



Guidance

Pupil Support & Access

Removing the Barriers

Raising Achievement Levels for Minority Ethnic Pupils

Exploring Good Practice

**LEAs,
Headteachers,
Teachers & Governors**

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removing the barriers

teachers' notes

foreword

By Catherine Ashton



In the past four years we have made significant progress in raising educational standards across the board and narrowing attainment gaps. There is encouraging evidence that, thanks to the hard work of local education authorities, schools and teachers, minority ethnic pupils are beginning to reap the benefits from initiatives such as Excellence in Cities and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

Many individual pupils from all minority ethnic backgrounds are now achieving impressive results. We welcome that, but there is no room for complacency. It cannot be right, for example, that children of Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin are half as likely to leave school with 5 good GCSEs as children of some other groups. The causes are complex, but they must be tackled. As a nation, we simply cannot afford to waste the talent of any of our young people.

This resource highlights the factors that can make a difference. It brings to life the guidance in our *Removing the Barriers* document first published in February 2000. All of the three schools featured in the video have made significant progress in raising the attainment of their minority ethnic students. They have done so not by introducing major changes in policy, but by increasing their expectations of what each student is capable of and encouraging the students themselves to set their own goals and to aim high.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Catherine Ashton".

Catherine Ashton
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Early Years and School Standards

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introduction

Removing the Barriers is a celebration of achievement. It shows how three secondary schools have succeeded in raising the attainment of their minority ethnic students. They have done this by increasing their expectations of what each student is capable of, and by introducing small but significant changes in their ethos and approach.

The video and accompanying notes start from the premise that every school is unique. Their aim is to initiate discussion about strategies for raising the attainment of minority ethnic students in your school.



the schools

The three schools featured in the video are:

- **Denbeigh High School:** a mixed comprehensive school in Luton, with 900 students aged 11 to 16; the students are mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi.
- **Norlington School for Boys:** a comprehensive school in Leyton, East London, for boys aged 11 to 16; 600 students; mixed intake of racial groups and languages, with a strong African-Caribbean contingent.
- **Francis Bacon School:** a mixed comprehensive school in St Albans, for students aged 11 to 18; 800 students, 40% of whom come from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Bangladeshi, Moroccan and Pakistani.



General Principles

The three schools have successfully implemented a number of strategies to raise the attainment of their minority ethnic students. Although the detailed approach varies from school to school, a number of general principles underpin all their strategies.

- Diversity should be valued and celebrated. It should be seen as an opportunity – not an excuse for underachievement.
- Teachers should have high expectations of their students and encourage their students to have high expectations of themselves.
- Students who are encouraged to believe in themselves and take responsibility for their own learning tend to do better. They are also empowered.
- Schools should work in partnership with parents and actively seek to involve them in their children's learning.

'The only thing that's going to stop me achieving what I want to achieve and going where I want to go is me!'
Jahran, Norlington School for Boys

Using this resource

This resource is designed to be used flexibly in a range of settings, for example:

- Whole-school training sessions, led by senior teachers or advisers;
- As a stimulus for discussion by small groups of teachers, from the same school or, where practicable, from different schools;
- By individual teachers, for example as part of an induction programme for those joining a school with an ethnically diverse intake.

In each case, we recommend that teachers begin by watching the programme, taking notes as appropriate, then working through the questions in this pack.

The issues raised are also relevant to students and, at the school's discretion, can be used to stimulate classroom debate. At the back of these notes some questions for students are suggested, which teachers may adopt or adapt to meet the needs of individual student groups.

watching the video

Before you watch

Please note that these notes are not intended to be used simultaneously with the video. This is because they contain additional material and differ in structure. But before you watch the video, it may be helpful to spend some time thinking about the strategies your school already has in place to raise the attainment of minority ethnic students. How successful are these strategies? In what other ways could your school work to increase these students' attainment?

While you are watching

The video contains a number of recurring themes. We recommend that you take notes under the following broad headings:

- High expectations;
- A positive school culture and ethos;
- Tackling prejudice and promoting inclusion;
- Mentoring;
- Parental involvement;
- Academic support.

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discussion section

Introduction

The video and this accompanying material start from the premise that every school's situation is unique, and that specific methods to raise attainment are best developed by each school in its own way.

As schools work to raise attainment, however, many common trends emerge. The programme and these notes draw on, and share, some of that existing good practice. The list of Questions for Consideration below encourages you to think about the actions your school has taken already, and provides suggestions for other avenues it might take.



