

Chapter 6

Absence and exclusion from school

This chapter compares absence and exclusions levels between pupils with special educational needs and other pupils. It looks at the proportion of pupils with special educational needs who were persistently absent from school by different characteristics, such as their gender and primary type of need. It also compares the characteristics of those pupils who were excluded from school.

Absence from school in 2007/08

Key findings from absence data

Pupils with special educational needs were more likely to be absent from school than other pupils. Of all the primary types of need, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were the most likely to be absent from school. Those with speech, language and communication difficulties were least likely.

Persistent absentees

In general, girls were more likely to be persistent absentees compared to boys. However boys with statements of special educational needs were more likely to be persistent absentees than girls.

Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties as their primary need type were least likely to be persistent absentees, while pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties were the most likely.

On average, persistent absentees with statements of special educational needs missed 39.3 per cent of half day school sessions in 2007/08, compared to 33.8 per cent for those without special educational needs. The figures for pupils at School Action and School Action Plus were 34.3 per cent and 38.2 per cent respectively.

Persistent absentees who had speech, language and communication difficulties as their primary need type missed the least number of half days of schooling, while pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties missed the most.



See Data Annex 6 for further detail on the material covered in this chapter. All referenced tables can be found in the accompanying downloadable spreadsheets at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000851/index.shtml>. All numbers which appear in this chapter were taken from the School Census (see Data Annex 6 for further details). Data were based on the academic year and special educational need provision was recorded in the January of the same year.

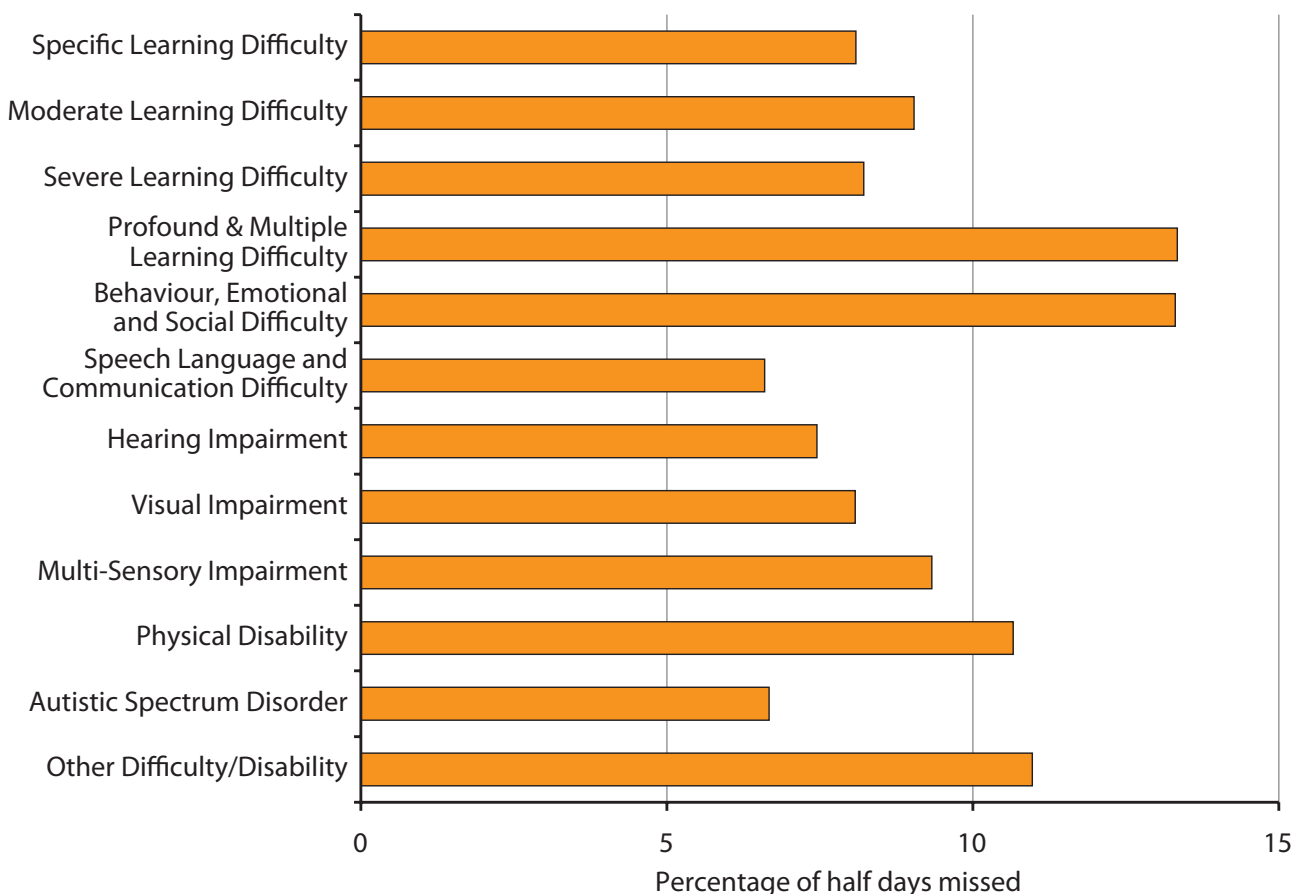
Absence rates for pupils at School Action Plus and with statements

Pupils at School Action Plus or with statements of special educational needs missed 9.6 per cent of half days (absence is calculated by the number of half days missed) at school in the academic year 2007/08 (this ran from September 2007 to

July 2008). All pupils (those with and without special educational needs) missed 6.3 per cent of half days, showing that pupils with special educational needs were more likely to be absent from school.

Figure 6.1 shows the percentage of half days of school missed through absence by 5 to 15 year olds at School Action Plus or with statements during 2007/08. Of all the primary types of need, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties were the most likely to be absent from school. Pupils in each of these categories missed 13.3 per cent of half days in 2007/08. Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties missed the least school at 6.6 per cent of half days. Web based Table 6.1 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Percentage of half day sessions missed by pupils at School Action Plus or with statements, in 2007/08 by primary type of need



Authorised and unauthorised absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (for example, illness).

