

## **EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL: A VIEW FROM SCOTLAND OF SOME POLICY AND PRACTICE DILEMMAS**

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Exclusion from school has potentially serious consequences for young people. Their opportunities for academic achievement are curtailed, thereby reducing their chances of gaining educational qualifications and thus progression to further or higher education or into direct employment. Furthermore, exclusion may adversely influence a young person's sense of belonging, self-esteem and general socialisation into acceptable behaviour. The article reports research on the nature and extent of exclusion from school in Scotland, 1994-1996. It places the findings in the context both of research in England and of current policy concerns with social exclusion. It is in three main sections. Section one sets out the legislative framework for exclusion in Scotland, contrasting it to that in England and Wales. Section two reports the nature and extent of exclusions in a sample of Scottish schools, including data from teachers and pupils about the purposes and effects of exclusion. Section three considers the policy and practice dilemmas facing schools in the drive to raise standards and reduce exclusion.

### **LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND**

In Scotland, there are two main grounds for exclusion laid down in the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 as amended. These are:

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- that the education authority are of the opinion that the parent of the pupil refuses to comply or to allow the pupil to comply with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school;
- that they consider that in all the circumstances to allow the pupil to continue his/her attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or to the educational well-being of pupils there.

The procedures for exclusion are set out in a range of regulations and acts. Key features are:

- the need for oral/written communication between the school/authority and the home on the day of the decision to exclude and subsequently, in the event of the exclusion not being resolved within 7 days;
- the right of appeal against exclusion to an appeal committee and beyond that to the sheriff;
- the recording of information about exclusion in the pupil's progress record;
- the responsibility which the parents have to educate the excluded pupil;
- the registering of exclusion as unauthorised absence as the pupil is deemed to be absent from school without reasonable excuse.

There are a number of important features in the Scottish legislation made explicit in more recent guidance from the Scottish Office (2/98):

- The length of an exclusion is not defined and is a matter for the discretion of the education authority;
- The legislation does not make a distinction between 'temporary exclusion' and 'permanent exclusion'. In legislative terms a pupil is merely excluded.
- Under Scottish Office Guidance (2/98, p.5) the term 'temporary exclusion' should be used when a pupil is excluded but remains on the school register because it is expected that he or she will return to the school. The term 'permanent exclusion' should not be used; instead, when a pupil is excluded (and not expected to return to school) the term 'exclusion/removal from the register' should be used.

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- Attention is drawn to the special difficulties of excluding a pupil with a Record of Needs, in other words having pronounced specific or complex special educational needs which require continuing review. Scottish Office Guidance (2/98, p.6) urges education authorities to 'take all reasonable steps urgently to ensure that alternative provision ... is made available'.
- There is no national 'tariff' which ties a specific length or type of exclusion to specific behaviours in a rigid or automatic way.

In contrast, in England and Wales under the 1997 Education Act:

- schools are permitted to exclude pupils up to a maximum of 45 days per year;
- detention outside school hours without parental consent is permitted;
- parents' rights to choose a new school if their child has been excluded from two schools are withdrawn;
- Local Education Authorities are required to publish plans for supporting schools with disruptive pupils.

In summary there are several differences in legislative provision north and south of the border. The key differences are that in England there is a stipulated maximum length of fixed term exclusions, there is a curtailment of the rights of parents to choose a school for their child if the child has been excluded more than once, and there is widespread use of permanent exclusion. In Scotland many education authorities do not use the term permanent exclusion, arguing that their underlying approach is one of inclusion and that the authority retains duties in relation to a child removed from the register of a particular school. It is difficult to determine whether these apparent legislative differences directly influence practice in schools' use of exclusion. As we shall see below, small numbers of pupils were excluded in Scottish schools for six weeks or more in contrast to the rapid rise in pupils permanently excluded in English schools. However, accurate and reliable statistics in this area are difficult to establish (Parsons 1996). A new standard report form recording exclusions has recently been introduced in Scotland which should, for the first time, provide fairly comprehensive data on exclusions across the country.

While a full consideration of the legislation affecting exclusion from school is outside the scope of this article, it is worth highlighting one general point which applies both to Scotland and England. This is the lack of congruence between the Children Act 1989, and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 on the

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one hand and education legislation on the other. The welfare principle which underpins the Children's Acts in England and Scotland, namely that the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration, has no parallel in the Education Acts.