1. High expectations

A common factor in each of the three schools featured – and indeed in all successful schools – is that they have high expectations of their students. Such schools treat students of all ethnic backgrounds, and with all kinds of learning needs, as potential high achievers. They communicate their expectations effectively and positively, and make them explicit to all involved. Likewise, students in such schools are positively encouraged to have high expectations of themselves. Adopting such an approach does not mean that legitimate educational and social concerns should be ignored. Rather such concerns should be regarded as challenges, or even opportunities, rather than obstructions. There are many ways to raise expectations and, ultimately, achievement.

Questions for consideration

- 1 How do the positive and negative expectations placed on a student influence his or her performance?
- 2 In what ways can expectations – academic and behavioural – be communicated to students?
- 3 Could your school's expectations of certain students be raised?
- 4 Could your school approach challenges (such as students who may not be fluent in English) in a different manner?
- 5 What are the best ways to give students a say in their own learning? (For example, through target-setting or self-assessment.)
- 6 How can a school best encourage parental involvement and support in raising expectations and attainment?

2. A positive school culture and ethos

Successful schools tend actively to foster a culture of respect for people as individuals, and as members of particular communities. It is clear that students from all groups benefit when standards of behaviour are high. The keyword is respect: between individuals and cultural groups, and also between the school and its students.

Because creating a positive school culture requires clarity of vision, effective leadership from the head teacher, governors and other senior figures is vital. However, everyone concerned – staff, students and parents – should be involved fully.

Questions for consideration:

- 1 What problems might be caused by a breakdown of mutual respect in a school?
- 2 All schools would agree that they want to instil high standards of behaviour. But how would you define 'higher standards' and how should schools go about instilling them?
- 3 What role does individual responsibility play, and how is this best fostered?
- 4 What do you think are the best ways to agree a united vision for a positive culture and ethos?
- 5 What role do race and ethnicity play in the creation of a school ethos?
- 6 How might a positive culture and ethos best be established?

3. Tackling prejudice and promoting inclusion

All would agree that prejudice is tremendously damaging, especially so in the school environment when it leads to low expectations. The trouble is, people are often unaware of their own prejudices. Their false assumptions can even be reinforced, and lent credibility, by external sources such as the media. Because of this, both staff and students should be encouraged to become aware of stereotyping and its damaging effects.

One way to tackle prejudice is to adopt a constant, conscious policy of inclusion. For example, successful schools tend to ensure that their curriculum adequately reflects all the ethnic groups represented in the school. Many schools have found it useful to have action plans to tackle prejudice and promote inclusion.

Questions for consideration:

- 1 In what ways can prejudice and stereotyping have an impact on students' expectations?
- 2 Many schools create vision statements of their commitment to equal opportunities. What should be the features of such a statement and what would be its purpose?
- 3 What are the best ways of putting a school's vision into practice?
- 4 What kind of staff training is most appropriate to ensure that students' expectations are raised and stereotypical thinking is reduced?
- 5 What sorts of unintentional stereotypical content might you find in a school's resource material?
- 6 Does your school include activities that are relevant to students' cultural backgrounds?
- 7 How might both lessons and assemblies promote social inclusion?
- 8 In what ways might a school support the adequate use of a child's first language, both for settling into the school, and for long-term learning?

Make lessons more relevant to your students. One English class found links between Macbeth and certain traditions within Islam.

4. Mentoring

Many schools have found mentoring programmes particularly helpful in raising the expectations and the attainment of their minority ethnic students. There are many types of mentors:

- **Peer mentor:** an older student assigned the task of helping a younger student with academic and social concerns.
- **Teacher mentor:** a teacher within the school, who meets regularly with a student to discuss their academic progress, and to help with academic or social issues that may be of concern to the student.
- **External mentor:** Also known as Business mentor. An adult from the wider community: local businesses, universities, and so on. Often from the same cultural and ethnic background as the student, but this is not necessarily the case. Provides a positive role model for the student and serves as a source of encouragement and support.
- **Learning mentor:** Employed through the Excellence in Cities programme in target authorities to improve opportunities for disadvantaged students, by tackling the barriers which prevent young people from learning effectively.

Mentoring programmes provide a powerful way for schools to motivate young people, and develop their confidence and self-esteem. They celebrate and encourage academic success, and make the students feel valued.

