
Working Towards Inclusive Education: Aspects of Good Practice for Gypsy Traveller Children

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PREFACE

The International Centre for Intercultural Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London, has been involved with issues relating to the education of Gypsy Traveller communities for nearly two decades. The Centre hopes that this report will be a contribution to examining issues of good practice in schools in England and to the development of appropriate policies for the education of Gypsy Traveller children. As nomadic groups, the education of these communities presents the settled population with an important challenge to ensure that differences in life style and culture are not seen in deficit terms. Such attitudes and subsequent deficit policies are associated not only with maintaining the social exclusion of Gypsy Traveller children but also provide an insight into how exclusionary practices and mechanisms operate more generally in our society.

This report is therefore important because it provides insights into improving the education of Gypsy Traveller children, which in turn may offer help in relation to other groups of socially excluded children in English schools. The report also shows the possibilities for developing good practice in all schools based on the practice found in the case study schools and demonstrates that although there are barriers to good practice, they can be overcome.

This research was conducted in schools, and its recommendations, therefore, relate primarily to actions schools can take. However, that is not to imply that the social exclusion of Gypsy and Traveller children is an issue for schools alone. The recent negative media coverage of asylum seekers in general and of Gypsies in particular is an important reminder that schools are just one element in the total picture.

In funding this research, the DfEE has demonstrated its continuing commitment to the area of Gypsy and Traveller education. It is hoped that this report will assist the DfEE, LEAs and schools to initiate and support existing good practice that will improve the educational achievement and life chances of these marginalized groups of children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team would like to thank the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) for their agreement to approach the schools and for their co-operation; and in particular, the six schools and the Traveller Education Services (TESs), who participated directly in the research project. The schools and the TESs all gave of their time generously and made the researcher feel very welcome. The team would also like to warmly thank all the parents and pupils who were involved in the research. Many parents welcomed the researcher into their homes and spoke freely and at length about their children's educational experiences.

We are grateful to the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) who commissioned the research and further wish to acknowledge the guidance and support provided by officials at the Department. We would also like to thank representatives from the National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT), and the Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT), who provided helpful advice during the early stages of the research.

Finally, the research team would like to thank Arthur Ivatts, the project consultant, for his constructive support and advice throughout. The project could not have been conducted without him, his extensive knowledge, his generosity of time and his enthusiasm.

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Employment, nor any of the other people and organisations that assisted with the research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research into successful practice in relation to the education of Gypsy Traveller children demonstrates that the low attendance, access to the curriculum and achievement levels of many such children can be successfully addressed by schools, LEAs and Traveller Education Services [TESs]. Six schools were subject to a detailed examination of their practice and this was put alongside detailed discussions with appropriate LEA TESs and parents from Gypsy Traveller communities. This research was also considered in relation to previous research.

It is evident from the report that schools have a crucial role and one that can lead to success.

In particular the report highlights:

- the value of schools having Equal Opportunities policies that specifically mention Gypsy Traveller children and their educational needs, coupled with constant monitoring and evaluation of such policies and practices;
- the importance of all teachers having high expectations for Gypsy Traveller children within an inclusive school ethos that supports Gypsy Traveller children;
- the establishment of such an ethos was seen to be determined by the senior management team, and by governors, committed to and involved in this area of work;
- the value of curriculum reviews that take Gypsy Traveller issues as a key focus;
- how effective pastoral care systems, including good and trusting relationships with parents, can make a real impact on attendance and achievement;
- the crucial importance of schools having effective behaviour codes and anti-bullying strategies;
- how essential the initial induction process is for the future attendance and achievement of Gypsy Traveller children;
- the value of special support measures adopted by schools, including:
 - study support;
 - mentoring programmes;
 - homework clubs;
 - sanctuary areas;
 - effective use of TES and Education Welfare Service [EWS] resources.

The report also looked at the work of TESs. Areas of importance that the research indicated included:

- the importance of their supportive advocacy of their clients;
- the importance of effective INSET that they provided to schools;
- securing appropriate school places for Gypsy Traveller children by:
 - supporting admission procedures and helping with devising appropriate induction schemes for the new children;
 - relating schools to parents;
 - initial assessment support;
 - assisting with continuity of educational experience, including helping secure more effective primary/secondary transfer;
- the importance of the TESs in facilitating and promoting regular attendance through:
 - support during the immediate period after admission;
 - organising transport arrangements;
 - help with the provision of uniforms;
 - liaison with the EWS;
- their value in relation to making pre-school provision more available;
- the importance of the work that TESs did in relation to facilitating and supporting learning through providing appropriate curriculum materials and supporting the continuity of the educational experience of Gypsy Traveller children.

The research also found that the TESs:

- need more national coordination;
- need effective management if they are to be really effective;
- need more recognition and use of their INSET skills at both school and LEA level.

Although these schools and their supporting TESs could demonstrate successful practice, the issue of replication in other schools remains. Both the TESs and the schools investigated work within a context that is shaped and supported by LEAs and central government. Although the research did not investigate these levels of the service, what was found in the schools suggests that they have a key supportive and developmental role which can be further developed if more schools are to be as effective as those studied in this research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background to the Research

In February 1999, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) invited tenders for a small-scale research project into the education of Gypsy Traveller children. The project was to address the issue of low attainment amongst this group of pupils. The Department was concerned for the research to identify the effective practice thought best to improve attendance and to raise attainment¹. The research project began in April 1999 and ended in January 2000.

Background to Gypsy Traveller Children and their Families

There is as yet no systematic national data collection on the size and nature of the Gypsy Traveller communities. The data that do exist are fragmentary. Gypsy Travellers, although recognised as an ethnic minority group under the 1976 Race Relations Act, are not separately listed for enumeration purposes as part of national census data collection. Consequently, there are no reliable figures on the numbers of Gypsy Travellers. As, will be seen below, different sources give markedly different estimates.

Most Local Education Authorities (LEAs) collect data on the number of Gypsy Traveller children, their attendance at school, and sometimes, information on levels of educational achievement. Most of these data are collected, and reported to the DfEE on an annual basis, as a requirement in relation to the regulations and conditions of grant paid under Section 488 of the 1996 Education Act. The most recent evidence collated by the DfEE (1997-1998) records 28,000 school-aged Traveller children identified by Traveller Education Services (TESs).² The same report also records a further 8,500 additional children in the 0-5 age range. Since 1990, with the introduction of the New Specific Grant (Section 488) and the requirement to complete an annual report for the DfEE by all LEAs in receipt of grant, the number of identified Gypsy and Traveller children has maintained a steady increase year-on-year. Between 1996/7 and 1997/8, the increase reported by the DfEE was seven percent. It is

¹ The Department's concerns have been informed by two recent OFSTED reports. *The Education of Travelling Children* 1996, and *Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils* 1999.

² *Traveller Education- Annual Report 1997-1998* Published by The Department for Education and Employment, London, June 1999.

difficult to be precise about the reasons for this annual degree of increase. A number of factors are possible, but the two most significant influences are thought to relate to the normal demographic increase predicted of communities with an above average percentage of persons below the age of 15 years, and the 'willingness of disclosure' effect in which Gypsy and Traveller families may be more willing to disclose their 'presence' because of the growing level of trust between the community and the local Traveller Education Service.

The OFSTED Report on *The Education of Travelling Children*³ gave a very different estimate. It estimated, in 1996, that the total size of the nomadic communities in England was in the region of 90,000 (with some 50,000 school-aged children). Gypsy Traveller numbers were thought to account for 70,000 of this total. Estelle Morris, while a minister at the DfEE, estimated the total number to be nearer to 150,000⁴.

The cohort of Gypsy Traveller children included within the DfEE and OFSTED figures over the past few years mainly relate to Gypsy Traveller children who are semi-nomadic. A relatively small number of children are thought to come from Gypsy Traveller backgrounds where the families have 'settled' into houses either temporarily or permanently. However, there are no national or regional data on the number of 'settled' Gypsies and Travellers. The estimates range widely from 100,000 to 350,000.

The cohort of pupils included in the case study schools within this research project mainly belong to the semi-nomadic communities who live on official public or private caravan/mobile home sites. While many of these families only travel for limited periods during a year, some families are more routinely nomadic and a proportion periodically become victims of the national lack of official sites. In consequence, some of the children have more limited educational opportunities and the imposed hit-and-miss attendance at numerous schools has a further negative impact on their levels of achievement.

³ *The Education of Travelling Children*, published by the Office For Standards in Education (OFSTED), London 1996. Reference Number: HMR/12/96/NS.

⁴ *Times Education Supplement* 26 September 1997.

In recent years it has been considered important to avoid potentially derogatory terms when describing identifiable ethnic and/or cultural groups. For this reason, the generic term “Travellers” has become regarded as the acceptable and preferred terminology to describe hitherto a number of distinct communities who either are, or have been, traditionally associated with a nomadic way of life. These communities include Gypsies/Romanies of English, Scottish or Welsh heritage; Gypsies and Travellers of Irish heritage; Roma/Gypsies mainly from Eastern and Central Europe; Fairground families or Showpeople; Circus families/groups; New Travellers; and Bargees. The use of some of the specific and traditional definitions of the different communities are increasingly being insisted upon by members of the communities themselves. For this and other reasons, the use of the generic term “Travellers”, in relation to this research project, is unhelpful as it fails to distinguish sufficiently the main target group. The research project was commissioned to investigate the education of Gypsy Travellers. Whilst in the main the majority of the pupils were from Gypsy/Romany backgrounds of English, Scottish or Welsh heritage, a number were of Irish Gypsy or Traveller heritage. Most of the schools studied also periodically make provision for children from Fairground and/or Circus backgrounds. The report has adopted the term “Gypsy Traveller” to represent the main group within the schools visited and to maintain a continuity in the use of the term with the most recent OFSTED publication on this subject.⁵ However, the research accepts the continuing evolution of terms to describe these groups of people. Given this context, it was not intended that the use of this term should contribute to any stereotypical or inaccurate definitions.

The Evidence Underpinning Concern

The poor participation rate and low levels of achievement in the formal education system by Gypsy Traveller children has been a matter of serious public concern for nearly forty years. This period has also seen a significant growth in the literature on the subject. In 1967 the Plowden Report, *Children and their Primary Schools*,⁶ formally drew the nation’s attention to the plight of Gypsy Traveller children. It stated that, “They are probably the most severely deprived children in the country. Most of them do not even go to school, and the potential abilities of those who do are stunted. The children’s educational needs are nevertheless

⁵ *Raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils- School and LEA responses*, published by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), London, March 1999. Reference Number: HMI 170.

⁶ *Children and their Primary Schools*, A report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), “The Plowden Report”, Vol.1, p.59 and Appendix 12. HMSO London 1967.

extreme and largely unmet... They will require special attention and carefully planned action". These concerns were raised again in a report called *Gypsies and Other Travellers*, which was published by the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government later in 1967: "...while the majority, (of an estimated 6000 children) who do not go to school, have little prospect of ever achieving the rudiments of a normal education. They are likely to grow up as illiterate as their parents unless special steps are taken to meet their educational needs." ⁷

The situation as described in these two reports stimulated further interest. In 1975 a more intensive study was initiated by the Schools Council. *Education of Travelling Children*, by Reiss⁸, provided a detailed account of the situation with recommendations for urgent action. The book also suggested a number of action research projects. Only two of these have since been worked on, one concerned with health issues and the other with educational comparisons in a European context.

Between 1975 and 1983 there was very limited research in this area and most of it was confined to small-scale projects funded privately or from charitable sources. In 1975 the results of a case study into the education of secondary-aged housed Gypsy Travellers was published by a national charity set up to advocate action in this area of education. *Catch 22 Gypsies*⁹, by Ivatts, detailed the complex difficulties presented for both the school, with its negative attitudes and inflexibility of approach, and the Gypsy Traveller pupils trying to maintain a dignity and self respect in an institution which offered them neither. Attendance and achievement were poor and exclusions high. A further study looked at policy and provision in England and Wales and echoed in many ways the previous research by Reiss. *Gypsy Education*, by Worrall¹⁰, provided a helpful critique of existing provision both by schools and within special voluntary projects.

⁷ *Gypsies and other travellers*, Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Welsh Office. p.31. HMSO, London 1967.

⁸ *Education of Travelling Children*, by Christopher Reiss. Macmillan Education for the Schools Council, London 1975.

⁹ *Catch 22 Gypsies* by Arthur R Ivatts. ACERT, London 1975.

¹⁰ *Gypsy Education* by Dick Worrall, A Study of Provision in England and Wales. Walsall Council for Community Relations, 1979.

In 1983, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) raised further official concerns. A report on *The Education of Travellers' Children*¹¹ was published as a discussion paper. This was based on evidence gathered by HMI in the course of their routine inspections of schools. It described current practice with indicators of promising or good practice. The report reiterated the general conclusion running through all the research documents previously referred to, that "Generally Travelling children are underachieving and poor attendance only accentuates their difficulties". A second edition of this report was issued in 1985. During the next decade, HMI, in addition to running teachers' short courses annually on this subject, conducted a series of inspections of the provision made for Gypsy Traveller children in a large number of local education authorities. These individual published reports and other inspection evidence provided the background to a further formal statement in the form of an OFSTED report in 1996, *The Education of Travelling Children*¹². This report detailed the progress made and again defined good practice. Serious concerns continued to be expressed, however, and these unsurprisingly related to issues of access, attendance and achievement. "Access to school for secondary aged children remains a matter of grave concern. There are possibly as many as 10,000 children at this phase who are not even registered with a school."

During 1984/5 a research project was conducted in the United Kingdom that was initiated by the European Commission.¹³ A detailed survey was conducted by Acton and Kenrick as part of this pan-European Union investigation. This work eventually led to a European Commission Resolution that was adopted by the Council and the Ministers of Education in May 1989. The research report painted a bleak picture regarding the education of Gypsy/Roma and which was common to all member states. The provision described within the UK was no exception. Other valuable publications have come from European sources, including the Council of Europe¹⁴ and the European Commission¹⁵.

