



The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People



The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People

The Inclusion of Gypsy,
Roma and Traveller Pupils:
strategies for building
confidence in voluntary
self-declared ethnicity ascription

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Foreword



Working towards and achieving effective practice in the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils is the responsibility of everyone within the education system – the DCSF, government offices, local authorities, schools, teachers, governors, Traveller Education Support Services, parents and pupils.

The Children's Plan, December 2007 clearly states our aim to make Britain the best place in the world for our children. We are all working together to improve outcomes and narrow the achievement gap. There should be no reason why *any* child is left behind. For a range of complex reasons many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are amongst the lowest achieving in our schools and the situation is not improving.

Since 2003 Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage have been identified as two distinct ethnicity groups in school census data. However, we know that this data is incomplete as many parents and children are reluctant to identify themselves for fear of bullying and prejudice which is endemic in their everyday lives. This leads to policy makers, local authorities and schools not receiving the resources they are entitled to and not being made accountable for improving the life chances of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, young people and families.

For far too long society has shunned people from these communities. This has resulted in their growing mistrust of authority and many generations not receiving a good education. Can you imagine how difficult it is for a child to learn when they are constantly in fear of being exposed as a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller? We need to create an inclusive learning environment for all children. All cultural backgrounds should be understood and respected. Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities should feel safe and cherished in school and therefore parents and pupils will be proud to identify themselves. Schools now have a duty to promote community cohesion and this is a real issue for their attention.

We know that children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can achieve just as well as any other child. Some of your work colleagues are from these communities. It is crucial that local authorities and schools engage effectively with parents and children from these communities. We need to raise awareness and aspirations in local authorities, schools, parents and pupils to produce the step change needed.

This guidance seeks to offer practical solutions to local authorities and schools for the inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people. An understanding of the history, culture and language of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities is the key. Experience to date shows subtle inclusion in the curriculum and resources for all pupils can break down barriers. Effective practice is where a pupil can see their identity recognised. The children and young people feel included, empowered and motivated and attendance and achievement is raised.

I have endorsed a national **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in June** – the first will be in 2008. This will offer us all the chance to raise awareness and explore the history, culture and language of these communities, which is not usually included in the curriculum for all pupils. We can challenge myths, tackle prejudice and be in a position to offer a balanced debate about the issues. We will all be able to celebrate the richness that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities bring to our everyday lives through their many and varied academic and artistic achievements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Adonis', with a horizontal flourish underneath.

**Lord Andrew Adonis,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools**

Introduction

Any school, anywhere, may have Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupils on roll. Raising the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children is the responsibility of everyone within the education system and a significant measure of the effectiveness of policies to combat educational and social exclusion. Ofsted¹ has reported that Gypsy, Roma & Traveller pupils, have the lowest results of any ethnic minority group and are the groups most at risk in the education system. These assessments have been confirmed by data coming from the School Census since 2003.

This is not a new issue. The Swann report² identified Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils as being strongly affected by many factors influencing the education of children from other minority ethnic groups. Particular mention was made then, as now, of racism and discrimination, myths, stereotyping and the need for more positive links between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents and their children's schools. Evidence is that access is steadily improving³, although there is still a long way to go, especially for the secondary age group. Attention is now focusing strongly on what can be done, once children are enrolled in school, to sustain their attendance and to continue to raise achievement.

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) is committed to raising the attendance and achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. The Department published *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils*⁴, in March 2003, and *Aiming High: 'Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils: A Guide to Good Practice'*⁵ in July 2003. This later document is one of a suite of guidance, aimed at all local authority and staff in educational settings, including school governors. It offers guidance and a range of actions which contribute to ensuring that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution to school life as set out in the Every Child Matters agenda and The Children's Plan, December 2007.

"It is a priority to improve the level and accuracy of reporting by Travellers of their ethnicity so that more realistic and precise data are available."⁶

"Disaggregated data are needed to identify areas of greatest inequality"⁷

"Educational authorities should collect systematically ethnically differentiated statistical data on the educational fortunes of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers which also gauge the impact of policies and measures."⁸

1 Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils, Ofsted 1999

2 DfES Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, Education for All, (The Swann Report) 1985

3 DfES Annual Reports on Traveller Education Summary 1997/8

4 "Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils" Department for Education and Skills, March 2003 Ref: DfES/0183/2003. and "Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils: A Guide to Good Practice", Department for Education and Skills, July 2003 Ref: DfES/0443/2003.

