

Report subject	Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions
Meeting date	25 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an analysis of permanent exclusions and suspensions across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP), with a focus on trends over time, comparisons with national and regional data, and the disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Permanent exclusions in BCP have increased significantly in recent years, particularly in secondary and special schools. Pupils with special educational needs (SEND), those eligible for free school meals (FSM), and children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are consistently overrepresented in exclusion data. While national guidance emphasises that exclusions must be lawful, reasonable, and proportionate, BCP's figures indicate that these groups continue to face higher rates of exclusion than their peers.</p> <p>Suspensions have also risen sharply, with BCP's rates exceeding national, Southwest, and statistical neighbour averages across most phases. The number of pupils receiving one or more suspensions has nearly doubled since 2019/20, with the highest rates observed among pupils with EHCPs and those eligible for FSM.</p> <p>This report summarises the policy landscape and national challenges, sets out the council's strategic intent and framework for action and provides benchmarking data for permanent exclusions by phase, SEND status, and FSM eligibility, followed by a focus on suspensions data across the same dimensions. The analysis aligns with the ambitions of BCP's Children and Young People's Partnership Plan, which sets out a vision for every child to lead a fulfilling and happy life. Reducing exclusions and improving outcomes for vulnerable learners remains a shared priority across the partnership and this is central to the work we have been doing to develop a BCP Belonging Strategy.</p>
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: Members note the data presented in this report and endorse the continued development and implementation of BCP Council's strategic approach to reducing exclusions and suspensions. This includes strengthening inclusive practice across schools, improving early intervention for pupils with SEND and those eligible for FSM, and supporting the delivery of the Belonging Strategy. Members are also asked to support enhanced data monitoring and targeted action to address disproportionality, ensuring that all children—particularly the most vulnerable—can access education that enables them to thrive.
Reason for recommendations	The recommendations respond to rising exclusion rates and aim to strengthen inclusive practice across BCP. They support the council's statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 to ensure suitable education for pupils unable to attend school.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Richard Burton
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Director of Children's Services
Report Authors	Tanya Smith, Head of Inclusion, Places and Capital
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation/Decision

Background

1. This report provides a detailed overview of pupil exclusions and suspensions across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP). It is structured in two main sections. The first section focuses on permanent exclusions, offering data-driven commentary on trends over time, differences by school phase, and the impact on pupils with SEND and those eligible for free school meals. The second section examines suspensions, analysing rates and pupil numbers by phase, SEND status, and socioeconomic background. Each section combines statistical insight with contextual analysis to support strategic planning and inform inclusive approaches across the local area.
2. **Policy:** The Education Act 2002 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 set out statutory duties for local authorities in relation to school exclusions and suspensions. More recently, the Department for Education's 2023 guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions reinforces these duties, requiring schools to notify the local authority of all permanent exclusions and any exclusion involving a care experienced child, regardless of duration. The guidance outlines procedures for notifying parents and local authorities, arranging education from the sixth day of exclusion, and managing Independent Review Panels. It also encourages local authorities to monitor exclusion data to identify patterns and support schools in reducing disparities. Crucially, it emphasizes that exclusions must be lawful, reasonable, and proportionate, with schools expected to consider the impact on vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND.
3. In line with these statutory responsibilities, BCP Council is notified by schools when a child has been permanently excluded or suspended. The council monitors this data and compares it with regional and national figures to identify key trends and outliers. Evidence shows that the number of children being excluded or suspended in BCP has increased, with the most vulnerable groups—such as those with additional needs or facing social disadvantage—disproportionately affected. National research consistently links exclusion to poorer long-term outcomes, including disengagement from education, employment, or training, and increased risk of involvement in criminal activity.
4. **Local and National Challenges:** Nationally and locally, exclusion data shows a disproportionate impact on children with unmet or undiagnosed social, emotional and mental health needs—often linked to trauma, neurodiversity, or adverse childhood experiences. These children may struggle to regulate their emotions, engage with learning, or form trusting relationships in school. These children often require specialist support, therapeutic input, and tailored approaches to learning and behaviour. Without early intervention and inclusive support, their behaviour can escalate, leading to suspension or permanent exclusion. This pattern highlights exclusions data cannot be viewed in isolation and there is the urgent need for system-wide reform: strengthening SEND provision, building inclusive capacity in schools, and ensuring that exclusion is never the only option available. The volume and complexity of needs exceed the availability of specialist placements and support services has not kept pace and this places significant strain on mainstream schools who report feeling under equipped to manage complex behavioural profiles. In this context, exclusion can become a response—which indicates the system lacks the capacity to offer viable alternatives.
- This report sets out BCP's response to the data and the range of challenges through improved oversight and monitoring of exclusions and suspensions. It also contains details of the latest activity, trends and benchmarking data and information on exclusions and suspensions to enable comparisons between BCP, southwest region and the England average. These comparisons help contextualise the data and provide meaningful comparisons with areas facing similar challenges for the purposes of identifying outliers that may signal issues in practice, provision, policy and/strategic approach. Next steps are summarised at the end of the report to support ongoing monitoring and strategic action

BCP's Strategic Framework

5. **BCP's Oversight and Strategic Framework:** The council has robust arrangements in place for the oversight and monitoring of exclusions and suspensions. Details of our key strategic documents, improvement plans, commissioning arrangements and day to day operational arrangements are set out below.
6. **SEND and Alternative Improvement Plan:** In September 2025, the Council presented its new SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan to the SEND Improvement Board, setting out key

actions necessary to strengthening inclusion, sufficiency, and outcomes across the local area. The plan responds to rising levels of need—particularly around Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)—and outlines a series of targeted actions to improve early intervention, reduce exclusions and suspensions, and ensure children and young people with SEND can access the right support at the right time. Central to the plan is a commitment to inclusion and belonging, recognising that children thrive when they feel safe, valued, and connected to their school communities. Key priorities include implementing a three-tiered model of alternative provision, enhancing commissioning and quality assurance processes, expanding specialist capacity, and embedding inclusive practice across schools. The plan was co-developed with partners and informed by data, lived experience, and national best practice, and will be monitored through the SEND Improvement Board to ensure accountability and impact.

7. **Children and Young People's Partnership Plan:** BCP's recently published Children and Young People's Plan sets out a clear ambition for all children to feel fulfilled, safe, and able to lead happy, healthy lives. This vision aligns closely with the Belonging Strategy, which focuses on ensuring every child feels valued, included, and connected to their school and community. Together, these strategies reinforce a shared commitment to inclusion, wellbeing, and equity—placing belonging at the heart of what it means to thrive in BCP.
- **Belonging Strategy:** In 2024, BCP Council co-produced a *Belonging Strategy* with children, families, and education partners. This strategy sets out a shared vision for ensuring every child feels safe, valued, and included in their school and community. It has helped shape our wider inclusion agenda and underpins our approach to reducing exclusions. Central to this vision is a commitment to strong partnership working across the local area, ensuring that children are supported by a joined-up system that identifies challenges early, acts swiftly and effectively, and provides sustained support for as long as needed. The strategy is supported with a Belonging Plan which contains a number of joint actions across the partnership to develop and implement evidence-based strategies that reduce exclusions and improve outcomes for all children. Further details are shared in the next steps section of this report.
8. **Commissioning Arrangements:** The council has also worked closely with commissioners to strengthen quality assurance and safeguarding across all tiers of provision. This includes clearer referral pathways, improved oversight of pupil outcomes, and enhanced safeguarding protocols. Consequently, there is confidence that the council's commissioning processes ensure children receive full-time education from day six of a permanent exclusion, in line with statutory guidance.
9. **Data Sharing Agreements:** We maintain 100% data-sharing coverage across BCP schools, enabling timely and informed discussions around individual cases and broader trends. This collaborative approach ensures that exclusion is always a last resort and that inclusive alternatives are explored wherever possible.
- **Day to Day Operational Arrangements:** The council's arrangements for managing exclusions and monitoring suspension data is in line with its statutory duties to ensure timely oversight, identify emerging trends, and provide support schools in promoting inclusive practice. The council's Inclusion Team plays a proactive role in supporting schools to prevent exclusions. Through direct engagement, challenge, and solution-focused planning, the team has helped rescind permanent exclusions and avoid others altogether. Arrangements are summarised below starting with notification from schools:
 - Schools inform the Local Authority of all school suspensions and exclusions and provide other information that will enable appropriate provision to be arranged.
 - The Local Authority arranges alternative provision for children who have been excluded from the 6th day following their exclusion. Their home school is responsible for providing them with education for the first 5 days after the exclusion.
 - Children accessing alternative provision are usually placed within either our Pupil Referral Unit or an Alternative Provision Academy. BCP Council commission 116 places for children that have been excluded from school. The exception to this is when it is assessed that the pupil's needs could be better met by an alternative provider, there are safeguarding reasons for not doing so or there are insufficient places available at these settings.

Each school is allocated a Link Alternative Education Co-ordinator who:

- Provides advice on alternatives to placing children in alternative provision or exclusion and on when a request for the LA to arrange a suitable education might be appropriate.
- Arranges and monitors alternative education which has been agreed by BCP Council's Alternative Provision Panel and commissioned by the Local Authority.

