to-one support, personalised and flexible provision, practical or vocational programmes and employer engagement.

An international review of AP (Gutherson et al., 2011) found that amongst other qualities, effective AP typically demonstrated:

- high standards and expectations that built aspirations;
- small scale provision with small class sizes and high staff/learner ratios;
- student-centred or personalised programmes that were flexible and customised to individual need;
- high quality 'caring and knowledgeable' staff with opportunities for their professional development and support;
- links to multiple agencies, partners and community organisations and 'a safety net of pastoral support including counselling and mentoring;
- an expanded, challenging and flexible curriculum related to learners' interests and capabilities that offered a range of accreditation opportunities.

2.3.3 The costs of alternative provision

The costs of AP vary widely. Ofsted (2011) suggested that AP costs between £20 and £123 a day, with the average being £50 equating to approximately £9,500 per annum for a full time place. Typically, places in PRUs cost more than this. In some cases charitable donations or subsidised rents reduce costs. Clearly, with increasing pressure on budgets schools may have difficult decisions to make in relation to balancing the cost of AP against its quality. Providers themselves prefer arrangements whereby commissioners block-buy places for a year or more, so that they can retain good staff and plan for the future (Taylor, 2012).

2.4 Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The main aims of the evaluation are to:

- assess the impact on schools, pupils (including those most vulnerable to exclusion) and LAs of devolving the responsibility for AP for excluded pupils to schools;
- assess whether the trial has increased the use of early intervention and family support and whether this has had any impact on pupil outcomes for those at risk of permanent exclusion;
- identify the lessons for any future implementation of the approach; and
- assess the cost effectiveness of the new approach and the impact on the AP market.

3. Methodology

3.1 Overall design

This is a longitudinal evaluation commencing in 2012 and continuing until the end of 2014, designed to track schools' and pupils' experiences and outcomes over the first three academic years of the new arrangements. Whilst the trial officially began in autumn 2011, in practice some preparations were made before this, and there was a staggered start across different trial LAs which continues through to April 2013. The evaluation period will end in summer 2014, and a final report produced in spring 2015. The focus is a sample of trial schools in LAs that have volunteered to participate in the School Exclusion Trial, together with a comparison sample of similar schools not participating in the trial. This quasi-experimental design has been chosen in order to identify impacts of participation in the trial, taking account of other known variables.

The new arrangements have the potential to impact upon pupils, on schools, on LAs and on providers of AP. The research is therefore designed to collect data about all of these stakeholder groups, through a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses.

This first interim report gives details below of the methods adopted in the first year of the evaluation of the trial, which extended over the calendar year 2012.

3.2 The samples

3.2.1 The trial sample

Eleven LAs volunteered to take part in the trial and they provided lists of participating schools, all of which were invited to take part in the evaluation. The timing of LA participation varied across the calendar year of 2012 and the sample of schools therefore increased in number in the course of the first year of the evaluation. This report is based on the LAs and schools that had agreed to participate and returned data by 31 October 2012. Any participants joining after this point will be included in future reports. At this point, eight LAs were involved; three had not yet returned data.

LAs participating in the trial are listed in Table 3.1. These include a good spread of regions and LA types, with the exception that none of the London Boroughs are involved in the trial.

Table 3.1 Trial local authorities

LA	Region	LA type
Hertfordshire	Eastern	Counties
Darlington	North East	English Unitary Authorities
Hartlepool	North East	English Unitary Authorities
Middlesbrough	North East	English Unitary Authorities
Redcar & Cleveland	North East	English Unitary Authorities
Lancashire	North West/Merseyside	Counties
Sefton	North West/Merseyside	Metropolitan Authorities
East Sussex	South East	Counties
Hampshire	South East	Counties
Wiltshire	South West	Counties
Leeds	Yorkshire & The Humber	Metropolitan Authorities

Table 3.2 sets out the number of trial LAs, together with the number of schools participating in the trial and the number participating in the evaluation; schools are taken to be participating in the evaluation if they have returned at least a pupil profile form (PPF), together with the formal agreement of the headteacher (including informing parents/carers about the research). The table also shows the numbers of instruments of each type returned for analysis, on which this report is based. The instruments are described in more detail below.

Table 3.2 Local authorities and schools participating in the evaluation and instruments returned

	LAs in evaluation	Schools in trial	Schools in evaluation	Pupil Profile Form	Lead teacher questionnaire	LA questionnaire
Overall total	8	144	51	43	49	7

Note: One PPF was returned per school with details of **all** pupils at risk of permanent exclusion recorded on each form.

3.2.2 Comparison schools

The sample of comparison schools was drawn from those LAs suitable for inclusion. LAs were excluded from the sampling frame if they were: trial LAs; LAs where a similar system of devolution of responsibility to schools was known to be in place; LAs who had already expressed an unwillingness to participate in the trial or evaluation; and LAs for which no information was available. In order to develop an up-to-date sampling frame, a short pro-forma was sent to all LAs in England (except those above) in January 2012. Of the 92 that responded, 14 (15%) indicated that some of their schools already had responsibility for commissioning alternative provision for permanently excluded pupils, or received devolved funding for alternative provision. A total of 65 LAs were found to meet the criteria as a result of this survey, and the sample of schools was drawn from these LAs.

A total of 665 schools were invited to participate, of which 43 agreed and 31 completed pupil profile forms, and these make up the comparison sample used in this report. Table 3.3 sets out the number of respondents. As above, the table gives the sample available on 31 October 2012.

Table 3.3 The comparison sample

Comparison sample	Number of LAs	Schools in evaluation	Pupil Profile Form	Lead teacher questionnaire	LA questionnaire
Number of respondents	31	43	31	42	31

Note: One PPF was returned per school with details of **all** pupils at risk of permanent exclusion recorded on each form.

Characteristics of sample schools

Table 3.4 summarises the characteristics of schools participating in the trial and in the evaluation on 31 October 2012, i.e. eight LAs out of the 11 trial LAs. Trial schools are broadly typical of all schools nationally, with the notable exception that they have substantially lower numbers of pupils from Caribbean or Gypsy and Roma Traveller ethnic groups. They also had a slightly higher rate of permanent exclusion in 2010/11. The trial schools participating in the evaluation are similar, but with slightly lower numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) or recorded as having School Action or School Action Plus special educational needs (SEN). Participating comparison schools are more representative of the national population, and have more FSM, SEN (of any type) and ethnic minority pupils, as well as more fixed period exclusions, but fewer permanent exclusions compared with trial schools in the evaluation. These pupil characteristics are particularly relevant because of their predominance amongst excluded pupils, as discussed in Section 4.

Table 3.4 Summary of pupil characteristics at trial and comparison schools participating in the trial at 31 October 2012

Characteristic	All schools in England	All schools in trial	Trial schools in evaluation	Comparison schools in evaluation
Total number of schools (all types)	3,268	144	51	31
Total number of pupils	3,234,877	130,319	48,440	30,622
Average % of pupils eligible for FSM	15.6	14.9	14.3	17.2
Average % of pupils with SEN (statement)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.6
Average % of pupils with SEN (School Action or School Action Plus)	19.0	17.9	18.0	19.6
Percentage of pupils in Black Caribbean or Gypsy & Roma Traveller ethnic groups	1.6	0.2	0.3	1.4
Average fixed period exclusion rate, 2010-11 (%)	8.8	8.8	8.0	9.3
Average permanent exclusion rate, 2010-11 (%)	0.15	0.22	0.18	0.16

Source: School Census, January 2012

Coverage: All mainstream secondary schools (excludes sixth form colleges, primary schools and special schools, includes academies and LA maintained schools). Evaluation trial and comparison schools only include those responding with pupil profile forms by 31 October 2012, which in particular only includes 8 of the 11 trial LAs

Recruiting schools

A range of strategies was adopted in order to encourage schools to participate, in both trial and comparison samples. LA contacts were involved, from the start in the case of the trial sample and later for the comparison sample. Representatives from each LA were given full information about the evaluation, including copies of the research instruments.

Following NFER's protocols², LAs were first approached with information about the schools which were to be contacted, and offered the opportunity to withdraw any schools in special circumstances. After that, all schools received a letter inviting participation. All schools that did not withdraw at this point were sent a second letter, including the research instruments. Following this, non-respondents received a series of reminders: a letter reminder; a telephone reminder; and a further letter with further copies of the research instruments. Finally, a reminder email was sent to LAs.

Participating schools were offered a facilitating payment of £200, equivalent to a day of supply cover, to reduce the burden of completing the research instruments.

The invitation to participate was supplemented by a number of approaches intended to foster school engagement. A full-colour information sheet about the evaluation was produced, headed by a 'School Exclusion Trial' logo. This logo was developed with the aim of establishing a clear identity and image for the evaluation that would ensure easy recognition throughout the three years of the study. Further, the research team hosted a series of webinars to give information about the evaluation and answer questions about participation. These were online seminars to which school staff could log in at a specific time to watch and listen to a PowerPoint presentation with a commentary from the four project managers.

Despite these various recruitment strategies, the participation rates for both trial and comparison schools were disappointing. Although nearly 30% of trial schools did complete a pupil profile form (PPF) (41 out of 144 in the eight LAs commencing the trial in the period covered by this report), which compares favourably with other evaluations, amongst comparison schools the response rate was less than 5% – much lower than would be expected. Where schools gave reasons for refusing to participate, these were, in order of frequency: unable to help (no specific reason); pressure of work; particular school circumstances such as reorganisation; staff or headteacher shortage or illness; too many requests for help; and the study regarded as inappropriate or irrelevant. In the case of the majority of schools in both samples, no response was received despite reminders.

Survey instruments

Several data collection instruments were developed and are described in more detail below. A version of each was sent to trial and comparison schools/LAs. These will be repeated in summer 2013 and summer 2014. In summary they were:

- a lead teacher questionnaire completed by trial and comparison schools;
- a pupil profile form (PPF) completed by trial and comparison schools; and
- an LA questionnaire completed by each LA.

In each participating school, individuals were identified who could be designated the lead teacher in matters of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. This lead teacher completed a baseline questionnaire in the first year of the evaluation, which will be followed up in each subsequent year (2013 and 2014) in the Spring/Summer.

² NFER undertook the recruitment of schools and LAs to participate in the evaluation.

The 2012 lead teacher questionnaire was provided in both paper and online forms and sought to characterise the situation and practices in schools before the start of the trial. For this reason, respondents were asked to answer in relation to the preceding academic year. Those completing the questionnaire in the academic year 2011-12 were asked about the 2010-11 school year; whilst those joining the trial in the autumn term of 2012 were asked about the 2011-12 school year. The questionnaire covered: the number of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in each year group; types of in-school provision in use; effectiveness of each type of in-school provision; number of pupils provided with AP; types of AP in use; effectiveness of each type of AP; reasons for using AP; processes for arranging and monitoring AP; strengths and weaknesses of these processes; and funding information. The funding information asked about resources allocated to AP and in-school provision and the staffing allocation for in-school provision and informed the economic analysis. For trial teachers only, there were also questions about changes in practice as a result of the trial.

A similar LA questionnaire was developed, reflecting LA responsibility for AP before the trial in trial areas and for comparison schools. The respondent was the LA officer responsible for this area. The questions related to excluded pupils and covered: the number of pupils provided with AP; types of AP in use; effectiveness of each type of AP; processes for arranging and monitoring AP; strengths and weaknesses of these processes; funding information; and, for trial LAs, questions about changes as a result of the trial. The funding information asked specifically about the costs of the AP provision that LAs had provided/arranged for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, either fixed term or permanent, during the academic year, which will inform the later economic analysis.

3.3 Identifying pupils at risk of permanent exclusion

Collecting data about pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion is at the heart of the evaluation design. This rich data makes it possible to track the experiences and outcomes of those pupils over the lifetime of the study and to compare trial and comparison groups. A pupil profile form (PPF) designed for this purpose was completed by lead teachers in a total of 74 trial and comparison schools. Those pupils identified by the school (following their usual procedures) as at risk of permanent exclusion were listed on the form. A total of 882 pupils were identified. For each such pupil, further columns collected data on: gender, date of birth, year group and unique pupil number (UPN); school-based reasons and other reasons for considering the pupil at risk of permanent exclusion; in-school interventions; AP interventions; ratings of behaviour, attendance and engagement with school; teacher assessment of attainment in English; information on managed moves; and parental contact details (in case it is necessary to trace the pupil in future years). PPFs will be completed again in future years of the evaluation.

In addition to asking schools to identify pupils they consider to be at risk of permanent exclusion, a complementary sample based solely on administrative data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) was also generated. This was undertaken in two stages of 'at risk' modelling. Firstly, historic data on permanent exclusions in the 2009/10 academic year for all mainstream schools in England were analysed together with a range of school- and pupil-level characteristics from the preceding years. By estimating multilevel regression models, factors were determined which are associated with an increased risk of permanent exclusion. The second stage then involved using the results from this modelling to predict a 'risk of exclusion' figure for each pupil at evaluation schools during the 2011/12 academic year. All pupils with greater than a particular threshold level of risk were then included in this additional 'at risk' sample. This modelled 'at risk' sample will be

used in analysis alongside the schools' lists to provide an alternative measure that is consistent across schools and does not depend on individual judgement.

The rationale for this dual approach to identifying pupils at risk of permanent exclusion recognises both the strengths and weaknesses of reliance on schools for this information. It is likely that the approach to pupil selection will vary substantially between schools, and that this variation may in some way be related to non-/participation in the trial – thus introducing possible bias into the analysis. An independent analysis based on administrative data from the NPD enables any possible biases to be explored and addressed, and the sample identified by schools to be augmented.

Case studies and qualitative analysis

Six LAs were identified to participate in this strand of the research. During the 2011/12 academic year, three of these LAs were visited in the summer term. The other three LAs will be visited in the summer term of 2012/13. As the initial fieldwork was undertaken at an early stage in the trial the findings only represent a first tentative picture of perceived impact. The fieldwork undertaken in the summer of 2013 is likely to be more representative of impact.

The LAs were selected so as to represent different populations in terms of ethnicity, proportion of SEN, the proportion of traveller children and other social groups, level of social deprivation, type of location e.g. rural or urban, inner and outer city, and size of LA. Schools were selected from those participating in the intervention in order to gain an understanding of the processes involved in implementing the trial.

Interview with LA leads

Telephone and/or email interviews were undertaken with LA officials from all 11 LAs involved in the pilot. These focused on a description of previous practice, the development over time of the implementation of the pilot, the transfer of funding arrangements, the working relationship with schools and the LA, the impact of the trial – in terms of provision, transferability, admissions and managed moves, and key lessons (for further details see Appendix 9).

Fieldwork in schools and PRUs

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with a range of school staff, including members of Senior Management Team (SMT), Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), and support staff. Interviews were a combination of group interviews where members of staff had worked together on aspects of the intervention and single interviews where these were deemed more appropriate, for instance, with the headteacher. These focused on previous practice, the implementation of the trial including the interventions put in place, the impact of the interventions on young people, re-integration of pupils back into mainstream, managed moves, barriers to successful implementation, good practice, funding arrangements, communication with LAs and AP providers and changes in school practice (see Appendix 9 for further details).

Interviews with AP providers focused on previous practice, the role of AP, different approaches to interventions, the systems/processes in place across AP, changes in place or planned as part of the trial and the experiences of parents/carers and pupils.

Where pupils had been involved in the same interventions, group interviews were undertaken. Pupils were selected to be representative of the target pupils for the intervention. Pupils were interviewed in schools, PRUs, other AP sites or at an appropriate place of their choice. The parent and pupil interviews enabled exploration of expectations prior to the start of the intervention or AP and whether these expectations had been met; the impact of the intervention or AP on the young person; whether things could have been done differently, and what had worked well (see Appendix 9 for further details).

Table 3.5 sets out the number of participants involved in the fieldwork visits to date. Further fieldwork visits are planned for 2013.

Table 3.5 Number of interview participants in the fieldwork visits to date

Participants	LA 1	LA 2	LA 3
School Behaviour Management staff – Non teaching	1		
Headteachers/SMT	4	2	4
SENCOs	1		
School Pastoral staff – Non teaching	2	1	1
Teachers	1		2
Support teachers			3
Parents/carers	1		
Pupils	4		10
AP Provider/staff	1	1	3*
LA staff		1	4

*PRU staff are included under AP providers.

Questionnaires were sent to staff working in the three LAs (including school staff) who will be involved in face-to-face fieldwork visits during 2013/14. Five were received.

Details of the three LAs where the fieldwork was undertaken are included in Section 6.

4. Pupils at risk of permanent exclusion – baseline findings

4.1 Introduction

The various analyses in this section combine to produce baseline data relating to pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The purpose is to provide baseline data on the national context in terms of exclusions and risk factors associated with permanent exclusions; making comparisons with data from trial and comparator schools; and to summarise the baseline findings at the start of the trial. The findings are presented in relation to the baseline population of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion and their characteristics, drawing on a range of data sources:

- national data on pupils permanently excluded from schools;
- analysis of the number of pupils identified by schools as at risk of permanent exclusion (on the lead teacher questionnaire and PPF);
- analysis of the characteristics of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion identified by schools (from the PPF and by linking to data from the national pupil database), and
- results from a separate exercise to predict which pupils are at risk of permanent exclusion based solely on NPD data, and a comparison between the characteristics of these pupils and those identified by schools.

4.2 The context: National Exclusion data

National data for exclusions in 2010/11 (the most recently available data) is presented here to provide a context for considering the rates of permanent exclusions in trial and comparison schools and the characteristics of children identified as at risk of permanent exclusion in those schools. There were 5,080 permanent exclusions from primary, secondary and special schools in England. This number had decreased by 11.5% since 2009/10 continuing a longer term downward trend (see Figure 4.1). In secondary schools there were 4,370 permanent exclusions, a decrease from 0.15% of the school population in 2009/10 to 0.13% in 2010/11, continuing the trend from 2000/01 (see Figure 4.2). Most permanent exclusions were for pupils in Years 9 and 10 with about 52% of all exclusions represented by pupils in these year groups. In 2010/11 there were 271,980 fixed period exclusions from state-funded secondary schools representing a small decrease from 2009/10 from 8.6% of the school population to 8.4%. The average length of a fixed period exclusion was 2.4 days (DfE, 2012).

Figure 4.1 Permanent exclusions all schools 1997/98 to 2010/11

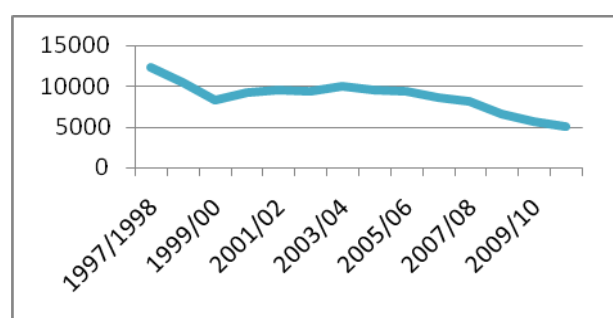
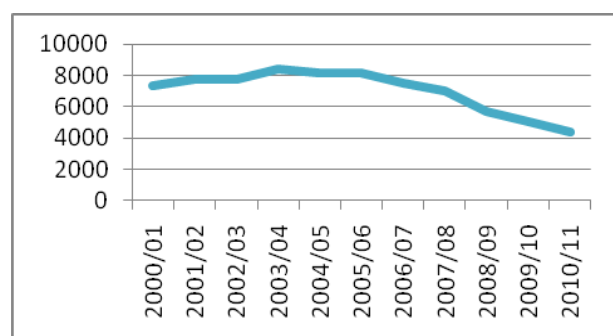


Figure 4.2 Permanent exclusions 2000/01 to 2010/11: Secondary schools



Source: DfE, 2012

The most common reason for exclusion (both permanent and fixed period exclusions) across all school phases is persistent disruptive behaviour. In 2010/11 in secondary schools some 34.2% of permanent exclusions and 24.7% of fixed period exclusions were due to persistent disruptive behaviour. 14.9% of permanent exclusions were for physical assault against a pupil and 7.6% for physical assault against an adult. Verbal abuse against an adult was reported in 10.5% of cases. For fixed period exclusions in secondary school the greatest reason after persistent disruptive behaviour was verbal and threatening behaviour against an adult (21.6%) and physical assault against a pupil (18.7%) (DfE, 2012).

