

Agenda Item	16. Part 2b
Report No	CLH 32/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 22 August 2018

Report Title: **Inclusive Education: School Exclusions and Part-time Education**

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the current national context and best practice guidance on creating inclusive education in relation to pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs, and provides an outline of how the national guidance has been interpreted in Highland to support school staff, pupils and parents.
- 1.2 The report also summarises the Highland data on pupils who have interrupted learning through exclusion and part-time attendance. It highlights some of the reasons for the various interventions used to support this group of pupils and the overall impact on their attendance and educational outcomes.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Note that standards of behaviour in Highland schools are generally in line with or better than the norms reported nationally.
 - ii. Note that the policy framework in Highland is in line with that required nationally and focuses on creating a positive culture and ethos, underpinned by positive relationships across the school community.
 - iii. Note the progress being made by the various interventions and approaches to supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
 - iv. Support the promotion of positive relationships with staff in schools and wider school communities as a key factor in developing a positive school ethos.

3. Behaviour in Scottish Schools

- 3.1 Every three years, schools across Scotland contribute to a national study on the levels and types of behaviour presented by pupils. The most recent survey was conducted in 2016 and published in December 2017. It recommended that further improving '... the ethos and culture, and relationships and behaviour in Scottish schools is central to the successful delivery of Curriculum for Excellence, implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child and the aspirations of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the National Improvement Framework.'

Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research, Scottish Government (2017)
<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/behaviour-scottish-schools-research-2016/>

- 3.2 The most recent study found that the majority of staff in schools report pupils as being generally well behaved. This is a pattern consistent with previous rounds of this research (2006, 2009, 2012). Although primary schools report a slight increase in low level disruption, there has been little change in low-level disruptive behaviour in secondary schools and overall, there has been little change in serious disruptive behaviour in either primary or secondary schools. Serious violent incidents remain rare. This is a similar situation as evidenced in Highland schools, with positive behaviour generally being reported across all sectors.
- 3.3 Analysis of a range of school and teacher variables showed that by far the strongest predictor of experiencing negative behaviours, for teachers and support staff in both sectors, was the perception of school ethos. Those who gave a poorer rating when asked to rate 'the overall ethos of your school' reported that they experienced negative behaviours more often. Contributory factors to maintaining a positive and inclusive school ethos were authoritative and distributive leadership, engagement of pupils and parents/carers, reflective practice and pedagogy within the staff group and the use of rights based, developmental approaches such as restorative practice and solution oriented approaches.
- 3.4 A culture where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure and where their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated is essential to the development of good relationships. In order to create an inclusive environment for effective learning and teaching there should be a shared understanding of wellbeing underpinned by children's rights and a focus on positive relationships such as that found within the Highland Practice Model.
- 3.5 Wider Scottish-based research has found that positive relationships align with higher attainment. Where schools have attainment that is higher than expected for their catchment area, they also demonstrate positive relationships throughout the school community, and children and young people are involved meaningfully in decisions which affect them at all levels of the school. Research into authoritative school 'climate' indicates a balance between high expectations and structure on one hand, and warmth and support on the other. This authoritative 'climate' has been cited as reducing student dropout rates, improving attainment and leading to less bullying and victimisation in schools.
- 3.6 Most teachers in Scotland report that they are confident in their abilities to promote positive relationships and behaviour and to respond to indiscipline in their classrooms, and this is a necessary skill as between 60-80% of staff in the 2017 national study reported they had to deal with low level disruption at least once a day or more. Support staff and teachers identified the most common low-level disruptive behaviours (talking out of turn, work avoidance, using mobile phones, making unnecessary

noise), as having the greatest negative impact in the classroom.

3.7 Nationally, primary support staff reported that they have experienced slightly higher levels of general abuse, physical aggression and physical violence towards them personally. They were of the view that this was due to a lack of both internal and external Additional Support Needs resources and also cited societal changes (including the increased use of digital technologies), and their perceptions of some parenting approaches.

4. **National Frameworks**

4.1 Currently, the various national frameworks supporting education and children's services are consistent in their promotion of positive relationships being central to creating inclusive practices and the wellbeing and achievement of children and young people. This accords with local evidence from children and young people gathered through the recent consultation report published by Highland Children's Forum on pupils not in full time education, which found that: 'The overarching theme of the responses, from young people, parents and professionals, was about attitude: the solution was to build positive relationships built on empathy and understanding.'
<http://highlandchildrensforum.org/hcf-reports>

4.2 The *National Improvement Framework* sets out clear priorities to deliver excellence and equity and outlines a number of key drivers for improvement that also support inclusive practice e.g. authoritative and distributive leadership, the engagement of pupils and their parents/carers in the education process and the promotion of differentiated and developmentally sensitive approaches to curricular planning and delivery.

4.3 Children's wellbeing is at the heart of *Getting it Right for Every Child*, providing a focus on the wellbeing indicators to prevent or reduce the impact of adversity. The assessment and planning for children that forms part of the *National Practice Model* promotes early intervention and preventative strategies, as well as a focus on targeted support and also includes a commitment to developing positive learning environments at a universal level, underpinned by children's rights.

4.4 The General Teaching Council for Scotland's *National Standards for Teachers* expects all staff to be proactive in promoting positive relationships and behaviour in the classroom, playground and the wider school community. There are specific experiences and outcomes in Health and Wellbeing which are the responsibility of all practitioners, who have a role in:

- Establishing open, positive, supporting relationships across the community, where children and young people will feel that they are listened to, and where they feel secure in their ability to discuss sensitive aspects of their lives;
- Promoting a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure;
- Modelling behaviour which promotes health and wellbeing and encouraging it in others;
- Using learning and teaching methodologies which promote effective learning;
- Being sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each child and young person.

4.5 The Scottish Government guidance on *The Curriculum for Excellence* also underscores the need for positive relationships within schools as a prerequisite for success and achievement. 'Respectful and constructive relationships are the starting point for successful learning. Schools and other education settings can foster respect,

responsibility and tolerance by living out their values and practicing them within their own communities". (Scottish Executive 2004)

- 4.6 Even where disruptive or challenging behaviour is extreme, the emphasis remains on maintaining and rebuilding positive relationships. The Scottish Government's Policy on Exclusion in Scottish Schools suggests that exclusion should be used as a short term measure and as a last resort, with the aim of improving outcomes and providing support – not punishment. In light of the work on early adversity, trauma, brain development and disadvantage, the loss experienced by the pupil through exclusion and the further breakdown of their relationships, can often exacerbate the negative consequences that earlier traumas have had on their lives. Any exclusion should therefore always enable planning and assessment and an opportunity for reflection for both the child/young person and staff involved in order to prevent any further need for this course of action to be taken. Relationship based approaches such as the solution oriented approach used in Highland, or restorative approaches, should be used to guide a child or young person's return to school, to support them in rebuilding relationships.