#### **THE RESEARCH**

The research was funded by the former Scottish Office and had five main aims: to map former Regional Authority policies; to explore headteachers' perception of these policies; to describe the characteristics of a sample of excluded pupils; to investigate perceptions of exclusion and of in-school alternatives; and to provide guidance on best policy and practice. It was carried out in three main phases 1994-96. Phase 1 on Regional Authority policy involved an analysis of appropriate documents and a telephone interview with a senior education officer with responsibility for exclusion.

Phase 2 consisted of a telephone survey of 176 headteachers, 60 from primary schools and 116 from secondary schools. We also asked headteachers to supply us with details of pupils who had been excluded since August 1995. Some 120 of the 176 did so, providing us with detailed information on 2,710 pupils.

Phase 3 consisted of case studies of eight secondary and four primary schools. Pairs of schools were similar in size and in the socio-economic status of their pupils, but different in their use of exclusion.

#### **THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF EXCLUSIONS**

Given the important role accorded to education authorities in defining time limits for exclusion, it is necessary to report briefly on the diversity of practice in regard to this and other aspects of exclusion. The summary of findings reinforces the point made earlier about the dubious validity and reliability of statistics on exclusion. The research was carried out while the 12 Regional and Island Authorities were still in existence and before the reform of local government created 32 single tier councils. Many of the new councils are in the process of adapting the exclusions policies of their Regional predecessors. The research revealed a wide diversity of policy, a diversity likely to increase with 32 rather than 12 authorities. The main areas of diversity were:

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- informal exclusion, where pupils were sent home for a 'cooling off' period without any record of such an event being kept. Four authorities permitted this at the time of the research either explicitly or implicitly; three expressly forbade it and five made no mention of it in policy documents.
- permanent exclusion, where the pupil could not be readmitted to the original school. This was a feature of policy in three authorities.
- notification of exclusion to the authority. Five authorities wanted notification of all exclusions while seven required notification only of exclusions of a certain number of days or beyond.
- stages of exclusion. These included 'at the headteacher's discretion'; two types such as 'under 14 days' and '14 days and over'; 3 stages of varying lengths, e.g. 5/10/15 days, 5/15/30 days.
- volume and, by implication, status of policy. Some authorities had fairly voluminous documentation and referred to other policies such as those for special educational needs. Others deliberately eschewed a formal policy statement, relying instead on a standard letter to headteachers.
- policy aims - all authorities stressed that exclusion was a serious step and should be used as a last resort. However, ten authorities emphasised the overall aim of inclusion, sustaining pupils in mainstream schools; two emphasised the need for accurate record keeping and adherence to the authority's procedures with an eye on legal process.
- status of an excluded child pending an appeal. In some authorities the pupil remained excluded when an appeal was lodged even if the appeal took place at a time after the pupil could have been readmitted.

The main areas of similarity among most, but not all, authorities were:

- the lack of a systematic collation and analysis of exclusion statistics and hence of a strategic overview in terms of schools, or of pupil characteristics such as age, gender, ethnic origin, special needs or whether the case was referable to the Children's Panel.
- the lack of a strategic overview of the range, quality and cost of alternative, off-site provision, regularly monitored, up-dated and debated.

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- the ad hoc provision of staff development in the area of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

From the survey of 116 secondary schools and 60 primary schools, information on pupils excluded over a specific eight month period was obtained. Schools generously gave their time to complete a detailed form 'Pupils Excluded Since August' as well as providing global estimates. The statistics below report all exclusions of however short a nature. The sample of secondary and primary schools does not provide a basis for generalisation, since the schools were not randomly selected but stratified to maximise the opportunities of collecting data from headteachers who had experience of using exclusions. It is worth adding, however, that the secondary school sample represents over 25% of all secondary schools in Scotland. The figures provide a snapshot of exclusions at a particular period of time.