Many find that mentoring works best when there is a clearly structured contact between the mentor and the school. The mentor's key function is as a role model, to provide support and encouragement to students. But a mentor should not be expected, or allowed, to take over the responsibilities of the school.

Questions for consideration:

- 1 How can positive role models help students?
- 2 Does your school currently run a mentoring programme?
- 3 Which students does your school mentoring programme reach, and might it benefit other students as well?
- 4 Where else might a school find suitable mentors for its students?
- 5 What type of people should mentors be?
- 6 What other positive role models, besides official mentors, are your students exposed to?

Capitalise on the self-esteem provided by mentors with complimentary actions. If your school has a system of rewards for academic effort, ask if students could become more involved in it's administration – for example, by nominating candidates?

5. Academic support

Successful schools often use a wide range of strategies to provide their students with the support they need, tailored to meet individual requirements. For example, many students benefit from additional curriculum support programmes, such as homework clubs which target individuals who have fallen behind with their homework, or feel marginalised.

Students can also be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by agreeing objectives and targets for achievement, and assessing their own progress. Schools can help by systematically monitoring the academic performance of students, and by offering individual support where it is needed. Student assessment procedures should be detailed, and updated constantly to reflect staff feedback.

Questions for consideration:

- 1 What additional needs do the students in your school have? How are these being met and what more can be done?
- 2 What curriculum support programmes are freely available to children who need them in your school?
- 3 What additional curriculum support programmes can you envisage?
- 4 In some schools, homework clubs are viewed negatively, as a form of punishment. What would you do to foster a more positive image?
- 5 Are there formal structures in your school through which students can set their own targets and monitor their own progress and if so, how are they evaluated?
- 6 What opportunities exist for teachers to influence student assessment procedures by providing feedback, and how could this be made easier?

When creating support groups such as Homework Clubs, work around students' other extra-curricular commitments, such as Mosque classes.

6. Parental involvement

Most schools agree that parents should be treated as equal partners in their children's education, and most parents welcome the opportunity to be involved. Successful schools look for opportunities to share information on achievement and celebrate success.

It has to be acknowledged that increasing parental involvement is not always easy. Schools may need to consider imaginative ways of reaching out to their minority ethnic parents, particularly those who may not be fluent in English. Parents need to be made to feel welcome, to know that their needs are being responded to, and that the constraints that are placed upon them are respected and understood.

Questions for consideration:

- 1 How can strong links with parents help increase students' attainment?
- 2 What does your school do now to involve parents in their children's education?
- 3 How can staff develop close links with particular parents?
- 4 In what ways could your school respond to parents' needs by providing material in their first language, and is it always practical to do so?
- 5 How might open-door sessions on set days of the week help to involve parents?
- 6 What factors must a school consider when setting times for parent interviews or other events?
- 7 Would open-door sessions at particular times of the week be practical?
- 8 Are there any challenges related to parental involvement that teachers should be aware of and prepared for?

Some schools have found it helpful to assign a named member of staff to act as a 'link' to every family. This can be particularly beneficial where the member of staff concerned is able to speak the family's first language.

Develop good 'front desk' reception practice, ensuring that someone is available for parents and other visitors. Include bilingual office staff where appropriate.

7. Ethnic monitoring

All schools are committed to raising the academic achievement of their students. However, studies have shown that schools that monitor results by ethnicity are best able to see whether all groups are achieving equally.

Statistical analysis needs to be based on accurate and detailed collection and compilation of achievement data by ethnicity, home language gender and any other factors which may be relevant at local level. In this way schools can identify and respond to trends in the performance of different groups.

Questions for consideration:

- 1 What are the arrangements for monitoring the performance of minority ethnic students in your school?
- 2 In what ways might this system be enhanced?
- 3 How might the information obtained from ethnic monitoring best be shared with and used by staff?
- 4 Can you think of specific areas where increased ethnic monitoring might clarify certain issues at your school?
- 5 In what ways might ethnic monitoring help different departments share knowledge and strategies with each other?

| Monitoring students' progress can be a good way of countering stereotypes

using the pack with students

The *Removing the Barriers* video is appropriate for students as well as for teachers. It may prove an interesting way to open discussions about high expectations, personal responsibility, conflict resolution, and high ambitions. Clearly, students must be encouraged to engage in discussions sensitively, showing respect for others' points of view and cultures.

Before viewing the video, we recommend inviting students to talk generally about their expectations, academic goals, ambitions and career choices. After viewing, you may find it helpful to use the questions below to start a discussion about the issues raised in the programme.

