Managed Moves: Schools collaborating for collective gain

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Abstract

Government guidance in the United Kingdom encourages groups of schools to take collective responsibility for supporting and making provision for excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion. Managed-moves are one way that some schools and authorities are enacting such guidance. This paper presents the results of an evaluation of one such scheme. The scheme, involving seven neighbouring secondary schools, was nearing its first year of completion. The paper draws primarily on interview data with pupils, parents and school staff to describe a number of positive outcomes associated with the scheme and to explore how these were achieved. We found that while some of these could be attributed directly to the managed-move, others arose from the more inclusive ethos and practices of particular schools. The concepts of tailored support, care and commitment emerged as strong themes that underpinned the various practical ways in which some schools in the cluster were able to re-engage 'at-risk' pupils. As managed-moves become more widely practiced it will be important to remember that it is how the move proceeds and develops rather than the move itself that will ultimately make the difference for troubled and troublesome pupils.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, the development of more inclusive schools has received much political and public attention. The concept of inclusion and the values implied by it underpins much educational policy both in the UK and internationally. Pupils identified as 'disaffected' or as having 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties' often pose the greatest challenge to this global movement towards more inclusive education (DfES, 2004a; Heath et al., 2004; Ofsted, 2004; Visser, 2000). This is because such pupils tend to disrupt not only their own education but also the education of others (Hamill and Boyd, 2002). Indeed, the argument about the need to balance the right of a disaffected pupil who consistently engages in disruptive behaviour to be educated, against the right of classmates to a 'disruption-free' education, is often used to justify the fixed-term or permanent exclusion of pupils who engage in challenging behaviour (Ofsted, 2005). This paper addresses the efforts of one cluster of schools to continue to offer formal education and training to pupils who are near permanent exclusion.

DfES statistics for pupils who are permanently excluded from school show a 25 percent decrease in comparison with the 1996/97 peak that sparked national concern and political action (9,440 versus 12,700: DfES, 2006). However, the high numbers of pupils either permanently excluded from school or seriously disaffected and presenting with challenging behaviour continues to constitute a major challenge to the UK Government's educational and social inclusion agenda. Those who are permanently excluded from school or who leave with no or few qualifications have been found to be at greater risk later in life of a variety of negative outcomes including unemployment, involvement in crime, homelessness and poor mental and physical health (Audit Commission, 1996; Donovan, 1998; Ofsted, 2004; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998).

It is within this context that a number of Government initiatives aimed at supporting schools to more effectively meet the needs of those with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties and thereby reduce disaffection and exclusion, have been launched. Strategies such as Connexions (Connexions, 1999), Every Child Matters (DfES 2003a), and more recently Education Improvement Partnerships (DfES, 2005a) aim to provide effective services for vulnerable children through more co-ordinated and collaborative efforts between relevant organisations. Other initiatives, such as the Attendance and Behaviour strand of the National Strategy (DfES, 2003b) and the Behaviour Improvement Programme (DfES, 2004b) are aimed specifically at tackling behavioural issues. Of particular relevance to those identified as 'disaffected', has been the relaxation of the National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 4 (DfES, 2005b) which allows schools greater flexibility in the range and type of programmes that they can provide.

One theme that is repeated in Government guidance (DfES, 2004c; DfES, 2004d; DfES, 2005a) is the expectation that groups of schools will take collective responsibility for supporting and making provision for excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion. Schools are encouraged to work collaboratively with each other and with their Local Authorities to offer a broader range of provision and support, both in-school and out-of-school. The concept of managed-moves, a process whereby a collaborating school agrees to accept a pupil at risk of exclusion from another collaborating school, is suggested in Government guidance as one alternative to exclusion. This paper presents the results of an evaluation of one such scheme that was being piloted in a Midlands Authority. It draws primarily on interview data with pupils, parents and school staff to describe a range of 'hard' and 'soft' outcomes that were associated with the scheme. It then explores the factors

that contributed to those outcomes and considers the implications for including 'troubled and troublesome' pupils[1].

The research

Coalfields Alternatives to Exclusion (CATE) involved managed transfers, between schools, of pupils who would otherwise have been permanently excluded and of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The protocol also included a preventative element whereby additional support, in various forms, was provided within and outside school, for pupils identified as disaffected or as at risk of becoming disaffected.