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. Arriving late for school, after the register has closed, is recorded as unauthorised absence.

Web based Table 6.1 shows that, in all the primary need groups, the proportion of school missed through authorised absence was greater than unauthorised absence. Pupils with multi-sensory impairment missed the smallest amount of school through unauthorised absence at 0.7 per cent of half days. Pupils with no special educational needs also missed more time through authorised than unauthorised absence.

Those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties missed the largest amount of school through unauthorised absence at 4.6 per cent of half days. Web based Table 6.1 shows data on all the primary need groups.

Persistent absentees

Persistent absentees are defined as pupils aged between 5 and 15 years who miss 20 per cent or more available sessions during the academic year, through either authorised or unauthorised absence.

Figure 6.2 shows the percentage of pupil enrolments that were defined as persistent absentees at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements of special educational needs. Pupils could have been enrolled in more than one school throughout the academic year, in which case they could appear in the absence record more than once.

9.4 per cent of pupils with statements of special educational needs who were enrolled at school in 2007/08 were persistent absentees. This compared to 2.4 per cent of pupils on roll where no special educational needs were identified. Pupils at School Action Plus were most likely to be persistent absentees (10.1 per cent of all enrolments).

Figure 6.2: Percentage of pupils enrolled in 2007/08 who were defined as persistent absentees, by provision for need and gender

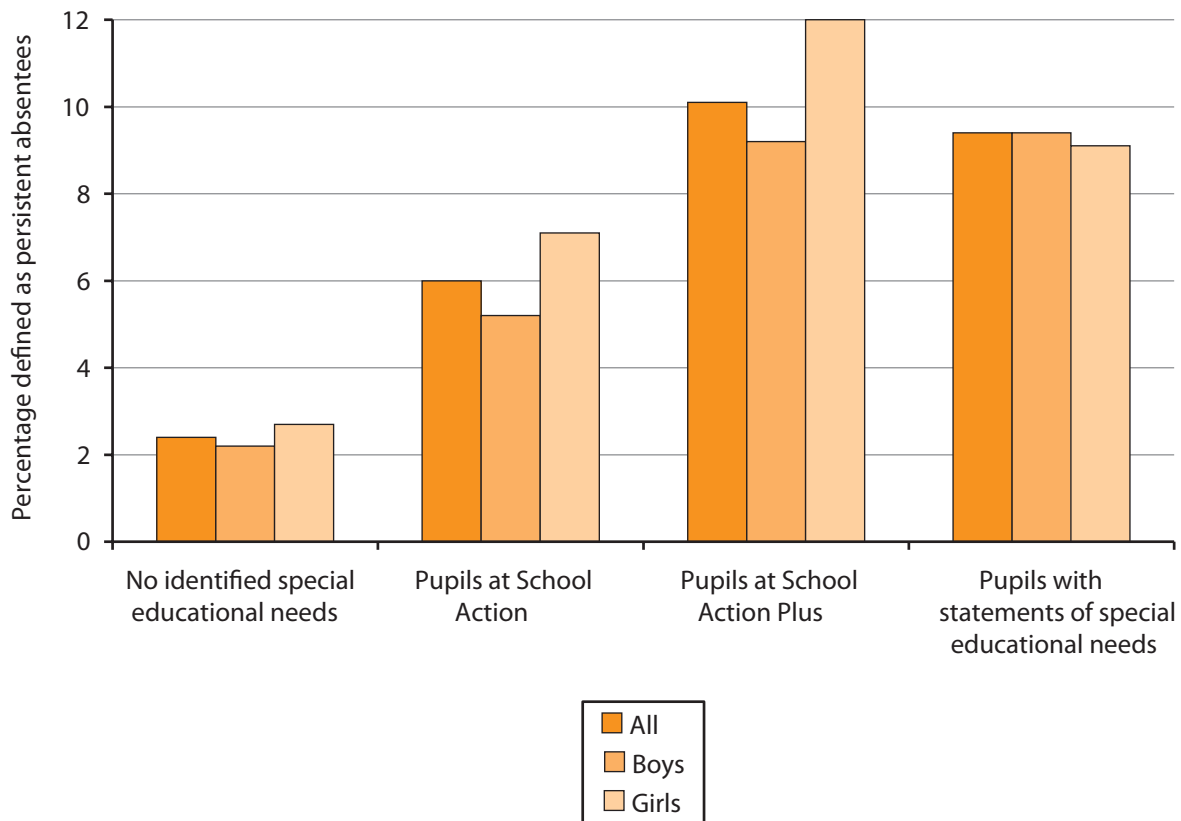
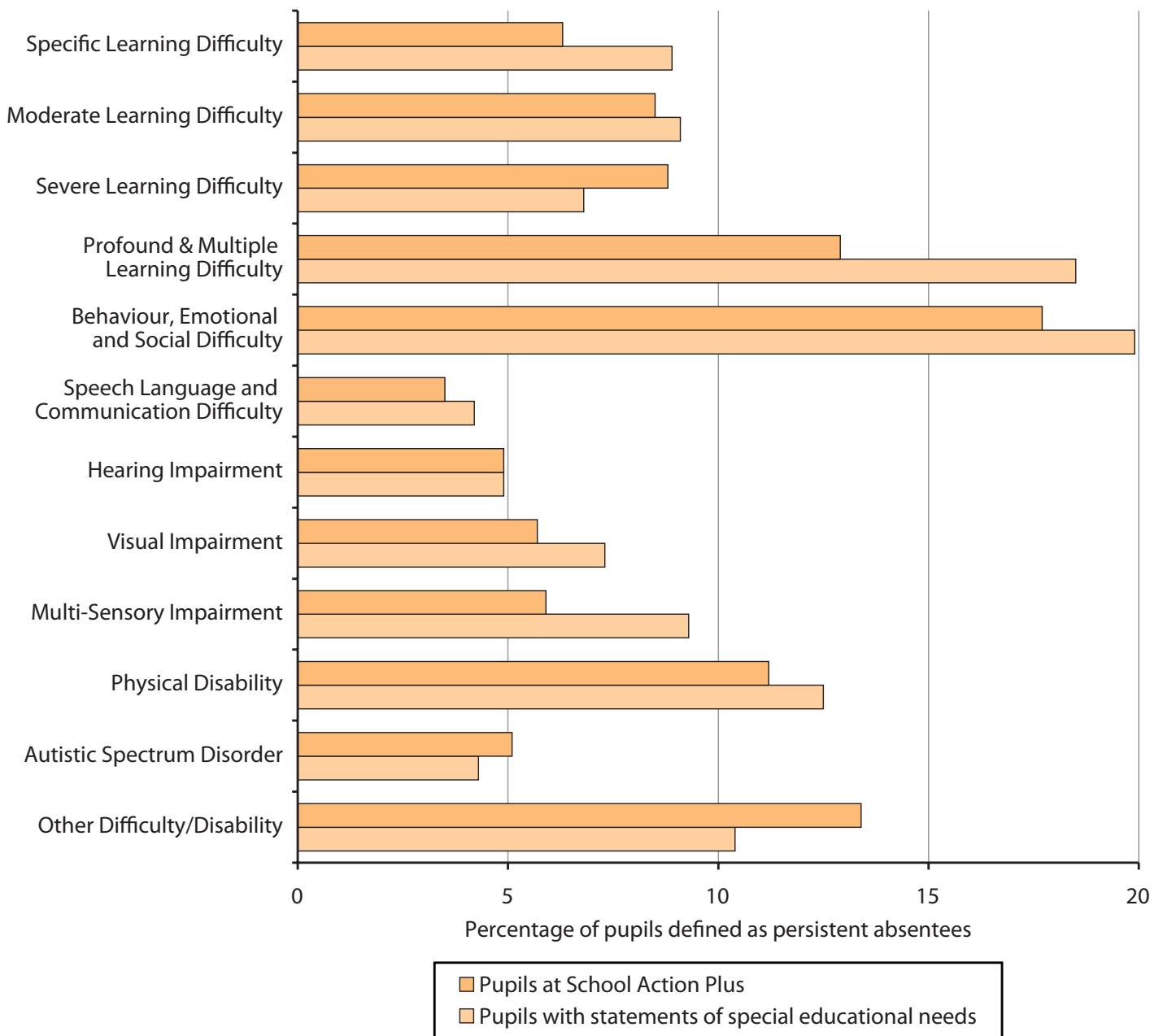


