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## **Provision for secondary school-aged Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils**

April 2019

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## Introduction

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In February 2017, the Children, Young People and Education Committee published their inquiry report into the Education Improvement Grant focusing on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) and Minority Ethnic children (National Assembly for Wales, 2017). Recommendation 7 related to Estyn:

‘The Welsh Government should remit Estyn to undertake a thematic review of educational provision for GRT, and Minority Ethnic pupils, providing an update on the position since its last thematic report in 2011. Estyn’s review should consider the impact of the new funding arrangements since 2015-16 and also consider the wider issue of how well the “middle tier” of education (regional consortia and local authorities) monitor and evaluate outcomes for particular groups of pupils. Estyn should be remitted to undertake this review in 2017-18 or the earliest year in which this is practical’ (p.8).

This report is written in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Cabinet Secretary’s annual remit letter to Estyn for 2018-2019:

‘The review will focus on progress on provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and minority ethnic learners since Estyn’s 2011 report. It will consider the impact of the new funding arrangements on current educational services and support for the educational outcomes of these learners. In preparation for this work, Estyn will gather evidence during link inspector visits to local authorities.’

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, teachers, headteachers and governing bodies in schools, local authorities and regional consortia. The report evaluates the quality and provision for secondary aged GRT pupils and how this has developed since previous Estyn reports, particularly Estyn’s 2011 report (Estyn, 2011), as summarised in appendix 1.

The report draws on evidence from inspection and from online questionnaires completed by representatives from local authorities and regional consortia. Inspectors undertook visits to schools and interviewed headteachers, representatives from local authorities and pupils and parents from the GRT communities.

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## Background

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It has long been recognised that GRT children and young people are among some of the most vulnerable learners in Wales. They face particular challenges in accessing education that makes the most of their individual talents, interests and abilities. Despite Welsh Government and local authority commitment to drive improvements, the attainment rates of GRT children and young people remain persistently low.

In February 2007, the Welsh Government set up an All Wales Forum of Gypsy and Traveller Education Co-ordinators. This forum is primarily made up of representatives from local authority service providers. The main focus of the forum is the educational achievement of GRT children and young people in educational settings. The forum operates under the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) Inclusion sub-group.

In March 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government published best practice guidance 'Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). The Welsh Government is currently working to update to this guidance.

In June 2011, Estyn published 'The education of Gypsy Traveller pupils: an update on provision in secondary schools' (Estyn, 2011). This report was a follow-up to the 2005 Estyn report on 'The education of Gypsy Traveller pupils' (Estyn, 2005). The main findings from Estyn's 2011 report include the following:

'Despite the best efforts of a few local authorities and secondary schools, much remains to be done to ensure improved outcomes for Gypsy Traveller pupils. Only one of the five recommendations made in the 2005 Estyn report on 'The education of Gypsy Traveller pupils' has been addressed.

'The most important factors in improving Gypsy Traveller pupils' outcomes are improving pupils' attendance and their attitudes towards school. Improving low attendance rates and the resulting low achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils is a challenge for traveller education staff as it involves changing well-established attitudes in the Gypsy Traveller community and in secondary schools.

'Provision for Gypsy Traveller pupils varies across authorities. Most local authorities provide only mainstream secondary education placements, but in a few authorities Gypsy Traveller pupils are inappropriately taught in separate discrete units for their entire secondary education.

'Most traveller education staff provide high-quality support for schools. They also provide important support for parents of Gypsy Traveller pupils and often the wider Gypsy Traveller community. In a few local authorities, traveller education staff work closely with education welfare officers to improve the attendance of Gypsy Traveller pupils. They make joint visits to Gypsy Traveller sites to establish the whereabouts of pupils. In a few cases, these actions are beginning to improve the attendance rates of Gypsy Traveller pupils.'

In 2016, the Travelling Ahead project published 'Good Practice in Education: Peer Research Project' (Save the Children, 2016). This research project took place between 2014 and 2015 and made recommendations on how to improve GRT pupils' experience of education. These recommendations included schools being made aware of GRT pupils' culture and their differences compared with the settled community, and ensuring that there are flexible education and part-time attendance options for all pupils across Wales.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016a) and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2016b) both expressed concerns about the state of education for GRT children and young people. Of particular concern is the bullying, discrimination, exclusion and low attainment rates disproportionately experienced by GRT children and young people. While these reports apply to the UK as a whole, they are also relevant to the devolved administrations – issuing recommendations that call for:

- a comprehensive strategy for promoting the inclusion of GRT communities
- improved access to services including education
- the end of stigmatisation faced by the GRT communities

The Welsh Government published a new 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' strategy (Welsh Government, 2018a) as part of their national commitments set out in 'Prosperity for All' (Welsh Government, 2017). This sets out a renewed commitment to:

- continue to focus on ensuring sufficient culturally-appropriate Gypsy and Traveller residential and transit sites are created in Wales
- challenge engrained health and education outcomes which prevent these communities from fulfilling their potential
- support Gypsies, Roma and Travellers to access the labour market
- provide advice and advocacy to Gypsies, Roma and Travellers who are encountering discrimination or hate crime
- improve information sharing, including in relation to rights and entitlements
- foster good relations between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and wider society

As part of the budget-setting process for 2015-2016, the Welsh Government amalgamated 11 previously ring-fenced grants including the Gypsy Traveller grant into a single grant called the 'Education Improvement Grant' (EIG). The EIG is administered by the four regional consortia, through which local authorities share their school improvement services. Further structural change to funding arrangements mean that, from 2018-2019, funding to support Gypsy Traveller pupils is provided through a local authority's Revenue Support Grant. This means that the funding to support Gypsy Traveller pupils is no longer ring-fenced.