Over this period, August 1994 - March 1995, 202 pupils had been excluded from 39 primary schools and 3,562 pupils had been excluded from 110 secondary schools. A further 969 pupils had been sent home. Thus a total of 4,740 pupils had been excluded over this period. Exclusion most commonly happened only once and for three days or fewer for most pupils, although a significant proportion had been excluded for longer. About 20 pupils were recorded as a single but long term exclusion. Table 1 shows the number of times pupils had been excluded. Table 2 shows the number of school days lost through exclusion. (Details on some pupils were missing and so totals in the tables vary.)

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**Table 1**  
**Number of times each pupil had been excluded August 1994 – March 1995**

Times Excluded	Primary School Pupils	Secondary School Pupils
	%	%
Once	64	69
Twice	18	18
3 times	8	8
4 times	8	3
5 times	1	1
Over 5 times	1	1
<i>sample size (=100%)</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>2435</i>

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**Table 2**  
**Days lost through exclusion per pupil, August 1994 – March 1995**

Times Excluded	Primary School Pupils %	Secondary School Pupils %
One day	7	4
2 days	16	8
3 days	27	25
4 days	5	8
5 days/a week	13	12
6 days to 2 weeks	14	21
11 days to 3 weeks	6	7
16 days to 6 weeks	8	9
More than 6 weeks	3	6
<i>sample size (=100%)</i>	<i>182</i>	<i>2491</i>

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Key characteristics of excluded pupils are:

- more boys than girls were excluded (9:1 in primary and 4:1 in secondary).
- the peak stages for exclusion were primary 5 (9-10 year olds), secondary 3 (14-15 year olds) and secondary 4 (15-16 year olds).
- over half the excluded secondary pupils had a previous history of indiscipline, while almost all excluded primary pupils had such a history.
- the most common reasons for exclusion were fighting/assault, disruptive behaviour, failure to obey rules and abuse/insolence (see Table 3).
- 26 pupils (19 secondary and 7 primary) had been excluded for assault on staff. Almost all were boys.

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Most excluded pupils were readmitted to their original schools.

Table 3 reports the reasons given for exclusion. The reasons stated can reflect no more than the legislative grounds for exclusion or the space available on forms. Some of the reasons given are striking for their seeming triviality given the emphasis on exclusion as a last resort to troublesome behaviour reported by the overwhelming majority of headteachers (data not shown). Nevertheless a seemingly minor offence can be the straw that breaks the camel's back in a history of disaffected behaviour, and this point was frequently made by teachers in the case study phase of the research. The numbers of pupils excluded for serious offences were small: using or selling drugs - 45; assault on staff - 26; carrying an offensive weapon - 19.

Direct comparisons with exclusions in England and Wales are difficult. We know from a number of studies that permanent exclusion from school in England and Wales has risen dramatically over the last six years. Parsons (1996) estimates that over 11,000 pupils were permanently excluded from secondary schools and 1,800 from primary schools in the school year 1995/96. The absolute numbers are worrying in themselves but of greater concern is that numbers are growing with a 45% increase between 93-94 and 95-96 in primary schools and an 18% increase over the same period in secondary schools (Parsons 1996; Lawrence and Hayden 1997). Furthermore boys are around four times as likely to be excluded as girls and African-Caribbean pupils are excluded between three and six times more often than their white peers (Commission for Racial Equality [CRE] 1996; Lloyd 1999).

### **THE IMPACT OF EXCLUSION**

What impact does exclusion have on pupils and their families? Research in this area in Britain is necessarily small-scale and relies on interviews and questionnaires with young people and their families or carers. A fairly consistent picture emerges. One theme is that of the unfairness of the exclusion. In the study for the Commission for Racial Equality (1996) half of the twelve people interviewed said that their exclusion was unfair. Cohen et al (1994) in their study for Barnardos report a similar story, parents and children feeling that they had been unfairly labelled as troublemakers by teachers. They report (Cohen et al 1994:76):