The scheme was overseen by the Pupil Placement Panel (PPP), a multi-professional panel that comprised the deputy headteacher from each of the seven participating secondary schools and the local pupil referral unit (PRU), Local Authority staff (education officer, senior educational psychologist, senior education welfare officer) and representatives from the local Connexions service and the Youth Offending Team. Decisions about the transfer of pupils between schools and the sort of support that would be made available to them and to other non-transferring pupils, were made at monthly meetings chaired by the education officer.

The research was conducted during the summer term of 2004/5. A university team was approached by the Local Authority to evaluate the recently implemented scheme which was being trialed among seven neighbouring secondary schools in a former coal-mining town. The schools served a largely white working-class community that had experienced considerable economic hardship since the 1980s.

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[1] A term used by McCluskey et al. (2004). See also Thomson (2002).

The aim of the research was to provide the Local Authority with an external and independent view of the effectiveness of the new protocol for improving provision and outcomes for pupils who were at risk of exclusion. The researchers were particularly interested in the experiences and perceptions of those whom the scheme aimed to support and to contrast these with those providing support. The evaluation therefore adopted a multi-perspective approach (Silverman, 1997) and relied on various forms of data collection using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods. Individual semi-structured interviews were used to gather perspectives from various stakeholders: non-school panel members (7), deputy headteachers (7), headteachers (7), parents (5) and pupils (14). The pupil sample ranged from Year 7 up to Year 11 and included eleven boys and three girls. Eleven pupils had undergone a managed move while the remaining three had received CATE funded preventative support within their schools. Focus group interviews were used to access the views of a cross-section of school staff in each school. These groups ranged in size from four to seven members. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed with thematic analysis undertaken by two of the researchers to ensure rater reliability (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 1993). Data were also gathered using observation and document analysis, alongside analysis of school exclusion statistics and a survey completed by teaching and non-teaching school staff. For a fuller description of research methods see Harris et al. (2006).

What difference does CATE make for pupils, their families and schools?

There was support for CATE across all stakeholder groups, although a number of issues and concerns were also noted (see Harris et al., 2006). This paper focuses primarily on outcomes, both 'hard' and 'soft', that relate directly to the pupils themselves. These included a reduction in permanent exclusions and behaviours associated with permanent exclusion, an associated increase in behaviour consistent with school norms and expectations, and students developing a more

positive view of themselves and their schools. Although experiences differed from pupil to pupil, these outcomes demonstrated that, at least in the short term, CATE was proving to be effective as a way of including these challenged and challenging pupils.

Fewer permanent exclusions

A reduction in permanent exclusions was identified by all panel members and many head and deputy headteachers as a key outcome and indicator of success. Indeed, comparison of pre- and post-CATE permanent exclusion statistics show an impressive reduction, with fewer than half as many pupils being excluded since the introduction of the protocol – across the seven schools, a total of 14 for the year in which CATE was introduced versus a total of 33 over the previous year.

This reduction was seen as desirable in terms of LEA and school exclusion statistics but also because it relieved pressure for places in the PRU. More importantly though, particularly for excluded pupils and their parents, the protocol was seen as effective because for most pupils, it avoided or significantly reduced the inevitable delay in finding another school after a permanent exclusion. The feelings of rejection and alienation that often accompany permanent exclusion (Munn et al., 2000; Osterman, 2000) were likewise avoided.

Ensuring continuity of education by reducing the delay between permanent exclusion and enrolment in another school was repeatedly highlighted as a strength of the protocol. One interviewee provided an example of the potential damage when continuity of education is disrupted.

> You see the alternative to CATE is permanent exclusion and that's so
>
> unwieldy because every time a kid is permanently excluded it's a minimum

of three months before getting them into another school. One of our clients, prior to being permanently excluded, had one hundred percent attendance at school. When we got him back in, his attendance has been ten percent or less. So that's the harm that's been done. (panel member, youth offending team)

The protocol was therefore seen as a more positive alternative to exclusion. By providing schools with another option it reduced the use of the ultimate sanction and in this way helped ensure continuity of education for 'at-risk' pupils.

Educational attainment

Low educational attainment is one of the negative outcomes often associated with permanent exclusion (Audit Commission, 1999; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998) and also those identified as having 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties' (Hamill and Boyd, 2002). Not surprisingly then, pupil attainment of accredited qualifications was another way in which the protocol was judged as effective. Speaking of one transferred pupil whose experiences at her previous school had included numerous unauthorised absences and several fixed-term exclusions, one interviewee reported how this young woman had been successfully integrated into the mainstream and had just passed her first exam.

