



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS  
IN EDUCATION

# Raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils

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*School and LEA responses*

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# Raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils

In general, this report adopts the ethnic categories used in the DfEE's annual School's Census (Form 7) which are similar to those in the 1991 National Census. Using geographically based terms (Bangladeshi, Pakistani etc) to describe ethnic group membership for settled British communities is problematic and fails to recognise the diversity within the various groups. Notwithstanding these complexities, in the interest of textual simplicity these terms will be used throughout this report. Similarly, references to, for example, 'Bangladeshi schools' should be understood to mean 'schools selected on account of their Bangladeshi origin pupils'.

# Introduction

- 1** In 1996 OFSTED published a review of research<sup>1</sup> on the achievement of minority ethnic pupils. As part of its response to the report the DfEE asked OFSTED to follow up some of the key issues which the review had highlighted. In particular, OFSTED was asked to inspect and report on the effectiveness of initiatives to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, especially from Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy Traveller backgrounds. In addition, the Inter-Departmental Racial Attacks Group<sup>2</sup> invited OFSTED to seek evidence on what can be done to tackle problems of racial tension and harassment in schools.
- 2** The inspection focused on the following questions:

  - What evidence do schools have on the relative performance of pupils from different ethnic groups?
  - What strategies have schools implemented to raise the attainment of minority ethnic groups?
  - What policies have schools developed for tackling stereotyping, ensuring high expectations and promoting good race relations?
  - How do LEAs assist and work in partnership with schools to achieve successful outcomes in these three main areas?
- 3** A sample of 48 schools was selected on account of the percentage of pupils from each of the four focus groups (Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy Traveller) to illustrate how schools nationally are responding to issues related to the achievement of minority ethnic pupils. For each group, 12 schools were selected – six primary and six secondary. In each case the focus group was the main minority ethnic group in the school. Discussions were held with officers in the 25 LEAs in which these schools were located.
- 4** In addition, visits were made to a further 34 schools which had been identified as demonstrating elements of good practice in relation to the education of minority ethnic pupils. Evidence from these visits is used throughout the report to illustrate the positive action that some schools have taken in relation to the first three key issues listed in paragraph 2.
- 5** The selected schools with Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Black Caribbean populations were all located in urban areas including metropolitan boroughs and three medium sized shire towns. With one exception all the schools served communities which were characterised by significant degrees of socio-economic disadvantage, with high unemployment, overcrowded housing, environmental deprivation (including limited safe play areas for children), high levels of racial tension and rapidly changing populations. Eligibility for free school meals was nearly always high, usually twice the national average but sometimes much higher. The majority of schools had significant numbers of pupils learning English as an additional language. In many of the schools there was significant pupil mobility, with pupil turnover anything up to 30 per cent in one year. Bangladeshi and, to a lesser extent, Pakistani children often had little experience of pre-school provision,

<sup>1</sup> D Gillborn and C Gipps, *Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils*, OFSTED 1996.

<sup>2</sup> *Taking Steps*, The Third Report of the Racial Attacks Group, Home Office 1996.

sometimes because of cultural traditions and sometimes because of restricted nursery and playgroup opportunities.

**6** The schools with Gypsy Traveller populations were mostly located in rural areas and mainly served village communities. A minority were in urban or metropolitan areas. In the rural areas the Gypsy Traveller pupils were likely to be the main (and often only) minority ethnic group in the school. In the urban secondary schools they were one group of several. These schools also experience high pupil mobility and fluctuating numbers due in large part to the migratory patterns of some Gypsy Traveller families. All the schools had within their catchment areas Gypsy Traveller sites which were either council or privately owned. In terms of socio-economic circumstance, the schools varied considerably. In the urban schools the free school meal eligibility was uniformly high (twice the national average) but in the rural areas the range was from 6 to 60 per cent. None of the primary schools had nursery provision and few of the Gypsy Traveller pupils had received any pre-school education.

**7** The 25 LEAs in the survey demonstrate a great variety in size and diversity of minority ethnic population. Of these LEAs, five of the six inner London boroughs have the highest proportion of minority ethnic pupils in their schools. In one outer London borough, the largest minority groups are well-established, often second if not third generation Punjabi or Gujarati speakers whose children perform well in terms of attainment. In several LEAs there are also sizeable groups of refugees and asylum seekers. Numbers of pupils of minority ethnic origin are relatively small in the predominantly rural shire counties and in some cases Gypsy Travellers form the most numerous minority group. In the majority

of the LEAs, pupils of minority ethnic origin mostly come from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds and a large proportion are eligible for free school meals.

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# Main findings

## The attainment of the minority ethnic groups

- 8** While the attainment of minority ethnic groups as a whole is improving, some groups continue to underachieve:
- The performance of Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils in the early years of schooling remains depressed. Once they become proficient in English, however, their attainment often matches or even surpasses that of English first language pupils in similar circumstances. Nevertheless, their generally lower attainment in higher grades at GCSE remains a concern.
  - Black Caribbean pupils make a sound start in primary schools but their performance shows a marked decline at secondary level.
  - Gypsy Traveller pupils are the group most at risk in the education system. Although some make a reasonably promising start in the primary school, by the time they reach secondary level their generally low attainment is a matter of serious concern.
  - In general, girls from minority ethnic groups attain more highly than boys.

## School initiatives

- 9** The majority of schools are engaged in a wide variety of initiatives to improve provision and raise the attainment of all pupils. However, few schools monitor these activities systematically and rarely do they have a specific ethnic focus.
- 10** Although most schools have equal opportunities policies, few have clear

procedures for monitoring their implementation and their impact on practice is limited.

- 11** In the schools which have been most successful in raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, senior managers make clear that the under-performance of any group is not acceptable, gather evidence systematically and challenge individual teachers and departments to spell out what they intend to do to improve the situation.
- 12** Although schools record the numbers of pupils by ethnic group, the use of ethnic monitoring as part of a school's strategy for raising attainment has barely begun at primary level; too many schools are content to live with general 'impressions' or 'hunches' about the performance of different groups of pupils and these can serve to reinforce commonly held stereotypes.
- 13** Secondary schools are much more likely to have attainment data analysed by ethnic group but few use this information as a key management tool for raising standards.
- 14** Very few schools review their curricular and pastoral strategies to ensure that they are sensitive to the ethnic groups in the student population and the wider community. In those instances where schools have done this as a result of concerns about a particular minority ethnic group, positive outcomes have resulted.
- 15** The work of Section 11 and Section 488 funded staff is of crucial importance in raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils. But the impact of these staff on policy and provision across schools is variable and to a large extent dependent on the degree of commitment to the issues by the senior management of the schools.

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As a result Section 11 staff are not always effectively deployed.

- 16** Section 11 funding is rarely used to address the needs of Black Caribbean pupils.
- 17** The schools in which minority ethnic pupils flourish understand the hostility these pupils often face (especially Gypsy Travellers). These schools have developed successful strategies for countering stereotyping which have not only had a tangible impact on the pupils' confidence and self-esteem, but have also influenced the attitudes of the majority.
- 18** An important feature of successful race relations work is a school ethos which is open and vigilant, in which pupils can talk about their concerns and share in the development of strategies for their resolution. This is true of both primary and secondary age pupils.

isolated pupils in schools with few minority ethnic pupils.

- 22** In many LEAs there is uncertainty which verges on helplessness about what are effective strategies to improve attainment for some groups. There is, for instance, a worrying ignorance, generally, about how to raise the attainment of Black Caribbean boys.
- 23** Most authorities are conscious of their responsibility for promoting good race relations and combating racial harassment. Most have written policies and some produce further guidance for schools. However, few monitor the implementation of these policies or the extent of racial harassment. Those that do, and have in addition provided good quality support and training for teachers and other school staff, have had a measurable impact on race relations in the schools involved.

### **LEA initiatives**

- 19** Fewer than a quarter of the 25 LEAs visited have a clear strategy for raising the attainment of minority ethnic groups.
- 20** Only a third of the LEAs monitor minority ethnic attainment comprehensively and can therefore target action effectively. These are mostly inner and outer London LEAs, as well as large metropolitan areas. Most shire counties have yet to collect ethnic performance data systematically.
- 21** Additional support to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils relies almost exclusively on the funding provided by external grants such as Section 11 and Section 488. Generally support services are well structured and posts sensibly deployed. Not all children requiring support have access to it, especially

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# Key issues for schools and LEAs

**24** To make sure that equal opportunities policies take effect, LEAs and schools must:

- monitor pupil achievement and behaviour, including attendance and exclusions, by ethnic group;
- use such data to:
  - set targets for raising the attainment and for improving the attendance and behaviour of underachieving groups;
  - manage and deploy grant-aided support more effectively;
- monitor specific initiatives, such as the Literacy Strategy, to judge how well they are raising the achievement of all ethnic groups;
- keep curricular and pastoral strategies under review to ensure they benefit all ethnic groups in the pupil population;
- within the curriculum, give a clear priority to ensuring that pupils from all ethnic groups make good progress and achieve high standards of literacy, numeracy and information technology;
- counter harassment and stereotyping by:
  - stating clearly in policy documents that these are unacceptable attitudes and behaviours that will not be tolerated;
  - creating an ethos in which these issues can be discussed openly by the whole school community including pupils and parents;
  - giving practical guidance on how to deal with racist behaviour.

**25** In addition, LEAs have a duty to ensure that:

- Educational Development Plans (EDPs) address the needs of minority ethnic pupils;
- the role of the school link inspector with respect to equal opportunities is made clear;
- training and advice to schools on the use of performance data to raise standards are available;
- the implementation of policies is monitored;
- overall trends and patterns of performance are analysed by ethnicity;
- good practice in raising attainment is disseminated.

# The attainment of minority ethnic pupils

- 26** There was considerable variation in the form and extent of the data held by the schools on the attainment of pupils from different ethnic groups. Some had no data available, in others the ethnic categories were crude (eg 'Asian'), while others failed to analyse the performance of boys and girls separately. Despite the deficiencies in the data, it is possible to establish some patterns in pupils' attainment across the different groups. These findings are similar to those reported by many LEAs and in the OFSTED research review, and confirm the incidence of widespread underachievement by pupils from some minority ethnic groups.
- 27** Data from the LEA survey indicates that although the attainment of minority ethnic pupils remains a matter of serious concern, there are some encouraging signs of improvement. In most LEAs this reflects improvements in the attainment of pupils nationally. In all minority ethnic groups, girls attain more highly than boys. Not surprisingly, the attainment of bilingual pupils is measurably improved when they have attained fluency in the English language. It follows that teaching pupils to become literate in English should be given the highest priority in all schools.<sup>3</sup>
- 28** Although not the specific focus of this inspection exercise, it is clear that some schools and LEAs have concerns about the attainment of other minority ethnic groups such as pupils of Turkish and Somali

origin. In some cases this is part of a more general anxiety about the underachievement of refugee pupils.

## Bangladeshi pupils

- 29** Bangladeshi pupils in the primary schools, boys and girls, are underachieving as a group. This is more marked at the end of Key Stage 1 where they are well below national averages, than at the end of Key Stage 2, where they are still below but much closer to national averages. Typically there is marked improvement in achievement between the two key stages.
- 30** At transfer to secondary school, National Curriculum levels remain below national averages. Bangladeshi pupils on average achieve only Level 3 in the core subjects. This rises to Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 3, with scores in mathematics and science slightly higher for boys. There is a strong correlation between proficiency in English and overall attainment. By the time they reach GCSE a greater proportion of Bangladeshi pupils have become proficient in English and in four of the schools achieve above the school average.
- 31** The overall pattern that emerges for Bangladeshi pupils is of a group making slow but steady progress from Key Stage 1 and achieving average points scores at GCSE that compare favourably with those attained by other pupils in socio-economically disadvantaged schools. Performance, however, remains below national averages and especially in relation to higher grades at GCSE.

<sup>3</sup> The Government's National Literacy Strategy (NLS) has much potential for helping these pupils and early indications of improvement in their progress through the NLS are promising. (*The National Literacy Project: An HMI Evaluation*, OFSTED, November 1998.)