The main responsibility for the education of GRT pupils lies with local authority education services. Regional consortia arrangements do not include specific responsibilities for GRT education, other than as part of their work to ensure that all pupils achieve well within schools. In 2018-2019, the Minister for Education agreed £8.7 million across Wales to support local authorities in providing educational support

for minority ethnic and GRT learners on the understanding that this support should become part of core local education services. The additional funding recognises that transforming the service to one which is more sustainable for the long term takes time. A further £8.7 million across local authorities in 2019-2020 has been earmarked to support the continuing development of a new delivery model, which is expected to take effect from April 2020. The Welsh Government is working with local authorities to consider potential future funding models.

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## Main findings

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- 1 Across Wales, only around half of Year 6 GRT pupils move on to secondary education in Year 7. The reasons for this include parental concerns that:
  - their children will be bullied in secondary school
  - their culture will be diluted by contact with the settled community
  - there is little in the school curriculum to prepare their children for work or for keeping a home
- 2 Around half of local authorities make arrangements to improve transition rates for GRT pupils, for example by arranging additional transition visits for Year 6 GRT pupils and their parents. Overall, these arrangements have had little impact on improving the rates of transition for GRT pupils.
- 3 Since 2011, the numbers of GRT pupils in secondary schools have increased by almost 35%. However, the data may not provide an accurate picture, as a minority of parents and pupils say that they do not identify themselves as being from these communities due to fear of persecution or bullying.
- 4 Only around half of schools' anti-bullying and equality policies take account of the particular needs of GRT pupils, for example in recognising how their culture and traditions may affect their attendance.
- 5 Many schools raise awareness of GRT culture and lifestyle through assemblies, through personal and social education (PSE) lessons, and through celebrating particular events such as the GRT history month. However overall, schools do not promote GRT culture well enough throughout the formal subject-based part of the school curriculum.
- 6 Attendance of GRT pupils at secondary school has improved over the past few years, although overall their attendance is too low and is well below the average for secondary school-aged pupils in Wales.
- 7 Around half of schools and local authorities believe that transport difficulties impact on the attendance of GRT pupils. A few sites are away from normal transport routes and near main roads or industrial areas, which means that walking to school is dangerous as there are often no footpaths. A minority of local authorities provide transport for pupils to help with attendance. Where the school or local authority offers transport, attendance and engagement of pupils are much higher.
- 8 A majority of local authorities and schools have pastoral support plans (PSPs) for GRT pupils. Most use PSPs appropriately to support attendance, including setting realistic targets. Pupils, parents, schools and outside agencies agree the strategies for improvement. Local authorities monitor these strategies suitably.
- 9 There have been some significant improvements in the examination performance of Gypsy and Gypsy Roma pupils at key stage 4 over the last few years, although



overall it continues to be the lowest of all ethnic groups in Wales and is below the Wales average. The small number of Traveller pupils means that similar comparisons cannot be drawn.

- 10 Although most schools and local authorities collect and analyse data on the attendance and attainment of GRT pupils, they do not use this data to evaluate the effectiveness of their improvement strategies well. Most local authorities continue with the same types of support without evaluating which are the most effective. A few schools and local authorities use this data well to determine the effectiveness of their strategies and to make amendments.
- 11 Most local authorities provide useful school-based support for GRT pupils through a traveller education service. Staff from these services liaise well with the families of GRT pupils and help pupils to improve their attendance and attainment. Most local authorities deploy their specialist staff to schools based on the number of GRT pupils attending. A few local authorities lack clarity about how they allocate these staff to schools.
- 12 Only a very few local authorities work in partnership with other local authorities to deliver joined-up services for GRT pupils. Two local authorities collaborate and share information on families who travel between the two authorities, for example. This helps to ensure continuity of education for these pupils.
- 13 Many schools and local authorities have made good use of the Welsh Government guidance 'Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education' to support the education of GRT pupils. It has helped to provide readers with an understanding of the Gypsy Traveller culture and of issues specific to Gypsy Traveller pupils and their families. However, this document is over 10 years old and much of the information in it is out of date.
- 14 Around half of local authorities and schools work in partnership with a local college or a work-based learning provider to enhance learning opportunities for GRT pupils at key stage 4. A few GRT pupils undertake vocational courses in construction or hair and beauty. In addition, a very few GRT pupils undertake A level courses in the sixth form and a very few have undertaken degree courses at university. Most GRT pupils do not go on to study courses that prepare them for formal qualifications at post-16 level.
- 15 Where the literacy and numeracy skills of GRT pupils need strengthening, most schools offer support through their standard interventions such as catch-up programmes. When a GRT pupil is identified as potentially having an additional learning need, liaison between local authority staff and the school's additional learning needs co-ordinator and the traveller education service generally ensures that the pupil undertakes relevant assessments that lead to suitable support being provided.
- 16 A majority of local authorities do not believe that the merging of the Gypsy Children and Traveller Children Education Grant into the EIG in 2014 was effective. This is because they think there was an overall reduction of funding that had a negative impact on the services that they were able to provide. Whilst the overall level of

funding provided by the Welsh Government via the EIG was maintained, within the EIG there was discretion for local authorities to allocate funding at a level they considered appropriate based on local need. In some cases, local authorities allocated additional funding for these groups of pupils through their core budgets.