So she joined the school and did various options. She has successfully passed one exam and we are just awaiting another result. And I would say that we've achieved something with that particular person … and her mum was so grateful that she had actually had a full year of education. (focus group, school A)

While the term 'disaffected' conjures up images of young people who are disinterested, unmotivated and alienated from what schools have to offer, and are

often portrayed, alongside their families as not valuing education, such stereotypes do not reflect the complex reality for many of these youngsters, nor the full range of attitudes and values of the communities to which they belong. In line with other research (Munn and Lloyd, 2005; Osler and Vincent, 2003) and in contrast to such images, most of the young people we interviewed, wanted 'an education' – one that included the gaining of accredited qualifications. The young man below identified access to an out-of-school programme as contributing to his more positive experiences at his new school. The fact that he could relate an award gained in this alternative provision to that which is offered in mainstream schools, appeared to be important to him. He explained:

> Well I go out on a Thursday to another centre to do, like, work and get qualified for GCSE - but doing different things. Like, I go to [place X] and then write about it. It's like a course thing and when you do so many you get, like, a bronze, a silver and a gold. A bronze is equivalent to a D GCSE. A silver is something like a C or a B and a gold's like an A at GCSE. (Year 10 pupil, school B)

Although the gaining of accredited qualifications was identified as an important outcome by some interviewees, we were surprised it was not raised more frequently, given its impact on longer-term outcomes and life chances. For those on the receiving end of alternative education, access to awards that are recognized and valued by potential employers, is likely to remain a pertinent issue.

Decrease in 'problematic' behaviours

Many of the pupils we interviewed had a lengthy history of behaviour difficulties and nine had experienced multiple fixed-period exclusions. A reduction in the frequency or intensity of 'problematic' behaviours could therefore be considered an

important outcome. When asked about what is different for them at their new schools, pupil responses often included changes in their own behaviours. They typically made reference to a reduction in verbally or physically aggressive behaviour towards staff or peers as well as less disruption in class. These inevitably resulted in other outcomes such as being sent out of class less frequently, fewer altercations with staff and greater engagement with the curriculum.

Some pupils attributed their new attitudes, feelings and behaviours primarily to aspects of the new school setting and much less to factors within their own control. This is despite some clear examples of pupils assuming more responsibility and control over their own behaviour. A Year 10 pupil, provided a good example. He reported receiving twelve fixed-term exclusions before finally being permanently excluded from his former school. He suggested that getting into fights - alongside being verbally abusive and non-compliant - was a major contributor to these exclusions and that his reputation for fighting extended back to his primary education. That is, he had a long-standing history of challenging behaviour and part of his identity of being 'hard' was based around his propensity for getting into fights. Despite enticement from peers on his first full-day of attendance at his new school, he reported walking away from an opportunity to fight. He explained:

> The teachers and the kids were winding me up. Like, the hardest lad in our year and all that, [saying] do you want to fight with him. And I didn't want to fight. I said: 'I didn't come over here to fight'. (Year 10 pupil, school B)

At the time of interview, this pupil had been attending his new school for ten months. In that time, he had not been involved in any fights nor had he been subject to any fixed-term exclusions. While he clearly appreciated and benefited

from the range of supports put in place for him at his new school, he appeared to have also made an active choice to leave his former reputation behind.

Teachers corroborated the behavioural changes suggested by pupils – sometimes expressing surprise at the extent of the changes:

> I have to say that we were expecting all sorts of fireworks … and I think we were quite shocked by the fact that she was so well behaved. She worked in here, in the support centre, for a while and settled very quickly and [then] we put her back into mainstream. (focus group, school C)

Interestingly, in some cases, teachers ascribed pupils' successful integration to a fresh start combined with changes within the pupils themselves. This recognition appeared to prompt some teachers to question their assumptions about pupils' willingness to engage with learning.

