

Raising aspirations and retaining Roma pupils at Key Stage 4: Babington Community College

URN: 120294

Region: East Midlands

Remit: Schools

Provider background

[Babington Community College](#) is an 11 to 16 comprehensive school on the outskirts of Leicester with around 900 pupils on roll. It was judged outstanding [in March 2013](#).

Brief description

This good practice example shows how Babington Community College has raised aspirations and retained pupils at Key Stage 4.

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

The good practice in detail

The college has a growing cohort of Czech and Slovak Roma students. In 2013, 10.7% of its pupils were identified as Gypsy or Roma compared with 3.9% in 2011. Of the 17 Roma pupils entered for GCSE in 2013, only six had been in the school since the start of Key Stage 3. The college is a leader in the local authority for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students. Its well-qualified coordinator for English as an additional language provides training, both locally and nationally, and has co-authored a good practice guide, '[Engaging with new Eastern European Roma communities](#)'.

A whole-college approach

Effective senior leadership, including a very engaged and knowledgeable Chair of Governors, promotes a culture of high expectations, no excuses and individual responsibility. The 'Proud to be Babington' motto reflects students' pride in the

school and in themselves as learners. The emphasis is on high quality teaching – not interventions. Roma pupils are seen as the responsibility of all staff, and all staff are trained accordingly by the college’s experienced coordinator.

Developing families’ trust is vital in securing their engagement. Key staff members have built up good relationships with Roma families.

- The home-school-links worker and a Roma support worker run regular coffee mornings.
- Leaders spend time listening to Roma parents’ concerns.
- Regular meetings ensure that Roma families are clear about and support Babington’s expectations.

All teachers are aware of the Roma students in their classes. The college has researched their students’ Roma community backgrounds to understand their challenges and has modified the curriculum to reflect Roma history and culture.

- A performing arts project, for example, stemmed from this research.
- Additional on-site and off-site courses are provided, including a BTEC in performing arts.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller month is celebrated and involves families in musical events.
- Students arriving who are new to English are paired, wherever possible, with a student who speaks the same Roma language and dialect.

Securing achievement

Roma students spoken to said that they enjoy the college, are ambitious and see it as a pathway to a career.

The college’s robust tracking of all groups of pupils is backed up by accurate monitoring of their performance. According to the school’s good practice guidance, the Roma students are monitored for attendance and progress in the same way as all other pupils in the school. A senior or middle leader is allocated a group of students who they monitor closely. Regular sets of progress data are produced for each student across the year. These data are monitored for progress and more importantly progress towards targets. This progress is discussed individually with students by the member of staff responsible. This may lead to short- and medium-term support for individuals, but the emphasis is on making sure that teaching is good or better. The monitoring of students into post-16 education allows for longer-term evaluation of the impact of the college’s strategies.

Gypsy and Roma students' progress is outstanding from their exceptionally low starting points when they join the school, although their attainment is low compared with the national average for all pupils.¹ However, some Roma pupils are in top sets, especially in mathematics.

Football and craft clubs are used to provide incentives to promote punctuality and attendance. Leaders monitor the impact of such initiatives very closely. The attendance at school of Gypsy and Roma students was 91.5% compared with the national figure for Gypsy and Roma pupils of 83.5% in 2013.² The school has a zero tolerance approach to holidays booked in term-time. No Gypsy and Roma pupils were permanently excluded in 2012/13 and the percentage of fixed-term exclusions was 3.45%, almost half the rate for all pupils in the school (6.65%) and well below the national (35.98%) for all Gypsy and Roma pupils.

Using the pupil premium

The pupil premium is used to raise Roma students' aspirations through the college's 'Dare to dream' programme.

Twice a year, the school holds an 'Economic role models and skills' show that colleges and employers attend. Students have the opportunity to enrol on programmes ranging from horse riding, vehicle maintenance, cake decorating, song writing to football. There are college taster days and Roma students are shown how to get to and from college.

Key Stage 4 completion rates are very high for Roma pupils and the college tracks post-16 leavers closely, most of whom go on to Leicester College.

¹ In 2013, only 13.8% of Gypsy/Roma pupils nationally gained five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, compared with 60.6% of all pupils. In the same year, only 23% of all Gypsy/Roma pupils in England achieved Level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 compared with 75% of all pupils nationally.

² 'Statistical first release: Pupil absence in schools in England: autumn 2012 and spring 2013', Department for Education, October 2013; www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-2012-and-spring-2013.

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

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

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

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