The decline in permanent exclusions is as a result of LAs and schools implementing a range of measures to improve behaviour and manage poor behaviour (DfE, 2012). Some groups of pupils are more likely to be excluded (whether fixed term or permanent): boys, those with special educational needs (SEN), certain ethnic groups and those eligible for FSM. We would expect that pupils considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion in this evaluation would reflect this national profile.

Gender: Across all phases of education boys are more likely to be excluded from school than girls. The data from 2010/11 shows that 0.10% of boys and 0.03% of girls were permanently excluded from school. Boys received 242,030 fixed period exclusions as opposed to 82,070 for girls, 6.4% of the school population as opposed to 2.2%. For pupils receiving one or more fixed period exclusions the number of boys was 128,540 as opposed to 45,740 girls, 3.4% and 1.3% of the school population respectively.

Special educational needs: The number of permanent exclusions in 2010/11 of children with statements of SEN across all school phases was 430, for children with SEN without statements

3,360, and for children with no SEN 1,300. This represented 8%, 65%, and 25% of permanent exclusions respectively. At secondary level, the number of fixed period exclusions in 2010/11 of children with statements of SEN was 17,110, for pupils with SEN but without statements 148,000 and for pupils with no SEN 106,870. At secondary school, 7,540 pupils with statements of SEN had received one or more fixed period exclusions, pupils with SEN but no statement had received 72,710 and pupils with no SEN 68,650. Children with SEN are particularly over-represented in past and current exclusion data.

Ethnic group: The percentage of the total school population permanently excluded from school was 0.08%. However, for Traveller of Irish Heritage children the percentage was 0.5%, for Gypsy/Roma children 0.3%, for Black Caribbean children 0.2%, and for White and Black Caribbean children 0.2%. Fixed period exclusions constituted 4.9% of the whole school population, whereas for Black Caribbean children the percentage was 10.6%, for White and Black Caribbean children 10.6%, for Traveller of Irish Heritage children 16.8% and for Gypsy/Roma children 14.9%.

Free school meals: At secondary level the percentage of permanent exclusions for the whole school population in 2010/11 was 0.13% compared with 0.4% for children eligible for free school meals. The percentage of children eligible for FSM who were excluded for a fixed period was 21.1% as compared with 6.2% of the whole school population.

4.3 The overall size of the excluded and ‘at risk’ pupil populations in the trial and comparison schools

This section sets out the size and characteristics of the sample of pupils identified as at risk of permanent exclusion in the trial and comparison schools providing a baseline for the trial and an assessment of the robustness of the data collected.

Numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion

There were two measures used in the surveys to record the numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in trial and comparison schools: one measure is supplied by lead teachers at an aggregate level for their schools on the lead teacher questionnaire and related to the year before the trial commenced³ and the other is obtained from the lists of all pupils identified as ‘at risk’ from the pupil profile form (PPF) in the current year.

Lead teachers were asked to indicate the number of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in each of Years 7 to 11 in the academic year prior to the start of the trial⁴. Table 4.1 below shows the average number of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion as reported by lead teachers in trial and comparison schools. Figure 4.3 gives further detail by showing the full distribution of responses for each year group.

³ This was defined as 2010/11 for the first cohort of schools completing baseline questionnaires in the summer term 2011/12, and defined as 2011/12 for the second cohort completing these in autumn 2012/13.

⁴ This varied between 2010/11 and 2011/12 depending on which wave of the survey each school responded to.

Statistical note

Lead teachers' responses to the number of their pupils at risk of permanent exclusion were clustered around the lower figures, making the distributions skewed for both trial and comparison schools. As a result, measures of central tendency alone, such as mean (average) or median, do not adequately describe the patterns of responses and could be misleading. Therefore, it is helpful to display the reported numbers of pupils at risk of exclusion graphically. In the graphs below, the x-axis represents the raw number of pupils at risk of exclusion, divided into ranges, for instance, one to five, six to ten and so on. The y-axis represents the percentage of schools in each group (trial or comparison) that reported a number of pupils within each of the ranges.

Three general findings are worth noting. First, lead teachers in both trial and comparison schools reported relatively low numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, between one and four per year group on average. Second, the reported numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion for trial and comparison schools were broadly similar for each year group from Year 7 to Year 11. There were no significant differences in the reported numbers of pupils, except in Year 7 where trial schools reported slightly higher numbers. However, closer examination of the data indicated that this difference was due, in part, to one lead teacher in a trial school that reported an outlying number of 15 pupils in Year 7 at risk of permanent exclusion. Furthermore, if the cut-off for significance is adjusted to account for testing five year groups simultaneously, the result is no longer significant⁵. Third, there was a general trend towards more pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in the older year groups. For example, in comparison schools, almost half of the lead teachers surveyed reported that there were no Year 7 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. This proportion dropped to 30% for Year 8 and below 20% for Year 10. Similarly, fewer than 7% of lead teachers reported having more than five Year 7 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion whereas roughly 20% of the same teachers reported that there were between six and fifteen Year 10 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in their school.

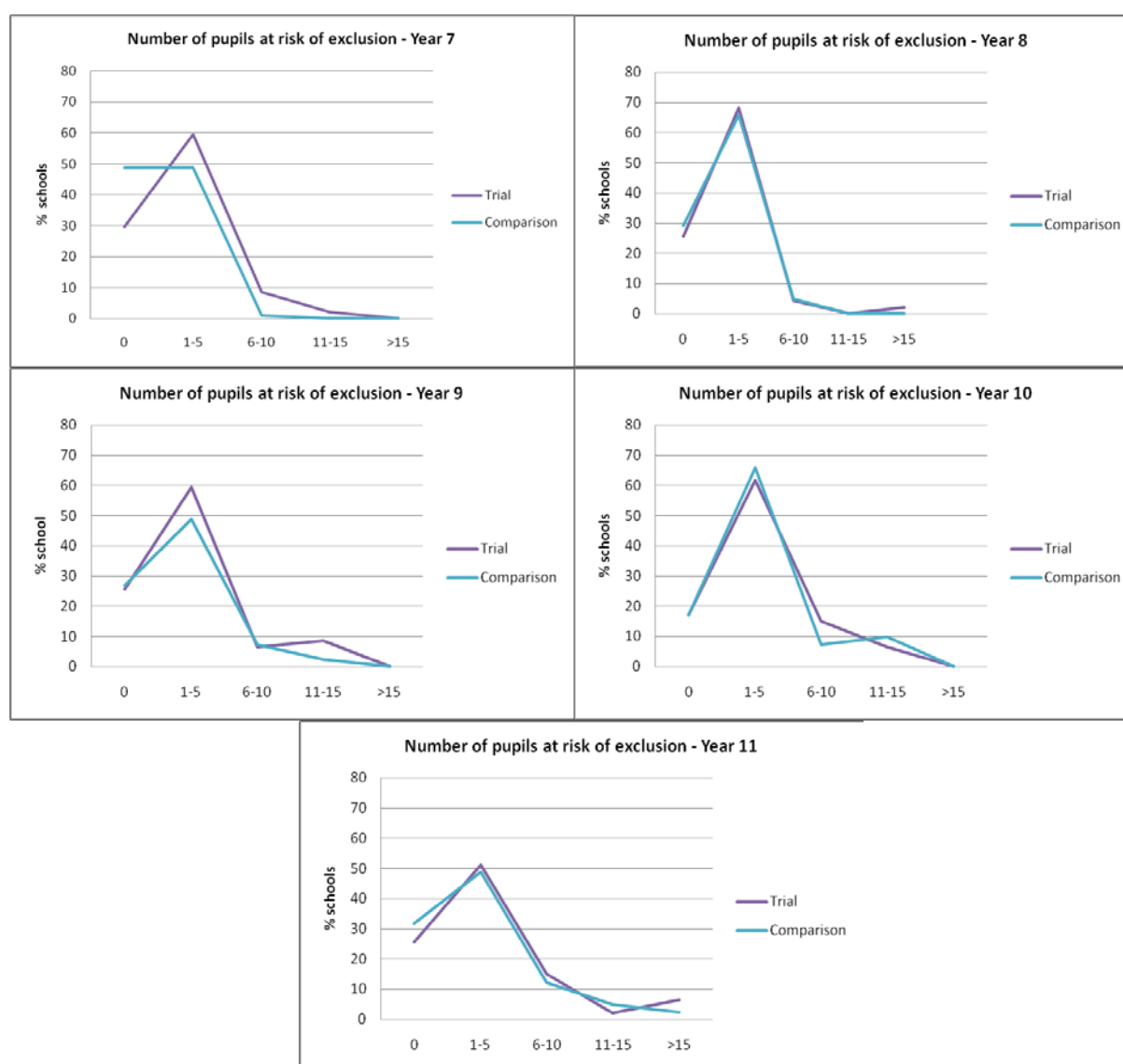
⁵ The Bonferroni correction was applied to account for testing the five year groups simultaneously. In practice this involved dividing .05 by 5 to give a new cut-off of .01.

Table 4.1 Mean reported number of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in Years 7 to 11 – trial and comparison schools

Year group	Trial		Comparison	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
7	2.2	3.0	1.0	1.5
8	2.5	4.1	2.0	2.0
9	3.1	3.7	2.4	2.8
10	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.8
11	3.9	5.1	2.8	4.1

Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012.

Figure 4.3 Numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in Years 7 to 11 – trial and comparison schools



Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012.

Lead teachers were also asked on the PPF to list the pupils they considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion in the current academic year. The overall pattern of responses for each year group was very similar, although on average the numbers on the PPF were slightly lower than those on the lead teacher questionnaire. Whilst this may represent a downward trend between the two time points, it is equally possible that the requirement on the PPF to name the pupils and provide additional information about them suppressed numbers to some extent. We also found that for schools completing both the survey and the PPF, the correlations between their two sets of responses were only moderate⁶ (ranging from 0.39 for Year 8 to 0.68 for Year 10). This suggests that within each cohort, the numbers of pupils identified as at risk of permanent exclusion by each school varies from one year to the next, responding perhaps to the escalation or de-escalation of need.

Characteristics of pupils

By matching the pupils at risk of permanent exclusion identified by schools to the NPD it was possible to explore the characteristics of these pupils and how they compared to other pupils in their school. Unsurprisingly, schools were identifying pupils more likely to have characteristics typical of those pupils at national level who had been excluded: low achieving⁷ boys eligible for free school meals or from deprived neighbourhoods⁸, with a previous history of absence and exclusion, and already identified as having Special Educational Needs. However, they were less likely to be a member of an ethnic minority (i.e. be non-White British). This is illustrated in Figure 4.4, comparing PPF pupils to all pupils in the evaluation schools, based on the NPD. The largest differences were for previous permanent exclusion (1.2% compared to 0.1%), previous fixed term exclusion (37.0% compared to 3.6%) and persistent absenteeism (16.6% compared to 2.6%).

Interpreting radar diagrams

Radar diagrams have been provided as a way of visualising differences between groups of pupils. The axes, or spokes on the diagram, represent various characteristics of interest. Each coloured line shows the characteristics of a particular group of pupils, and the further from the centre this line crosses each axis, the higher the proportion of pupils who possess this characteristic.

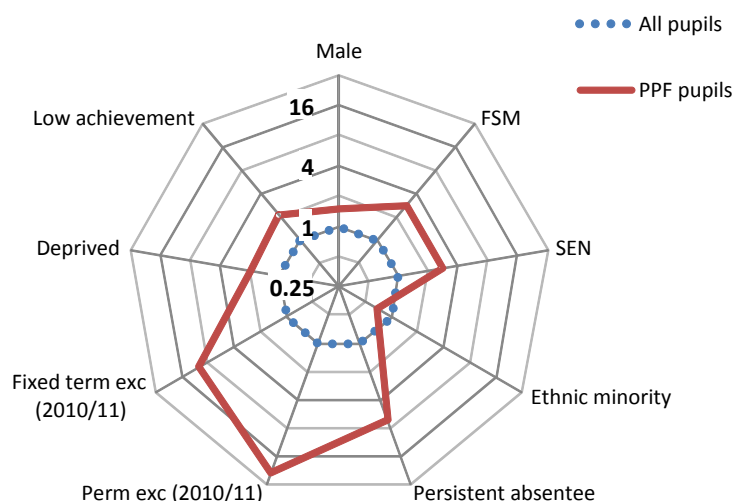
Each diagram has a 'reference group' (for example all pupils in evaluation schools) which assumes a value of 1 for the characteristics shown. The proportion of pupils in the comparator group was then plotted (for example PPF pupils) who possessed the given characteristic *relative to the reference group*. So, a value of 4 against the FSM axis, implies the comparator group are four times more likely to be eligible for free school meals compared to the reference group. Note that the axes follow a logarithmic scale, meaning that each step away from the centre indicates that the proportion of pupils has *doubled*.

⁶ These comparisons took into account the difference in academic year each referred to, so for example, we compared 2010/11 Year 8 pupil numbers for the surveys to 2011/12 Year 9 pupil numbers from the PPF.

⁷ Defined as being in the lowest quintile of achievement at Key Stage 2, equivalent to less than levels 4+4+3 in English, Maths and Science

⁸ In the lowest quintile of IDACI scores

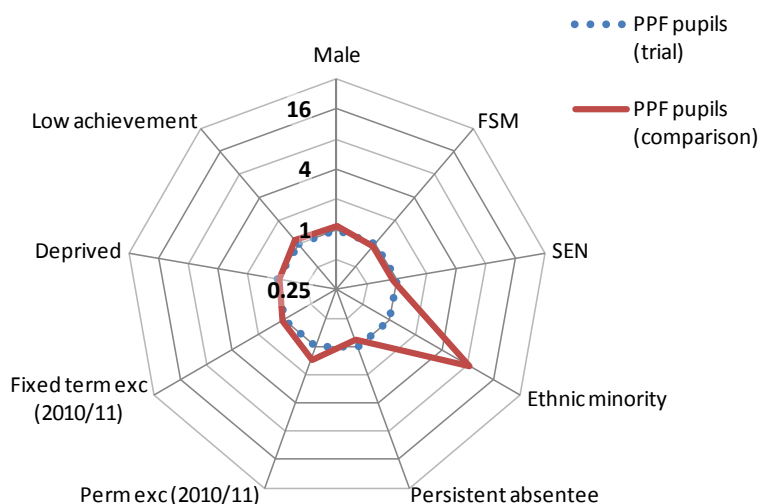
Figure 4.4 PPF pupils compared to all pupils in their schools



Based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012.

Pupils identified as being at risk of permanent exclusion in trial schools were then compared with pupils being identified as being at risk of permanent exclusion in comparison schools. This was in order to test for any baseline differences between trial and comparison schools, and hence how well matched they are for evaluation purposes. This is illustrated in Figure 4.5. The most obvious difference was that there were a substantially higher number of ethnic minority (i.e. non-White British) pupils amongst comparison schools' 'at risk' group (27% compared to just 3.2% at trial schools). This can be partially explained by differences in the overall make-up of the pupil population; however comparison schools identified a higher proportion of their ethnic minority pupils on the PPF as well as greater overall numbers. Whilst comparison PPF pupils appeared to be more likely to have been permanently excluded previously, this difference is not statistically significant. Conversely, the relatively small difference in the proportion of PPF pupils recorded as having SEN (70.4% trial versus 64.3% comparison) is statistically significant, and may suggest that trial schools are already better at recognising this additional need and putting support in place.

Figure 4.5 PPF pupils – trial versus comparison



Based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012.

Differences between PPF pupils and other pupils in their schools for the trial and comparison groups were explored further through multilevel modelling using ‘identified as at risk’ as a dichotomous outcome in logistic regression models for each year group. These models were based on all pupils from evaluation trial and comparison schools, and included variables for pupil- and school-level characteristics, and an additional dummy variable indicating whether the school was participating in the trial or not. The advantage of using modelling rather than just comparing characteristics directly, as above, is that all of the characteristics can be taken into account simultaneously. The relationship each characteristic has with the likelihood of being considered at risk of permanent exclusion is therefore estimated holding all other characteristics constant. A summary of the findings can be found in Table 4.2.

This analysis reveals broadly the same pattern as a straightforward comparison between PPF pupils and their contemporaries in the same schools, with some interesting differences. For example, prior attainment does not seem to be a relevant factor in pupils being identified as at risk of permanent exclusion, with higher Key Stage 2 attainment only reducing the chances of being identified as such for Year 8 pupils. This suggests that other characteristics that themselves happen to be associated with prior attainment (such as FSM and SEN) are behind schools’ decisions as to which pupils to consider as at risk of permanent exclusion (and therefore perhaps provide additional support to), rather than attainment per se.

Of particular interest for the evaluation is that when pupil characteristics are controlled for, trial schools are more likely to have included them on the PPF. So, whilst overall PPF pupil numbers per school are similar across trial and comparison groups, this analysis suggests that this is despite pupils in trial schools exhibiting fewer of the characteristics that would otherwise lead to them being included. It is not clear why this should be the case, but could be indicative of trial schools already being more proactive in identifying ‘at risk’ pupils earlier on.