> The students we've offloaded had been doing quite a significant amount of damage within the school, and the ones we've brought in haven't caused us major disruption. I don't think it's simply a case of getting rid of a real bad one and getting a good one back. I think that they [the pupils] have actually changed. When they've come in they have actually done the business. (focus group, school C)

Increase in behaviour consistent with school norms and expectations

Alongside a decrease in 'problematic' behaviours there was a corresponding increase in behaviours consistent with school norms and expectations. These included improved attendance, seeking assistance in class rather than disrupting

the lesson, completing set work and developing more positive relationships with staff. With regard to attendance, one panel member suggested that:

> Those that I worked with and have gone through the CATE system I haven't had cause to work with since. (panel member, education welfare officer)

This impact on attendance was confirmed by student reports. A Year 7 pupil for whom unauthorised absence had been a concern at her former school and also initially at her new school, reported that she had not 'wagged' for over four weeks and was attending all her classes. Similarly, the parent of another pupil reported:

> I don't have any problems in the mornings [anymore]. He's happy enough to come to school. (parent A)

A different parent commented with some surprise that her son was now involved in a range of extracurricular activities. She noted that this was something he had refused at his previous school, despite encouragement from her.

> He plays football for this school and rugby. And they did a little show and he took part in that and he was a stand up comedian. I couldn't believe it. (parent B)

Feeling comfortable and motivated enough to participate in a wider range of school activities was viewed as an important outcome by this young man's parent. As argued in the inclusion literature, inclusion is about much more than simply being physically present in school – it is also about the quality of a pupils' experience and the extent to which they are able to 'learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school' (DfES, 2004a: 25).

Improved relationships at home

While much is often made of the way in which difficulties in the home setting contribute to difficulties in the school setting, we found evidence that the reverse can also be true. Both of the parents above spoke of how resolving issues at school had a positive impact on relationships at home. Speaking of her son, Parent B said:

> He's like a different kid since he's been at this school. Our relationship at home is lovely. He loves it. (parent B)

Her son's willingness to attend his new school and the reduced frequency of 'troublesome' behaviour had eliminated what had been a considerable source of tension between them at home.

Focus group members also drew attention to improved relationships at home as a positive outcome for CATE pupils. In contrast to some of the parent deficit discourses expressed by some interviewees, the speaker below pointed to the wider community as offering considerable support to the pupil being spoken about – and also how improvements in the situation at school had a positive impact at home.

> The kid that I've been involved with they [relatives and friends] can't do enough for him. There are so many people around him to help him especially outside school. One of the big problems when we got him in September was the relationship between him and his mum and he was, kind of, staying at other people's houses and it was a massive issue. By Christmas that was completely sorted because he was a lot happier in school. (focus group, school B)

The improved relationship at home was considered an important outcome in its own right but also in terms of supporting the on-going work at school. The relationship between events at home and at school was seen very much as two-way.

More positive feelings about themselves and their schools

Other, less tangible outcomes were also noted by interviewees, including the development of different perspectives and ambitions. Some pupils conveyed a new found motivation and valuing of education. 'An education' was seen as worthwhile and desirable, even though past behaviours may have suggested otherwise. Additional outcomes such as improved self-worth and feeling happier were implied in teacher comments about pupils smiling more, taking greater care over personal hygiene and being able to accept compliments. Speaking of a CATE pupil that had been attending one of her classes for some months, one teacher reported:

> There is a great change in her appearance from when she first started. She's cleaner, isn't she? And although she finds it difficult to handle positive remarks, when she's thought about them they do mean something to her. (focus group, school B)

In summary, the CATE initiative was viewed positively by most stakeholders and seen as a worthwhile endeavour. Effectiveness was defined in terms of a wide range of interrelated outcomes. The most tangible and easily measured outcome was a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions. This was underpinned by a reduction in previously problematic behaviours and an increase in behaviours consistent with school norms. Improved attendance, greater engagement with the curriculum, greater involvement in extra-curricular activities and more constructive relationships with staff, peers and family members were noted. Crucial to the noted behavioural changes was the development of new attitudes and personal

motivation that reflected changes in the ways pupils thought and felt about themselves and their school environments. Although less easily measured, it is these latter outcomes that are especially important as they form the foundation of the movement from disaffection towards a more constructive engagement in education and therefore inclusion (Weare and Gray, 2003).

Moving towards inclusion: what works?

In broad terms, and in line with other research (Cooper et al., 2000; Osterman, 2000; Thacker, 2002; Visser, 2003) much of what was helpful for our young interviewees resulted from them coming to feel genuinely cared about, wanted, listened to and supported. Integral to this was the formation of relationships with staff that were characterised by trust and respect. We have argued that this relational change is a necessary first step in the practices of inclusion (Harris et al 2006). We now explore some of the events and processes that engendered these feelings, allowing these qualitatively different relationships to develop and we look at what this reveals about creating more inclusive schools.