Please note that some of the questions are particularly challenging and may not be suitable for all students. Teachers should use their professional judgment in deciding which ones to use or adapt.

Teachers might also want to consider devising specific tasks to give students, based on the issues discussed.

Questions for students:

- 1 At the beginning of the programme, the children say what careers they plan to pursue. What factors do you think have contributed to their choices of careers?
- 2 One child points out that people have low expectations of them "just because of our background". What can schools do to help prevent people from having these low expectations?
- 3 What do you think are the most effective ways for a school to remove barriers to achievement and raise expectations?
- 4 What sort of ethos does a school need to implement the ideas you mentioned above and what are the best ways to instil that ethos in staff, students and parents alike?
- 5 In what ways can a school encourage students' individual aspirations; for example, Chris's desire to be an illustrator or Jarhan's to be an architect?
- 6 In the programme, Subia talks of her experiences of peer mentoring a year 7 boy, and states: "I felt it was better coming from me ... than a teacher." For what situations might peer mentoring be appropriate, and in what circumstances do children need adult mentors? (For example: academic issues; home life; conflict resolution; raising aspirations; countering stereotypes.)

Many of the above Key Points have been drawn from the DfES's publication *Removing the Barriers: Raising Achievement Levels for Minority Ethnic Students*, which has been reproduced as part of this pack.

key points for schools

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executive summary

The new century brings great challenges to schools in the UK. One of the most important is to raise the attainment levels of our minority ethnic pupils and to enable them to play their full part in the society of the future.

'Removing the Barriers' brings together some key points from research into how such an objective might be approached. It is based on studies undertaken in schools which have had success in helping minority ethnic pupils to fulfil their potential and forms the first part of a series of research summaries. The document will be available on a newly developed DfES website. Future documents, including English as an additional language/bilingualism, will also be available on the new website.

The document covers four specific areas which have been seen as key aspects of raising attainment:

High expectations

Culture and ethos

Parental involvement

Ethnic monitoring

Raising expectations deals with the need for teachers, parents and the pupils themselves to foster a belief in the pupil's potential and to celebrate success. In the schools studied, high expectations were supported by:

- programmes of mentoring and the introduction of pupils to potential role models;
- structured learning and support programmes, which included:
 - additional curriculum support programmes;
 - assessment and target setting;
 - an inclusive curriculum which considered and showed respect for the cultural background of all pupils.

The **culture and ethos** of the school community were seen to be crucial in the process of raising attainment. In successful schools:

- heads and governors had established values to which the whole school was committed;
- values were effectively communicated throughout the school community;
- high standards of behaviour were demanded and a culture of mutual respect between all groups was fostered;
- staff and parents were fully consulted and any concerns and misgivings were acknowledged and dealt with effectively;
- systems of reprimand and reward had to be recognised as fair by all;
- conscious efforts were made to counter the effects of stereotyping and prejudice;
- procedures were established to deal with race relations within the school.

Parental involvement was encouraged and facilitated. Making this effective often required:

- the introduction of innovative approaches to ensure that parents were involved as fully and effectively as possible, for example the designation of staff members with a direct telephone link to parents;
- the establishment of staff / parent partnerships whereby accessibility was facilitated by home visits, 'open door' sessions and language assistance.

Ethnic monitoring was a key component in enabling schools to keep track of what was happening to their pupils. Schools had introduced:

- purpose-developed analytical systems, enabling pupils' academic progress to be carefully monitored and assessed;
- systems to monitor the effects of behaviour problems, truancy and exclusions.

Some schools will already have introduced many of these measures. The intention of this document, however, is to make the information available so that schools can learn from one another.

introduction

This is the first of a series of publications that will be released on the Minority Ethnic Pupils website¹. We will be publishing additional documents (for example, on English as an additional language/bilingualism) to expand this information in due course. The document consists of four sections covering:

High expectations

Culture and ethos

Parental involvement

Ethnic monitoring

The examples and information presented are taken from approaches illustrated in DfES-commissioned research and in Ofsted research reports. The research teams visited a wide range of LEAs. The examples given in the document are taken from a number of schools which were judged successful in raising achievement levels among minority ethnic pupils. Readers may wish to explore in greater depth the fuller discussion and extended case studies in the publications referred to below:

- Gillborn, D. and Gipps, C. (1996) *Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils*, Ofsted Reviews of Research, London, HMSO;
- Blair, M. and Bourne, J. (1998) *Making the Difference: Teaching and Learning Strategies in Successful Multi-ethnic Schools*. DfES Publications;
- Ofsted, *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils – School and LEA Responses*, (1999).