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## Black Caribbean pupils

- 32** The data on achievement from the Black Caribbean schools were particularly fragmentary. The primary school data, though limited, indicate Black Caribbean pupils starting out reasonably well and, overall, achieving in line with national averages. This generally positive picture is confirmed by more extensive data from a number of LEAs. Black Caribbean pupils, despite notable exceptions, were, however, generally under-represented in the higher levels at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Overall, Black Caribbean girls are achieving higher standards than boys, but in some schools boys do better in mathematics and science.
- 33** At secondary level, the data indicate that Black Caribbean pupils underachieve. In some cases they are the lowest performing group at GCSE level. It is therefore urgent that secondary schools establish what is happening to Black Caribbean pupils to cause a good start in primary schools to turn into such a marked decline and take action to reverse it.

## Pakistani pupils

- 34** Pakistani pupils are the group for whom it was hardest to establish a clear pattern of achievement. As with the Bangladeshi group, attainment appears depressed at primary level and well below national averages. Only one secondary school had attainment data at transfer for Pakistani pupils and here they were the lowest performing group in the school.
- 35** At GCSE level the picture is rather more positive, with Pakistani pupils having generally caught up or even overtaken other major ethnic groups in these schools (White UK, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean). This result, however, is less

encouraging than it first seems as five of the six schools had average points scores that were well below the national average. Also, as with Bangladeshi pupils, attainment in terms of higher grades at GCSE is a cause for concern.

## Gypsy Traveller pupils

- 36** None of the Gypsy Traveller primary schools was carrying out systematic monitoring of attainment by ethnicity. However, it is clear that Gypsy Traveller pupils achieve less well on average than other pupils in these schools. In two schools there was evidence of serious underachievement. In one of these, Gypsy Traveller children formed 18 per cent of the school roll but represented 50 per cent of the stated pupils in the school – over half of the Gypsy Traveller pupils were on the SEN register. In the second school, 74 per cent of the Gypsy Traveller pupils were on the SEN register.
- 37** At the point of transfer to secondary schools, Gypsy Traveller attainment is well below school and national averages. This results in the majority being placed on school SEN registers. In all the schools where the information was available, over 50 per cent of the Gypsy Traveller population were on the SEN register, and in one school it was 80 per cent. In half the schools no Gypsy Traveller child has yet sat for GCSE.
- 38** Of the four focus groups in this survey, Gypsy Traveller children are the most at risk in the education system. Although some make a reasonably promising start in primary school, by the time they reach secondary school their levels of attainment are almost always a matter for concern. Many, especially boys, opt out of education by Year 9 and very few go on to achieve success at GCSE or beyond.

# School initiatives to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils

## i. School aims and equal opportunities policies

- 39** Most of the schools have policies to promote high achievement for all pupils, including broad equal opportunities or anti-racist policies and more specific policies directed at identified aspects of school performance. Policy making is not, of itself, a panacea but where staff are seriously involved in the development and implementation of policies they clearly benefit from the process, for example, their own awareness of racial issues is often raised along with commitment to dealing with them.
- 40** A majority of the **primary** schools have policies on equal opportunities and, especially the inner city schools, on education for diversity. There is too much variation, however, in the way they are implemented and influence the life and work of the school. All too often sound intentions are not translated into effective day-to-day practice. So, for example, a school may state that prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable in the life and work of the school but have no clearly agreed procedures for dealing with the racist behaviour suffered routinely by some of its pupils in and out of school.
- 41** Most of the primary schools, particularly those with Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean pupils, have recognised the importance of countering racial and gender stereotyping, although the level of conscious action varies, with some schools

being far more explicit about the issues than others. This is particularly the case in the Pakistani and Gypsy Traveller schools which, despite equal opportunities policies and a generally caring ethos, have no systems to underpin these aims. In one such school, for example, the book stock contains much stereotypical and inappropriate material. Although many of the schools recognise and celebrate ethnic diversity, there is considerable hesitancy with regard to Gypsy Traveller backgrounds.

- 42** In the best practice, equal opportunities and behaviour policy documents set down a clear code of practice for all staff, pupils and parents. Indeed in such schools all documents refer appropriately to the importance of equal opportunities.

*In one school with rapidly improving standards, documentation on a wide range of issues is of a very high standard (prospectus, school development plan, action planning, equal opportunities, bullying, behaviour, Section 11 work, literacy). All documents make the school's stand on equal opportunities very clear. It figures prominently in the 'School Aims' and in its 'Values Statement'. The school also recognises that racism and sexism exist and that it has an important role in combating them. The importance of staff having high expectations of all pupils is spelt out. "Children's abilities must not be underestimated because they may not speak English fluently or clearly, because they belong to a particular gender group..." The senior management team lead strongly on these issues and will challenge stereotypical remarks, by asking, for example, "Did you really mean what you just said?" A racist incidents book is kept.*

- 43** Nearly all of the **secondary** schools have equal opportunities policies or mission statements that refer to equalities issues,

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and several have separate policies for multicultural education, anti-racism, anti-sexism etc. In a few schools the policies make clear that expectations are directed at both staff and pupils, but it is rare to find clear procedures for monitoring their implementation. In the school which has been most effective in bringing about greater equality for all its students, the senior management team have concentrated on developing an ethos which values learning and all pupils equally. This has been achieved by a tightly focused system of monitoring to raise attendance and achievement levels, giving additional support where needed and the careful preparation of pupils for examinations. In short, a raft of interlocking initiatives which addresses all aspects of school life.

- 44 Some secondary schools have involved pupils in the implementation of anti-bullying and equal opportunities policies. For example, in one school where racism occurred a student anti-racist group was set up which promoted several initiatives including a 'thought for the week' and a 'problem box' where students could post issues for debate and resolution. Additionally, progress was made because pupils overcame their reluctance to report incidents of racism to staff.
- 45 Two of the more successful schools felt that, although essential, equal opportunities policies rarely address the 'nitty gritty of school improvement and effectiveness'. Rather the best way of tackling stereotyping is through tight monitoring systems which in addition to looking at attainment and progress include reviewing the impact of policies such as mixed ethnic and gender working and ability setting.

*One headteacher commented: "Our main effort in this area has been in providing opportunities for all pupils to achieve as highly as possible and on developing a culture which values everybody." This school monitors the progress of all pupils carefully – both individually and also by gender and ethnicity. If the stereotype of Bangladeshis is that they underachieve, this is certainly not the case here. Indeed, in this school currently the major concern is for white UK girls who are underachieving relative to their attainment at entry. In brief, stereotyping is countered largely through the drive to raise achievement across the board – whilst being aware of any groups which consistently perform below school averages.*

- 46 Thus in the most successful schools, the senior management team make clear that the underperformance of any group is not acceptable, gather evidence systematically, and challenge individuals and departments to spell out what they intend to do to improve the situation.

## ii. The collection and use of attainment data

- 47 In order to identify underachievement, diagnose need and take action, schools need accurate information about aspects of pupil performance. Very few **primary** schools, however, currently make effective use of the increasing amounts of data available to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils. A school serving one of the most disadvantaged wards in the country illustrates what can be achieved with careful monitoring:

*Because the school places equal opportunities at the heart of its vision for the school community, it believes that monitoring by ethnicity and gender is*

*essential for assuring whether its objectives are being met. Very careful analyses are made of National Curriculum assessments, with a commentary written by the headteacher. Recommendations for future action are given and then built into school development planning along with specified targets. For example, the particular needs of Black African (refugee) boys who had suffered considerable trauma, resulting in violent playground behaviour and low achievement, were met through changed pastoral practices and the introduction of a new humanities curriculum unit. The behaviour and attainment of this group of pupils have improved significantly. Given that 89 per cent of pupils in this school have English as an additional language, a significant number are refugees, there is considerable pupil transience, and over 60 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, levels of attainment are very creditable. The 1997 Key Stage 1 reading results were above (mathematics results well above) LEA and national averages. At Key Stage 2 English results were just below LEA and national averages but mathematics and science results were above. The careful monitoring this school carries out enables it to identify problems and focus support appropriately.*

- 48** In general, however, the use of assessment data is too limited. Most of the primary schools are in the process of adopting some form of baseline assessment on entry, although some are at a very early stage of development, and have given little thought to its analytical potential. For most schools, these assessments serve mainly to monitor individual pupils' progress, to target support for pupils with SEN and to measure 'value added'. Plans to use baseline assessment data to monitor the attainment and progress of minority ethnic groups have yet to be developed in the majority of the schools. Caution in

moving forward on this was often related to difficulties in establishing appropriate ethnic group categories and often for fear of reducing the expectations held by teachers of particular ethnic groups.

- 49** While most LEAs provide their primary schools with an analysis of their National Curriculum assessment results, the nature of the analysis varies considerably, with only a minority (mostly in urban and metropolitan areas) including ethnic data. Even where schools do receive good quality data analysed by ethnicity, few make constructive use of it. In some schools the data are studied by headteachers and, more rarely, by core subject co-ordinators, but in most cases, the information remains unused. There is a need for further training and guidance on how to analyse and respond to such information. One school was an exception to this generally negative picture. Following the analysis of its own National Curriculum assessment results, the school took action on three fronts: a whole-school focus on bilingual support; a review of the curriculum to ensure that it was sensitive to the school's multicultural population; and the development of anti-racist strategies.
- 50** All the Gypsy Traveller primary schools supplied their LEA with National Curriculum attainment information for Gypsy Traveller children, this being required as a condition of Section 488 funding by the DfEE. However, there is no overall systematic procedure for the collection of these data or for the use of them at LEA level other than to secure additional government funding.
- 51** A variety of other standardised tests is used by more than half of the primary schools. Most relate to reading and other language skills. In a few cases schools

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receive detailed returns from LEAs which include an analysis of results by ethnic group (for example London Reading Test scores). Despite this, none of the schools routinely considers the ethnically analysed data or uses them to plan future development work. A majority of the schools seem happy to live with 'general impressions' or 'hunches' about the attainment of different groups of pupils. When tested, however, such assumptions were sometimes proved wrong and could lead to the establishment of unhelpful stereotypes. For example, the discovery in one school that teacher assessments for one group of pupils (in this case Pakistani origin) were consistently below national test results, raised questions about teacher expectations.

- 52** In contrast to the primary schools, just over half of the **secondary** schools have some attainment data analysed by ethnicity (and in some cases gender as well). Schools vary considerably, however, in the range of information collected and the way it is analysed. At best, the information is used to underpin a drive to raise standards. The most effective practice was found in the Bangladeshi schools, with the Black Caribbean and Gypsy Traveller schools generally at the other end of the spectrum. Some schools analyse all attainment data such as National Curriculum assessments, GCSE results and standardised tests (reading and cognitive abilities) by ethnicity, as well as other data such as attendance and exclusions. Others monitor only GCSE results in this way. Almost half the schools, however, have no ethnic data. Also, where the senior management team of the school have not been involved in collating and interpreting the data, they are rarely used as a tool for raising attainment. Schools with higher proportions of minority ethnic pupils are no more

likely than schools with lower proportions to monitor by ethnicity. The following example is fairly typical of the minority that make effective use of such data:

*The school analyses GCSE results by ethnicity and gender and produces subject results for each ethnic group. Departmental heads are asked to compare results with previous years, overall performance, national averages and estimated grades and to identify significant differences in performance by ability, gender, teaching groups and ethnic groups. Departments are asked to identify factors contributing to these outcomes and to suggest both department and whole school strategies which might further raise achievement.*

- 53** Where schools analyse data by ethnicity, it is often a fairly recent development. There seems to be a direct link between LEAs which provide schools with good quality ethnic data and the willingness of the school to undertake further and more sophisticated analysis of the information. However, in one LEA a specific focus on the underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils (the largest minority ethnic group in the LEA) had successfully galvanised schools into action with respect to this group but not with respect to Black Caribbean pupils who were underachieving even more significantly.
- 54** Most secondary schools spend a considerable amount of time analysing and assessing the attainment of pupils at transfer. Many have rich databases, but few use them to gain a coherent picture of the relative attainments by ethnicity of pupils entering their schools in Year 7. Several are in the process of collecting and analysing such information but are often hampered by logistical problems such as the late or non-transfer of National Curriculum assessment records as well as late admissions.