The Virtual School: The Virtual School has also delivered targeted support for children in our care (CIC), resulting in zero permanent exclusions and reduced suspensions for this vulnerable cohort—demonstrating how data is used to inform and tailor support. The Virtual School works closely with designated teachers, social workers, and school leaders to monitor attendance, behaviour, and progress for children in care. It challenges exclusions where appropriate and ensures that schools explore all reasonable adjustments before considering suspension or permanent exclusion. The team also supports training and capacity-building around trauma-informed practice and attachment-aware approaches, helping schools better understand and respond to the needs of vulnerable learners. The Virtual School's proactive and collaborative approach gives a clear indication of the benefits of a collaborative and targeted approach, trust engagement and capacity training – as summarised below.

- **Strategic and Targeted Interventions** - Sustained reductions in suspensions and improved attendance reflect timely, data-led support for schools of concern through weekly analysis.
 - **School and Trust Engagement** - Stronger leadership accountability between the Virtual School, Heads of Service and Headteachers and shared ownership are ensuring sustainable, consistent responses to pupil needs.
 - **Capacity Building Through Training** - Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training for Virtual School staff and enhanced designated teacher training are strengthening whole-school approaches and statutory responsibilities.
- **Performance, Oversight:** Performance is monitored by the Inclusion Service where exclusion and suspensions data is scrutinised. A dashboard of data supports this process and will be further enhanced with an emerging data scorecard which will help further ensure the council's effectiveness is measured against key performance indicators. This ensures that trends are identified early, and that targeted action can be taken. The Inclusion Service submit exception reports through monthly Education Quality and Performance meetings, where discussion is focussed around exceptions and practice, and is where the impact of our approach to reducing permanent exclusions and suspensions is reported and outcomes of children and young people are shared and celebrated. Highlight reports are shared with the Quality and Performance Improvement Board (QPIB) and the SEND Improvement Board (SIB).

Permanent Exclusions – Benchmark Data

10. **Rate of Permanent Exclusions:** Table 1 shows the permanent exclusion rate in BCP compared with regional and national benchmarks. Key points to note are as follows:

- BCP's permanent exclusion rate has fluctuated over the six-year period, starting at 0.12 in 2019/20 (12 permanent exclusions per 10,000 children), dipping to 0.09 in 2020/21, then rising sharply to 0.23 in 2022/23.
- Although the rate dropped to 0.17 in 2023/24, the provisional figure for 2024/25 is 0.20. BCP's exclusion rate has consistently exceeded the Southwest regional average, statistical neighbours, and national figures in every year. For example, in 2022/23, BCP's rate of 0.23 was significantly higher than England's 0.11, the South West's 0.13, and statistical neighbours' 0.10.
- The data points to a disproportionate use of permanent exclusion in BCP, raising concerns about the impact on pupils with vulnerabilities and the effectiveness of preventative strategies.

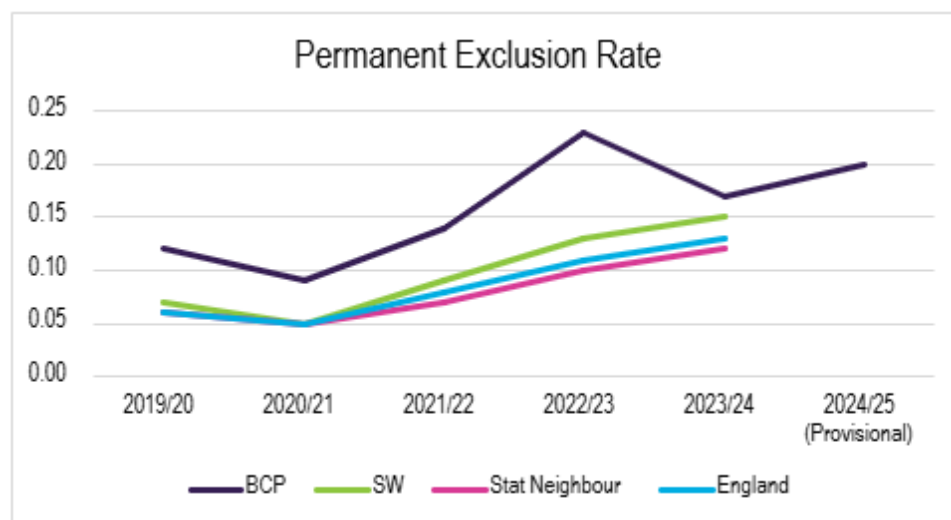
Table 1: Permanent Exclusion Rate (per 10,000 children)

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (Provisional)
BCP	0.12	0.09	0.14	0.23	0.17	0.20
SW	0.07	0.05	0.09	0.13	0.15	n/a
Stat Neighbour	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.10	0.12	n/a
England	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.11	0.13	n/a

11. Table 2 shows the number of exclusions over a 6-year period. The data shows a clear upward trend in permanent exclusions across BCP schools over the past six years, rising from 60 in 2019/20 to a provisional 105 in 2024/25. While there was a temporary dip in 2020/21 (48 exclusions), likely influenced by pandemic-related school closures, the numbers have since escalated with peaks either side of slightly lower numbers in 2023/24. The lower numbers in 2023/24 may reflect the impact of small-scale pilot where additional resources were offered to schools to prevent exclusions.
12. **Deep-Dive 2024/25 Permanent Exclusions:** A deep dive into the data for 2024/25 shows that of the 105 children that were permanently excluded:
- 96 permanent exclusions were from secondary schools, 4 were from special schools, and 5 were from primary schools. Exclusions were spread across a total of 32 schools. The maximum number of permanent exclusions in any one secondary school was 13 followed by 11, 9 and 9 and 7 exclusions for the top five excluding schools.
 - Children in Year Groups 9, 10 and 11 account for a total of 91 exclusions, with Year 11 children reaching the highest number with a total of 34 exclusions.
 - 15 of the 105 children were open to Social Care, 24 had an EHCP and 40 children were receiving SEN support.
 - Just under two thirds of children excluded were boys and 88.6% of those excluded are white British or English. There are no emerging themes in respect of the black and minority ethnic cohort.
 - Persistent or general disruption accounted for 54 exclusions, 20 were for a physical assault against pupil, 17 were drug and alcohol related and 13 were for a physical assault against an adult, 8 were for use or threat of an offensive weapon and the remaining were for verbal or threatening behaviour.
13. The benchmark data suggests systemic challenges to behaviour management, inclusion, or early intervention compared to similar areas. Work to reduce exclusions will rely on the success of multi-agency collaboration and early help. Work to strengthen our local arrangements is underway and further details are provided towards the end of the report.

Table 2: Number Permanent Exclusions

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (Provisional)
BCP	60	48	76	105	91	105



14. **Permanent Exclusions by Phase:** The data table 3 reveals a concentration of permanent exclusions in secondary schools across BCP.
15. When comparing exclusion rates by phase against national averages, BCP consistently exceeds national benchmarks, particularly in secondary and special schools. In 2022/23, BCP's secondary

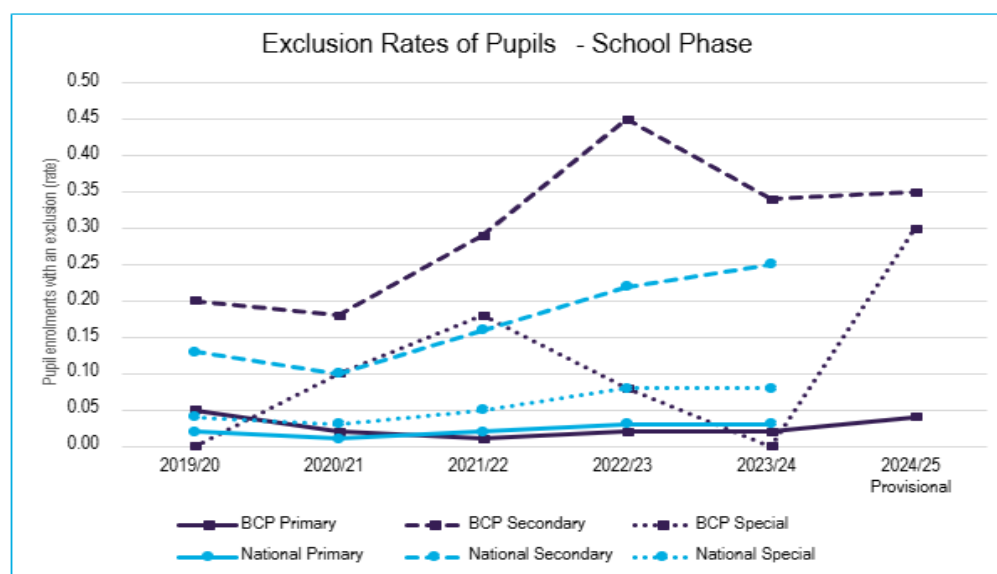
exclusion rate reached 0.45, more than double the national rate of 0.22. Although this dropped to 0.34 in 2023/24, it still reflects a disproportionately high use of exclusion.