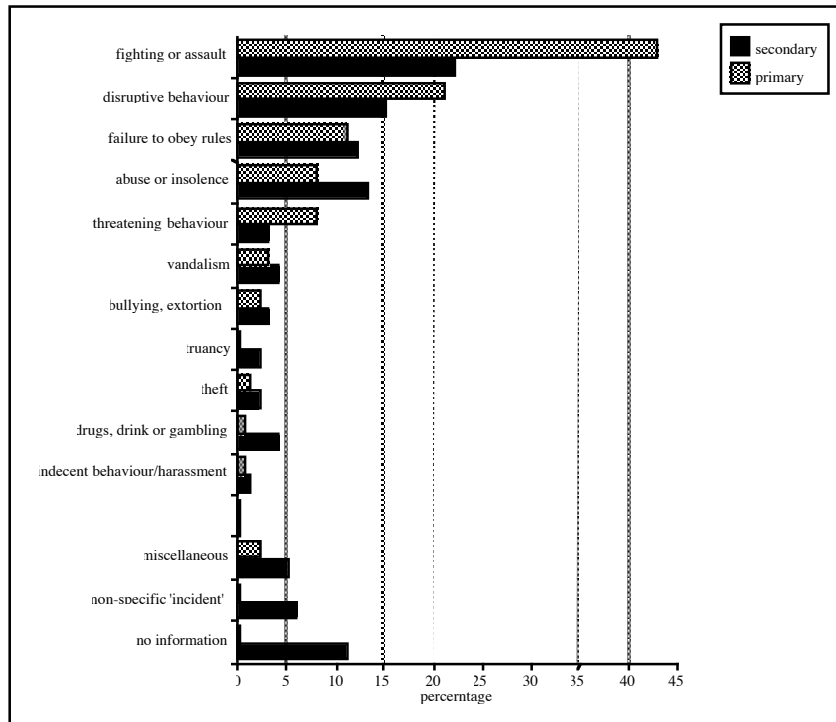
[Unfairness] came through particularly strongly in cases of Black pupils who also pointed out that when they retaliated to racist name calling and

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other forms of racial harassment this could provide a series of events which led to exclusion.

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**Table 3**  
**Reasons for Exclusion**



The issues of name calling, through not in a racist context, and of labelling, also featured in Scottish research involving 11 frequently excluded pupils and their families (Cullen et al 1997: 48)

They [other pupils] call you names and nag at you and you end up just striking back because you get sick of them and then it's not the other

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person that gets into trouble, it's me.  
(Jean A, Coruisk School\*)

The teachers shout at you for wee things, even if somebody else did it,  
they ken that you're always in trouble so they give you worse than what  
the other person got that's hardly ever in trouble.  
(Michael N, Gairloch School)

Studies showed that the pupils concerned, like Michael N, were well aware of the consequences of 'getting a reputation', but for some their behaviour was viewed as part of them and impossible to change. This passivity was quite striking. This might be interpreted as a way of absolving themselves from any responsibility for their actions - it was the teachers or school provision or organisation which had to change. Alternatively it might be seen as a recognition that they were destined not to be a valued member of the school community, forever beyond the pale as it were, unable and maybe unwilling to accept school norms and values.

This latter interpretation is borne out to some extent by reports of feelings of low self-esteem, stupidity and general lack of worth by some excluded pupils. A number of psychological studies in the USA has shown the association between these feelings, aggressive behaviour and youth crime. (See Goleman 1996, pp. 234-237 for a useful overview; Cullingford and Morrison 1995, p. 548.) In the CRE (1996) study, some pupils were relieved to be excluded, perhaps because it removed one site in which such feelings were experienced. However, another theme emerging from the small number of studies which contain excluded pupils' voices is that of boredom, of missing school and of wanting to return.

These same studies report the stress which exclusion can cause in families. The CRE research (1996) involved interviews with 27 parents, 17 of whom used words such as stress, strain and worry, perhaps unsurprisingly, to describe the effects of exclusion. In a small number of extreme cases there were reports of illness, nervous breakdown and having to give up work. Other studies paint a similar picture, highlighting the other stresses often being experienced by families including poverty, bad housing, bereavement and illness (e.g. Cohen et al 1994; Lawrence and Hayden 1997). Effects on the family are likely to be more intensely felt when the exclusion is permanent or long term and no alternative provision is made.

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\*Names of pupils and schools are fictitious to protect the identity of respondents.