55 Although many of the schools have undertaken (or received from their LEA) some monitoring of GCSE results, there is considerable variation in the quality of the information, in the approach and measures used and in the use of the information in the school. One school, for example, with a high proportion of Pakistani pupils had a print-off of individual GCSE performances and a column to identify pupils by ethnicity, but this information had not been aggregated. Others had aggregated the data but not explored their implications. Analysis of GNVQ and GCE A level results by ethnicity was rare.

56 In the best practice the information is used to track the progress of both individuals and groups at whole school and departmental level. For example, one of the Black Caribbean schools has analysed its GCSE results over a number of years by ethnicity and gender in terms of five plus A\*-C, five plus A\*-G, one plus A\*-G and no passes. The school has also analysed individual subject results in relation to ethnicity. As a result, this school has a good overview of the attainment of its cohort and of the initiatives needed to improve outcomes, for example, the identification early in Key Stage 4 of those pupils who need additional support and guidance.

57 In general, the schools are only just beginning to analyse National Curriculum Key Stage 3 results by ethnicity. One Black Caribbean school that had asked the LEA to carry out an ethnic analysis of its Key Stage 3 results noted significant discrepancies in teacher assessments and test scores. This led the school to review its expectations of different ethnic groups. Another school had noted improvement of Black Caribbean pupils' higher level scores in science which led to an evaluation of results across other core subjects and the

establishment of a programme for close monitoring of pupils as they started their GCSE courses to ensure that progress was maintained.

58 With regard to the survey schools overall, the evidence suggests that it is in those schools with the best ethnic data that the performance of the minority ethnic pupils has improved most strongly. Although the collection and analysis of data are becoming recognised as key management tools by an increasing number of schools, unless the performance of different ethnic groups in a wide range of school provision is monitored, it is impossible to be sure that appropriate and often scarce resources are being used to maximum effect.

### iii. Teaching

#### *Teaching strategies*

59 Not surprisingly at a time of considerable educational change, and especially the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, many of the **primary** schools are reviewing or changing their teaching strategies with the aim of raising standards for all pupils irrespective of their ethnicity. They include shared and guided reading, more whole class teaching, strategies to improve boys' motivation, the increased use of attainment grouping at Key Stage 1 and setting at Key Stage 2, intensive remedial work with individuals or small groups, a review of SEN teaching, the headteacher monitoring work from the different classes, more rigorous planning and setting of learning objectives. Most of the schools are not systematically evaluating these initiatives to ensure that all ethnic groups benefit equally.

60 Many of the **secondary** schools are also reviewing their teaching strategies. Here

too, much of the work is aimed at all of the pupils, though in several of the schools there are specific aspects which focus on equal opportunities issues or minority ethnic pupils in particular. Whole school approaches include a focus on classroom organisation and teaching styles and the implementation of school and departmental policies. This is frequently accompanied by senior management team monitoring of class teaching, sometimes with a specific focus on aspects such as ethos, engagement, lesson objectives, rewards, use of student planners and marking. In other schools, especially those with Black Caribbean and Gypsy Traveller populations, the initiatives include a higher profile for literacy support accompanied by an analysis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of in-class or withdrawal approaches.

- 61** In one school, a focus on the performance of bilingual pupils at GCSE has led to a review of teaching styles which involved the pupils.

*A small sample of bilingual pupils, all of Pakistani origin, and a control group completed a questionnaire on their preferred subjects and the reasons why they found some lessons more enjoyable and easier to follow. A key issue that emerged was that all pupils, but especially those for whom English is an additional language, need to have a clear idea of the subject matter they were about to study and the teacher's expectations and intentions for the lesson. Observations of lessons were then undertaken in two subjects which were generally perceived to be well taught. Where the following features were present, bilingual pupils performed better: the structure and objectives of the lesson were made clear at the outset; attention was given to the main vocabulary and language structures needed for the task or assignment; deadlines were*

*indicated, but some independence about how the task might be completed was allowed. Unstructured discussion, however lively and engaging for pupils proficient in English, can be very difficult for EAL learners to follow without support.*

- 62** The importance of teacher expectation for raising levels of attainment is acknowledged explicitly in some of the **primary** schools. However, policies and strategies specifically targeted at raising teacher expectation of minority ethnic pupils are rarely in evidence in the schools with high numbers of Pakistani and Gypsy Traveller pupils. This is the case even where underexpectation is recognised as an issue.
- 63** Teacher expectations of Gypsy Traveller pupils are generally unreasonably low. This is true even where policies in some schools to raise expectations and attainment for all children are generally effective. High achieving Gypsy Traveller pupils help to raise teachers' expectations of pupil potential, although the clear recognition of these individual pupils' achievements does not always go hand in hand with raised expectations for the group as a whole.
- 64** In some of the primary schools there is an awareness that socio-economic deprivation and minority ethnic status are strongly associated with teacher underexpectation. One headteacher, for example, expressed concern about the consistent differential between low teacher expectation of Pakistani pupils (as expressed through Key Stage 2 teacher assessment scores) and their National Curriculum test results (which were noticeably higher). The same dangers exist for pupils learning English as an additional language. In a few schools concerns about teacher underexpectation are focused on white pupils from poor

home circumstances. Where schools have high expectations of all pupils and classwork is well matched to the different levels of attainment, good progress can be made regardless of the school's intake, as the following example shows.

*In one primary school with many Bangladeshi pupils, the headteacher had been shocked when first taking up her appointment by the endemic underexpectation of a relatively long-established staff. She set in train a range of policy initiatives including the introduction of a structured reading scheme, in-service training on assessment, recording and reporting and a programme of staff meetings to agree a set of appropriate expectations in terms of targets for each year group. The dysfunction of Section 11 staff being seen as second-class citizens to class teachers was tackled by insisting that there would be true partnership teaching in every class. Standards of attainment in the school have risen steadily following these initiatives.*

Another headteacher, informed by her own experience of educational underexpectation as a member of a minority ethnic community, saw it as her duty to challenge all staff who expected too little of their pupils.

- 65** All the **secondary** schools profess to being committed to "raising achievement through high expectations" (the title of one school development plan). It is clear that many senior management teams are concerned to raise the aspirations not only of the pupils but the teachers as well. Approaches to this in the most successful schools are two-pronged. Changing the anti-education ethos of many of the pupils is usually seen as the starting point. Constructing monitoring and accountability systems through the collection and analysis of data and the setting of clear targets is the structure used

to leave 'no escape for any weak links' in the staff. A system of professional review accompanied by in-service training supports these approaches.

- 66** A significant number of the secondary schools talked of the importance of creating a 'learning community' – one school had set up a 'culture of learning' working party. One of the by-products of this was the monitoring of movement between ability sets of the Asian students (the school was aware of the over-representation of Bangladeshis in bottom sets). Changing 'anti-boffin' attitudes in another of the Bangladeshi schools was greatly assisted by the desire of the Bangladeshi pupils themselves to widen their career options beyond the restaurant trade. As the image of the school changed and standards rose it became much more popular, indeed oversubscribed. Many of the new pupils joining the school were much less hostile to education. This made a big difference to the staff who now found a climate that was receptive. A rapid rise in standards followed.
- 67** Strategies for raising expectations are for the most part aimed at all pupils with little consideration of an ethnic dimension. Although the potential for exploring teacher expectations in relation to specific groups of pupils clearly exists (for example through comparisons of predicted and actual GCSE grades), this is rarely done.

*One school which has for some time monitored a range of outcomes by gender has also started to monitor by ethnicity. This has resulted in a much greater awareness of how a variety of school procedures can, unwittingly, reinforce stereotypes – for example, the annual award of prizes to pupils who have shown effort and commitment and made good progress. Subject teachers are asked to put forward*

names for inclusion and if a pupil receives three separate nominations he/she will receive a prize. The deputy headteacher noted that not one Black Caribbean boy in the whole school featured on the list. He therefore sent the list out to year heads asking if there were any other names they wished to add. This time among the additional names put forward quite a few Black Caribbean boys were suggested as having met the criteria of hard work and improvement. This has helped to provide positive role models for the Black Caribbean boys in the school – a group that had been identified as underachieving.

- 68** Raising the expectations of Gypsy Traveller pupils among secondary teachers is probably the most urgent priority. Many arrive at secondary school with depressed reading scores and the fact that such a high proportion feature on SEN Registers tends to reinforce the view of them as low achievers. Although several headteachers were quite explicit about their general concern to raise teacher expectations, and whole-school and departmental target setting were important aspects of this, only one school had specific targets for the achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils.
- 69** None of the schools routinely monitors its SEN register to check whether any ethnic group occurs disproportionately on it.

### **Staff responsibilities and use of additional grant**

- 70** The majority of schools see central government additional grant funding as the major source for initiatives related to raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils. In the case of Section 11 funding,<sup>4</sup> the focus of much of the work is on pupils who are learning English as an additional

language, with a small number of achievement projects highlighting, for example, the needs of Black Caribbean pupils. Section 488 funding supports work with Gypsy Traveller and refugee pupils.

- 71** The work of most **primary** Section 11 staff in the schools is effective. These teachers and classroom assistants assess the learning needs of the bilingual pupils leading, in general, to an appropriate deployment of individual or small group support. Most support is offered within the mainstream class, and usually entails good joint planning with class teachers. In a growing number of schools, there is evidence of a strong partnership approach to teaching.

*In a Year 1 reading lesson pupils worked in four groups on tasks related to the story 'Rosie's Walk'. A Section 11 teacher, who had planned the lesson with the class teacher, supported a group, which included pupils new to English, in the retelling of the story using cut-outs. She focused their attention on prepositions, demonstrating 'on', 'under', 'round' as appropriate. Another group read the story with the class teacher looking carefully at punctuation in the text. The two other groups were engaged in word lotto and picture/word matching activities. The groups were subsequently brought together for an intensive session of phonic work. The good partnership work in this school contributes much to the rapid progress in English made by the EAL pupils.*

- 72** Section 11 support staff frequently provide other teachers with sound advice and help with teaching materials. They also make valuable contributions to forging links with parents, particularly when community languages are part of their language skills. The uncertainties surrounding Section 11 funding have had a negative impact on the recruitment and

<sup>4</sup> In April 1999 a new Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) administered by the DfEE will replace Section 11 funding.

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retention of good quality staff, and schools where posts have been cut or remained unfilled report a decline in attainment of their EAL pupils. Section 11 support assistants and bilingual instructors who speak community languages are generally deployed effectively. They are particularly effective in supporting pupils' learning in the early stages of English language acquisition.

- 73** On occasion, Section 11 staff are not deployed effectively. Inadequate joint planning and agreement about shared roles can result in support staff being underused and spending far too much time passively watching the class teacher perform. This is a serious waste of an expensive resource in some schools.
- 74** In the primary schools in this survey, the work of Section 11 staff takes little direct account of the needs of Black Caribbean pupils, even where this is part of their job description. Black Caribbean children tend only to benefit indirectly from additional funding.
- 75** All of the Gypsy Traveller primary schools benefit from additional teaching and ancillary support provided by Traveller Education Services. In some of these schools the support is excellent. It is structured and used effectively, for example, to raise attendance and levels of attainment. In one school the additional teaching support is used to reduce class size with only indirect benefit for the Gypsy Traveller pupils. The attitude of the school staff towards the Gypsy Traveller pupils has a direct influence on the relationship with the Traveller Education Service and the effectiveness of its work. Where the Gypsy Traveller pupils are valued in the same way as other pupils, the support of the Traveller Education Service is welcomed and embraced in a

way which leads to very effective and well co-ordinated provision. In contrast, where the children are viewed negatively, there is a hesitancy on the part of the school to fully utilise the support on offer and this obviously reduces its effectiveness.