Figure 6.2 also shows that girls were more likely to be persistent absentees than boys. 2.7 per cent of girls without special educational needs enrolled at school in 2007/08 were persistent absentees compared to 2.2 per cent of boys enrolled. The gap was largest between those at School Action Plus, where 12.0 per cent of girls on roll were persistent absentees compared to 9.2 per cent of boys. The only group where boys were more likely to be persistent absentees were those with statements (9.4 per cent for boys and 9.1 per cent for girls). Web based Table 6.2 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 6.2.

Persistent absentees by primary type of need

Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of persistent absentees at School Action Plus and with statements by primary types of special educational need.

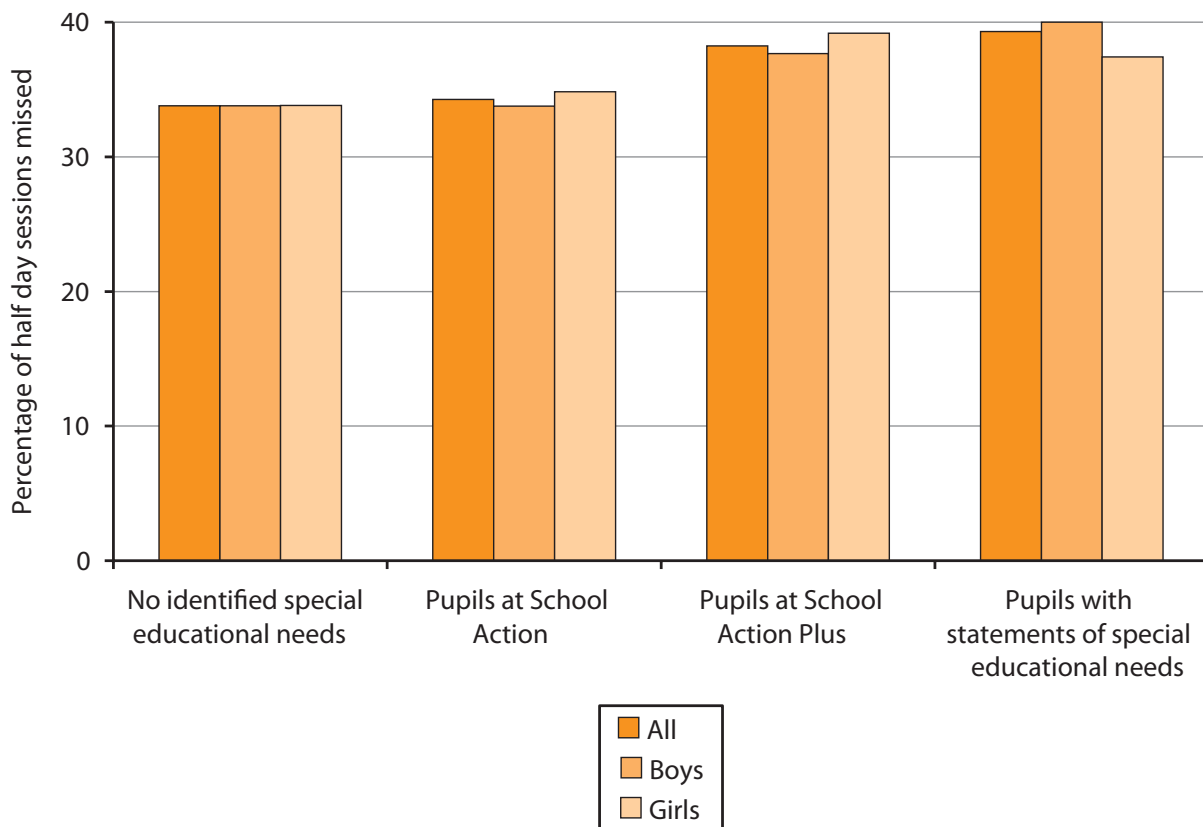
Figure 6.3: Percentage of pupils enrolled in 2007/08 who were defined as persistent absentees, by primary need type