¹¹ *The Education of Travellers' Children* (An HMI Discussion Paper) HMSO, London 1983.

¹² *The Education of Travelling Children*, OFSTED. Op.cit. See footnote 3.

¹³ *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller children*, by Jean-Pierre Liégeois et al. Commission of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 1987. NB The UK research was carried out by Dr. Thomas Acton and Dr. Donald Kenrick.

¹⁴ E.g. *The Training of Teachers of Gypsy Children* Doc. DECS/EGT (83) 63, Strasbourg, 1984; Jean-Pierre Liégeois *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*, Strasbourg, 1994.

¹⁵ E.g. *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children*. Report on the implementation of measures envisaged in the resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education meeting with the Council, 22nd May 1989 (89/C 153/02). Luxembourg, 1996; *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children – A Synthesis Report*, Luxembourg, 1987.

The Swann Report of 1985, *Education for All*¹⁶, devoted a chapter to the education of Gypsy Traveller children. This report once again echoed the previous concerns and recommended action in the interests of fostering the emergence of a truly pluralist society.

The complex issues surrounding Gypsy Traveller education were partially addressed in 1998/9 by a research project conducted for the DfEE by the Open University, *Making the Difference: Teaching and Learning Strategies in Successful Multi-Ethnic Schools*¹⁷. Although the research was only able to deal with this topic as and when it arose in the case study schools, the general conclusions support the justification for the concerns detailed in other reports. One of the main recommendations emanating from this study was that further detailed research was urgently needed in this area of education.

In 1989, Hyman was able to confirm the vulnerability of Gypsy Traveller children in the education system. “Traveller children are unquestionably more vulnerable because of their relative inexperience of school and because of the burden of hostility which many of them bear.”¹⁸ The negative attitudes towards Gypsy Travellers in the population at large, and the insecurities stemming from the evictions from unauthorised sites, were identified as serious hindrances to schooling. The access to secondary education was again flagged as an issue of concern.

The most recent formal evidence on the education of Gypsy Travellers was published by OFSTED in March 1999, *Raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils – School and LEA responses*. While pointers to good practice were described, the general conclusions from HMI inspection evidence provided a confirmation of the serious concerns that have been flagged across the string of reports and other documents in the last four decades. “Gypsy Traveller pupils are the group most at risk in the education system. Although some make a reasonably promising start in primary school, by the time they reach secondary level their generally low attainment is a matter of serious concern.” In the same year, another work was published,

¹⁶ *Education for All, the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups* The Swann Report, Department of Education and Science, HMSO, London 1985.

¹⁷ *Making the Difference: Teaching and Learning Strategies in Successful Multi-ethnic Schools*, by Maud Blair and Jill Bourne et al, Open University. DfEE Research Reports No.RR59, London 1999.

¹⁸ *Sites for Travellers* A study in five London boroughs. By Mavis Hyman. London Race and Housing Research Unit, London 1989.

*Traveller Children – A Voice for Themselves*¹⁹, which provides an analysis of the changing relationships between the Gypsy Travellers and schools and the real and/or imagined impact on both cultures. The difficulties of gaining a satisfactory education are well described and the importance of schools to be listening and responsive institutions is stressed.

The common themes to the research in this field over many years is that there have been, and still are, serious obstacles to securing for Gypsy Traveller children ready access, regular attendance, continuity of educational experience and satisfactory levels of achievement. Many of these observations and conclusions have been contained within official reports, often marginal to the main objective of the research or other formal investigation. Over the years the extent of detail in the various books and reports surrounding good practice has markedly increased and this is perhaps a positive sign of progress, as is the way in which they help explain the many factors responsible for hindered access and poor or irregular attendance. There is more modest and less confident evidence, however, regarding the range of reasons for the seeming persistence of underachievement, despite the measured increase in school attendance.

¹⁹ *Traveller Children – A Voice for Themselves*, by Cathy Kiddle. J.Kingsley, London 1999.

2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The project sought to focus on examples of successful initiatives in mainstream education by schools that aimed to improve attendance and/or raise attainment. The main aim was to identify the key elements of successful schemes and to disseminate them in order to promote more effective teaching and learning.

Qualitative evaluation methods

Since the project was to focus on examples of successful initiatives, the most appropriate methodology was that of case studies²⁰. This method allows the detailed study of cases selected as specific instances, rather than being chosen to be typical or representative. The aim of a project of this kind is not to provide data on schools as a whole: many such data are already available (see e.g. DfEE, 1999; Ivatts, 1971; OFSTED, 1996; Reiss, 1975). Instead the study focuses on schools chosen because they were thought, from experience of the field, to be examples of good practice.

The methods used in the case studies were the qualitative evaluation methods developed by Patton²¹. The characteristic of qualitative research “is the priority accorded the perspectives of those being studied ... along with a related emphasis on the interpretation of observations in accordance with subjects’ own understandings.”²² In this project participants would include head teachers, class teachers, peripatetic specialist teachers, learning support assistants, representatives of the LEA Traveller Education Service, parents and pupils. The project aimed to focus on forms of practice that improve attendance and raise attainment.

Identification of case studies

Since the project was to be of relatively short duration, it was important to be able to identify schools rapidly, negotiate access and visit to collect the data, leaving time for analysis and writing up. The research team identified specific schools that met the required criteria, from their knowledge of working in the area.

²⁰ E.g. Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.

²¹ E.g. Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. London: Sage.

²² Bryman, A. (1989). *Research Methods and Organization Studies*. London: Unwin Hyman, p.135.

The project was conducted in six schools, four primary and two secondary. Six were considered to be enough to get a spread of experience; more primary schools than secondary schools were chosen for two reasons. Firstly because primary schools are generally smaller, so each secondary school accounts for more pupils. In addition, it was believed that the primary school is key in that it lays the basis for later attendance and attainment. Schools were selected from a range of geographical areas, both urban and rural, but all known to have relatively large Traveller in-take to schools.

Data collection

The project Research Officer visited each of the six schools, spending several days in each. To make the data collection as efficient as possible, all meetings were arranged in advance. Key informants for each school needed to be identified. In all cases this included the head teacher, but otherwise they varied somewhat. In all cases someone from the Traveller Education Service was included. The Research Officer used a semi-structured interview: this allows the interviews to be flexible enough to meet local variations, but to ensure that a detailed list of topics were always covered, to give a full account of each school's activity. These topics included the following:

- the history of the programme, how it was initiated, who was involved, what resources were called upon;
- the barriers to starting and continuing the programme, and how these were overcome;
- the involvement of families, and at what stage;
- what worked well and what changes would they like to see;
- an evaluation of the programme and experience of being involved;
- how they saw the future of the programme.

As well as the professionals' experiences, it was thought essential to get the families' experiences. To this end, the researcher conducted interviews with a number of parents from each school. Given the timescale of the project, it was not possible to get the views of the families in any detail.

Before visiting a school, as much background information on the school as possible was assembled. In particular, the most recent OFSTED inspection reports were downloaded from the world wide web, as were the schools' examination results for secondary schools.

Data collection took place in the final term of the academic year 1998/1999 and in the first term of 1999/2000.

Description of the schools

At the end of this report is some background information for each of the study schools, including data collected from interviews and from other sources, such as the OFSTED reports. Each school has been given a pseudonym, and these are used throughout this report. The true identities of the schools are, of course, confidential. The schools are as follows:

Evergreen Secondary School is a mixed comprehensive in a rural county;

Forest Primary School is a first school, taking children aged 4 to 9, in a town centre;

Market Secondary School is a middle-sized mixed comprehensive;

Melbourne Primary School is an amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools;

Mountain Primary School is an inner city primary school;

Sandunes Primary School is a Roman Catholic school.

Identification of good practice

The focus of this project was to identify good practice. Schools identified what they thought was good and effective practice. However, it is important to compare views of what is effective. By comparing the views of a range of respondents regarding each school – the head teacher, class and specialist teachers, TES staff and parents – it was possible to validate views of what worked and what did not. The various interviews were checked for agreements and for disagreements. What was described as good practice was also compared with what previous literature had identified.

Structure of the report

The report is in four sections, each focussing on elements of good practice: factors influencing access to school, factors influencing attainment, staff responsibilities and the role of the TES. As analysis of the interview material is presented, illustrative quotes are included to both demonstrate the source of inferences being drawn and to give the reader a better feel

for the data. Throughout the report, Key Points are highlighted. The four sections are followed by some conclusions and the main points of the research, with some recommendations for future action.

3. ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE: FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCESS TO SCHOOL

The Development of Relationships with Parents

The literature constantly emphasises the crucial need to establish trusting relationships with Gypsy Traveller parents and the community. The initial access to school education, apart from practical considerations concerned, for example, with the availability of school places and the distance from a school, depends on families having sufficient interest and confidence in schools and for them to trust the institutions with the care of their children. This essential aspect of provision is fully appreciated by all the case study schools.

The role of the Traveller Education Service All the six schools investigated have achieved excellent links with parents and the community. The schools show a strength in achieving and maintaining these links in order to develop the foundations of effective and good professional practice. Frequently these relationships with the parents are maintained through the liaison role of the Traveller Education Service (TES). The TESs had built up strong relationships with parents over a number of years. These relationships are the direct result of a determination to build mutual trust and respect between the schools and the Gypsy Traveller parents.

Designated named person for Gypsy Travellers In most cases, this process demands a very broad interpretation of the concept of home and school liaison. For example, in Market Secondary School²³, a designated senior teacher, who had previously worked with the local TES, has been responsible for a number of years for developing a close relationship with the local Gypsy Traveller families. The teacher, who has been in post for 13 years, has built up a strong relationship with both the parents and the whole community. Her role is to ‘look after’ the Gypsy Traveller pupils in the school and to liaise with the TES on relevant issues. She is the named person in the school to whom the children, the staff and the head teacher, will go to on any issues concerning Gypsy Travellers. Furthermore, this teacher’s role is seen in a much wider context. Although the focus of the named teacher’s work is to help the families with school and educational issues, it is often the case that some families may need assistance

²³ The names given for schools are all pseudonyms.

with other matters. Easy access to sympathetic help and advice, by known and trusted individual members of staff, is one important element to the development of good relationships with parents.

Named Teacher:

I know the families very well. I have known them for 13 years and they know me. I have signed their passport forms, driving licences and sometimes a parent will come into school with a letter or something they don't understand and I try and help them with that. The school is a place where they know they can get help. If a parent comes in and needs to see me and I'm teaching, the office staff will come and find me and I will leave my lesson to come and speak to the parent.

Similarly, an experienced teacher attached to Melbourne Primary school, and who has been working for the TES for 10 years, feels that the stability and establishment of trust and mutual respect between the parents and the school is a vital requirement in the development of good practice.

TES Support Teacher:

The success has to do with the stability of support we offer to parents. It takes years to build trust and this has to happen over time. Reputation is then founded with the Travellers; they can then trust and respect you. Acceptance is also important, not letting them down. If you say you're going to do something, you have to do it.

These links with parents are a fundamental part of the strong relationship the school and the TES have with the community. The close links established enable parents to trust the school and so send their children to an environment in which they feel sure that they will be safe, respected and looked after. A key element, therefore in the development of good practice is the realisation that the school has the duty to demonstrate trust and this is frequently facilitated by a willingness to do regular outreach work to the families and the community.

Head Teacher of a Secondary School:

It's our responsibility to engage Gypsy Travellers, to provide quality pastoral care and a safe environment, most of all to engage parents in a partnership. If part of the problem is mistrust, then the onus is on us to provide evidence that we're trusting. And that comes down to the school and what the school does to make the parents feel comfortable is reflected in whether Gypsy Travellers want their children to go to that school.

Such relationships can take years to develop and the success as exemplified in all the case study schools, further suggests that the continuity of individual staff involvement is an important element. The key named person, who is known and trusted, provides safe and non-threatening access to the institution.

Gypsy Traveller Parent:

If it wasn't for her [*TES teacher*] I don't know whether the children would go to school. We know she's always there for us and if we have a problem, she will listen to us and try and understand what we mean. She does what she can for us and helps us with other things, not just school things. We do trust her and we get on with her.

The confidence of Gypsy Traveller parents in a school is raised if they know and trust particular members of staff. In these circumstances, they are more likely to want to send their children to a school on a regular basis, particularly if they know that their children will be looked after and protected from discrimination.

Responding to the educational needs of the community Effective links with parents can lead to, and be fostered by, the provision of adult education. In Forest Primary School adult literacy classes, that were originally intended for Gypsy Traveller parents, have proved to be successful with many other parents in the school community. The work with parents is also vitally important for linking across different phases and securing their involvement and support in their children's cross-phase transfers.

The critical role of the head teacher and other staff The best practice observed in the case study schools also reveals that the role of the head teacher is crucial in establishing the welcoming and trusting ethos of the school and the effective implementation of equal opportunity and race equality policies. The best practice also features the realisation by the school that the institution itself needs to nurture and own the quality relationship with Gypsy Traveller families, albeit assisted initially by the Traveller Education Service. The designation of a ‘named person’ as the sympathetic point of contact with the school is important, but must be accompanied by the informed response by the institution as a whole. The designation of a key person by itself has little effect unless it is matched by a positive and welcoming attitude on the part of all the staff of the school. This attitude is fostered in the study schools by regular in-service training, for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, specifically to include the education of Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Key Points

- Trusting relationships with parents are of crucial importance.
- Schools need to promote an explicit culture of respect, care and safety.
- Trusting relationships once established need to be maintained and strengthened.
- Importance of designated named person at senior level for Gypsy Travellers
- The school has a duty to take the initiative in the development of home/school relationships.
- A positive response to the educational needs of the community.
- Regular in-service training for both teaching and non-teaching staff.