- 76** In some primary schools there is a lack of clarity with regard to the understanding of the role and function of the Traveller Education Service. This has led to tensions which are counter-productive in terms of clear staff responsibilities and co-operative and effective practice. There is a tendency in some schools to see the Traveller Education Service as responsible for the Gypsy Traveller pupils and as the go-between with the parents, rather than the school itself. The reluctance to accept full responsibility for the children militates against the development of co-ordinated action to improve attendance and raise levels of attainment.
- 77** The work of the Language Support and Traveller Education Service personnel also constitute a major part of the **secondary** schools' response to the needs of minority ethnic pupils. However, as in the primary schools, only rarely are Black Caribbean pupils a focus for Section 11 staff even where the project might refer to the needs of such pupils.
- 78** The major component of Section 11 work for Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils is language support for those learning English as an additional language. The focus of much of this work is on pupils whose English is still at an early stage of development, recent arrivals or returnees from extended periods abroad. Work with more advanced learners, though needed, is often curtailed due to limitations in the level of staffing. Staff spend most of their time in teaching support (in or outside the classroom) but other duties are the

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collection of assessment data, the collation of information about the languages spoken and proficiency in English (and sometimes mainstream performance data as well), curriculum development in partnership with other teachers or whole departments, and home school liaison.

- 79** The most effective Section 11 work is curriculum-focused and is based on a strong partnership between the EAL teachers and mainstream teachers. Where the EAL teacher has the experience, training and confidence to work in an advisory role, outcomes are often impressive.

*The work of the Section 11 team (seven full-time equivalent staff) is very effective in this school and the team is strongly led. The focus of the work is curriculum development. Support is focused in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science together with other language-rich subjects such as humanities and RE. Departments have to bid in for support making clear their commitment to the work and the nature of development required. The maths department, for example, has noted that EAL pupils find the language of investigative writing difficult, so the Section 11 team and maths department have written a new scheme together. The head of EAL believes that in general most subject teachers need more training for working with developing bilingual pupils – although most do not recognise this. She comments “an interested head of department is the key for productive development”.*

In another school, clear benefits followed from work undertaken by the head of EAL on oracy, raising the awareness of all teachers of the importance of creating the right conditions for planned talk as a learning tool.

- 80** In other cases, however, language support teaching is of poor quality. A range of factors influence the effectiveness of the work of Section 11 staff: the attitude of the headteacher and other senior staff; the procedures for monitoring and influencing the quality of Section 11 teaching; the interest of heads of department in the language development needs of bilingual pupils; the quality of the teachers involved (Section 11 and mainstream); and class teachers' willingness to work collaboratively with support teachers in their classrooms.
- 81** What seems clear is that the reduction of Section 11 grant has weakened schools' capacity to provide the amount and quality of support needed. The short-term nature of the funding and the resultant lack of a career structure has exacerbated the difficulty of recruiting and retaining well-qualified teachers. In general, the quality of Section 11 teaching is too variable, the extent to which Section 11 support impacts on the whole school is generally limited, the commitment of mainstream teachers to these issues is inconsistent and the amount of specialist training for this work has all but evaporated.
- 82** By contrast, the home/school liaison aspect of Section 11 work is, almost without exception, considered of great value by schools, especially where undertaken by someone with knowledge of or, even better, from the community.
- 83** All the Gypsy Traveller secondary schools receive some additional funding to help support the needs of their Gypsy Traveller pupils. At most this amounts to two days' part-time work by a teacher from the local Traveller Education Service, shared access to a Home School Liaison Officer or Education Welfare Officer and in some

cases a few Learning Support Assistant hours. The quality of the work of many Traveller support teachers in the schools is good; many are known and trusted by the local Traveller communities. However, their contribution to the school's overall provision is often limited by the relatively short amount of time spent in the school. Unless the school as a whole addresses the needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils, the work of such teachers remains marginalised.

**84** The job description of Traveller Education Service support teachers is often very broad, encompassing: partnership teaching with mainstream staff or support for individual pupils or groups; record keeping (assessment results, attendance rates); general advice to pupils, staff or governors; close liaison with parents and home school liaison officers. Often they are based within the SEN department with the SENCO having special responsibility for Traveller children. This can be very effective but runs the risk of stereotyping all Travellers as low attainers.

**85** In the best practice Traveller support teachers work closely with form, subject and SEN teachers, especially in the construction of individual education plans (IEPs). Detailed knowledge of the children's home circumstances is sometimes sensitively used to help track progress:

*"Katie's attendance in Year 10 was a cause for congratulations in itself as none of her family have been through secondary education beyond Year 10." Clear long-term objectives were set such as continued attendance at school through to the end of Year 11, to be entered for some GCSE subjects, to improve Reading Age and Spelling Age by six months, to complete a Record of Achievement. Recommendations for provision across the curriculum were spelt out for the subject teachers.*

For example:

Fully differentiated curriculum including:

- *Written work:*
  - cloze with key words provided;
  - sentence beginnings (endings provided);
  - paired work.
- *Display of important key words.*
- *Allowed to work with a more able pupil.*
- *To have opportunities to dictate work, thus giving a context to display creativity and content beyond a limited written and spelling vocabulary.*

This brief IEP gave clear and practical advice about how to support Katie's work in the classroom. The quality of support work seen across the schools was not, however, always this effective.

### **Curriculum review**

**86** There is a hesitancy in many of the primary schools to select areas of work from the Programmes of Study which reflect the pupils' cultural backgrounds – for example, music, famous artists, famous people in history. Indeed, half the primary schools take the view that responding in this way to the ethnic and cultural diversity of their pupil populations is unhelpful and patronising to the groups concerned. Yet National Curriculum Programmes of Study in several subject areas require such a response and a few schools have seized these opportunities to good effect.

**87** Nevertheless few of the primary schools have monitored their curriculum from the standpoint of raising the levels of attainment of minority ethnic pupils. This is a common weakness that calls for urgent attention. However, many of the

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Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean primary schools attempt to foster self-respect among their minority ethnic pupils by using appropriate subject content to promote an understanding of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

Linguistic diversity, for example, is regularly celebrated with stories told in more than one language in class and assembly, and dual language books are available for pupils and parents to share.

- 88** In one of the Black Caribbean schools the curriculum was enriched by a focus on Black History which coincided with a biennial book week. Black African and Caribbean poets and story tellers were invited to work with the pupils. The response of pupils and their parents was very positive. When parents' cultures are recognised by the school, their interest and involvement in the curriculum often increase dramatically. Most curriculum policies in these schools advocate an intercultural approach. In a curriculum policy on humanities, for example, staff are encouraged to "look at Black peoples' history through positive images and powerful figures rather than as victims".

*Following an analysis by ethnicity of National Curriculum results in one primary school, concern about black underachievement and low self-esteem led to a focus on the culture of Black African pupils, even though they were few in number in this predominantly British Asian school. African influenced art and craft work was developed as part of a curriculum initiative in history where Benin was chosen as a unit of study. Work of outstanding quality, supported by stimulating and carefully chosen artefacts, was much in evidence in the school. The response of all the pupils was enthusiastic. The progress and behaviour of the black pupils have improved.*

- 89** Similarly in another primary school subject matter, for example, in history and science, acknowledged the contribution of black people. Where previously a significant number of Black Caribbean children had been underachieving, learning, for example, about black scientists such as Lewis Latimer and Garrett Morgan as part of work on the National Curriculum topic on 'Electricity' had helped them engage with the work as never before. Recent National Curriculum assessment results show no significant differences between the various ethnic groups in this school and two-thirds of the Black Caribbean pupils in Year 6 achieved Level 5 in science. The headteacher commented that where previously the majority of the black parents were disenchanted with education through their own negative experiences and had little contact with the school, they were now actively involved in their children's learning.

- 90** While many of the **secondary** schools have policy statements about the need for the curriculum to be sensitive to the ethnic groups in the pupil population, only one of the schools (selected for its Gypsy Traveller population) systematically audits its curriculum offering from this perspective, although some individual departments have done so. The head of English in one school, for example, had carefully selected the literature to be studied so that the issue of racial stereotyping was addressed. Personal and Social Education (PSE) programmes often include units on stereotyping and racism and assemblies celebrating, for example, Eid or the Chinese New Year can be a helpful dimension of a school's overall response to the needs of pupils in an ethnically diverse society. However, on their own, they are not a sufficient response and ignore the contribution

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that curriculum development can make to raising attainment and ensuring that the cultural experiences of all pupils are recognised and respected within the mainstream curriculum.

- 91** Those schools which have significant numbers of bilingual pupils have often introduced community languages. Half the Pakistani and nearly all the Bangladeshi schools offer either Urdu or Bengali, some in both key stages, others only at Key Stage 4. Where numbers are low this is an expensive option to maintain and constantly under threat. In one school a Bangladeshi science teacher offers Bengali voluntarily in twilight sessions. Generally take-up and outcomes for community languages are good even where substantial numbers of pupils start as late as Year 10 with limited literacy skills in the language. Several schools report more able pupils studying community languages outside school so that they can take an additional GCSE. Many schools are debating whether to start teaching these languages in Key Stage 3 and the implications of not doing so for choice of languages in Key Stage 4.
- 92** Only two of the schools systematically monitor option choices by ethnic group at Key Stage 4. While certain subjects in these schools appear particularly attractive to some ethnic groups, for example textiles for Bangladeshi girls and food for 'other Asian' groups, of more concern are the very low numbers of Bangladeshi pupils opting for history, art or drama. None of the Asian girls opts for PE. Option choices for the other ethnic groups in the schools are more evenly scattered. In other schools where a similar pattern of choices has been noted, various initiatives have brought about change. For example, the language of history is often found difficult by pupils still mastering English as an additional language.

Some schools have provided additional language support and altered their teaching and learning styles to take account of this (for example, by increasing the amount of oral work in class and introducing collaborative activities that require pupils to work more actively with texts). With respect to subjects such as art, drama and PE, more information to parents about course demands and sensitivity to cultural differences have enabled pupils to pursue subjects they are keen to take (for example, PE at GCSE level for one Bangladeshi girl who was a talented basketball player).

- 93** It is not unusual for schools to have some form of extra English option (called, for example, in one school 'English and Communication') for bilingual pupils who need extra language support. Several schools make sure that if bilingual pupils are unlikely to gain a graded result in GCSE English, they are able to take a more basic literacy test so that they at least leave with some language qualification.
- 94** One school has benefited from a Section 11 project which funded mainstream staff secondments and helped them undertake action research on particular aspects of the curriculum. This resulted in a detailed consideration of where bilingual pupils were either underachieving or doing extremely well. The observations staff undertook of Pakistani pupils in classrooms showed that most difficulties arose with everyday language particularly if it was idiomatic. This led to a language policy that emphasised some key strategies in supporting bilingual pupils. There is a common assumption that bilingual pupils need particular support with specialist subject vocabulary. The research, however, showed that staff take great care when introducing specialist vocabulary because it is of crucial importance for their subject and for

all pupils. It was the 'bits between' that caused the trouble for EAL learners especially when the language used was informal. Such language is unlikely to be experienced and used routinely by speakers of languages other than English who do not mix freely with native speakers of English outside school.

- 95 One Gypsy Traveller school reviewed all departmental schemes of work and found a wide range of responses across the curriculum. For example, the 'forgotten Holocaust' with reference to Gypsy Travellers is discussed in history and RE, the art department uses examples of Travellers' homes when doing work on living spaces, work in English allows Travellers to talk and write about their own experiences and respond to criticism, as in the following example:

*Dear Miranda*

*I read your school magazine and found your poem about Gypsies. None of what you have written is true. I know this because I am a Traveller (Gypsies prefer to be called Travellers).*

*First of all some Gypsies might have black hair but some might have blond, brown or any other colour hair. You talk about rotten teeth; I go to the dentist every six months and Travellers' teeth are good. Some older people might have bad teeth, but so might some non-Travellers.*

*You describe Gypsies as they would have lived hundreds of years ago; I do not walk among the daisies any more than you do!*

*I was insulted at your suggestion that Gypsies do not wash. I have a bath every day and the hygiene rules of Gypsies are much stricter than non-Gypsy rules.*

*Your whole poem is not true, it is a stereotype of a Gypsy.*

*If you would like to meet me or some other Travellers, please come and visit us at (name) School.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Mary*

In this school pupils are proud to identify themselves as Travellers.