1. This website will be accessible at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rtb>

high expectations

A positive approach to expectations

To attain a significant improvement in performance it is essential that staff and parents have high expectations of pupils and communicate them effectively. The schools studied in the research had approached these issues positively and had demonstrated success in raising standards. All schools were to some extent driven by performance tables. One advantage of the publication of performance tables had been that schools were constantly refining their systems for raising achievement.

A number of schools attribute their success in raising academic achievement to the high expectations of both teachers and pupils. Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds and with all kinds of learning needs are treated as potential high achievers. Commonly perceived setbacks such as a poor command of English are regarded as challenges to be met rather than excuses for underachievement. Schools which had closely linked the welfare and academic interests of the pupils, and which had been sensitive to pupils' cultural, religious and linguistic needs had shown the greatest impact on pupil achievement and motivation.



Teachers had high expectations of all pupils and this was reflected in their curriculum plans and teaching styles. To encourage independent work, pupils received clear instructions and explanations and were given the opportunity to question before each activity began. Clear and consistent routines and ways of behaving in class were constructed and maintained right across the school on a daily basis.

Primary School

Schools had succeeded in raising expectations by:

- examining school values and practice and by having a clear vision and commitment to equal opportunities;
- challenging stereotypical views and unfair practices;
- setting and maintaining high standards;
- creating support structures which encouraged teachers to be accountable for pupil results;
- closely targeting, tracking and monitoring individual pupils' achievement;
- benchmarking pupil achievement against LEA and national data;
- networking with other successful schools;
- liaising with parents;
- encouraging team working;
- involving pupils in their own learning by target setting and self-assessment.



One of the greatest challenges faced by the Head and the senior management at a comprehensive school was to raise teacher expectations of the students. They gave an example of the potential of the school, given dedication, hard work and, most importantly, a belief in the students.

"When I first came here, our Maths results were diabolical, we were down to something like 14% A-Cs. With a proper Action Plan and targets, the Head of Maths saw the difference for himself. In the first year, the results went up from 14 to 30% and improvement has been sustained." The Deputy Head explained: "We make staff as accountable as possible against set standards. We feel it is that drive for quality, and that drive for quality provision, which is the key to cracking low expectations.

We don't give anybody the choice. If we can hold everybody accountable, then low expectations will take care of themselves".

Comprehensive School

Mentoring and role models

In the schools studied, a culture of high expectations was accompanied by particular strategies to motivate individuals or groups of pupils. Schools and parents had worked together to create the right environment so that all young people would feel valued and be able to develop confidence and self-esteem.

Through monitoring, the school found that a problem that seemed to apply more to the Black male students, but was also an issue for all male students, was the notion that being clever and taking academic work seriously was not 'cool'. A strategy for dealing with this was to make use of 'cool' but successful male students as role models for the others.

"One boy, S, was able to be popular, to work and still have credibility with the other students. We have lads like that who don't mind having their work pinned up or who don't mind being highlighted. One of S's friends came in and asked for extra work at KS3 because he wanted to do as well as S."

Comprehensive School

A significant number of the schools in the study had developed mentoring programmes. These were most successful where there was a clearly structured contract between the mentor and the school, which included continuing professional development for the teachers, and where the school took primary responsibility for the pupil's education. It was clearly understood that the mentor was there to support and encourage the child and to be a role model, not to take over the responsibilities of the school.

The mentoring programme in the school was extended specifically for Black male students in Years 9 and 10. The mentors were young men in their early twenties who had achieved, were from the local community² and could relate to the students and speak to them about school.

The Head explained: *"The students are aware that these young people give of their time voluntarily and that they would be expected to perform a similar role for others eventually".*

Comprehensive School

In other schools the emphasis was on challenging the perception of the pupils, their parents and sometimes their teachers by celebrating success openly.



2. See also *raising standards: opening doors* DfES - Ref RSOD. PP3D15/40298/1299/14



A teacher overheard one student of Bangladeshi origin saying: *“Well, what Bangladeshi boy has ever achieved anything?”* The school started to display photographs in the front entrance of all those who achieved A*-C grade passes. Not only could students see that they too were capable of achieving, so could their parents as well as those teachers who might be inclined to hold racial assumptions about students’ abilities.