For both provisions for special educational needs (School Action Plus and statements) pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties were least likely to be persistent absentees, while pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties were most likely. Web based

Table 6.2 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 6.3. Caution should be used when interpreting the figures for multi-sensory impairments in both groups along with the figure for profound and multiple learning with statements, due to low numbers.

Figure 6.4: Percentage of half day sessions missed by persistent absentees, in 2007/08 by provision for need and gender



Half days missed at school by persistent absentees by provision for need

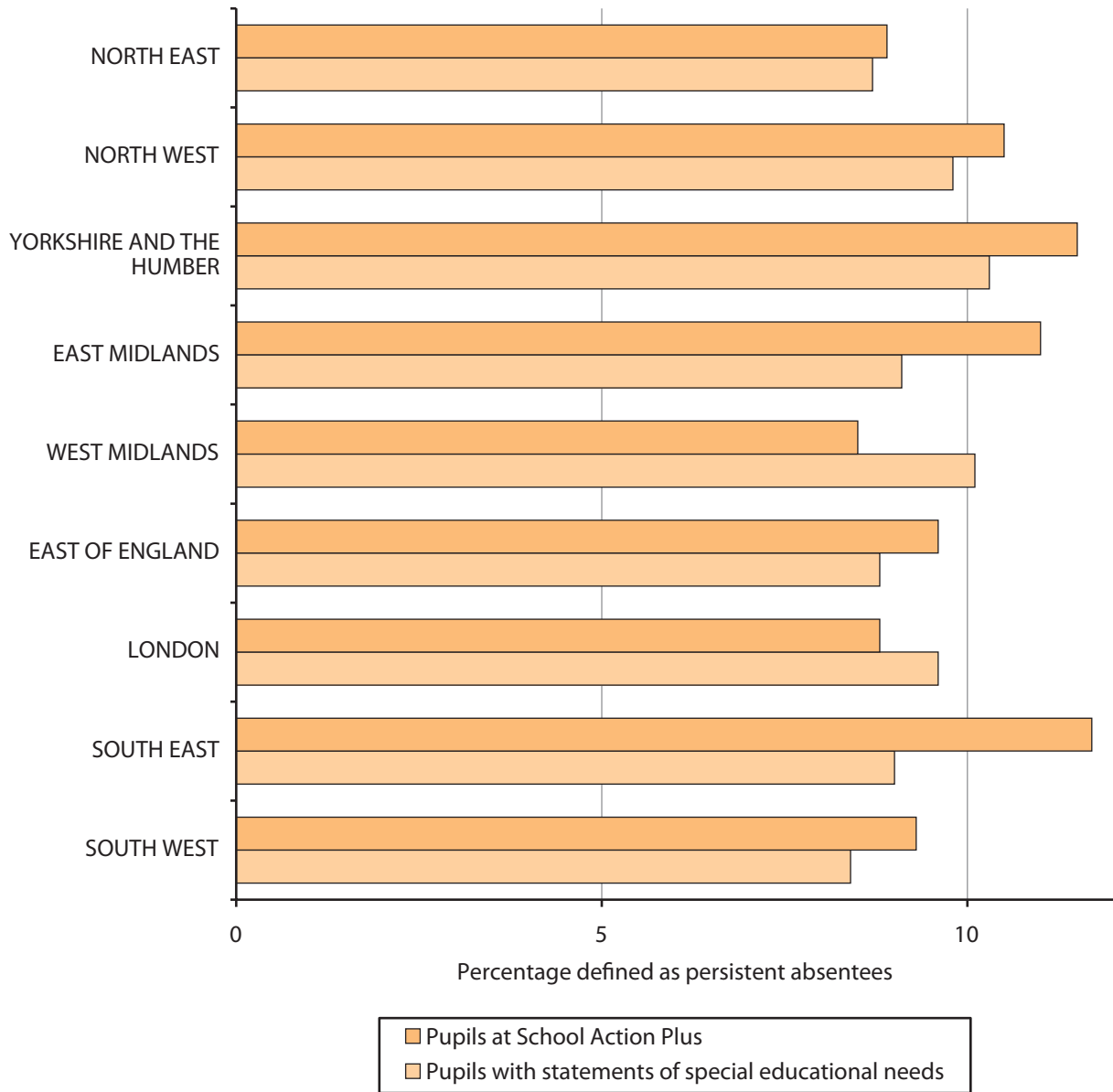
Figure 6.4 shows the percentage of half days missed at school by pupils at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements. On average, persistent absentees with statements of special educational needs missed 39.3 per cent of half day sessions in 2007/08, compared to 33.8 per cent for those without special educational needs. The figures for pupils at School Action and School Action Plus were 34.3 per cent and 38.2 per cent respectively. Web based Table 6.2 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 6.4.

Half days missed at school by persistent absentees by primary type of need

Figure 6.5 shows the percentage of half days missed at school by primary types of special educational need for pupils at School Action Plus and for pupils with statements. Web based Table 6.2 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 6.5.

Persistent absentees at School Action Plus and with statements with speech, language and communication difficulties as their primary need type missed the least number of half days, while pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties missed the most. Caution should be used when interpreting the figures for multi-sensory impairments in both groups along with the figure for profound and multiple learning with statements, due to low numbers.