- 96 In another school, although there had been no curriculum review, a specially organised 'craft week' for Year 8 pupils constituted curricular enhancement which had a very positive effect on the Gypsy Traveller pupils. Adults from the local community were invited into the school. Traveller parents showed the pupils how to make bender tents (semi-circular frame tents), how to cook various Traveller recipes and how the ornate artwork on caravans is created. The parents were initially very anxious about coming into the school, fearing a hostile reception. In the event, the sessions went well and staff commented on how proud children had been to see their parents talking confidently to the other pupils and what a "boost it had been for their ego". Photographs of the work were subsequently made into a display panel for the school's entrance hall.

#### iv. Support for pupils

##### **Pastoral care**

- 97 Strong pastoral care systems are sensitive to the changing needs of individuals and of groups, including ethnic groups. Such systems are especially vigilant and responsive to pupils made vulnerable, emotionally and physically, for example, by taunting and racial abuse. Effective pastoral care is also characterised by the reinforcement of positive behaviour and the highlighting of respect for others. In

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these circumstances minority ethnic pupils benefit in the same way as all other pupils from a school's pastoral arrangements.

**98** A number of the **primary** schools have well-established elected School Councils with a rotational membership, widely agreed agendas and minutes of meetings. Issues relating to school policies, and sometimes outside community matters, are frequently discussed by the pupils. In two cases the Council is used to negotiate school rules. The Councils are a strong feature of positive behaviour management strategies and help to reinforce the school's values (including, crucially, equal opportunities) and give pupils a genuine voice in school affairs. In a similar way, Circle Time is sometimes used as a forum for the discussion of issues such as race relations, bullying and gender.

**99** A few of the schools have developed strategies aimed at specific ethnic groups – for example, Gypsy Traveller pupils with their parents being taken for medical or speech therapist appointments, or staff making special visits to see parents in order to gain permission for the pupils concerned to go on educational school visits. Often Traveller Education Service staff act as informal mentors and this can work well.

**100** Concern for pupils' well-being both in terms of their academic progress and personal development is a vital aspect of the **secondary** schools' pastoral provision. In most of the schools, tutors and year heads have an academic monitoring responsibility as part of their pastoral role. The crucially important condition of all good pastoral systems is that pupils should know that there is someone they can turn to in times of trouble and feel confident that they can do so. Such confidence is borne of trust and is carefully nurtured in the best schools from the time

pupils enter them. It hardly needs to be said that good pastoral systems can make an enormous difference to pupils from minority ethnic groups but only if the system is sensitive to their needs and concerns.

**101** The use of teachers from the minority communities for home school liaison work and their positive impact in terms of improved punctuality and attendance were frequently noted. In one school voluntary counsellors (of whom one is Asian) offer guidance to pupils on racism, bullying and work problems. The nature of the complaints are not known as the service is confidential but it was felt by the school to have been very successful and the governing body has now agreed to fund a further five hours a week (in addition to the 10 offered voluntarily).

**102** Staff concerns about pupils of Asian origin include the sudden removal of girls for arranged marriages (a declining occurrence but still one causing great distress to the pupils and staff concerned). For young Asian teenage boys, the death of a father can bring intense pressures as they are thrust into the role of 'head of the family'. It is difficult for schools to know how best to handle such culturally influenced incidents but staff who come from the same community often play a critical role in mediating between home and school and providing a safety net for the pupils. This often puts them under a lot of pressure and entails personal sacrifices in the amount of time spent supporting pupils.

**103** Specific provision for the pastoral needs of Black Caribbean youngsters is rarely initiated by the schools. It is mostly provided through mentoring schemes staffed by adults from outside the school such as youth workers or local business

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people. This is discussed in the section on mentoring (below).

**104** By contrast the particular pastoral needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils are generally recognised by secondary schools and, in conjunction with Traveller Education Services, some good practice is developing. Such specific pastoral strategies involve: recognising the hostility, stereotyping and racism often directed at Travellers and taking steps to counter this; acknowledging their needs as a minority group and being sensitive to educational needs; taking a flexible approach to school rules and procedures (without compromising school policies). For example, staff in these schools are sensitive to the fact that Travellers' lives are not always ruled by the clock, earrings can be symbols of ethnic origin, and parents may not be able to provide notes to explain absence if no one at home can write. Occasionally schools send folders of work out with pupils during the travelling season.

**105** In one school the SEN department has produced a brief but helpful paper on Traveller pupils, which outlines ways to deal with the hostility suffered by this group. School transfer procedures from primary to secondary also pay particular attention to the needs of Gypsy Traveller children at a critical point in their school career. Extra preliminary visits are organised for Year 6 Gypsy Traveller pupils to help them feel confident about transferring. Also the secondary Traveller teacher works with Year 6 pupils in their primary schools in the summer term prior to transfer, especially if problems are anticipated. A similar concern for pupils moving into Key Stage 4, a point at which many Gypsy Traveller children drop out from school, results in much visiting of sites and individual encouragement to

pupils and parents to maintain attendance as fully and for as long as possible.

**106** Another strategy used by this school at critical points is the negotiation of temporary part-time timetables (accompanied by the issuing of guidelines to staff) if this is considered the best way of keeping a pupil in contact with formal education. Intensive negotiation and co-operation between all the interested parties (the school, Traveller Education Service, parents, pupils and Education Welfare Service) take place until a satisfactory solution is found. The school and Traveller Education Service review these strategies regularly and the evidence shows them to be successful.

### ***Mentoring***

**107** The informal mentoring role of Section 11 and Section 488 funded staff with respect to minority ethnic pupils has been mentioned above. While some **primary** schools see mentoring as the routine responsibility of the class teacher and, quite rightly, as an aspect of pastoral care, others have developed specific schemes. Two schools, for example, have developed paired reading schemes, one using adults from local businesses as part of a business partnership project, the other using pupils from local secondary schools. The latter was particularly successful because it brought white British teenagers into contact with Pakistani pupils in an area where racial tensions are sometimes high. Clearly the quality of mentoring is important. In both cases the mentors were trained and there were measurable gains in progress in the pupils' reading skills.

**108** A majority of the **secondary** schools in inner-city or metropolitan areas use a range of mentoring schemes to raise

attainment. Most commonly initiatives involve all pupils within a particular year group (such as focused support to Year 11 pupils in the run-up to GCSE examinations), but sometimes they apply to pupils who have a particular academic need (such as literacy) or belong to a particular ethnic group, especially Black Caribbean pupils. Paired reading schemes involving adults from outside the school or older pupils helping younger pupils are relatively common.

**109** Successful mentoring schemes in secondary schools include those run by education business partnerships and the mentoring of younger pupils by their older peers. In one school sixth formers support pupils recently arrived from overseas needing help with English. This is particularly effective where pupils share the same first language. In one Bangladeshi school the mentoring of Year 11 pupils was particularly successful. This school, where there had been considerable underachievement, made clear to groups of pupils the high but realistic expectations held for them, backed by a programme of interviews with a member of the senior management team or form tutor.

**110** As a result of the success of such schemes, many schools have sought to incorporate the principles of mentoring in their school day.

*A three year Section 11 funded Curriculum Access and Achievement project focused on a small number of New Commonwealth pupils, mostly of Asian origin, who were identified as in need of additional support. This involved rigorous screening to identify target pupils, daily checking of aspects of performance, for example that homework was completed and key points understood. Where problems were identified, action was*

*taken such as redrafting of worksheets to introduce smaller learning steps. Additionally a bilingual project worker visited families to enlist their support. This strategy produced clear gains including upward movement of pupils through sets.*

**111** The challenges facing such initiatives are considerable, particularly how to sustain the momentum for pupils and staff involved, so that the experiences become part of a mainstream offering and are funded accordingly. A major difficulty facing school and LEA run schemes is that places are limited. Where the number of pupils who can be supported is less than the number in need, selection criteria are often problematic and some inevitably are disappointed. For example, in one school running a scheme for Black Caribbean pupils several applicants were disappointed and in any case the scheme was restricted to Year 10, so could not be followed up in Year 11.

*This project, supported by the LEA and a charitable foundation, had been devised after research into work with young offenders, and talking to advisers who had worked in educational, probation, recreation and care settings. The tutor selected had considerable experience of working with young people and adults in different settings and had particular experience of working with Black Caribbean young people. She was assisted by two other staff members. The school selected 10 pupils who were manifesting the kind of behaviour that gave them an 80–90 per cent risk of permanent exclusion. All of the pupils were Black Caribbean: one girl and nine boys. A meeting with parents and pupils to explain the programme was well attended and the programme was welcomed. The course enabled specific support to be given to 10 Year 10 pupils over eight weeks in 16 group sessions. The programme involved communication skills, conflict*

*resolution, study skills and optional sessions on black awareness run by a black worker. In addition, the group participated in a residential course. Some students who had participated were full of praise for the opportunity of this support. Close co-operation was enhanced between parents and pastoral staff. The school was so impressed with the outcomes of the project for the pupils concerned that it managed to get some additional funding with the support of the LEA to finance the worker one day a week to undertake individual counselling with the pupils in the following academic year. Nine of the pupils completed their GCSE courses. Continuation of the initiative is, however, threatened by shortage of funds.*

Another school linked with local business and community groups to form a 'Young Pakistani Professional Group' and a 'Young Bangladeshi Professional Group'. Successful young Bangladeshi and Pakistani business men and women served as role models to help raise pupils' aspirations.

- 112** While internal school mentoring schemes have had considerable success in raising standards, those involving outside groups have rarely been evaluated. Clearly some pupils have benefited from them by avoiding exclusion and by experiencing greater motivation for involvement in school activities. But whether they are cost effective given the time and staffing devoted to them is difficult to discern.

### **Promoting high rates of attendance**

- 113** Nearly all of the primary schools strongly encourage good attendance and punctuality by all pupils but the ethnic monitoring of attendance varies widely.

All the schools with Gypsy Traveller pupils maintain attendance data in relation to these pupils as this is required by their LEAs for the annual reports linked to Section 488 funding. Half the schools with Bangladeshi pupils monitor the attendance patterns of different ethnic groups and are assisted by their LEA in this. However, in only one of the Black Caribbean and none of the Pakistani schools are such data collected.

- 114** There is considerable concern about 'extended holidays' taken by Bangladeshi, Pakistani and, to a much lesser extent, Black Caribbean families. Such holidays affect the level of authorised absences in a school and, more importantly, have a negative impact on the academic progress of the pupils. Apart from one school, which mistakenly feels that the practice should go unchallenged on the grounds of not interfering in what is essentially a cultural issue, all the other primary schools do not condone such absence. Parents are written to, visited by bilingual support workers or educational social workers and generally alerted to the adverse educational consequences, together with the possible loss of a school place on return. The significant efforts targeted on this issue are having positive results with more families ensuring that visits coincide with school holidays. None of the schools provides any distance learning packs for the children to take with them.
- 115** One primary school which experienced difficulties over punctuality has successfully introduced 'Early Bird' certificates for pupils who arrive on time to school for a full term. Several of the schools are concerned about the lateness of Bangladeshi pupils, sometimes seen as linked to religious festivals or the late shift work of family restaurant businesses.

**116** In the primary schools with Gypsy Traveller populations, overall attendance levels are generally in line with national averages. In one school serving a very settled site, the attendance rates of Gypsy Traveller pupils match the average for the school. In the other five schools, there is a high rate of authorised absence which is explained in terms of Gypsy Traveller migration patterns. The schools generally accept this as normal for Gypsy Traveller families. Most of the schools, however, put considerable effort into encouraging good attendance and punctuality and are well supported in this by Education Welfare Officers who provide helpful links with parents.