Supporting the Admission Process

Personalised and flexible arrangements re admission Each of the schools have their own admission policies, although they have to conform to legal requirements. For example, in Market Secondary School the admissions criteria include whether the child has a sibling at the school, whether the child has a specific medical condition and how far the child lives from the school. Many Gypsy Traveller pupils go through the usual admission procedures at the same time as most other pupils entering the school. In some cases, however, it may be the named teacher for Gypsy Traveller pupils who fills in the necessary admission forms with the families. Furthermore, this school organises ‘taster days’ for some Gypsy Traveller children

who may be visiting the area on a temporary basis and who are offered the chance to see what the working life of the school is like during one school day. The school is also conscious of the need of some pupils to register on a short-term basis on account of their family's nomadic way of life. These supportive and flexible arrangements demonstrate how the school can be sensitive and supportive to the nomadic nature of some Gypsy Traveller families. The policy recognises that the families may, for a variety of reasons, be suspicious of schools and formal institutions. They are provided with the reassurance of being able to look around the school and for their children to benefit from being able to gauge the nature of the school's social environment.

Head Teacher:

For those Gypsy Travellers who are travelling a lot, we have to be flexible. They may spend a day here, work in the library; look at the materials we have and meet other pupils including Gypsy Travellers. It might be that we don't take them on roll, it may be an informal arrangement and they just come in for some time during the day or the week while they are in the area.

The supportive role of the TES These sensitive arrangements are a common feature of all the case study schools. Evergreen Secondary School, for example, also has its own admission procedures, which include close liaison with the TES in relation to the admission of Gypsy Traveller pupils. The teacher attached to the TES contacts the parents well before the time of transfer to secondary school. The parents and children will visit, usually accompanied by the TES teacher, to facilitate a more detailed knowledge and feel for the school. These initial visits are judged by the schools to be very important and planned opportunities are taken by the head teacher and other senior staff, to meet with parents and make manifest the friendly and welcoming style of the school.

Head Teacher:

We feel it's better that someone they know, like the TES teacher, makes them feel comfortable when they come into a big secondary school. So she will show them around and they will meet me and other teachers. This way, they won't be frightened

by the size of the school and will see it as being welcoming. We also like very much for the parents to come in if they can.

Flexibility in pupil organisation at primary level This flexibility is also in evidence in the primary schools. The Mountain Primary School, for example, provides a further illustration:

Head Teacher:

If we have children who have not had a formal education for a while, then we ease them into it. This may be that they come in part-time for a week or so. Every case is taken on an individual basis, it depends what the child needs and what is good for the individual child.

A seemingly helpful aspect of the flexibility at the primary stage is the willingness to allow siblings to stay together, or to visit each other's classrooms on a regular basis. If at the initial stages following admission, it is judged that the pupils and/or their parents need this level of reassurance, then it appears to present few difficulties. The flexibility and sound pastoral practice surrounding the admission of Gypsy Traveller pupils in the case study schools, provides additional opportunities to identify and resolve any practical details such as the school times, uniform requirements, school meals and any necessary items of equipment. This is helpful preparatory knowledge, which might not always have been noted by the parents in the written communications sent to homes. Other, more individual concerns are also usefully dealt with on these occasions.

Aspects of a welcoming ethos The admission process, which may be challenging for both pupils and parents, can be made far less threatening if all the staff are genuinely welcoming. In primary schools in particular, the role of the school secretary is crucial in this context and in a majority of the case study schools, this particular point has not been overlooked. In the Market Secondary School, reassurance and delight had been expressed by many parents about the explicit statement of acceptance and welcome portrayed by a prominent display about Gypsy Travellers and including pictures; pupil's written and art work; books and artefacts. The display acts as an unequivocal statement to all, that the school both acknowledges, accepts and respects the ethnic and cultural identity of this community.

Arrangements for securing the admission of Gypsy Traveller pupils to schools, is often aided by the prior knowledge that the TES might have about the possible need for additional school places. The functional networks that have been established with Traveller Education Services elsewhere frequently provide this information.

Co-ordinator of TES:

It is crucial to inter-link with other TESs, so that we are able to get the information on children and so we don't have to wait or rely on the information the schools might have.

The importance of the early years The last aspect of support in the process of accessing Gypsy Traveller pupils to school is the practice of trying to encourage parents to seek admission for their pre-school children when places and/or facilities are available. The literature on the education of Gypsy Travellers regularly stresses the vital importance of pre-school education. In all the six case study settings, joint efforts are made between the TESs and the schools to obtain as early admission as possible in the pupil's individual school careers. The Mountain Primary School is attached to a Family Centre. Gypsy Traveller parents are encouraged to bring their children as soon as possible to the centre, to give them an early experience of 'formal' education. This can be on a part-time basis to start with until more regular attendance is appropriate. Such practice usually ensures an early start in primary education.

Head Teacher:

Because she [*TES support teacher*] knows the families so well, she knows when there is a child who will be due to start school soon and so she starts to explain to the family what they have to do. This has worked well, we have a number of Gypsy Traveller pupils who are in Reception and will continue to come to school. Their siblings are here and their parents were also here.

The access to nursery school and other forms of pre-school provision is seemingly far more successful if trusting relationships with the families have been well established while the

children have been at the toddler stage. This is a further strength of the provision made by the TESs and the primary schools.

Key Points

- The involvement and support of the named person can be very helpful in the admission process.
- Need for flexible arrangements if necessary as a response to mobility and any apprehensions.
- The TES can play a pivotal role in securing stress-free admission and successful phase transfer.
- The need to exploit all opportunities to familiarise the children and parents about the routines and expectations of school life.
- All staff need to exemplify the welcoming ethos of the school.
- Displays featuring the cultural background of Gypsy Traveller families are explicit statements of acceptance and respect.
- Admission to early years provision should be a priority and encouraged at the earliest opportunity.

Facilitating and Promoting Regular Attendance

Transport arrangements All of the TESs have the facility for making transport arrangements for Gypsy Traveller pupils to take them to and from school. In some of the case study schools the parents make their own arrangements. However, for many of the children, contracted taxi services are used and judged by the TES to be the most cost effective option. For many of the parents, the transport arrangements are vital to get their children to school.

Gypsy Traveller Parent:

The transport is important for us to get our kids to school. Otherwise they wouldn't get there. She [*TES teacher*] has been good in getting us these things.

A lack of suitable family transport, the demands of younger children, and the distance from school are all identified as inhibiting factors to the making of independent arrangements.

However, the distance between home and school appears to be less of a factor than the fears surrounding their children's safety given the isolation of some of the residential sites and/or the dangerous roads to be traversed. In addition, there is also an expressed legitimate anxiety about the safety of their children if unaccompanied in relation to strangers, racist bullying or verbal abuse from other children or adults. They also feel that their children are safer if they are travelling in a taxi and so will know how and when their children will be returning home.

The use of taxis, and in some cases a school bus, is also known to improve school attendance, as parents often said that their children were unable to go to school due to lack of public and/or private transport. The provision of transport from home provides a daily structure and routine which is a further help and reassurance to many parents. The TESs and schools involved in this aspect of provision are robust in their defence of these policies because of the realisation that all possible hindrances to access and regular attendance need to be addressed.

Provision of uniforms A number of schools have access to uniform grants that are available for Gypsy Traveller pupils either through LEA uniform grants or via the TES's specific uniform budget. Those that do not are willing to provide uniforms, either by offering parents second-hand uniforms or just providing parents with new uniforms funded from school resources. The issue of school uniform provides a further example of the co-operative working relationship between the schools and the TESs. This is one of the ways the TES is able to work with the school to identify and solve problems that hinder or prevent access and regular attendance. There is a general acknowledgement that Gypsy Traveller families who may be moving frequently between different schools will experience particular problems in relation to the provision of uniform.

At Evergreen Secondary School, if the Gypsy Traveller pupils do not have a uniform or a PE kit, the TES teacher and/or the school, often find one for them. The provision of uniform is aimed at including these pupils in the school. It is an effort that many of the schools and the TESs make, because it is such an important and explicit indication of the visual inclusiveness of Gypsy Traveller pupils.

It is clear from the case study schools that the requirement of a school uniform is not allowed to be a hindrance to admission and attendance. Difficulties particular families may have in

this regard are recognised. Considerable effort is taken to ensure that necessary uniforms and other items of clothing and/or equipment are provided if this is a pre-requisite to obtaining access and attendance.

Liaison with Education Welfare Officer Service In all but one of the schools, the liaison with the specialist Education Welfare Officer (EWO) attached to the TES is very effective and productive. It is clearly an important factor in initiating and maintaining links between parents and the school, in order to secure access and promote good levels of attendance. In Sandunes Primary School the relationship between the specialist EWO and the school is crucial to both monitoring and maintaining satisfactory attendance by Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Head Teacher:

The EWO has spent a lot of time with KS2 Gypsy Traveller pupils. If the places are not being taken up in secondary school (*at the appropriate time*), they may no longer be offered. The EWO is very persistent at working with the children and families. She makes sure they will get to secondary school.

It is the informed and persistent work of the EWO, either by a specialist attached to a TES, or by the normal 'patch' mainstream service officer, which is most effective in improving attendance, particularly at the secondary stage. It has long been acknowledged that the primary-secondary divide has been a stumbling block for significant numbers of Gypsy Traveller pupils.

TES Co-ordinator:

The EWO is very experienced and she does not let the families go. Any excuse they have, she deals with it. If they say the taxis don't turn up, she sorts it out. We have turned the situation round for secondary transfers and have done very well. The EWO's work is very important and her role is vital.

A range of appropriate strategies have been adopted, and in many cases with marked success.

TES Co-ordinator:

We have used the DfEE video with them about secondary transfers and have also talked to the parents. We have had children transfer as a direct result of this. The teachers also set up a session with some Gypsy Traveller girls so that they could attend initially for just one morning per week. This was called the 'Wednesday Club' and had a positive impression on the girls, because it encouraged them to attend.

In Evergreen Secondary School, Gypsy Traveller pupils are sometimes rewarded for improving attendance by being given book tokens. Incentives are seen as more productive than threats in order to secure a regular pattern of attendance in the first instance. In Market Secondary School regular attendance is promoted by routine contacts with homes. One of the school has special responsibility for Traveller support. As some Gypsy Traveller pupils are sometimes absent because of travelling, teachers will often telephone the parents to find out why the children are away or may even ask the Traveller support teacher to find out. Since the school is flexible in its approach and the teachers are concerned about the needs of the pupils, the teachers themselves may take the initiative to telephone the parents.

Secondary School Class Teacher:

If there are any problems about absence I may 'phone home to get some reassurance and find out what's happening. Or the named teacher may have a word. Some of the children get taxis home and their parents want them to come straight home and so if they have a detention, we can do this at lunch time .

The importance of this work is echoed in the comment by one primary head teacher who sees the liaison with the EWO as essential to improving the attendance of Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Head Teacher:

These links are vital because the links between the home and the school are what makes it successful

The TESs involved in the research project make a clear distinction between the respective roles of the specialist EWO and that of the peripatetic teacher.

TES Co-ordinator:

Mrs 'L' [*TES teacher*] looks after the children, she does home visits and has lengthy discussions with the family. She offers them additional support and fills in any forms they may have problems with. Her role is different to that of the specialist EWO, because she has a more independent and peripheral role. She is involved in advocacy work, if the school is full and the family has to appeal, then she will help. If there is an exclusion, she can also be there.

The best practice identified views the work of the specialist EWO attached to a TES as primarily concerned with initiating contact with Gypsy Traveller families, developing good relationships, securing school places and efficiently organising all the necessary arrangements to allow for early, happy and successful access to school and subsequent regular attendance.

Key Points

- The criteria surrounding the provision of transport need to be much broader than considerations of journey distance alone.
- Transport arrangements need to reassure parents about safety including protection from racist bullying.
- The issue of uniform and other kit must not be allowed to undermine access and or attendance.
- Regular attendance needs to be an explicit expectation.
- Significant levels of support and preparatory liaison are needed if transfer to secondary (middle or high) is to be successful.
- Regular attendance is better promoted by incentives than 'force'.
- Appropriately trained specialist EWOs can enhance access and attendance.

4. ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE: RAISING ACHIEVEMENT

School Aims and Equal Opportunities Policies

All of the schools have implemented Equal Opportunities Policies that are regularly referred to by the school staff and members of the TES. A typical example is set out below. The policy offers a model that demonstrates equality provision for Gypsy Traveller children and others. A number of points in the policy reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities for Gypsy Traveller children and for others. For example:

Equal Opportunities Policy at Market Secondary School:

- 1) The school will actively attempt to eliminate any view, policy or practice which seeks to discriminate on this basis, or has the effect of so discriminating.
- 2) The school recognises the possibility that particular people may not enjoy equality of opportunity within society at large and will encourage positive action to enhance the opportunities of those individuals or groups who might otherwise run the risk of being discriminated against.
- 3) The school will attempt to eliminate discrimination which might occur indirectly or throughout institutional procedures and attitudes which have the effect of discrimination against certain individuals, and groups, even when no overt or intended discrimination is occurring.

This policy demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equality of access to all pupils, especially those of Gypsy Traveller background. This particular school has also achieved a Charter Mark of Excellence in its achievements, a recognition of the school's success in raising the achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Another very effective example is that provided by Evergreen Secondary School. This school also has a strong Equal Opportunities Policy that emphasises equality in all areas of school life.

Equal Opportunities Policy at Evergreen Secondary School:

At *Evergreen* we see equal opportunities as a cross-cultural dimension and as such it should permeate every aspect of the curriculum. We believe equal opportunities should mean freedom from discrimination for all and equal access to both education and employment irrespective of gender, class, race and disability.

In Melbourne Primary School, the Equal Opportunities Policy is central to all areas the school is involved in, such as the learning environment, the curriculum, resources, assessment and achievement, parental and community involvement, staff selection and training and how the Equal Opportunities Policy is monitored.