CATE related factors

A fresh start in a new school was clearly a key to change for many of the pupils we interviewed. From their perspective, this related to the opportunities this afforded to leave behind aspects of a former reputation and identity and to establish new relationships with staff and peers (see Harris et al., 2006 for further detail). However, it was not simply a fresh start that made the difference, but also the fact that CATE created an opportunity to better match provision to need through access to educational alternatives or additional support packages. As one panel member pointed out:

For some of them a new school is essential but for others, it's not just a case of them going in and having a fresh start, it's having a fresh start with something that's going to make a difference as well. (deputy headteacher, school F)

The speaker was referring to the money that was set aside as part of the CATE protocol which was used to purchase a range of provision, both in and out-of-school, for identified individuals. This aspect of CATE was highlighted as a key strength of the protocol. As the deputyhead below argued, and as also suggested elsewhere, successful integration to a new school is likely to require additional support (DfES, 2004e).

You've got to have the people and the support packages in schools to be able to deal with it. It's no good telling them: 'Off you go!' and sending them into a system with twelve hundred other kids and expect them to survive because they are not going to survive. (deputy headteacher, school E)

Related to this, some school staff stressed that integration to the mainstream is often best achieved through a gradual process. Pupil comments supported the importance of a phased integration. One pupil, reported being 'a bit nervous' on his first few days and thought it was good that he spent the first three weeks in the Learning Support Unit before gradually starting to attend mainstream classes. He explained:

I went to a lesson. I were doing one lesson a day and then they said to me would I like to try another lesson and I said, yeah. (Year 9 pupil, school D)

This pupil reported enjoying his mainstream classes and the fact that he was making new friends but the time he was given to adjust to change seemed equally

important. Implicit in his comment was another important point – the value of being consulted. Government documents such as the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), state that pupils should be actively involved in decisions that affect them. Ensuring that this pupil had some control over the pace of reintegration was one way of helping him to feel part of the process and of demonstrating that his views were worthy of being heard.

A parallel process was identified as a strength of the protocol by the adults involved – namely, the way in which CATE has given greater control back to schools. As the headteacher below explained:

> I don't think I've ever seen anybody who has benefited from permanent exclusion and that was one of the reasons we were so supportive of CATE. The concept of the managed move is much more positive. It puts the control back with, well, with everybody really. In the past I've had umpteen disagreements with various agencies about the fact that you can't access resources unless you permanently exclude a child so, you know, CATE attempts to redress that. And whilst it might not be perfect, it is a definite improvement on permanent exclusion. (headteacher, school E)

CATE then, has changed the power dynamic between the Local Authority (LA) and the schools. It has allowed the LA to step back from the position of requiring a school to accept a permanently excluded pupil, to one of chairing a panel where schools themselves take ownership and control of the decisions about where a permanently excluded or 'at-risk' pupil is to be educated and what financial support will be made available to ensure an effective transfer. Among school representatives on the panel, this appeared to be an important outcome for maintaining commitment to the protocol.

Now there is no way that I want someone saying to me: 'He's coming to you'. And if that starts to happen then I would go to my head and the governors and say: 'CATE has now changed it's ethos and they are now telling us we are taking on board these kids rather then giving us the opportunity to say no'. And I think that is wrong. (focus group, school B)

In much the same way that a pupil who feels wanted and listened to in a school responds with greater motivation and commitment, (DfES, 2004e; Visser, 2003) the CATE process helped create the conditions whereby the schools wanted and were committed to including 'at-risk' pupils.

In summary, bringing local providers together to share information and resources had several benefits. Firstly, the process provided some pupils with a timely fresh-start in a new school. In addition, a focus on the specific needs of each pupil in their context enabled the PPP to agree and support the 'best fit' of school and programme for the pupil. This created a less stigmatizing process for parents and pupils, and a more empowering one for the schools.

School related factors

Although key for some pupils, the managed-move accounted for only some of the noted successes. It became clear that some schools had a more inclusive ethos than others.