The policy notes that 'The foundation for schools, learning establishments and local authorities is a whole school ethos of prevention, early intervention and support against a background which promotes positive relationships, learning and behaviour. Everyone in a learning community should feel they are in a safe and nurturing environment'

(Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 - Scottish Government 2017)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/2017/06/8877>

5. The Highland Context

- 5.1 Highland is a rural authority with a limited number of specialist services and provisions. Most children and young people are educated within mainstream schools, some of which have additionally resourced provisions. This can help promote inclusion as pupils are generally supported within their own communities, but can also limit the options for pupils who might struggle to manage within a busy mainstream environment. However having more pupils educated in mainstream schools provides the impetus for all staff to become more skilled in supporting the full range of pupils with additional needs, including those with social, emotional and behavioural needs and to support this skills base, a varied training programme is offered to teachers and Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) across Highland throughout the year.
- 5.2 There are limited specialist provisions for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs (SEBN), but these do include Intensive Support provisions for older pupils in Inverness (The Bridge), Wick (Airport House) and Fort William (An Cala). These alternative educational provisions can provide both SQA courses as well as alternatives such as Asdan, John Muir Awards, Duke of Edinburgh, Saltire Awards, Young Scot etc, which allows pupils in their final years of education to develop a portfolio of experience and certificates to take with them when they leave. Given the age of the pupils, these provisions often have a focus on employability/transition work with SDS Key Workers, with local college links or extended work experience.
- 5.3 In addition, there is provision for late primary and early secondary aged pupils based around the Inner Moray Firth, which provides both outreach and alternative provision, delivered by a small staff group based on the Black Isle. For younger pupils, there are currently over 20 nurture provisions based in Highland primary schools. Other schools

are using their Pupil Equity Funding to train staff to support pupils in additional nurture bases, which are supported by a robust training programme delivered by Educational Psychologists across Highland.

- 5.4 Pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs are considered to have additional support needs, as defined by the Education (Scotland) (ASL) Act 2004. Currently there are 2096 pupils identified as having SEBN as their main or only additional need on SEEMIS, (the pupil database used by schools), with a further 1328 being recorded as having SEBN as one of a number of identified needs, most often associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder, severe learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, or family issues. Many of these pupils have needs identified at level 3 or 4 and so have additional resource identified to help staff meet their needs within the school's ASN allocation.
- 5.5 The ASN team in Highland incorporates a small Positive Relationships Team (1.6FTE), managed by a strategic lead with responsibility for promoting positive relationships. The lead for this team works with the Head of Service and the wider ASN team to track the key indicators for pupils with SEBN and to support strategic developments across Highland. This data set includes information on pupils involved in violent and aggressive incidents, those who are excluded from school and also those on part time timetables. With support from Area ASN Managers and ASN Officers, the Educational Psychology Service, the Primary Mental Health Worker Service and the Transitions Coordinator, improvement is planned and progress is tracked quarterly through the ASN Improvement Group.

6. Violent and Aggressive Incident Reporting

- 6.1 Violent and Aggressive Incident Forms are completed by schools for all incidents they define in this category. Over a number of years, reporting has become more accurate and schools are regularly encouraged to complete forms, to provide as full a picture as possible. A number of years ago when this work was being highlighted to schools, there was a significant increase in reporting, which has now settled and so over the past few years, there has been more confidence in the data. Forms are completed by each adult involved in an incident, and consequently there are more reports received than there are incidents occurring (see fig 2 below). When incidents are counted exclusively (regardless of the number of staff involved) the total for session 2017-18 was 853 incidents. The reduction in reports from 2016 -17 indicates a 12.6 percent reduction in violence and aggression in the past academic year, and includes reductions in several schools where ASN teams have focused a range of targeted interventions.

Academic Year	Total Pupil Against Staff reports	Total Pupil Against Staff incidents
2014 - 2015	1034	1032
2015 - 2016	1041	1033
2016 - 2017	1000	1000
2017 – 2018	874	853

Fig 2

- 6.2 Many of the pupils who are involved in violent or aggressive incidents have significant additional support needs (see fig 3), and a high number attend special schools or resourced provisions, where it is acknowledged that there is no intent to harm, but the aggression is a reaction to the environment, or to their anxiety or frustration. Specific training on supporting children with Autism and those with severe and complex needs

has been accessed by staff in our special schools and the level of incident recording has reduced as a result.

	ASN Level			
	1	2	3	4
Number of Incidents	33	106	84	550

Fig 3

- 6.3 Pupils who tend to be involved in violent or aggressive incidents are generally very young. The peak age is between 6-8 years old and this has been fairly consistent over a number of years (see fig 4). This is consistent with the research in this area identifying greater levels of frustration and acting out behaviours when pupils have a more limited vocabulary to express their emotions and thoughts, and before the stage when developmentally they can fully empathise with others or regulate their own emotions.

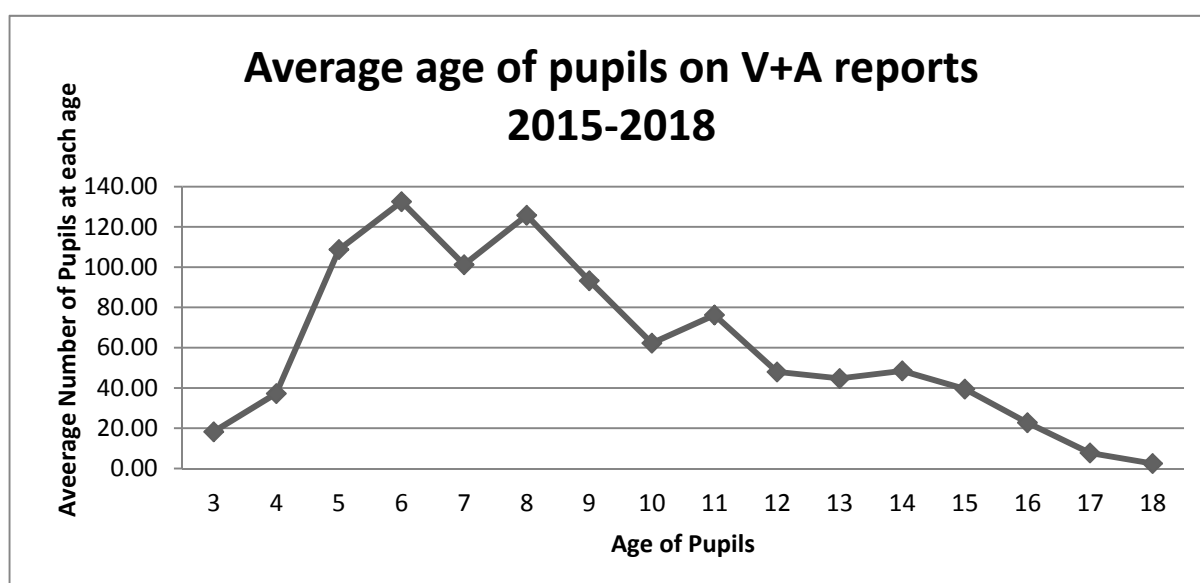


Fig 4

- 6.4 To address the issues in the early primary stages, training has been rolled out across Highland to early years staff and primary school staff, to help them understand why some children may act out at this age and to focus more work on differentiating the curriculum and the environment. Supporting children to feel safe in school by providing a nurturing environment and reducing anxiety within the curriculum e.g. taking a developmental approach such as that supported by 'Emerging Literacy', <https://highlandliteracy.com/emerging-literacy/> or supporting the development of early vocabulary through 'Words Up' training, <https://highlandliteracy.com/words-up-key-messages/> has impacted positively on behaviour in schools where these approaches have been implemented consistently.
- 6.5 One intervention evidenced as being successful for this age group is provided by 10 trainers who deliver a programme called 'Roots of Empathy' to P3 pupils, to support them developing greater levels of empathy and social, emotional learning through their P3 year. <http://rootsofempathy.org/>
- 6.6 In addition, the 'Resilient Kids' programme developed by Highland Council Psychological Service is delivered as a universal intervention in many primary schools at the nursery to primary transition and then at P3, supporting the development of

resilience and emotional regulation.

<https://highlandcouncilpsychologicalservice.wordpress.com/resilient-kids/>

- 6.7 The drop off in the number of Violence & Aggression reports after P3 evidences the success of these supports for children in the early stages, who may present with challenging behaviours, to help them be more settled and more in control of their emotions as they develop greater levels of skill.
- 6.8 Although any one incident can be recorded against many incident types, the majority of incidents reported in session 2017-18 involved physical assault (see fig 5). This can be hitting out physically, or throwing something towards the adult. Most often any 'weapon' is improvised and will tend to be something close at hand e.g. a book, a pencil, a cup etc. In a very small number of cases, weapons e.g. knives, are involved in the incident. In 2017-18, a weapon was reported to be present in only 6 incidents and where it was used, it was used to threaten rather than harm. Although very seldom is the other person harmed by any weapon, these incidents are dealt with very seriously and usually the pupil is excluded from school for a number of days. To support schools through such situations, guidance on managing incidents involving weapons has been developed in partnership with Police Scotland.

