

# *Experiences of Persistently Absent Children: Access to SEND Support & Unexplained School Exits*

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# 1. SEND Identification in Primary School

## Who gets access to SEND support?

### Modelled probability of being identified with SEND in years 1-6

- Most important factor (accounting for over half of variation) was which school attended
- True for 'School Support' assessed by the school but *also for EHCPs* assessed by the LA
- SENDCOP defines SEND as *individual* need above that of other same-age children, but individual factors are dominated by the school attended = dysfunctional system
- Academisation stood out as a key school-level *and LA-level* factor affecting probability of SEND identification

# 1. SEND Identification in Primary School

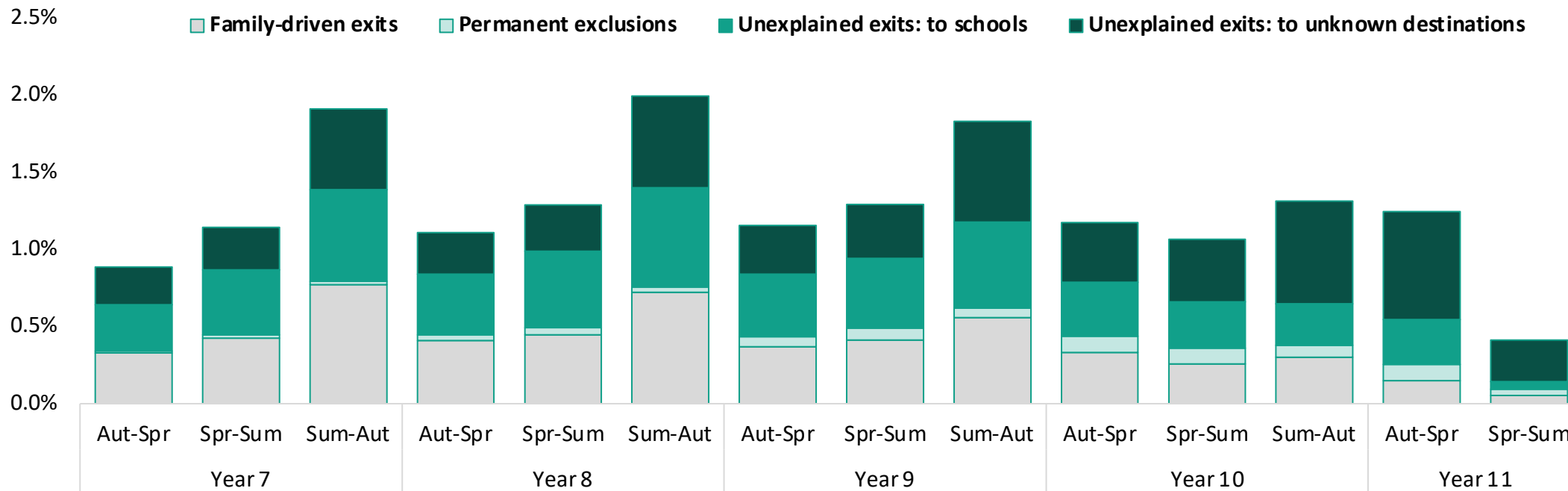
## After accounting for schools, what individual child factors matter?

- Disadvantaged children more likely to be identified with SEND, but there was evidence of *rationing in favour of the more affluent* within the most deprived local authorities
- Problem of *less visible children* who were more likely to miss out on SEND support than similarly vulnerable children
- The less visible groups were: children who moved schools, those in contact with social care, and those who were absent for longer percentages of the school year
- Puzzling because children already recorded with SEND have higher absence
- The graduated and iterative nature of the 'assess, plan, do, review' SEND model does not work well for children who are mobile or struggle to attend school

# 2. Unexplained Exits from School

61,000 children in the Y11 2017 cohort had an unexplained exit

- That is one in ten, or three per class of 30 (on average)
- Does not include: official exclusions or those that left for ‘family reasons’
- Does include: moves to another school, to AP and exits from state schools sector



# What happens after an unexplained exit?

**There are 24,000 kids from the 2017 cohort where we do not know what happened to them**

- 52% of the 61,000 are not immediately enrolled in another school
- 4 in 10 have not returned to a state school by the end of Y11
- Of those that move into Alternative Provision, only 1 in 10 are reintegrated to a mainstream school later

**For those who do move straight to another school:**

- 1 in 4 move to a school rated lower by Ofsted than their original school
- 1 in 6 move from a school that is good or better to a school that is less than good

# Which pupils are at greater risk?

- > 1 in 3 kids who experienced permanent exclusion
- Almost 1 in 3 of Looked After Children and of kids with SEMH special needs
- 1 in 4 kids with fixed period exclusions or significant absence
- 1 in 5 Children In Need of local authority social services
- 1 in 6 kids with any type of SEND and of those who are ever eligible for FSM
- 1 in 7 black children and of children with low prior attainment



# 3. Some Policy Implications

## Helping children with additional needs stay in school

- Specialist SEND training for every school leader
- Better access to specialists such as educational psychologists
- Curriculum and pedagogies to foster social and emotional wellbeing
- National framework of reasonable adjustments to be offered by all schools
- Pilot smaller class sizes in early primary to evaluate benefits

## Adjusting the system to engage with children outside of school

- SEND assessment and support available in the family home
- Similar access issues with CAMHS as the 'teams in schools' model is slow to roll out