

Evidence for the Race Equality Commission - May 2021

Tuesday Rhodes – Headteacher of the Sheffield Inclusion Centre

I became the Headteacher of the Sheffield Inclusion Centre in September 2019. I inherited a school in flux that was not serving all the student body. In the last 18 months there has been significant developments and now we educate children in their locality as much as possible rather than in one school for the whole of Sheffield.

All children attending the Sheffield Inclusion Centre have been permanently excluded. We have a high disproportionate amount of SEND and BAME children on our roll. Our admission number has been reduced this academic year due to the lockdowns.

In the 2011 census, 19% of the Sheffield population were BAME. We have had 53 referrals to us since September and 44% of those are from BAME families.

Before schools permanently exclude they are encouraged to present children at the Inclusion Panels (Primary or Secondary). These panels are very well resourced and provide easy access to a variety of agencies from education, health and care. Some permanent exclusions are for unexpected, one off incidents and hence it would not be expected that all children would be presented however, only 8 out of 40 secondary children were presented and only 2 out of 18 BAME children were presented.

Ethnicity based on 2011 census		
	% of Sheffield population	% PX
BAME population	19	44

	PX children presented at the Primary/Secondary Inclusion Panel							
	No of PX	% of PX	No of Primary PX	No of PX's Referred to PIP	% Primary PX Referred to PIP	No of Secondary PX	No of PX's Referred to SIP	% PX Referred to SIP
WBRI	30	56.0	8	8	100	22	6	27
BAME	23	44.0	5	4	80	18	2	11
Overall	53		13	12	92	40	8	20

The table below shows the reasons why children were permanently excluded. The most common reason for BAME children to be permanently excluded is *physical assault on another pupil*. Interestingly and unscientifically, at the admissions meetings 7 out of the 9 BAME children in that category cited racial abuse as the reason for the physical assault for which they were excluded.

Another point of interest in this table is the number of BAME children who felt the need to carry a weapon at school. If the anecdotal numbers of racial abuse incidents are accepted then this perhaps gives some context around why some of our BAME children felt the need to carry a weapon.

What is apparent is that there are no permanent exclusions for racial abuse this year, in fact the last permanent exclusion for racial abuse was in 2018.

Referrals 20/21	BAME										
Reason	WBRI	ABAN	APKN	BAOF	MWAO	MWAP	MWBA	MWBC	ROMA	Total	%
Drug and alcohol related	4							1		5	9.4
Persistent disruptive behaviour	13			1	1					15	28.3
Physical assault against an adult	5							4		9	17.0
Physical assault against a pupil	5	1	1	1		1		1	4	14	26.4
Use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item	1		3							4	7.5
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult	2		2				1		1	6	11.3
Whole Year	30	1	6	2	1	1	1	6	5	53	100.0

The table below shows the schools who have permanently excluded high numbers of children. Let it be noted that 6 of these schools have excluded 50% or over BAME children.

Permanent Exclusions 20/21		BAME														
School	Phase	WBRI	ABAN	APKN	BAOF	MWAO	MWAP	MWBA	MWBC	ROMA	Total	% of PX in city	Total BAME	% BAME PX		
Fir Vale School	S		1	1						3	5	9.4	5	100		
Birley Academy	S	2			1				1		4	7.5	2	50		
Firth Park Academy	S	3							1		4	7.5	1	25		
Sheffield Springs	S	3							1		4	7.5	1	25		
Astrea Academy	S	3		3							3	5.7	3	100		
Hinde House School	S	1		2							3	5.7	2	66		
Meadowhead	S	2						1			3	5.7	1	33		
Meynell Primary	P	1				1			1		3	5.7	2	66		
Newfield	S	2							1		3	5.7	1	33		
Outwood Academy	S	3									3	5.7	0	0		
Sheffield Park	S	2								1	3	5.7	1	66		

Roma segregation

In 2015 the Sheffield Inclusion Centre welcomed 12 Roma children permanently excluded from one school. Since then the numbers of permanently excluded children has continued at a high rate.

According to the data published in ***Ethnicity Facts and Figures*** published in February 2021 on GOV.UK a Roma child is more likely to be permanently excluded than a child of any other ethnicity. This is reflected in Sheffield with 20% (37) of all the children at Sheffield Inclusion Centre being from the Roma community.

I inherited a school structure in which the Inclusion Centre commissioned places at a segregated alternative provision for Roma children. We decommissioned this provision in July 2020. In its place, we have two of our own learning bases. We are slowly challenging the segregation by placing newly excluded children at other learning bases. However, there remains the remnant of segregation with the two cohorts that have been educated separately for a number of years.

We rarely reintegrate Roma children as the families feel that their children are safe and happy together, which for a small, unfairly judged community it is understandable. I also inherited a prevention base run for Locality B schools that is only for Roma children. This again is segregation, and we are challenging its purpose and student base.

From the point of view of the Inclusion Centre, we see an unsupported community especially in terms of education, but also in terms of agency support.

Support for permanently excluded children						
	No of children	No on CPP	No in CIN	No at risk of CCE	No with non-statutory support	No in youth offending
All children at SIC	190	13	35	59	65	2
BAME children at SIC	54	3	6	25	26	
Roma children at SIC	36	0	1	3	3	2

Despite our high rates of children at risk of Criminal Exploitation, the Sheffield Inclusion Centre does not have any police contact. Most mainstream schools have a police link, so why when we have the highest proportion of CCE children do we have no police support.

In 18 months I have brought this to the attention of a number of high ranking police personnel and still we have no police support. In fact, we have had two visits from the police, once to stop a member of staff for not having car insurance (he did have car insurance) and another time when the alarm had gone off in the school after the children had left at 5pm and my Deputy was resetting it. By the way, on both occasions the members of staff were BAME.