16. The most concerning shift is in special schools: after recording no exclusions in 2023/24, the provisional rate for 2024/25 jumps to 0.30—far above previous national averages. This suggests a possible breakdown in inclusive practice or support for pupils with complex needs. This may reflect a small number of exclusions within a relatively small cohort, where even one or two cases can significantly affect the overall rate. It can also indicate the increasing complexity of need among pupils in special schools, particularly where behaviours linked to unmet Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs challenge the capacity of settings to respond.
17. Overall, the data points to a need for targeted support in secondary and special education settings, with a focus on early intervention, inclusive strategies, and multi-agency collaboration to reduce reliance on exclusion as a behavioural response.

Table 3: Rate of Permanent Exclusions by Phase Compared with National

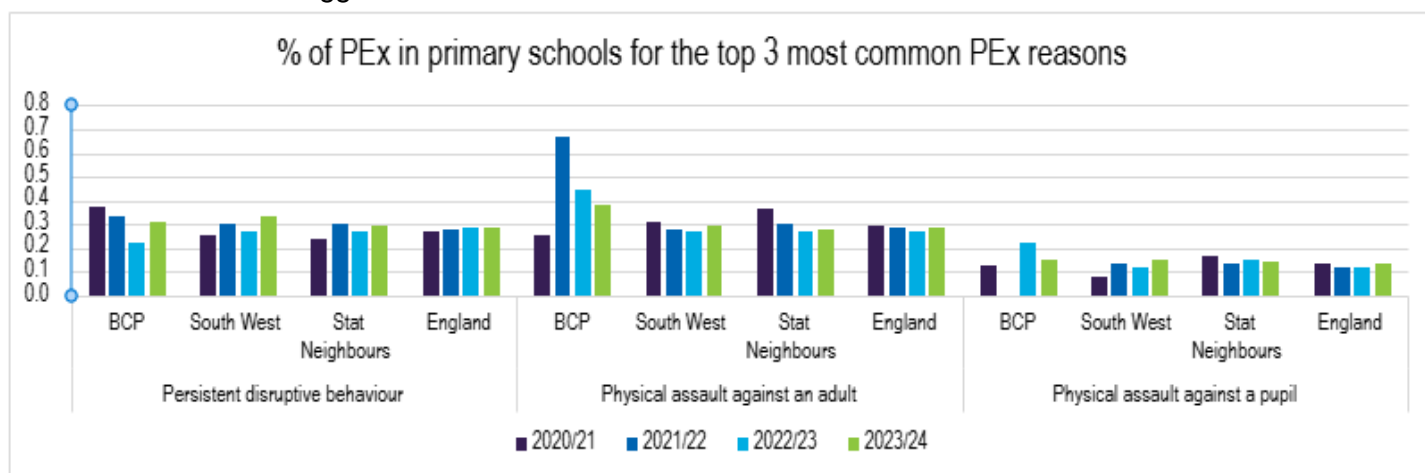
	BCP			National		
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Primary	Secondary	Special
2019/20	0.05	0.20	0.00	0.02	0.13	0.04
2020/21	0.02	0.18	0.10	0.01	0.10	0.03
2021/22	0.01	0.29	0.18	0.02	0.16	0.05
2022/23	0.02	0.45	0.08	0.03	0.22	0.08
2023/24	0.02	0.34	0.00	0.03	0.25	0.08
2024/25*	0.04	0.35	0.30			

*Provisional



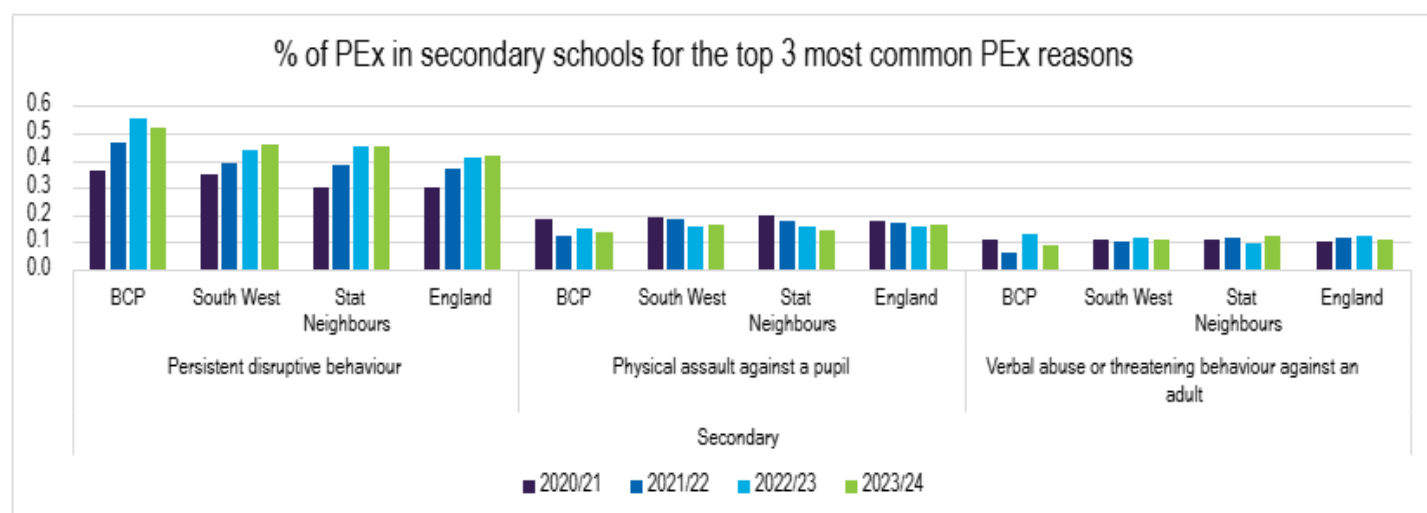
18. **Reasons for Permanent Exclusion in Primary Schools:** The data in the graph below show the 3 most common reasons for permanent exclusions in primary schools. It shows that persistent disruptive behaviour is the leading cause of permanent exclusions in BCP primary schools, with a marked increase between 2020/21 and 2022/23. While other regions—including the Southwest, statistical neighbours, and England—show relatively stable rates for this reason, BCP’s spike suggests that behaviour management challenges in primary settings may be escalating locally.
19. Physical assault against an adult also stands out in BCP, particularly in 2021/22, where the percentage far exceeds that of other regions. Although this figure declines in subsequent years, it remains notably higher than comparative benchmarks, indicating a need for targeted support and early intervention strategies to address emotional regulation in younger pupils.
20. In contrast, physical assault against a pupil remains low and consistent across all regions and years, suggesting that peer-on-peer violence is not a primary driver of exclusions in primary settings. This stability may reflect effective peer mediation or supervision practices, but it also underscores that adult-directed aggression and disruptive behaviour are the more pressing concerns in BCP.

21. Overall, the data points to a need for strengthened primary behaviour support, trauma-informed approaches, and staff training to prevent and reduce exclusions driven by persistent disruption and adult-directed aggression.



22. The data in the graph below show the three most common reasons for permanent exclusions in secondary schools. The data highlights persistent disruptive behaviour, physical assault against a pupil, and verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult as the three most common reasons for permanent exclusions in BCP secondary schools. Across the four-year period, BCP's rates have consistently exceeded regional, statistical neighbour, and national averages, particularly for disruptive behaviour. Key points to note are as follows:

- **Persistent Disruptive Behaviour:** This remains the most frequent reason for permanent exclusion in BCP, with rates rising from 36.4% in 2020/21 to a peak of 55.2% in 2022/23, before slightly declining to 52.3% in 2023/24. These figures are consistently higher than those for the Southwest and England, indicating a significant and ongoing challenge in managing behaviour in secondary classrooms.
- **Physical Assault Against a Pupil:** BCP's rates for this reason have fluctuated, starting at 18.2% in 2020/21, dropping to 12.3% in 2021/22, then rising again to 15.4% in 2022/23 before settling at 13.5% in 2023/24. While generally in line with or slightly below regional and national averages, the variation suggests a need for continued focus on peer conflict and violence prevention.
- **Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult:** BCP's figures for this category have remained relatively low and below national averages, ranging from 6.2% in 2021/22 to 13.3% in 2022/23, before declining again to 9.0% in 2023/24. Although less prevalent than other reasons, this behaviour still warrants attention given its impact on staff wellbeing and school climate.



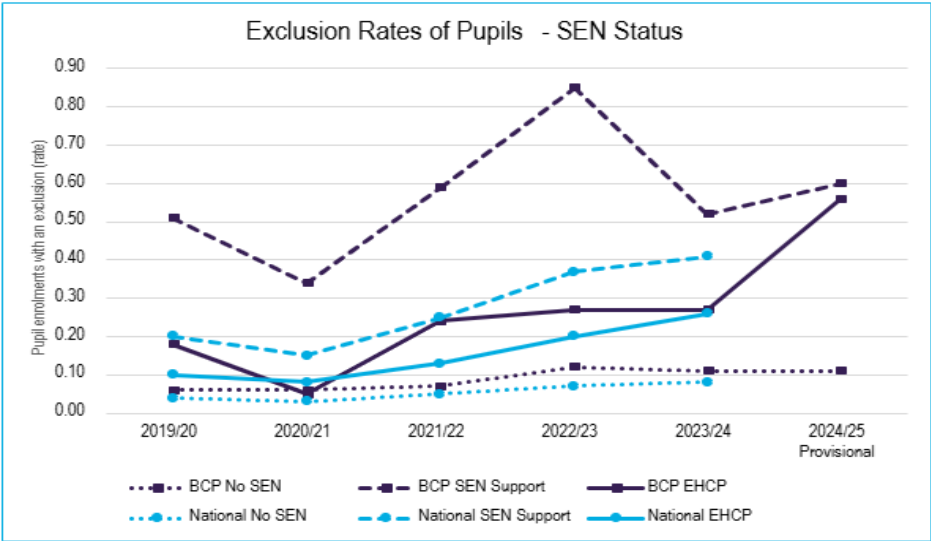
23. **Permanent Exclusions by SEND Status:** Table 4 shows the rate of permanent exclusions by SEND status for all children in BCP compared with national figures. The data reveals a persistent and disproportionate pattern of permanent exclusions among pupils with special educational needs in BCP. Pupils on SEN Support have consistently faced the highest exclusion rates, peaking at 0.85 in 2022/23, more than double the national rate of 0.37 that year. Although this dropped to 0.52 in 2023/24, the provisional figure for 2024/25 remains elevated at 0.60, indicating ongoing systemic challenges in supporting this group.