Table 4.2 Results from multilevel modelling: Factors associated with pupils identified as at risk of permanent exclusion by schools

2011/12 year group:	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Pupil background characteristics					
Male	+	+	+	+	
FSM	+	+	+	+	
EAL	-	-			
IDACI			+	+	+
Recorded SEN (School Action/Plus)	+	+	+	+	+
Statement of SEN	+		+		+
Mobile			+		
Ethnicity: Asian (Pakistani)		+			
Ethnicity: Black (Other)	+				
Previous attendance, attainment and exclusions					
Prior attainment (KS2)		-			
Fixed term exclusion in 2010/11	+	+	+	+	+
Number of fixed term exclusions in 2010/11		+	+	+	+
Number of sessions of fixed term exclusion in 2010/11		-			
Authorised absence rate	+	+	+	+	
Unauthorised absence rate	+		+	+	
Persistent absence in 2010/11	-				
School characteristics exclusions					
School's permanent exclusion rate					-
Trial school	+	+	+	+	+

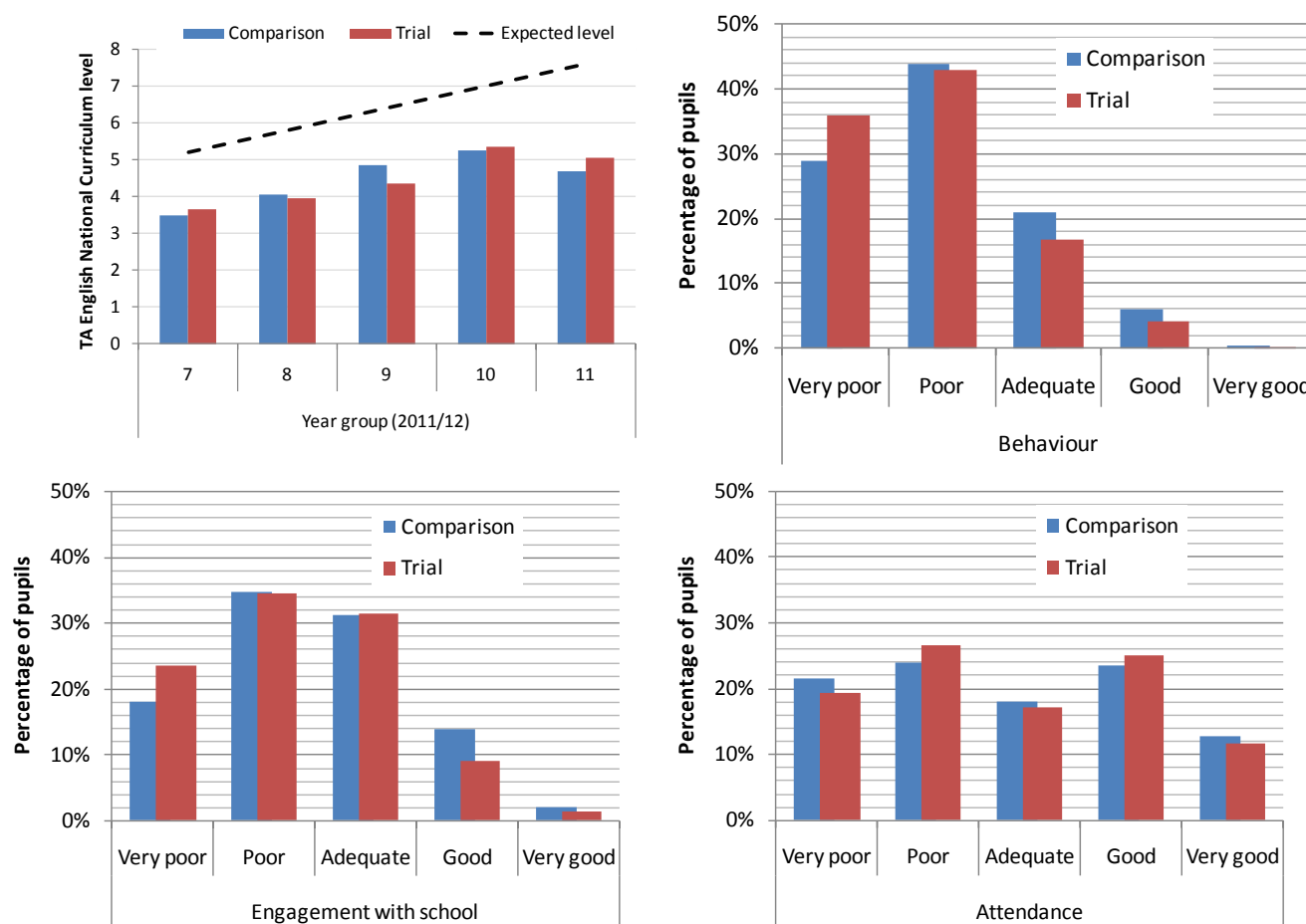
Note: A '+' indicates a positive association between the characteristic in question and the likelihood of being identified as 'at risk' by the school. Similarly a '-' represents a negative association. Table only includes relationships significant at the 5% level, and so blank cells represent no statistically significant association.

Results based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012.

Whilst the NPD provides a rich set of background variables, there are nevertheless issues that can only be explored by asking lead teachers directly. Additional questions on the PPF asked about managed moves, and explored teacher ratings of their pupils' current levels of behaviour, attendance and engagement and English teacher assessment (TA) level. In around 6% of cases, the pupils at risk of permanent exclusion had been subject to a managed move into the school, and 22% of the pupils were currently being considered for a managed move out. Furthermore, there was a significant link between these two groups, with over 40% of the 'moved in' group also being in the 'move out' group.

Pupils' TA levels in English were consistently below expected in each year group, typically by around two National Curriculum levels. This was the case for both trial and comparison schools, with no significant differences between them. When asked about pupils' behaviour, attendance and engagement with school, teachers rated behaviour lowest with over three quarters rating this as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Over half of pupils were also rated as having 'poor' or 'very poor' engagement with school. The picture for attendance was more mixed: whilst 46% of pupils were rated as having 'poor' or 'very poor' attendance, 37% were rated 'good' or 'very good'. Ratings for pupils' behaviour and engagement were slightly (but statistically significantly) better amongst comparison pupils. These findings are summarised in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6 Teacher ratings: English Teacher Assessment levels, behaviour, attendance and engagement

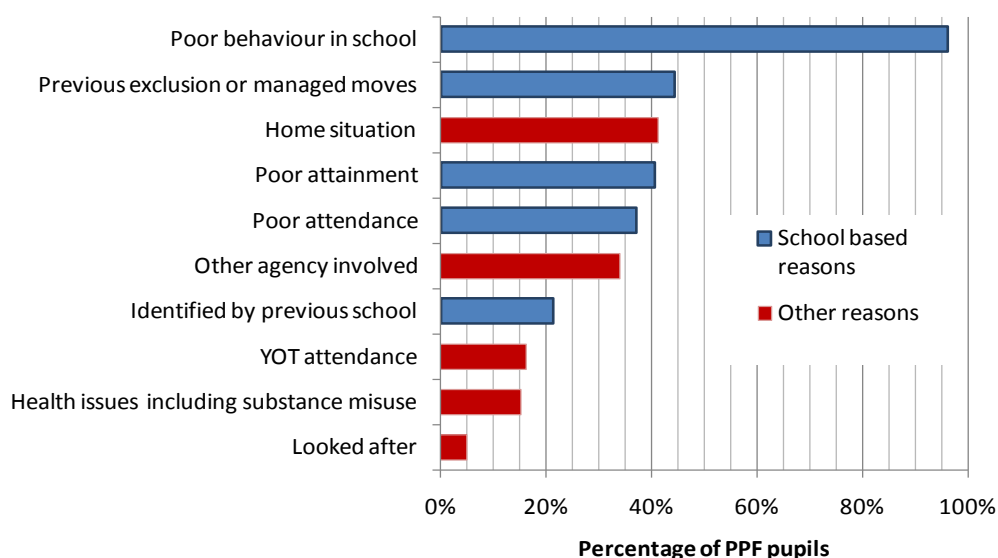


Based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012.

The PPF also explored the reasons why pupils were included on the lists, and broke these down into ‘school-based reasons’ and ‘other reasons’. Figure 4.7 illustrates that poor behaviour in school was an issue for the vast majority (over 96%) of pupils. However, the question allowed for multiple responses, and a substantial minority (at least a third) also cited previous exclusion or managed moves, poor attendance and attainment, the pupil’s home situation, or other agency involvement as a factor. Unsurprisingly, school-based reasons were most prominent, although schools were clearly also taking into account a wider range of considerations.

Trial and comparison schools both gave a similar set of reasons, although comparison schools were more likely to cite other agency involvement (40% of cases compared to 31% for trial schools) and where pupils had been identified as at risk of permanent exclusion by a previous school (26% versus 19% of cases).

Figure 4.7 Reasons for identifying pupils as ‘at risk’



There were some differences in the reasons given by schools between different types of pupils⁹, in particular:

- being identified by a previous school was less likely to be cited for pupils with no SEN (15%, compared to 23% for pupils with School Action or School Action Plus, and 33% for pupils with statements);
- FSM pupils’ home situation was more likely to be cited (51%) compared to non-FSM pupils (34%);
- other agency involvement was more likely to be cited for FSM pupils (40% compared to 29% for non-FSM pupils);

⁹ Note that this analysis only considered gender, FSM, SEN, low IDACI score and low achievement i.e. categories for which there were reasonable numbers of pupils in both groups to enable meaningful comparisons. P values were adjusted for multiple comparisons across the ten reasons considered.

- other agency involvement was also less likely to be cited for pupils with no SEN (28%, compared to 35% of pupils with School Action or School Action Plus, and 55% for pupils with statements).

4.4 Modelling of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion using historic data

In addition to asking schools to identify ‘at risk’ pupils, statistical modelling of historical NPD data was also undertaken to identify factors associated with higher rates of permanent exclusion. As discussed in Section 3, this was in order to augment our evaluation list of ‘at risk’ pupils in an objective manner that is consistent across schools and does not depend on individual judgement. We constructed logistic multilevel regression models for each of Years 7-11, with “permanent exclusion in 2009/10” as an outcome variable, and a wide range of explanatory variables. The findings are broadly consistent with those of similar analyses elsewhere such as the description of the national picture at the start of this chapter, as summarised in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Results from modelling historical risk of permanent exclusion

Explanatory variables	Findings
Year group (separate models for each)	Likelihood of exclusion increases each year as a pupil progresses through the school up to Year 10, and then reduces in Year 11.
Individual pupil characteristics	Boys are more likely to be permanently excluded, as are pupils eligible for free school meals and those recorded for School Action/School Action Plus SEN. Black Caribbean and mixed ethnicity pupils are more likely to be excluded in Years 8-11, as are Gypsy/Roma pupils – but only in Year 11. Pupils from high IDACI areas are also more likely to be excluded, but only for Years 7-10.
Previous fixed term or permanent exclusions	Pupils with a fixed term exclusion in the previous year were more likely to be permanently excluded, particularly in Year 7, and this tended to increase with the numbers of instances and number of sessions missed.
Prior attainment (KS2) and absence	Lower KS2 attainment and higher levels of authorised and unauthorised absence were associated with higher levels of permanent exclusion.
School’s exclusion record (past two years)	Pupils at schools with higher levels of permanent exclusion in the past two years were themselves more likely to be excluded. However, for Year 11 only, pupils at schools with higher rates of fixed term exclusion were slightly less likely themselves to be permanently excluded.

Based on NPD data for all mainstream secondary schools in England.

Using the coefficients from this historical modelling, it was possible to estimate a risk of permanent exclusion for each pupil in the study population (who will now be in Years 8-12¹⁰ in the 2012/13 academic year in schools taking part in the evaluation). As can be seen from the summary in Table 4.4, for the vast majority of pupils this risk is very low (less than 0.1% for roughly four fifths of pupils). However, for a minority of pupils (nearly 3% of those in Year 9 in 2011/12), the risk was estimated to be in excess of 1% – i.e. in a given year, at least one in every hundred amongst this group of pupils is likely to be excluded.

Table 4.4 Summary of estimated risk of permanent exclusion by current year group for all pupils in evaluation schools

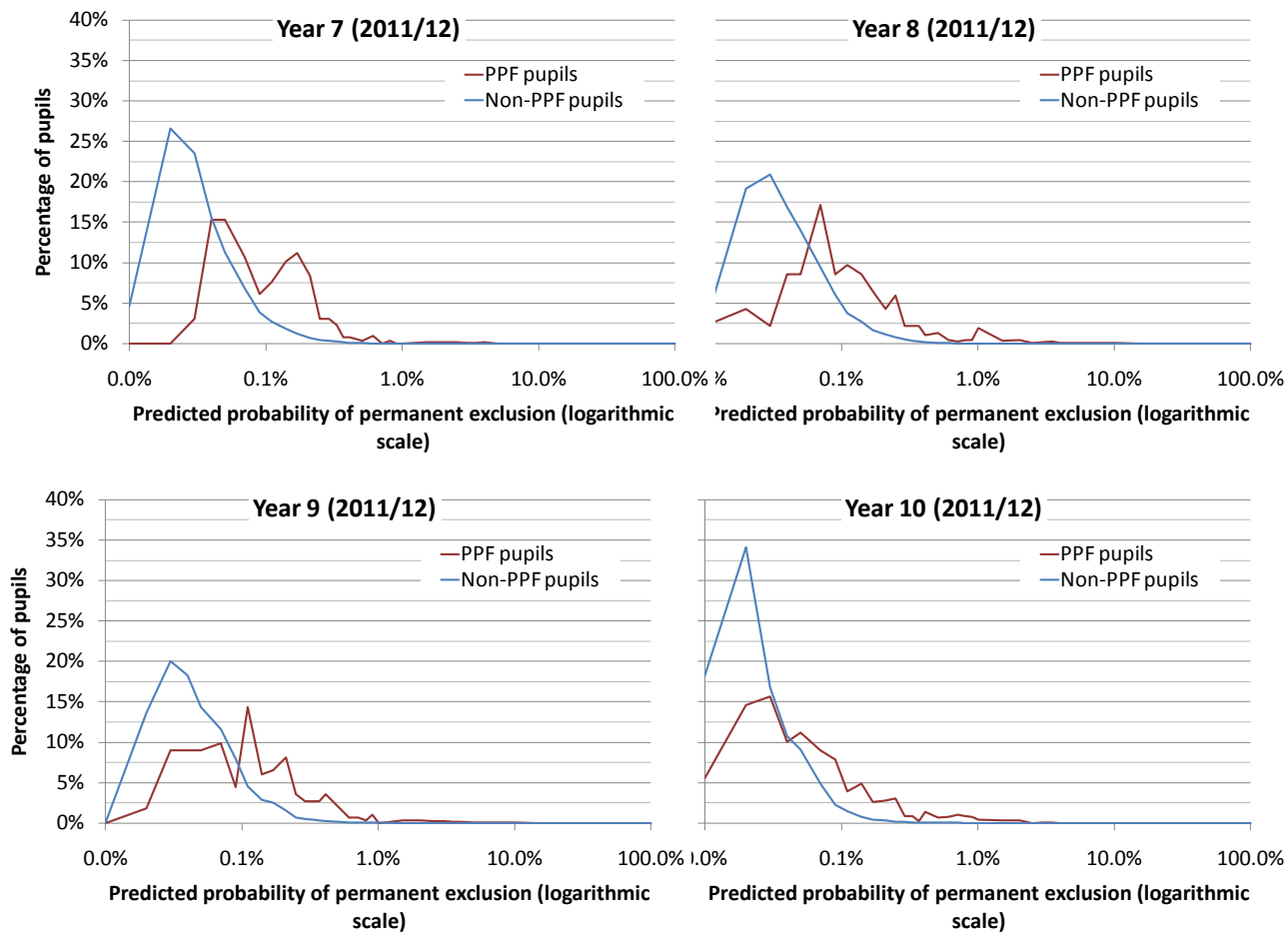
Estimated risk of permanent exclusion	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Less than 0.01%	14%	8%	4%	33%	33%
0.01% to 0.1%	70%	69%	68%	57%	56%
0.1% to 1%	15%	21%	25%	9%	9%
1% to 10%	0.6%	2.1%	2.7%	1.4%	1.4%
10% or greater	0.02%	0.03%	0.15%	0.01%	0.02%

Results based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012

Of particular interest was the correspondence between pupils whom teachers were identifying as ‘at risk’ and what was predicted by the modelling using NPD data. By comparing the estimated levels of risk amongst PPF pupils compared to other pupils in their school, we found that whilst PPF pupils tended to have higher predicted probability of exclusion, there was a lot of overlap with non-PPF pupils. In other words, teachers were identifying some pupils as ‘at risk’ who possessed few or none of the typical characteristics considered as predictors of exclusion. Conversely, there were some pupils with many of these characteristics who nonetheless were not being considered by teachers as at risk of permanent exclusion. This is illustrated in the charts in Figure 4.8.

¹⁰ Current Year 7 pupils were only identified by the minority of schools who completed the PPF after the 2012 summer break, and furthermore at the time NPD data was requested no census data was available for autumn term 2012 which could be used to identify their contemporaries in the school (having only just moved from primary school).

Figure 4.8 Predicted probability of permanent exclusion by current year group: PPF versus non-PPF pupils



Based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012.

It is possible that there are some cases where teachers are not making appropriate use of all the information available to them about their pupils. However, based on the evidence of reasons given on the PPF, it seems more likely that teachers are using the far richer knowledge they have of their pupils than is captured by the NPD (relating to specific problems at home for example), and exercising their judgement in determining which pupils are in need of additional support.

Based on this analysis, the overall 'at risk' population to be tracked through this study can be identified as: i) all pupils identified on the PPF; plus ii) any pupils with an estimated probability of permanent exclusion that is at least as high as the median value amongst PPF pupils in each year group. Note that this approach in principle would also enable the identification of an 'at risk' population in all trial and comparison schools for whom there is suitable pupil and school-level NPD data (not just those that returned PPFs); however, for the current purposes it is more informative to focus on evaluation schools only. Pupil numbers for trial and comparison schools are summarised in Table 4.5. Whilst there are some differences in the proportions of pupils included in each year group across the two sets of schools, these are broadly similar and will reflect slight differences in pupil characteristics. This overall 'at risk' population will form a reference point for future analyses, alongside the PPF 'at risk' population.

Reflecting the substantial overlap in pupil characteristics amongst the PPF and non-PPF pupil groups, PPF pupils constitute a relatively low proportion of the overall 'at risk' population. The proportion is higher amongst older pupils and in trial schools (as much as 28% amongst Year 10s

in trial schools), suggesting that there is a greater tendency to identify risk in these cases. However, it does also suggest that amongst younger year groups there are pupils with similar risk profiles (according to administrative data) but who are not currently being identified until they are older. This may well be because of factors not captured in the NPD (such as behaviour) emerging amongst the older pupils. Indeed, as noted in our analysis of PPF responses, behaviour was indeed cited by lead teachers as a reason for identifying a pupil as at risk of permanent exclusion in the vast majority of cases.

Table 4.5 Summary of overall 'at risk' population for evaluation

Year group (2011/12)	Threshold risk level	Trial pupils			Comparison pupils		
		All	At risk (% of all)	PPF (% of at risk)	All	At risk (% of all)	PPF (% of at risk)
7	0.16%	7,563	615 (8.1%)	60 (9.8%)	5,146	455 (8.8%)	36 (7.9%)
8	0.23%	7,828	658 (8.4%)	124 (18.8%)	5,279	444 (8.4%)	54 (12.2%)
9	0.36%	7,810	519 (6.6%)	146 (28.1%)	5,415	435 (8.0%)	89 (20.5%)
10	0.17%	8,111	539 (6.6%)	145 (26.9%)	5,497	389 (7.1%)	94 (24.2%)
11	0.18%	7,815	539 (6.9%)	74 (13.7%)	5,365	342 (6.4%)	26 (7.6%)
TOTAL		39,127	2,870 (7.3%)	549 (19.1%)	26,702	2,065 (7.7%)	299 (14.5%)

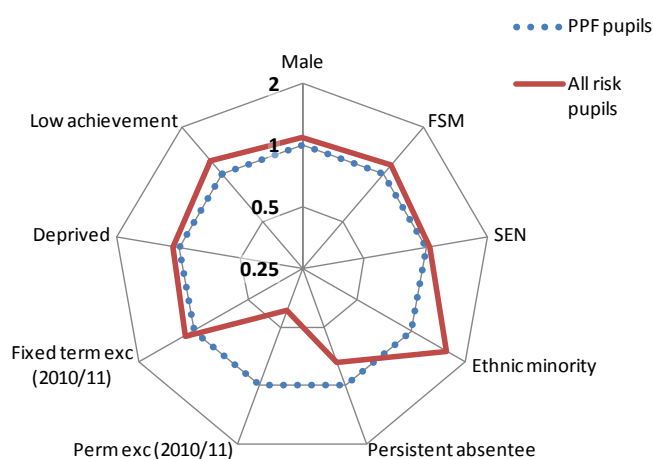
Notes: Pupils are defined as 'at risk' if identified on the PPF or they have an estimated risk of exclusion at least as high as the threshold specified. Year 7 pupils identified in autumn 2012/13 are not included because autumn term census data identifying which pupils have joined the secondary school was not available. The data are based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012

Results based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012.