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The impact of exclusion upon the generality of pupils is more difficult to gauge. Teachers' explanations of the purposes of exclusion often refer to their responsibilities for the general welfare of all the children in the class(es) as well as the individual welfare of troubled and troublesome pupils (Cullen et al 1997). Thus teachers contend that a 'cheer goes up from the silent majority of pupils' when a disruptive pupil is excluded. We might also speculate that exclusion sends messages about the kind of behaviour which would not be tolerated in school, reinforcing the existence of unequal power relationship between teachers and pupils and the nature of the implied contract between them. More subtly, perhaps in terms of socialisation, exclusion is sending messages about the nature of communities, their shared assumptive worlds of norms and values as a defining characteristic and, as far as schools are concerned, the importance of conforming to norms and values. A sense of belonging is thus premised on being alike rather than on understanding or even living with difference.

### **POLICY AND PRACTICE DILEMMAS**

The current government is 'committed to promoting social inclusion and equality of opportunity in Scotland' (Scottish Office 1999b, p.3). It set up a social inclusion network in 1998 to 'improve co-ordination between relevant agencies and to help the government to develop its approach to social inclusion. The Network consists of representatives of Government and other national public and private sector organisations, alongside individuals with direct experience of tackling social exclusion.' (Scottish Office 1999b, p.4.) The Network has agreed three areas for priority attention:

- excluded young people;
- inclusive communities;
- the impact of local anti-poverty action.

The role of education features prominently in these areas. The role of schools in tackling exclusion has already featured in policy initiatives. For example, £23 million has been made available under the Excellence Funds for Schools to assist local authorities to develop strategies to reduce exclusion. This is in addition to the £3 million available through the Alternatives to Exclusion Grant Scheme which is allowing authorities to pilot innovative alternatives to exclusion. New Community Schools will bring together a team of professionals to provide integrated support to children and families, supported by £26 million of government investment. A significant feature of many of these schools is a commitment to zero exclusions. Such programmes

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are welcome as are the recently produced **Guidelines on Exclusion from School** (2/98) which emphasises that exclusion should be a last resort and clarifies the legal framework.

This section begins by focusing on some policy and practice dilemmas faced by the school in terms of exclusion. School is the place where decisions are taken to exclude a young person, and so an exploration of some of the dilemmas facing schools is an important starting point in considering the extent to which local and national policies to reduce exclusion will take root.

Schools may be understood as institutions driven by diverse and contested purposes, by the values of those who go there and by the practices which may or may not reflect purposes and values. Thus when it comes to decisions on exclusion, competing claims have to be weighed and compromises reached. Few people involved in exclusion from school, at whatever level, see it as straightforward and unproblematic. Four main dilemmas are highlighted by way of illustrating one part of the terrain in which a policy to tackle exclusion will operate.

First there are the competing claims of the rights of the individual disruptive child or young person to schooling weighed against the claims of the majority of pupils to enjoy a safe and secure educational environment and not to be distracted from work by disruptive behaviour. Teachers and others spoke about the disproportionate time and effort which could be devoted to a small number of disaffected pupils, time which was, therefore, being denied the majority. This point was made across the spectrum of teachers interviewed in the case study phase of the research, but was most apparent from guidance staff who felt that guidance work with the generality of pupils was being neglected. The competing claims of individual and collective welfare rights are beginning to be tackled in cases of young people with physical disabilities or special educational needs. In the past it was rare for these young people to be educated in mainstream schools; they were typically educated in specialist day or residential provision or in special units attached to mainstream schools. That situation is gradually changing and there is now a more varied population of children with special needs in both mainstream and special schools (Allan et al 1995) although the figure of 1.2 per cent of all school pupils educated in special schools has changed little over the years (Closs 1997). The practice of assessing and recording children with special educational needs is now well established although problematic in practice (Thomson et al 1996). Yet recording remains an important vehicle promoting entitlement to specialist provision for young people in need. The more recent adoption of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the current advocacy of

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Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) for all children (New Community Schools Prospectus 1999) may be a useful way of encouraging teachers to see children with behavioural difficulties as having special needs in much the same way as children with visual or hearing impairments, and also of identifying the specialist help and other resources needed to meet their needs. Even if teachers can be encouraged to see troubled and troublesome youngsters as having special needs, however, there remains the question of where these needs might be met and also who should do so.