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## Recommendations

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### **Local authorities and schools should:**

- R1 Ensure that they evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies to improve the achievement, transition and attendance\* of GRT pupils and make improvements when strategies are not bringing about the desired outcomes
- R2 Ensure that anti-bullying and equality policies take account of the specific needs of GRT pupils\*
- R3 Ensure that schools promote GRT culture throughout the school curriculum\*
- R4 Ensure that GRT pupils have opportunities to express their views about their learning experiences
- R5 Work collaboratively to deliver and enhance services for GRT pupils
- R6 Explore ways of building the confidence of GRT pupils and parents to self-ascribe their ethnic identity accurately

### **The Welsh Government should:**

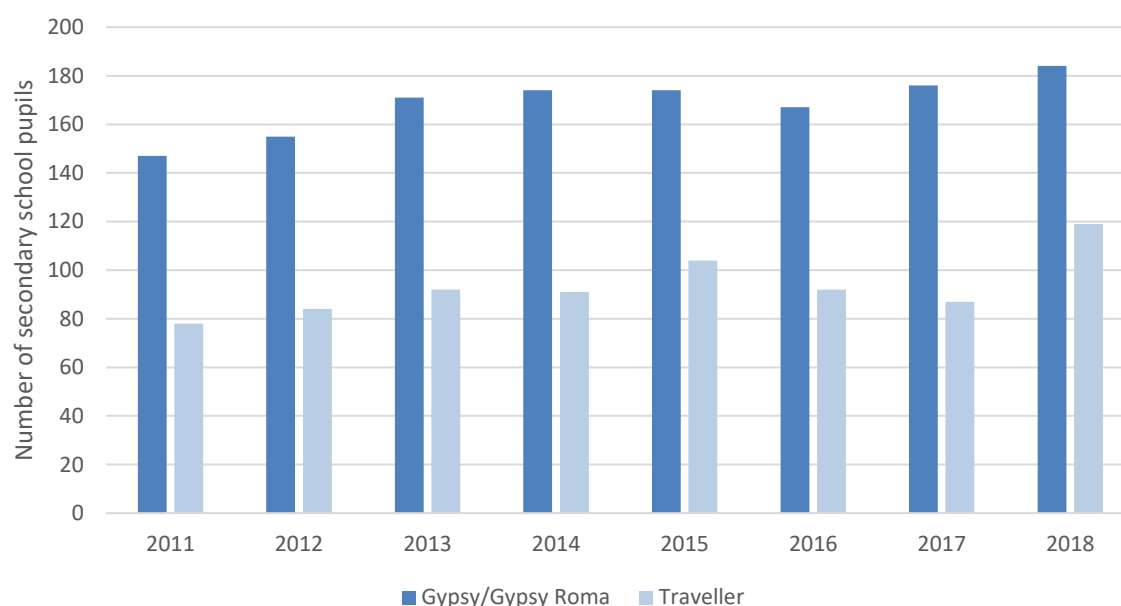
- R7 Update the 2008 guidance 'Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education'

\* Recommendation in the 2005 and 2011 Estyn reports

## Support for transition

- 17 Between 2011 and 2018, the number of GRT pupils of statutory school age in secondary schools increased from 225 to 303, an increase of 35%. During the same period, the number of GRT pupils of statutory school age in primary schools increased from 497 to 699, an increase of 41%. GRT pupils represent 0.2% of the statutory school age population in secondary schools and 0.3% in primary schools. Despite the increase in pupil numbers, a minority of parents and pupils say that they do not identify themselves as being from these communities due to fear of persecution or being bullied by the settled community. This means that the data collected may not reflect accurately the number of GRT pupils attending school.

**Figure 1: Numbers of pupils of statutory school age in secondary schools from Gypsy / Gypsy Roma and Traveller backgrounds, 2011-2018**



Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), 2018<sup>1</sup>

- 18 Around half of local authorities have specific transition arrangements to support GRT pupils as they make the transition from primary school to secondary school. These arrangements include close liaison with parents and organising visits to secondary schools for both pupils and parents. In these cases, the arrangements are effective in improving the numbers of pupils moving from primary to secondary. However, overall across Wales transition arrangements have not improved well enough since Estyn's previous report (Estyn, 2011).

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished data collected by Welsh Government, calculations completed by Estyn

- 19 Over the past five years, only around half of Year 6 GRT pupils moved on to secondary education in Year 7<sup>2</sup>. The reasons for this are many and include:
- concerns that they will be bullied in secondary school because of their ethnicity
  - a fear that their culture will be diluted by mixing in with the settled community
  - a perception from parents that there is little in the curriculum of relevance that will prepare their children for work or for keeping a home

### **Good practice in transition arrangements in Cardiff Council**

Cardiff traveller education service undertakes transition work as a continuous process throughout the final year of primary school. They ensure close liaison with parents and support parents throughout the whole transition process. They arrange visits for pupils and parents to the secondary school, complete admission forms with parents and help to allay any misconceptions and fears that parents may have about secondary school education. This has resulted in a 38 percentage point increase in the number of GRT pupils transferring to Cardiff secondary schools over the last three years, from 50% in 2014 to 88% in 2017.

- 20 One local authority provides separate provision for secondary aged GRT pupils outside of a secondary school setting. This is because parents are reluctant to allow their children to transition from primary school at the end of Year 6 to attend a mainstream secondary school. This provision is arranged so that secondary-aged GRT pupils are able to experience secondary school teaching prior to transferring to the local secondary school. However, in line with the national average only around half of these pupils later make the transition to a mainstream secondary school.

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<sup>2</sup> Unpublished data collected by Welsh Government, calculations completed by Estyn

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## Promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture through the curriculum

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- 21 Many schools raise awareness of GRT culture and lifestyle through assemblies, through personal and social education (PSE) lessons, and through celebrating particular events such as the GRT history month. In a few schools, teachers do this through the history curriculum, for example when considering the persecution of Gypsies during the holocaust. Many schools do not promote GRT culture well enough throughout the formal subject-based part of the school curriculum.