Sum of Verbal	Sum of Verbal & Physical	Sum of Physical
175	290	606

Fig 5

- 6.9 A variety of staff can be involved in violent incidents but often PSAs will be those most directly involved (see fig 6). Incidents will always be reported to a member of the senior management team, even if it is able to be dealt with at a lower level.

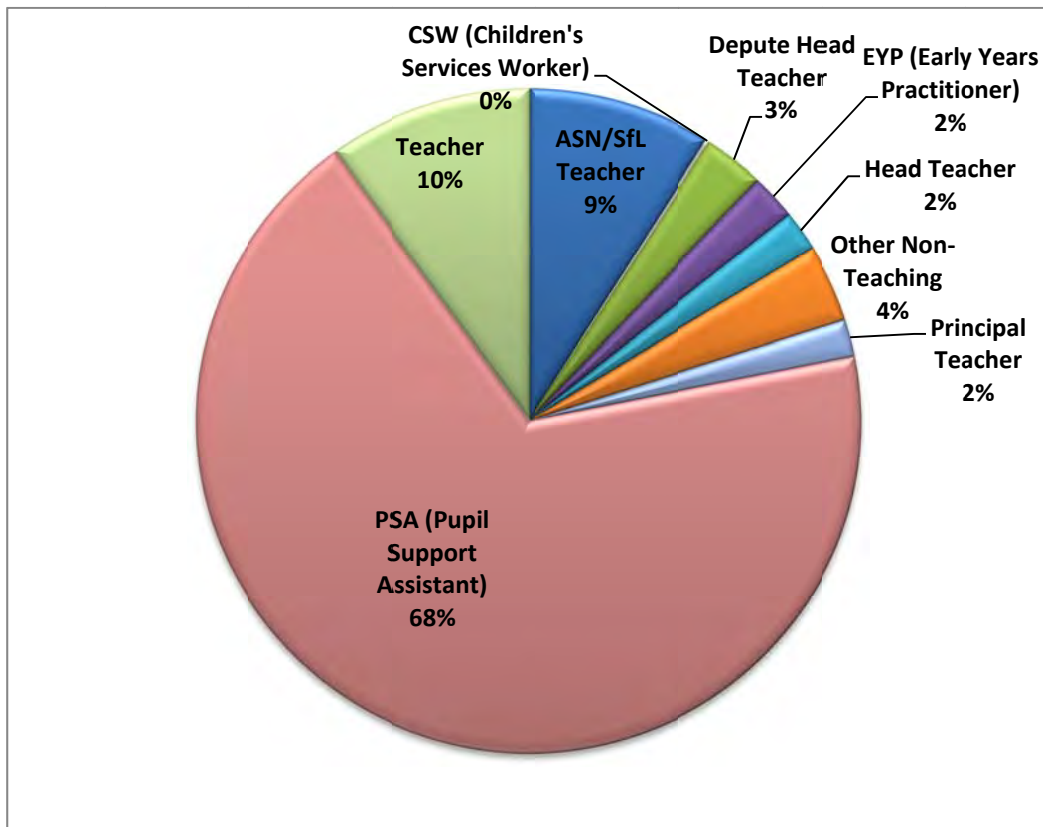


Fig 6

Training is provided for all PSAs on 'Promoting Positive Relationships', 'Functional

6.10 Analysis of Behaviour' and where appropriate on 'Physical Intervention'. Given the number of pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders, who also exhibit challenging behaviour from time to time, training is also provided for PSAs on supporting pupils with Autism. Those PSAs who are supporting pupils who are known to react violently when upset, anxious or frustrated, are offered training at a higher level and many have completed the 8 day 'Emotional Literacy' training course, alongside teaching staff and other staff within Children's Services. Over 400 staff have completed this course in the 10 years it has been offered, with very positive feedback received for the learning and changes it has made to practice in almost all cases.

7. Exclusions

7.1 Exclusion rates in Highland compare favourably to those across the rest of Scotland (see fig 7).

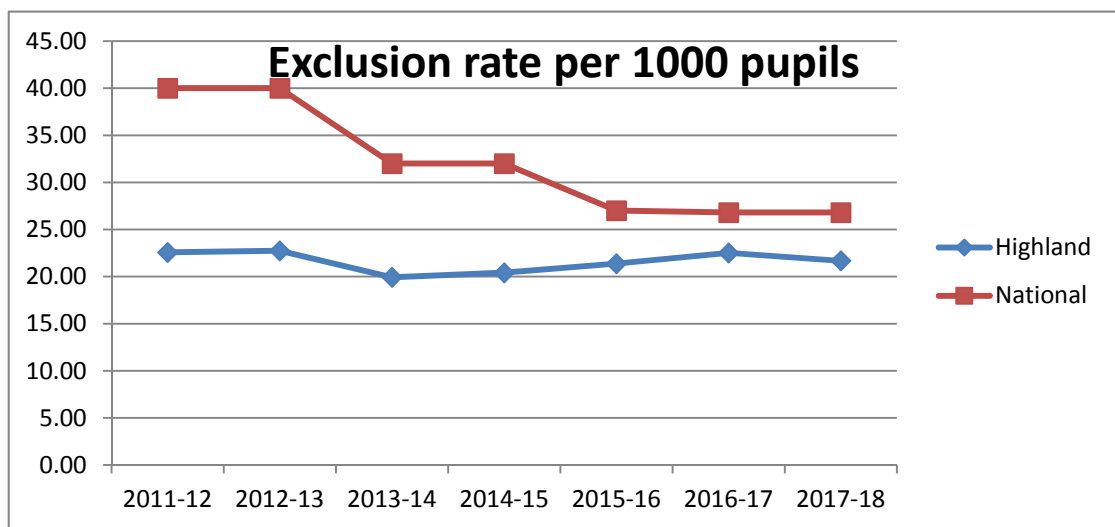


Fig 7

7.2 However there remains variability across schools and schools of a similar size and similar catchment areas are reported to have different rates of exclusion. Sometimes a particular cohort of pupils can lead to a 'spike' in exclusion rates for a period of time, but in some cases, exclusion rates are consistently higher, or lower than would be expected, providing information about practice in those schools. The graphs below show the rate of exclusion in schools across Highland.

7.3 Of the 171 primary schools in Highland, 39 (22.8%) excluded at least one pupil in 2017. The percentage of the pupil population in each of these schools, who experienced exclusion varied from 0.22% to 9.47% (see figure 8).