In the case study schools, there is a strong commitment, throughout the school, to the principles of Equal Opportunities and for this to be manifest in relation to Gypsy Traveller pupils and their parents. The guidelines contained within the Equal Opportunities Policies frequently portray a conscious effort to ensure that the policy is inclusive of all groups including Gypsy Travellers. The policies further ensure that the schools' decision making processes are fully informed, thus avoiding ad hoc judgements which may be based on hidden or explicit stereotypical assumptions.

Key Point

- Schools need Equal Opportunities and race equality Policies that are explicitly inclusive of Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Leadership and Inclusive Ethos

The role of the head teacher A key factor of success in all the schools visited relates to the strong leadership quality of the head teacher and the insistence that their school should epitomise an 'inclusive' ethos. The 'inclusive' nature of the schools' ethos is reflective of the uniform commitment to Equal Opportunities policies by the head teachers and senior management. Such an ethos is one that exists throughout the institution and is filtered down from the head teacher to all other members of staff (both teaching and non-teaching). This strong leadership role contributes significantly to the success with Gypsy Travellers in terms of confident relationships, secure access, regular attendance and academic achievement. The

influence of the head teacher is crucial in setting the tone or culture of the institutional response.

Recognition and acceptance of ethnic and cultural status The recognition and acceptance of the ethnic and cultural status of pupils contributes to the development of confidence and trust, and in consequence, the breaking down of mistrust and fear of ‘official’ type institutions. The head teacher at Market Secondary School has been in post for twelve years and his enthusiastic acceptance of Gypsy Traveller pupils appears to have an influence on the success of the educational provision made for them. The school as a whole has an informed appreciation of the importance of Gypsy Traveller communities. The head teacher is proactive in ensuring that their culture is recognised and celebrated within the curriculum for all pupils. The institution’s vision of seeing its worth and richness contributes to how Gypsy Travellers are seen by others. A positive self and group image is also a key objective for all pupils.

Head Teacher:

If the school is hot on equal opportunities policies and their quality of pastoral care, if the teachers are compassionate, if there are expectations that teachers will always treat children with respect, if the curriculum is provided adequately then the environment will be a fertile one.

Melbourne Primary School also has a responsive curriculum in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity and its inclusive character is a reflection of the ethos of the school. In this particular school special efforts are taken to ensure that no groups are stereotyped and this is achieved, in part, by emphasising the importance of responding to accurately assessed individual needs. The school has a diverse cultural mix, including the highest number of Gypsy Traveller pupils in the authority. Because of the school’s richness in terms of its ethnic and cultural diversity, it is felt to be more able to cater for all the children’s individual needs, while at the same time respecting cultural and linguistic differences.

The importance of the listening school Regular interaction between the head teacher and the TES is essential and a strong marker of good practice. The practice is enhanced when the senior management in the school listens to, and acts on, the advice given by the TES.

TES Co-ordinator:

We have a very productive relationship with the school. The school is very supportive and always willing to listen and take on board Traveller issues. In other schools, we also feel valued and respected. I have no hesitation about going to see senior management about Gypsy Traveller issues, because I know they will listen and take them seriously.

In Mountain Primary School, the head teacher and staff work together with the TES to try to meet the needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Head Teacher:

We are all receptive to the TES and we work together for the children. They keep us informed and we keep them informed. We are open and that's the way the service has developed, it is positive. We involve all the staff and the school.

In Forest Primary School the positive attitude of the head teacher is a strength of the school. Her experience and positive attitude towards Gypsy Traveller pupils is fundamental to the school's success with these pupils.

Deputy Head Teacher at Forest Primary School:

Things changed when she [*head teacher*] became the head teacher. She has a good relationship with the parents and the children and they trust her. They know her. The head creates the ethos in which we have to try and help the children to succeed and we have to understand that they travel and try and meet their particular needs.

The 'inclusion' of parents in the life and work of the school A common aspect of an inclusive approach in the schools is the commitment to, as much as possible, include parents in the education of their children. In the Forest Primary School, all efforts are taken to ensure that important information, particularly in relation to pupil progress, is shared with all parents including Gypsy Travellers. In some circumstances this will require special arrangements.

Head Teacher of Forest Primary School:

We produce annual reports for each child and these we will take and if necessary read to the parents. I visit the site regularly, so that parents know I take their issues seriously.

An issue of concern raised by a number of the head teachers is that surrounding the threats to the establishment of an inclusive ethos posed by published school performance tables and imposed targets. Low levels of achievement and/or attendance by Gypsy Traveller pupils could make a marked difference to a school's relative position in the published performance tables. Some heads felt that pressure to improve a school's overall performance might discourage policies that encouraged the enrolment of pupils who might be expected to reduce that performance. Although all the head teachers expressing these anxieties are determined that these considerations do not influence school policy in any way, they do see these developments as having the potential for the creation of structural hindrances to access to school education for 'less favoured' groups of pupils.

Key Points

- The role of the head teacher in setting the inclusive ethos of the school is critical to the success of the provision.
- The recognition and acceptance of the ethnic and cultural background of Gypsy Travellers is an essential requirement to the building of confidence and trust.
- It is vitally important for the senior management of a school to 'listen' to the TES, parents and pupils.
- An inclusive education must address the educational needs of the parents and the community.
- School performance tables should not influence school policy towards Gypsy Traveller admissions.

Behaviour Policies and Anti-Bullying Strategies

The promotion of good behaviour Pupil behaviour in all the six schools was reported by the staff of the schools to be good. In the case study schools, sound and well considered behavioural policies are seen as important in the context of detailing and confirming the rules

and expectations implicit in the establishment of an ethos of inclusive education. All of the schools have behavioural policies that are dutifully adhered to and they are available for pupils and parents to look at. Some are displayed in public spaces in the school. In one of the secondary schools, the policy includes sections on: the types of behaviour the school wants to eliminate; the pupil's code of conduct; the school's responsibilities in terms of ensuring good behaviour; support strategies; an achievement programme; sanctions; the 'way to good order' and 'other approaches'.

From Secondary School Behaviour Policy:

Wherever possible we aim to be positive in our approach and to notice and reward good behaviour, rather than take it for granted. We believe that everyone should have equal access to rewards in our school, not just those who are academically able. Staff are able to use a range of rewards to promote good behaviour.

In one of the primary schools visited, the behaviour policy states that the school will try to achieve its educational aims by:

From Primary School Behaviour Policy:

Providing a learning environment which caters for the individual needs of all pupils, showing respect for the rights and needs of individuals with the care and concern for their welfare and feelings, making pupils feel they are regarded as valuable individuals and to treat all aspects of their work and achievements as valued.

The policies in the schools focus more on the promotion of good behaviour and harmonious and respectful interpersonal relationship, than the imposition of discipline. The policies recognise divisions in communities and society at large and reflect a concern to provide a moral context for the response to, and management of, any inherent tensions. This is well exemplified in one such policy:

From Primary School Behaviour Policy

Our school reflects society's strengths and opportunities, we also reflect its problems. We bring together children from various backgrounds, and recognise that learning

how to behave towards each other is an important part of school life. All the school's policies are underpinned by the Governor's Curriculum Policy and our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Behaviour related to race issues All teachers in the schools are aware of the schools' behaviour policies and standards of behaviour are taken very seriously. Behaviour that is associated in any way with race relations, is seen as a very serious threat to not only the maintenance of social order, but also to the inclusive ethos that is at the heart of the school.

The processes of response to bullying All of the schools have official anti-bullying strategies and/or bullying guidelines in place. In all cases, bullying is taken very seriously and it is the aim of all the schools to both inform and help the bully and the victim. All schools have procedures to follow up when bullying incidents take place. For instance, at one of the two secondary schools, all the staff and pupils are frequently made aware of the rules and procedures in relation to bullying. The policy recommends a number of guidelines such as:

- 1) Record the incident on a referral form.
- 2) Inform colleagues, particularly if the incident arose out of a situation where everyone should be more vigilant (e.g. unsupervised toilets).
- 3) Where necessary, tell both sets of parents that the incident is being dealt with.

The policies generally advocate a rapid response and also the involvement of parents and school governors. The example, from one primary school there is a helpful illustration of such a routine policy. The policy refers to the procedures to be followed when bullying takes place in the school:

From Primary School Bullying Policy:

The staff response to any incident needs to be immediate and this will involve notifying senior staff and ensuring that the class teacher is informed; talking calmly to the bully and making it clear that bullying is unacceptable; reassuring the victim that action is being taken to stop the bullying; inviting the co-operation of parents and

increasing supervision of child/children involved. Making sure all relevant staff are aware of the potential problems.

Reassurance and resolution The schools are very conscious about the negative and potentially damaging impact of ‘name-calling’. When Gypsy Traveller pupils and/or parents are the recipients of this, it is unequivocally seen as racially abusive behaviour and is generally judged to be totally unacceptable. The potential for bullying in relation to Gypsy Traveller pupils is commonly recognised in the schools. The head teacher at one of the secondary school emphasises the importance of such policies:

Secondary School Head Teacher:

There is racism, prejudice and hostility generally towards Gypsy Traveller pupils. We overcome these through our pastoral care. They are a group of confident youngsters who have a culture they can celebrate. We have to see the benefits of having this cultural group in our school. If we see them being bullied, we have to treat the person being bullied and the bully. It’s our work to educate both. Both the settled population and Gypsy Travellers can misunderstand each other.

One of the ways the anti-bullying strategies are thought to be effective is by building the confidence of the Gypsy Traveller pupils by making them feel really welcome. Also the parents need to be confident that if their children are bullied this will be dealt with effectively. This level of reassurance is vital to the development of good practice and central to gaining access, regular attendance and indirectly, to raising levels of achievement. Many Gypsy Traveller parents are anxious about sending their children to school, especially at secondary level, on account of their fear that their children may receive racial abuse in the form of derogatory name-calling and/or physical harm.

Within some of the primary schools, ‘Circle Time’ is reported to be an effective approach in the context of race relations and anti-bullying strategies. (Circle Time is a planned opportunity for all the pupils in a class to sit in a circle and to discuss freely, with the guidance and support of the class teacher, issues of social concern both within the context of the life of the school and the wider world.) Circle Time is effective as it enables children to

identify their own problems, and involves all participants sitting in a circle and taking equal responsibility for the solving of their own and each others problems.

Key Points

- Behaviour policies detail and confirm the rules and expectations required in the context of inclusive education.
- Behaviour policies need to be well publicised to ensure wide ownership.
- Behaviour policies need to be circumspect of contentious social issues that might ‘surface’ in the school community with the potential for a negative impact on pupils’ behaviour.
- Instances of bullying require a rapid response and the involvement of all relevant parties.
- Name-calling associated to ethnic background must be seen as racist bullying.
- Victims of bullying need the reassurance that the school takes the matter seriously and that action will be fair and just.

Anti-Racist Strategies

Monitoring racial incidents All of the schools take issues of racism seriously and as previously referred to all have Equal Opportunities policies that include and focus on this issue. All but one school formally record racist incidents. For example, in one primary school, the racist incidents are all recorded and are sent to the LEA that keeps a central record of all such incidents. These policies help to demonstrate the importance of the non-tolerance of racism in both the LEA and in its schools.

Head Teacher of Primary School:

Our LEA takes racism very seriously because of the make up of people who live in the borough and we know what we have to do when this happens in the school. All the teachers know and we take it very seriously. All the staff know the formal procedures to follow when racist incidents take place.

Constructive responses to racist behaviour In another of the primary schools visited the Equal Opportunities policy includes a suggestion that the pupils who have demonstrated

racist behaviour be required to write down and record the actual events. This includes the child having to think about his/her actions and why he/she behaved in the way they did.

The Traveller support teacher in one of the two secondary schools gave a telling example of how racist incidents are dealt with and the quality of intercultural relations in the school. The incidents are reported to involve racist name-calling and in some cases fighting.

Traveller Support Teacher:

Sometimes you get children calling Gypsy Travellers 'dirty gypos' and this has happened in the past. But we're very hot on bullying and name-calling. When this has happened we have explained to the abuser that it is a derogatory remark and why it's a racist term. The children are then able to understand this.

So in all the schools, there are set and well-known procedures for dealing with racist incidents that demonstrate equality of treatment. These procedures are followed dutifully each time an incident takes place.

Key Points

- Need for all racist incidents to be recognised, formally recorded and investigated.
- Victims of racist behaviour need clear and, if required, public support.
- Effective and explicit sanctions to deal with and/or prevent racist behaviour are required.
- School pastoral systems need to assist sensitively in the combating of racist attitudes and behaviour.

Special Support Measures

Learning and Study Support A number of after school support clubs exist in the schools visited whereby children are able to attend for study support and any problems the pupils may have can be resolved. Frequently, the TES support teacher is the person who provides the Gypsy Traveller pupils with the help they need. In some cases where the Gypsy Traveller pupils may have missed a particular deadline for course-work or other school work, the assistance given can be useful in trying to organise a planned programme and routine of work

to allow for re-negotiated deadlines. Difficulties of this type are frequently caused by intermittent attendance on account of the travelling patterns of some families.

Learning support is also an effective element of good classroom practice. At the primary level effective practice involves the pupils being given plenty of praise for effort, as well as the standards achieved, however modest these might be. Pupils are encouraged to be proud of their individual achievements. The most effective strategies demonstrate a teaching style that is orientated towards agreement with pupils over their work and personal targets. The emphasis is on teachers talking individually to pupils about their work to explore where they can succeed and how this can happen. Effective home-school links are also important in this context. The close relationship that has been established with the families can provide purposeful liaison over home-study routines and school expectations. Positive and supportive feedback to parents can also be afforded by these links. Learning support in both the primary and secondary schools includes the early identification of any special educational needs and the provision of appropriate support within the limits of available resources.

