

Creating a positive culture of equality and opportunity: Cranford Community College

URN: 136522
Region: London
Remit: Schools

Provider background

[Cranford Community College](#) is an 11–19 academy with 1,420 pupils on roll. It is located to the west of London near Heathrow Airport and is part of a federation of schools. The academy was judged outstanding [in October 2012](#).

Brief description

This good practice example shows how Cranford Community College uses partnership links with the feeder primary school and the local Traveller site to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

This is part of a set of examples showcasing good practice in raising the achievement and attendance of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, as well as reducing their exclusion rates.

The good practice in detail

In 2012/13 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils made up 0.8% of Cranford Community College's pupils on roll. The pupils are mainly settled in a local site. None of the pupils are new to speaking English.

The college is part of a federation where the executive headteacher has oversight of both the primary school and the college. The head of the primary school is a member of Cranford's senior leadership team. Joint leadership of both schools provides consistency and continuity for families and pupils. There are very effective transition links and the respective headteachers work closely together. They are already familiar with the staff who work across both schools. The college has appointed a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller liaison officer to work across Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils

are provided with continuity and so do not face a long settling-in period in Year 7 that could hamper their progress. This is especially valuable for the Traveller community in building up their trust and confidence.

Creating a positive culture

Cranford is an outstanding school so all pupils, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, have access to a very high quality of teaching and support. The school has high expectations and is willing to challenge all pupils and parents with no compromise. It can do this because it has built up good relationships based on trust and respect over the years. The Traveller site is right next door to the college so parents can readily access the school. Staff are well known on the site, as they visit regularly. This fosters good relationships further. The school has shown its understanding of Traveller families and their culture through:

- appreciating the importance of rites of passage such as funerals and setting up a memorial garden in the grounds of the school
- celebrating special occasions – such as a barbecue for parents
- hosting a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller month
- running a regular Gypsy Roma and Traveller club.

From a position of trust, the college can challenge parents without it leading to confrontation or a breakdown in relationships. The other side to this is being prepared to listen to parents and carers.

As a result of the close relationship staff have with parents and carers, Cranford has addressed the issue of mobility and travelling during term time. It has set out expectations that families no longer travel in term time. The school places high emphasis on equality and fairness. It is transparent that school rules apply to all pupils with no exceptions, for example over attendance and wearing jewellery, so that no one group is seen as being singled out for positive or negative treatment. Pupils regard this as a positive: 'The staff treat us equally – there is no discrimination.'

Leaders recognised that they had to change the culture of the school before they could influence any change in attitudes within the school to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and families within the community. Through lessons and special assemblies, leaders challenge misconceptions of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils portrayed on television.

The close proximity of the main Gypsy, Roma and Traveller site to the grounds of the college and the feeder primary school is beneficial for families and pupils. They do not have to face long journeys walking or by bus, where they feel vulnerable to abuse from pupils from other schools or members of the local community.

Tackling exclusion and improving attendance

The school has introduced a system of restorative justice to deal with behaviour issues and disputes whereby both parties in an alleged incident meet to resolve the issue. This is facilitated by a member of staff or, in some cases, other pupils. This system works for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in the same way as for pupils from any other group. Restorative justice provides alternatives to exclusion.

Consequently, exclusion rates for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are very low. The executive headteacher describes permanent exclusion as a genuine 'last resort'. In addition to restorative justice, the school also:

- meets with parents
- offers counselling
- always issues a final warning
- sets a two-day fixed exclusion for serious offences.

No Gypsy Roma pupils were permanently excluded in 2012/13. The rate of fixed-term exclusions was low (9.09%) compared to the national average for Gypsy, Roma pupils of 35.98%. No Travellers were excluded in 2012/13 either permanently or for a fixed term. By contrast, the national average for fixed-term exclusions is 46.6% for Traveller pupils.

Attendance is improving in part through the reward system introduced, known as the 'dream points' system. Pupils can earn points for good self-discipline, respect, achievement and maturity. This can lead to rewards such as dance lessons or a trip to France. This has also led to improved attendance as there is great competition to earn the points. The rate of absence for Gypsy, Roma pupils in 2012/13 was 12.7% compared to the national average for all Gypsy, Roma pupils of 16.5%. The rate was 9.8% for Travellers compared to the national average of 21.6% for Travellers.¹

Supporting learning to improve attainment

Numbers of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupils in the school are very small. For example, there were no Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupils in Year 11 in 2013 to take GCSE examinations.

The school recognises the need for a holistic approach if outcomes for pupils are to be improved. It has been involved in a multi-agency partnership with a range of

¹ 'Statistical first release: Pupil absence in schools in England: autumn 2012 and spring 2013', Department for Education, October 2013; www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-2012-and-spring-2013.

other services to develop and improve the local Traveller site. The school has engaged in a partnership with the local authority and councillors to access funding made available to transform the local area. The college has succeeded in securing agreement from the local authority to provide significant improvements and an extension to the site. This will include a designated room for pupils to do homework and where members of staff can meet confidentially with parents.

All Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are engaged with school from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4. This is achieved through flexible curriculum pathways and an extended school day, as well as the following tactics:

- Pupils can take vocational courses including health and beauty, business and enterprise and health and social care. These courses involve days based in a local college.
- Assemblies are held with a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller theme.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history month is held every year.
- A 'Wow-Factor' enrichment programme has been devised with specific activities that may appeal to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils including boxing, football, exotic animals and landscape gardening.

The school's extended school day, known as the 'twilight school', keeps Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils engaged with education, particularly those who may have issues at home affecting their work. The day is flexible, starting at 11.45am and finishing at 5.00pm. It is geared for pupils at risk from exclusion.

Specific, targeted plans are devised, such as allowing struggling pupils to drop some GCSE subjects in order to focus on additional literacy. Pupils may be encouraged to attend a vocational course that may better suit them, including days spent at a college. Good attendance at school on other days becomes a condition of their continued attendance at the college. The end aim is for pupils to return to being successfully integrated in school life, but they may continue with a combination of 'twilight school' and main school hours. Progress is measured in literacy and numeracy, as well as in pupils' other subjects or courses. 'Twilight school' also helps with reducing absence rates due to family commitments being taken into account in flexible hours.

The good practice case studies that Ofsted publishes highlight specific examples of practice that providers of education, learning and children's services have used to achieve successful outcomes.

For education, the case studies do not recommend a single particular approach to teaching and learning. Ofsted has no preferred lesson structure or teaching style. We showcase and share a wide range of approaches that providers have found work well for them in achieving good outcomes for children, young people and learners.

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Complete our survey [here](#).

Click [here](#) to see other good practice examples.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.