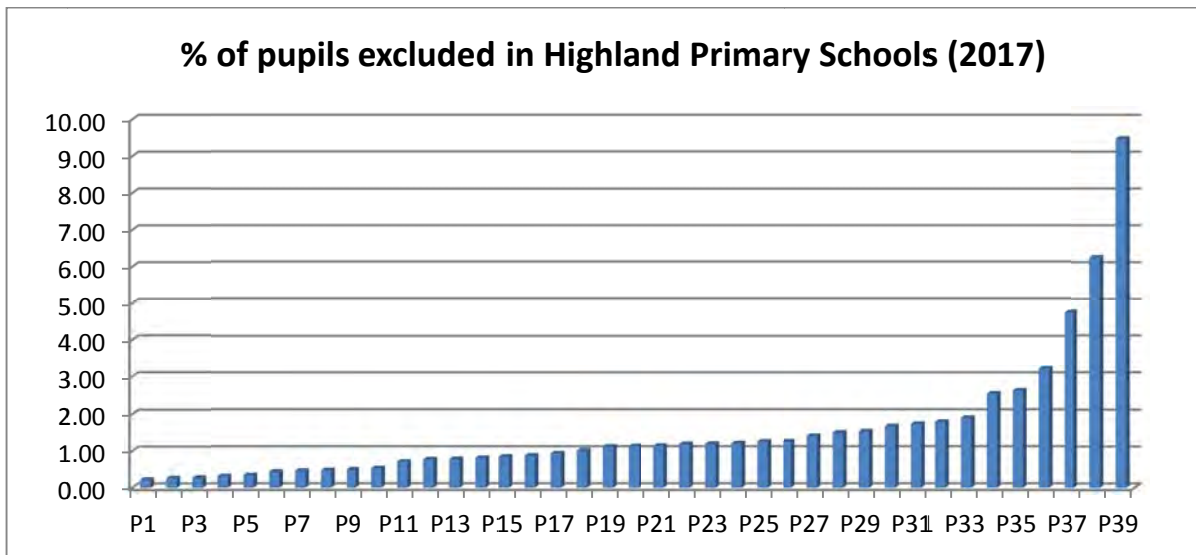


Fig 8

7.4 Of the 29 secondary schools in Highland, 25 (86.2%) excluded at least one pupil in 2017. The percentage of the pupil population in each of these schools, who experienced exclusion varied from 0.22% to 9.47% (see figure 9).

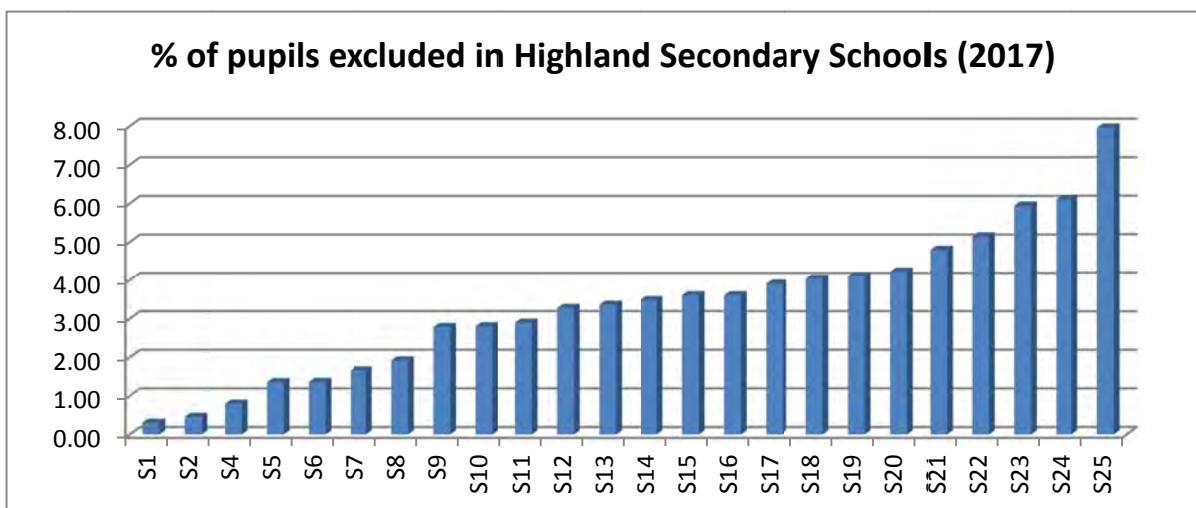


Fig 9

7.5 What is very clear from a number of studies is that a consistent education is one of the key factors in building resilience in children and young people and non-attendance or interrupted learning is regularly identified in research as a significant risk factor to those children and young people who have poorer outcomes in terms of employment, social relationships, misuse of drugs and alcohol, criminal activity etc. For example, The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crimeⁱ looked at 4000 young people who started secondary school in 1998. One of the most important predictors of criminal record status after leaving school, was school exclusion by the third year of secondary education. Smith, Dyer and Connelly (2014)ⁱⁱ looked at the pathways leading to offending of 125 young people in Polmont Young Offenders Institution and found that 80%+ had been excluded from school. Understanding differences and supporting schools to reduce exclusions through creating more supportive environments and building positive relationships is therefore a key role within the Highland strategy on Promoting Positive Relationships.

7.6 During session 2017-18, there were 667 exclusions, involving 402 pupils. It has consistently been the case that some pupils experience significant difficulty in

maintaining good discipline in schools and are excluded on multiple occasions. The number of exclusions will therefore always be greater than the number of pupils involved in exclusions. (see fig 10).

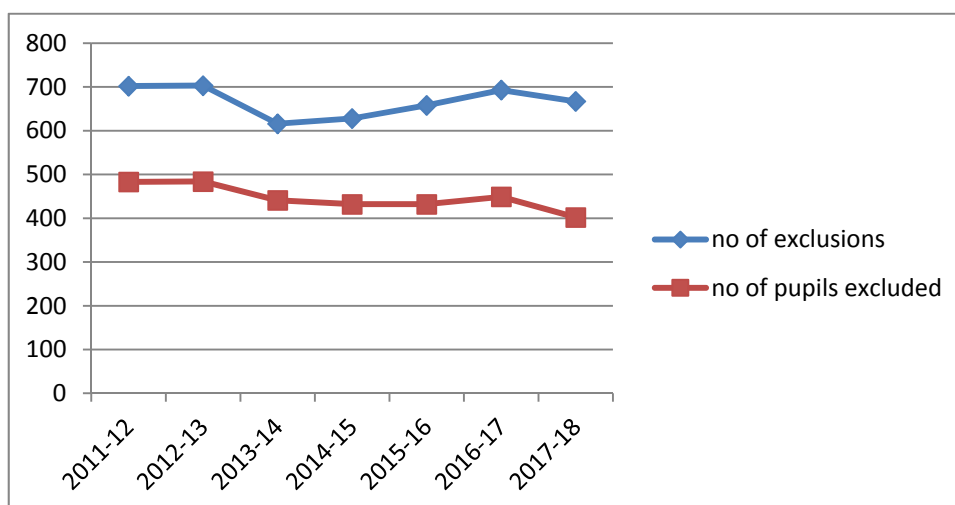


Fig 10

7.7 While most exclusions are short term (between 1-3 days), for more serious incidents, pupils can be excluded for 15 days or more (see fig 11). In 2017 the maximum length of any exclusion was 31 days. In all cases of exclusion, the ASN Area teams are informed and where an alternative educational placement or additional support is being considered, the Area ASN Manager will always be directly involved and so outcomes for pupils can be tracked and interventions individualised to meet their needs.

Length of exclusion	1 day only	1-3 days	3-5 days	5-10 days	10-15 days	15-20 days	20-25 days	More than 25 days
% of 2017 exclusions	13.5	34.4	29.6	16.3	1.4	2.2	2.7	0.5

Fig 11

7.8 Unlike violent and aggressive incident reporting, the majority of exclusions happen in the secondary sector (see fig 12)

School Type	Number of pupils excluded 2017-18	Number of V&A incidents 2017-18
Primary	47	616
Secondary	352	87
Special	7	150
Grand Total	402	853

Fig 12

7.9 Tracking the data over the last 5 years does not show a strong link between pupils involved in violent and aggressive incidents in the Primary sector and those who are excluded in the Secondary sector. For a small number there is a clear link and their education is disruptive across a number of years, however in general these groups are not the same. The reasons for the disruption are often similar, with pupils in both age groups finding it difficult to express their emotions appropriately or having a lack of emotional regulation. However, older pupils are also more disaffected and have potentially become more frustrated and distressed through years of feeling

overwhelmed by their home circumstances or educational experiences, and not feeling a sense of belonging in school. This may explain why the peak of exclusion happens towards the end of school for many pupils (age 15-16), when they become more aware that they are unlikely to achieve the success that their peers may be experiencing (see fig 13).