Remedial support to access the curriculum All the case study schools are aware of the possibility that for a range of circumstances some Gypsy Traveller pupils may demonstrate a weakness in basic skills, especially in language. Not all the schools monitor, however, achievement in relation to ethnic status, but a general view was that the cohort of Gypsy Traveller pupils represented a profile of underachievement. Efforts are taken to provide remedial support to facilitate access to the curriculum. In Mountain Primary School the children in these circumstances are given extra time after school to be able to catch up. They are fully supported in their numeracy and literacy needs by staff who are willing to stay on after school. In Evergreen Secondary School there is a recognition that gaps in education can undermine progress and that additional support is needed not only in school, but also at home. In response, a number of children are lent laptop computers for their own use to work on at home, as many Gypsy Traveller families do not have access to computers. The school makes provision to have appropriate resources available for Gypsy Traveller pupils to improve and help with their levels of achievement in basic skills, should these be a matter of concern.

Support with homework The schools visited are aware of the difficulties that exist for some Gypsy Traveller pupils in relation to homework. Not all children have a quiet space at home in which to study, or are surrounded by books and pens. As far as possible the schools try to be supportive and understanding so that homework tasks can be completed. Market Secondary School runs a homework and breakfast club. These clubs are open for all children to attend and not just the Gypsy Traveller pupils. These are primarily to help children with their homework, but also to provide breakfast. Evergreen Secondary School has established links with 'Community Education' that has set up a very successful Gypsy Traveller Youth Group. Although the group was initially set up for Gypsy Traveller pupils and young people, other pupils in the school are now also encouraged to attend. In addition to providing for the social needs of the pupils, the aim is also to offer recreational activities, like swimming, as well as support for academic work. The Gypsy Traveller pupils feel confident about the youth workers who are employed by 'Community Education'.

TES Support Teacher:

They run the Traveller Youth group and it has seen real benefits. The Gypsy Traveller pupils' self-esteem has been raised and they are aware they have the right to participate in activities just like everyone else has. As a result, the parents have allowed them to participate in out of school activities. Several Gypsy Traveller pupils have been on day trips and previously, this did not happen here.

Community Education in conjunction with the TES has produced a book about Travellers for children and staff. The book is aimed to remove some of the stereotypes people have about Gypsy Travellers. It is also popular amongst other agencies and has been well received amongst the Gypsy Traveller community itself. The approval by Gypsy Traveller parents and the community of policies that are targeted at raising awareness in a positive way is a further example of good practice. It helps to promote trust and cement good relationships between all the parties involved.

Manager of Community Education:

We had to go through the basic problems of the parents accepting us and also trusting us with the kids. Once we'd gone through this barrier, that was fine and now the

children have been going on trips and their parents know they are safe with us and we will drop them off at home.

In the same school the SEN department runs an English workshop once a week and many Gypsy Traveller children attend. The focus of the workshop includes encouraging the children to read, to improve their writing and punctuation skills and to the raising of reading standards by exploring different types of books at the appropriate reading level. This commendable practice facilitates and aids access to the curriculum for Gypsy Traveller pupils and increases individual motivation and achievement.

Designation of Sanctuary Territory

In all the schools, there is a special room or place where the Gypsy Traveller children can go if they have a problem, or if they just want to feel to be in a safe place. If the Gypsy Traveller pupils who need it have a named person and a 'place of safety' to which they can go, then this can help them to become more confident about actually going to school and in seeking advice and support for any difficulties they may be experiencing. Having a named person in an institution is an important point of call for Gypsy Traveller pupils, someone who is willing to listen and who is always there for them. Such sensitive provision would seem to enhance the confidence that some pupils have in the school and its staff.

Key Points

- Importance of 'additional' support for meeting deadlines and course-work.
- Praise and encouragement acts as an effective motivating support to purposeful learning.
- Pupils need to be personally involved and to take responsibility for planning and organising their own work and learning.
- Close links with parents are an important element of learning support.
- Intensive remedial support may be needed for some Gypsy Traveller pupils to access the curriculum. This provision may take place both within school lesson time as well as an extra-curricular activity.
- Support for homework needs to be routine when home circumstances are less than satisfactory or conducive to its successful completion.
- Both routine and innovative efforts to raise the motivation to learn of Gypsy Traveller pupils are of direct benefit to the pupils learning.

- In some circumstances, the designation of ‘sanctuary territory’ is important for some pupils’ sense of security.

Curriculum and Raising Achievement

Access to the National Curriculum The schools are all committed in their desire to secure access to the National Curriculum for all pupils including Gypsy Travellers. It is generally appreciated, however, that in a significant number of cases the educational history of individual pupils, either betrays a late start at school, or arrested progress on account of fragmented attendance. When these circumstances are identified following assessment, appropriate programmes of support are put in place. As previously referred to, sometimes both school and TES provision is part of the well co-ordinated learning support strategies. Special learning difficulties and remedial needs are given a high priority in the allocation of teaching and other resources. Frequently these resources require an approach that is flexible in terms of pupil organisation. This is an area of further consideration to be dealt with later in this report.

Traveller Support Teacher:

The school has to be flexible to allow the Gypsy Traveller pupils to achieve. Only then can you give them a chance of attending regularly and achieving satisfactorily.

The culturally affirmative curriculum Generally, the schools are also acutely aware of the need for the books and learning materials to reflect Gypsy Traveller culture in as many ways as possible and for a number of important reasons. Only in a minority of schools, however, is there any active consciousness regarding the bilingual status of most Gypsy Traveller pupils. The pupils’ knowledge of a secondary language of rarely recognised, commended or promoted.

The inclusion of the Gypsy Traveller cultural background in the curriculum is first and foremost to provide an environment in which Gypsy Traveller pupils feel welcome and thus want to come to the school.

Traveller Support Teacher:

The school has to be welcoming and has to celebrate their culture to do this

Apart from the importance of all learning materials having relevance to pupils' real life experiences and their understanding of the world in which they live, it is also fundamentally important in the context of the affirmation of self and group identity. As has been previously mentioned, a good example is provided by Market Secondary School, which has a particularly welcoming ethos. As part of the attempt to affirm Gypsy Traveller pupils' values and identities, the school has a number of very large display boards, which celebrate Gypsy Traveller culture. The Gypsy Traveller pupils frequently develop the displays themselves. The children take photographs of their trips, for example, to Appleby Horse Fair and other positive depictions of their way of life. This is an implicit, but at the same time an unequivocal confirmation that Gypsy Traveller culture, history and language are legitimate, relevant and worthy of celebration. Such practice would seem to be vital for many Gypsy Traveller pupils who may feel a lack of being valued in a strange institutional school setting, given the commonly perceived and negative public stereotypes of Gypsy Travellers.

An example of the curriculum providing an opportunity for Gypsy Traveller pupils to display their unusually extensive general knowledge and to participate with confidence is provided by Mountain Primary School.

Classroom Teacher:

We made a big map of the British Isles and all the children put down and moved model cars to all the places that they had visited. All the Gypsy Traveller children were able to speak about the places they had visited and then we started talking about travelling. All the children in the class enjoyed this and learnt from it

The importance of an inter-cultural curriculum for all pupils This last comment provides a timely prompt to the introduction of the next important point to be dealt with under curriculum. In addition to affirming identities, the inclusion of Gypsy Traveller culture in the curriculum is to the educational benefit of all pupils in the school. The head teacher and the teachers at Market Secondary School are aware of the need to include the culture of Gypsy

Travellers in the school curriculum whenever they can. Including Gypsy Traveller culture into the body of ‘knowledge’ is not just in the interests of Gypsy Traveller pupils, but *all* pupils. It is justified on the grounds that it improves the quality and accuracy of ‘knowledge’ for *all* pupils in the school.

Traveller Support Teacher:

In Art, the teachers don’t say draw your house, they say draw your *home*, wherever you live. For many children, this will be their house, for Gypsy Traveller pupils, this may be a trailer.

The inherent benefits of diversity Many of the TES support teachers feel that the presence of Gypsy Travellers in school makes all children aware of ethnic and cultural diversity and its value in an otherwise ‘mono-ethnic’ institution. It emphasises the gaps and perhaps the degree of accuracy in the body of ‘knowledge’ (curriculum) that is currently presented to all children. Because the ways of life experienced by many Gypsy Traveller pupils are different to those of the majority, they are able to bring a freshness to the school. They add richness to the existing diversity of the school population that extends important opportunities for curriculum development not least in the area of improving intercultural relations.

Traveller Support Teacher:

By Gypsy Traveller pupils taking a part in the school, they see that their culture is worth defending and it empowers them. By their presence, they make a tremendous contribution to the learning experience of other children and adults.

The primary schools are also committed to such curriculum enrichment. In Melbourne Primary School there is an emphasis on promoting Gypsy Traveller culture in the curriculum and facilitating it via appropriate resources. This includes raising positive awareness of the culture and background and fostering respect for Gypsy Travellers in the wider community. Again the use of display as an explicit statement of acceptance is seen as an effective strategy.

TES Support Teacher:

We have a number of concrete displays that work. These displays go to all the schools, so everyone is able to see them. We also provide things for different exhibitions that have a Traveller input. These displays are visually stimulating, interactive and positive. And they work

Key Points

- Access to the National Curriculum must be a principal aim of the provision.
- The curriculum needs to be culturally inclusive and affirmative of Gypsy Traveller pupils if successful learning is to take place.
- Displays in the school can make a significant contribution to affirming Gypsy Traveller identity.
- The inclusion of Gypsy Traveller culture within the curriculum leads to an improvement in the accuracy and quality of knowledge for all children.

Flexibility in Pupil Organisation and Teaching Strategies

An appreciation of the social context One of the central characteristics of good practice as exemplified by the case study schools, is flexibility. The need for flexibility of response to the identified needs of Gypsy Traveller families does not appear to be motivated by a patronising desire to be accommodating to ‘socially deprived children’. It is based on the realisation that the very real differences between the Gypsy Traveller life and that of the ‘settled’ population, both in terms of social and ethnic status and the nomadic nature of the way of life of many, has traditionally and structurally marginalised this community by restricting access to education and other public services. The noteworthy practice developed by the six schools, represents a serious professional attempt to modify the structure of the provision within their individual schools, in a way that secures far better participation rates and success than has hitherto been the case. The schools that demonstrate models of good practice are those that accept the reality of a nomadic way of life and design the structure of provision to match as far as possible the particular needs stemming from this reality, together with that of a marginalised status born of a long history of prejudice and discrimination.

Head Teacher of Secondary School:

It is important for schools to recognise that most Gypsy Travellers *travel* and we have to find a system that gives them access to education because of this reality.

It is also recognised, however, that despite the efforts of individual schools, the experience of many families will be very disjointed if they move between a number of schools and local education authorities.

Head Teacher of Secondary School:

When Gypsy Traveller pupils go to different schools, there may be inconsistency in their needs being met. We need co-ordination and better dissemination of good practice, better monitoring of how Gypsy Traveller pupils are provided for in schools.

An appropriate philosophy for pupil organisation Flexibility needs to be reflected in both the organisation of pupils and in teaching strategies. At certain stages in a pupil's school life, for example, it may be judged necessary to provide a differentiated timetable. At Market Secondary School the firm aim is inclusion and in a small number of cases a part-time timetable is arranged for particular Gypsy Traveller pupils. In this way they are 'eased' into the school curriculum and not forced to attend every lesson.

Traveller Support Teacher at Secondary School:

When a new Gypsy Traveller pupil joined, he was afraid to go to the classes on his own and so a Year 9 Gypsy Traveller girl accompanied him to the lessons to make him feel comfortable. A notice went round to the staff and it was just accepted. This worked because he now comes to the school and goes to lessons on his own. Here, the teachers are understanding and will bend the rules if they have to. They see it as important to get children to attend some lessons, rather than forcing them to attend all lessons and then dropping out altogether.

The philosophy in the schools that sees the need for policy and provision to be organic in character and to make compromises as a method of getting some pupils started, is well illustrated by the comments from the head teacher of Market Secondary School.

Head Teacher of Secondary School:

It's better to bring the children in for an hour and achieve than have them here for a day and fail. It's better to have them here for six months and achieve, than force them to be here for a year and fail. It's better to focus on numeracy and literacy and succeed, rather than focus on everything and fail. We need to look imaginatively and creatively at what we're doing for these children. Sometimes the Gypsy Traveller children may sit in the library or sit in the class with a sibling and we can arrange that. If the child is prepared to come in for two hours a day, we can arrange that as well. We try and look at the individual needs of the child and the family. It's a way of gaining the confidence of people who may have no confidence in the education system.

The willingness of the two secondary schools to be flexible, is of course, an indicator of innovative good practice. Evergreen Secondary School is also willing to be as flexible as a particular situation demands.

Head Teacher of Secondary School:

If children have some difficulty attending, then we can create an individual timetable for them. We can give them part-time subjects and plan it for the individual child. We find out from the head of year which subjects the child enjoys and then pick out these to encourage the child to attend in the first place. This has worked successfully because they then have had a positive experience at school.

Although it could be argued that the ability to be flexible is perhaps more feasible at the primary stage, it is still commendable that the willingness to be as flexible as the situation demands is in evidence within the four primary schools. The flexibility in approach is seen as necessary to meet the individual pupil's particular needs. Forest Primary School provides an example to illustrate this approach.

Head Teacher of Primary School:

The school ethos is to look at children and see what they need and then to provide it. We alter the curriculum for the children in the group. Some Gypsy Traveller children

need more support than others and we also try to provide for the parents. Some of the parents are not so good at time-keeping and we would rather them come in late at 9.30 than not at all.

Continuity of educational experience The case study schools are also conscious of the need for their flexible approach to constructively respond to the periodic travelling by some pupils' families. The schools aim to contribute to the continuity of educational experience by the provision of work and advice to Gypsy Traveller parents who may find themselves in these circumstances. Teachers, frequently with the support of the TES, design and provide distance learning packs. Such provision is very much appreciated by parents. It is an implicit statement of interest and concern and further reflective of the high expectations surrounding their levels of achievement. An example is well illustrated by Market Secondary School.