### **Modification of religious education lessons to include GRT culture**

In one school, inappropriate comments had been made towards GRT pupils. The school held an assembly pointing out difference and tolerance. It modified religious education lessons to include discussions about the GRT culture. Pupils were given opportunities to research the culture and produce information booklets. In addition, outside speakers came to the school and participated in group question and answer sessions. This helped to raise pupils' awareness of GRT culture.

- 22 Nearly all GRT pupils and parents say that they would value their culture being reflected more in school. They believe that this could help to give pupils from the settled community a greater understanding of the GRT background and lifestyle. In addition, they believe this may help to reduce bullying and support all pupils to become more ethical, informed citizens.
- 23 Many pupils report that incidents of identity-based bullying against GRT pupils such as name calling are common. In the cases reported as part of the survey, most pupils felt that the school dealt with the incidents sensitively and resolved matters appropriately. Nearly all schools have anti-bullying and equality policies designed to support pupils that they are required to have. Only around half of these policies take account of the specific needs of GRT pupils, for example by ensuring that policies to address identity-based bullying include pupils from GRT backgrounds.

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## Wellbeing

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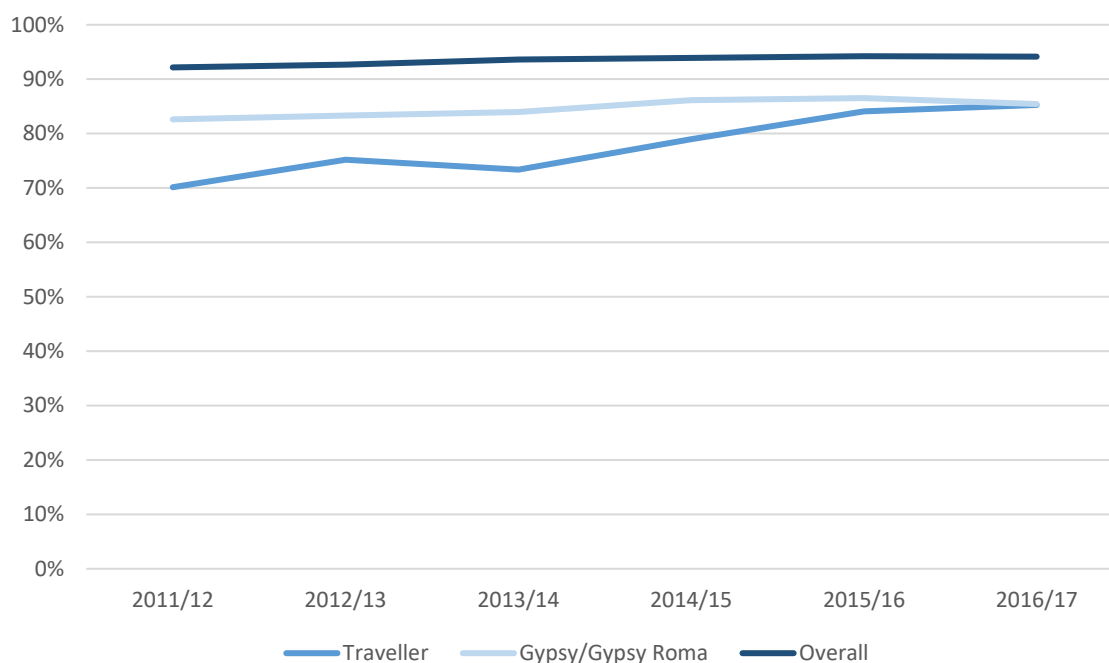
- 24 A minority of schools have GRT pupils who are on school councils. This has meant that they are more involved and engaged in their school community and they are able to raise issues that affect them. A very few schools say that GRT pupils have been invited to be on the school council, but have declined due to a lack of confidence. Overall, schools are not doing enough to ensure that they listen to the views of GRT pupils.

One local authority set up a 'Young People's Council', which includes GRT pupils to operate alongside local councillors to ensure that young people have a voice within the decision-making processes. Additional work with the Children's Commissioner has also resulted in one of the GRT pupils becoming a Community Ambassador. This has helped to ensure that GRT pupils feel valued and that their opinions are considered.

- 25 Most schools are sensitive to the issues surrounding homework for GRT pupils and provide beneficial and flexible support. Many offer lunchtime clubs for GRT pupils to enable them to complete school work and homework before returning home. This gives GRT pupils a quiet space in which to complete their work and also provides them with additional adult support should they require it. In many cases, clubs are well-attended and help pupils to ensure that they are able to complete work set in class. In addition, most schools provide ICT facilities as many of these pupils do not have internet access at home. This has helped to improve GRT pupils' confidence in the use of computer hardware and software. Most local authority support staff promote these clubs well through their liaison with parents.
- 25 A majority of schools have appropriate arrangements in place to try to ensure continuity of learning for pupils who travel often. In the best cases, traveller education staff support the family to seek out an appropriate school near to where they expect to move. Service staff liaise with the new school to check the suitability of the school and pass on any required information. However in most cases, the pupils' old school is not informed about the move and are therefore unable to pass on information in a timely manner.
- 26 In many local authorities, a few GRT pupils engage suitably with individual learning pathways. For example, during 2017-2018 in one local authority, eight Gypsy Traveller children attended college or other provision, six of these through the 14-19 pathway. In 2018-2019, 11 pupils are following the 14-19 pathway.