Figure 6.6: Percentage of pupils enrolled in 2007/08 who were defined as persistent absentees, by Government Office Region



Government Office Region results

Figure 6.6 shows differences in the percentage of persistent absentees by Government Office Region for pupils at School Action Plus or with statements.

Pupils with statements of special educational needs were most likely to be persistent absentees if they went to school in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Pupils at School Action Plus were most likely to be persistent absentees if they went to school in the South East.

In general, pupils at School Action Plus were more likely to be persistent absentees than those with statements. However, the opposite rule applied for pupils who went to school in the West Midlands and London. Web based Table 6.3 shows Government Office Region and local authority figures.

Exclusions from school in 2006/07

Key findings from exclusions data

Temporary exclusions

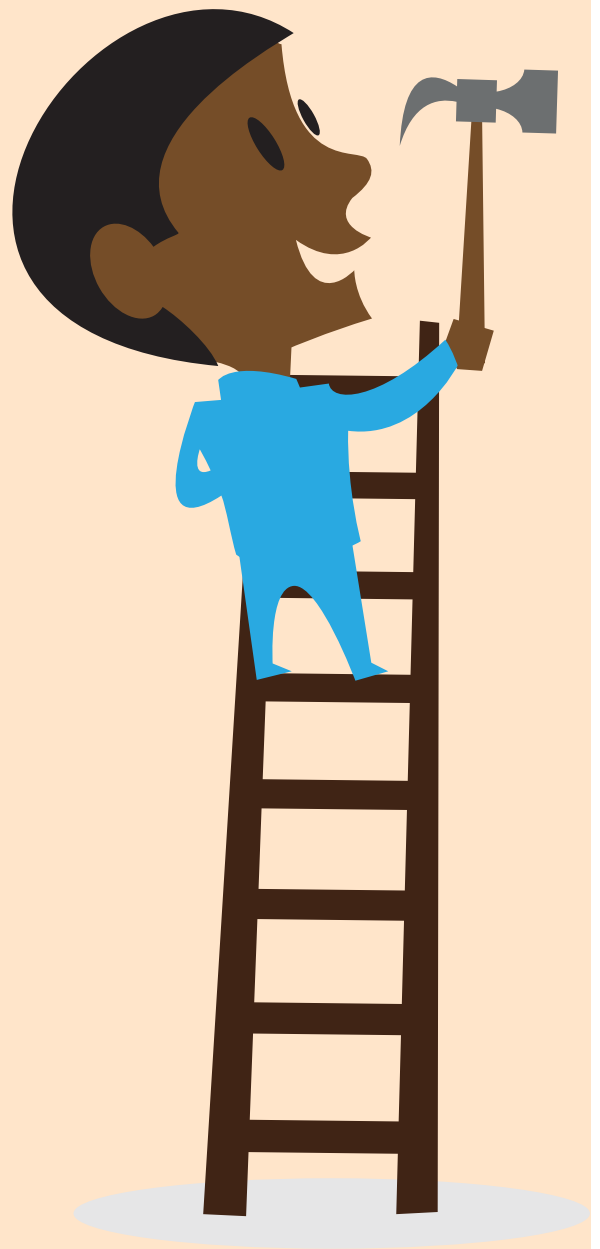
Pupils with special educational needs were more likely to be temporarily excluded from school than their peers. Pupils at School Action Plus were most likely to be excluded from school.

Boys were more likely to be temporarily excluded from school than girls.

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were least likely to be temporarily excluded from school. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties were by far the most likely to be temporarily excluded.

Permanent exclusions

Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulty were the most likely to be permanently excluded.



Rate of fixed term exclusions

A fixed term (or temporary) exclusion is when a pupil is excluded from a school but remains on the register because they are expected to return once the exclusion period is over.

Figure 6.7 shows the percentage of pupils who were temporarily excluded in 2006/07. It compares differences between boys and girls at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements. Web based Table 6.4 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 6.7.

This shows that 8.8 per cent of pupils with statements of special educational needs were temporarily excluded, compared to 12.1 per cent at School Action Plus, 5.7 per cent at School Action

and 1.8 per cent for pupils with no identified special educational needs.

Figure 6.7 shows that boys were more likely to be temporarily excluded from school than girls regardless of their provision for need.

Boys with statements were three times more likely than girls to be temporarily excluded.

Boys at School Action Plus and School Action were nearly twice as likely as girls to be temporarily excluded.

Boys with no identified special educational needs were over twice as likely as girls to be temporarily excluded.

Figure 6.7: Percentage of pupils with a fixed term exclusion in 2006/07, by provision for need and gender