Traveller Support Teacher:

We have a girl in Year 9 who will be travelling shortly and when she goes we'll link her up with the secondary school that is near her. We'll contact the nearest TES and make sure this happens. We'll also make up the distance learning packs and give them or send them to her. The TES with which we have made contact will drop in and see how she's getting on. We give the children large pre-paid envelopes so that they can send the work back to us.

The primary schools are also engaged in securing continuity of educational experience. The curriculum at Melbourne Primary School is designed and structured to deal with gaps in Gypsy Traveller pupils' experiences. All of the primary case study schools and the respective TESs work together to provide additional support for children when they are travelling, and this is usually through the provision of distance learning packs. For example, the Mountain Primary School has long experience in the production of distant learning materials for the Gypsy Traveller pupils who travel during term time. The distance learning packs are made up on the basis of the school's programme of work. Those pupils who travel are each given a box that contains two work packs, with three weeks work in each workpack. The pack also contains an education Contacts Booklet (names and addresses of all the TESs in the country); stamped and addressed envelopes in which to send work back to school; postcards and letters the children can send to the school whilst they are away; and pens, pencils and other

materials the children may need. The distance learning packs not only help the children to maintain continuity in their learning, but also allow for the maintenance of social contacts and to keep in touch with the base school. For example, staff in Sandunes Primary School take an active interest in the work that is completed by the Gypsy Travellers pupils while away from the school.

Deputy Head Teacher:

The teachers and the TES support teacher will make up the distance learning packs and they are given to the children to take with them. They are seen to help the children to try and carry on with some learning when they are travelling. When they come back we give them a certificate to show that they have completed the pack, this encourages them.

In the Family Centre that is attached to Mountain Primary School, Gypsy Traveller children are also provided with packs when they travel which consist of early reading and writing materials.

Key Points

- The need for flexibility of approach has to be based on an understanding of the distinctive nature of a nomadic culture and the negative impact of social exclusion.
- Continuity of educational experience may require a school to provide distance learning materials.
- Continuity is an important issue in all phases of education including the Early Years.

Resource Acquisition and Use

The catalyst role of the TES The TESs have collections of resources that have been built up over many years. These sometimes include specially published material such as a loose-leaf pack that is given free to all secondary schools in the LEA. This pack contains information about the TES and the backgrounds of Gypsy Travellers. There are also books and materials that have been developed for the 'literacy hour' that are inclusive of Gypsy Traveller culture. One TES has developed a whole literacy programme that has cultural relevance to Gypsy

Traveller pupils. This TES has a specialist library and a wealth of resources such as play trailers, books, videos and puzzles. They have also made many of their own materials that are used by the TES and in the schools.

TES Support Teacher:

We have a number of resources which include lots of information such as books, jigsaws etc. These are lent to schools. We always have a box of books that we take with us to the schools so that teachers are able either to buy or borrow. Schools often buy them for their own libraries and classrooms.

A cautionary note is sounded, however, by the head teacher in Melbourne Primary School. It is emphasised that overall there is a marked lack of appropriate resources and particularly, quality fiction and non-fiction books.

Head Teacher of Primary School:

The problem is that there are not many resources out there and getting hold of them is hard. The DfEE video is very good. Mostly the resources are used effectively and people know where they are.

In response to this situation, the TES support teacher with the assistance of a Gypsy Traveller family, has made a booklet for use in primary schools. The parent took pictures of her young daughter. It thus tells the story of a child first going to nursery school. It has been widely and warmly accepted and is currently being used in a number of schools.

All of the schools, with the support of TESs, appear able to generate sufficient appropriate resources to inform curriculum development work. However, a significant proportion of these resources are locally produced and lack the quality of commercially produced resources. This reflects the lack of interest in this area of work by the educational publishers.

Resources as part of induction The books and other resources produced by either the TESs or the schools are generally of a high professional standard. The range of resources is equally impressive. Market Secondary School, for example, has developed a booklet for new teachers

as part of their induction programme. A TES also has flyers which advertises their resources, such as new culturally relevant 'big books' for the 'literacy hour' and a bilingual 'Traveller Alphabet' book in English and Romany. The TES, in common with the other services, also has a professionally published booklet which contains a number of book references and other materials on Gypsy Traveller culture, such as on caravans and old wagons, the Romany language and other subjects. The booklet contains further information about books on the backgrounds of Gypsy Traveller communities, pamphlets and packs that are available for loan. These are given to all schools and the TES support teacher is informed if schools wish to borrow any listed materials. The booklet has been an undoubted success as many classroom teachers have been able to use the materials to enrich the curriculum. Another leaflet developed by a TES, which is given to all schools, contains information on resources reflecting Gypsy Traveller culture. This also includes jigsaws, a small lorry and trailer, a counting and sorting set and a large lorry and trailer. This leaflet also contains information on which age of child or level the resources are appropriate for, such as reception, primary or secondary school age children.

There is little doubt that in the main the TESs are the catalysts to the development of appropriate resources available in the schools. Increasingly, the schools are making their own purchases of these valuable resources, but this is a process that the TESs have to continue to encourage. In Mountain Primary School, a range of resources have been loaned by the TES to provide ideas for resource acquisition. The resources have included games, puzzles and books and in addition, other items of equipment such as tape recorders and laptop computers for loan to Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Gypsy Traveller Co-ordinator:

I have a box that I take to the schools weekly and teachers can borrow the materials they want. We made a big A4 book on Gypsy Travellers and it worked well with the children and we also made a video with Gypsy Travellers talking about their lifestyles, rather than us saying what we think their lifestyle is about.

One of the clear indicators of good practice within the case study schools is the level of appropriate resources, how they have been gathered together and the evidence that these are seen as central to creating and offering an inclusive education. All of the schools have

substantial resources that reflect the cultural backgrounds of their Gypsy Traveller pupils. At the same time these resources add an extra dimension to the quality of the schools' resources overall. The role of the TESs in these developments cannot be under estimated. Many of the resources are of sufficient quality, interest and relevance to begin to be used in schools with no Gypsy Traveller pupils on roll. In some cases, the resources that have been collected and developed over many years by TESs, represent a valuable educational archive.

TES Co-ordinator:

We have the third largest specialist library in the country. We have an archive which includes news cuttings from 1970. We have a large video and audio collection, extensive teaching resources, artefacts from all Gypsy Traveller communities, a lot of cultural specific Early Learning materials and trailer homes.

This particular TES holds open days when all head teachers from the consortium authorities are invited to review the extensive resources.

TES Co-ordinator:

We have a well used base. In January, we have all the head teachers coming to look at the range of resources we have that they can include in teaching. The families also use our base. They use the archive and the library. We encourage this as much as possible.

Key Points

- TESs may need to be the catalyst to the appropriate augmentation of a school's culturally relevant learning materials, books and equipment.
- Good quality commercially produced resources are not as yet plentiful and this frequently acts as a frustration to curriculum developments.

5. ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE: STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT INVOLVEMENT

Statements of respect In all of the schools visited, there is a positive response from the senior management team (SMT) and other staff in addressing the needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils in order to secure access, raise their levels of achievement and improve their attendance. A majority of the head teachers have been in post for a number of years and in most cases have been the architects of the inclusive culture of the school. With the support for the head teacher, often from senior colleagues and the TES, which in many ways has been the catalyst to the development of successful practice, the school as a professional institution has become fully informed of the complex issues surrounding the education of Gypsy Traveller pupils. The continuity of well-informed and committed staff in leadership and management roles is clearly demonstrated to be a key factor in securing a model of best practice. The inclusive ethos generated by the senior management in the schools is reflected in a genuine respect for all pupils and parents. Explicit statements of respect demonstrate to Gypsy Traveller parents that the school is the right place for their children and that they will be similarly treated with respect when they attend.

TES Co-ordinator:

The head teacher [*secondary school*] is a very good head. She will personally walk around with the families and that makes a difference to them. This is giving an important message to the parents. It's the personal touch which marks respect.

Collective responsibility In addition to the commitment of senior management, and the designation of a key member of staff, it is also important for all the staff of a school to be informed and sympathetic to the needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils and their parents. Links with families are again seen as important in fostering this uniform sense of responsibility and level of awareness.

TES Support Teacher:

I think all the staff should make some effort, or should be asked at least once to visit the Gypsy Travellers at home and then they can understand where they're coming

from. The Head should also visit more and this could then be common practice for everyone.

At Market Secondary School there is an emphasis on whole school staff training and the importance for all members of staff to have accurate knowledge and information about Gypsy Travellers. As previously referred to, in all of the schools visited, there is a named member of staff the Gypsy Traveller pupils can go to for help, information and advice if they have any problems. This member of staff can have an important influence on the level of awareness by other staff in the school. The responsibility for Gypsy Traveller pupils is thus not just down to the head teacher and/or the named person. It is in fact up to all the staff to contribute and make some effort to cater for the needs of the Gypsy Traveller pupils. It would seem important, however, that a general staff responsibility is not usurped by the individual status of 'expert' or the 'go-between' role of the named person or the head teacher. In Market Secondary School this is visibly not the case, as all of the staff appear to be well informed and well disposed towards the Gypsy Traveller pupils and their parents.

Advocacy in securing rights

Class Teacher:

When I started here she [*Traveller support teacher and named person*] gave me a pack, in common with all new staff, and it's been very useful. I often go back to it and refer to it to refresh my memory.

The involvement by head teachers and other senior staff in the development of an inclusive educational ethos frequently requires a robust advocacy for the right of Gypsy Traveller pupils to be free from the damaging constraints of racial prejudice and discrimination.

Market Secondary School participates in a number of activities to encourage pride in Gypsy Traveller identity, culture and history. The head teacher and other members of staff encourage Gypsy Traveller pupils to respond to either negative stereotypical images or positive portrayals of Gypsy Travellers in the mass media. This has included:

Positive Actions by Gypsy Traveller Pupils

- 1) Correspondence with the *Sunday Times* colour supplement editor by two Gypsy Traveller pupils.
- 2) Letters to various local newspapers about reports involving Gypsy Travellers. The most recent was from a pupil in Year 9 to congratulate a reporter on an article providing a positive portrayal of Gypsy Travellers.
- 3) A letter to the writer/producer of television's *The Bill*.
- 4) A letter to a pupil at a private school (and one to the head teacher of the school) following the publication of the pupil's poem in the school magazine, entitled 'Gypsy'. This poem carried a number of negative stereotypes about Gypsy Travellers.

The head teacher himself recently responded to a local newspaper article that portrayed Gypsy Travellers in a negative and stereotypical light.

The case study schools provide ample evidence of the crucial importance of the role of the head teacher and senior managers, in setting the positive and constructive vision of the school to its ethnic and cultural diversity, and particularly the Gypsy Traveller pupils and parents.

TES Co-ordinator:

He's [*secondary school head teacher*] excellent. Here, he welcomes the Gypsy Traveller children and parents personally himself. They all know him and they trust him. All the teachers here are welcoming and understanding to Gypsy Traveller children. The office staff, library staff, learning support staff and lunchtime staff are all working together and you can see the positive attitudes throughout. The head gives the ethos and it is filtered down to all levels of staff.

Status and influence of the TES Within the schools visited the high regard within the LEA for the TES is a further boost of confidence to the schools in their development of policy and provision for Gypsy Traveller pupils. For example, in one LEA where the TES has a high profile and is seen to be doing a worthwhile job, it is thus respected and taken seriously by the schools and other support services. The level of respect by senior management within the

LEA for the work of the TES appears to be a further important influence on the changing of attitudes and practice both within schools and across the education service as a whole.

TES Support Teacher:

We have a high profile, but this has only happened recently. It may have been different before. Here it is taken seriously due to the work we do. For example, the transport manager here is approachable and lots of people within the authority are sympathetic and approachable.

So in addition to the commitment and close involvement of senior managers in schools, the named teachers and the wider responsibilities of all staff, it is also important that senior management at LEA level, and particularly the director of education, is equally committed. There is a requirement, therefore, for the LEA to be seen to be proactive in supporting the work of both the schools and the TES. The need for a positive attitude to be made explicit within the hierarchical structure of the education system would seem to be relevant at all levels.

TES Co-ordinator:

The Director of Education is empathetic towards Gypsy Travellers and now sees us as being visible and there is a drive towards holistic approaches especially with the Children Act. I think generally people are taking notice of Gypsy Travellers and the DfEE Ministers see it as being an important area.

Awareness raising in-service training To facilitate the purposeful involvement of senior staff at different levels, all of the TESs included in the project keep LEA managers and others in influential positions, well briefed on policy and practice issues. Head teachers and other senior staff in the schools are also periodically targeted for awareness raising in-service training.

TES Co-ordinator:

All the departments have copies of our policy booklets and we have MPs who have been involved with the school and the TES to raise the profile of Gypsy Travellers.

Last year we had some underspend money and we had a day where the head teachers from 30 schools came and gave presentations about what they thought good practice was.

A major contribution to changing attitudes and structures to ensure that policy and practice at all levels does not promote or perpetuate the social exclusion of Gypsy Traveller families is made by TESs via their programmes of in-service training (INSET). All of the TESs provide regular INSET. A good example is provided by one TES that provides in-service training for many professional agencies working with children, parents and teachers. The training sessions take place termly at the TES base. This may include training for learning support assistants, the Psychology and Assessment Service, the LEA's Early Years initiative and playgroup leaders. Within the TES team, each sub-group has responsibility for providing training for each of the above. This enables the team to cover as broad a sphere as possible and to refine practice within their developmental work. Each member of the TES has a particular responsibility such as publicity and awareness raising, resources, distance learning, school inspections, staff development, Early Years and Nomadic Travellers. These specific responsibilities change around regularly to ensure that all team members extend their professional experience and skills.