5 "Provision and Support for Traveller Pupils", Ofsted 2003

6 "Education for All – The Quality Imperative", UNESCO, Paris 2004

7 "Roma and Travellers in Public Education – An overview of the situation in the EU Member States", May 2006, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Vienna, 2006, p.13.

8 "Roma and Travellers in Public Education – An overview of the situation in the EU Member States", May 2006, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Vienna, 2006, p.13.

Section 1:

School Census Data Collection

- 1.1 Gypsy/Roma⁹ and Travellers of Irish Heritage are identified as racial groups and covered by the Race Relations Acts as legitimate minority ethnic communities. It is important that schools and local authorities acknowledge this fact. These communities are, therefore, subject to all the rights and protections under the acts as enjoyed by all other minority ethnic communities. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities frequently experience social exclusion and discrimination which can be intentionally or is unintentionally racist in character on account of the lack of knowledge by the perpetrator(s) of their legal minority ethnic status.¹⁰
- 1.2 Since 2003 Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage are two distinct ethnicity group categories within the School Census. These two groups are defined as follows:
 - **Gypsy/Roma** – This category includes pupils who identify themselves as Gypsies and or Romanies, and or Travellers, and or Traditional Travellers, and or Romanichals, and or Romanichal Gypsies and or Welsh Gypsies/Kaale, and or Scottish Travellers/Gypsies, and or Roma. It includes all children of a Gypsy/Roma ethnic background, irrespective of whether they are nomadic, semi nomadic or living in static accommodation.
 - **Traveller of Irish Heritage** – A range of terminology is also used in relation to Travellers with an Irish heritage. These are either ascribed and or self-ascribed and include: Minceir, Travellers, Travelling People, and Travellers of Irish heritage. Travellers of Irish heritage speak their own language known as Gammon, sometimes referred to as ‘Cant’ and which is a language with many Romani loan-words, but not thought to be a dialect of Romani itself.
- 1.3 The School Census categorisation does not include Fairground (Showman’s) children; the children travelling with circuses; or the children of New Travellers or those dwelling on the waterways unless, of course, their ethnicity status is either of that which is mentioned above.
- 1.4 However, there is a clear need to capture data on those other groups who travel with their families during the school year in order that schools can identify the need in common with minority ethnic pupils, to offer a good quality blended approach to distance learning opportunities to all children who have interrupted schooling. It has been proven through the e-learning and mobility projects (ELAMP) that pupils who are given appropriate work and tasks to accomplish, keep in close contact with their teachers and class mates through ICT whilst they travel, remain motivated, achieve well and are keen to come to school when they can whilst travelling or upon their return to the base school. There is also a need to celebrate their rich history and way of life and to make sure they are effectively integrated into our schools and society.

9 It is to be noted that the term ‘Gypsy/Roma’ will also include many people whose immigration status will be either, asylum seeker or refugee, and or migrant worker.

10 Gypsy/Roma people have been recognized as a racial group since 1988 (CRE v Dutton). Travellers of Irish heritage received legal recognition in law as a racial group in 2000 (O’Leary v Allied Domecq).

Section 2:

Achievement

- 2.1 The initial analysis from the ethnicity data collection since 2003 is signalling some serious concerns about the relative attainment of these two groups of pupils. However, the analysis is based on a rather small sample of pupils who have identified themselves at schools within these specific ethnicity categories. Given previous evidence obtained by the Department through the annual reports on the Section 488 funding programme,¹¹ it would seem that those pupils and parents willing to declare their specific ethnicity may be a very small percentage of the estimated cohort of these children.
- 2.2 In addition to complying with both the general and specific duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and particularly in relation to monitoring the impact of policies on different racial groups, including their impact on pupil attainment levels, the Department appreciates the vital importance of having sound data to be able to establish a realistic picture of numbers and needs. More accurate data will allow more informed policy initiatives and professional discussion at all levels, especially in schools. Good quality data about these communities will also highlight the extent of need and better facilitate the targeting of resources to the most vulnerable children in need of narrowing the attainment gap. Such developments are an essential requirement to make sure well coordinated and effective strategies are in place at all levels to raise the attainment of children and young people from these communities.
- 2.3 At the school and pupil level, children who are confident about their personal and community identity are so much better placed to be happy and successful learners. The importance of the notion of self-worth is well known as a major determinant of learning success.
- 2.4 An Ofsted report commented, **“Where the presence of Travelling children is openly acknowledged, and where positive and accurate images of the different communities are featured within both the resources of the school and the curriculum, then the pupil response is lively and there is a genuine openness to learning.”**
- 2.5 In order to secure a more representative sample and therefore a more accurate picture of the overall situation in terms of attainment and other key data, it would be helpful if an increasing number of children and parents from these communities were willing to voluntarily declare their ethnicity in school census data collection. Any attempt at such a strategy, however, should in no way be seen as an infringement of anybody’s right to freely record their felt or claimed ethnic status or to decline to make any declaration.
- 2.6 With this in mind the DCSF set out to investigate the situation by initiating a small number of discussion seminars with the aim of getting a more informed assessment of the complex issues involved. The aim was to identify and explore current practice and to produce a guide to good practice for the benefit of Local Authorities/Children’s Services and schools. This document provides a summary of the main recommendations stemming from the seminars.
- 2.7 In the interests of boosting the confidence of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to self-ascribe their ethnicity, the Department feels strongly that there needs to be a concerted effort across the different levels of education. The Department offers a checklist of what should happen within the context of a uniform and effective policy in regard to this important matter.