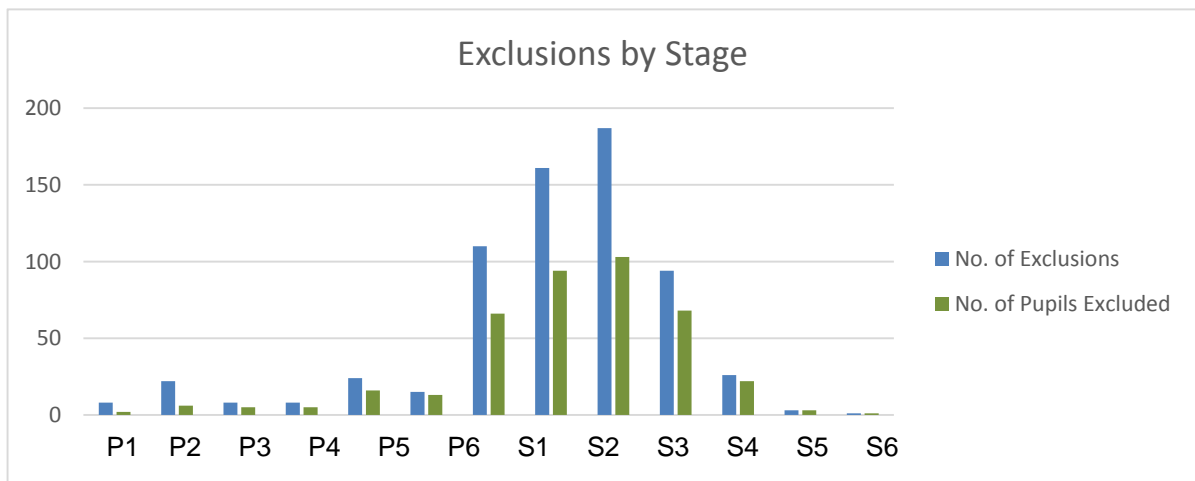


Fig 13

8. Part Time Attendance

8.1 Attendance levels in Highland schools are well within the expected range. While there is variation across schools and within schools, the overall attendance figures of 91% in secondary schools and 95% in primary schools have remained fairly comparable with the national figures of 91.8% in secondary and 95.1% in primary and have been reasonably consistent over a number of years.

8.2 It is more difficult however to gather comparable national data on that group of pupils who do attend school, but for a variety of reasons have been placed on reduced timetables, as this information is not gathered by other local authorities. In some Highland schools a reduced timetable is agreed to meet the needs of a pupil who may have medical, social or mental health needs - removing the pressure on them to attend every lesson and every day. With such expectations, some pupils will simply not attend and will lose the link with the school and with their learning. Sometimes, there is an agreement to reduce the timetable as a preventative measure, to reduce the likelihood of full exclusion from school or as a means of gradually building up time in school as a support strategy following an exclusion. In such situations, the hope is that the part time nature of the timetable will allow the pupil to achieve success when they do attend and to gradually build on this.

8.3 The recent HCF report on the use of part time timetables noted best practice when schools and services listened to the young person and the family and were able to be flexible and creative in meeting needs. This included approaches that individualised adaptations to both the timetable and the curriculum. Sometimes the school environment itself presented a barrier to pupils attending full-time, with significant sensory or social issues leading to high levels of anxiety in some cases. Those consulted were of the view that part-time timetables could be useful if they were monitored and well managed, but felt that there were limited alternative activities to extend a pupil's curriculum in a way that could better meet their needs, if issues were entrenched or significant. <http://highlandchildrensforum.org/hcf-reports>

8.4 For whatever reason a child's time in school is limited, this reduction can create issues

for the child/young person maintaining social contact with his/her peers and/or contact with the curriculum and so should be carefully monitored and used sparingly as an intervention. In using this strategy in Highland schools, head teachers are therefore asked to have regard to the guidance on part time timetables and to carefully monitor the plans for those children where this is used.

http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/17934/guidance_on_pupils_not_in_full_time_education

- 8.5 There are more than twice as many pupils of secondary school age on reduced timetables as primary school aged pupils, with more secondary aged pupils being on significantly reduced timetables (see fig 14). In particular, there is a significant spike in S4, which represents those pupils who are less able to manage a full diet of academic subjects and may require a greater level of elaboration of their educational package.

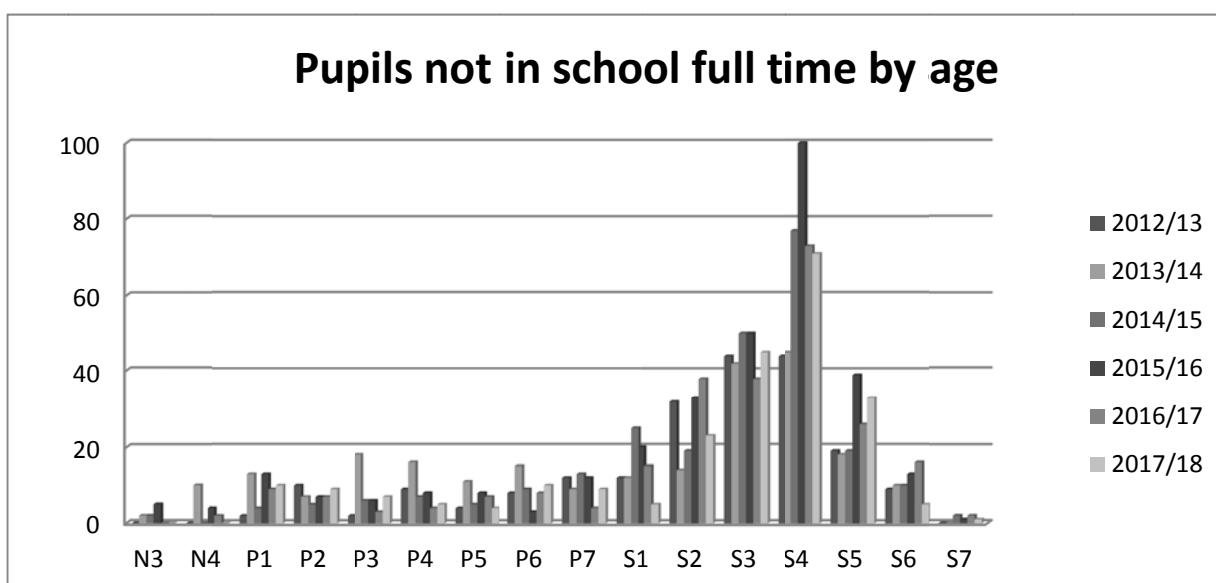


Fig 14

- 8.6 It may be easier to provide more flexibility around the primary curriculum. It is also possible that school staff find it less challenging when faced with a younger child who presents with challenging behaviour and is more understanding or tolerant of the challenges they present. Long term patterns of interrupted learning is however a feature for many pupils of all ages with significantly reduced attendance. Patterns of difficulty can be noted earlier in their school career and can become entrenched over time, making it more and more difficult to return to a more regular pattern of attendance. Close monitoring and planning is therefore important to ensure early intervention and to prevent established patterns of part time attendance being accepted.
- 8.7 During session 2016-17, 3% of S4 pupils were identified as being on part-time timetables. These pupils are significantly impacted in relation to their exam success, achieving an average of only 43.9 SCQF tariff points as compared to an average of 331.6 for the S4 cohort as a whole. Only one pupil within this cohort received a score close to the average of their peers at 339.
- 8.8 For this cohort of pupils, (N=74), 53 left at the end of S4, i.e. their first possible leaving date. In relation to longer term outcomes however, pupils fair better than might be expected, given their exam performances, with 71.7% of these school leavers moving into positive destinations on leaving school initially. These figures included 34% who

moved into further education, modern apprenticeships or full time employment – all very positive destinations that are likely to be longer lasting. However, 11% were economically inactive or unemployed and 28% left school on Activity Agreements which in themselves do not provide longer term employment or training opportunities.