**117** Only a handful of the **secondary** schools monitor attendance rates by ethnicity. As in the primary schools, extended holidays are seen as an 'intractable' problem, especially in relation to Bangladeshi pupils. One LEA has calculated that time out of school should be doubled in terms of the curriculum learning lost, so a six week trip is the equivalent of missing a term's education. Bilingual pupils are also not infrequently used as translators (eg for hospital visits) in homes where little English is spoken. The value of monitoring attendance by ethnicity is demonstrated by one Bangladeshi school:

*In this school, attendance had been very poor. It is now monitored very tightly and has improved from a low of 74.6 per cent in 1992 to 91.9 per cent in 1996. Unauthorised absence has also improved from 9.1 per cent in 1992 to 1.9 per cent in 1996. The school has created an Attendance Unit with very strict rules. There are telephone calls home (with an interpreter if necessary) each week. Checks are made in every lesson and a programme of sanctions and rewards is in place. The figures for Year 9 in the autumn term 1996, for example, were as follows:*

*Black Caribbean 88 per cent, Bangladeshi 89 per cent, White UK 78 per cent, Other 88 per cent. This monitoring was a useful counter to the view that 'poor attendance is mainly an issue of Bangladeshis and extended visits abroad'.*

**118** One Black Caribbean school which monitors attendance by ethnicity has used the data to obtain additional funding in conjunction with a national charity. The money is used to employ a home school support worker who keeps a detailed breakdown of attendance patterns as well as undertaking an extensive rota of visits. Evidence presented by the school indicates the positive impact of the initiative for particular Black Caribbean pupils and their families. In one of the Pakistani schools, an analysis of the attendance rates of EAL pupils for the purposes of Section 11 funding showed Urdu and Bengali speakers to be consistently poorer attenders than others. In many of the schools, however, senior staff could only offer impressionistic comments on trends, as no hard data had been assembled.

**119** Traveller Education Service staff regularly monitor attendance and follow up absent children. Attendance is a key issue for Gypsy Traveller pupils as everyone recognises that if the children are not at school academic progress will be seriously affected. In five of the six secondary schools attendance is said to be problematic, sometimes but not always a result of family travelling patterns. Two common concerns are the retention of pupils, especially boys, beyond Year 9 and the absence of pupils at critical points such as the sitting of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 or when reading or other school tests are given. The sixth school demonstrates that it is not inevitable that Traveller pupils will be poor attenders:

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*All the Gypsy Traveller pupils came regularly with any absences followed up immediately by a designated Education Welfare Officer. The parents' positive attitude to the school and schooling in general was an important factor in this as was the work of the Traveller Education Service. Relationships between the headteacher, a member of the pastoral staff with special responsibility for Gypsy Traveller liaison and the community were also good. The key word was flexibility. For example, threats by an alleged paedophile to "get a gypsy child" which were circulating locally had caused some loss of punctuality due to the need for the children to come in a group for their own security. The school responded sensitively to this.*

### **Promoting good standards of behaviour**

**120** Nearly all the **primary** and the **secondary** schools have devoted considerable time and effort to reviewing and developing effective behaviour policies. The main ingredients are clear expectations of good behaviour, positive reinforcement and clearly established procedures for dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour (including racist behaviour). In the best practice, formulation of these policies has involved pupils, parents and governors.

**121** While most schools monitor behaviour systematically, this rarely takes account of ethnic background, although some LEAs require this with respect to incidents involving racially abusive language or resulting in physical injury. The lack of ethnic monitoring leaves schools open to the danger of stereotypical 'impressions' and gives no sound basis for initiatives to address any real difficulties. Two schools, for example, believed that the behaviour of Black Caribbean pupils was more boisterous and/or aggressive than that

of other pupils but this was not based on any sound evidence.

**122** Very few of the **primary** schools formally monitor exclusions in relation to ethnic background. However, all the schools have detailed knowledge of excluded pupils, particularly where LEAs require ethnic information to be included in the routine returns made by schools or, in the case of Gypsy Traveller pupils, reported to the Traveller Education Service. Permanent exclusions were rare in these schools and no Gypsy Traveller or Pakistani pupils were involved in exclusions in the academic year 1996/97 and only one Bangladeshi pupil. In only one case was racially abusive language associated with an incident of severely disruptive behaviour. Black Caribbean pupils, however, were disproportionately involved in incidents of exclusion in half of the Black Caribbean primary schools.

**123** As with the primary schools, few of the **secondaries** analyse exclusion data routinely by ethnicity or consider trends in the causes of exclusion. Indeed when preparing data for this survey two schools were surprised to see the disproportionate number of minority ethnic pupils being excluded – usually black pupils. In a significant number of schools, Black Caribbean and Pakistani pupils are being excluded disproportionately to their percentages in the schools. The value of analysing exclusion data is illustrated by the following school:

*Exclusions were monitored by year group, ethnicity and gender. Internal exclusions were also monitored. Reasons for the exclusion were given and the categories included racism. In only a few cases was race deemed to be the primary cause. The major category was violence. The data had enabled the school to review its behaviour*

*policy. Everyone understood the school rules and the sanctions that would be applied. Permanent exclusions were reserved for carrying weapons and arson. While the rate of exclusion was still felt to be too high, it had dropped considerably – especially permanent exclusions. Generally speaking the proportions of excludees reflected the proportions of the different ethnic groups in the school.*

**124** The reasons why pupils are excluded vary from school to school: smoking, insolence, fighting, violence, bullying, disobedience and challenge to teachers. Few schools identify a racial dimension in behaviour that results in exclusion. One school that did reported the case of a Black African boy who repeatedly got into fights with Bangladeshi groups both in and out of school and who ended up being permanently excluded. Discussion with pupils and staff subsequently confirmed that black boys (in a minority in the school) had suffered racist abuse and attacks from Bangladeshi pupils. In other schools there were tensions between Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils or reported attacks by older white boys on younger minority ethnic pupils. Several schools said that name calling or ‘cussing’ between pupils is a recurrent source of disputes which can lead to fights and eventual exclusion from schools. In two schools older Gypsy Traveller pupils had been excluded partly as a result of taking upon themselves the role of ‘protector’ of younger Traveller children against presumed slight, intimidation or other racist behaviour.

### **Study support**

**125** Across the primary schools there is considerable variation with regard to the setting and support of homework. The

majority of schools have home school reading programmes where pupils take books home for regular reading practice with their parents and carers. One school expressed hesitancy about this policy for fear that books might not be returned. The setting of other homework tends to be at the discretion of individual teachers although in many schools it is more formalised for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in preparation for their transfer to secondary school. Overall the status given to homework as part of the strategy to raise pupil attainment is not high in most of these primary schools. Three schools have, however, introduced Homework Clubs. One, funded from local business monies, meets for an hour twice a week, focusing in equal measure on literacy and sport. Another encourages pupils to do their regular homework tasks in an After School Club, which is particularly beneficial for pupils whose parents themselves have limited literacy. The third school provides additional support at lunchtime especially to help Traveller children.

**126** In the main, extra-curricular activities are not seen by the primary schools as directly linked to policies aimed at raising levels of attainment, and few have a broad and balanced range of activities. Attendance of minority ethnic communities is said to be low, particularly when events are programmed after school and clash with community based educational provision – mainly first language teaching or religious instruction. For this reason lunchtime clubs are seen as potentially the most successful. Gypsy Traveller pupils generally have negligible involvement in extra-curricular activities, and only one school fully appreciates the social and educational importance of ensuring that these pupils are encouraged to participate as fully as possible. This school is aware of the practical and racial factors militating

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against inclusion in after school activities and both staff and Traveller Education Service personnel provide transport home after events where appropriate.

**127** All the **secondary** schools offer study support activities although the range of provision and uptake varies considerably. Rural schools organise many of their clubs in the lunch hour so that pupils can catch the school bus home at the end of the day. Homework clubs or centres are less common, although provision of some kind is available in all the Bangladeshi schools and half the Pakistani schools. Attendance at these activities is hardly ever monitored by ethnicity but in the two schools which do have data, pupils of Asian (and in one case specifically Bangladeshi) origin are significant users of the facilities. A few schools make special arrangements to transport pupils home after clubs if this presents a particular difficulty for certain groups, such as Gypsy Travellers living on isolated sites or Asian girls who would not otherwise be allowed to attend.

**128** After-school homework support takes a variety of forms. In one school, for example, the library remains open daily between 3 and 4pm with the librarian on hand to help. In other schools there are fully fledged 'study-centres' – in one school opening every morning before school and three times a week after school with several staff always present to help. Students speak enthusiastically about these opportunities. Financial support comes from a range of sources including the Prince's Trust in one case, a city bank in another.

**129** In addition to study centres and homework clubs several schools, especially those with Bangladeshi populations, also offer revision classes and study weekends. In one school, for

example, extra sessions are made available to Year 11 pupils on the four Saturdays prior to GCSE examinations, plus three days in each holiday period (half terms and Easter), and all sessions are well subscribed.

**130** As well as homework support, many schools offer a wide range of other after-school clubs: sports, IT, spelling, drama, art, steel band etc. IT clubs in particular are well attended by some minority ethnic students many of whom have no access to IT after school. Clubs aimed at a specific ethnic group, however, such as a 'Bangla Club' in one school, are not necessarily popular. In one school the efforts of the PE department in building up a national reputation for the school in hockey deserve comment. The head of department noticed that many East End boys were too small and at risk of injury in rugby against other teams once they passed beyond the under 12 team level. He introduced hockey in spite of limited facilities and the school has achieved considerable success. Two pupils play at national level for England. Most of the school teams are county finalists. The successful players, mostly of Bangladeshi origin, are excellent role models for the younger pupils.

### ***Links with parents***

**131** Links with parents are said by all the **primary** schools to be important and a necessary part of improving the quality of provision and raising standards. However, the energy with which schools foster supportive relationships with parents differs: some schools employ a wide range of strategies to encourage high levels of parental participation in the life and work of the school. These include a designated post of responsibility and provision of a parents' room in school.

*A family literacy project has run for three years in this predominantly Pakistani school. A tutor and creche worker are provided from external funding, and the school makes premises available and absorbs day-to-day costs. About 12 mothers attend regularly and some have now gone on to college for further training. This year children are involved and the focus is the language of school and supporting children's literacy. The mothers visit classes, see what is going on and then take activities home to use with their children (eg snakes and ladders). The confidence of the mothers and children has risen enormously.*

*The work is complemented by a science project for parents of Year 1 pupils. The class teacher developed science packs for the mothers to use, prior to the particular activity being introduced in class (eg floating and sinking). The parents are supplied with simple objects (such as balloons and plastic bottles) needed to carry out the investigations, and given clear, illustrated instructions in English and Urdu. Both parents and children have greatly enjoyed the activities – this year the work will be developed more systematically and monitored. This project, apart from increasing parental involvement in the school, has considerable potential for improved access to the curriculum for these bilingual pupils.*

**132** In other cases, however, schools pay only limited attention to links with parents. Many of the schools for all the four focus groups speak of the difficulties they have encountered in attracting parents onto the Governing Body, in encouraging them to take part in Parent Teacher Association activities, in attending Parents' Evenings or in participating in voluntary classroom support. Those which persist have, however, experienced success. Half of the Bangladeshi schools now have parents of

Bangladeshi origin on their Governing Body, either by election or co-option.

**133** Ethnic monitoring of parental participation rates in **school events** such as Parents' Evenings, assemblies, Parent Teacher Association meetings and extra-curricular activities, is not a routine feature of current practice in the primary schools. Effective strategies to encourage participation include: making sure the welcome at nursery level is warm as an important first step to forging positive long-term relationships; developing good contacts such as celebrating seasonal and religious festivals, and the sharing of cultural traditions; offering flexibility in the timing of meetings and interviews; translating all formal communications, including newsletters, into community languages; displaying material and directional signs around the school in community languages; and providing interpreting facilities (most important also at SEN review meetings). Some schools also hold meetings for specific purposes, for example, to explain National Curriculum tests to parents of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils; distribute questionnaires to sound out opinions on important issues; or provide handbooks for parents, with translations, explaining school rules and procedures.