11 1996 Education Act.

Section 3:

Actions Needed by:

- **Local Authorities**
 - Strategic Planning
 - Support for Schools
- **Schools**

Strategic planning

- 3.1 Provide informed briefing documentation for all employees detailing the legality of the minority ethnic status of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage and linking this to the authority's duties under the Race Relations legislation.¹² This should include a brief history of these communities and to clarify the appropriate terminology and grammar requirements in relation to the use of capital letters.
- A fuller briefing document linked to in-service training should be provided for all the staff working within the school/college admissions department. This document should provide background information on reasons why these communities may be reluctant to declare their true ethnicity. It should also stress the need for a sensitive approach to the issues.
 - Data collection on LA staff ethnicity origins should include the categories of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish heritage to encourage staff declaration.
 - The senior authority officers responsible for culture, libraries, inclusion, race relations and press/media links, should devise an informed strategy on actions to be taken to ensure the explicit positive representation and promotion of these communities across all its work and influence in line with Corporate Equalities Policies and the Equality Standard for Local Government.
 - Establish as far as reasonably possible for Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage, opportunities for consultation and involvement in decision making processes and structures.
 - The establishment of on-going communication and consultation on all relevant policy issues with locally based Gypsy, Roma and Traveller NGOs, Civil Society organisations and communities.
 - The adoption of an authority wide policy to publicly challenge negative and inaccurate media coverage of these communities in keeping with the authority's duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
 - Take positive action to encourage applications from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds for employment.
 - Impact assess all policies to ensure they promote equality for Gypsy, Roma Traveller children.
 - Work in partnership with other agencies to share good practice and ensure consistency in the collection of ethnicity data.
 - Make sure there is effective cross-agency working to consider the needs and aspirations of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, young people and families in their planning of services.
 - Strategies to encourage the full participation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in June.

¹² The Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Support for schools

- 3.2 Provide informed briefing documentation and training for all schools detailing the legality of the minority ethnic status of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage and linking this to the schools' duties under Race Relations legislation.
- Support schools in acquiring accurate information on previous schooling and country of origin of new arrivals particularly in the case of Eastern European Roma migrant workers' children who may have experienced a diversity of provision or no provision at all.
 - Support schools and other agencies in understanding the fear and apprehension of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers in declaring accurate ethnicity and the importance of taking formally undeclared ethnic information into consideration when planning responses and services.
 - Take appropriate action to ensure that all service personnel and new recruits are made fully aware of the issues involved and their sensitive nature.
 - Ensure schools and other education providers own culturally specific books, materials and other learning resources. Proactively raise awareness of the cultural backgrounds of these two minority ethnic communities and effectively promote community cohesion.
 - Provide relevant in-service training for school secretaries and or staff responsible for admissions and public relations.
 - Provide appropriate in-service training for *all* school staff, including governors and lunchtime staff with the specific focus on all the issues surrounding voluntary ethnicity self-ascription including anti-racist bullying policies.
 - Work with Education Welfare Officers, Admissions Officers and school staff to improve the accuracy of ethnicity and English as an Additional Language (EAL) data in schools.
 - Work with the senior managers and teachers on effective strategies for an inclusive curriculum in relation to the cultural, historical and linguistic backgrounds of these communities. Provide sustainable embellishments that will contribute to the improvement of the quality and accuracy of knowledge for all pupils.
 - Develop a strategy to promote story books and other educational materials which will facilitate curriculum developments and reflect on these communities in a positive light.
 - Develop a strategy to engage with parents and communities to discuss the issues surrounding voluntary ethnicity self ascription by exploring and exploiting the opportunities offered by a range of learning venues, including home visits.
 - Develop a range of materials and resources that will aid the voluntary disclosure of ethnicity status.
 - Promote positive models and images of all communities of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people through the collection, dissemination and publicity of any notable achievements by individuals and or groups.