Comprehensive School

The average percentage of Grade A*-Cs in 1995 was 25% (LEA average 27%). The school decided to examine its practices and put in place a whole school plan for raising achievement. These changes led not only to a better teaching and learning environment for all students and teachers but to an improving picture in relation to the performance of the African-Caribbean male students, the lowest achieving group. In 1996 the school’s average had risen to 33.1% raising its position from below to above the middle of the LEA performance tables. It rose again in 1997 to 36%.

Comprehensive School

To create the right environment for success, schools were:

- fostering in pupils a belief in themselves, giving them a sense of responsibility for themselves, others and their environment;
- setting up systems of rewards for academic effort as well as good behaviour;
- making use of counselling as well as sanctions in disciplinary procedure;
- displaying pupils’ work, achievements and/or grade passes in corridors and classrooms around the school;
- making use of role models in the school;
- setting up a mentoring programme.

Structured learning and support

The commitment to pupils in all the schools studied was high, but what made the difference in the most successful schools was the recognition that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds faced a range of different pressures that resulted in the need for additional support. To deal with these issues, schools put particular emphasis on:

- additional curriculum support programmes;
- individual pupil assessment and target setting;
- an inclusive curriculum.

"The teachers really push you to do your best, especially Mrs B. She called me to the office the other day and she says: 'I've seen a spark and I don't want it to die. You've got the ability and you can do it.' She wants to monitor everything - my attendance, my punctuality, and I will gladly go along with that because I know that she is doing it because she really cares."

Black Male Pupil

Additional curriculum support programmes

In some schools teachers run homework and revision sessions at lunch times, after school and even in the Easter holidays. Pupils are targeted as individuals, particularly those beginning to fall behind with homework or those who already feel marginalised. Good schools recognised that some young people and groups face many external pressures that work against good school performance³.

A Homework Club has been established as an after-school activity providing an opportunity for pupils to revise and get advice on their work. It is invaluable for students with little support at home. Efforts are made to target those least likely to attend from choice. Good science results from Black students in 1997 were directly attributed to these after-school classes.

"Homework clubs are timed to fit with Muslim students' evening classes at the Mosque."

Comprehensive School

3. See also: *Extending Opportunity: a national framework for study support* (DfES). ISBN 0 855 22 7559

Individual pupil assessment and target setting

"As soon as you start looking, you have to look deeper. Why is this child sticking at this level?"

Primary School

All the schools studied had effective pupil assessment procedures which were detailed, relevant, dynamic and constantly updated to reflect staff feedback. Pupils were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by setting their own targets for achievement or assessing their own progress. Schools also monitored their own performance against national and LEA norms.

This school had developed a comprehensive form to chart each individual pupil's progress, which was passed on to each class teacher. It included records of groupings pupils had been placed in from year to year; any Special Needs or language support; the adults the pupil had worked with; baseline assessments; National Curriculum Assessment and reading test results. It also had space for more open-ended comments.

Primary School

The schools placed great emphasis on individual monitoring and tracking of pupils with individual support available on a number of levels, all carefully documented. Individual pupil profiles, linked to baseline assessment, were developed throughout the school. These were particularly important with bilingual pupils where there was a discrepancy between predicted and actual attainment.

In the spring term, staff filled in a pupil record giving brief comments on progress and any areas of weakness, and set out a plan for action. Following this, the Head met with each teacher to discuss the plans. Parents' conferences were held in the autumn and summer terms and each record had comments added by the pupil, the parent and the Head.

Primary School



An inclusive curriculum

"The school's results have improved steadily over the past four years. The school has created an environment where students feel that their cultural and individual identities are respected and valued. It has been an ongoing process linked to the need to change stereotypes and foster high academic expectations."

Comprehensive School

Pupils and parents from minority ethnic backgrounds sometimes feel the media present a negative, stereotypical image of their culture. Successful schools are creative in their attempts to reverse these perceptions. They are sensitive to the identities of pupils and make efforts to include in the curriculum their histories, languages, religions and cultures.



The English departments at two successful schools had attempted to integrate systematically the cultures and religions of South Asian students into the mainstream curriculum. Students studied examples of Black writers writing in English.

English Literature acquired relevance for the students, as students' cultures were drawn in to illustrate English Literature texts. For example, the Head of English at one school explained that in teaching 'Macbeth', they had made links with certain traditions in Islam.