8.9 Of the 9 S4 pupils on part time timetables in 2016-17 who were either LAC at the time of the exams or had previously been LAC, 6 had timetables covering less than 50%. The average tariff score for this group of pupils was only 18, with one pupil not being presented and 3 who were presented but received no pass in any exam. Care Experienced Young People are therefore more significantly at risk and appropriately will be tracked within the LAC Improvement Plan currently being implemented within Children’s Services.

8.10 The numbers of children known to have a disability, who are in school less than full-time, has fluctuated over the years (see fig 15). In 2013/14, the data was not available from the Mid Area and so the numbers were slightly lower than in subsequent years. In 2014/15, when data was available across all 4 Areas in Highland, this figure had peaked at 95. The data for 2015/16 was identical, identifying 95 pupils with disabilities. Unfortunately in session 2016/17, data was not available from the West Area and so the decrease reported in this year cannot be seen as a reliable indication of a true decrease in incidence. However, the most recent data, for session 2017/18 does show a further reduction to 70 and so this improvement does seem to be real.

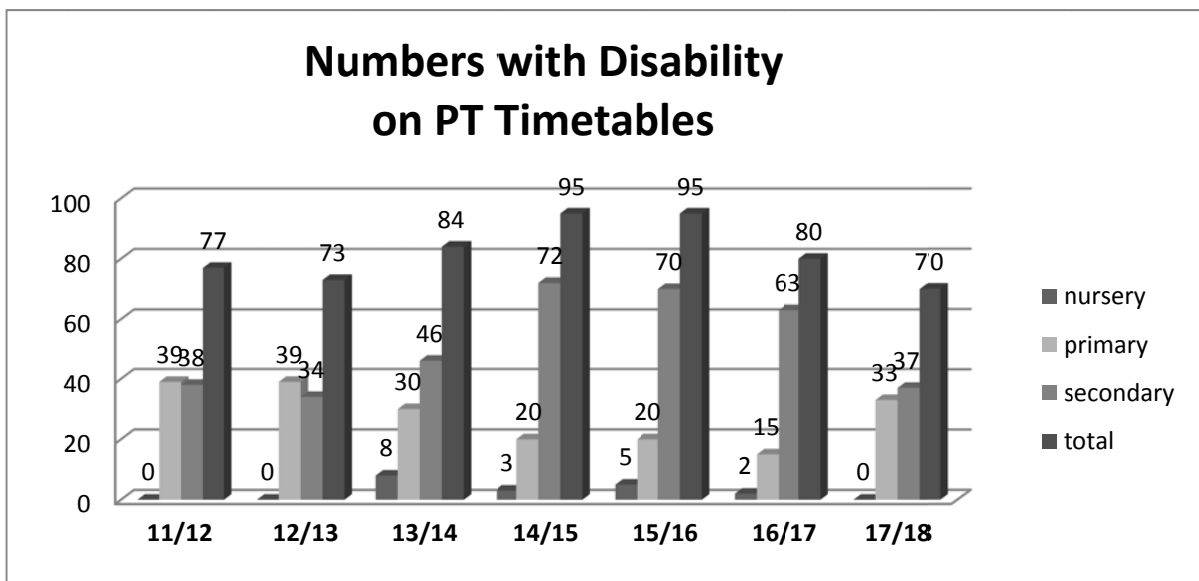


Fig 15

8.11 Of the pupils with disabilities, a significant proportion has autism spectrum disorders, as indicated in fig 16 below. The challenges experienced by pupils with ASD include behaviours that school staff find difficult to manage, but also levels of anxiety experienced by the pupils themselves, that lead to difficulties managing the social demands and sensory environment of the school. Numbers of pupils with a diagnosis of ASD have increased from around 600 in 2011 to over 647 in 2017 and so some of the increase in this group of children and young people may be due to the increased identification and diagnosis.

School Session	Pupils with Disabilities	Pupils with ASD
2011/ 2012	77	69
2012/2013	73	32
2013/2014	84	38
2014/2015	95	50
2015/2016	95	54
2016/2017	80	55
2017/2018	70	62

Fig 16

8.12 Pupils with a wide range of needs and disabilities are represented within the cohort who are on part time timetables (see fig 17), and in particular there has been an increasing number of pupils with mental health issues being identified, most notably those with anxiety difficulties. This could be indicative of a real growth in this type of need, but could also be a feature of mental health now being recognised in its own right, rather than as part of other conditions. To address this identified need there has been a significant level of activity, led by the Primary Mental Health Worker Service, to provide consultation and training to school staff, to help highlight and help them correctly identify the needs of pupils with mental health issues in order to address them through appropriate interventions. It is likely that this higher level of awareness in schools has provided greater confidence in staff identifying mental health as a distinct category of need within those pupils who are in part-time attendance.

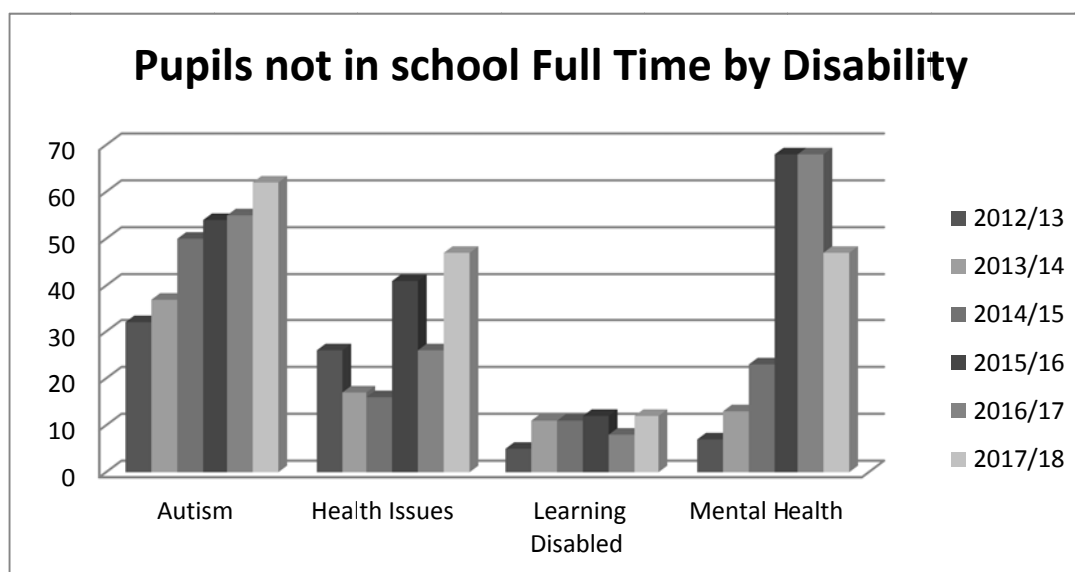


Fig 17

8.13 Schools in Highland are offered training from the PMHW Service on Mental Health Awareness and 'Mental Health First Aid for Young People', to help support staff in identifying and addressing issues early. The Council's Psychological Service also offers training in packages to increase resilience in pupils at various stages in school, to help prevent anxiety and low mood from interrupting the learning of children and young people.

8.14 Overall, the numbers of pupils having access to a full time educational package have remained fairly constant, with 99.23% of pupils currently being offered access to a full time timetable (see fig 18). The performance management target across Highland for this data is 99.3%, although all head teachers and managers should work towards all

pupils being able to access a full time educational package.