## Attendance

**Figure 2: Secondary school attendance rates by ethnic background, 2011-2012 to 2016-2017**



Source: Pupil level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2017 and Attendance Database 2017<sup>3</sup>

- 27 Since 2012, the attendance of Gypsy / Gypsy Roma pupils has increased from 82.6% to 85.5%. During the same period, the attendance of Traveller pupils has increased from 70.1% to 85.3%. However, attendance for these groups continues to be well below the average of 94% for secondary age pupils in Wales in 2017.
- 28 Nearly all local authorities and schools monitor attendance data appropriately and compare with national figures. Where attendance falls below national averages or is of concern, a multi-agency approach is used to support improvement. This includes members of the traveller education service working with education welfare officers.
- 29 In many authorities, the traveller education service works with schools and the education welfare service to monitor the attendance of GRT pupils. Where the school raises concerns or attendance does not reach the individual pupil's target, the traveller education service will contact the family by phone or carry out a home visit. These agencies then monitor the pupil's attendance closely. Where attendance is good, schools praise families and encourage them to continue supporting their children's attendance.

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished data collected by Welsh Government, calculations completed by Estyn



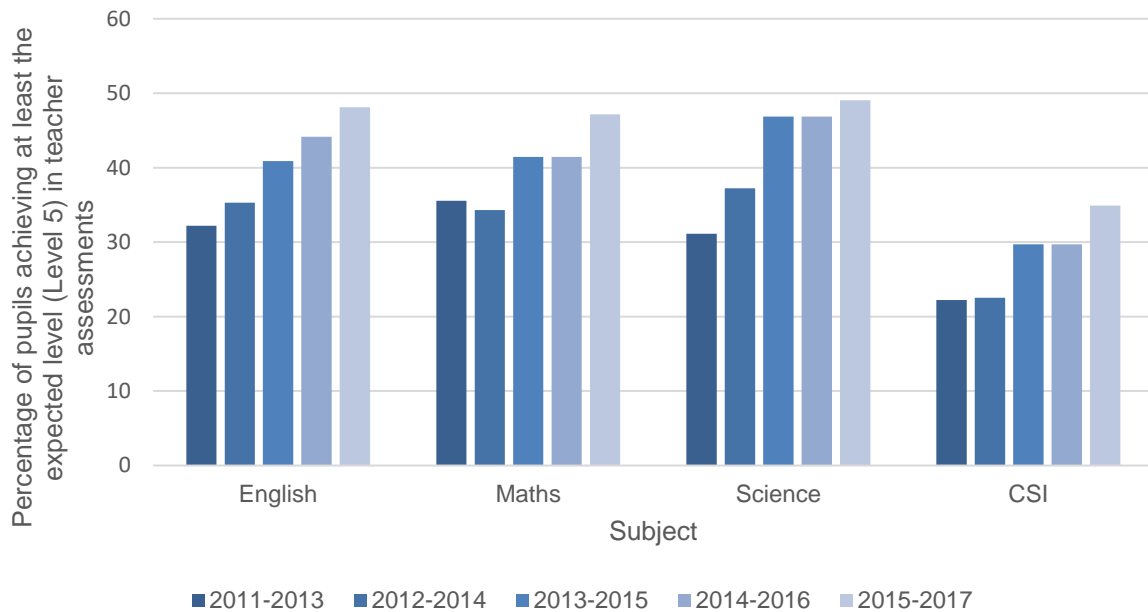
- 30 A few schools and local authorities have prosecuted GRT parents for poor attendance. This strategy has led to some limited improvement in attendance for those pupils. However, most schools and local authorities are reluctant to prosecute, fearing that it could have the adverse effect of parents deciding not to send their children to school at all.
- 31 Most local authorities provide useful guidance for schools on how to address issues around attendance for GRT pupils. The guidance documents have helped schools to understand better the reasons behind poor attendance of GRT pupils and also suggest some useful strategies on how to improve GRT pupils' attendance.
- 32 Nearly all schools monitor the attendance of GRT pupils. Most have appropriate strategies in place to encourage good attendance, for example by offering rewards and liaising with parents to build relationships. However, around half of GRT parents do not want their child to attend secondary school, feeling that it is irrelevant to their way of life and would prefer it if their teenagers worked with older family members to learn a trade or stayed at home.
- 33 Around half of schools and local authorities believe that transport difficulties impact on the attendance of GRT pupils. A few sites are away from public transport routes, and are near main roads or industrial areas, which means that walking to school can be dangerous as there are often no footpaths. A minority of local authorities provide transport for pupils to help with attendance. Where the school or local authority offers transport, attendance and engagement of pupils are much higher.
- 34 In most local authorities, traveller education staff meet regularly with GRT parents and pupils to discuss any barriers to attendance and try to find solutions to overcome these barriers. In the majority of these authorities, staff have built up a good rapport with the parents and gained their trust. These staff are then able to support the families to address issues of poor attendance.
- 35 Around half of local authorities and schools use dual registration<sup>4</sup> for pupils and say that the system works well to ensure suitable recording of GRT pupils when they are travelling. This allows schools to share relevant information and ensures that they monitor GRT pupils more effectively.
- 36 A majority of local authorities and schools have pastoral support plans (PSP) for GRT pupils. Most use PSPs appropriately to support attendance, including setting realistic targets. Pupils, parents, schools and outside agencies agree the strategies for improvement. Local authorities monitor these strategies suitably. Using PSPs gives pupils and their parents opportunities to discuss relevant issues, access attendance support mechanisms and make informed and shared decisions about how to further improve attendance. For example, one local authority used PSPs to help improve the attendance of pupils from two GRT families. Through the PSP, the families gained the support needed and had an opportunity to explain the difficulties they faced. When this was identified, a collaborative approach was used to ensure improved engagement and attendance. Communication between the parents and the school improved and allowed for closer monitoring of attendance. It also meant that further legal action against the parents was avoided.