- Develop a policy that will encourage the celebration of cultural diversity in a way that explicitly includes Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- Assist pupils, parents and schools to challenge negative and inaccurate media coverage of these communities in keeping with the duties of schools under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- Recruit professional staff from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds.
- Empower communities to promote their own culture through a) partnership work in schools, b) establishing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller collections/museums and c) engaging positively with the media.
- Raise awareness of Eastern European Roma families and established Traveller communities to enable meetings, sharing of experiences and support.
- Ensure that members of the communities are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding Race Equality issues and the benefits and safeguards inherent in accurate ethnicity self ascription.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this range of policies for raising community confidence to voluntarily self-ascribe their true ethnicity status.



Schools

- 3.3 Ensure that all school staff, including non-teaching staff and governors, receive full briefing documentation detailing the legality of the minority ethnicity status of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage and linking this to the schools' duties under Race Relations legislation.
- Develop a programme of in-service training focused on the issues surrounding the confidence of parents and pupils to voluntarily self declare their true ethnic identity.
 - Ensure that the social and aesthetic environment of the school is specifically and explicitly welcoming, reassuring and affirmative of respectful acceptance of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, their culture, history and languages.
 - Devise strategies to enable equal opportunities for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents who may have had little access to schooling/the written word and/or whose first language is not English, to understand the ethnicity ascription process and declare themselves accurately.
 - The purchase of books, teaching materials and works of art and other artefacts should reflect the cultural diversity of the school and community and be inclusive of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history, language and culture.
 - The curriculum should be inclusive about the cultural, historical and linguistic backgrounds of these communities, and in a way, which results in sustainable embellishments that will improve the quality and accuracy of knowledge for all pupils in the school.
 - Policy and practice should be equally applied across all groups in relation to race equality and anti-racist bullying. This should include routine identification of any anti-Gypsy/Roma/Traveller comment, name-calling and or behaviour alongside any other racist behaviour. A rapid and robust process for dealing with incidents should be developed.
 - Develop a strategy that always doubly scrutinises any pending decision to exclude a pupil from these communities as they are the ethnic minorities most likely to be victims of racism and at risk of exclusion.
 - Develop a policy that will facilitate the celebration of cultural diversity within the community in a way that explicitly includes Gypsy, Roma and Travellers.
 - A strategy to engage with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents and communities to discuss the issues surrounding voluntary declared ethnicity self ascription by exploring and exploiting the opportunities offered by a range of learning venues, including the school and or home visits. These discussions should focus on the reasons for ethnicity monitoring in education and the anonymous character of the statistical data held.
 - Work in close co-operation with the Traveller Education Support Service to devise strategies to extend the school's repertoire of professional development skills to facilitate effective parental liaison which results in parents from these communities taking a full and equal part in the life and work of the school.

- Work in close co-operation with the Traveller Education Support Service to monitor the accuracy of data collection regarding language and ethnicity and to develop appropriate strategies for any improvement.
- Endeavour to promote positive models and images of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils through the celebration of notable achievements of individual pupils or members of staff.
- Strategies to encourage the full participation of all pupils in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in June.
- Assist pupils, parents and staff, to publicly challenge negative and inaccurate media coverage, and or any other negative references of the communities, in keeping with the duties of the school under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- Recruit professional staff from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds.
- Recruit school governors from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds including the possibility of co-option in relation to the school's duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Devise strategies to encourage understanding and confidence in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents who might volunteer but feel they lack the skills required.
- Provide appropriate induction training to all new staff at the school on the issues of voluntary declared ethnicity self ascription particularly those involved in home visits who may have more opportunity to build trust.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the school's policy on raising the community's confidence to voluntarily self-ascribe their true ethnicity status.



Section 4:

Benefits of Self-Declared Ethnicity Ascription for:

- **Pupils**
- **Parents**
- **Schools and Local Authorities**

- 4.1 There are a number of benefits to be derived from the voluntary self-declared ethnicity ascription of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage communities. These should be at the heart of the reasons, strategies and policies underpinning efforts to encourage greater confidence in self-declared ethnicity ascription.

Pupils: Why should I – What’s in it for me?

