

School Exclusions and Suspensions Update

Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

31 January 2024

Presenter:

Brenda Wile

Deputy Director of Education

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Service Manager for Inclusion and Attendance

Recommendations for action

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

- Note the data and information with regard to school exclusions and suspensions in Wolverhampton schools in 2022/2023 as outlined in this report and appendices.
- Note that the update only includes data up until the end of the Autumn term for the academic year 2022/2023 as published information on the whole of the previous academic year is only issued annually in the month of March.
- Agree to receive an annual update report at the end of the Spring school term each year following the publication of national data.

Key Questions for Scrutiny to consider:

- Does the Panel acknowledge that whilst the rate of Permanent Exclusions is still marginally higher than the national average there is a marked decline in Wolverhampton?
- Does the Panel acknowledge that suspensions from schools in Wolverhampton are overall lower than national figures?
- Does the Panel request a focus for additional work to be targeted on any particular vulnerable group or protected characteristic?

Purpose and Background

- The purpose of this update is to keep Scrutiny panel members informed around Wolverhampton's performance in respect of exclusions and suspensions.
- Prior to the Covid pandemic, Wolverhampton was one of the highest excluding authorities nationally.
- Across the country exclusions and suspensions during the period of lockdowns, when schools were closed to all pupils, not surprisingly, exclusion and suspension rates fell dramatically.
- Following the return to school for all young people, exclusions and suspensions increased again.
- Particular focus in Wolverhampton was necessary because of the high levels of exclusions and suspensions from our schools.
- Detailed monitoring of the information and data available is carried out including for specific groups of young people, including interrogation around gender disparities, ethnic minority groups and vulnerable pupils such as those with SEND, or who are open to social care.

Key information for Scrutiny

- Comparisons are made between other local authorities in the West Midlands, statistical neighbours and nationally.
- Where disparities are high-lighted further work is carried out to investigate reasons and also strategies to improve the statistics locally.
- The detailed slide presentation attached to the report as Appendix 1 provides detail on performance of Wolverhampton schools.
- The overall trend is downwards with fewer exclusions and suspensions reported than pre pandemic, however levels are still too high and extensive work is being undertaken to provide support, training, strategies and intervention by the Inclusion service of the Local Authority (this includes with academies).
- Schools are encouraged to seek support for individuals and groups of students where changes of behaviour are noticed at an early stage so that intervention strategies to avoid exclusions or suspensions or increasingly disruptive behaviour is becoming evident.

Comments, discussion and questions

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