Differences between the overall 'at risk' population and PPF pupils can be explored further by looking at their characteristics. Figure 4.9 illustrates how the additional pupils identified by the modelling, but who were not included on the PPF, were slightly more likely to be male, eligible for FSM, have SEN, be deprived and to have low prior attainment and previous fixed term exclusions. They were also much less likely to have been permanently excluded previously (0.5% for all 'at risk' pupils, compared to 1.3% of PPF pupils), and much more likely to be from an ethnic minority (25% compared to 16%). This confirms what we would expect: that schools' focus in on

characteristics associated with poor behaviour such as previous permanent exclusion, rather than background characteristics such as ethnicity (or other characteristics/circumstances correlated with ethnicity), in deciding which pupils to identify on the PPF. Note that the scale on this figure is much smaller than for the previous radar charts, reflecting the fact that compared to the differences with all pupils in these schools, the differences are small.

Figure 4.9 Comparing all 'at risk' pupils' to PPF pupils' characteristics



Based on the 74 evaluation schools returning a PPF during summer-autumn 2012.

4.5 Baseline data relating to alternative and in-school provision

Introduction

This section sets out baseline data relating to AP and in-school provision in trial and comparison schools providing a starting point for the evaluation. These data will be revisited and reviewed in the second interim and final reports. The data are derived from the questionnaires completed by lead teachers in trial and comparator schools. Evidence is also included from the telephone interviews with the LA staff leading the trial and the case-study interviews undertaken as part of the fieldwork.

Numbers of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion who were provided with AP

Lead teachers with responsibility for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion were asked to indicate the number of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in each of Years 7 to 11 who were provided with AP. Table 4.6 below shows the average numbers of these pupils as reported by teachers. Figure 4.10 plots the full distribution of responses. Some general trends emerged from the data.

First, lead teachers reported low numbers of pupils who were provided with AP, below four on average for all year groups. This is not surprising, considering that many teachers reported low numbers of pupils who were considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion. However, it is worth

noting that substantial proportions of lead teachers reported that no pupils at risk of permanent exclusion were provided with AP. For example, for Year 8, around half of respondents in trial and comparison schools indicated that there were no pupils at risk of permanent exclusion being provided with AP.

Second, the reported provision of AP for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion was markedly similar among trial and comparison schools and statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in responses between trial and comparison schools¹¹.

Third, provision of AP was reportedly more common for the older year groups in both trial and comparison schools. As Figure 4.10 shows, the majority of teachers (more than 60%) reported that no Year 7 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion were provided with AP. In contrast, in Year 10 this proportion was closer to 20%.

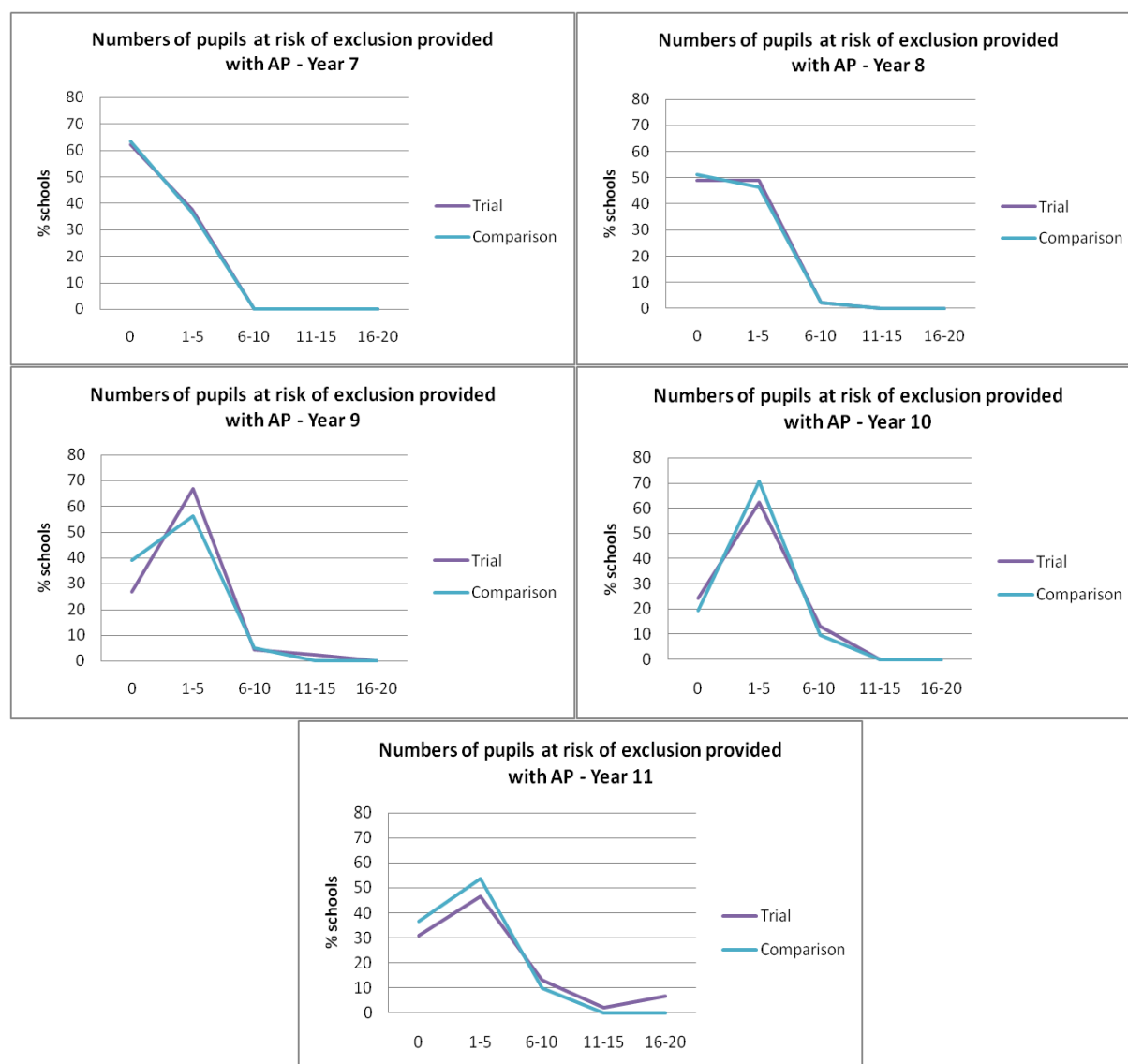
Table 4.6 Mean reported number of 'at risk' pupils who were provided with alternative provision by year group

Year group	Trial		Comparison	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
7	.6	.9	.6	1.0
8	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.7
9	2.0	2.6	1.4	1.9
10	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.3
11	3.6	5.1	1.9	2.5

Figures based on the 91 trial and comparison evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

¹¹ The Mann-Whitney U test was used here as the distributions were not normal (highly skewed).

Figure 4.10 Numbers of 'at risk' pupils who were provided with alternative provision, by year group



Figures based on the 91 trial and comparison evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

4.6 In-school support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion

How many interventions were in place?

Most lead teachers indicated that their school offered multiple supports for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. When presented with a list of 22 possible interventions, no lead teacher indicated having fewer than five of these in place and the average across the whole sample was 15. Comparing trial and comparison schools:

- there were no significant differences in the proportion of schools offering any single listed intervention¹² and

¹² Chi-squared was used to test for any differences in the dichotomous responses of yes (in place) or no (not in place).

- there was no significant difference in the total number of interventions offered (as measured by the lead teacher questionnaire)¹³.

Which interventions were commonly in place?

The second column of Table 4.7 shows the percentage of teachers who indicated that each intervention was in place in their school prior to the start of the trial. The most commonly available interventions were behaviour management, teaching assistants and using a revised school timetable (all more than 90%). However, most interventions were reportedly common. From learning support units upwards in the table, each intervention was in place in more than half of the schools surveyed. Furthermore, from school nurse upwards, this proportion rose to more than three-quarters.

The most common ‘other’ interventions mentioned by teachers included:

- on-site units with a focus on Social, Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD);
- youth justice workers; and
- outdoor education programmes.

The effectiveness of in-school interventions for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion

Table 4.7 summarises lead teachers’ views on the impact of each intervention on exclusions, attendance, attainment and behaviour. These generic terms were used allowing schools to interpret them broadly, although it is likely that they were interpreted within national benchmark criteria. The box below gives some guidance on interpreting this table.

Interpreting the ratings tables

To present the ratings data as clearly as possible, Table 4.7 shows only the proportion of teachers who rated each intervention as a four or a five out of five i.e. positively. The proportions were ordered and then the full set was divided roughly into thirds. This resulted in three groups of ratings of similar size: high, moderate and low. The percentages in the table are colour-coded according to these categories: high/green (more than 50%); moderate/blue (about 34% to about 49%); low/yellow (up to about 33%) It is important to note that a ‘low’ rating does not necessarily mean that the intervention is thought to be ineffective. It merely indicates that, in relation to the other interventions, teachers perceive it to be less effective.

¹³ Mean total number of interventions was 15.1 for trial schools and 15.7 for comparison schools. ANOVA was used to compare these means as the distributions were approximately normal.

Some key points to note here are:

- Overall, teachers rated these in-school interventions quite highly. Most ratings in the table are either green or blue, indicating that at least one-third of teachers rated them positively (four or five).
- In general, teachers did not perceive the most common interventions to be the most effective. For example, a revised school timetable was reportedly common (90%) and was rated highly for exclusions, attendance and behaviour. However, LSUs were reportedly much less common (54%) but were rated more highly across all four outcomes.
- Overall, teachers did not view interventions as universally effective or ineffective. That is, they rated interventions differently according to outcome. For example, teachers tended to rate interventions as much more effective for preventing exclusions, than for improving attainment. In Table 5.2 this general trend is represented by the large proportion of green cells in the exclusions column, compared with the large proportion of yellow cells in the attainment column. Even for interventions that were rated quite highly overall, such as inclusion coordinators and learning mentors, the proportion of high ratings was lower for attainment than for the other outcomes.
- There were some interventions which were rated consistently across all four outcomes. For example, LA services and school nurses were rated less favourably for all outcomes in comparison to other interventions. Conversely, learning support units (LSUs) were rated as four or five by more than half of teachers for all four outcomes.
- There were no significant differences between trial and comparison respondents in the perceived impact of in-school interventions on exclusions, attendance, attainment or behaviour¹⁴.

The PPF also asked teachers about the in-school support put in place for the individual pupils they listed. This revealed a similar pattern to the school-level survey in terms of what was more or less in place. However, there were several notable exceptions. Teaching assistants, time-out provision, and other LA services were cited relatively more often in the teacher survey compared to the PPF. This suggests that whilst their use is widespread across schools, they are used in a more targeted fashion for a small number of individual pupils in each school. Conversely, school-home liaison and key workers appeared relatively more frequently on the PPF, suggesting that there are a small number of schools who use these extensively.

¹⁴ The Mann-Whitney U test was used here as the data was ordinal but not interval.

Table 4.7 Lead teachers' reports of in-school interventions for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion: frequency and effectiveness

In-school interventions	% in place	Exclusions % 4 or 5	Attendance % 4 or 5	Attainment % 4 or 5	Behaviour % 4 or 5
Behaviour management	94.5	60.5	38.4	46.5	61.6
Teaching assistant	91.2	38.6	31.3	50.6	38.6
Revised school timetable	90.1	82.9	69.5	40.2	61.0
Anger management	89.0	38.3	29.6	21.0	42.0
Behaviour support	87.9	66.3	45.0	41.3	57.5
Anti-bullying	86.8	40.5	55.7	40.5	57.0
Time out provision	86.8	43.0	36.7	29.1	44.3
Other LA services (e.g. behaviour support, Counselling)	82.4	29.3	16.0	14.7	24.0
School nurse	81.3	41.9	39.2	25.7	43.2
Inclusion coordinator	80.2	17.8	23.3	11.0	17.8
School home liaison	74.7	69.1	55.9	48.5	58.8
Restorative approaches	70.3	67.2	60.9	43.8	46.9
Transition support from primary school	69.2	52.4	44.4	30.2	55.6
Collaborative provision with other schools	67.0	52.5	54.1	36.1	49.2
SEN advisory teacher	62.6	56.1	33.3	21.1	33.3
Learning mentors	62.6	35.1	26.3	36.8	28.1
Family support workers	60.4	54.5	45.5	56.4	56.4
Learning support units	53.8	32.7	34.7	14.3	24.5
Key workers	53.8	63.3	59.2	63.3	67.3
Family therapy	48.4	50.0	40.9	36.4	43.2
Therapeutic activity based interventions (e.g. Art, music and drama therapy)	23.1	42.9	33.3	14.3	42.9
Other, please specify below	19.8	50.0	44.4	27.8	50.0
	7.7	71.4	57.1	57.1	71.4

Ratings based on lead teacher survey responses in relation to the year before the trial commenced in each school (i.e. 2010/11 or 2011/12). Table based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012.

Key – proportion of respondents rating as 4 or 5					
	More than half		Between a third and a half		Less than a third

4.7 Alternative provision for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion

How many types of AP were used by schools?

When presented with a list of 15 types of AP, on average, lead teachers indicated that five of these were in place for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, although this ranged from zero to 12 across individual schools. Comparing trial and comparison schools:

- there were no significant differences in the proportion using any single listed type of AP¹⁵; and
- there was no significant difference in the total number of types of AP used (as measured by this questionnaire)¹⁶.

Which types of AP were commonly used?

The second column of Table 4.8 shows the percentage of lead teachers who indicated that each type of AP was used by their school in the year before the trial began. The most commonly used types of AP were specialist support (such as CAMHS) and the PRU (both more than half). Overall, AP was reportedly less common than in-school interventions. The vast majority of types of AP were used by less than half of the schools surveyed (from individual work placements downwards in the table). Two-thirds of the types of AP were used by less than 20% of schools (from independent specialist providers downwards in the table).

The most common 'other' types of AP mentioned by teachers included:

- creative arts providers;
- off-site academic provision/ tuition;
- managed moves; and
- community action.

What were lead teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AP for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion?

Table 4.8 summarises teachers' views on the impact of each type of AP on exclusions, attendance, attainment and behaviour. The table was created using the same principles as Table 4.7. Key points to note are:

- As with in-school interventions, the more common types of AP were not necessarily perceived to be most effective. For example, individual work placements were reportedly quite common (50%) and rated highly for most outcomes. However, training providers were far less common (25%) yet rated almost as highly on most outcomes.

¹⁵ Chi-squared was used to test for any differences in the dichotomous responses of yes (in place) or no (not in place).

¹⁶ Mean total number of interventions was 5.2 for trial schools and 5.0 for comparison schools. ANOVA was used to compare these means as the distributions were approximately normal.

Table 4.8 Lead teachers' reports of alternative provision for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion: frequency and effectiveness

Alternative provision	% in place	Exclusions % 4 or 5	Attendance % 4 or 5	Attainment % 4 or 5	Behaviour % 4 or 5
Specialist support e.g. CAMHS	73.6	32.8	17.9	10.4	19.4
PRU	68.1	64.5	48.4	22.6	37.1
Individual work placements	49.5	75.6	71.1	33.3	51.1
Additional services provided by the LA e.g. Traveller Education Support	45.1	39.0	34.1	26.8	34.1
Time spent in FE college, either full or part time	41.8	89.5	71.1	47.4	52.6
Time spent in another school	35.2	71.9	50.0	31.3	43.8
Private sector organisations e.g. offering learning and training opportunities	29.7	77.8	59.3	14.8	51.9
Training provider	25.3	78.3	65.2	34.8	47.8
Home tuition service	22.0	60.0	35.0	30.0	40.0
Independent specialist providers e.g. behavioural or	19.8	61.1	38.9	27.8	44.4
Voluntary and third sector organisations	19.8	38.9	33.3	11.1	27.8
Youth work organisation	19.8	33.3	22.2	11.1	33.3
Sports clubs e.g. boxing academy, football club	18.7	52.9	41.2	29.4	47.1
Hospital school	16.5	46.7	60.0	46.7	33.3
E-learning provision e.g. notschool.net	15.4	42.9	7.1	14.3	21.4
Other, please specify below	5.5	60.0	60.0	40.0	60.0
None ticked	2.2	-	-	-	-

Ratings based on lead teacher survey responses in relation to the year before the trial commenced in each school (i.e. 2010/11 or 2011/12). Table based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012.

Key – proportion of respondents rating as 4 or 5					
	More than half		Between a third and a half		Less than a third

- Some types of AP were rated markedly differently according to outcome. For example, the PRU was rated highly for preventing exclusions, poorly for improving attainment, and moderately for improving attendance and behaviour. Other types of AP with this response pattern included: sports clubs, time spent in another school and independent specialist providers.
- The disparity between the perceived impact of AP on attainment, as compared with the other outcomes, was even more pronounced than for in-school interventions. This is reflected in the table, with the vast majority of the cells in the attainment column coloured yellow, and none green. This indicates that for almost every type of AP, at most one-third of teachers gave a positive rating (4 or 5) in terms of impact on attainment.
- Only two types of AP were rated consistently across outcomes: specialist support (such as CAMHS) and youth work organisations. In both cases, no more than one-third of teachers gave a positive rating (4 or 5) for any outcome. This is surprising given that schools frequently indicated that more CAMHS support was needed. The relatively low rating may be because CAMHS is difficult to access. This will need to be explored further as the research progresses.
- There were a few significant differences between trial and comparison responses in the perceived impact of AP on exclusions, attendance, attainment and behaviour. These are outlined below.

Differences in lead teachers' perceptions between trial and comparison schools

- Individual work placements: There was a significant difference in the pattern of ratings for this type of AP across all four outcomes. Specifically, comparison schools were more likely to rate individual work placements as effective compared with trial schools. However, when we adjusted for multiple comparisons, the difference only remained significant for attainment¹⁷.
- PRU: There was a significant difference in the pattern of ratings for this type of AP for attainment and behaviour only. Again, comparison schools were more likely to rate the PRU as effective compared with trial schools. However, when we adjusted for multiple comparisons, the difference was no longer significant.
- Training providers: There was a significant difference in the pattern of ratings for this type of AP for behaviour only. Again, comparison schools were more likely to rate training providers as effective compared with trial schools. However, when we adjusted for multiple comparisons, the difference was no longer significant.