	Mid Area		North Area		South Area		West Area		TOTALS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2012/2013	69	1.0	21	0.4	82	0.6	45	0.8	217	0.7
2013/2014	47	0.7	36	0.7	134	1.0	35	0.5	252	0.8
2014/2015	71	1.0	15	0.3	139	1.0	28	0.5	253	0.8
2015/2016	86	1.3	30	0.7	178	1.1	26	0.5	320	1.0
2016/2017	72	1.1	50	1.1	130	0.8	43	0.8	295	0.95
2017/2018	66	1.0	9	0.2	142	1.0	20	0.4	237	0.77

Fig 18

(Data in 2012/2013 was not available for one large primary school and one large secondary school in the North and a number of small primary schools in Mid and West. The figures for 2014/2015 also omit the data for one large secondary school in the North and several small primary schools in North and West.)

- 8.15 The number of pupils not being offered a full-time educational package has reduced slightly over the past 6 years (see fig 19). There are now 238 pupils not being offered their full educational entitlement from data received from the 4 Areas in Highland. This equates to around 0.77% of pupils in Highland. ASN Managers in all Areas work closely with head teachers to consider additional supports that can be offered to pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs and to provide a greater level of coordination and consistency in supporting such pupils across Highland.

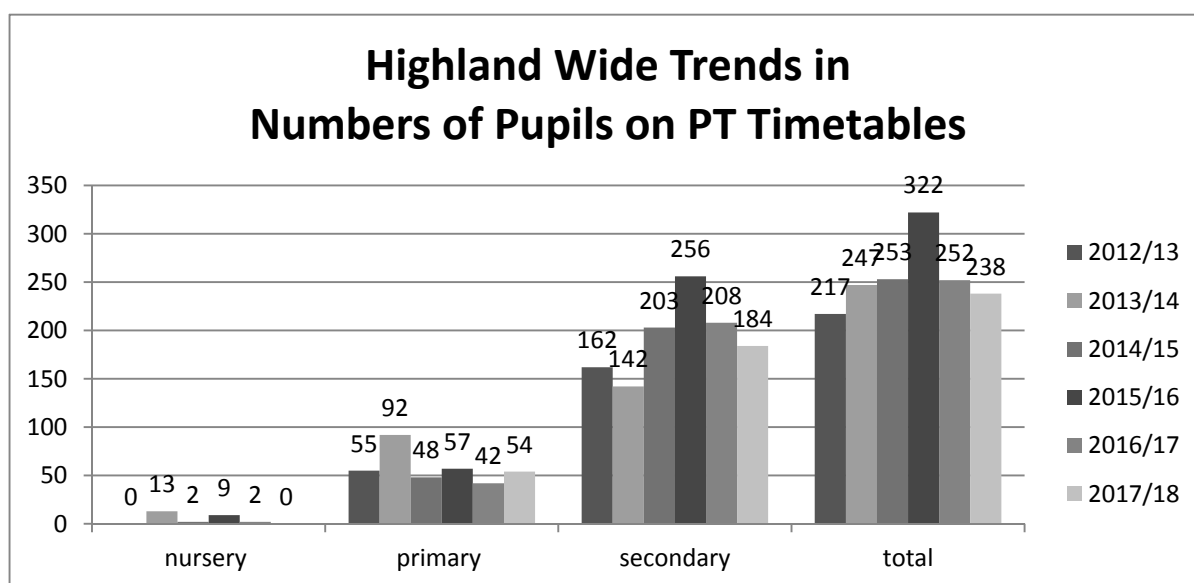


Fig 19

- 8.16 Over the years part-time timetables have been tracked, the majority of pupils have had very restricted levels of education (less than 50% of a full time package) (see fig 20). This illustrates the complexity of the needs of this small percentage of pupils and the need for easy access to alternative curricular experiences to support their overall package. The improvements have been made with those pupils who have had limited or moderate reductions in their timetables and in particular, for those pupils who already spend most of their time in school, having more than 80% of a full time package.

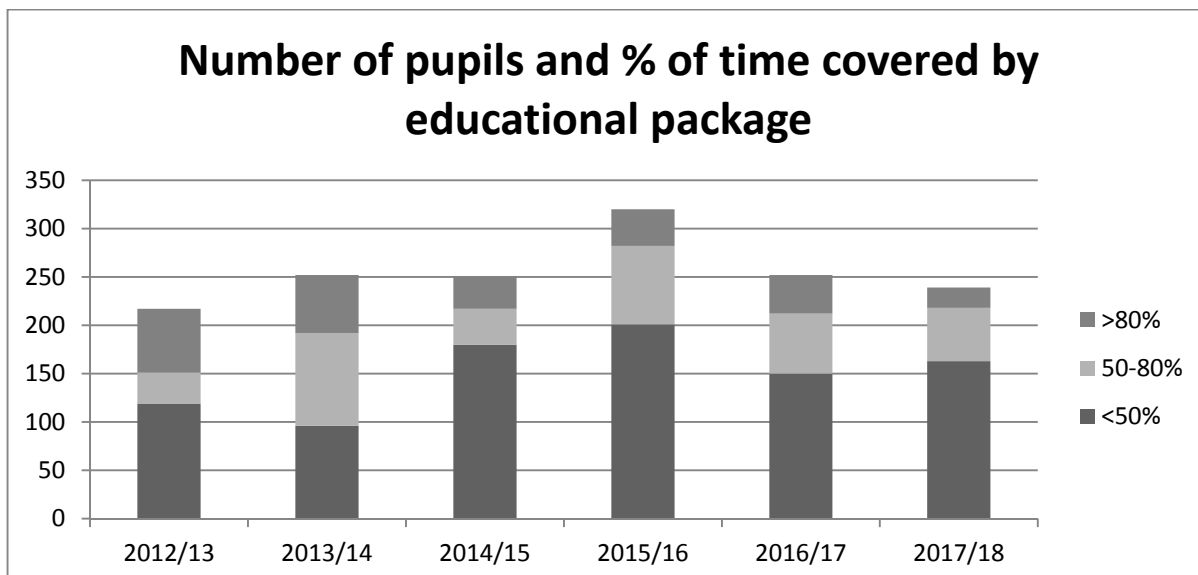


Fig 20

- 8.17 Those pupils on the most reduced timetables (less than 50%), are more likely to present challenging behaviour as a result of their social, emotional or behavioural needs (SEBN), or to have mental health issues (MH) and be significantly anxious about leaving home (separation anxiety) and/or attending school (school phobic). These two groups account for 115 of the 163 pupils with the most limited education (SEBN = 78, MH = 37).
- 8.18 For the first group, the reduced timetable tends to be as a result of the challenging and sometimes violent and aggressive behaviour exhibited by the pupils, with the reduction agreed to protect staff or other pupils from any further violent or aggressive behaviours. In the latter group, the reduction tends to be as a means of providing a timetable that the pupil can manage, to limit the stress they experience. Many of these pupils have been on reduced timetables for significant periods of time, due to complex and often entrenched difficulties. Planning for an increase in school attendance as part of the child's plan process is important from the outset, so that pupils, parents and staff are aware that the expectation is that they will be able to engage in a less limited educational programme which is able to meet their needs.

9. Evidence Based Interventions

- 9.1 To address the needs of those pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs and to support greater levels of inclusive practice across all ages, the Highland Practice Model is central to the approach taken in Highland. Providing a universal level of support, with positive relationships at the core, supports preventative work as well as targeted interventions within early years, primary school and secondary stages.
- 9.2 Preventative approaches in Highland are particularly focused on the Early Years. These interventions include:
- Video Interaction Guidance, which is used as a way to support early attachment between children and their parents. This is offered by Educational Psychologists, Primary Mental Health Workers, Children's Services Workers, Health Visitors and/or Early Years Practitioners, working as part of integrated teams.
 - Developmental Overviews are used as a way to flag up children at age 3 and 4 who are already having some difficulties with social, emotional development.