Ten of the 14 pupils interviewed experienced difficulties accessing the curriculum and this often contributed to their feelings of disaffection. While it is often difficult to unpick the extent to which learning difficulties are feeding into behaviour problems, and vice-versa, the link between the two is widely accepted (Hamill and Boyd, 2002; Wearmouth, 2004). This relationship can be further complicated by

the wider system within which school learning is embedded. In particular, attention was drawn to the demotivating effect on some pupils of the National Curriculum. In the words of one focus group member:

> The school is driven by a National Curriculum. And the easiest way to get out of this situation for the kids is to misbehave and get yourself kicked out rather than be seen to fail. (focus group, school D)

Given these points, it was therefore not surprising to find that providing additional learning support, not just during initial reintegration but on a long term basis, was frequently cited by pupils as helpful. One Year 9 pupil whose high number of fixed-period exclusions put him at risk of permanent exclusion, was receiving CATE funded support within his original school. For him, it was not just the one-day per week access to an out-of-school programme that helped reduce his risk of exclusion, but also recognition of and a proactive response to his learning difficulties. This took the form of additional support in his mainstream classes as well as access to the school Learning Support Unit. At the time of interview, this pupil reported being subject to no exclusions over the previous six months. This was a stark contrast to the previous year.

Learning support, then, played an important role in helping to re-engage 'at-risk' pupils and was highlighted as a key strength of CATE by all stakeholders groups. Other factors centred on the willingness and ability of the school to respond creatively and flexibly to perceived pupil needs. A Year 7 pupil provides a good example. This pupil had experienced multiple fixed-period exclusions at his former school for behaviours that were characterised by loss of self-control – usually in the form of violence towards other people and objects including throwing tables, chairs and rubbish bins across the class and hitting other pupils. In his words, 'Well I just

flip out and boot doors and stuff'. At his new school however, he reported fewer such outbursts and described walking away from a potentially explosive incident.

This pupil attributed his behavioural changes to suggestions from staff members that he 'calm down and everything and walk away'. While the expectation of greater self-control was conveyed verbally, this was also accompanied by some special arrangements. He explained that if he felt himself getting angry he was allowed to take 'time-out' – that is, to remove himself from the situation for a short period to enable himself to calm down. Interestingly, he reported not having to do that very often. It seemed that simply knowing that he could legitimately remove himself from class if he felt the need, was in itself a helpful intervention.

This pupil was also allowed to leave his second class of the day five minutes early so that he could move through the corridor and get himself something to eat before it became too crowded. Similarly, the school found a creative way of addressing his nicotine addition. He was allowed to leave the premises for a cigarette at lunchtime. In his words:

> I'm allowed to go out of lessons five minutes earlier. I'm allowed to come out at ten to eleven instead of five to, so I can get something to eat early … so it's not crowded. And they let me go outside the gates for a fag. You're not allowed to smoke on site … so I go outside at break. (Year 7 pupil, school E)

Given this range of accommodations, it was not surprising that this pupil felt supported by the school and that his individual needs were recognised and responded to. Other pupils described similarly flexible and creative responses to their particular situations. This invariably resulted in more positive attitudes

towards school, calmer dispositions and much less of the behaviour that had put them at risk of exclusion.

Quality relationships, evidenced by the perception that at least one staff member cares about them, were a recurring theme in pupil and parent interviews. In the excerpt below, a parent points to trust as being an important aspect of such a relationship. In her son's case, this required an understanding and non-judgmental ear. The school encouraged and supported the development of this relationship by making access to this teacher easy for the pupil. This provides another example of a school being flexible in the way it meets pupil needs.

> Well he's got Mr. P [one of his subject teachers]. At first he wouldn't talk to Mr. P but now he trusts him and talks to him if he's angry or upset. And if he's getting boiled up or angry he has permission to nip out and find Mr. P. (Parent B)

Mirroring other research (Munn et al., 2000; Pomeroy, 2000) pupils in this study highlighted how teacher behaviour such as shouting did little to engender the respect that would form the basis of a trusting relationship. As also evidenced in other literature (Charlton, 2004; Osler and Vincent, 2003), behaviours such as taking the time to listen to and understand pupils, was helpful. Trust and respect were also developed in other ways. The stories of some participants demonstrated considerable commitment on the part of some schools towards keeping a pupil in school. Turning a blind eye on occasions or not making a big issue out of the less important things were examples of this – and as the parent below pointed out, not expecting perfection and not giving up on pupils were also demonstrations of care and commitment.

And they've not given up on him even though he has messed up from time to time. (parent C)

For another pupil, the school's commitment to her was demonstrated by conveying belief in her ability to succeed. This encouragement inspired motivation and commitment from the pupil. This pupil had not truanted for over four weeks and her self-expectation was for regular attendance.