Comprehensive School

African Studies was initially introduced in response to one group, the African-Caribbean male students, whose behaviour was causing concern. From an optional class, it was extended to regular after-school sessions, open to all. It was then brought into the school curriculum for all students as a compulsory six-week element of the Personal and Social Education programme. Irish Studies was also later introduced. Despite giving time to these extra initiatives, the school had progressively improved in terms of overall higher grades at GCSE.

Comprehensive School

Schools had provided structured learning and support through:

Additional curriculum support programmes

- following up pupils who are failing with homework;
- providing extra encouragement for the least motivated pupils to attend support sessions;
- releasing form tutors for one-to-one time with pupils in their tutor group and planning support staff's time to help pupils with second language or learning needs.

Assessment and target setting

- establishing systems for targeting and monitoring of individual pupils, negotiating targets with pupils and regularly reviewing these on a one-to-one basis, involving parents where appropriate;
- using baseline assessments/tests on entry as part of the profile of pupils in order to target appropriate extra support;
- liaising with Minority Ethnic Support teams and language support teachers on assessment and record keeping;
- monitoring the school's performance against national and LEA data.

An inclusive curriculum

- encouraging positive enquiry, discussion and debate by giving space on the curriculum for the histories of the ethnic groups represented in the school;
- offering a broad range of modern languages including those spoken in the local community;
- encouraging the use of the first language for 'settling in' as well as for longer-term learning;
- giving pupils access to a wide range of artistic experiences and the chance to work in and with the wider community;
- including activities that are relevant to pupils' cultural backgrounds;
- acknowledging the different religious affiliations and celebrating feast days and holidays.



culture and ethos

To be effective in addressing the needs of their minority ethnic pupils, schools have to ensure that the right culture and ethos is created. This requires vision and leadership by the Head and Governors in establishing values to which the school is committed. They also need the support of staff, parents and pupils in making the vision a reality.

The schools studied set and maintained high standards of behaviour and had high expectations of their pupils and staff. They recognised that issues of race and ethnicity needed to be properly addressed by all staff and ensured that good staff selection procedures were followed, reinforced by the provision of proper support and training. The primary aim was to create a culture of mutual respect between all ethnic groups. Strong emphasis was placed on self-discipline and responsibility, together with clear and consistent procedures for rewards and sanctions.

In any school staffroom there will be a range of views on matters of policy and practice but achieving equality throughout the school may often require senior management to introduce practices that might not be popular with everyone. It was therefore important that clarity of vision from the Head and Governors should be communicated to all. However, success in this endeavour was generally demonstrated through effective consultation, an awareness of the sensitivities of teachers and parents, and the need to deal tactfully and diplomatically with these issues.

"We sat down as teachers and discussed the whole philosophy and that's very strong. Everyone says that comes through all the time from the kids, from the non-teaching staff, the caretakers, everyone is aware of what that is."

When addressing the issue of race and ethnicity, Heads acknowledged that attempting to secure a united vision was a slow process, and recognised the importance of supporting and enabling staff to make the necessary transition.

Changing the views and attitudes of those members of staff who were opposed to the particular approach being taken in relation to Black students was important. It was necessary to engage with the scepticism and anxieties of staff. The Head adopted an open and honest approach where staff felt able to question decisions and express

their concerns. In this way, she created an opportunity to show why her strategy was a good one. *"I've been quite outright in saying that strategies to help Black students also raise the achievement of the White students and of the whole school."*
Comprehensive School

Schools recognised the need to:

- examine school values as well as practices, communicating a clear vision and commitment to equal opportunities;
- set and maintain high standards and expectations of staff and pupils;
- acknowledge the concerns of staff and give them opportunities for open discussion and consultation on the direction the school is taking;
- provide good quality in-service training;
- ensure that the school's culture is reinforced through the curriculum and assemblies.

A culture of respect

"There is a high level of good behaviour...There is an impressive level of racial harmony. There are excellent relationships between students and good relationships between students and staff...There is a positive ethos...There is constant effort to provide equality of opportunity for all students with a commitment to high achievement."

1995 Ofsted Report

The schools studied believed all pupils were entitled to equality of opportunity and examined their practices in response to their own particular and diverse intake.

"The key to good relations in our school is that we take time to listen to the pupils. We give them a fair hearing." Deputy Head

Within the schools there was a belief that all pupils were entitled to have their say and to have their concerns taken seriously. Staff listened to the issues raised by the pupils and their parents and took note of how they perceived the school and their relationship with it, both as individuals and as members of different cultural groups.