- It is good to be proud of who you are.
- It is a human right for the world to respect you for who you really are.
- There is nothing to be ashamed of in being a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller.
- Bullies will never be challenged and exposed for what they are by the silence of fear.
- It is good that others are able to learn about, and to meet and know, people of different backgrounds – it is what brings human beings together to live in peace and harmony. It is the essential building block of community cohesion.
- Your parents and sisters and brothers, and your community, need to be presented to the world through your proud and honest representation and advocacy.
- You have a right to education and it is not conditional on you hiding your ethnic identity.
- Your happy and successful learning will often need you to draw on and share your life experiences within your family and community. You will not be able to do that if you are fearful about the school knowing who you really are.
- When you achieve success at school and receive applause in assembly you will be unable to earn the praise and respect for the ethnicity and cultural status of yourself, your family and your community.
- Childhood should be full of happiness and it is short enough without the burden of having to keep a closely guarded secret and living in the fear of ‘exposure’.
- In order to have real friends in school, relationships have to deepen and for this to happen and for them to be truly rewarding, they have to be based on honesty and truth.
- Your teachers will not be able to help you as much as they would if they do not know about your ethnicity and cultural background.

Parents: Why should we – What are the benefits for our children and our community?

- Most parents across the world want their children to grow up to be proud of their family and its heritage.
- There is nothing to be ashamed of in being Gypsy, Roma or Traveller.
- It is a human right for the world to respect you for who you really are.
- It is important to children's psychological, social and personal development to be proud of their family and its cultural heritage.
- Most parents across the world want their children to have the freedom to be happy and confident in their self-knowledge and to be able to share freely, and to be treated with respect for who they really are.
- Racists will never be challenged and exposed for what they are by the silence of fear.
- Most parents want their children to have happy lives in which they learn to relate to, and respect others, with different and diverse backgrounds so that they may live together in peace and harmony. This important process is promoted and experienced at school but it requires everyone to have the confidence to be open and honest.
- Parents, who tell their children to deny their ethnicity, place an unfair burden on their children and a disadvantage that is not suffered by other children.
- Your children have a right to education and it is not conditional on them hiding their ethnicity or cultural identity.
- Your children's happy and successful learning will often need them to draw on and share their life experiences within your family and community. They will not be able to do that if they are fearful about the school knowing who they really are.
- Your children will also be unable to bring home examples of completed work that they and you should be proud of because it portrays a treasured truth about your culture and way of life. This will deny them the happiness that most children experience during their school years.
- When you are invited to the school assembly to celebrate your children's successful achievements for which they may receive applause, you will be unable to claim the praise and respect for your families and community's ethnicity and cultural status. Yet another opportunity will be lost to flag your children's and family's positive contribution to the life and work of the school.
- Childhood should be full of happiness and it is short enough without the burden of having to keep a closely guarded secret and living in the fear of 'exposure'.
- If your children go to school in fear of disclosing their ethnic identity they will find it hard to make friends and may feel socially isolated and lonely. This experience should not be part of a happy childhood at school and is seldom part of successful learning.

- Your children's teachers will not be able to help them as much as they would if they knew about their ethnicity and cultural background.
- If your children need additional teaching support, this may not be possible unless the school is fully aware of the ethnicity of the children.
- Most parents across the world want their children to be treated equally and fairly when at school. A hidden identity is a serious threat to enjoying a fulfilled life at school.



Schools and Local Authorities: Why should we be concerned to get pupil background identity right?

- Teachers know that for children to experience happy and successful learning, they need to be self-confident in their personal and family identity and that this is inextricably linked to their self-esteem as learners.
- Schools cannot satisfactorily foster a close relationship with parents and the community unless it is cognisant of the social, cultural and racial dimensions of the whole school community.
- Schools and local authorities cannot satisfactorily comply with their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, unless they are aware of the ethnicity and cultural diversity of their school population.
- Funding streams and targeted support are frequently linked to particular groups of pupils who may feature as a priority in terms of educational funding programmes. Local authorities and schools that are not aware of the full range of pupils' backgrounds are ill placed to bid for and receive such additional funding. More accurate ascription will attract increases in funding.
- Knowing the backgrounds of pupils is an essential first step for helping individual pupils with their learning, including those with special educational needs.
- In order for the curriculum to be personalised and inclusive, the diversity of pupil's backgrounds needs to be known.
- In order for school improvement officers and SIPs to support schools to raise achievement they need to be fully aware of the diversity of pupils' backgrounds.
- Ethnically disaggregated data is important as part of school self-evaluation requirements.
- Local authorities need to be fully aware of their BME populations, including Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage in order to set appropriate targets for pupil achievement.
- Ethnically disaggregated data is important as it has a strong influence on the priorities and orientation of Ofsted inspections of schools.
- Schools and local authorities want pupils to achieve to their full potential and it is recognised that pupils who are fearful and who have to deny their identity in the school setting are destined to underachieve compared with pupils who do not suffer this unfair and needless disadvantage.