**134** The involvement of Gypsy Traveller parents in the life and work of the primary schools presents particular challenges. In some schools specific policies have been implemented to encourage Gypsy Traveller parents to be fully involved in the education of their children. Home visits are made to aid the development of trusting relationships and the encouragement to attend events at the school. The parents also know that help is available at the school for the filling in of forms, the reading of letters and official

documents, and to assist with access to benefit entitlements. In one school the Gypsy Traveller parents are provided with transport to facilitate attendance at such events as Parents' Evenings and school concerts. In these schools, Gypsy Traveller parents are fully involved in that they generally attend most functions including reviews in connection with statements of SEN, and they sometimes contribute to school functions and initiatives. The level of participation by Gypsy Traveller parents in Parent Teacher Associations is, however, reported to be disappointing.

**135** All the **secondary** schools see liaison with parents as important. One of the Black Caribbean schools has a specialist worker with responsibility for developing links with all parents, and the work is promising. In the Bangladeshi and Pakistani schools the role of bilingual Education Welfare Officers and home school liaison workers is of considerable importance. All the schools report that they have to work hard to encourage Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents to come into school. Many have had only modest success, but in other schools the numbers attending Parents' Evenings have dramatically improved and are now similar to those for other groups. A range of strategies has been attempted. In one school, for example, before open evenings, pupils are sent home early and asked to bring their parents back with them. This works well. Several schools have used bilingual teachers, Education Welfare Officers, and home school liaison teachers or officers to contact parents by letter or telephone. This direct contact has proved very successful. One school has also worked with the local liaison officer to run workshops in Bengali on such issues as GCSE option choices, post-16 opportunities and National Curriculum assessments. There is clear evidence in such

cases that parental confidence is boosted. Overall, however, relatively few of the secondary schools have systematic and coherent strategies for improving the quality of relationships between home and school.

**136** The value of systematically monitoring attendance by ethnic group at **Parents' Evenings** is demonstrated by a school which collected data over several years. This showed that very few Bangladeshi parents were attending Parents' Evenings in 1994/95. For example, only 11 per cent of the parents of Year 7 Bangladeshi pupils attended. As a result of a number of actions led by a Bangladeshi science teacher in the school, including telephone calls, letters of encouragement and offers to accompany parents, the attendance of the parents of these same pupils (then in Year 9) rose to 74 per cent.

**137** Although some schools have seen a breakthrough in parental attendance (including women) at meetings and greater willingness to be involved with the life of the school, others still find that, despite much effort, relatively few Bangladeshi or Pakistani parents come to school. Initiatives such as providing an interpreter, collecting them by car and taking them home afterwards have not changed the turnout at open evenings significantly. This appears to be a particular problem with relatively isolated communities whose knowledge of English and the English education system is limited and where there is considerable local hostility towards the Asian community.

**138** One school had recently sent a questionnaire to parents to gauge their opinion on a number of issues including their satisfaction with the quality of information received, their reception at the school, homework, standards of discipline, school aims and policies, incidents of

racism and bullying. Parents, pupils and the headteacher in this school sign up to a home school agreement which spells out the 'obligations of each party'. In two other schools, staff have visited Black Caribbean parents at home to listen to their views on the school and education more generally. This arose out of concern for the underachievement of the Black Caribbean boys in the school and their disaffection. This has led to increased confidence between parents and teachers and greater willingness on the part of the parents to come into school.

**139** Several of the secondary schools with Gypsy Traveller parents have worked hard to build up good relationships. The help of the Traveller Education Service team has usually been a crucial factor in gaining the confidence of the families. It had taken a long time to establish good links and schools comment that these often remain fragile – misunderstanding can easily arise and quickly lead to setbacks. For this reason individual contacts are essential. In the schools where senior members of staff take the time to visit the sites, in addition to the specialist support teachers, Travellers spoke warmly of the school and its support for them.

### ***Links with the wider community***

**140** At **primary** level links with the wider community tend to be specific to each school, but a common feature is for schools to have good contacts with local places of religious worship. One of the Pakistani schools had successfully established a community room where local adult education courses are run, including EAL for adults of Asian origin. The issue for schools with Gypsy Traveller pupils is more complex as the Gypsy Traveller communities are frequently viewed

as on the social margins of the wider community. Constructive work in this connection is probably best focused on their involvement at school level.

However, the close relationship between one school and its Gypsy Traveller community had facilitated successful access to a local playgroup.

**141** Those primary schools where the focus group is Black Caribbean pupils seem to have been most active in this area, and each of the six schools in their different ways has reached out to form mutually supportive relationships with community groups and institutions. Close and co-operative links are reported to exist with local religious leaders, music and drama groups, the media, local and national charities (who are frequently the beneficiaries of funds raised by the school and its community), and local police liaison officers. Some of the schools have been involved in competitions organised by the police. One school has also become a member of a community group known as the 'Afro-Caribbean Parents, Teachers and Governors Group'. Staff and governors attend meetings and events regularly. In the interest of fostering community links and contributing to the school's ethos of respect and recognition of minority ethnic communities, one school takes part in the annual commemoration celebrations for Mary Seacole, the 'black Florence Nightingale'.

**142** Relationships with the wider community in respect of all four focus groups are not always straightforward. For example, several **secondary** schools comment on tensions within the Bangladeshi community between the younger, more progressive members and the older, more orthodox groups often linked to the local mosque. This can make consultation with the community difficult, especially if it

involves a high profile issue such as the retention of a single-sex school or its conversion to a mixed intake. Conflicting approaches, an aspect of life for members of any cultural group, can make it particularly difficult, however, for young people, especially Bangladeshi girls, to live within both the majority and minority culture with ease. In connection with the Gypsy Traveller community one school commented that it had difficulty in knowing how to deal with a community that had no obvious infrastructure, no recognised centre (such as a mosque, gurdwara, mandir etc) and no clear community leaders.

- 143** Links with the wider community, however, frequently have positive and tangible results. In one secondary school, for example, links with the local mosque have proved very valuable in resolving complaints about the intimidation of the public by young people in certain open areas. In another school a Bangladeshi Business Group which offers prizes to the most successful Year 11 local boy and girl each year, honoured one of their pupils who had received outstanding GCSE grades. And links with an American Merchant Bank in one East London school have brought about an array of benefits for the school.

*A partnership (launched in 1995) was based on negotiation and a close working relationship. The intention was to offer an enrichment programme which would help pupils change their anti-learning culture and create high aspirations. The bank has resourced a highly successful study centre, contributed to residential study weekends and organised a week in New York which included visits to high schools and a residential weekend with American pupils – an outstanding success according to the headteacher. More recently the bank has*

*helped purchase Book Boxes to help the school's literacy drive, and provided work shadowing opportunities and video conferencing sessions with American pupils. The school is convinced that these enrichment activities have contributed significantly to raising standards in the school and improving pupil attitudes.*

In the same school, links with neighbours in the immediate vicinity are not overlooked. The senior management team attend tenants' meetings in the local flats around the school and the headteacher is visible out and about in the streets every lunch time. He makes a point of speaking to local shop owners and invites residents to talk to him about any concerns. He maintains good contacts with all the local community groups, seeing this as a very important part of his work.

#### **v. Promoting good race relations**

- 144** Countering stereotyping and ensuring good standards of pupils' behaviour and learning are related aspects of promoting good race relations. The production of an equal opportunities policy, however important, is only the first step. Promoting good race relations involves a review of all school policies and procedures to ensure that certain groups are not discriminated against. The development of a long-term strategy is essential, and support at the highest level in the school is necessary if success is to be assured.

- 145** One school has produced detailed and practical advice for staff on how to handle incidents of racial or sexual harassment. It includes step-by-step guidance on who should take responsibility for dealing with the incident (the one who witnesses it), when (immediately), how to arrange cover for other responsibilities if necessary, and

how to proceed. Staff find the guidance very helpful. They now feel much more confident about handling such incidents especially as there has been whole-staff discussion during the development of the procedures. The quality of relationships in the school has improved, adults listen more to children and behaviour has improved.

**146** The establishment of harmonious race relations in the most effective schools is seen to require a wide range of purposeful and constructive strategies. Included within these strategies are positive behaviour management policies which allow sufficient time for issues to be fully discussed or resolved between the parties involved; regular and appropriate in-service training; a multicultural and anti-racist curriculum; close parental and community links; pupil organisation which takes account of ethnic and gender balance; the boosting of pupils' self-esteem; books and materials which avoid stereotypical and inaccurate images; school social events aimed at pulling together the different life experiences of groups within the community; and staffing establishments which reflect, as far as possible, the ethnic make-up of the school and the community.

**147** Some schools, concerned about divisive outcomes, respond by playing down differences of culture and ethnicity, believing that good relations will be achieved by **not** highlighting or celebrating the distinctive characteristics of minority cultures. The most successful schools, however, take the opposite approach.

**148** Obviously, the vast majority of pupils take care not to use racially abusive language in front of adults. This is why schools and inspections, in general, report relatively few racist incidents. Research, however,

has found evidence that racial taunting is widespread and a regular fact of life for many minority ethnic pupils. It sometimes starts among nursery age pupils and increases with age. Those minority ethnic pupils who react angrily to racist insults often find themselves at the sharp end of sanctions. Schools must make it explicit that racist behaviour is wrong and will not be tolerated.

**149** Good and stable behaviour can often be seen in schools which make deliberate efforts to see that pupils work together in mixed ethnic and gender groups. In one secondary school, for example:

*Commitment to forming mixed ethnic and gender teaching groups within classes is made clear to pupils and parents. Some pupils said that at first they didn't like it, but after two or three lessons they got used to it. Now it is accepted as a normal occurrence. There has been a noticeable impact on attitudes and cross-ethnic and gender friendships. Staff strongly encourage such groupings on tasks within the classroom and more generally.*

**150** All the **primary** schools are anxious to promote good race relations between pupils. Most report good race relations although many say that tension, frequently stemming from racial problems in the community, sometimes surfaces in the school. When this occurs it is often successfully handled immediately, through classroom discussion or during school assemblies. In some schools, however, failure to deal openly and swiftly with racial tensions does little to help resolve them. Most of the primary schools have an incidents book for the recording of unacceptable behaviour including that which has a racial element. Serious cases are usually required to be reported to the LEA and in some cases the LEA offers

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additional support. Headteachers generally see themselves as responsible for race relations, and particularly in connection to adults and parents. It hardly needs to be said that the most effective schools in these respects were those where headteachers insisted on establishing good race relations as a priority.

- 151** In one primary school a specific 'playground investigation' brought about considerable changes in the actual environment and the children's behaviour.

*It was clear to the staff that many children did not enjoy playtime – there was much name-calling and other kinds of harassment. Children were asked first of all to indicate which parts of the playground they liked/disliked using red and green flags. The reasons for their views (bullying, teasing etc) were discussed. They were then asked what areas and activities they would like to see in their playground. They identified 10 including a woodland walk, a garden, a quiet area, different kinds of climbing frames etc. Over the last three years and with the parents' help these have been built. The quality of play and behaviour has improved. There is less bullying and name-calling, scope for more games and co-operative activities. Various staff and the school keeper take part regularly. Pupils are also given the opportunity of indoor games for the last 20 minutes of the lunch break. In brief, staff have taken more responsibility for structuring playtime and this has resulted in more harmonious relationships.*

- 152** In a school in an area of much greater racial tension (the headteacher recounts, for example, how a small group of Asian girls escorted by her for the first time into school, ran the gauntlet of racist comments and were even spat on by some white parents) playtime is also a focus of considerable conflict. As with the previous

school, staff find they need to take more control over break times to reduce the amount of racial hostility and violence which erupts. A co-operative games strategy has been introduced where teachers organise games for their class during break which is staggered to reduce the number of pupils outside at any one time. While behaviour is still boisterous, the policy has succeeded in greatly reducing the number of incidents of fighting and harassment and has improved relationships amongst pupils.

- 153** All the **secondary** schools report considerable racial tension in their areas and are aware of the impact this can have inside school. Pupils confirm that most schools take a very firm stand on racism (and sexism) and deal vigorously with any incidents that occur or are reported by them. Pupils generally feel secure and in most schools relationships appear harmonious. In one school that has developed an anti-bullying policy, following a harassment survey conducted amongst pupils, a confidential box for information has been instituted and pupils encouraged to report any incidents. Pupils have confidence in the system and feel the school responds well to any issues raised.