In a similar way as for in-school support, the PPF also asked lead teachers about AP for the individual pupils they listed. This revealed a similar pattern to the school-level survey in terms of what was more or less popular, but there were two exceptions. Individual work placements and home tuition services were both identified relatively more often on the teacher survey, suggesting

¹⁷ For the analyses in this section, we divided .05 by 23 (for each type of AP: 22 plus 'other').

that whilst widespread in their use, each school is using these with only a small proportion of their 'at risk' pupils.

5. Arranging, monitoring and quality assuring alternative provision

This section presents the findings from the lead teacher survey and the interviews with school and LA staff relating to the reasons for using AP and the processes for arranging, quality assuring and monitoring AP. Overall, the processes described pre-date the trial. These data represent a baseline against which change can be assessed.

Interpreting the tree diagrams

Tree diagrams in the following sections show how lead teachers' responses to open-ended questions in the survey were structured based on a coding framework. Each diagram starts with the over-arching categories on the left, with the relevant percentages of teachers in trial (T) and comparison (C) schools who gave a response in this category. Where the categories break down further, the tree extends to the right, with some examples given.

Things to note:

Percentages in the diagrams refer to percentage of respondents, not percentage of comments. They do not sum to 100, as respondents could have comments in more than one category.

Any examples given at the far right of each tree are not exhaustive and usually represent the most common categories.

Any significant differences between trial and comparison responses are indicated by an asterisk (*) and are discussed in the accompanying text.

The survey responses are based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead teacher questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012. The total number of lead teachers who responded to each question is indicated by "n" in each diagram. In most cases "n" is less than 91.

5.1 Why do schools use AP?

Lead teachers were asked to comment on the reasons for using AP in their school, either in addition to, or instead of, in-school provision. As Figure 5.1 shows, most teachers (about two-thirds) focused on the fact that AP is in some way different to school. Within this category, lead teachers mentioned that AP can meet individual or complex needs and '*provide personal education pathways*.' Another common view was that AP providers have specialist staff or facilities (e.g. therapeutic) that can support pupils. In addition, some teachers mentioned that AP can provide a much-needed alternative setting that differs from the traditional classroom.

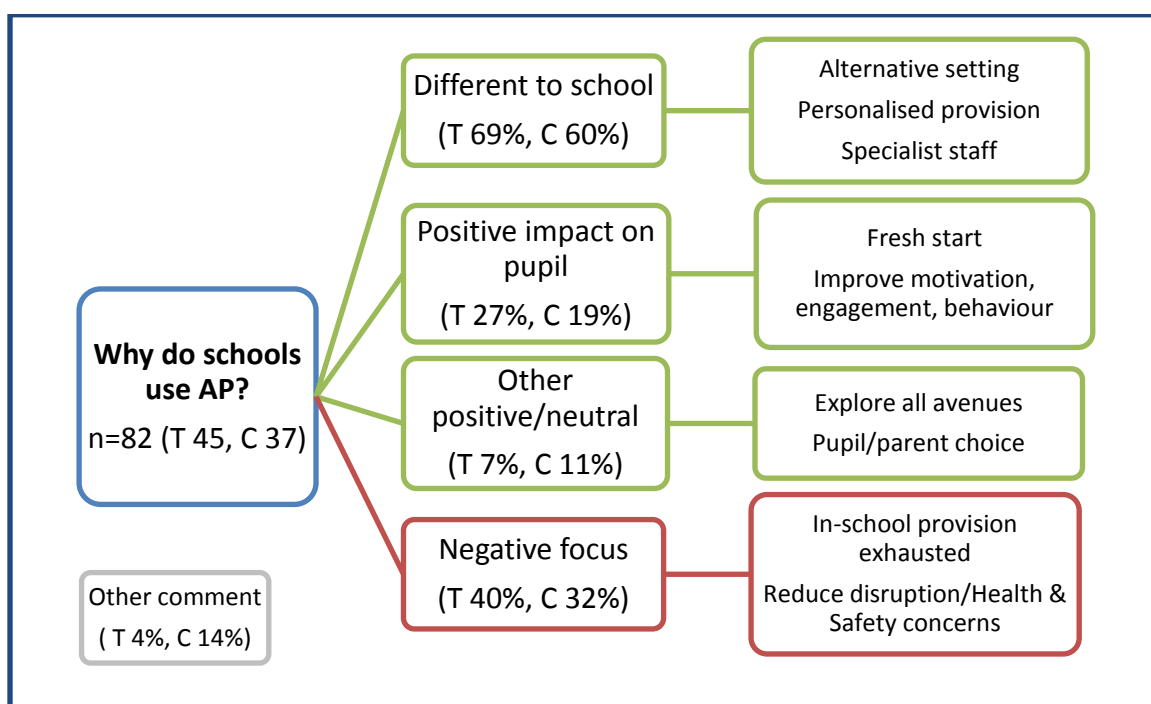
In terms of positive impact on pupils, lead teachers most commonly said that AP can give pupils a break or a fresh start: *‘Sometimes the student needs time out to break a cycle of bad behaviour or unproductive relationships.’*

The case study interviews confirmed the opportunity that AP can provide for students to break out of a stereotypical label that they may have acquired. A different environment can support behaviour change. As one interviewee indicated:

‘The history that the young people have with all of the staff and with the actual school itself means that just physically being on site is difficult. I have one young person who is at the college. At the school, he is up the trees, he is up the ceiling, he is literally bouncing around the walls. In college he is fantastic; they can’t believe it is the same person. Back in school he behaves like people expect him to behave.’

Lead teachers responding in the questionnaires also reported using AP to try to improve pupils’ behaviour or motivation and engagement in learning: *‘To try to engage the students and enable them to want to learn...to ignite a passion for learning.’* The interview data supported this, indicating that for some students AP *‘absolutely’* keeps them in school. It was clear that finding something that they were interested in was key to success. *‘If you try to push them on to a course they’re not interested in, the chances are, it won’t work.’* Avoiding exclusion was perceived to be important: *‘We know what damage an exclusion can do on a child’s record. If there’s a possible way around it we would do just that.’* The school would also use temporary placements in something like the PRU with a view to reintegrating the student back into school. It was viewed as helpful as a *‘time out’* for everyone, including the student, to reflect and think about next steps.

Figure 5.1 Why do schools use AP?



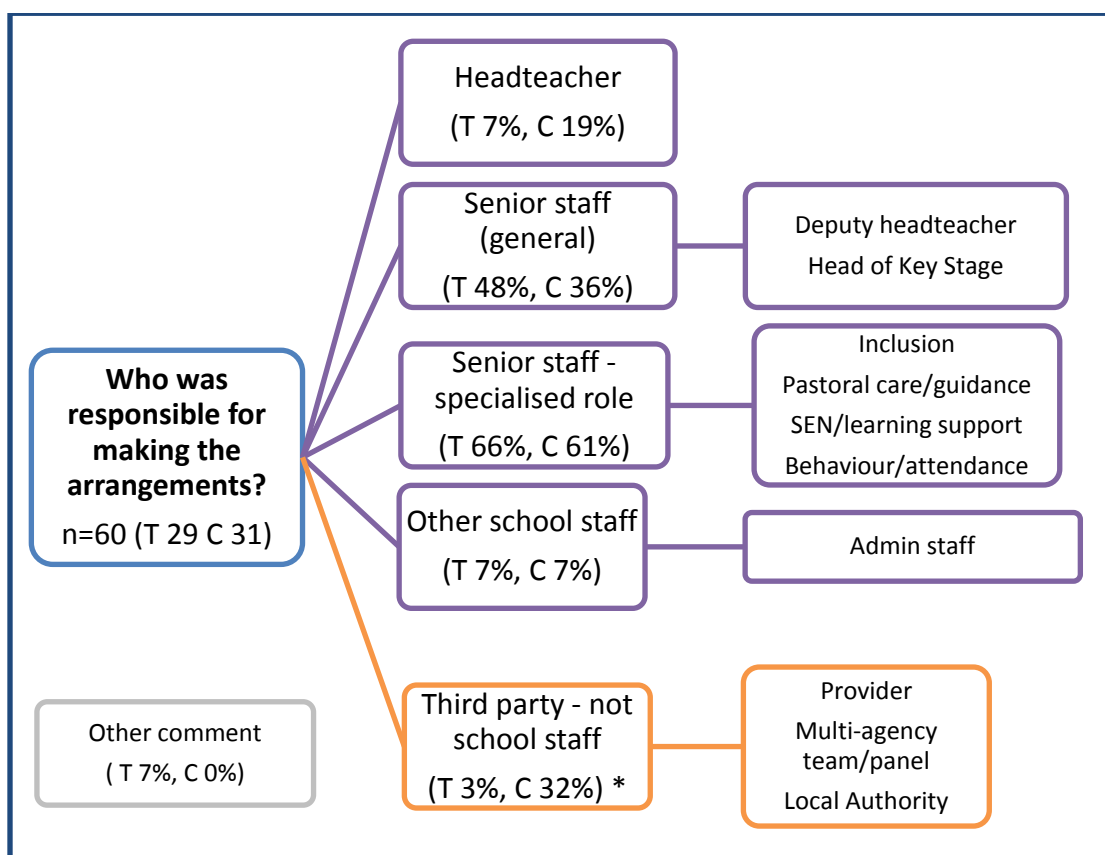
Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

As Figure 5.1 shows, a substantial proportion of lead teachers responding to the questionnaire gave reasons that were negative in nature. For example, some lead teachers explained that AP was used to reduce disruption to other pupils and to avoid health and safety issues. In addition, some lead teachers mentioned that AP was used when all available in-school provision had failed: *‘When all other strategies are exhausted, the school looks to alternative providers.’* This approach may change over time as a result of the trial as schools increasingly focus on early interventions.

5.2 What were the processes for commissioning, quality assuring and arranging AP?

Lead teachers responsible for arranging AP were asked about the processes for commissioning and arranging it. As Figure 5.2 shows, it was most common for senior staff members in specialised roles to be involved in arranging AP. This was often a staff member in a pastoral role (e.g. Director of Staff and Student Welfare) or in an inclusion role (e.g. Inclusion Manager). A large proportion of lead teachers also reported that senior staff in more general roles were involved in making arrangements. This included heads of year and key stage and members of the Senior Management Team more generally.

Figure 5.2 Who was responsible for making the arrangements?



Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

Almost one-third of lead teachers in comparison schools reported that an individual or group external to the school¹⁸ had responsibility for arranging AP. In contrast, only 3% of lead teachers

¹⁸ This included groups or panels composed of both school and non-school staff.

in trial schools reported this. This difference in proportions was statistically significant, even after correcting for multiple comparisons. This 'third party' category included the LA and multi-agency teams, such as a Looked After Children (LAC) Team or Educational Psychology and Behaviour Support Team. It is not possible to determine whether this is a result of the trial as it could indicate a pre-existing level of autonomy in schools within LAs that were willing to take part in the trial.

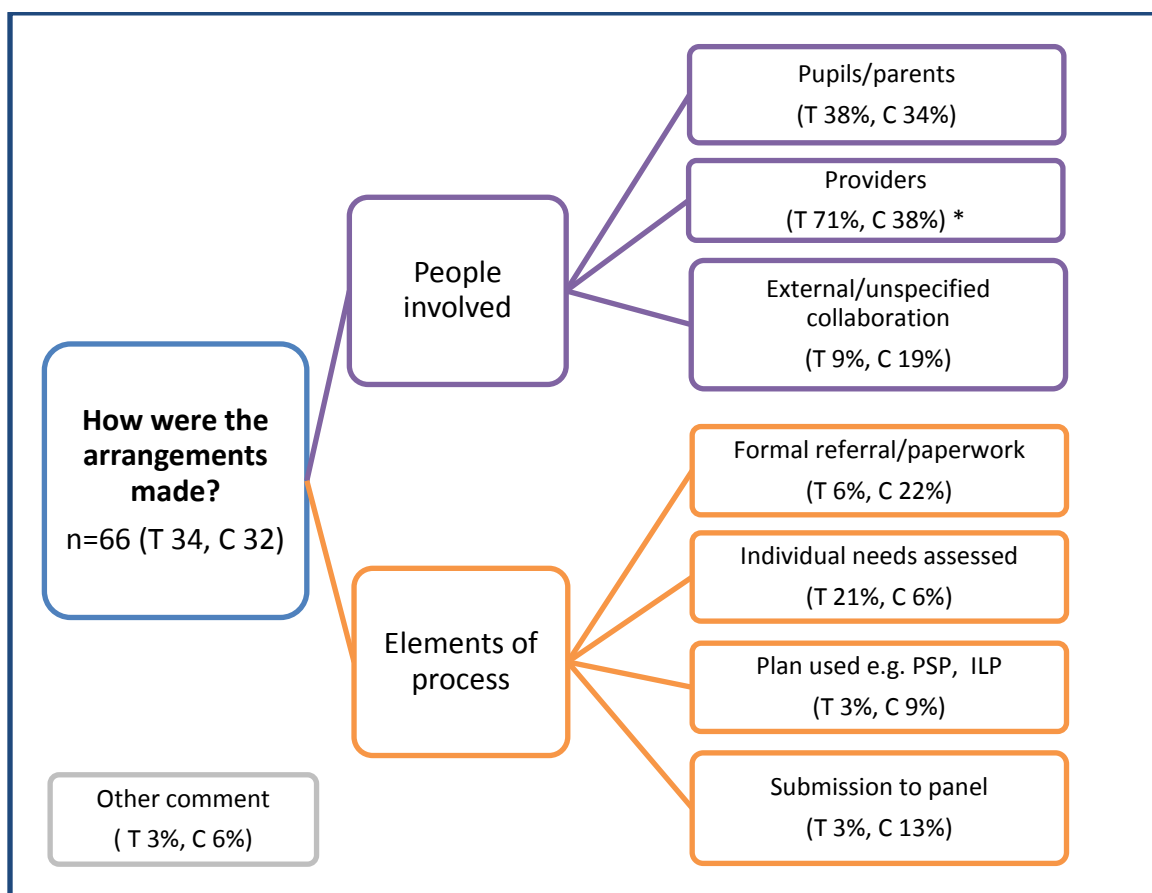
5.3 How were arrangements for AP made?

Lead teachers were asked how the arrangements for AP were made. As Figure 5.3 shows, their responses were of two main types, focusing either on the people who were consulted, or on elements of the process. Almost three-quarters of lead teachers indicated that the arrangements involved collaboration with the provider(s). This consisted of face-to-face meetings, pre-visits and emails or telephone conversations. In contrast, only 38% of lead teachers in comparison schools mentioned this type of collaboration. This difference in proportions was statistically significant, but only before adjustment for multiple comparisons. About one-third of lead teachers in both trial and comparison schools mentioned working with parents, carers or pupils when arranging AP. Smaller proportions of lead teachers also mentioned working with external parties such as Connexions, Team Around the Child or an Educational Welfare Officer.

In terms of the process itself, lead teachers commonly reported that individual pupil needs were taken into account. This often involved the collation of evidence relating to the pupil's need for particular types of support. Lead teachers also reported that the process of arranging AP often involved a formal referral with accompanying paperwork. In a few cases schools used an existing process to aid the arrangements for AP. For example, some schools submitted the request for AP to a panel, such as a Fair Access Panel or Pupil Placement Panel. In addition, some schools used plans in the arrangement process, such as a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) or an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Although the lead teachers and LA leads were asked to provide information on the AP commissioning process prior to the trial start date, a number of LA respondents indicated that there was a sense that improved systems were starting to lead to better information about pupils. *'They are getting more information, more links with the school to the PRU so they can enhance the offer. The access panel contributes to this' (LA lead).*

Figure 5.3 How were the arrangements made?

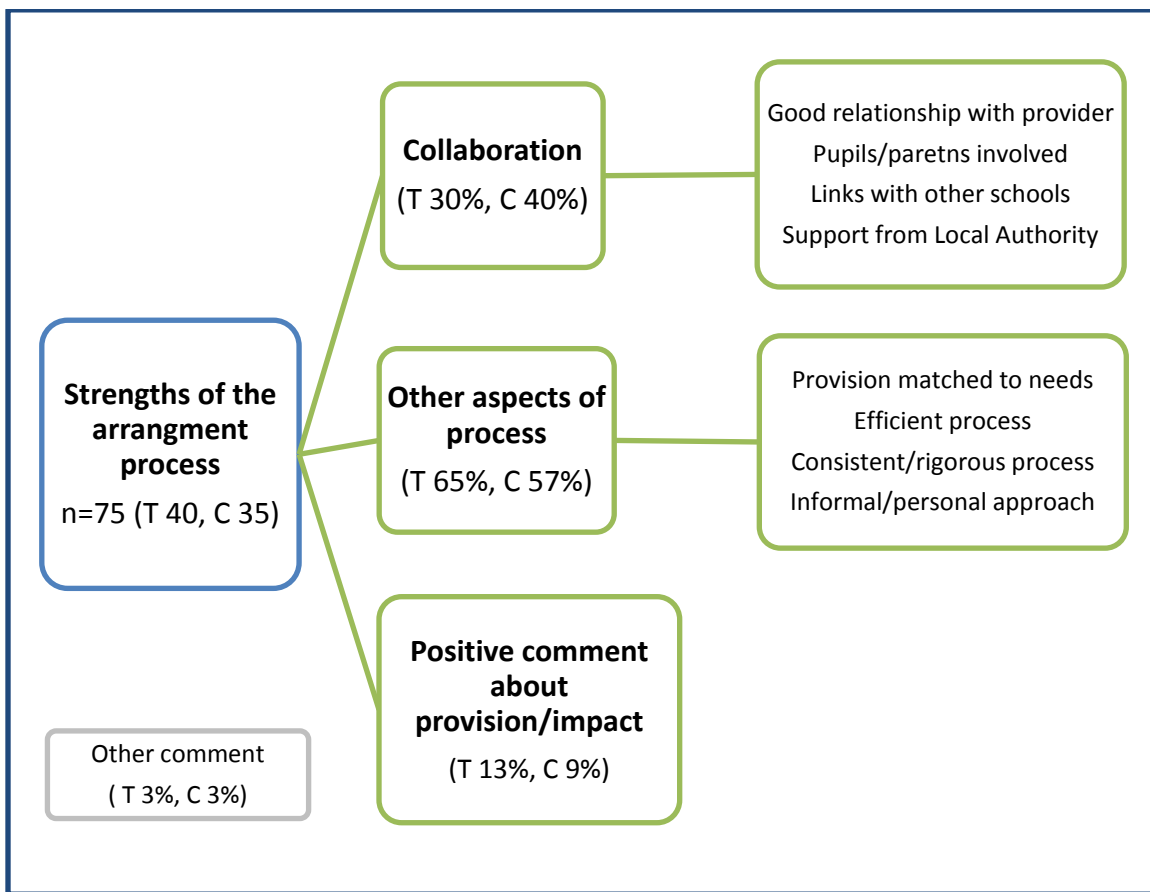


Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

5.4 Strengths of the arrangements

Lead teachers were asked about any perceived strengths of the arrangement process for AP in their school. As Figure 5.4 shows, their comments were of three main types. A substantial proportion of lead teachers in both trial and comparison schools mentioned the collaborative nature of the process as a strength. This referred to working in partnership with a range of stakeholders including pupils, parent or carers, providers, other schools and the LA.