Recent research on teachers' perceptions of indiscipline reported that teachers would welcome more off-site provision for difficult youngsters (Munn et al 1998). Such provision features in a small number of schemes funded under the 'Alternatives to Exclusion' scheme. Most of the 18 schemes funded, however, involve in-school support through a support base in the school, staff development and the development of peripatetic behaviour support teams of teachers.

This brings us to the second dilemma faced by schools - that of the weight given to the academic purposes of schooling in terms of developing pupils' cognitive attainments in the various subject disciplines and the broader purposes of personal and social development. In the case studies of secondary schools those which had social and academic goals for their pupils and where staff had a conception of teaching as involving more than subject specialisation had lower exclusion rates. Contrast the following views of two senior staff about the focus of a school's work.

Our view is [that] the central act that goes on in any school is teaching and learning ... All the extra curricular activities ... are fine but the whole raison d'être of this and every other school is, teachers are here to teach and pupils are here to learn. Pupils, therefore, who stand in the way of that, after reasonable warnings ... we start the process of exclusion.  
(Depute headteacher, Ness School)

I think it's a moral thing - that you've got to say that those youngsters should be in education and it's education for all. It's not just education for the few that come in and don't cause us problems ... We have got to improve what the school has to offer for them.  
(Headteacher, Gairloch Secondary School)

Secondary schools are publicly accountable for the standards of attainment reached by their pupils through the publication of performance or 'league' tables in the press which rank schools according to the percentages of pupils

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achieving success in public examinations. It is hardly surprising that some will feel under pressure to remove or not admit pupils who will adversely affect their place in the league. Furthermore, schools anxious to sustain or increase the numbers of pupils on the roll may feel that a tough policy on exclusions would be attractive to parents choosing schools. The headteacher at Ness, a 'leafy suburb' which had attracted a number of placing requests from poor parents outwith its natural catchment area, was quite candid about this. He wanted to maintain the school's good academic reputation and hence appeal to its traditional catchment area. Being tough on school discipline was one way of doing this.

It is only relatively recently that schools are being asked to publish figures on attendance, truancy and exclusion, thereby signalling national concern about these areas. The collection and publication of such statistics may affirm the values of those like the headteacher of Gairloch regarding the inclusive nature of schools. Unlike examination results, however, attendance and exclusions data are supplied by schools themselves with all the scope for 'massaging' the figures that such a system brings. The headteacher of Maree Secondary, a high-excluding school, made this point:

You will find [from regional statistics] that Maree is consistently high on exclusions. The reason for that is that we have consistently been honest. We never tell kids to go away and don't come back; or tell their parents that [their kids] have a bad cold and we don't want this cold to be healed until Christmas. In fact when we saw the statistics ... it brought chuckles to [our] lips.  
(Headteacher, Maree Secondary)

Even if headteachers do not massage the figures, a low exclusion rate may conceal poor quality provision for pupils in trouble, such as sitting in corridors or other forms of 'internal exclusion'. Thus ways of affirming the broad range of the purposes of schooling need to be found in addition to performance management systems. More fundamentally, however, the aspects of schooling concerned with pupils' cognitive attainments, as certificated by public examinations, confer distinct advantages to those possessing such certificates over those who do not possess them. Public examination certificates are the gateway to further and higher education and to the labour market. Access to these opportunities is competitive. Thus things which stand in the way of pupils' maximising their chances of securing good examination results are bound to be resisted by pupils themselves and especially parents, who are aware of the advantages good results can bring. Schools, therefore, are inevitably torn between the responsibilities of their

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'core business', teaching and learning, and their social welfare function. As indicated above, performance targets in the area of social welfare goals are a beginning, albeit an imperfect one, signalling the importance which government attaches to them.

A third dilemma concerns the professional autonomy of teachers and headteachers. A consistent approach to classroom discipline across a range of subjects and staff in a large secondary school is no easy matter even where staff are inclined to adopt such an approach. The private nature of teaching, the professional autonomy of the individual teacher in the day-to-day management of the classroom and the context-specific nature of discipline, all make consistency a goal which has to be continually reaffirmed. Many schools are adopting policies highlighting praise and reward for good behaviour, which can open up discussion among staff and pupils about what counts as good behaviour and about how to promote positive relationships between staff and pupils. This kind of approach, as well as staff analysing patterns of 'referral' and exclusion of pupils, is beginning to show some positive results (Munn 1999). Yet the private nature of much teaching can make it difficult for headteachers to be seen to be fair to both staff and pupils in using exclusion as a sanction. It is noteworthy that almost all excluded pupils interviewed in research studies say that they have been treated unfairly. 'They would say that, wouldn't they' is an easy reaction from stressed or cynical staff. Yet sufficient is known about the negative effects of labelling pupils as disruptive to raise questions about consistency and justice in the use of exclusions.