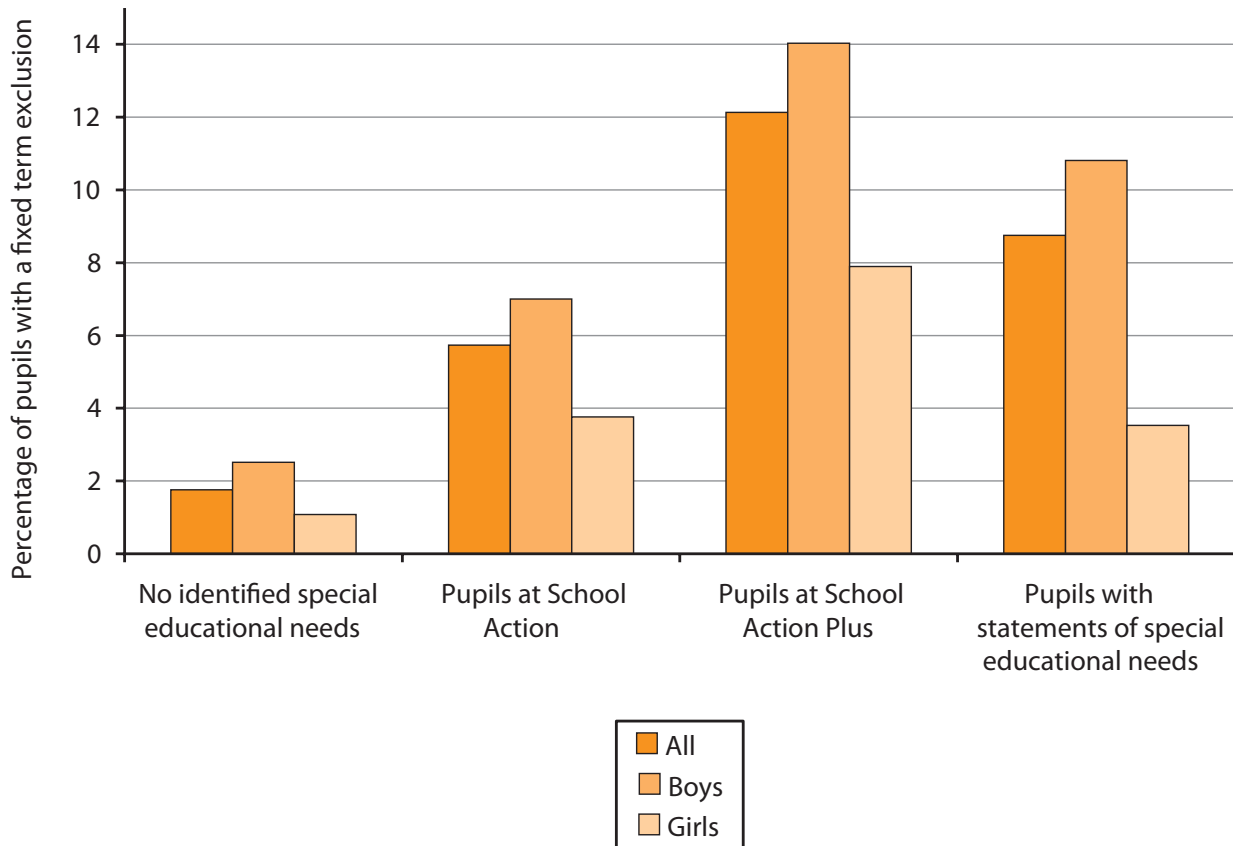
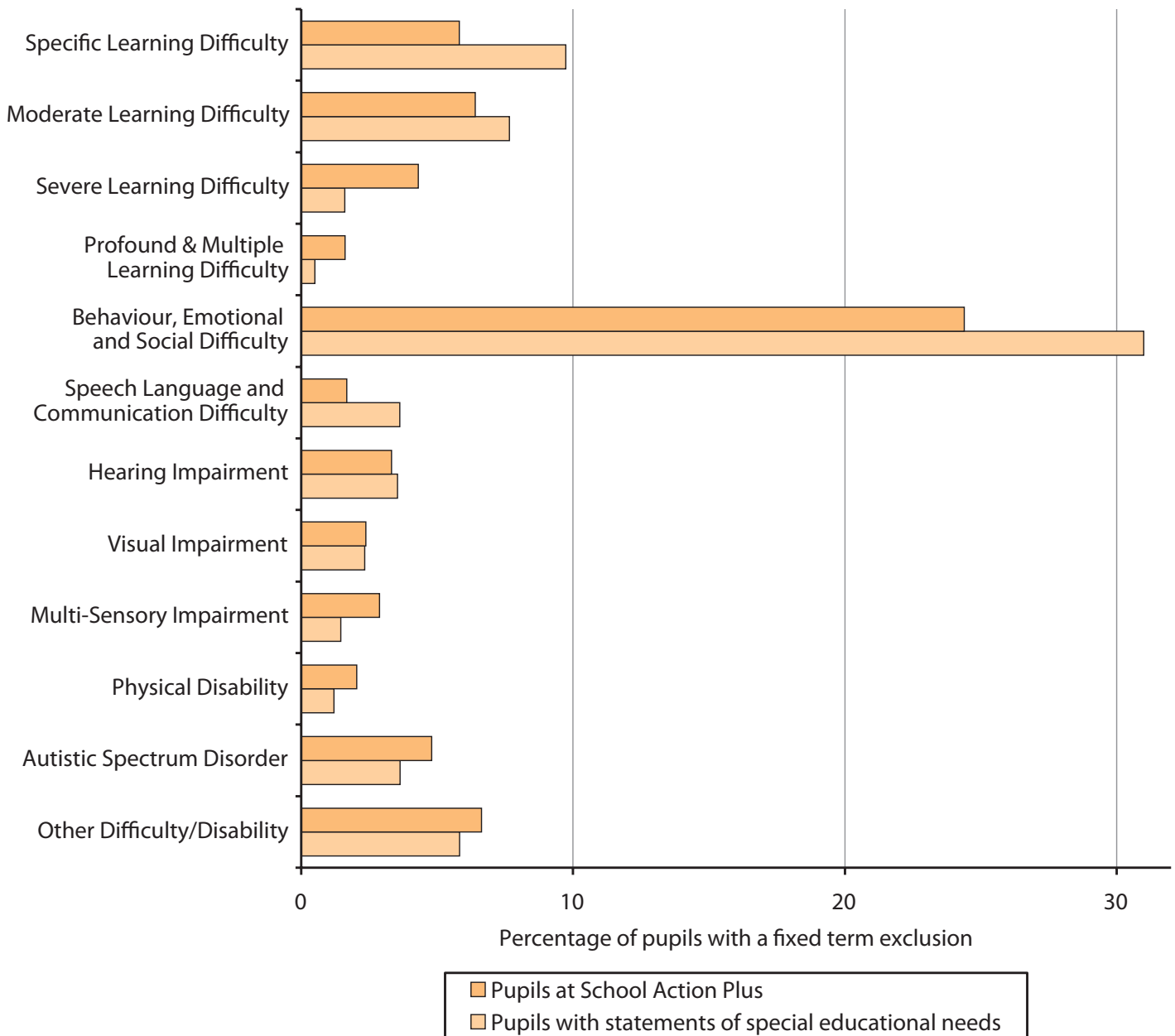


Figure 6.8: Percentage of pupils with fixed term exclusions in 2006/07, by primary need type



Rate of fixed term exclusions by primary type of need

Figure 6.8 shows the rate of fixed term (temporarily) exclusions by primary types of special educational need among pupils at School Action Plus and those with statements.