Figure 5.4 Strengths of the arrangement process



Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

Matching provision to pupil needs: More than half of the lead teachers surveyed in both trial and comparison schools mentioned other aspects of the process. Most commonly, lead teachers reported that the arrangement process involved matching provision to pupil needs, resulting in ‘tailored’ provision. The case-study interviews revealed that this frequently meant the use of part-time AP:

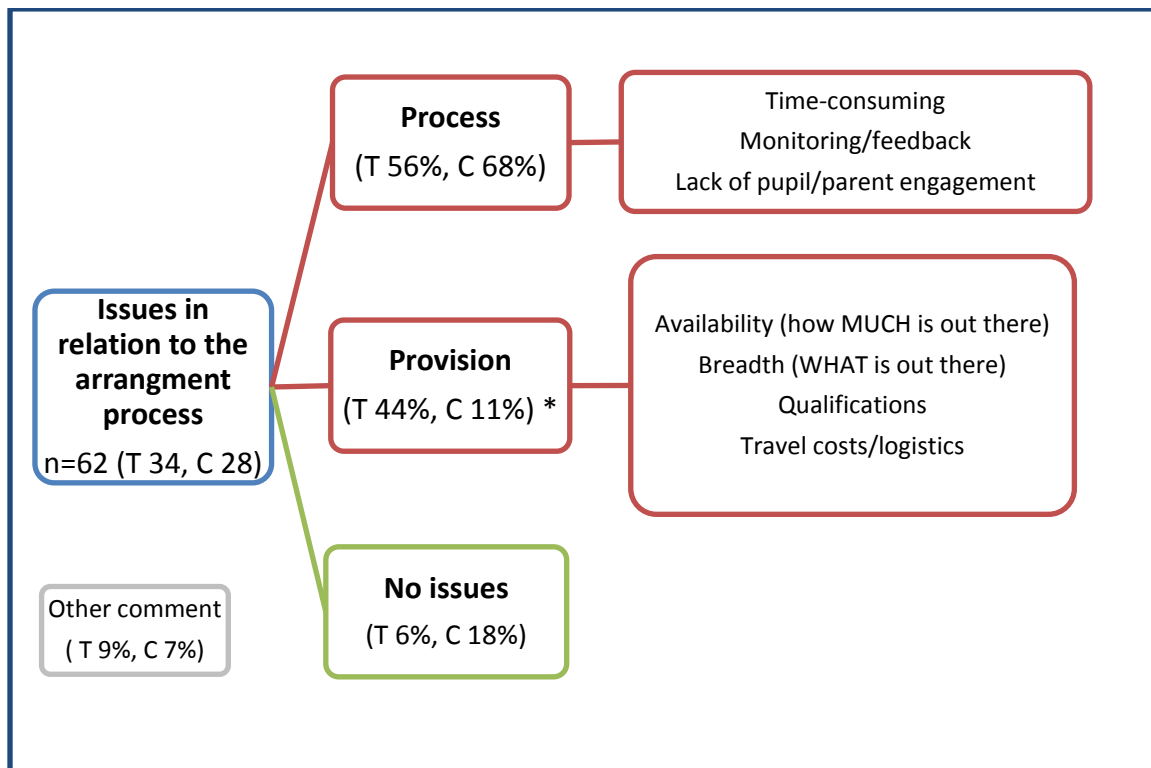
‘The pupil usually attends the PRU for the whole of a half term with the idea that it is a short quick intervention. It gives the school a break but it is about putting together the right support for that young person. Usually what we see is an improvement in school attendance and attitudes to learning usually improve. The emphasis is about re-engaging to get them back into school. Hopefully, they will go back into school the following half term with the support of the PRU. It doesn’t always end up like that for all pupils. Some end up doing part time at the PRU and part time at the school. So it’s quite a flexible arrangement. Some pupils in KS3 pop in and out of the PRU but nobody stays there full time and they don’t go on roll there.’ (LA officer)

Processes: A substantial proportion of lead teachers responding to the survey viewed their arrangement processes as efficient, consistent or rigorous. In addition, a notable proportion of lead teachers commented on the informal or personal approach to the arrangement process as a strength: *‘[The] personal touch allowed us to discuss students we knew very well to best place them.’*

5.5 Issues arising relating to making arrangements for AP

When asked about issues relating to the arrangement processes in place prior to the trial, lead teachers responding to the questionnaire tended to focus either on issues related to the process itself, or on issues relating to the provision (Figure 5.5). The evaluation will track changes occurring to making arrangements for AP as a result of the trial. These will be reported in subsequent reports.

Figure 5.5 Issues relating to making arrangements for AP



Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead teacher questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

As Figure 5.5 shows, lead teachers responding to the survey in trial schools were more likely than comparison schools to mention a weakness relating to the provision. This difference was statistically significant¹⁹. This difference was not due to any one aspect of the provision that was mentioned. Rather, lead teachers in trial schools were more likely to comment negatively on every aspect²⁰. This is an interesting baseline finding that may be capturing some early changes as a result of the trial. As the trial progresses, the evaluation will be investigating this further, to test whether it is reflecting an increased level of scrutiny of AP provided in the trial LAs. Notably, a few lead teachers responded to this question by commenting that they did not perceive any weaknesses in their school's processes for arranging AP.

Processes: More than half of the lead teachers commented on issues relating to the process, most commonly indicating that arranging AP was time-consuming or lengthy. Lead teachers also

¹⁹ This difference remained significant after correcting for multiple comparisons.

²⁰ This does not refer to every *possible* aspect of AP, but rather every aspect that was mentioned by the sample as a whole in this question.

mentioned that monitoring pupils in AP could be difficult (e.g. monitoring attendance) and that the quality or regularity of feedback from providers was sometimes an issue.

Parental engagement: Some lead teachers highlighted lack of parental engagement as a barrier to arranging AP: *'There can be a significant delay when parents do not engage with [the] process.'* This was supported in the interviews: *'Working with parents is often effective where the parents accept there is a problem but the degree and effectiveness of parental support and involvement can vary considerably'* (LA Officer). Some schools reported that dealing with parents was frequently difficult in cases where the relationship between the parent and the school had broken down. For example, a breakdown in communication between a school and parent may create a barrier to organising a managed move for a pupil at risk of permanent exclusion.

Pupils' relationship with the school: A few teachers commented on the effect that AP could have on the student's relationship with the school. Specifically, teachers mentioned *'loss of ownership'* by the school when a pupil attends AP. They also expressed concern about pupils missing out on their core education. The evaluation will monitor changes in the relationship between the school and pupils in AP as the trial proceeds.

Availability and breadth of AP: When commenting on issues relating to the provision of AP, lead teachers responding to the questionnaire most commonly reported issues with the availability of AP. This either related to the number of placements on offer, or to the number of providers in the market. In the case-study interviews schools and LAs indicated that a range of factors external to the trial had already impacted on the AP market and that there were fewer providers now than had been the case in the past. Prior to the trial, AP providers which were evaluated as 'good' had closed because of lack of funding:

'We always found it to be a good provision because students got good qualifications from it – always had good feedback from students who attended. But 3 years ago, the funding for it stopped and we could no longer access it.' (deputy headteacher)

Such closures had an impact on children and led schools to consider arranging more internal provision:

'Our unfortunate experience this year was one of our major training providers went into liquidation – like it closed on a Monday and the kids were told as they were arriving. We had to support the children who had been there and it was incredibly upsetting for them because that was where they went and it wasn't there anymore. So we thought, well we need to be having more control over that so that doesn't happen again.' (headteacher)

The breadth of AP was also mentioned in terms of what providers offered, for example, a limited curriculum was cited as a weakness and many LA leads expressed concerns about the educational offer from AP providers. The School Exclusion Trial intends to address this issue. The baseline data revealed issues about the level of the curriculum offering: *'Lots of Level 1 provision but very little at Level 2.'* Some Key Stage 4 (KS4) students who were already working at Level 2 were having to move down to Level 1 in AP.

In the case-study interviews, staff in schools expressed concern about the lack of AP at Key Stage 3 (KS3):

‘There is a very real need for a KS3 intervention programme. The programme we envisage would be intensive, say 4 – 12 weeks and would be off-site, focused on training the pupil to develop independence, social skills and behavioural management, amongst others.’
(headteacher)

It is expected that as the trial proceeds more provision at KS3 and Level 2 will become available. The evaluation will monitor these changes.

Other issues: In the case-study interviews other issues were raised. These included: the costs of AP; the logistics of travel arrangements for pupils, particularly in rural areas, the latter also acting as a barrier to collaboration and; the breakdown of placements where they were found to be unsuitable for the pupil. Some LA staff commented that cuts in LAs meant that there would be difficulties in monitoring the quality of provision.

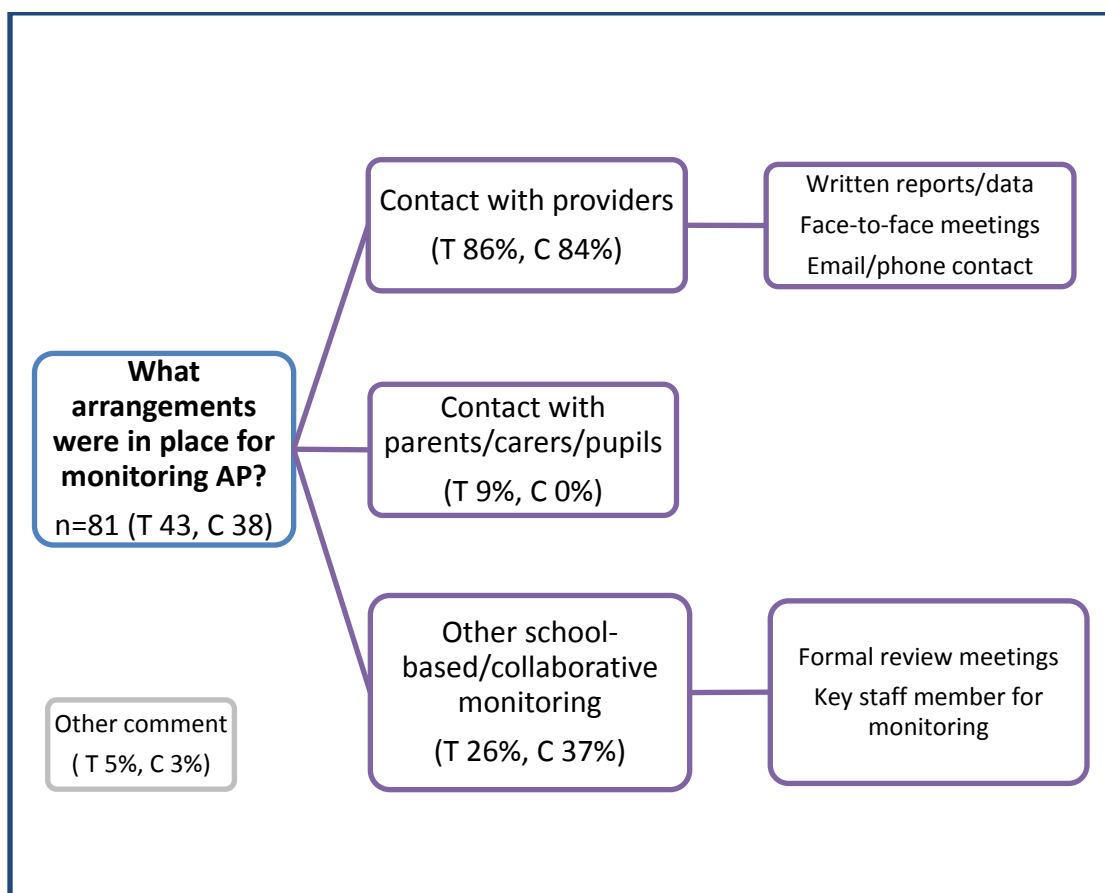
5.6 What were the processes for monitoring AP?

Lead teachers were asked in the survey about the processes in place in their school for monitoring AP. As Figure 5.6 shows, the vast majority of lead teachers mentioned contact with providers as part of the monitoring process. This included receiving written reports or data from providers, as well as face-to-face meetings and email or telephone contact. In addition, a small proportion of teachers (in trial schools only) indicated that the monitoring process involved contact with parents or carers or pupils. About one-third of teachers overall cited other methods of monitoring that were school based or collaborative. These most commonly included:

- having regular formal meetings e.g. Education Planning meetings, Team Around the Child meetings;
- having a key staff member with responsibility for monitoring e.g. Alternative Curriculum Manager, Transition Coordinator; and
- using a database or other electronic tool e.g. online evaluation tool.

A small number of teachers also mentioned that monitoring or quality assurance was carried out in collaboration with other schools, or with the LA.

Figure 5.6 Processes in place for monitoring AP



Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

5.7 Strengths and issues relating to current monitoring arrangements

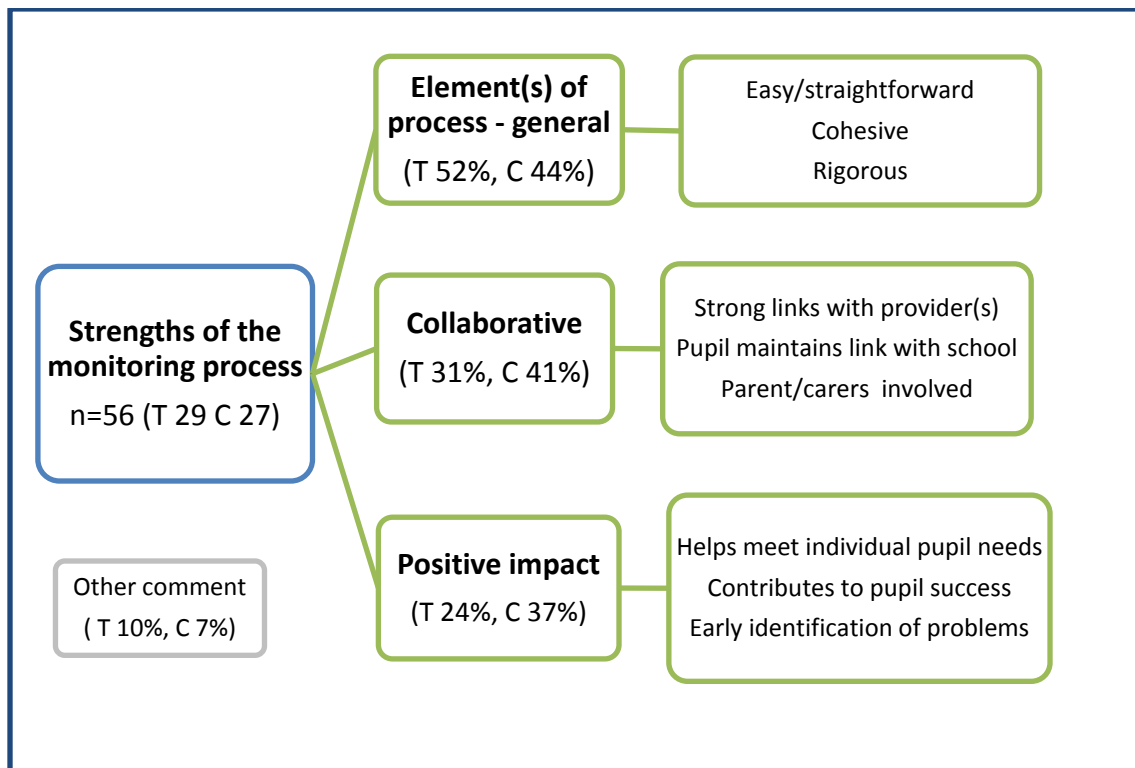
Lead teachers were asked to comment on any perceived strengths and issues relating to the monitoring arrangements discussed above. As Figure 5.7 shows, their comments were of three main types.

Effective data sharing: About half of lead teachers commented on general strengths of the process. The most common strength of this type was effective data sharing between school and provider, in terms of detail, accuracy and timeliness. Other commonly mentioned strengths included the simple or straightforward nature of the process, or the fact that it was rigorous or cohesive. For example, one lead teacher explained that the monitoring process for AP was guided by the school's own usual monitoring processes.

Collaboration: About one-third of lead teachers specifically highlighted the collaborative nature of the monitoring process. For example, lead teachers felt that a good relationship with the provider was a strength, as was involving pupils and parents or carers in the process. A few lead teachers mentioned that involving pupils in monitoring helped to maintain their relationship with the school, which made pupils feel 'valued' and 'nurtured' by the school.

Positive impact: A substantial proportion of lead teachers responded by pointing out the positive impacts of monitoring. Lead teachers most commonly mentioned that monitoring allowed for problems to be identified early, for example, if a placement was not suitable, or if the pupil was not attending. Some lead teachers also commented that monitoring was valuable in assessing pupil progress and other benefits of the AP. Notably, two lead teachers felt that monitoring contributed towards pupil success in AP by acting as an incentive to attend and behave well: *‘Pupils know that normal rules apply even if they are in alternative education.’*

Figure 5.7 Strengths of the monitoring process



Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

Quality and Quantity of data: In terms of issues relating to the monitoring process, a notable proportion of lead teachers commented specifically on the quality and quantity of data from providers (see Figure 5.8). General comments about data included lack of consistency across providers, especially in terms of frequency of data sharing. Lead teachers also felt that there was sometimes a lack of detail in the data. For example, one mentioned that the feedback they received from the provider was too general.

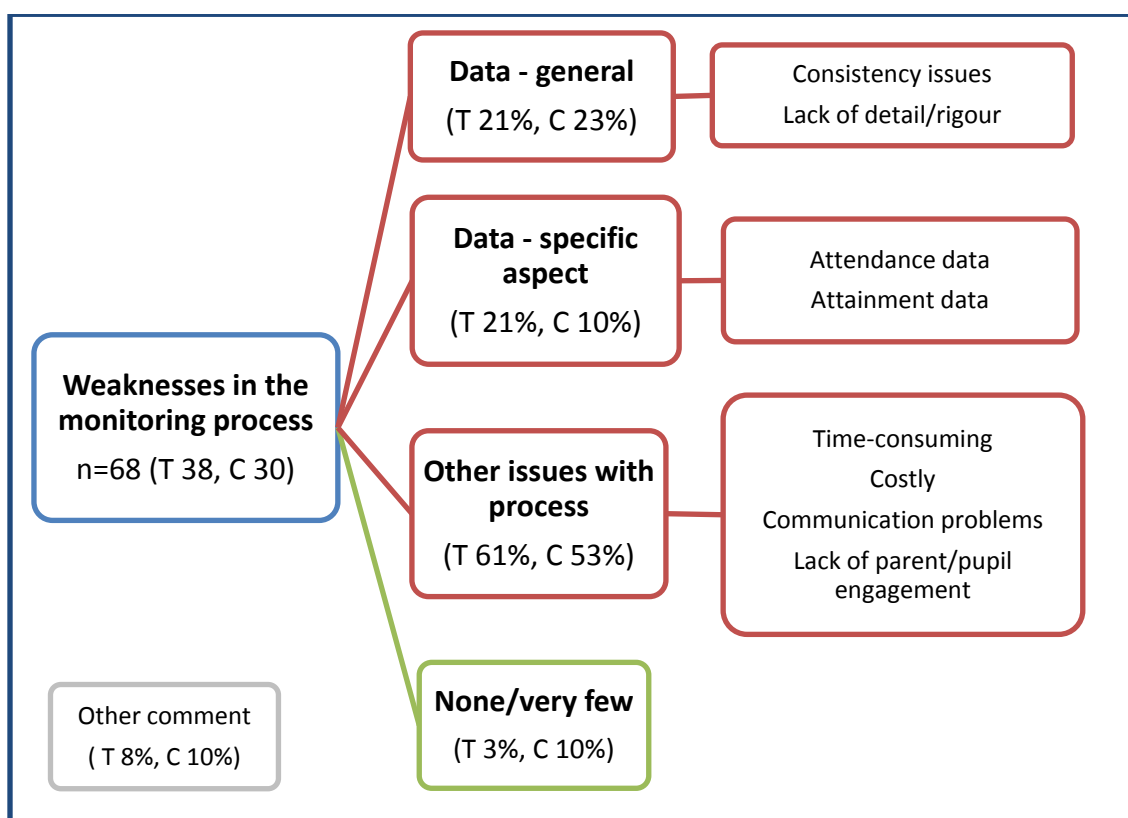
Some lead teachers mentioned specific aspects of the data that were problematic. The most common issues related to attendance and attainment data. For example, some mentioned that, if there were attendance issues, the school did not always receive this information early enough to intervene. In terms of attainment data, problems included inadequate volume, regularity and accuracy of information.