They inform appropriate early intervention strategies to support individuals and their families at this stage.

- Training has been provided for all early years practitioners in Nurseries and Partner Centres on early brain development and language development, with a focus on the development of emotional literacy at an early stage.
- Language development work is offered to all early years establishments jointly delivered by Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists.
- Before Words/Words Up training has been provided to midwives, health visitors, early years practitioners and school staff, by the Early Years Educational Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapists, supporting parents and staff to improve relationships with children and supporting their early social and language development.

9.3 There is an increasing national interest in and focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their impacts. The essential message is that adversity during childhood, especially but not only in the first few years, can have long lasting effects on how children's brains and bodies develop, with implications for behaviour, health and achievement seen well into adulthood. To support this understanding, a series of workshops were arranged in May/June 2018, aimed at specialist staff, Team Leads and Managers across Care and Learning. Feedback from the 500+ members of staff who attended these sessions has shaped the direction of travel for future training and support for a wider range of practitioners across Care and Learning. These workshops will be followed up with further showings of the film *Resilience* and more discussion with a wider audience of practitioners after the summer break.

10. Training Strategy

10.1 An increasing evidence base points to the importance of school connectedness and school relationships in terms of long term positive outcomes for pupils (Learner and Kruger 1997ⁱⁱⁱ, Commodari 2013^{iv}, Niehaus et al 2012^v). School exclusion, reduced timetables and interrupted learning, for any reason, is likely to have a significant impact on these positive relationships.

10.2 To support pupils with SEBN and the staff who work with them, the ASN Team has therefore created a support strategy, providing training and support at 3 levels:

- Level 1 – Creating a Skills Base for a Positive Ethos, Culture & Climate
- Level 2 – Developing a Skills Base for Individual and Small Group Work
- Level 3 – Developing a Skills Base for Targeted Individualised work

10.3 Level 1 – Creating a Skills Base for a Positive Ethos, Culture & Climate
This includes the creation of a policy framework for 'Promoting Positive Relationships'. Policies are in place to support Highland practitioners that take cognisance of the legislative framework around inclusion, additional support needs, equality and children's rights. The Care and Learning Service has also recently agreed an SLA with UNICEF, as part of the Northern Alliance, to provide the Rights Respecting Schools Programme for all Highland schools. This programme aims to embed universal rights within school policy and practices and supports strong partnership working with pupils to empower them to achieve their universal rights.

10.4 The policy framework also includes the *Highland Anti-bullying Policy and Guidance*^{vi} which has recently been reviewed and rewritten by The Misty Isle Youth Forum on Skye, who undertook their own audit of all school pupils, to create a bespoke policy of exceptional quality for Highland. This will undoubtedly contribute to the social and emotional wellbeing in schools and provide guidance to help manage some of the

more challenging behaviour. In Highland we have a Toolkit and training programme to support practice in equality and diversity including guidance on approaches to identify and prevent homophobic bullying that is unique within the UK.

- 10.5 Solution focused approaches are used across Highland to identify and address need as part of the Highland Practice Model and also form the basis to the approach taken in Highland to support the practice of Coaching in schools. Direct training on the use of Solution Focused approaches and Emotional Literacy are provided regularly throughout the year as well as Cooperative Learning Academies and recall days.
- 10.6 Training is provided regularly to school staff, early years practitioners and other children's services staff on creating a whole school/service approach to promoting positive relationships, the functional analysis of behaviour and approaches to intervening positively to improve behaviour across schools. The Highland Psychological Service lead on initiatives such as Resilient Kids (Highland Council) and Whole School Approaches to Nurture (Scottish Government). Training is also provided for all Newly Qualified Teachers in relation to ASN, Inclusion and Promoting Positive Relationships.
- 10.7 Level 2 – Developing a Skills Base for Individual and Small Group Work
The teams within the ASN structure in Highland can all provide direct support and training to others to support them in working with individual children and young people or small groups who have particular needs. E.g. Primary Mental Health Workers, Educational Psychologists, Allied Health Professionals etc. In addition, the service works in partnership with some 3rd sector and voluntary organisations to provide support to particular groups of pupils e.g. Young Carers, pupils with SEBN, pupils with sensory impairments etc
- 10.8 Level 3 – Developing a Skills Base for Targeted Individualised work
The Highland Practice Model supports the involvement of children/young people and parents/carers, the involvement of specialist services and external agencies as part of the team around the child as appropriate and a range of policy frameworks and documentation that was standard across Children's Services.
- 10.9 To support the assessment and intervention of targeted services, the ASN team provide training on: Emotional Literacy & Understanding Behaviour; Internal regulation and developing scripts; Restorative Practices; Consultation/mentoring/coaching; incident debriefing; De-escalation (whole school); etc.
- 10.10 The service also commissions others to provide individual support for those pupils where some additionality may support their educational package e.g. Glachbeg Croft on the Black Isle, Abriachan Forest, Riding for the Disabled, Action for Children, Barnardos etc. These partners can support the individual child/young person and their families, but can also provide a model of different ways of working that can be supportive of skills development for staff in schools.

11. Implications

11.1 Resource

There are no additional resource implications at this stage. By monitoring school attendance and providing early intervention to support pupils, it is hoped this will lead to better personal outcomes for children and young people. It can however also reduce the need for intervention at a later stage which can often be more expensive e.g. an out of authority placement.

11.2 Legal

This process and the relevant improvement actions are supporting the Council in meeting its legal requirements. There is a requirement in law to provide education for pupils that is 'adequate and efficient' - Education (Scotland) Act 1980. In addition, every child also has the right to an education that is aimed at developing the personality, talents, mental and physical abilities of the individual to their fullest potential (The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act, 2000). Providing the required support and strategic direction to ensure that all pupils have a full time educational package that meets their needs enables these requirements to be met.

11.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

Children and young people with protected characteristics, in particular those with disabilities, are directly affected by the issues explored in this report. The aim is however to reduce their vulnerability and build their resilience while maximising their attendance at school and opportunities for learning and development.

The proposed actions support the Council in fulfilling its equalities duties. The Equalities Act (2010) provides a duty on education authorities, to 'make reasonable adjustments' to accommodate and meet the needs of pupils with a protected characteristic – including those with disabilities. This report identifies how reasonable adjustments are being made to meet the needs of those individuals who require the physical environment, curriculum approaches or personal supports to be adapted to ensure they can maintain a full time educational experience as far as possible.

11.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

There are no implications.

11.5 Risk

There are no risks associated with this work, but significant risks to vulnerable groups of pupils with SEBN if this work is not continued.

11.6 Gaelic

Pupils with SEBN are found across Highland and support is provided in Gaelic Medium Education, on the same basis as in English Medium. The one issue that sometimes presents is the availability of Gaelic speaking support staff.

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Date: 31 July 2018

Author: Bernadette Cairns, Head of Additional Support Services

Background Papers:

ⁱ esytc.ed.ac.uk

ⁱⁱ www.cycj.org.uk

ⁱⁱⁱ Attachment, self-concept and academic motivation in high school students, DG Learner, LJ Kruger, American Journal of Orthopsychiatry (1997)

^{iv} Pre-school teacher attachment, school readiness and risk of learning difficulties, E Commodari, Early Childhood Research Quarterly (2013)

^vA longitudinal study of school connectedness and academic outcomes across sixth grade, K Niehaus, C Rakes and KM Rudasill, Journal of school psychology (2012)

^{vi} https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/19358/anti_bullying_-_guidance_for_schools.pdf