24. Exclusion rates for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in BCP have also risen sharply—from 0.05 in 2020/21 to a provisional 0.56 in 2024/25. This is significantly higher than the national EHCP rate of 0.26 in 2023/24 and suggests that even those with the highest level of statutory support are at increasing risk of exclusion locally.
25. In contrast, pupils without SEND in BCP have consistently lower exclusion rates, aligning more closely with national averages. This widening gap between SEND and non-SEND pupils highlights a critical equity issue: children with additional needs are being excluded at rates that far exceed their peers.
26. The council's data suggests that current systems may not be adequately meeting the needs of SEND pupils, and that exclusion is being used as a response to unmet need rather than as a last resort. Strategic investment in SEND support, staff training, and behaviour pathways will be essential to reversing this trajectory.

Table 4: Permanent Exclusion Rate by SEND Status

	BCP			National		
	EHCP	SEN Support	No SEN	EHCP	SEN Support	No SEN
2019/20	0.18	0.51	0.06	0.10	0.20	0.04
2020/21	0.05	0.34	0.06	0.08	0.15	0.03
2021/22	0.24	0.59	0.07	0.13	0.25	0.05
2022/23	0.27	0.85	0.12	0.20	0.37	0.07
2023/24	0.27	0.52	0.11	0.26	0.41	0.08
2024/25*	0.56	0.60	0.11			

*Provisional

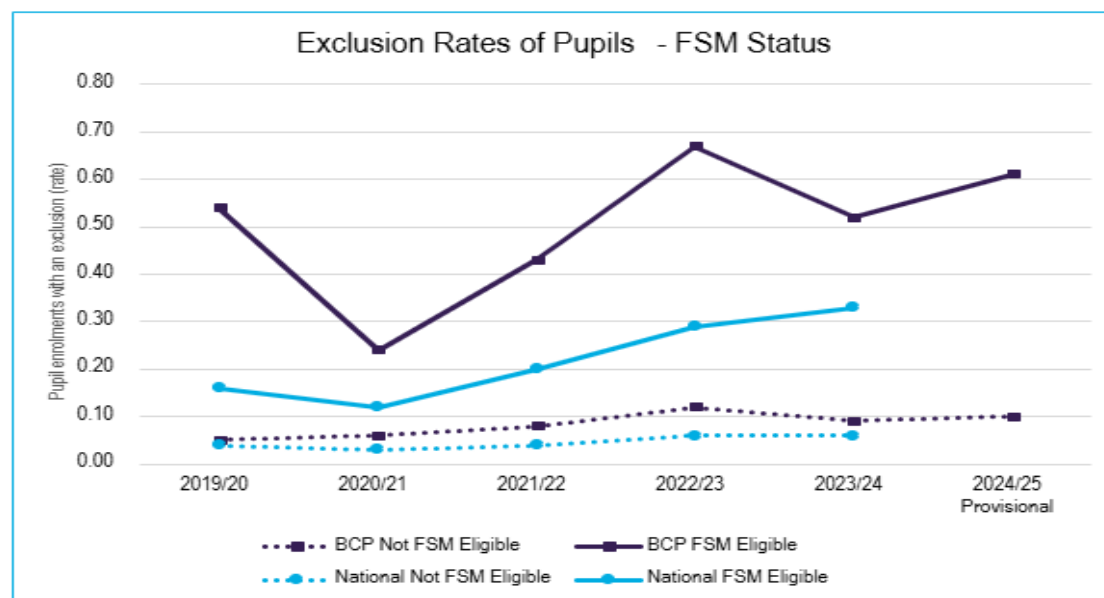


27. **Permanent Exclusion Rate for Children Eligible for Free School Meals:** The data in Table 5 highlights disparity in permanent exclusion rates between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their non-FSM peers in BCP. Across all years, FSM-eligible pupils in BCP are excluded at rates significantly higher than both the national average and their non-FSM counterparts. For example, in 2022/23, the exclusion rate for FSM pupils in BCP reached 0.67—more than double the national rate of 0.29, and over five times the rate for non-FSM pupils locally.
28. While there was a slight dip in 2023/24 to 0.52, the provisional figure for 2024/25 shows a renewed increase to 0.61, suggesting that exclusion remains a systemic issue for disadvantaged pupils. In contrast, exclusion rates for non-FSM pupils in BCP have remained relatively low and stable, fluctuating between 0.05 and 0.12 over the six-year period.
29. This pattern reflects a broader national concern about the intersection of poverty and exclusion, but BCP’s figures indicate a more acute local challenge. This identifies socioeconomic disadvantage as a key risk factor for exclusion and calls for targeted, multi-agency interventions. For BCP, this data underscores the urgent need to strengthen inclusive practices, embed equity-focused behaviour policies, and ensure that schools are supported to address the underlying causes of disruption—rather than resorting to exclusion for children already facing disadvantage.

Table 5: Permanent Exclusion Rate for Children Eligible for Free School Meals

	BCP		National	
	FSM Eligible	Not FSM Eligible	FSM Eligible	Not FSM Eligible
2019/20	0.54	0.05	0.16	0.04
2020/21	0.24	0.06	0.12	0.03
2021/22	0.43	0.08	0.20	0.04
2022/23	0.67	0.12	0.29	0.06
2023/24	0.52	0.09	0.33	0.06
2024/25*	0.61	0.10		

*Provisional. Note: Data is not available for Southwest regional local authorities or statistical neighbours.



Suspensions

30. **Suspensions Rate:** Tables 6 and 7 show the suspension rate and the number of suspensions in BCP compared with regional and national benchmarks. Key points to note are as follows:

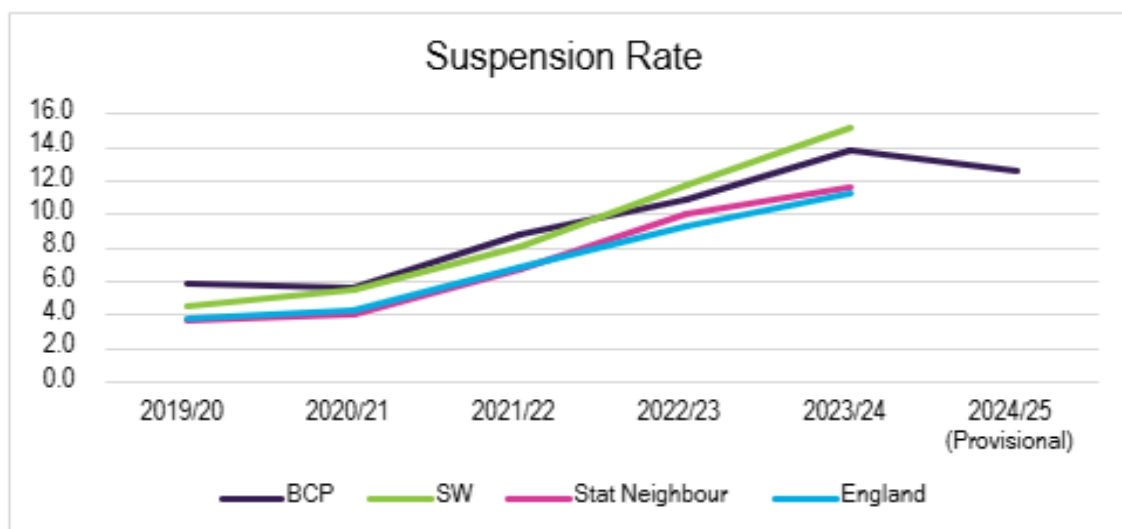
- This data reveals a clear and sustained rise in suspension rates across BCP over the past six years, with figures consistently exceeding national, regional, and statistical neighbour averages. BCP's suspension rate increased from 5.9 in 2019/20 to a peak of 13.9 in 2023/24, before a slight dip to 12.6 in the provisional 2024/25 data. This trajectory suggests that exclusionary practices—particularly short-term removals—are being used more frequently as a behavioural response.
- The total number of suspensions in BCP more than doubled from 3,017 in 2019/20 to 7,347 in 2023/24, reflecting not just a higher rate but a broader systemic reliance on suspension. While the Southwest region also shows a rising trend, BCP's figures are consistently above the national average, indicating that local factors—such as policy, support capacity, or school culture—may be contributing to the elevated use of suspensions.
- This further highlights the need for early intervention and inclusive strategies to reduce reliance on exclusions. The slight reduction in the provisional 2024/25 data may signal the beginning of a shift, but the overall volume remains high. To address this, BCP may need to strengthen behaviour support systems, invest in staff training, and expand access to preventative services that reduce the need for suspension.