Time and expense: More than half of lead teachers commented on other weaknesses of the monitoring process. The most commonly reported problems were the time and expense involved

in monitoring. In some cases this was also related to staffing issues: *'[It is] time-consuming for the member of staff. We could do with employing two in the role.'* In the case-study interviews concerns were expressed that schools may not be able to afford to monitor provision as thoroughly as in the past.

Some lead teachers felt that engaging relevant individuals in the process was a difficulty. For example, lack of pupil or parental engagement was mentioned. In addition, a few lead teachers commented that there were problems arranging monitoring meetings in that key stakeholders sometimes cancelled or did not attend.

Figure 5.8 Issues relating to the monitoring process



Based on the 91 evaluation schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

No weaknesses: As Figure 5.8 shows, a small proportion of lead teachers responded by saying that their school's monitoring processes had very few weaknesses or none at all.

5.7 Baseline data relating to financial arrangements, staffing and numbers of pupils supported with AP or in-school provision

This section presents the data relating to the funding of AP and in school interventions for trial and comparison schools and LAs, the number of staff involved and the number of pupils supported.

Commentary on the analysis

Frequencies and percentages were calculated whenever the variables of interest were binary (e.g. the school had a dedicated budget for alternative provision 'yes/no'). When the question contained multiple sub-questions, summative indices were created. For instance, lead teachers were asked for the number of staff allocated per annum for in-school provision. This question contained 32 sub-questions accounting for different types of staff members (e.g. administrative support, clinical psychologist, child therapist, etc). The number of staff in each category was summed into one index. Most of the responses on these 32 variables were equal to zero because schools tended not to have a staff member in each category.

Table 5.1 sets out a comparison of responses from trial and comparison schools relating to having a dedicated budget for AP and in-school provision, the number of staff and staff hours supporting in-school provision and the number of pupils supported in-school or through AP. Of note are that 59% of trial schools reported having a dedicated budget for AP, as opposed to 38% of comparison schools and that 22 as opposed to nine pupils were supported in-school in trial schools.

Responses to questionnaires by trial and comparison LAs showed that three of the seven responding trial LAs had a dedicated budget for AP, with an average number of pupils engaged in AP of 59. Of the 31 responding comparison LAs, 82% reported that they had a dedicated budget for AP, with an average of 55 pupils being supported.

The data provided by schools and LAs relating to their actual budgets for in-school and AP was inadequate to enable any analysis to be undertaken. Changes are being made to the format of the lead teacher questionnaires to address this issue and LA data will be confirmed by telephone interview in future data collections.

Table 5.1 Comparison of responses from trial and comparison schools in relation to AP provision

	Trial schools (N=49)	Comparison schools (N=42)
Percentage having a dedicated budget for in-school provision	37%	42%
Percentage having a dedicated budget for AP	59%	38%
Full time staff supporting in-school provision	2.5	3
Number of pupils supported by in-school provision	22	9
Average number of staff hours allocated to in-school provision	54	43
Average number of pupils accessing AP	3.6	2
Percentage of schools collaborating with other schools to deliver AP	29%	21%

Note: This table refers to the baseline period prior to the start of the trial.

6. Changes due to the trial

6.1 Introduction

This section presents early findings relating to changes occurring as a result of the trial. The findings are based on responses from the survey of lead teachers in trial schools, the telephone interviews with staff leading the trial in local authorities (LAs) and case study interviews in three LAs. Although not a reflection of the government policy behind the trial, some schools and LAs were motivated by a desire for zero exclusions. Some LAs joined the trial because they felt that the approach that they were already adopting reflected the principles of the trial. As a result change was already underway prior to the start of the trial. For these LAs the evaluation constitutes the documentation of an ongoing journey.

6.2 The local authority perspective

The data from the telephone interviews with staff leading the trial in LAs and the case-study interviews demonstrated a range of different approaches to implementing the trial. Despite this, LA staff held similar expectations. They believed that the trial would increase headteachers' awareness of their responsibilities in relation to exclusion and the challenges involved. As schools took responsibility for permanently excluded pupils this might:

- reduce the need for exclusions;
- create clearer funding streams;
- guarantee appropriate funding to meet often complex needs; and
- increase levels of in-school provision.

The trial was seen as an opportunity by LAs to get schools '*to take ownership of pupils*' and as a result '*to do something different for vulnerable children*'. It was viewed as facilitating systems to be developed to enable schools and individual pupils to have clear pathways. In some LAs, the headteachers agreed to participate in the trial so that a more collaborative agenda could be developed which would offer more flexibility. One or two LAs anticipated that schools would change their approach particularly where in the past the PRU had been viewed as '*a dumping ground*.'

Some LAs articulated a clear strategic approach to the use of services as a feature of their intention for the trial:

'The LA has a number of services but there is probably some overlap. The trial will adopt a larger strategic approach that the LA is currently lacking. The strategy is about trying to meet needs on a more local level. A lot of children are currently travelling across the LA to access different things. We are trying to make people at a local level have a clear understanding of what is available. More planning is needed that involves local stakeholders. We are trying to give schools more influence on how to shape provision in the local area.' (LA officer)

In one LA there had been a re-launch of their graduated response which included: *Strategies to try; Systems in place; What have schools done* (e.g. involved the Educational Psychologist, involved the Education Welfare Officer). The same LA was also offering part-time placements in the PRU. These places were then followed by assessments, which might see some pupils then receiving additional support; attendance at a special school; or a mainstream school.

6.3 The approaches of the case study LAs to the implementation of the trial

Local authority one

This LA had historically been a high-excluding authority in terms of fixed-term and permanent exclusions. While there had been a reduction in exclusions in recent years, the LA continued to have high levels of exclusion and this was to be addressed as part of the trial process. The trial began in April 2012.

The implementation of the trial in the LA is primarily characterised by the role of the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership (BAP) and changes made to the use of the PRU. While the BAP pre-dated the trial, it plays a stronger role since the trial started with more rigorous processes in place.

'The pupil placement panel had existed before but started to work more proactively. The secondary Behaviour and Attendance Panel meets every fortnight. They have established new protocols about how they would work. The information coming to the panel is now more robust. Previously there was a lack of join up between the behaviour support service and the PRU – this has improved.' (LA officer)

The BAP meetings afford schools in the partnership an opportunity to discuss referrals to the PRU and suggestions for further support within the home school and/or the appropriateness of a managed move. The hope is that schools will identify pupils at risk of permanent exclusion earlier and that these pupils will attend the PRU on a part time basis with the rest of the time at school. The LA has allocated to schools a number of places in the PRU and other AP. Schools can decide how to use these. In this LA, partnership working was a key element of the trial. Systems were in place for managed moves three years ago.

Local authority two

In this LA, strong links and relationships existed between the schools and the LA prior to the trial and there was a history of partnership working. The trial started in this LA in spring 2012. Secondary headteachers agreed to participate in the trial as they wanted to develop a more collaborative approach which would lead to a more flexible system. For instance, it was anticipated that the previous model of managed moves would be further developed as part of the trial. When the trial commenced, most schools in the LA had obtained, or were in the process of pursuing, academy or trust school status. A range of AP providers had been used in the past, largely private or national organisations but there was a perceived lack of Level 2 opportunities for young people. The focus of the trial in this LA is mapping the right provision for young people, whether this is special education, AP or mainstream school. Hospital school teaching also features in the LA as a result of the large mental health centre in the locality that serves the region. The Fair Access Panel, which pre-dates the trial, ensures that the needs of the child are prioritised. The whole

approach is overseen by a multi-remit operational group responsible for Fair Access, the trial and behaviour and attendance policies.

Local authority three

This LA is relatively small with a total of six secondary schools overall. There is a history of schools working together and with the LA. The trial officially started in April 2012. The main reason for the LA participating in the trial was to demonstrate what they were doing, share their practice with others and learn from a wider community. The LA has a central role in the partnership and commissions some of the AP for Key Stage 4 pupils. The focus of the trial is increasing school responsibility for excluded pupils, offering increased and enhanced provision in-house and improving partnership working with schools. This includes schools adopting a whole-school approach to inclusion, developing support for parents, and also undertaking some direct commissioning of AP for Key Stage 3 pupils. As part of the trial, changes continue to be made to the role of the PRU which now acts as an out-reach service to support pupils mainly at Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion. The emphasis is about re-engaging young people in order to get them back into school. Pupils attend the PRU as a short intervention before they return to mainstream schools. Some pupils will continue to attend the PRU part time and spend the remaining time at their school. In-house provision has also changed with the development of curriculum changes in schools to include, for example, motor vehicle studies, construction and hairdressing.

Working in partnership

A number of LAs, in collaboration with schools, were strengthening, further developing or instigating systems of managed moves in response to the trial. In one LA, the process of managed moves was arranged through a panel of headteachers, although in the future it was anticipated that this role would be taken over by school inclusion coordinators. Moves were usually made in response to negative attitudes or poor behaviour. When the panel met, decisions had to be made and could only be deferred twice. In another LA, the panel considered the cases of pupils brought by schools and sometimes, for hard to place pupils, by the access team. All of the participating schools took a fair share of moved pupils. LA and school staff perceived that the trust between schools was key to the success of these partnerships.

One LA had changed the system for managed moves with moved pupils remaining on the roll of their home school after a move. The system had been in place for three years but there had been an increase in the number of children moving. As the LA lead commented *'It seemed that the threshold for when a head requested a move had dropped and some heads were taking advantage of managed moves.'* As a result of this, under the new agreement managed moves were still an option but the pupils remained on the school roll of their home school.

Staff leading the trial LAs indicated that managed moves had met with varying degrees of success and that relationships had to be strong for success. There was some indication that they had worked better at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. In one LA the use of managed moves was part of early intervention:

'In many cases they are using managed moves. They are putting these in place earlier. Not all are successful but most are. There has been a 500% increase in managed moves. Some pupils have gone back to their original school.' (LA officer)

In another LA what had been the PRU had been reformed as a complementary education service.

Not all of the interviewees were positive about collaborative working. In relation to managed moves issues raised included:

- the small number of possible schools where movement could occur;
- perceived inequities in the number of pupils that different schools had taken as part of managed moves;
- different expectations of what behaviour might lead to a managed move. In some schools this might be mild non-compliant behaviour (wearing a skirt that was too short, arriving without a pen, or being a bit rude to a member of staff), whereas in another school it could be assault against a member of staff.

Working in collaborative relationships meant that: *'if you've bought into [the trial], you've kind of got to live by the judgment of the other professionals in the room.'*

There was some concern that the success of the partnerships relied on the partnership schools 'buying in' and working openly with the trial. It would only take one or two to leave the partnership for the system to 'topple.' LAs and schools were concerned that collaborations were fragile: *'there is a big question among the existing heads about what will happen if a new head is appointed who doesn't have the experience of working with the LA and working collaboratively'* (LA officer).

Other challenges to collaborative working related to the extent to which schools within partnerships believed that they were operating fairly. Panels which focused on fair access were addressing this issue.

Flexible provision

A number of LA staff reported an increase in what was described as 'dual roll' where pupils remained on the school roll. At Key Stage 3 this typically involved a short term intervention at the PRU and re-integration into the mainstream school. While at the PRU, pupils engaged in personalised learning (social support, working with family) alongside a heavy emphasis on literacy so that the young people could return to mainstream school.

At Key Stage 4 there was not always an expectation that students would return to school but that they would progress to post 16 provision. Typically, there was some vocational provision, e.g. vision2learn, ICT; health and nutrition. What had changed was the emphasis on academic attainment. The dual roll meant that schools were concerned that pupils had good academic results. There was a greater emphasis on vision2learn GCSE and a change to vocational qualifications as a result of the impact of the Wolf Report. Every student was taking five subjects in preparation for examinations.

Provision offered on a part-time basis so that it could be combined with in-school provision was viewed as particularly successful by those participating in the case-study interviews:

'The part-time placements at the PRU have been very helpful. This provides the opportunity to add a further layer of intervention and support for the school. It also gives a clear warning

to the student without having to permanently remove them from school. Sometimes a break for a short-term period can help to re-engage a student in mainstream education.'
(headteacher)

The Power to Innovate and shadow funding

Through the Power to Innovate initiative the Secretary of State for Education is able to temporarily suspend, or modify, education legislation that may be holding back - or even stopping - innovative approaches to raising standards. It allows schools, foundations, colleges of further education, and local authorities, to think innovatively, to test ideas on how best to tailor education provision in order to raise educational standards and improve outcomes for pupils and students. In the case of the trial it would enable LAs to transfer budgets to schools in the absence of legislation. Most LAs had not adopted the Power to Innovate because they felt that they were *'not ready for it really. We need to develop a culture in order to be able to do this. Heads are not in that place. This is not the time to do this.'* Others felt that it was not needed at the moment. In one LA, all the secondary schools were academies so there was no need to devolve budgets. However, there were examples where LAs were putting in place shadow budgets or ghost budgets so that they could monitor costs in detail.

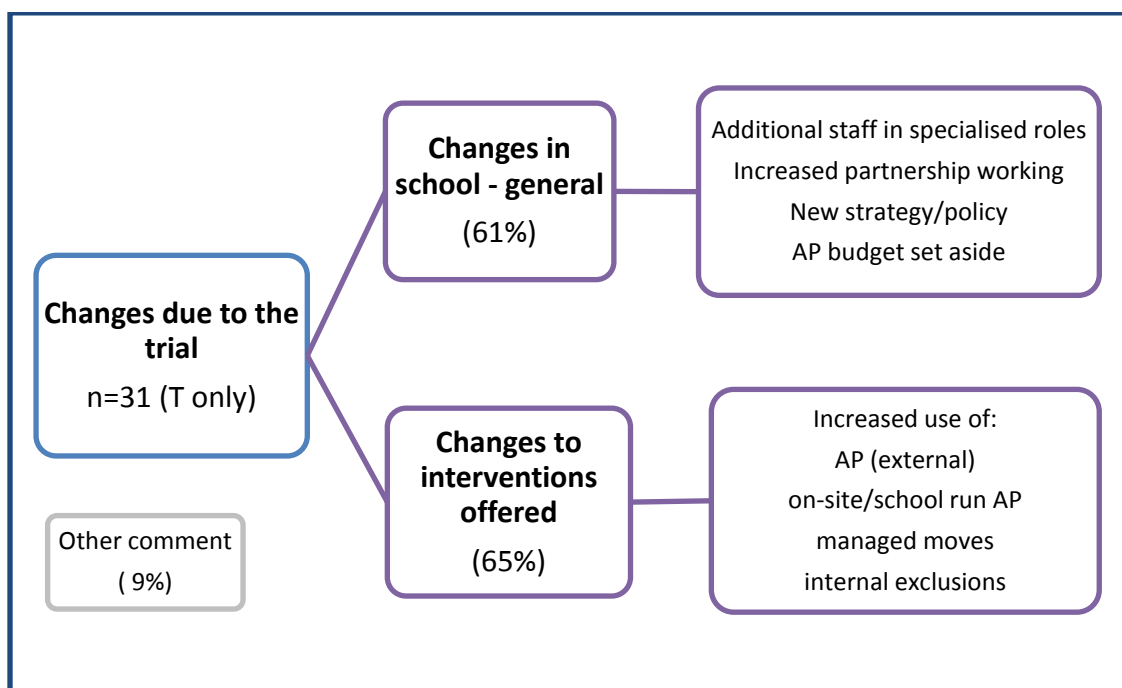
6.4 Changes in schools in response to the trial

Findings from the lead teacher survey

Lead teachers were asked in the questionnaire whether their school had made any changes as a result of the trial. Of the 49 lead teachers in trial schools, 23 (47%) indicated that their school had made changes²¹. As Figure 6.1 shows, these changes were of two main types: school processes and specific interventions for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. Guidance on how to interpret the tree diagram is given at the beginning of Section 5.

²¹ Of the remaining 26 lead teachers in trial schools, three said changes would be made in the summer term of 2012, five in the autumn term of 2012 and two in the spring term of 2013. Twelve lead teachers said they did not know when changes would be made and four did not respond.

Figure 6.1 Changes due to the trial



Based on the 31 trial schools completing a lead questionnaire during summer-autumn 2012

School processes and provision: Just under two-thirds of lead teachers mentioned general changes to their school's provision. The most common change was employing new staff in specialised roles, such as Behaviour for Learning Mentors and careers advisors. A few lead teachers also commented that their school had increased its partnership working, for example, with other schools through a Behaviour and Attendance Partnership. Other changes included:

- new school-wide policies or strategies, for example, Climate for Learning Policy, revised school timetable;
- setting aside a budget for AP; and
- more training for existing staff.

About two-thirds of lead teachers indicating change mentioned changes to the types of support offered for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The most common changes were increased use of external AP, but also of on-site or school-run provision. A few lead teachers also indicated that their school had increased its use of alternatives to exclusion, such as internal exclusions and managed moves.

In-school provision

The case-study interview data demonstrated the diverse range of in-school provision available. Although the data were collected at a very early stage in the trial, the interviews revealed that some schools were increasingly recognising their responsibilities to individual students and also to the wider community in relation to excluding pupils.

One headteacher referred to school ethos as an important factor in increasing in-school provision:

'I think that we are going to use the providers less because it relates to our school ethos. We are part of the community, we are part of an extended family and the children actually respond if they still feel that they have people in school to care for and support them'
(headteacher)

During the academic year 2011/12 this school had implemented a new zero exclusions policy:

'We felt that, as a school, we weren't doing the right thing by our students if we were sending them out into the local community, either on a fixed term or as a permanent exclusion.' (headteacher)

The case-study interview data revealed initial changes in the perspectives of schools in relation to their responsibilities:

'That's part of the exclusions trial – you don't let go of your students, they're your students.'

'It's a good thing. It makes people wake up to their responsibilities.'

One assistant headteacher cited the incident of a boy who would have been permanently excluded, but now had provision in place at a nearby college where he was following appropriate courses but *'he's still part of the school. Members of staff go out and meet him and talk to him. I got a lovely card from the parent thanking us for the way we handled the situation. He's now working with CAMHS and is diagnosed with ADHD.'*

An off-site learning and social/emotional support programme was implemented in one school:

'Students are provided with learning/social and emotional support to access Key Stage 4 qualifications under the supervision of specialist staff. We insist on school uniform and adherence to all the school regulations. It's run by school staff. Some children work there full time, other children use it as a respite facility. Usually as you get further into Year 11 you have more children taking advantage of the respite. We have tried very hard to raise the profile of this provision so now if someone has a piece of coursework that hasn't been finished they will go there and complete it for the day, it's not just about provision for those who are poorly behaved. We are trying to get the idea that it is an academic provision for everybody' (headteacher).