Structures can help promote justice. Some local authorities, for instance, can require a series of steps to be taken before exclusion, such as consultation with and the provision of reports from educational psychologists, which constrain the power of a headteacher to exclude a child for more than three days. Headteachers themselves may draw up procedures to discourage staff from using exclusion, such as meetings with guidance staff, and social workers and others, to assess the needs of the child and determine ways of meeting these. Structures and procedures alone, however, are insufficient. The nature of teacher and of headteacher autonomy means that procedures and structures can be subverted, sometimes in a bid to access scarce resources, sometimes as a way of obtaining respite from a difficult pupil. Policies, structures and procedures need to be underpinned by a sense of belief and support for their aims. Caught up as they are with the day-to-day realities of teaching and managing schools, it can be difficult for teachers and headteachers to remind themselves of the broader social functions of schooling, the successes which the school system has delivered in terms of

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rising numbers of pupils achieving passes in public examinations. It is this kind of awareness that needs to be encouraged in initial teacher education and continued professional development programmes if the spirit as well as the letter of exclusion guidelines is to be followed.

Lastly, there is a dilemma about curriculum entitlement. In Scotland the curriculum guidelines for ages 5-14 specify broad areas of knowledge to which all children should be exposed and suggest the proportions of time to be spent on these. Some flexibility in provision is permitted but this is usually seen as enhancing or reinforcing particular areas such as language or expressive arts, rather than reducing provision. Similarly the 14-16 curriculum sets out 'modes' which every pupil must study while permitting choice of particular subjects seen as fulfilling each mode. Where troubled behaviour has its roots in learning difficulties, questions immediately arise as to the appropriateness of the curriculum for pupils. Yet to restrict access can be seen as unduly disadvantaging pupils, and, even if a decision is taken to do so, questions remain about how to restrict access. Clear guidance from local and national government on this issue would help. Some teachers are afraid that they will be criticised by local authority evaluation and review teams or by the schools inspectorate if curriculum entitlement is restricted.

A related aspect concerns the prominence given by schools to traditional academic qualifications as compared to those which are more vocationally orientated and skills based. There is increasing recognition that traditional classroom-based teaching is not attractive to some young people, and the Scottish Office is currently commissioning research on the effectiveness of extended work experience, enterprise education and other learning approaches in motivating disaffected young people and thereby helping tackle behaviour which leads to exclusion. The reform of upper secondary education in Scotland for 16-18 year olds, Higher Still (Raffe 1997), with its emphasis on a unified system of academic and vocational provision through a single ladder of progression and attainment, and the more rapid accreditation of learning through units may help, particularly if it begins to replace the two year Standard Grade courses for 14-16 year olds. The provision of courses below Higher level at Intermediate 1 and 2 makes this a distinct possibility.

### **CONCLUSION**

This article has indicated that the numbers of children being excluded from school are a cause for concern and that such statistics as there are underestimate its extent. We know very little about the numbers of children

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in England and Wales on temporary exclusion, and their characteristics in terms of age, gender, social class and ethnicity. Significant resources are now being invested to combat exclusions in Scotland as part of the government's overall strategy to tackle social exclusion.

The article has also suggested that these well-intentioned policies, strategies and resources confront schools with significant dilemmas. Those highlighted are the collective welfare as opposed to the individual welfare orientation of schools; the primacy of certificated cognitive attainments as a positional good as opposed to goals of social and personal welfare; the autonomy of teachers and headteachers in day-to-day school life; and curriculum entitlement. Some ways to help resolve these dilemmas are put forward and no doubt other solutions may emerge. The dilemmas themselves, however, need to be recognised and tackled if the government's determination to combat exclusion from school is to succeed fully.

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