Table 6: Suspension Rate

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (Provisional)
BCP	5.9	5.7	8.8	11.0	13.9	12.6
SW	4.6	5.5	8.1	11.7	15.2	n/a
Stat Neighbour	3.7	4.1	6.8	10.0	11.7	n/a
England	3.8	4.3	6.9	9.3	11.3	n/a

Table 7: Number of Suspensions

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (Provisional)
BCP	3017	2947	4633	5787	7347	6617



31. **Deep-Dive 2024/25 Suspensions:** A deep dive into the data for 2024/25 shows that there were 6,617 suspensions across primary, secondary and special schools resulting in 24,449 sessions lost affecting 2,022 children. The data show that:

- Sessions lost in Year Groups 10, 11, and 12 account for 88.9% of sessions lost in BCP.
- 190 of the 2,022 children with suspensions were open to Social Care, 432 had an EHCP and 535 children were receiving SEN support.
- Two thirds of children suspended were boys
- Persistent or general disruption accounted for 1056 suspensions, 598 were for a physical assault against pupil, 464 were for verbal abuse/threatening behaviour, 231 were for a physical assault against an adult , 178 were drug and alcohol related, 126 were verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil, 105 were damage related, 81 was for racist abuse, 76 related to the use or threat of an offensive weapon and residual reasons are made up of bullying, inappropriate use of IT, theft, sexual misconduct, abuse against sexual orientation and gender identify.

32. **1+ Suspensions Rate:** Table 8 shows the suspension rate in BCP for children with one or more suspensions compared with regional and national benchmarks. Key points to note are as follows:

- This data shows a steady increase in the proportion of pupils receiving one or more suspensions in BCP over the past six years, rising from 2.2% in 2019/20 to a peak of 4.0% in 2023/24, with a slight dip to 3.9% in the provisional 2024/25 figures. This mirrors national and regional trends. With the exception of 2023/24 BCP's rates have consistently tracked just above the England average.
- The Southwest region and statistical neighbours also show upward trajectories, but BCP's figures remain among the highest, particularly in recent years. This indicates that a growing number of pupils are experiencing repeated suspensions, which may reflect underlying behavioural, social, or unmet educational needs.
- It is vital to identify children at risk of repeated exclusion and intervene early with targeted support. BCP's data reinforces this need, pointing to the value of multi-agency collaboration,

restorative approaches, and inclusive behaviour policies to reduce recurrence and improve outcomes for affected pupils.

Table 8: 1+Suspensions Rate

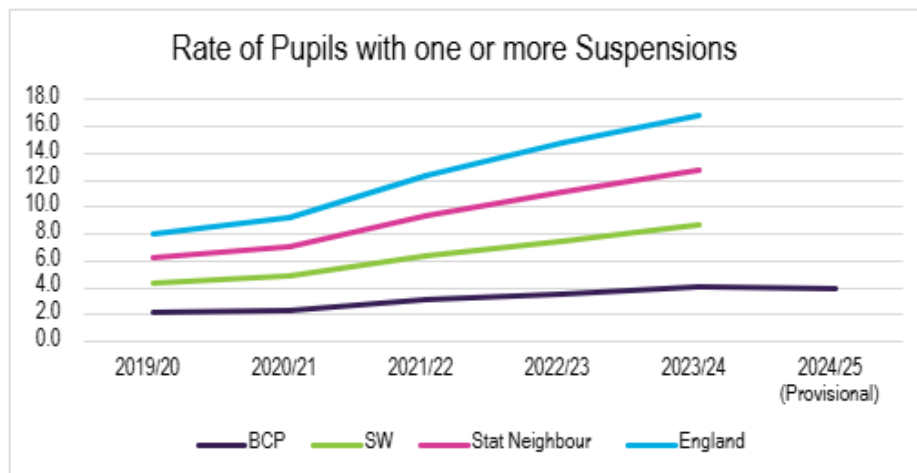
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (Provisional)
BCP	2.2	2.4	3.1	3.5	4.0	3.9
SW	2.1	2.5	3.3	4.0	4.6	n/a
Stat Neighbour	1.9	2.2	3.0	3.7	4.1	n/a
England	1.9	2.2	3.0	3.6	4.0	n/a

33. **Number of Children with 1+ Suspensions:** Table 9 shows the number of suspensions for children with one plus suspensions compared with regional and national benchmarks. It shows:

- A clear and sustained increase in the number of pupils in BCP who have experienced one or more suspensions over the past six years. From 1,143 pupils in 2019/20, the figure rose steadily each year, peaking at 2,131 in 2023/24—nearly doubling over the period. Although the provisional figure for 2024/25 shows a slight decline to 2,017, the overall trend remains significantly elevated.
- This upward trajectory suggests that a growing proportion of pupils are being repeatedly suspended, which may reflect deeper behavioural challenges, unmet needs, or systemic reliance on exclusionary discipline. The increase aligns with broader patterns seen in the suspension rate data, reinforcing concerns about the cumulative impact of repeated suspensions on pupil engagement, attainment, and wellbeing.
- It is important to identify children at risk of repeated exclusion and intervene early with targeted, multi-agency support. BCP's data highlights the urgency of embedding preventative strategies and ensuring schools have access to timely and effective support services to reduce recurrence and improve outcomes.

Table 9: Number of pupils with 1 or more suspensions

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (Provisional)
BCP	1143	1226	1630	1837	2131	2017



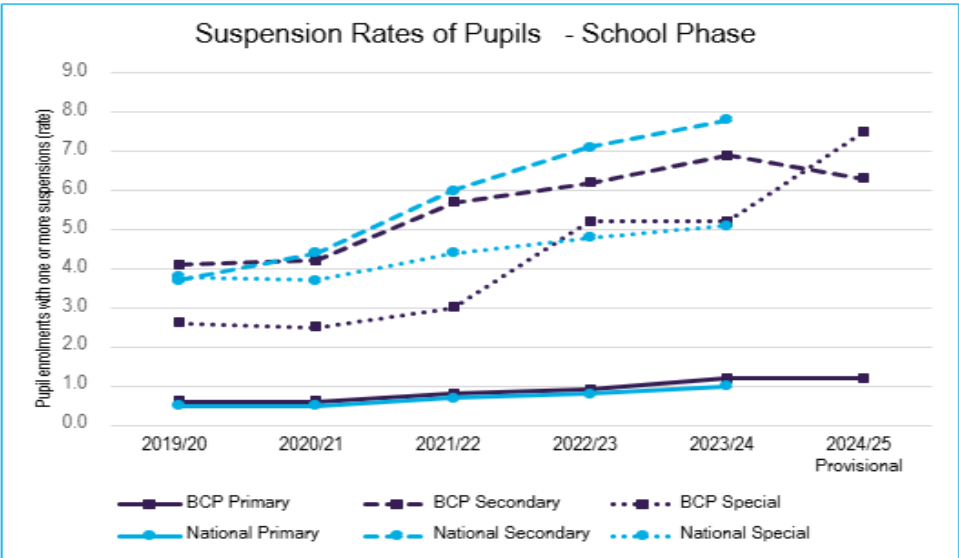
34. **Rate of Suspensions by Phase:** Table 10 sets out the rate of children with one or more suspensions by phase. It highlights a consistent upward trend in the proportion of pupils receiving one or more suspensions across all phases in BCP, with particularly sharp increases in special and secondary settings.

35. In primary schools, BCP's suspension rate rose from 0.6% in 2019/20 to 1.2% by 2023/24, doubling over five years and slightly exceeding national and statistical neighbour averages. This suggests growing challenges in early education, possibly linked to unmet needs or post-pandemic developmental impacts. BCP ranks 147th out of 153 local authorities in England for primary school suspension rates, according to the Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT), highlighting a significant area of concern and placing BCP in quartile D.

36. Secondary schools show the highest rates overall, with BCP climbing from 4.1% in 2019/20 to a peak of 6.9% in 2023/24. Although the provisional 2024/25 figure shows a slight dip to 6.3%, BCP remains consistently below the Southwest and national averages in this phase, which may reflect either effective interventions or differing thresholds for suspension.
37. The most striking trend is in special schools, where BCP's rate rose from 2.6% in 2019/20 to a provisional 7.5% in 2024/25.
38. These patterns emphasize the importance of inclusive practice, early help, and multi-agency collaboration. For BCP, the data suggests an urgent need to review behaviour policies and support structures across all phases—particularly in special schools—to reduce reliance on suspension and improve outcomes for vulnerable learners.