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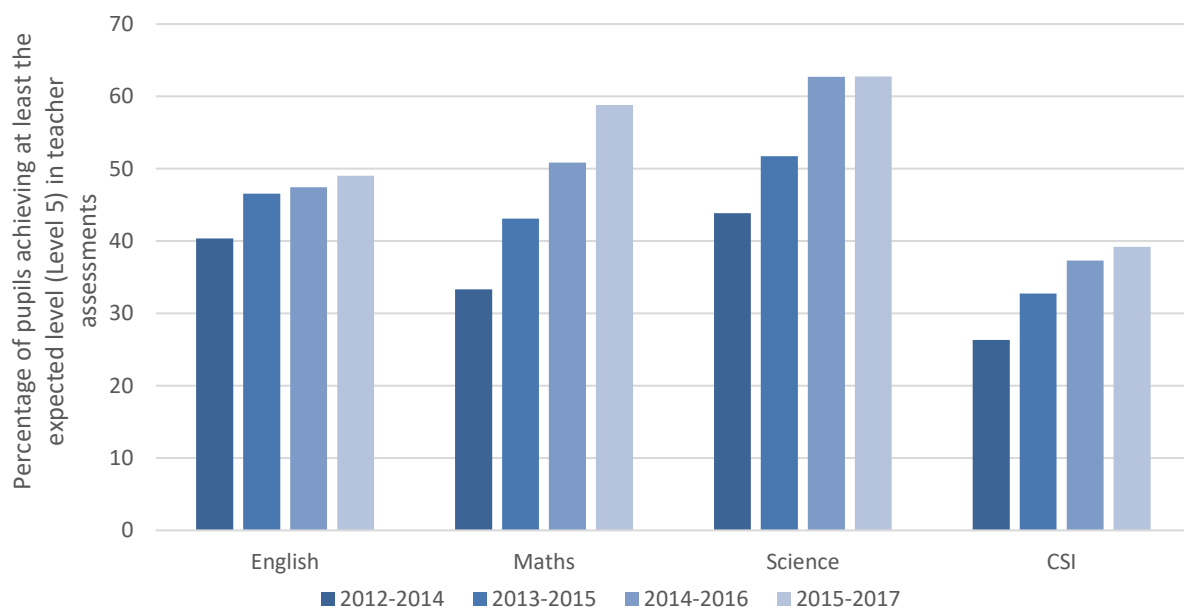
<sup>4</sup> See glossary for an explanation of dual registration

## Achievement

**Figure 3: Key stage 3 academic achievement for Gypsy / Gypsy Roma pupils, 2011-2017 (three year averages)**

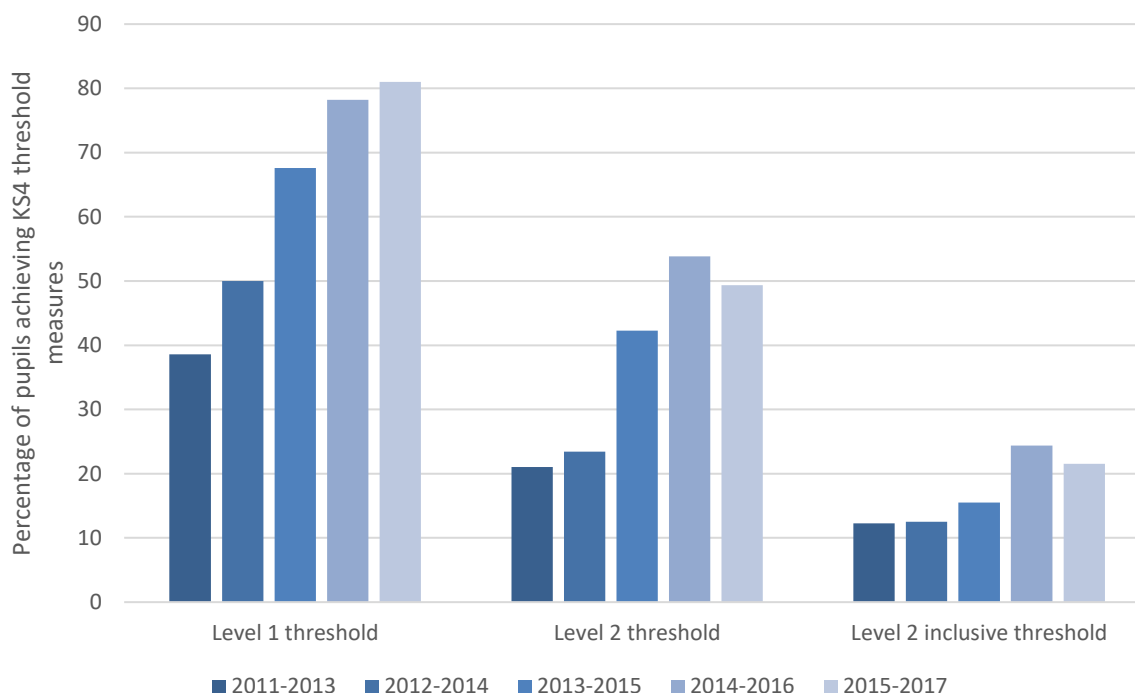


**Figure 4: Key stage 3 academic achievement for Traveller pupils, 2012-2017 (three year averages)**



Note that due to the small number of Traveller pupils, there is no key stage 3 attainment data for 2011-2013

**Figure 5: Key stage 4 academic achievement for Gypsy / Gypsy Roma pupils, 2011-2017 (three year averages)**



Source: Welsh Government, 2018b

Note that there is no published key stage 4 attainment data for Traveller pupils due to small numbers.