There is a police house on Fir Vale, in walking distance from one of the learning bases, and we have tried to contact the personnel with no progress.

Our children have a very negative view of the police and to have the right person in school working to break down these barriers would be immensely fruitful.

Recommendations

More support for the Roma families

- Representation at every stage of the exclusion process (including all BAME families)
- Build trust by employing a Roma speaking support team to focus on health and education (Fir Vale Hub to be developed)
- Construct a group to reflect on what type of education would help Roma children to succeed and reduce exclusions
- Police presence housed in Fir Vale to work with our Roma bases

Police in school

- Attach police personnel to the Inclusion Centre

Schools

- Need to reflect on whether the curriculum suits all ethnicities
- Have alternatives to permanent exclusion
- Ofsted need to incentivise inclusive schools

LA actions

- The LA safeguards their children and each PX of a BAME child is flagged and met with serious challenge by senior managers in the LA
- Ethnicity of permanently excluded children is tracked and reported on as a standing agenda item for the Sheffield Council and officer meetings
- Positive action at reintegration panel for BAME families
- Just as there are departments for SEND and CLA, there should be a department for Race Equality, with the same positive action being in place
- Have a senior education officer on the LA SLT for education and inclusion of BAME children so there is accountability and tracking hence actions will have KPIs and we will be able to measure success
- Data around ethnicity and PX is reported to MAT CEOs in a regular meeting with the LA
- ***Pinball Kids March 2020*** concluded – ‘Government should invest in multi-agency teams to support preventative work by head teachers. Area-based teams of mental health, social care, youth work and criminal justice professionals should work together to help head teachers support pupils at risk of exclusion.’ This is already set up in Sheffield, but as the data reveals it is not used where it is absolutely needed. The LA need to take action as this is an expensive resource.

Positive action does work....

We at the Inclusion Centre are advocates of 'you can't be what you can't see'. Hence, the diversity of our staff is important to us and during the recruitment process providing strong role models for our children is considered vital. Although not yet representative of our school cohort, at 22% we are above the 2011 census BAME proportion of the Sheffield population of 19%. 3 of these staff are on the leadership team.

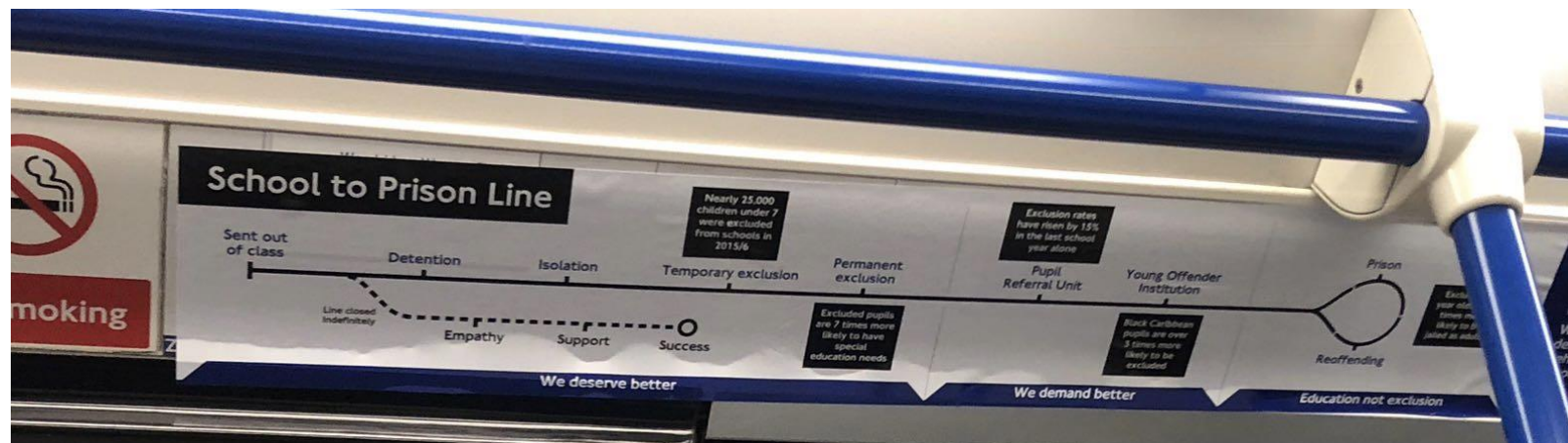
Sheffield Inclusion Centre		
Ethnicity of teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors	Number	%
BAME	18	22
Other	65	78
Total	83	

Conclusion

None of these issues are new and the majority of the evidence in this report was identified in the ***Timpson Review of School Exclusion May 2019***.

It is difficult not to conclude that there is institutional racism in the education system from our view at the Sheffield Inclusion Centre. Your likelihood of being permanently excluded should not depend predominantly on your ethnicity and SEND.

As a city and a country, we need to do better and this very poor quality photograph of a poster on the tube in 2018, produced by a youth group sums things up well. We need to move down the line that is closed indefinitely!



Today is GCSE Results Day. While most pupils across the country are excitedly awaiting news about their future, thousands remain left behind. Every day, 35 students (a full classroom) are permanently excluded from school. Only 1% of them will go on to get the five good GCSEs they need to succeed. It is the most disadvantaged children who are disproportionately punished by the system. We deserve better.

We are a group of South London students who believe in empathy not exclusion. We demand a more compassionate education system with a supportive approach to behaviour and discipline. And we demand that schools are given the financial resources to make it possible.

#EducationNotExclusion