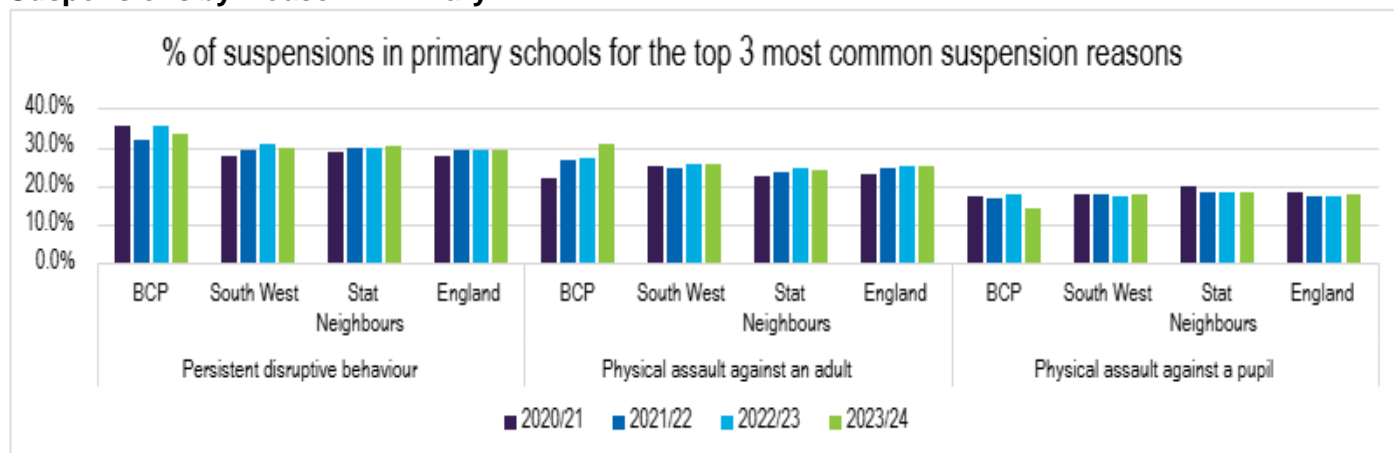
Table 10: Pupil enrolments with one or more suspensions (rate) by Phase

	BCP			National			Southwest			Stat Neighbours		
	Primary	Sec	Special	Primary	Sec	Special	Primary	Sec	Special	Primary	Sec	Special
2019/20	0.6	4.1	2.6	0.5	3.7	3.8	0.7	3.9	4.4	0.6	3.5	3.9
2020/21	0.6	4.2	2.5	0.5	4.4	3.7	0.7	4.8	4.7	0.6	4.1	3.8
2021/22	0.8	5.7	3.0	0.7	6.0	4.4	0.8	6.3	5.2	0.8	5.7	4.4
2022/23	0.9	6.2	5.2	0.8	7.1	4.8	1.0	7.6	5.5	1.0	7.0	4.8
2023/24	1.2	6.9	5.2	1.0	7.8	5.1	1.3	8.5	6.7	1.2	7.6	5.7
2024/25 Prov	1.2	6.3	7.5									



39. The graph below shows the three most common suspension reasons in primary schools. Across the four-year period, BCP's rates for these reasons have generally exceeded regional, statistical neighbour, and national averages. Key points to note for each reason are as follows:
- **Persistent Disruptive Behaviour:** This remains the most frequent reason for suspension in BCP, with rates consistently above comparator areas. In 2022/23, 35.6% of suspensions were due to disruptive behaviour, compared to 30.7% in the Southwest and 29.2% nationally. Although the rate dipped slightly in 2023/24 to 33.4%, it still reflects a higher-than-average reliance on suspension for classroom disruption.
 - **Physical Assault Against an Adult:** BCP has seen a steady increase in suspensions for this reason, rising from 22.1% in 2020/21 to 31.1% in 2023/24. This is significantly higher than both regional and national averages, which remained around 25%. The upward trend suggests growing concerns around pupil aggression towards staff and other adults in school settings.
 - **Physical Assault Against a Pupil:** While this category has remained relatively stable nationally, BCP's figures show a slight decline—from 17.2% in 2020/21 to 14.0% in 2023/24. Despite being lower than the national average in the most recent year, it still represents a notable proportion of suspensions and highlights the need for continued focus on peer conflict resolution.

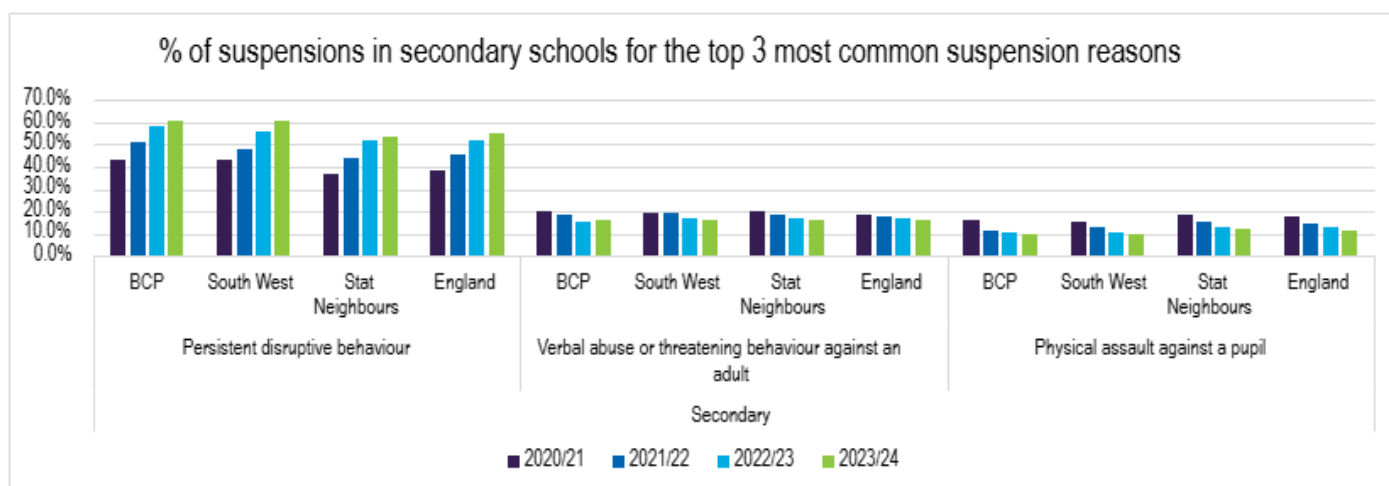
Suspensions by Reason – Primary



40. The graph below shows the three most common suspension reasons in secondary schools. The data reveals consistent patterns in the reasons for suspensions in BCP secondary schools, with persistent disruptive behaviour, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult, and physical assault against a pupil being the most common suspension reasons. BCP's rates in these categories have generally exceeded regional, statistical neighbour, and national averages over the four-year period. Key points to note for each reason are as follows:

- **Persistent Disruptive Behaviour:** This remains the dominant reason for suspensions in BCP secondary schools, with a steady year-on-year increase from 43.3% in 2020/21 to 60.5% in 2023/24. These figures are consistently above national and comparator averages, indicating a significant and growing challenge in managing classroom behaviour and maintaining learning environments.
- **Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult:** BCP's rates for this reason have remained relatively stable, ranging from 14.9% to 19.9% across the period. While broadly in line with regional and national averages, the persistently high proportion suggests ongoing concerns around pupil interactions with staff and authority figures.
- **Physical Assault Against a Pupil:** This category has shown a downward trend in BCP, falling from 16.2% in 2020/21 to 9.4% in 2023/24. Although this decline is notable, BCP's rates remain slightly below national and regional averages, which may reflect improvements in peer conflict management or shifts in reporting and categorisation.

Suspensions by Reason – Secondary



41. **Suspensions by SEND Status:** Table 11 shows a widening disparity in suspension rates by SEND status in BCP, particularly for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). It shows:

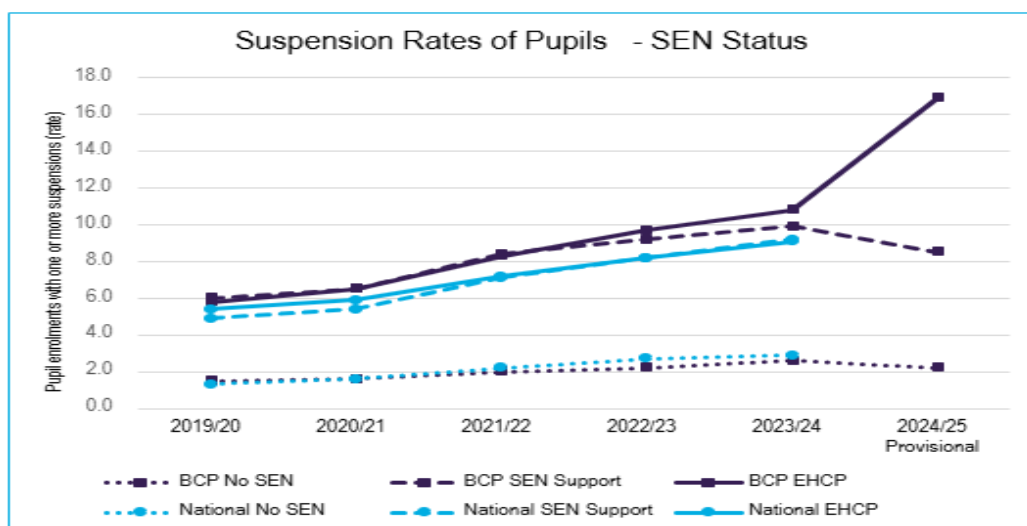
- From 2019/20 to 2023/24, suspension rates for pupils with EHCPs in BCP rose from 5.8 to 10.8, already exceeding national and regional averages. However, the provisional figure for 2024/25 shows a dramatic spike to 16.9, nearly double the previous year and far above any comparator. This suggests a significant breakdown in inclusive practice and raises serious

questions about how pupils with the highest level of statutory support are being managed in mainstream and specialist settings.