Section 5:

Case Studies

Cranford Community College, London Borough of Hounslow

The college has 1200 pupils on roll, 90% of who are from minority backgrounds. There are 15 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils on roll, all ascribed as Gypsy/Roma or Irish Traveller. The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are one of several underachieving groups that have received extra focus this year. A deputy head, supported by the headteacher has taken on responsibility for examining ways in which Traveller pupil progress can be raised.

Data from existing school records has been collated into one specific Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupil database. This gives details of ethnicity, termly attendance and exclusions and achievement in the core subjects. It also provides information about any additional needs and maps extra support for the year. Individual termly targets have been set for all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and shared with subject leaders and inclusion team workers. All Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils now receive individual support and mentoring from a Teaching Assistant for pupils from these communities. Pupil progress is added to the database termly. The pupils are now viewed by school staff as a distinct group who are vulnerable to underachievement and the database is used to effectively track pupil progress and map future interventions.

After outreach work by the Teaching Assistant and the deputy headteacher all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents are now engaged with the school and most attend meetings. Year 9 pupils are supported onto alternative education options as well as GCSEs. This is appreciated by parents. Year 10 and 11 pupils are involved in alternative additional education both on and off-site and external providers are paid where necessary. 5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils have been loaned cameras to record their travelling lifestyle and contribute to a DVD on their return. Photos will be used to create books, posters and resources for use in the curriculum.

Data at the end of the year showed that 9 pupils had improved their attendance from the previous year and (apart from 2 statemented pupils) all Year 8 and 9 pupils reached or succeeded their targets in the core subjects.

At Cranford Community College raising the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils is viewed as a whole school responsibility, with the Senior Management Team taking the lead on scrutiny of data, pupil progress tracking and engagement with parents.

Cumberland Secondary School, London Borough of Newham

Our aim is to raise the self esteem of Roma pupils; develop understanding in the school community of the Roma culture and interact with the Roma community. The objectives are:

- For Roma pupils to feel safe within the school environment and for the families and carers of Roma pupils to feel that their children are safe within the school.
- The school welcomes and works with a member of the Roma community and thus respect for diversity is reinforced in the school community.
- Roma pupils have pride in their culture and are willing to ascribe their Gypsy/Roma ethnicity.

There were a number of children in the school that the Ethnic Minority Achievement co-ordinator thought were underachieving and families had raised concerns over the welfare of their children in school through instances that they perceived as bullying. The co-ordinator consulted with the Traveller Education Support Services who agreed funding for a Roma to work on a part-time basis as a Teaching Assistant and mentor within the school. The remit was to work in classes with all students but with a focus on any underachieving Roma students and to be proactive at break and lunch-times, talking to any students re issues or problems they might have within the school.

The profile of Roma pupils was raised within the school. Parents are keen for their children to attend and willing to say that they are Roma when they enter the school.





Section 6:

Race Equality

- 6.1 Given the history of the abusive treatment of these communities over a number of centuries, both officially and by the public at large, it is entirely understandable that there should be a reluctance within the communities to voluntarily declare their true ethnic heritage.

Race Relations Act 1976

- 6.2 The Race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful to treat a person less favourably than others on racial grounds. These cover grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), and national or ethnic origin. The Act applies to educational establishments in England, Wales and Scotland such as all schools and colleges maintained by local authorities (LAs). It also includes LAs, and governors of schools and colleges.
- 6.3 The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in admission, treatment as a pupil or student, and exclusion, as well as decisions by LAs such as decisions on special educational needs.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

- 6.4 In 2001, an amendment to the Race Relations Act was introduced which strengthened the existing legislation, legislating against discrimination in all public services and more subtle forms of discrimination that are embedded deep in institutional structures, systematically disadvantaging particular groups.
- 6.5 A general statutory duty was imposed on over 43,000 public authorities, including all maintained schools and LAs. The duty requires them, in carrying out their functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
 - promote equality of opportunity; and
 - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- 6.6 The aim of the general duty is to make promoting race equality central to the way public authorities work, and to all areas of their work. The Home Secretary imposed specific duties on certain public authorities to help them meet the general duty. The specific duties for schools are to:
- produce and maintain a Race Equality Policy;
 - assess the impact of its policies, including its race equality policy, on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups including, in particular, the impact on attainment levels of such pupils;
 - monitor, by reference to their impact on such pupils, staff and parents, the operation of such policies;
 - annually publish the results of its monitoring.
- 6.7 Gypsy, Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage are included under the terms of the Race Relations Acts as minority ethnic groups.