- 154** It is clear in other schools, however, that not all pupils find it easy to raise their concerns, which only serves to underline how important it is for staff to be open and confident about the issues. In one school, for example, opportunities for the small number of minority ethnic pupils to raise concerns were inadequate. Pakistani pupils in Year 11 were happy about the quality of academic support they were receiving in most subjects but they had concerns about the level of petty insults and remarks they received from a section of the school population, particularly in break and lunch times. Although such

incidents were reported to staff, after a while the sneering and insults started up again. They felt that this sort of behaviour was ignored too much and more probing by staff was needed to explore how extensive it was.

**155** Organised gangs pose a threat to some minority ethnic pupils especially if they are travelling into predominantly white areas. One of the schools has been forced to produce an anti-gang policy, which explains the relationships between pupils and outsiders and advises staff on how to minimise the threat posed to the school by such gangs. It asks staff to report any contacts between pupils and gangs in the neighbourhood. An incident log is kept to monitor congregations of 'outsiders', pupils attached to them and any demands or threats made by such groups on school pupils.

**156** The efforts of one school are worth describing in some detail as staff have worked with persistence and considerable success over several years to tackle the problem of racism. The headteacher made the following statement:

*"Going back five years, levels of achievement were very low across the ability range and in addition the school was experiencing a great deal of racial conflict. The school had largely been reactive in its approach to racial problems and we decided to take up a more proactive stance. As a result of a serious incident involving many older pupils we took a group of 30 pupils out of school for a day conference, trying some conflict resolution strategies.*

*"Experiencing some initial success with this we took up an opportunity to work with an organisation which specialises in conflict resolution. This work has gone from strength to strength and involves a number of staff*

*and trained peer tutors among the pupils. The work has become incorporated into the PSHE programme in Year 8 and builds on the work done on bullying in Year 7.*

*"We deliberately adopted this approach as opposed to an anti-racism one as the latter appeared often to blame the problem on white pupils. Conflict resolution is much broader and more neutral.*

*"PSHE, however, is only part of the strategy. As early as April 1993, there was staff INSET on positive discipline to try to move away from a confrontational approach. Sporting activities, which had once been a source of racial conflict, were actively encouraged as were residential experiences where extreme care is always taken to ensure a balance of gender and ethnicity. A deliberate effort has to be made to ensure the participation of Bangladeshi girls.*

*"On the day-to-day level, our approach to discipline and behaviour problems promotes reconciliation, and although time consuming, attempts to prevent the simmering resentments which often recur after an initial incident. It is now policy to seat pupils according to a seating plan and it is common practice to see pupils of different ethnic groups co-operating at a high level. This was not the case four years ago."*

Pupils confirmed that the conflict resolution programme had been both successful and enjoyable. Year 11 pupils remembered how poor the atmosphere had been in the school when they first arrived. There had been much violence and name-calling. Everything was different now and the programme had been a key element in that change. It encouraged openness and helped build up confidence. The school's insistence on mixed ethnic and gender grouping was also considered important.

**157** The conflict resolution approach in this school has been expensive in terms of time and training. It has required considerable commitment from staff over a period of several years. However, outcomes are impressive and the optimism is shared by all involved: staff, pupils, parents. Although racial tension in the school had reduced, staff were aware that incidents outside school could flare up at any time and there was a need for constant vigilance.

**158** In another school two Year 9 classes were involved in a 'Finding the Way Home' project initiated by a local university and involving other local schools and schools in Germany.

*It was concerned with safety in the area and had prompted discussion of a wide range of issues, including racial conflict, and had resulted in posters, talks by pupils and the making of a video. One of the Bangladeshi boys involved in the project explained that Bangladeshi pupils felt more secure in large groups, but that this made other people less secure. One solution was greater mixing in groups (including visits to each other's homes) and this had been one by-product of the project. Other practical outcomes had been the shortening of the school day so that pupils could get home in daylight and a ban on leaving the premises at lunchtime (also shortened). By cutting down the potential for trouble and racially motivated confrontation, the image of the school and relationships had improved. The project had highlighted those areas of the locality which were safe and unsafe.*

**159** In this school a working party including pupils was convened following a serious racist incident. They set in train a range of initiatives which appeared to be having an impact on the school.

*Their ability to talk frankly about racial bullying and their determination to ensure that "no one should have to put up with it" were refreshing and encouraging. One Bangladeshi girl spoke powerfully of how she had suffered racist abuse in the school when she was younger. She had said nothing to staff or family but it had, she believed, altered her personality. Initially she became quiet and introverted, then angry, loud and aggressive. Her work had suffered. She thought telling a teacher would only make her more of a target. Eventually one of her friends spoke to a teacher and it was quickly resolved. The school had been very supportive.*

'Telling a friend' is a strategy actively promoted by Childline who, in listening to children talking about abuse (including racial abuse), have discovered that it is one of the most effective strategies for raising and resolving the issue. Training young people to be active on behalf of the injustice suffered by others has been found to be a successful strategy. Indeed in all those schools where pupils were actively involved in conflict resolution, anti-racist, equal opportunities or anti-bullying programmes, there was a greater willingness to discuss the problem openly.

**160** None of these schools denies the existence of racism – indeed most of them are all too well aware of its occurrence both inside and outside school. It is a live issue for pupils – but the ethos makes it easier for them to discuss it and attempt to counter it. In others, pupils, especially boys, clearly experience racism but are reluctant to talk about it. Often it is the groups which are small in number which suffer most. So in one predominantly Bangladeshi school, Black Caribbean boys experience harassment, in another the situation is reversed. Unless staff take a lead on race

relations pupils will not raise the issue themselves. The notion of 'telling as grassing' is very strong and must be countered. Equally pupils often believe that telling will only serve to make things worse and in many cases, as the Childline evidence confirms, this is indeed the case. Luckily for most of the pupils spoken to in this survey, when they reported problems the schools had dealt with them vigorously and the situation had improved.

**161** Despite the wide ranging endeavours in many schools, there is realism among staff that positive attitudes to other ethnic groups are sometimes difficult to achieve. There is a realisation that though schools do their best, that may still not be enough to move some pupils away from negative stereotyping and anti-social behaviour. For example, in a school with a small proportion of Pakistani pupils as well as other minority ethnic pupils, an extensive and well organised programme of visits to places of worship as part of its RE programme ran into difficulties. Some white parents refused to allow their children to visit the gurdwara. The majority of pupils eligible to go did so and enjoyed the visit but the negative attitudes displayed by some of the pupils who did not go created tensions in lessons which the staff had to work hard to resolve.

**162** One of the hardest things for schools to deal with is parental racial hostility. It is seen as important by some of the schools to be explicit with parents about issues of race and the school's general philosophy and position on racism. Countering the attitudes of some parents, however, is not easy. One school which has tackled this issue reported that some white parents reacted uncomfortably. One parent commented to the headteacher of another school, "How can you expect to teach the children well if you have all these

foreigners on the staff?" (there were four minority ethnic staff). And many parents brought in because their children had used unacceptable language ("Paki", "Blackie") failed to accept that there was anything wrong with such terms. Equally their encouragement of the children to "hit back" makes the school's approach to conflict resolution hard to carry out.

**163** Some schools sustain a difficult struggle against such racist attitudes, made more difficult by continuing staff turnover, the constant need for training and counselling of staff and a recognition that the dialogue with parents who display engrained racist attitudes is never-ending. It would be wrong, however, to present too negative a picture, as the following example illustrates:

*The headteacher of an infant school in a shire county (9 per cent minority ethnic pupils) had noted the initial coolness which existed between the main community groups and how this impacted on the life of the school and the children. She has worked hard to bring down the barriers. Bilingual classroom assistants were invaluable in bringing in the Asian parents and helping to organise a very successful South Asian evening: food, music, dance, mende patterns etc. Nevertheless the headteacher senses that the white community 'polices' the activities. Is she getting the balance right? If Eid is celebrated someone is likely to say the following week, "I hope something is being done to celebrate Easter". But many parents are now more positive about the multicultural community and "whilst it is not perfect," the headteacher feels, "it is more comfortable, smoother, less confrontational".*

In another school a Code of Conduct which takes a robust line on race issues is signed by all parents.

**164** All the Gypsy Traveller schools report considerable local prejudice with children usually following the example set by the parents. Indeed, the level of hostility faced by Gypsy Traveller children is probably greater than for any other minority ethnic group. There is little doubt in the minds of the headteachers that the hostility of the outside community impacts on the life of the school. As one headteacher commented, "Travellers are often suspect and frequently resented, and this has led to incidents in school particularly of name-calling and bullying." When, for example, property disappeared in school it was often assumed that the Traveller children had stolen it. Such incidents require very careful handling if the confidence of the Traveller community in the school and its procedures is to be maintained. Consciousness of the racist prejudice within the local community acts as a hindrance in some of the schools to more fully embracing the Gypsy Traveller community into the life and work of the school, including the necessary development of the curriculum for all pupils.

**165** Some Traveller support teachers have as part of their role "the promotion of a good self image for Gypsy Traveller pupils", but to have any lasting effect this needs to be encouraged and supported at whole-school level. One of the six Gypsy Traveller secondary schools illustrates what can be achieved. In this school not only does the headteacher make public how he perceives the school to benefit from the presence of Traveller students, but also many school activities reinforce this positive message. Pupils are encouraged to respond to stereotypical comments in the press about Travellers, efforts are made to ensure that staff are knowledgeable about Traveller culture

through in-service training, and a wide range of enrichment activities enable Travellers to feel good about themselves and their cultural inheritance. These strategies are very effective in developing confidence and pride so that pupils do not feel the need to hide their Traveller origins as is the case in some schools. The headteacher's comments on the Traveller community are worth quoting:

*"It is very evident that the school benefits from the presence of our Travellers. For example, their morality and cleanliness have caused many non-Travellers to question their own prejudices; their family loyalty and their respect for their parents and extended family are an example to their non-Traveller peers; they provide cultural diversity in an otherwise homogeneous community. Furthermore, the learning support and pastoral care of Travellers has helped our teachers to appreciate that all pupils are individuals with needs. Our Travellers have been integrated into the school without compromise to their identity; as a result the school has gained."*

**166** In a second school Traveller pupils were encouraged by the Traveller Education Service teacher to produce booklets and other material which promote the positive side of their culture. This led to an excellent display on Traveller achievement in the school which helped other pupils to develop an interest in Gypsy Traveller culture. The outcome of a craft week involving Gypsy Traveller parents in a third school was equally positive. It was reported in more than one school that non-Traveller children were frequently made welcome on sites, often visiting their friends without the knowledge of their parents (who, it was thought, would have disapproved). This led to greater understanding at peer group level.

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**167** Many of the schools see the composition of the staff as very significant in the battle to undermine stereotypical images of different ethnic groups. Staff from minority ethnic groups can and do play an important role in countering stereotypes. It is important that staffing at all levels reflects the multi-ethnic nature of the local community and society at large. However, schools generally find it difficult to recruit teachers from minority ethnic groups.

is not easy as many people are not fully aware of their prejudices.

**168** Evidence of teacher stereotyping of certain ethnic groups is difficult to establish and therefore counter. Only a minority of headteachers recognise the problem and seek to tackle it in a variety of ways. In one school, documentation warns staff to be aware of their own prejudices and stereotypical images. "Efforts should be made to counter stereotyping and communication of prejudice. Resources should contain accurate information on racial and cultural matters."

**169** One school is developing a series of policies to support its mission statement which includes the following commitment: "Opposition to racism and development of positive attitudes." One of the accompanying papers alerts teachers to the dangers of: telling racist jokes or making stereotypical comments; articulating and holding low expectations of students' performance and attainment; reinforcing existing stereotypes through displays, assemblies and curriculum resources that reflect only the decorative and colourful side of other cultures. These are just a few of a daunting list of inappropriate behaviours to be avoided. Whether this is the best way of tackling the problem is doubtful. The majority of teachers are not intentionally racist. A more positive presentation of appropriate behaviours might have been less threatening and more instructive. This