- 37 Since 2011, the performance of Gypsy / Gypsy Roma pupils has shown a trend of improvement at both key stage 3 and key stage 4 in all of the key indicators. The greatest improvement has been in the level 1 threshold at key stage 4 where pupils have made notable improvement over the last seven years. However, performance is still well below the national average by around 16 percentage points. In the main key indicator at key stage 4, the level 2 inclusive of English/Welsh and mathematics threshold, Gypsy / Gypsy Roma pupils are the lowest performing ethnic group in Wales, performing notably lower than the national average of 59%. The numbers of Traveller pupils are too small to make any similar comparisons at key stage 4.
- 38 Most schools and local authorities collect and analyse data on the attendance and attainment of GRT pupils. In a few cases, schools and local authorities use this information well to determine the effectiveness of strategies for improvement and make any necessary alterations to improve outcomes and provision. However, this is not done widely enough across all local authorities. Most local authorities continue with the same types of support without considering which strategies are the most or least effective.

- 39 Where the literacy and numeracy skills of GRT pupils need strengthening, most schools offer support through their standard interventions such as catch-up programmes. When a GRT pupil is identified as potentially having an additional learning need, liaison between local authority staff and the school's additional learning needs co-ordinator and the traveller education service generally ensures that the pupil undertakes relevant assessments that lead to suitable support being provided.

One secondary school ensured close liaison between the school, home and a wide range of support services to build tailored provision to support a Gypsy Traveller pupil with complex learning and medical needs. Regular meetings between the school, family, and outside agencies were held to monitor progress through key stage 3 and then into key stage 4. The school sustained this level of support in key stage 4 and provided a tailored curriculum to meet the pupil's needs. As a result, the pupil completed key stage 4 and is in the process of moving into post-16 education at a specialist provision.

- 40 A majority of providers are aware of GRT pupils who are more able and talented. They meet the needs of these pupils appropriately by making sure that individual pupil's skills are developed in line with their abilities. For example, in one school, a scientifically and mathematically more able GRT pupil received additional adult support to help him settle in the higher tier classes.
- 41 Many schools celebrate the achievements of GRT pupils in the same way as they do for all pupils. This is mostly through reward certificates, presentations and letters sent home.

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## School and local authority targeted services

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- 42 Most local authorities provide useful school-based support through a traveller education service. This is usually undertaken through specialist staff working with pupils in their school. Service staff liaise well with the families of GRT pupils and help pupils to improve their attainment and attendance. Many service staff also provide training for school staff to help them understand the cultural background of GRT pupils and how best to support them.
- 43 In most cases, the local authority allocates specialist staff to schools based on the number of GRT pupils attending. In a few local authorities, there is a lack of clarity about how the local authority allocates staff to schools.
- 44 Services for GRT pupils are mostly delivered by individual local authorities. Only a very few local authorities work in partnership with other local authorities to deliver services for GRT pupils. For example, Wrexham and Flintshire collaborate to share information on a few families who travel between the two counties and this helps to ensure continuity of education for these pupils. More generally, the lack of partnership working across authorities means that information about GRT pupils and their educational needs is not shared well enough, even though these pupils are more likely to move across authority boundaries during their school years.
- 45 Many schools and local authorities surveyed have used 'Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education Guidance' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) and have found it useful. It has helped to provide readers with a good understanding of the Gypsy Traveller culture and the issues specific to Gypsy Traveller pupils and their families. However, the document is now over 10 years old and does not reflect fully the current context.
- 46 A very few schools have employed staff from GRT communities to work with the GRT pupils. For example, one school employed a trusted member of the Czech Roma community as an Inclusion and Wellbeing teaching assistant. The school enhanced engagement with the local community and, as a result, pupils' attendance, progress and behaviour improved.
- 47 Around half of local authorities and schools work in partnership with a local college or work-based learning provider to enhance learning opportunities for GRT pupils at key stage 4. For example, in one school, a pupil was considering leaving school in key stage 4. The local authority secured funding for a course on blacksmithing skills as part of an alternative curriculum. The pupil had good attendance at the sessions and achieved well. As a result, a further education college has accepted him to continue his studies. Only a very few GRT pupils continue with their education post-16. A few GRT pupils undertake courses such as construction or hair and beauty and even fewer undertake A level courses in the sixth form. It is rare for a GRT pupil to proceed to undertake a degree course at university.

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## Funding, monitoring and evaluation

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- 48 A majority of local authorities do not believe that the merging of the Gypsy Children and Traveller Children Education Grant into the EIG in 2014 was effective. This is because they think there was an overall reduction of funding that had a negative impact on the services that they were able to provide. Whilst the overall level of funding provided by the Welsh Government via the EIG was maintained, within the EIG there was discretion for local authorities to allocate funding at a level they considered appropriate based on local need. In some cases, local authorities allocated additional funding for these groups of pupils through their core budgets.
- 49 Consortia arrangements are largely confined to distributing EIG funding directly to local authorities. They do not generally have a role in taking on responsibilities for the education of GRT pupils.
- 50 Around half of local authorities consider that the administration arrangements for the grant were adequate. One of the main benefits was that, under the EIG, the local authority received the grant in a timely manner. In addition, they believe that recent further changes to funding arrangements will continue to have a negative impact on the education of GRT pupils.
- 51 Overall, consortia arrangements for monitoring and evaluating outcomes for GRT pupils are appropriate. School improvement advisers and challenge advisers broadly support and monitor all vulnerable learners including GRT learners. However, local authorities themselves undertake detailed monitoring and evaluation of GRT pupils.
- 52 A few local authorities with small numbers of GRT pupils distribute grant funding directly to schools based on the numbers of GRT pupils. Schools use this funding to support pupils' literacy, numeracy and emotional literacy development.