Local Authorities and the Race Equality Duty

6.8 All LAs are bound by the duty to promote race equality. To meet the duty, they need to tackle unlawful racial discrimination, and promote equal opportunities and good race relations when carrying out all their 'relevant' functions. This means that LAs have a key role to play in encouraging, supporting, and helping schools to develop good practice in achieving race equality, particularly if the work involves meeting the requirements of the duty. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) encouraged LAs to:

- play an active part in supporting schools in their race equality work;
- identify, set up, and promote good practice in achieving race equality in schools;
- help to develop positive links between schools and local communities;
- provide information, resources, guidance, and support, so that schools can develop good practice.

6.9 In some instances, it will be most appropriate for the LA to take a lead on some aspects of schools' work to meet the duty. For example, in some cases it will be most appropriate for the LA to co-ordinate race equality impact assessments. This might be the case when school policies are reviewed and may be particularly important if schools are likely to be consulting the same groups of people. LAs in areas with small minority ethnic populations may need to play a particularly active role in co-ordinating impact assessments.

Gypsy and Traveller Strategy

6.10 The CRE recognised the extent of discrimination and disadvantage experienced by all the Gypsy and Traveller communities and is committed to helping to bring improvements to Gypsies and Travellers in all walks of life. It launched a three year strategy in 2004. The key priority in the strategy is securing adequate suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. Other areas of work highlighted are education, health, promoting good race relations, legal enforcement, ensuring better ethnic monitoring.

- *"For this group (Gypsies and Travellers), Great Britain is still like the American Deep South for black people in the 1950s. Extreme levels of public hostility exist in relation to Gypsies and Travellers – fuelled in part by irresponsible media reporting of the kind that would be met with outrage if it was targeted at any other ethnic group."*

Trevor Phillips, Launch of consultation on October 2003

- *Prejudice and overt discrimination are the daily experience of Gypsy and Traveller people. In an era in which it would now be unthinkable for landlords to use the 'No blacks, no Irish, no dogs' signs of the 1950s, 'No Traveller' signs are a frequent occurrence, despite constant challenge by the CRE.*

Sarah Spencer, British Institute of Human Rights Lecture, 11 March 2005

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was established by the Equality Act 2006 as the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. It was formed in 2007 and its research team initiated a small review about the inequalities of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in January 2008.

Racist Incidents

- 6.11 Schools will be aware that there is evidence to suggest that too many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in schools have experienced racist abuse and other forms of bullying. It has become obvious that these experiences go some way to explaining many pupils' poor attendance rate in school and their marked underachievement.

The response by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to such experiences frequently involves some of them in negative behaviour with the consequence of disciplinary actions on the part of the schools. It may well be that this race relations element is accountable for the high levels of exclusions of these pupils from schools. 2007 School Census data for these two groups combined had by far the highest percentage exclusion rate compared to all other groups.

Schools will be aware of the definition of a racist incident following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report of 1999, in which the perceptions of the abused person or persons are central to the legitimate classification of the incident, so that it is:

"any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

- 6.12 It is important that schools recognise the particular vulnerability of these groups of pupils and take appropriate actions to ensure that their school experiences are not harmed in this way. It is equally important for schools to have within their anti bullying policy, examples of racist terminology pertinent to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These may include such terms as: gypoes, pikies, mumpers, tinker, didikai, didi and chav.

Schools' anti bullying policies should make specific reference to racist incidents, their definition, recording and reporting. Specific references to the vulnerability of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils needs to be included given the widespread negative and prejudiced attitudes that exist towards these communities in the wider society, and also the possible feelings of frustration and anger that can be experienced by children when personal and or group ethnic and cultural identity is assaulted and demeaned in this way.

Dealing with Racist Incidents

- 6.13 A school will fulfil its commitment to race equality by dealing consistently and effectively with all racist incidents, harassment and bullying. All such incidents should be recorded, investigated and reported to the local authority. Incidents should be dealt with in accordance with whole school policies and approaches to equal opportunities and multi-cultural education. The context, the age of the children or young people involved, and the seriousness of the situation will influence how an incident is dealt with.