- Pupils with SEN Support also face elevated suspension rates, consistently above those without SEND and often above national and regional benchmarks. Although the rate for pupils with SEN Support in BCP dropped slightly to 8.5 in the provisional 2024/25 data, it remains more than three times the rate for pupils with no SEND.
- Pupils without SEND have the lowest suspension rates across all years and regions, reinforcing the pattern that children with additional needs are disproportionately affected.
- These trends emphasize the need for trauma-informed approaches, staff training, and multi-agency support to reduce suspensions among pupils with SEND. The data signals an urgent need to review behaviour policies, strengthen early intervention, and ensure that schools are equipped to meet the needs of SEND learners without resorting to suspension.

Table 11: Suspensions by SEND Status **Provisional*

	BCP			National			Southwest			Stat Neighbours		
	EHCP	SEN Support	No SEN	EHCP	SEN Support	No SEN	EHCP	SEN Support	No SEN	EHCP	SEN Support	No SEN
2019/20	5.8	6.0	1.5	5.4	4.9	1.3	7.1	5.8	1.3	5.8	5.1	1.3
2020/21	6.5	6.5	1.6	5.9	5.4	1.6	8.5	6.5	1.7	6.3	5.8	1.5
2021/22	8.3	8.4	2.0	7.2	7.1	2.2	9.6	8.1	2.2	7.5	7.6	2.1
2022/23	9.7	9.2	2.2	8.2	8.2	2.7	10.7	9.8	2.7	8.5	9.2	2.6
2023/24	10.8	9.9	2.6	9.1	9.2	2.9	12.0	11.3	3.0	10.0	10.3	2.8
2024/25*	16.9	8.5	2.2									



42. **Suspensions for Children Eligible for Free School Meals:** Tables 12 reveals a persistent and widening disparity in suspension rates between pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers not eligible for FSM in BCP. Key points to note are as follows:

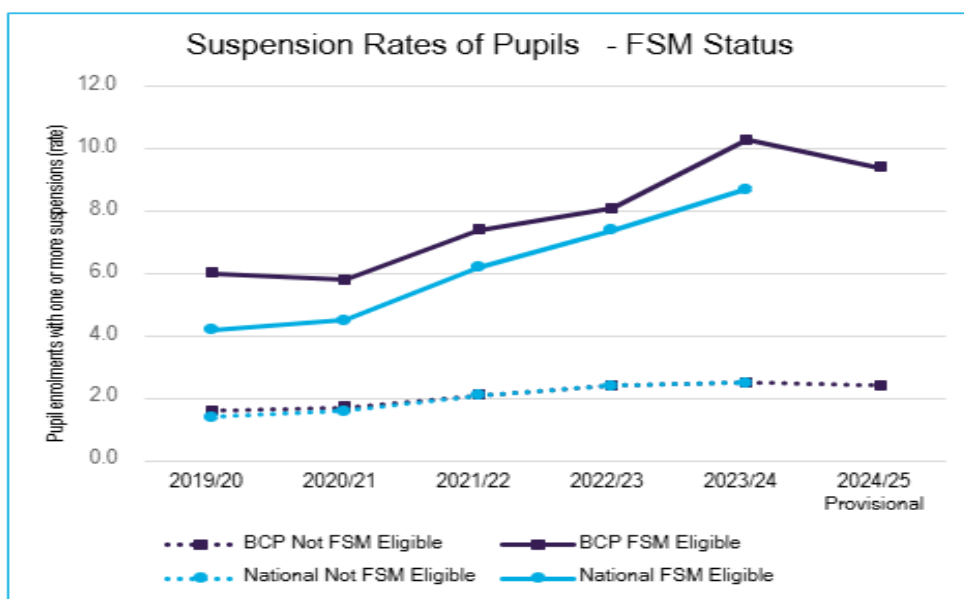
- From 2019/20 to 2023/24, pupils eligible for FSM in BCP experienced a steep rise in suspension rates—from 6.0 to 10.3—while rates for pupils not eligible for FSM remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 1.6 and 2.5. The provisional figure for 2024/25 shows a slight decline for pupils eligible for FSM to 9.4, but the gap remains stark.
- Compared to national, Southwest, and statistical neighbour averages, BCP consistently records higher suspension rates for pupils eligible for FSM. For instance, in 2023/24, BCP's rate of 10.3 exceeds the national average of 8.7 and the South West's 10.9, indicating that socioeconomic disadvantage is a more acute predictor of exclusionary discipline in BCP than elsewhere.
- This pattern suggests that pupils eligible for FSM are disproportionately affected by behavioural sanctions, which may reflect deeper systemic issues such as unmet needs, lack of early intervention, or inconsistent application of inclusive practices. Similar to the national picture, poverty is a key risk factor for exclusion.
- For BCP, this data underscores the need to embed equity-focused behaviour policies, strengthen pastoral and family support, and ensure that schools are equipped to address the

root causes of disruption—rather than relying on suspension for pupils already facing disadvantage.

Table 12: Suspensions for Children Eligible for Free School Meals

	BCP		National		Southwest		Stat Neighbours	
	FSM Eligible	Not FSM Eligible	FSM Eligible	Not FSM Eligible	FSM Eligible	Not FSM Eligible	FSM Eligible	Not FSM Eligible
2019/20	6.0	1.6	4.2	1.4	5.3	1.5	4.6	1.4
2020/21	5.8	1.7	4.5	1.6	5.9	1.8	4.9	1.6
2021/22	7.4	2.1	6.2	2.1	7.5	2.3	6.6	2.1
2022/23	8.1	2.4	7.4	2.4	9.1	2.7	8.1	2.6
2023/24	10.3	2.5	8.7	2.5	10.9	3.0	9.5	2.7
2024/25*	9.4	2.4						

*Provisional



39. Next Steps - Strategic Approach to System Improvement: BCP Council recognises the urgent need to reduce permanent exclusions and suspensions and improve outcomes for children and young people with vulnerabilities. Next steps are as follows:

- **Belonging Plan:** We are co-producing the Belonging Plan which delivers on the priorities in the Belonging Strategy. Belonging and the development of the Belonging Plan was a key focus at our Education Conference which took place in the summer and was attended by school leaders. Our BCP Youth Forum are also contributing to the development of this plan and are in the process of establishing a working group.
- **Conference – Belonging and Inclusion:** During the summer, the council hosted a well-attended Belonging and *Inclusion Conference*, bringing together school leaders, practitioners, and national experts to share best practice and strengthen our collective response. We are now working with *The Difference*—a national charity focused on inclusive leadership—and the *Ted Wragg Trust* to embed inclusive practice and build capacity across our schools. Furthermore, we have delivered a professional development workshop on belonging for Children's Services staff.
- **Three-Tier Alternative Provision (AP) Model** A multi-agency working group is in the process of developing a BCP three-tier AP model, which aligns with plans set out in the government's national SEND and AP Plan. The three-tiers will comprise of: Targeted early support within mainstream school, time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision settings and longer-term placements to support return to mainstream or a sustainable post-16 destination. The model is designed to offer flexible, graduated support for children at risk of exclusion. This model includes:

- Tier 1: School-led internal provision
 - Tier 2: Commissioned outreach and short-term placements
 - Tier 3: Full-time specialist placements
- Membership of the AP Working Group includes representatives from parent groups, school leaders, AP leaders and BCP officers and is being co-led by 'The Difference', who recently published [What-Works-Four-Tenets-of-Effective-Internal-Alternative-Provision.pdf](#). The council is also engaging with best practice from other areas of the country, for example the Ted Wragg Trust from Devon, and South Gloucestershire Council who are part of the DfE's Change Programme. The discussions from the AP working group are being used to develop a plan to support delivery of the BCP three-tier AP model. The first draft of this delivery plan will be shared at the November's working group meeting.
 - **Inclusion Practice in Schools:** We have funded (via DfE SEND Improvement funding) and filled 50 places for our school leaders on 'The Difference's' Inclusion Leadership Course. This professional development initiative is designed to help school leaders improve whole-school inclusion, reduce lost learning and enhance outcomes for children and young people with vulnerabilities.
 - **Updating our SEND and Alternative Provision Sufficiency Strategy:** An updated strategy is in development which will incorporate a dedicated secondary-phase focus to address the growing demand for secondary specialist pathways and alternative provision. The strategy is being co-developed with partners and informed by data, lived experience, and national best practice, and will be monitored through the SEND Improvement Board to ensure accountability and impact.
 - **Development of Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Approach Toolkit:** The council has secured funding to second a school leader, supported by suitably experienced and qualified professionals, to develop ordinarily available provision and the graduated approach across the area. The toolkit will help schools distinguish between pupils who can thrive with consistent universal support and those who require additional interventions. The seconded leader with the support of a suitably experienced and qualified professional will work to embed ordinarily available provision across the conurbation. This approach provides structured guidance for teachers and school leaders to identify, assess, and record the needs of pupils requiring additional or special educational provision. It supports schools in planning appropriate support based on individual needs, reviewing progress systematically and ensuring that interventions are evidence-based and proportionate. By embedding this approach, schools are better equipped to intervene early and consistently, reducing the likelihood of escalation to exclusion.
 - **Inclusion Leads Pilot:** As part of a pilot utilising schools block surplus funding, we have recently appointed three Inclusion Leads to support schools develop inclusive practice. The impact of their work will be monitored and evaluated, and if effective this is a model that could be scaled up. The approach is in line with the likely direction of travel of the government's White Paper on SEND.
 - **Outreach offer:** The Council has commissioned outreach services in partnership with our local special schools to provide support for mainstream schools including specialist advice and support to meet the needs of complex children and/or cohorts within their school. There is further scope for outreach services from our Alternative Providers, and this is being explored. The model aims to support schools to build their skill and capacity to meet need at an earlier stage.
 - **Education Effectiveness Framework:** Working with our local school partners and learning from best practice in other areas, the council is developing a robust Education Effectiveness Framework aimed at driving continuous improvement across all educational settings. The framework will bring together key strands including inclusive practice, targeted support for schools, and a commitment to equity in outcomes for all learners. By working collaboratively with school and MAT leaders, as well as other partners, the framework will provide clear guidance on responsibilities and ensure every child, regardless of background or need, has access to high-quality education.