The role of school governors At school level it is also important that the governing body is interested in and supportive of the work to establish an inclusive ethos. In one school the governing body is reported to be very supportive. The possibility of Gypsy Traveller parents serving on governing bodies is a realistic ambition held by some of the schools.

Head Teacher of a Primary School:

We have a positive governing body here. They support the Gypsy Traveller children. The Chair is a local councillor and is very supportive.

Key Points

- Senior school staff need to show respect to Gypsy Traveller parents.
- Need for continuity of informed and committed staff at senior levels.

- Need for collective responsibility by a school's staff and the avoidance of relying on an 'expert' and or 'go-between'.
- The school needs to be proactive in its work of advocacy by in challenging negative stereotypes.
- The support of the TES by senior LEA officers, including the Director of Education, influences the effectiveness of the service's work in schools.
- Awareness raising in-service training is important at all levels, including senior LEA management.
- School governors need to be involved in the process of achieving an inclusive ethos.

6. ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE TRAVELLER EDUCATION SERVICE

The legal basis All of the case study schools are located in Local Education Authorities that have long established Traveller Education Services that are mainly funded under the provisions of Section 488 of the 1996 Education Act. Although the TESs vary in size and structure, their principal objective, as set out in the relevant Circulars²⁴ issued by the DfEE, is clear. Their work must be aimed at securing for Gypsy Traveller children, unhindered access and full integration in mainstream education.

Respect and the wider benefits of the work of the TES All of the TESs have dedicated staff working for them and all of the co-ordinators have a great deal of relevant professional experience and are committed and passionate about the work. Indeed, the effective management of the TESs is an indicator of the delivery of good practice in the schools. All the TESs are respected by senior management in both the schools and the LEAs.

TES Co-ordinator:

At the last meeting I attended, the Director of Education actually said it was a privilege to have the TES working in this area and felt that our work was invaluable.

This particular team have been able to buy Information Technology (IT) hardware and have trained themselves in the use of desktop publishing techniques. As a result, this has enabled them to produce course booklets and other supportive materials for fostering more independent learning for a majority of the pupils in a school, and not just the Gypsy Traveller children. This is an example of the innovative work of the TES that has made a significant contribution to the quality of practice in many schools in the county. The work of all the TESs visited is very creative and contributes to the development of policy and the improvement of professional practice affecting the education of many pupils, and not just those of Gypsy Traveller heritage.

²⁴ Circulars 10/90 and 11/92 DfEE. Section 488 funding (previously Section 210, 1988 Education Reform Act) is now administered by the Standards Fund (DfEE) and comes under the "Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant" (EMTAG).

Service level agreements with schools All of the TESs have service level agreements or contracts of support with the schools. These detail the general nature of the support to be carried out in the school, its duration and review dates. Although some of these jointly signed agreements relate to an advisory function for the TES, they are more generally focused on the specific needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils on the roll of the school, and detail the nature of the individual targets to be achieved. Frequently the contracts with schools also make reference to additional support work in the way of, for example, the provision of awareness raising in-service training for the staff, and/or the provision of culturally relevant books and other learning materials and equipment. The support thus provided generally makes a clear distinction between the role of the TES and that of the school's own support for pupils with identified special educational needs (SEN). The TES provision is different and predicated on the assessment that the pupil's needs are related more to a late start at school or a history of intermittent formal education, than to any special learning difficulties. In many cases, however, the individual learning targets are set to be compatible with, and supplementary to, the child's individual education plan (IEP) if they are at the appropriate stage on the school's SEN register.

Inter-agency involvement The TESs are also all formally involved in inter-agency work with other departments in the Local Authority and wider regional agencies and authorities, although the direct participation by Gypsy Travellers parents is poor. However, this work appears to be very effective in maintaining links with other professional groups and organisations, and in working together to achieve adequate social and educational provision for Gypsy Traveller communities. All of the teams work together effectively and individual members are able to gain from each other's strengths. They are there to support one another and are held together by strong and committed leadership.

Raising awareness through informative documentation All of the TESs have a range of relevant documentation. They provide schools with information packs about their service and what the service is able to offer to schools and other educational institutions. For example, the pack provided by one TES consists of detailed information on the justification for a TES; guidelines on the recording of school attendance of Gypsy Traveller children; criteria for supporting both Gypsy Traveller children and schools; the support available and how to access it; support agreements; the role of specialist EWOs; pupil transport arrangements;

details of Section 488 specific grant for the education of Gypsy Travellers; the regional resource centre and its available resources; pupil educational records and their transfer; secondary transfer; distance learning; links with other support services; pre-school initiatives and information on the legislation on Gypsy Travellers. The TES also provides a handbook for other Service Providers and a leaflet on how the law has recently changed for Gypsy Travellers.

Similar information is provided by all those TESs involved in the research project. These materials are reported to have a positive impact on the level of awareness by other service providers. The practice of providing these materials would seem to be of central importance in establishing a well-informed and uniform professional knowledge base in, not only the schools, but also the school support agencies across the authority.

Key Points

- The creative work and practice of TESs needs to be seen by the schools as contributing to the quality of learning of all pupils.
- The TES's support to individual pupils needs to be in addition to any SEN provision.
- TES contracts with schools benefit from including work that has the potential for improving the schools' provision for all pupils, not least Gypsy Travellers.
- TES's involvement in inter-agency structures can be very effective in improving the quality of life for many Gypsy Traveller children.
- TESs can be instrumental in adding to professional knowledge and skill by the provision of informative documentation.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The case study schools were selected for this research project on the basis of their known good practice. However, most, if not all, would readily admit to seeing the process as essentially developmental. The ethos of the schools demonstrates a desire to extend the boundaries of their own understanding of good practice in the domain of making provision for Gypsy Traveller pupils. The schools all have their strengths and weaknesses, as do all institutions, but collectively they present an optimistic picture of what can and needs to be done to secure the educational entitlements of Gypsy Traveller children. The details provided by the research interviews and other observations flag the key elements of good practice that are firmly rooted in the real experiences of these schools.

From the evidence provided by the TESs and also by the references within existing research material and official reports (see Introduction), it is clear that the good practice as described within this report is not replicated across all other schools or LEAs. Even the evidence provided by the case study schools shows that they do not always succeed in all areas relating to Gypsy Traveller education. However, the schools reveal an improving picture with key elements of good practice already firmly in place and having a marked and positive impact. Confidence and trust by the pupils and their parents in the care and good will of the schools is in plentiful evidence, together with a growing eagerness to be successful learners on the part of many Gypsy Traveller pupils. The lessons learned by the six schools over their many years of involvement in this field of work provide a helpful checklist for others developing similar provision. The main findings, which follow, should be read in conjunction with the Key Points that have been highlighted throughout the report.

Main Findings

- ◆ The support provided by Traveller Education Services (TESs) to schools with Gypsy Traveller pupils is critical to the development of best practice.
- ◆ The commitment of the head teacher and other senior management to the school's Equal Opportunity and Race Equality policies is crucial in establishing the inclusive ethos of the school.

- ◆ The schools with the most effective practice invest significant management resources into the establishment of good relationships with parents and pupils. These are schools that listen to pupils and parents.
- ◆ The foundations for the success of the case study schools rest on an acceptance and respect for Gypsy Traveller communities.
- ◆ Best practice is linked to the degree to which the school is willing to be flexible, such flexibility being the professional search for the most effective ways to meet the needs of all pupils.
- ◆ The motivation of Gypsy Traveller pupils to attend school and fully participate is strongly influenced by the quality of intercultural relations in the school and the anti-racist policies and practices.
- ◆ Successful learning by Gypsy Traveller pupils depends on accurate assessment, appropriate remedial action if gaps in experience and depressed achievement are identified, and high expectations.
- ◆ Confidence and enthusiasm for learning is directly influenced by the extent to which the curriculum and resources reflect the reality of Gypsy Traveller culture, history and language.
- ◆ Poor attendance can be minimised by the co-operative joint action of the school, the TES and the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Although the schools studied for this research, and their supporting TEs, could demonstrate successful practice, the issue of replication in other schools remains. The following recommendations, therefore, are for further action and development work, based on what was learned from the study schools. However, both the TEs and the schools investigated work within a context that is shaped and supported by LEAs and central government. Although the research did not investigate these levels of the service directly, what was found in the schools suggests that they have a key supportive and developmental role which needs to be further developed if more schools are to be as effective as those studied in this research. Following each recommendation are page numbers showing where this is covered in the report.

At School Level

- ◆ All schools need to set time aside to involve all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, in in-service training directly targeted towards the education of minority ethnic pupils, specifically to include Gypsy Traveller pupils. (22)
- ◆ Schools should recognise the importance of developing a specific policy for the inclusion and success of Gypsy Traveller pupils. It is important that this is part of the schools' Equal Opportunity, Race Equality and Anti-Racist policies. (32)
- ◆ In the light of the anxiety with which some Gypsy Traveller pupils and parents may view the school, it is important that a senior teacher is designated to take the lead in being the key link between the family and the institution. It is also important that such a position should not in any way represent a marginalisation of the issues, or usurp the responsibility of all staff to be part of the accepting, supportive and welcoming ethos of the school. (19, 22)
- ◆ Since the continuity of trusting relationships is important, broad responsibility must be taken among the staff to foster good relationships with parents. This approach is more likely to secure a smooth transfer of duties when key staff leave to take up posts in other schools. (22)

- ◆ It is important that the schools themselves take ownership of the relationship with the community and do not rely on a third party to act as ‘go-between’. ‘Responsive listening’ must be part of the culture of the school. (56)
- ◆ The role of the head teacher in fashioning the positive and welcoming ethos of the school is critical. Setting an anti-racist tone to the school as part of a whole school approach is a vital influence to keeping in check any unacceptable attitudes and behaviours which might exist. The personal involvement by head teachers in the development of relationships with Gypsy Traveller parents is an explicit statement of respect that does not go unnoticed by the community. (22)
- ◆ Sensitivity needs to be part of the admission and registration process. The involvement of senior management is helpful, as decisions on any required flexibility can be immediate. Opportunities for families to become familiar with the school are always valuable. (22)
- ◆ The welcoming ethos of a school, which is so essential, can receive tangible confirmation by appropriate displays that betray the fact that the school knows and accepts the ethnic and cultural identity of the Gypsy Traveller communities. (24)
- ◆ Schools need to foster and maintain liaison with the LEA’s Traveller Education Service. This can aid the schools in the objective of identifying any factors that might act as a hindrance to the development of successful professional practice. (19)
- ◆ Schools need to foster and maintain supportive liaison with Education Welfare Services (EWSs) to ensure that poor attendance does not undermine levels of achievement. (28)
- ◆ The responsibilities of leadership in the development of good practice in this area of policy and provision must also involve the school’s governing body. School governors need to share in the process of support to demonstrate an interest in all the communities that send children to the school. This interest should be reflected in a wide representation on the governing body itself. (59)
- ◆ Schools need to develop policies that are designed to be effective in reassuring pupils and parents that they and their children are safe and protected from racist bullying and physical harm. Interpersonal behaviour which is thought to be based on racist attitudes needs to be taken seriously with a uniform approach based on an appropriate school policy and involving governors, parents and the LEA. Behaviour that involves name-calling and the use of derogatory terms about the ‘person’, need to be firmly opposed. Both victim and bully require understanding and support. (27, 35-40)

- ◆ In the light of the fragmented educational experience of many Gypsy Traveller pupils, assessments that reveal weaknesses in learning and/or gaps in knowledge, require immediate attention and the allocation of appropriate resources. The school and the TES might jointly provide this. Additional curricular support outside classroom time is also desirable if it is possible to organise. Special arrangements to support Gypsy Traveller pupils with homework are also helpful, especially at the secondary stage. (42, 44)
- ◆ Despite the assessed low levels of achievement by some Gypsy Traveller pupils, it is important for schools to guard against the development of stereotypical impressions that undermine appropriate and high expectations of these pupils. (56)
- ◆ It may be appropriate in certain circumstances for a secondary school to designate an area that can be seen by Gypsy Traveller and other socially vulnerable pupils as ‘sanctuary territory’. (43)
- ◆ All schools need to be aware of the importance of a curriculum that is intercultural and one which includes in its ‘body of knowledge’ appropriate images and references specifically related to Gypsy Traveller culture, history and language. The legitimacy and relevance of these necessary curriculum developments need to be affirmed through the acquisition of books, artefacts and other resources. Some of these may feature periodically in prominent displays about the school. (46)
- ◆ Apart from the need for schools to be flexible in relation to the assessed needs of individual Gypsy Traveller pupils, there is also the need to be concerned to secure continuity of educational experience. The provision of distance learning materials may be a necessary requirement if a pupil’s family has plans to travel. The maintenance of sound educational records and their rapid dispatch following a request from the next or subsequent school(s), should be a matter of routine practice. (50 - 51)

At Traveller Education Service Level

- ◆ Traveller Education Services need to maintain a central peripatetic and flexible role within their respective LEAs in order to be able to act upon the receipt of information about the location of Gypsy Traveller families. When local areas have permanent sites, they may also need to make initial contact with families to facilitate any requests in regard to the choice of school places in the locality. (23)

- ◆ TESs need to set aside adequate levels of resources to provide assistance to schools in the task of giving all staff and governors appropriate in-service training targeted towards the education of minority ethnic pupils, specifically to include Gypsy Travellers. (59, 62)
- ◆ TESs need to establish liaison with schools and for this to be primarily channelled through the role of a designated ‘named’ senior teacher. (19)
- ◆ The TES should facilitate the adoption of good relationships with the community by the schools. The schools need to be encouraged and supported in taking ownership of the home/school relationship. (46, 19)
- ◆ TESs need to give priority to promoting good intercultural relations and to the raising of awareness across the whole authority. The establishment of high quality displays for use in public buildings should be considered as a wise investment of resources. (46)
- ◆ TESs need to give very high priority to the provision of information and ideas surrounding the suitability and availability of resources that will support the necessary curriculum developments within schools and colleges. Assistance may also be required in this context with curriculum development work in schools. (51-53)
- ◆ Support may also be required with the development and provision of distance learning materials to facilitate the fulfilment of a school’s duty to secure continuity of educational experience for Gypsy Traveller pupils. (59, 63)
- ◆ TESs need to establish close working links with Education Welfare Services to ensure that the latter is able to fulfil its statutory responsibilities towards Gypsy Traveller children. (30)
- ◆ The TES should devote appropriate resources to facilitating access to pre-school provision for Gypsy Traveller children and securing successful transfer between primary and secondary schools. (25, 23)

CASE STUDY SCHOOLS – BACKGROUND

Evergreen Secondary School

Evergreen Secondary School is a mixed comprehensive school in a large rural county and caters for pupils aged 11 to 16. There are 780 pupils taught by 36 full-time and 11 part-time teachers. The school has 30 pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Results in the national SAT tests at the end of Key Stage 3 show that the percentages of pupils achieving level 5 or above are not significantly different from national averages. In English and maths results are well above the national average for pupils achieving level 6 or above. In Science, SAT test results are below the national average for pupils achieving level 6 or above.