Some students spent their whole time in school in that provision but a reintegration package was in place with additional support for students as they returned to the main stream (e.g. TAs or individual needs assistant).

The curriculum offer in schools: There was evidence from LAs that schools were prepared to offer a wider curriculum on site, for instance, construction, car mechanics, cooking. Students who would have been sent to college could now access such subjects in school. While some schools would have sent several students to AP, for instance, to gain hair dressing experience, this was no longer happening. This was, in part, related to cost but also the control that schools had over the provision and the importance that they attached to attainment:

'We have developed some internal facilities in some schools, a special school has hairdressing, horticultural and business facilities. We've got some hairdressing facilities

developed internally at another school and we are going to have a motor vehicle and construction facility next year in another. We have found some funding to do that. Lots of things like that are going on to keep the youngsters in school. Extreme cases will probably still go out because they are worried about them being on site with their levels of physical violence' (LA 14-19 coordinator).

Some participating schools were offering a more varied curriculum from the outset:

'We are very mindful of the curriculum. The more buy-in we can get from a student, in terms of our curriculum offer, the less chance they will be looking to get involved in things that might end up with them being excluded. The more involved they are with school life, the less chance of them being excluded at some point.' (assistant headteacher)

The same school was also trying a '*broader brush*' literacy strategy to support students coming into the school with low literacy levels. They wanted to prevent students becoming disenfranchised and ensure that they could access the curriculum. In general, they tried to intervene early where they thought there might be a problem, for example, they used college courses for one day a week or the Prince's Trust to engage students.

6.5 Alternative provision

In many of the participating LAs there had been extensive change prior to the introduction of the trial, particularly in relation to the ways that PRUs operated and the development of partnerships between schools to reduce exclusions through managed move processes. As a result of these earlier changes, in the LAs where the case-study interviews took place, the number of permanent exclusions from school was either none or very small. The increase in partnership working meant that:

'For a youngster to go to an external provider, their needs are very, very extreme. You are normally dealing with somebody who is probably very violent, maybe major family breakup situations, and total disengagement.' (LA Officer)

Commissioning, monitoring and quality assuring of AP: The case-study interviews revealed that schools and LAs both undertook commissioning. Schools more often dealt with AP related to the curriculum, while the LA did so for issues related to behaviour, although this was not always the case. The evaluation to date suggested that, as a result of the trial, more commissioning of AP was being undertaken by schools and there was an expectation that this would increase and that it would be beneficial for schools to be more involved and know more about the providers: *'I would welcome that... That schools ultimately are responsible for these young people.'* (manager at AP provider)

As a result of changes prior to the trial there had already been changes in the commissioning process in some LAs. Some of the services previously run by LAs could now be bought in as required, for instance, educational psychology services. This was viewed positively as it meant that the school could purchase services when they were needed and did not have to predict in advance what might be required over the year.

Some LA and school staff expressed the view that, currently, school staff did not have the experience to commission provision and monitor its quality. LAs had more experience of

commissioning and systems in place to support it. In the interviews, LAs demonstrated the robustness of their quality assurance processes. For instance, in one LA every year the AP specification became more detailed. This was sent out to all of those who were on a pre-approved LA list. The specification indicated what provision the LA needed and how they wished it to be delivered: *'We're very prescriptive on guided learning, as on everything, because it means that then there's that consistency. And then already this is the start of our quality assurance process because this becomes part of the contract. and if a provider isn't delivering against this it means they're not meeting the contract and we go down supporting methods before doing a Notice to Improve'*. Minimum ratios of staff to students were also specified.

One manager of an AP establishment (which had previously been an LA PRU), had a database of all available provision which was used to cross reference the needs of the young people against, and was therefore able to support them in what they wanted to do. This was based on an individual learning plan which in turn was based on a pupil passport. Service level agreements were made between the provider and the school about what was going to be delivered at what cost. All new providers were quality assured to ensure that CRB checks had been completed and health and safety issues had been addressed. A headteacher indicated that by delegating commissioning to this AP provider she could be confident that child protection and safeguarding regulations would be met, that teaching and learning would be quality assured every six weeks, and that the provision would be good value for money: *'I can go off and buy my own, but then I'd have to do all of those things myself and quite frankly I haven't got enough time to do that.'* She also indicated that she didn't have the expertise to recruit providers in some areas, for instance, hairdressing or building. As the trial proceeds changes are expected in the extent to which schools develop expertise in commissioning and monitoring the quality of AP.

The importance of rigorous quality assurance and monitoring was demonstrated by perceptions of the poor quality of some training providers, both national and local in the past. One headteacher undertaking monitoring of work placements of those doing external AP as part of their portfolio of provision described how dissatisfied the school were with the provision.

Perceived impact of the trial on AP providers: While there was, to date, no evidence of the impact of the trial on AP providers, there was a perception that provision was likely to reduce further as a result of schools offering more provision internally:

'The biggest thing for AP will be the economic situation. Fewer and fewer youngsters are going out of school. More and more are kept in school in mainstream, kept in school in their off-site provision or have a mixture between both. External alternative provision has reduced over the period because of the cost, a lot of the third sector providers have gone to the wall, their capacity is going.' (LA Officer).

6.6 Parents and families

There was evidence of change in schools' attitudes towards parents, carers and students. Previously *'the choice was your behaviour's led you to this. We've done everything we can with you in this school, so it's unfortunate but we have to move you on. A place would be sought at another local school and that's where you go.'* Now there was more support and choice for

students and parents. One LA Officer pointed out the general difficulties faced in relation to working with families and how they had changed their practices to support families:

'Schools give a huge amount of support to these [at risk] youngsters, but it is always the school that is left to deal with them because it is the only body that can't refuse to work with a child. Social workers, some intervention workers, if the family don't want them involved or the child doesn't they don't have to. What will happen now at an earlier stage is that schools will say, look we have got this team around secondary schools, explain what it is, and say can I discuss your child with that team. At that point, most families don't refuse and you do get that involvement through the school at that point. So we hope to see more intervening early.' (LA officer)

Early intervention and work with primary schools

One of the aims of the trial was to increase early intervention. As was indicated in the interviews:

'What often seems to happen is that things will get to a crisis point quite quickly and earlier triggers either haven't been identified or they have and not necessarily responded to perhaps in a way that we would want them to be' (LA officer).

At secondary level, there was evidence of early intervention in terms of the curriculum and other in-school support as outlined earlier. One LA was adopting a proactive strategy:

'Some pupils go to the PRU for one term and then go back into schools. A multi-faceted model is adopted that follows three key principles: personalisation, early intervention and partnership' (LA officer).

Resolving issues at primary level was viewed as important:

'There are a number of youngsters that primary schools manage very well but when they get to secondary school and because the underlying issues haven't been dealt with it erupts. The causes and symptoms haven't been addressed.' (LA Officer)

There was evidence of work on the transition from primary to secondary school. One headteacher indicated that the early intervention work was effective at preventing problems later on:

'We haven't got a massive resource for early intervention but we really target who we're going to be using it for. And you can identify particular types of students who are going to put themselves at risk of exclusion later on.'

The headteacher described that, for example, they had had Year 6 pupils in for a few days this year and had already started to think about which pupils would need additional support. It was intended that the Year 6 pupils would come in for a summer school and do a week of forest school intervention work.

'From the minute they come to us we're identifying who we think are going to be our potential problems and making sure they don't ever turn into those. That's the secret isn't it really? You've got to...catch them really early.' (headteacher)

This headteacher also worked closely with the primary headteachers and there was discussion of setting up a '*mini-exclusions trial*' for the primary schools. Pressures on primary schools to raise standards were perceived at LA level as leading to difficulties in finding school places for children with complex needs.

6.7 Perceptions of early changes in approach to 'at risk' pupils

There was evidence that the trial was beginning to change the approach of schools to permanent exclusion and encouraging them to adopt a more thoughtful stance as they retained responsibility for pupils. In one example, a school commissioned a local private company to provide mentoring for a pupil at risk of permanent exclusion. The package of activities and a new environment gave the pupil new opportunities that led to him taking GCSEs and expand his aspirations.

7. Challenges to the success of the trial and issues to be considered for the future

7.1 Challenges to the success of the trial

This chapter aims to set out the challenges to the implementation of the trial going forward. It explores issues directly related to the implementation of the trial which the DfE, LAs and schools will need to consider if the trial is to be successful. It also sets out a range of issues which may impact on the success of the trial but which are not directly related to it. It is based on data from the questionnaires for lead teachers, the telephone interviews with staff leading on the trial in LAs and the case-study interviews with LA and school staff, representatives of AP and parents and pupils.

Collaborative working: In many of the LAs collaborative working between schools was a core element of the implementation of the trial. Ensuring that schools remained within collaborative partnerships and that momentum was maintained were therefore seen as crucial. Concerns were expressed that new incoming headteachers may not wish to participate. Also important was that partnerships were seen to be operating fairly so that schools did not leave. Panels which focus on fair access may be one way to address this issue. Over the course of the evaluation it will be possible to monitor the extent to which collaboration between schools is successful and sustainable.

Financial issues: Schools participating in the trial were worried about the additional expenditure required for successful implementation:

'In its 2012 guidance the DfE says it supports the right of headteachers to use exclusion, permanent where necessary, as a sanction. For schools which fall within the School Exclusion Trial, although technically able to 'exclude ' a child from the school permanently, the child remains on roll, remains in performance indicator calculations and responsibility for the education and safeguarding of the child remains with the school. This has considerable workload implications for school staff. The delegated funding only pays for the cost of the child's provision. It does not compensate the school for all the additional costs involved in securing the provision, liaising with the provider, monitoring the quality of it, liaising with parents, monitoring attendance and retaining responsibility for the child's safeguarding.' (headteacher)

While schools were supportive of the trial, they indicated that their focus was ensuring that the right provision was made available to the child. They were concerned as to whether sufficient funding would be available to meet the needs of all of the children who were at risk of permanent exclusion.

Some staff raised the issue of taking children from another LA where mechanisms for transferring funding needed to be devised.

In the interviews there was much discussion related to high level funding issues within the LA as a whole, especially the balance between social care and education budget allocations for meeting the high level needs of some young people. The support for some young people was very

expensive and staff felt that social services were making decisions that affected the education budget:

‘There is often no input from educational professionals, so these kids are often placed in highly expensive commercial enterprises outside the LA. My fear is they’re just ticking a box to say ‘this difficult kid is gone’ but it is our education budget that is paying for it and we have no input into the decision. There is no accountability. There are times when a child needs to be out of the area and social services have a cast iron case – but the issue is when decisions are made without us even being consulted or told. In some cases it would be cheaper to send a young person to Eton with 24 hour care assistants than some private provision’ (assistant headteacher).

The financial concerns raised by schools will continue to be monitored as the evaluation progresses.

The capacity of schools to manage AP: Related to the issue of the cost of schools managing AP, there were concerns that some schools currently did not have the staff with appropriate expertise or time to successfully commission, manage and monitor AP. As the trial progresses the evaluation will explore the extent to which LAs are supporting schools in developing these skills.

Unrealistic expectations of schools placed on AP providers: A manager of an AP indicated that schools sometimes had unrealistic expectations of what they could achieve:

‘Usually what is causing the learner to be disengaged is social problems and learning difficulties and that makes learning very difficult for them. You have to put strategies in place to encourage them to come onto the programme to actually work with them and not put them under too much pressure where they cannot cope and they stop attending. On the other hand, the schools are saying we are paying you for this so we want to see achievements so it keeps our score board right. Some of the expectations of schools are pretty unrealistic. They are paying for the engagement of that learner more than anything. If that learner gets totally disengaged when they leave school at 16 they’ll go NEET and will remain NEET and will go on into longer unemployment so will incur even more costs in the long term.’

As the evaluation progresses it will be possible to further explore the issues for AP providers in delivering an academic curriculum. The work with LAs and schools will also make it possible to see whether there is an increase in the implementation of provision which is part-time in AP and part-time in school as this seems to have been more successful in sustaining academic achievement.

Parental and student preferences: in attempting to provide for the diverse needs of pupils and work with them and their parents in meeting those needs schools sometimes faced challenges when short term AP was preferred on a permanent basis rather than reintegration into mainstream school. For instance, one school gave the example of a student who enjoyed her time at the PRU as it was less formal and involved weekly day trips to a local farm to do outdoor activities. When the student was back in the mainstream school she decided *“Well actually I don’t want to go back into school full time because I’ve had quite a nice time there”* and she started kicking off the moment she came back.’ While in most cases parents went along with the suggested plan

because it avoided their child being excluded, one parent had taken the case to the Chair of Governors. The perspectives of parents and carers on their experience of their children's AP were broadly positive in the case-study interviews and the evaluation will continue to monitor their views as the research progresses.

7.2 Issues to be considered as the trial goes forward

This first interim report is based on data collected at a very early stage in the trial and it is intended to be used as a summary of the baseline position. Drawing conclusions about the impact of the trial is therefore premature, although the evidence to date suggests that participating schools and LAs are committed to the approach. The baseline research identified a range of issues for consideration as the trial goes forward. Most of the issues raised were not directly related to the trial but concerned issues related to AP. These included:

- the shrinking of the AP market currently underway;
- problems in rural areas where the possibilities for AP and managed moves were limited because of geographical location;
- managing changes in demand and requests for increased flexibility when AP providers may have limited capacity;
- providing AP providers with regular income, particularly when they are not operating in highly populated urban areas, to ensure stability of provision and high quality staff;
- the current lack of AP at Key Stage 3; and
- the availability of AP at Level 2.

Clearly, if there is a lack of appropriate AP in a particular geographical area LAs and schools will need to develop other alternatives. From the preliminary findings reported here it seems likely that schools will develop more in-school provision. The longitudinal nature of the evaluation will enable this to be monitored over time.

Some issues, which may impact on the trial, but are not directly related to it, concerned schools. These included issues concerning:

- the difficulty of engaging some parents;
- the need to improve interventions in primary schools to address underlying serious behavioural problems early on; and
- ensuring that schools have sufficient accommodation to be able to provide a range of in-school provision on and off-site.

There is considerable evidence of the difficulties that schools experience in engaging the parents of some disaffected children and also of strategies that schools can adopt to encourage parents to take a more active role in their children's education (Hallam and Rogers, 2008). It is encouraging that there was some evidence of schools being proactive in providing support for parents as part of the trial. If this approach is adopted widely there may be considerable benefits.

The way that primary schools are organised, with children being in the same classroom, with the same teacher for the majority of the time means that it is easier to manage and contain difficult behaviour. However, this can mean that deep seated problems are not addressed at that time (Hallam and Rogers, 2008). While the trial is not directly concerned with these issues there was some evidence of secondary schools supporting the transition process for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. As the evaluation progresses, it will be possible to monitor the impact of such early identification of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion by secondary schools.

The pressure on school accommodation and how schools manage this in the context of the trial will constitute an important element of the evaluation going forward.

Two issues were identified which directly relate to the trial. Staff in LAs and schools both indicated that school staff may not have the capacity or expertise to commission, manage and monitor AP. As the trial is embedded, LAs will need to address this issue by providing support and training.

The other issue which emerged was the need to increase the extent of early intervention at the first sign of difficulties. The pupils at risk of permanent exclusion were largely identified on the basis of their poor behaviour in school, although other factors were also raised. The trial may change the processes that schools adopt and make it more likely that they will identify problems earlier. This will constitute an important element of the evaluation.

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9. Appendix: Case study interview schedules

Telephone interviews with LA lead Officers: Summer Term 2012

Description of previous practice

- What happened before the School Exclusion Trial to include the LA role in the provision and commissioning of AP
- Different practices across schools including early intervention
- Range of AP
- Key issues about permanently excluded pupils
- The nature of the mechanisms involved in commissioning AP
- What worked – issues, barriers, successes
- The experiences of managed or temporary moves
- What other pilots, interventions or other programmes are being used/will be introduced in the LA
- What planning has been put in place for future provision during the trial
- Expectations for the trial

School Exclusion Trial

- When did this start in your LA?
- If this has not started, what processes do you wish to put in place?
- Why did you decide not to use the power to innovate or why did you decide to use the power to innovate as appropriate?
- The nature of the mechanisms involved in commissioning AP since the start of the trial
- How LAs have been able to draw on their experiences to support schools in commissioning AP
- The LAs experience of the transition from LA to school responsibility
- The nature of the process involved in administering the new approach and whether any changes are required
- How have schools used multi-agency assessments (MAA) to tackle persistent behaviour cases?
- What have been the perceived outcomes from the use of MAAs?
- Any other issues

Interviews with headteachers, senior management, SENCOs, Education Welfare Officers, other school staff and governors

Description of previous practice

- What happened before the School Exclusion Trial
- The type of provision used:
 - AP
 - In house
 - Early prevention
- Key issues about permanently excluded pupils
- The nature of the mechanisms involved in commissioning AP
- Existing experiences that schools may have had in utilising and building up their commissioning skills (e.g. through LAs);
- What other pilots, interventions or other programmes are being used/will be introduced in the school
- Experiences of managed or temporary moves
- What planning has been put in place for future provision during the trial
- Hopes for the trial

School Exclusion Trial

- When did this start in your school? What has changed since the start of the implementation?
- If this has not started, what processes do you wish to put in place?
- Changes in the type of provision used or to be used
 - AP
 - in-house
 - early prevention
- The incidence of and types of early intervention adopted or to be adopted and why they were selected
- What changes to family support measures have been adopted or are planned as part of early intervention?
- How has your school used multi-agency assessments (MAA) to tackle persistent behaviour cases?
- What have been the perceived outcomes from the use of MAAs?

Exclusion

- The process of exclusion from the perspective of school staff
- How does this match with experiences of pupils and their parents/carers

If appropriate: overall factors contributing to the implementation of the trial

- Success
- Barriers to success
- The nature of any practical support that the school has needed

Interviews with parents or carers and pupils

Experience of the trial

- Their expectations and whether their needs have been met;
- Their experiences of AP or early intervention (and types of support);
- The experiences of managed or temporary moves;
- The experience of young people leading up to exclusion including:
 - What prompted the exclusion
 - What do they think were the reasons behind their exclusion
 - How were they informed
 - Did they meet with staff
 - Did they have a say on their exclusion
- If appropriate, whether they experienced any difficulties with the new approach
- What they think might have been improved.

Impact

- The impact on their educational engagement (behaviour and attendance)
- Whether their needs have been met
- Their future plans, including return to mainstream school

Interviews with AP providers

Description of previous practice

- What happened before the School Exclusion Trial (to include the LA role in the provision and commissioning of AP)
- Different practices across schools or LAs - the AP provider's experiences of differing approaches from different schools or LAs commissioning them
- Description of the service(s) that you offer
- Key issues about permanently excluded pupils
- The nature of the mechanisms involved in commissioning AP
- What worked – issues, barriers, successes
- Expectations about the trial

School Exclusion Trial

- Awareness of the school exclusion trial in this LA
- Any changes or planned changes in the nature of the mechanisms involved in commissioning AP since the start of the trial

Any other issues



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