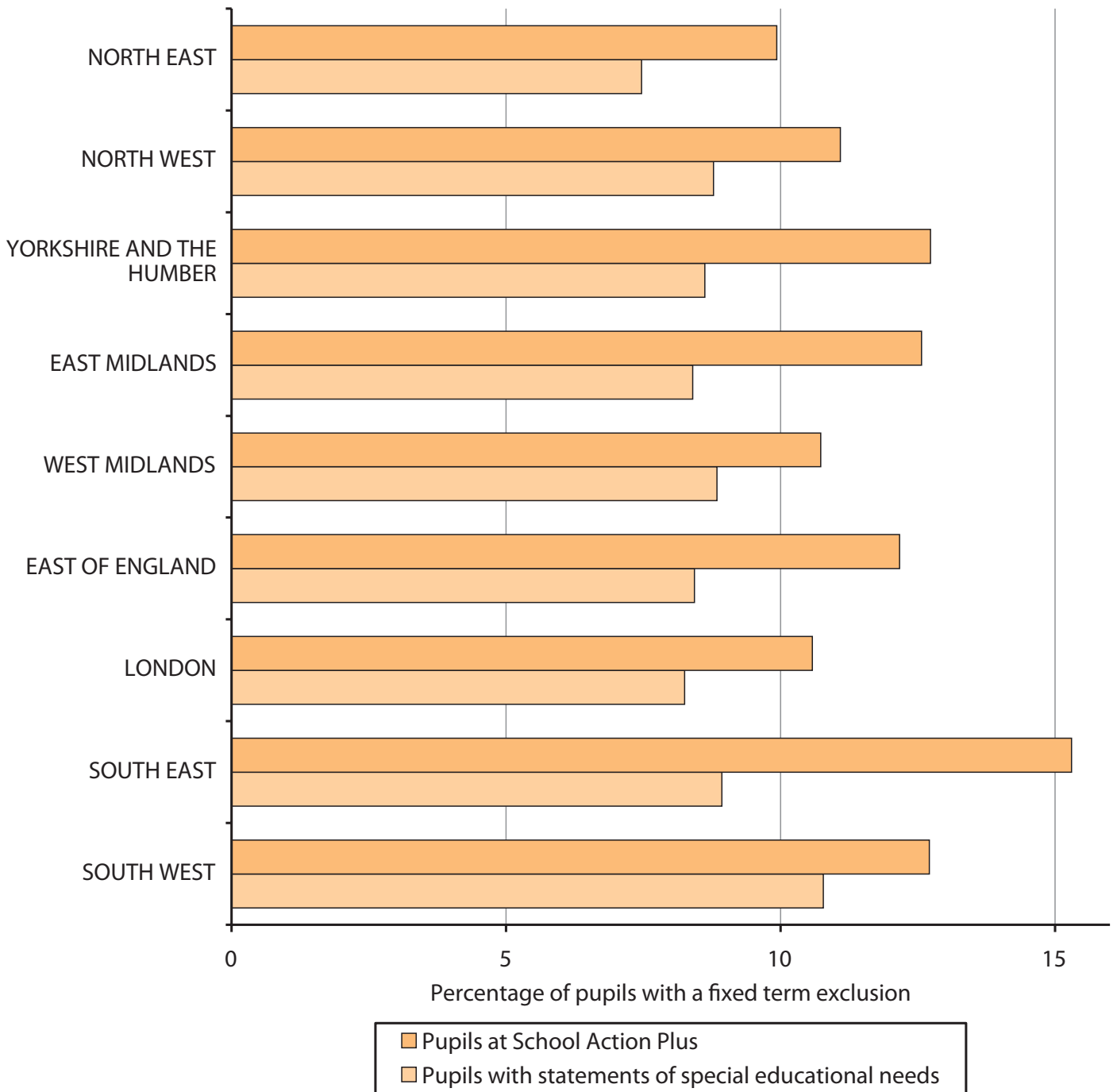
Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were least likely to be temporarily excluded from school. Although caution should be used when interpreting this figure as well as the figure for multi-sensory impairment, due to low numbers.

Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties were by far the most likely to be temporarily excluded. Web based Table 6.4 shows data on all the primary need groups.

Fixed term exclusions by Government Office Region

Figure 6.9 shows the proportion of fixed term exclusions by Government Office Region for pupils at School Action Plus or with statements.

Figure 6.9: Percentage of pupils with fixed term exclusions in 2006/07, by provision for need by Government Office Region



Of all the Government Office Regions, pupils with statements attending school in the North East were the least likely to be temporarily excluded from school. The South West had the highest proportion of pupils with statements that received a temporary exclusion.

The South East had the highest proportion of pupils at School Action Plus to be temporarily excluded.

In all the Government Office Regions, pupils at School Action Plus were more likely to be temporarily excluded than those with statements of special educational needs. Web based Table 6.5 shows Government Office Region and local authority figures.

Rate of permanent exclusions

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is excluded from a school and their name removed from the register.

Figure 6.10 shows the percentage of pupils who were permanently excluded in 2006/07. It compares differences between boys and girls at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements. Web based Table 6.6 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 6.10.

This chart displays a very similar trend to that shown in Figure 6.7, which related to temporary exclusions. Compared to their peers, pupils with special educational needs were more likely to be permanently excluded. As with fixed term exclusions, pupils at School Action Plus were most likely to receive a permanent exclusion.