At the end of Key Stage 4, results in GCSE examinations across subjects indicate that in 1996 the performance of pupils at the school is not significantly different from national averages. In English, GCSE at the higher grades (A*-C) are well above national averages, in maths they are above national averages and in science they are in line with national averages. The trend at these higher grades, based on results in the last three years, shows a steady improvement. In other subjects, overall GCSE grades are above or close to national averages.

Provision for SEN and for the education of pupils from the local Gypsy Traveller community is a major strength of the school. The progress of SEN pupils is better among the girls and for those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils who come from a semi-settled Gypsy Traveller background also make good progress in the main. The progress and attainment that these pupils make in literacy skills is particularly good. There is under-achievement and slow progress made by a high proportion of the boys on the SEN register at both key stages in many subjects of the national curriculum.

The assessment of the individual needs of pupils on the SEN register and the action taken to support their academic and social development is excellent. The curriculum provision and pastoral support between the school and the LEA Traveller Education Service, is very effective and of high quality. The Traveller children are very well integrated into the school.

Their attendance is significantly higher in comparison with national figures, and their attainment across a range of subjects is often good and sometimes very good.²⁵

At the time of visit there were 29 Traveller pupils on roll. The school has a long established experience of making provision for Gypsy Traveller pupils. Very good relationships have been fostered and developed over a long period with the Gypsy Traveller community. A spirit of mutual trust exists between them and the school. The school has a national reputation for good practice regarding Gypsy Traveller Education. The Travellers are mainly English Gypsy Travellers. The TES has excellent links with Gypsy Traveller families.

Forest Primary School

Forest Primary School is a town centre school that is 100 years old. It is a first school, taking children aged four to nine. The school has 11 per cent of its children drawn from the local Gypsy Traveller population. Ethnic minorities make up only a small percentage of the school roll. There are 207 children on the school roll. Sixty four children are on the register of SEN, which is well above the national average. Two of these children have statements of SEN. Seventeen children take free school meals.

Children enter the reception class with a wide range of attainment. By the time they are five, their attainment is in line with that appropriate for their age, and the attainment of some is higher than this. They make satisfactory progress.

At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in English, maths and science is in line with, or marginally above, national averages. Number work is above average. Over the last four years standards in these subjects have shown a slight, but steady improvement in the performance of pupils of average attainment, but this improvement is not evident for pupils of higher attainment. Standards seen in other subjects are in line with national expectations, except for Design and Technology (DT), where they are below.

At both key stages, progress in number work is good, and in DT it is unsatisfactory. Pupils of average and higher attainment make satisfactory progress, but this could be better. Pupils with SEN make good progress. At the age of nine, attainment in number work, history and

²⁵ This information has been obtained from the school's 1997 OFSTED report

music, is above national expectations and progress in these subjects is good. In DT attainment is slightly below national expectations. In all other areas of the curriculum, attainment is in line with national expectations.

The children from Traveller families make good progress, but in the main at Key Stage 2 have a lower level of attainment than other children. Their progress is good and this is a tribute to the school's provision.

Racial harmony is good and mutual respect is taken as the norm. The school takes positive steps to overcome the concerns of the Gypsy Traveller population about their children, who are well integrated into school life.

Attendance levels are satisfactory and are in line with schools that have a sizeable number of Gypsy Travellers attending. The school has demonstrated over the last few years its ability to achieve a considerable improvement in the rate of attendance of Gypsy Traveller children. The school is well supported by the TES that visits Gypsy Traveller families regularly, and work hard to win their trust and confidence. The Education Welfare Service, TES and the school work well together to ensure that absences are kept to a minimum while respecting the culture of the Gypsy Traveller community. The school has been successful in encouraging parents of Gypsy Traveller children into the school. The stable and welcoming environment offered by the school has made possible the highly commendable integration of the Gypsy Traveller community into the life and work of the school.²⁶

At the time of visit, there were 12 Gypsy Traveller children on roll. The head teacher has very positive attitudes, high expectations and sound knowledge of the culture and background of Gypsy Traveller children and regularly visits the site.

Market Secondary School

Market Secondary School is a mixed comprehensive. There are 1474 pupils on roll of whom 141 are in the sixth form. There are 271 pupils on the school's register of SEN, 19 of whom have statements of SEN. The social background of the pupils is disadvantaged in relation to

²⁶ This information has been obtained from the school's 1997 OFSTED report

the country as a whole. For example, 23% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is above the national average²⁷.

Overall attainment in Key Stage 4 is better than in Key Stage 3. There is considerable difference between pupils' attainments in different subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE's at grade A-C is well below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils attaining at least five passes at GCSE is above the national average; they achieve on average a total GCSE point score which is broadly in line with that found nationally.

In the core subjects of English, maths and science, the proportion of pupils gaining a GCSE certificate is in line with national averages. However, the number of passes at the higher grades (A-C) is well below the national average as are the results at the end of Key Stage 3.

Looking at the higher grades (A-C) at GCSE between 1994-1996 the trend in English is one of decline while English Literature results have shown an improvement. Over the last three years the percentage of pupils obtaining higher GCSE grades in maths and science has increased slightly, although it has remained well below the national average. The percentage of pupils obtaining a GCSE pass has been around the national figures.

Most pupils make sound progress in the sixth form although those entered for two or more subjects at GCSE 'A' level achieve results which are well below national averages.

Whilst pupils with special education needs make satisfactory progress in reading through the work in withdrawal groups, progress against their targets on their individual education plans in lessons is less good. The lack of coherent management of resources for SEN has led to fragmented provision. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good and sometimes very good in the small withdrawal groups, but support teaching in lessons is less effective²⁸.

²⁷ In 1998 17.5% of secondary school pupils in England were eligible for free school meals. DfEE (1998) *Statistics of Education. Schools in England. 1998*. London: The Stationery Office, table 14.

²⁸ This information has been obtained from the school's 1997 OFSTED report.

The school has an impressive record of working with Gypsy Travellers over the last 17 years. The school serves a local council site with mainly English Gypsies. At the time of visit there were 12 Gypsy Travellers on the roll of the school. There is outstanding understanding and commitment from the Head and Senior Management. The school has had one full-time teacher for Travellers for many years, and who now has a mainly pastoral role with the Travellers. As a result, trust has been built up between the community and the school. Access, attendance and levels of achievement have slowly improved over the years. The culture of Gypsy Travellers has always been recognised and celebrated within the school. This school is an example of very good practice.

Melbourne Primary School

Melbourne Primary School is a mixed school with children aged 3-11. It has county control from the LEA. It was rebuilt in 1993, as an amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools. There are 370 pupils on roll, 186 boys and 184 girls. Sixty part-time pupils attend the nursery for mornings or afternoons. The school is situated in a densely urban area. It serves a number of housing estates, and the catchment area also includes an official local authority permanent Gypsy Traveller site and a large hostel for homeless people. Some refugee pupils arrive in school suffering from severe experiences of war and civil unrest. Fifty percent of pupils in the school and the nursery are from homes where English is not the first language and over half of these receive additional language support. There are 140, or almost forty percent of pupils who are identified on the school's register of Special Educational Needs. Forty percent of pupils are eligible for free meals and this figure is high compared to schools nationally.

By the end of reception year, the majority of pupils have received the desirable outcomes of pre-school education. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 1996 National Curriculum assessment results is well below national expectations in English, Mathematics and science, although attainment in Mathematics is higher than in English. However, the test results for 1997 indicate a significant improvement in English, maths and science, and science is now in line with national expectations. Pupils with SEN make good progress towards set targets in their individual education plans, this is enhanced by the support offered from class teachers and support staff.

At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attainment in the National Curriculum tests is well below national expectations in English, Mathematics and science. Attainment in English is broadly in line with those in maths. The test results for 1997 indicate a small improvement in attainment at level 4 or above, in English, Maths and Science and a greater improvement for those pupils who are attaining at the lower levels.

Statistics show that the high numbers of pupils with SEN significantly affects the results of tests at the end of Key Stage 1, but there is little difference at the end of Key Stage 2.

Relationships between all members of the school community are very good and a strength of the school. Support for pupils with SEN, Gypsy Travellers and those who have difficulty understanding English, is good and support is carefully directed to those who need most help. The special arrangements for parents for whom English is not their first language and for Gypsy Travellers, reflects the high priority placed on parental partnership by the school. The quality of liaison with supporting agencies is good, and these partnerships have a positive effect on pupils. Particularly notable is the support given by language support teachers, the EWO and staff liaising with Travellers.²⁹

At the time of the visits there were 28 Gypsy Traveller pupils on roll. They are mainly English Gypsies, but there are one or two children from an Irish Traveller heritage. The school has been supporting Gypsy Traveller pupils for a long time. Support for Gypsy Traveller children is good and they make good progress. They are now becoming better prepared for transfer to the next stage of education. Senior management in the school is very positive and there are excellent relationships with the TES and with the families on the local long established site.

Mountain Primary School

Mountain Primary School is an above average sized primary school of 377 pupils. The school is situated in an inner city area of a county town. The school also has a Family Centre that caters for the educational and other needs of children aged 0-5 years within the community. It

²⁹ This information has been obtained from the school's 1997 OFSTED report

serves an area with a mix of private and rented housing. The school community reflects the racial mix of the area. Ninety per cent of pupils are white; others are mainly from Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Indian heritage backgrounds. The social and economic backgrounds of many pupils are disadvantaged. Twenty four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, although this is broadly in line with the national average. Four pupils have statements of SEN and 55 pupils are entered on the schools' special educational needs register.

In judging the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 1 and 2 it is important to take account of the significant number of pupils from Traveller families, who are not present in the school during summer term and who are unavailable to participate in the statutory formal assessments. This negatively distorts the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels at the end of each key stage.

At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainments are broadly in line with the national expectations. Pupil attainments for 7 year olds are well above the national average in maths, above average in reading and in line with the national picture in writing. Assessments in Science indicate below average attainments.

At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments are in line with national expectations. Attainments are well above average in maths and Science, and average in English. At the end of both Key Stages, attainments in literacy and numeracy are in line with the national expectations.

Good provision is made for pupils with SEN. Provision for children under 5 is very good. The provision made for Traveller children, by the school and the LEA is of very good quality enabling them to make good progress.

Attendance is sound, it has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The rate of authorised absence is higher than average because some children from Traveller backgrounds are away from school for many months of the year.

In the curriculum, there is very good provision for children from Traveller backgrounds and for children under the age of 5 in reception, there are weaknesses in the provision for information and communications technology.³⁰

At the time of visit there were 25 Gypsy and Traveller children on roll (10 Gypsies and 15 Fairground children). The school openly accepts these children as the main ethos of the school is one of inclusion. Many of the Gypsy Traveller children attend the Family Centre and all Gypsy Traveller children transfer to secondary school at the end of Key Stage 2.

Sandunes Primary School

Sandunes Roman Catholic Primary School is a school with a nursery and currently has 271 pupils of ages 3-11 on roll. The school draws from a wide catchment area. Because of its denominational nature many of the wards from which it draws are areas of some social deprivation. The school has a large proportion of children from a Gypsy Traveller background; they constitute around 15% (53) of the school population. About 22% of all pupils have SEN.

Pupils make good progress in English, Maths and Science throughout the school and by the time the children leave, standards are above the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average, so the standards achieved by the age of 11 represent good progress and in the case of English, very good progress. The standard of work achieved by 7 year olds consistently meets those expected and standards in English, Maths and Science have improved. Pupils' competence in other subjects is about average throughout the school.

Progress in English is good at both Key stages. Progress in Maths and science is also good throughout the school, at both key stages.

Attendance is below the national average. However, attendance rates are distorted by the sizeable proportion of Gypsy Traveller children in the school. This is particularly noticeable

³⁰ This information has been obtained from the school's 1999 OFSTED report.

in Reception age pupils. While they are based in the area however, attendance by all pupils is satisfactory.³¹

At the time of visit, there were 53 Gypsy Traveller pupils on roll. The majority of these pupils are from semi-nomadic English Gypsy Traveller backgrounds who travel each year to mainland Europe, between the end of February and October. The school welcomes Gypsy Travellers and integrates them successfully into school. The head teacher has created a climate in which partnerships have developed between the Gypsy Traveller families, the TES and the school. The school works hard to include all pupils in the curriculum and other aspects of school life, it celebrates the variety that pupils from different ethnic backgrounds bring.

Pupils from Traveller backgrounds make satisfactory progress. At five, their attainment is below that of other children in some areas of the curriculum, although in terms of their personal and social development, their attainment is equal to that of their peers.

³¹ This information has been obtained from the school's 1999 OFSTED report

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