- **Co-production of best practice guidance in relation to Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA):** The council is developing best practice guidance to support schools in responding to Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA). The guidance sets out clear strategies for identifying and addressing emotional barriers to attendance, with a focus on early support, inclusive practice, and multi-agency involvement. It aims to help schools create safe, nurturing environments where pupils feel a sense of belonging and are supported to re-engage with learning.
- **Development of 'Way Forward' meetings:** Way Forward meetings are planned to provide structured support and planning when an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment Request (EHCNAR) is declined, or a decision is made not to issue an EHCP. These meetings bring together practitioners and families to review the child's needs, explore alternative support options, and agree next steps to ensure continued progress and inclusion within education settings.
- **Admissions Re-design:** Work to progress the project to re-design SEND Admission arrangements will start in November 2025. This is a major piece of work that will significantly improve our placement decision making which is a necessary foundation for commissioning sufficiency of specialist places. The purpose of the redesign is to create a fair, transparent and compliant admissions system for children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan, ensuring appropriate placement decisions are made through improved processes and robust governance arrangements. The project will be implemented in four phases over a 7-month period with implementation from April 2026 and a period of a further 7 months thereafter for continuous review and refinement.
- **Updated In Year Fair Access Protocol:** An updated In-Year Fair Access Protocol is in development to ensure that children requiring school placements outside the standard admissions cycle are supported through a fair, transparent, and timely process. Developed in partnership with a task and finish group of headteachers, the protocol includes a decision-making matrix that enables consistent, objective evaluations of each case. At the heart of this approach is a commitment to child-focused discussion and decision making ensuring that every placement considers the individual needs, circumstances, and best interests of the child. This collaborative framework strengthens inclusion and equity, balancing the needs of pupils and schools while promoting positive outcomes for all learners. After extensive consultation, the new protocol is expected to go live during November 2025.
- **Transitions:** Establishment of a cross-phase transition working group to improve the experience of transitions between phases of education for our children and young people. The working group will identify best practice locally, regionally and nationally to improve outcomes.
- **Multi-agency Belonging Forums:** Implement best practice from other local authorities who have established multi-agency forums as a way for schools to both support each other to meet the needs of children and young people with vulnerabilities and gain support from partner agencies.
- **Targeted funding model:** BCP Council is currently developing its thinking around a schools' cluster model of shared funding, peer collaboration and inclusive practice to strengthen early intervention and reduce escalation to statutory Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The aim is to provide timely, targeted support for children with emerging or lower-level SEND needs within mainstream settings, without requiring a full EHCP assessment. The model would offer schools access to additional resources such as specialist input, equipment, or short-term interventions based on clear criteria and evidence of need. Co-produced with schools and parent/carer representatives, the model would be designed to promote inclusion, reduce delays in support, and ensure that children's needs are met earlier and more effectively. The next step is to engage our partners to develop the idea and establish what a costed model would look like. Best practice in other local authority areas has also been sought, and Southampton LA are working with us to share the learning from their model.

Financial Implications

43. The delivery plan will include invest-to-save proposals requiring upfront investment, with projected savings over an initial three-year period. Funding will be required for:
- Commissioning and developing tiered AP placements
 - Training and rollout of the Graduated Approach and OAP across all schools
 - Partnership work with external organisations (e.g. The Difference, Ted Wragg Trust)
44. Budget implications span financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28 and will be drawn from the High Needs Budget and funding obtained from the DfE's SEND Improvement Fund. Details of the headline annual savings and investments required in each year based on a 2025 starting point will be developed and costed as part of the DSG Recovery Plan. Potential Savings result from
- A reduction in exclusions and associated costs (e.g. transport, AP placements, tribunal processes)
 - Improved outcomes for vulnerable pupils, reducing future demand on social care, youth justice, and post-16 support service
 - A reduction in the need for unregistered and costly AP as more needs are met by schools

Summary of Legal Implications

45. The council's legal considerations underscore the importance of robust governance, consistent application of policy, and a clear audit trail when managing exclusions and suspensions. The headline legal implications are summarised below.
46. **Statutory Duties Under the Education Act 1996:** Under Section 19, local authorities must arrange suitable full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age who are excluded or otherwise unable to attend school. Failure to meet this duty could result in legal challenge or judicial review.
47. **Compliance with Exclusions Guidance:** Schools and the local authority must adhere to the Department for Education's statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions. This includes ensuring exclusions are lawful, reasonable, and proportionate, and that pupils and parents are informed of their rights to appeal.
48. **Equality Act 2010:** The council and schools must ensure that exclusion practices do not discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics, including disability, race, or SEND. Failure to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND could result in claims of unlawful discrimination.
49. **SEND Code of Practice (2015):** The local authority has a legal duty to ensure that children with special educational needs receive appropriate support and that exclusions are not used as a substitute for unmet needs. Excluding a pupil without first considering and implementing reasonable adjustments may breach statutory obligations.
50. **Human Rights Act 1998:** Exclusion decisions must respect pupils' rights under the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly the right to education (Article 2 of Protocol 1) and the right to a fair hearing (Article 6).
51. **Data Protection and Information Sharing:** Monitoring and sharing exclusion data must comply with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring that personal data is processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.

Summary of Human Resources Implications

52. There are a range of resource implications for BCP Council in implementing its strategic framework to reduce exclusions and suspensions. These highlight the need for strategic workforce planning to ensure the council and schools are equipped to deliver inclusive education effectively and sustainably.
- **Workforce Capacity and Skills:** Upskilling existing staff—particularly in areas such as trauma-informed practice, restorative approaches, and inclusive pedagogy—will be essential.

Educational psychologists, specialist teachers, and inclusion officers may need expanded roles or increased capacity.

- **Training and Professional Development:** Recruitment and Retention: Recruitment of skilled professionals to deliver and oversee the tiered Alternative Provision model. Additional staffing may be required to support early intervention, data monitoring, and delivery of targeted support. Ongoing CPD (Continuing Professional Development) for school staff and council teams to embed the Graduated Approach and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP). Joint training with strategic partners (e.g. The Difference, Ted Wragg Trust) to promote consistent inclusive practice across settings.
- **Cross-Agency Collaboration:** Strengthening multi-disciplinary working between education, health, and social care will require clear roles, shared protocols, and joint planning time.

Summary of Sustainability Impact

53. The proposed strategic framework to reduce exclusions and suspensions supports long-term sustainability by promoting inclusive education and reducing reliance on costly alternative provision placements. By investing in early intervention and strengthening mainstream support, the council aims to improve educational outcomes, reduce social inequalities, and minimise future demand on specialist services. This approach contributes to a more resilient education system and aligns with broader sustainability goals, including community cohesion and economic inclusion.

Summary of Public Health Implications

54. Reducing exclusions and suspensions has direct public health benefits, particularly for children and young people at risk of poor mental health, social isolation, and disengagement from education. The framework promotes early identification of need and access to appropriate support, which can mitigate adverse childhood experiences and reduce long-term health inequalities. Collaborative working with health partners ensures that pupils with emotional, behavioural, or neurodevelopmental needs receive timely interventions, contributing to improved wellbeing and safeguarding outcomes.

Summary of Equality Implications

55. The strategy is designed to advance equality by addressing disproportionality in exclusion rates among pupils with special educational needs, those eligible for free school meals, and children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Tools such as the Graduated Approach and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) help schools deliver consistent, inclusive support and make reasonable adjustments. The council will monitor data to ensure that exclusion practices do not discriminate and that all children have equitable access to education and support.

Background Papers

- Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2025
- Belonging Strategy 2024
- SEND Improvement and Alternative Provision Plan 2025
- SEND Sufficiency Strategy May 2024
- In Year Fair Access Protocol 2025