Figure 6.10: Percentage of pupils with a permanent exclusion in 2006/07, by provision for need and gender

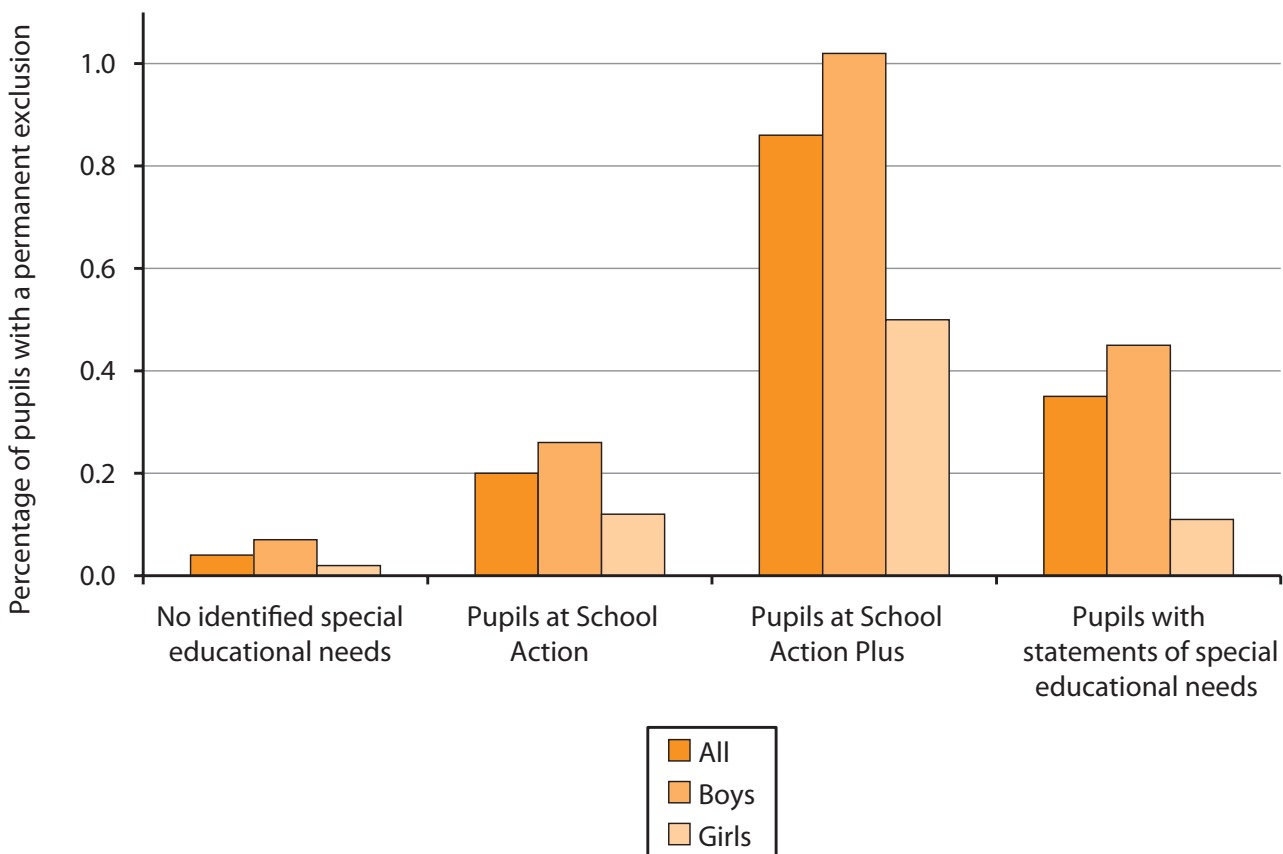


Figure 6.10 shows that boys with statements of special educational needs were four times more likely to be permanently excluded than girls.

Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulty were the most likely to be permanently excluded. Web based Table 6.6 shows data on all the primary need groups. Web based Table 6.7 shows Government Office Region and local authority figures.

Exclusions from school in 2007/08

Provision for need information on the number of pupils with special educational needs who were excluded from school in 2007/08 was published in July 2009 and can be found at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000860/index.shtml>.



Data Annex VI: Absence and exclusion from school for pupils with special educational needs

The data included in Chapter 6 has been provided as additional analysis following the publication of Statistical First Releases (SFR) entitled '**Pupil Absence in Schools in England, including Pupil Characteristics: 2007/08**' and '**Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England 2006/07 – Amended**' available at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000832/index.shtml> <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000793/index.shtml>.

The tables contain data for pupils at a variety of different schools including maintained schools (including academies and City Technology Colleges) and non-maintained special schools. Tables differ in their coverage of pupils from the different types of schools. The footnotes in each of the tables explain which pupils and schools were included. Special educational need provision was recorded in January each year. Numbers were rounded to the nearest 10 and '#' represents a number, percentage or rate based on fewer than five. Totals may not appear to equal the sum of the component parts because numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

The data source used in the tables was the School Census. Details on the School Census data collection can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datacollections/sc2009/>.

Some information on pupils with special educational needs who were excluded in 2007/08 can be found in Statistical First Releases (SFR) entitled '**Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England 2007/08**' available at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000860/index.shtml>.

The seven tables referenced within Chapter 6 are listed below. The tables can be found in the accompanying web based spreadsheets at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000851/index.shtml>.

Index of tables for Chapter 6

Table 6.1: Absence rates by primary type of need for pupils at School Action Plus and with statements of SEN, 2007/08

Table 6.2: Persistent absentees by provision, and primary type of need and gender, 2007/08

Table 6.3: Persistent absentees at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements by local authority, 2007/08

Table 6.4: Pupils with fixed term exclusions by provision, primary type of need and gender, 2006/07

Table 6.5: Pupils at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements with fixed term exclusions by local authority, 2006/07

Table 6.6: Pupils with permanent exclusions by provision, primary type of need and gender, 2006/07

Table 6.7: Pupils at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements with permanent exclusions by local authority, 2006/07