The following is a suggested checklist for dealing with specific incidents and may be adapted to the particular circumstances in the school:

- acknowledge the incident expressing disapproval;
- give support to the victim, apologise for the incident;
- identify the racist behaviour;

- counsel the perpetrator while maintaining pastoral support;
- explain to those responsible, as well as any onlookers, what is unacceptable about the incident;
- contact both sets of parents if appropriate. Explain the action taken and relate this to the school's policy on dealing with racist incidents;
- local authority advice should be referred to in serious cases, for example, leading to an exclusion from school, a complaint from parents, media attention, or if the school requires advice and support;
- keep senior management, the governing body and others appropriately informed.

It is important:

- to be pro-active in encouraging children and young people to report incidents;
- for staff to discuss individual incidents, the steps taken and the position and policy of the school towards racist incidents;
- that individual members of staff are aware of their role and responsibility within the whole school policy so that its implementation is effective;
- to ensure that through policy discussion and development victims can feel supported and perpetrators will realise in future the consequence and inappropriateness of their actions;
- to review all aspects of school curriculum and procedures to ensure that racism is challenged and not inadvertently reinforced;
- to establish procedures for dealing with parental complaints about racist incidents within the establishment's environment;
- to enable children and young people to make contact with an approved outside agency if appropriate;
- to encourage children and young people who have been subject to racial abuse to involve an advocate if appropriate.

Recording and Monitoring

6.14 It is *essential* that all incidents are recorded in order to provide an accurate picture of the scale and nature of the problem. A designated senior member of staff should be responsible for monitoring racist incidents in order to:

- get a full picture of the frequency and nature of such incidents;
- measure the effectiveness of the methods used in responding to racist incidents;
- determine immediate or future action;
- provide the school management team, governing body and the local authority with a statistical analysis of racist incidents.

6.15 Schools are required to keep a record of **all** racist incidents and action taken. Where an incident is serious, parents should be informed of the nature of the incident and the action taken. The Police should be advised of any criminal activity, and of any serious incidents. They will advise on appropriate action.

Head teachers should provide governors with information on racist incidents at least annually and ideally once a term. Governing bodies are required to inform the Education Authority annually of the pattern and frequency of incidents.

There is **no** requirement to publish the number of racist incidents on a school by school basis. Whilst this was a recommendation of the Macpherson report, the Government saw a number of disadvantages in this approach and did not accept the recommendation.

International prescriptions

6.16 **The European Commission:** is committed to ensuring equality and tackling discrimination. In its European Handbook on Equality Data 2006 the importance of accurate data collection is seen as necessary to:

- guide and support policy development and implementation;
- provide empirical evidence in judicial processes;
- perform monitoring functions;
- sensitise and raise awareness.

With regard to classifying individuals the Handbook identifies 3 practices:

- **Self-categorisation;**
- **Third-party categorisation;**
- **Mutual recognition.**

6.17 It acknowledges that 'third party classification... **may be effective in identifying individuals who are at particular risk of being discriminated against**'

6.18 At the same time the Handbook acknowledges that free self ascription (self-categorisation) should be the basis of data collection. It also acknowledges that '**respondents should be free to indicate more than one ethnic origin or a combination of origins**'.

6.19 These are useful areas to consider when devising appropriate strategies to protect and support those who, fearful of the possible consequences of accurate ethnicity ascription, are also vulnerable to racism which may go unperceived by authorities informed only by the chosen self-ascription data.

Useful Websites:

Leeds Education Gypsy, Roma and Traveller website

This website is maintained by the Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service (GRTAS) in Leeds. It's for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, those that work with them and those that wish to find out more about these fascinating communities. www.grtleeds.co.uk

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month June

Find out about the exciting events that are happening nationally and regionally and post your own information at www.grthm.co.uk

The National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT)

Find all the contact details for the Traveller Education Support Services and other useful information at www.natt.org.uk

The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM)

ITM seeks to raise the profile of Irish Travellers in Britain and increase their say in decision making processes and forums. Find out more at www.irishtraveller.org.uk

Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group (DGLG)

DGLG provides valuable assistance and information to the Gypsy community in and around Derbyshire. DGLG also has close relationships with local authorities and services to aid managing Gypsy culture with knowledge and respect. www.dglg.org/

The Roma Support Group

The origins of the organisation and its ethos are strongly based within the grass root movement of the Roma community in London. The RSG was established by the Roma people and it is led by them today. www.romasupportgroup.org.uk

Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT)

FFT is a nationally recognised organisation that serves the whole spectrum of the Gypsy and Traveller community whether traditional or new, settled or on the road. Find out more at www.gypsy-traveller.org

Multiverse

An Initial Teacher Training Professional resource network contains a useful section on Gypsies and Travellers www.multiverse.ac.uk

Early Years Foundation Stage

Find out more at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs

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