They [staff] said that if I don't stop wagging and everything they are going to have to chuck me out and they said I'd got a new school but they don't want me to go because they said I got the ability to get through it. (Year 7 pupil, school A)

Some schools recognized that change takes not just effort but time. As the excerpt below illustrates, allowing the time and not giving up on pupils, is another way of demonstrating commitment to retaining a pupil.

One girl said that we had really worked hard with her last year and eventually we took her to the awards evening because she had really done well. And she said: 'I didn't know it felt this good to be good'. Now that took a whole year before she was able to feel that. And the dedication of all those staff who stuck with her and helped. (focus group, school D)

In summary, there are many ways then that a school can convey care and commitment. Exactly what was done within each school to support transferees or those targeted for preventative action varied. Some of the positive outcomes associated with CATE can be attributed to the 'fresh start', a phased and supported integration to a new school and to access to educational alternatives or additional 'in-school' support. However, some schools in the cluster appeared to be more

successful than others in their work with these young people. Within these schools, sensitive and flexible responses to perceived pupil needs, academic and non-academic, served as tangible demonstrations of care and commitment. Respect was conveyed through actions such as consulting pupils about decisions that effect them and through non-judgemental interactions, offering encouragement and not giving up on pupils. This resulted in the development of trusting and respectful relationships which in turn led to increased motivation and commitment from their challenged and challenging pupils.

Lessons for inclusion

School inclusion is a movement away from educational and ultimately social exclusion (Slee, 2000) and an important precondition of a democratic society (Ballard, 1999). The links between good educational outcomes and successful adulthood have been well established (DfES, 2004d; Ofsted, 2004) and form the basis of the UK Government's efforts to tackle both educational and social exclusion. While support for the principle of inclusion appears to be widely accepted, it remains a complex and contested concept (Lindsay, 2003). How it is conceptualised and put into practice varies greatly both within and between Local Authorities and schools.

As noted earlier, successfully including 'troubled and troublesome' pupils presents particular challenges to schools. This can be attributed partly to the tensions between the competing demands made on schools by the quasi-market policies and their inclusive responsibilities. For example, a recurring theme in the inclusion literature has been the reluctance of schools to take on pupils who are unlikely to contribute to achievement targets (Visser et al., 2005). Also contributing to this dilemma is the view that the main causes of problem behaviour lie outside the school. Such views are prevalent both in official discourse and within the teaching

profession more generally (Araujo, 2005; Watson, 2005). While the 'out of school'

situations and experiences cannot be ignored as influencing pupil behaviour, such a

focus draws attention away from the many ways in which the structural,

organisational and interpersonal realities of schools play an important role in

producing or reducing 'problem behaviour' (Araujo, 2005).

Despite such tensions, many schools are finding innovative ways to meet the

challenges of inclusion (Wedell, 2005). CATE is one such example. For the adult

participants in this study, inclusion appeared to be conceptualised broadly as a

meaningful engagement in education. For the youngsters concerned, this was

achieved through a variety of means. For some pupils, a fresh start in a new

school was key while for others, preventative work within the original school was

enough to reduce the risk of exclusion. In both cases, supported reintegration to

the mainstream was a desired and achieved outcome for some pupils. For others, a

combination of access to mainstream classes, within-school withdrawal

programmes, placement in the school's Learning Support Unit or access to out-of-

school educational alternatives was the means through which a more meaningful

engagement with education was achieved.

Our findings suggest that CATE contributed to these outcomes in a number of ways.

Three broad themes that emerged as important were those of tailored support, care

and commitment. Bringing local providers together to share information resulted in

a better understanding of the pupils concerned and created an opportunity to better

match provision to need. It also supported the development of a common ethos

between the schools and a less stigmatizing process for pupils and parents. In the

more inclusive schools, a commitment to giving pupils a 'fresh start' was supported

by relationships and procedures that were able to sensitively attune to the needs of

the pupil rather than trying to fit the pupil into a rigid environment. This

acceptance and responsiveness appeared to support pupils' own developing agency and to result in increased motivation and commitment.

Although in its infancy and although not a panacea for 'at-risk' pupils, our findings suggest that the concept of managed-moves as practiced by CATE has some merit as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Our evaluation provides further support for the idea that regardless of the 'out-of-school' challenges faced by some young people, schools and teachers can and do make a difference and that a creative and flexible approach to managing behaviour, the learning environment and exclusion can help re-motivate and re-engage even the 'hard to include'.

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