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## Appendix 1: Progress against recommendations from previous Estyn reports

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The progress against the recommendations made in Estyn's 2011 report for local authorities and schools is addressed through the report itself. The recommendations were that local authorities and schools should:

- R1 Continue to find ways to improve the attendance rates of Gypsy Traveller children at secondary schools\*
- R2 Ensure that all schools have policies that address the specific needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils\*
- R3 Ensure that the curriculum promotes the positive aspects of Gypsy Traveller culture, particularly in schools where this group of pupils is on roll\*
- R4 Improve the use of attendance, exclusions and attainment data to evaluate the impact of support for Gypsy Traveller pupils
- R5 Ensure that any discrete provision for Gypsy Traveller pupils is only a short-term arrangement prior to full integration into mainstream secondary schools

The progress against the recommendations made in Estyn's 2011 report for the Welsh Government are discussed below.

### **R1: Ensure that the data collected on Gypsy Traveller pupils from information supplied by designated local authority support staff is accurate and consistent\***

The way data on Gypsy Travellers is collected has changed. The Welsh Government no longer requires local authorities to submit returns, which include pupil numbers to inform funding as happened under the 2011 grants. The Welsh Government now collects data via the pupil level annual school census (PLASC). In 2018, the Welsh Government introduced additional ethnicity codes to provide options for pupils and their parents to ascribe more accurately the ethnicity that best fits them. The Welsh Government separated out Gypsy and Roma learners, and introduced a category for Show person. This has helped to ensure greater accuracy in data collection. However, a minority of GRT parents are reluctant to identify themselves in these categories for fear of discrimination and bullying.

### **R2: Consider ways in which funding can be allocated so that it places greater emphasis on the needs of secondary age pupils\***

When Estyn made this recommendation, funding of support service for these pupils was via discrete grants. In 2013-2014, the funding formula used to determine the awards from the Gypsy and Traveller Education Grant gave the highest weighting to secondary age pupils. This is no longer relevant, as funding for GRT pupils' support has changed and so decisions about targeting funding rest with local authorities.

**R3: Provide guidelines on prosecution in cases where Gypsy Traveller pupil attendance falls to under 200 sessions a year, to ensure a consistent approach across Wales**

There has been limited progress against this recommendation. The Welsh Government accepted the recommendation in their original response to the 2011 report. It is currently reviewing the school attendance framework and considering this recommendation as part of that review.

\*Recommendation in the 2005 Estyn report



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## Appendix 2: Evidence base

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The findings and recommendations of this report draw on an analysis of inspection findings, visits to schools, local authorities and one consortium, telephone interviews with schools and local authorities and online surveys of local authorities and regional consortia representatives. In addition groups of pupils and one group of parents were interviewed. One consortium also responded by email. The sample takes account of the different areas of Wales. The report also takes into consideration current research, guidance publications by the Welsh Government and Estyn's effective practice case studies.

### Local authorities and consortia that took part through the online survey

- Merthyr Tydfil
- Blaenau Gwent
- Neath Port Talbot
- Education Achievement Service Consortium
- Monmouthshire
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Powys
- Pembrokeshire
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Newport
- Flintshire
- Carmarthenshire
- Torfaen
- Wrexham
- Swansea

### Schools, local authorities and consortia met with or visited

- Wrexham
- Flintshire
- Pembrokeshire
- Carmarthenshire
- Cardiff
- Education Achievement Service consortium
- Cathays High School, Cardiff
- St Illtyd's High School, Cardiff
- Lliswerry High School, Newport
- GEMS (Gwent Ethnic Minority Service), Newport
- John Frost High School, Newport
- St Joseph's High School, Wrexham
- Connah's Quay High School, Flintshire
- Flintshire Youth Service and Youth Council

### **Schools and local authorities taking part through a telephone consultation**

- Torfaen
- Penyrheol High School, Swansea
- Welshpool High School, Powys
- West Monmouth High School, Torfaen
- Priory Learning Centre, Pembrokeshire
- Neath Port Talbot

Estyn's effective practice case studies:

[Effective strategies to support Gypsy Traveller pupils](#), St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican secondary school, Wrexham

[An innovative approach to support pupils from Occupational Traveller families](#), Penyrheol Comprehensive School, Swansea

## Glossary

<b>Dual registration</b>	If a pupil is dually registered at more than one school, for any particular school session at which he/she is due to attend one school, the other school may mark him/her in the attendance register as attending an approved educational activity. This equally applies to Traveller children who are known to be attending another school at which they are registered.
<b>Education Improvement Grant (EIG)</b>	The Education Improvement Grant (EIG), established in April 2015, provides financial assistance to schools, local authorities and regional education consortia to improve educational outcomes for all learners.
<b>Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)</b>	A pastoral support plan is a school-based intervention to help pupils better manage their behaviour and attendance and identify any support mechanisms which need to be put in place.
<b>Revenue Support Grant (RSG)</b>	The Welsh Government provides around 80% of the money allocated to local authorities in Wales. This funding is known as the Revenue Support Grant.
<b>Traveller education service (TES)</b>	A service provided by most local authorities to support the education of GRT pupils

### Numbers – quantities and proportions

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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