Ms C (the Head) and the staff who supported her approach, recognised early on that the school could not move forward unless something was done to resolve the feeling of disaffection among the Black students. Ms C was faced with an obvious difficulty - the Black students felt aggrieved because of the injustice that they were experiencing at the hands of some staff.

On the other hand, staff thought the Black students created the problem. Clearly this required a sensitive and tactful approach. It was necessary to address the culture of the school by examining the behaviours and practices of the whole school community and not only that of the students.

Comprehensive School

In a successful multi-ethnic school:

- members of the school community respect each other as individuals and as members of particular cultural/religious groups;
- there are clear boundaries of behaviour and systems of reprimand and reward which the pupils recognise as fair;
- the effectiveness of the school is evaluated by consultation with pupils and parents and all members of the school community are involved in its ethos and values;
- pupils are taught to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Black students felt assured that the Head was willing to listen to and empathise with their point of view. More importantly, she was willing to do something about their sense of alienation and rejection. This was critical to the process of change that was beginning in the school.

Comprehensive School

The schools believed all pupils were entitled to strive for academic success and were taking a determined approach to raising achievement to national standards or above. There were clear lines of accountability for monitoring and supporting individuals and groups, together with equally clear systems of management support for staff.

Tackling prejudice and stereotyping

Successful schools had been active in fostering a culture of respect for people as individuals and as members of particular communities. Staff and pupils were encouraged to be aware of stereotyping and its damaging effects particularly when these led to false assumptions and low expectations. Teachers and other staff can often be unaware of their own personal prejudices since, as in the community outside the school, these are often based on stereotypical representations by the media. Schools had examined their resource material for evidence of stereotypical content.

"Our main effort in this area has been on providing opportunities for all pupils to achieve as highly as possible and on developing a culture which values everybody."

Head

This school monitors the progress of all pupils carefully - both individually and also by gender and ethnicity. If the stereotype of Bangladeshis is that they under-achieve, this school has found to the contrary. Its concern is for ESWI⁴ girls who are under-achieving relative to their attainment at entry. The school challenges stereotyping with its drive to raise achievement across the board - whilst being aware of any groups which consistently perform below school averages.

School with significant Bangladeshi intake

4. ESWI - English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish.

Schools had dealt with issues of prejudice and stereotyping by:

- raising awareness of all forms of stereotyping among pupils and staff;
- recognising the implications on expectations and performance;
- adopting a co-ordinated approach to ensure that individual lessons or assemblies on such issues were part of an overall plan;
- providing appropriate training.

Race relations

| *"Memories are long and you need to be proactive...on your toes the whole time." Head*

Good race relations cannot be left to chance; schools with a good record on race relations have fostered positive links within the school and with the wider community. Joint activities between different groups can usefully be encouraged through sport, drama and other role-playing activities. The participation of outside bodies such as community organisations and the local Race Equality Council can be very beneficial.

The school issued staff with detailed and practical advice on how to handle harassment. It included who should deal with it (the witness), the need to deal with the matter immediately, how to arrange cover for other responsibilities and how to proceed. Suggestions for the wording and sentiment to use with both the victim and the perpetrator were given. Staff found the guidance invaluable and felt they would have been very hesitant about tackling such complex issues without it.

Infants School

Schools had approached the handling of race relations by:

- positive behaviour management policies;
- regular and appropriate continuing professional development;
- a good multi-cultural curriculum;
- close parental and community links;
- provision of guidance on the handling of incidents;
- use of conflict resolution as an approach to disciplinary issues;
- group interaction through drama, working groups and discussion.

"The quality of relationships in the school has improved, adults listen more to children and behaviour has improved."

Head



parental involvement

Schools and parents agree that parental involvement in their children's education is essential – but do not always share the same understanding of how this might best be achieved. Successful schools had ensured that parents were treated as equal partners in the education of their children. They had tried to find imaginative ways to break down barriers and make parents welcome, being responsive to parents' needs and respectful of the constraints upon them. Information was shared with parents on achievement and development as well as discipline issues. The schools recognised the need to be flexible and to make themselves available to parents at times which were appropriate to them.

“The more the parents felt able to approach the school, the more confidence they developed to take part in other aspects of school life.”

Most parents care deeply about their children's education and want to know about their academic progress, the development of the curriculum, homework and issues such as setting and banding. In a broader sense, they want useful information about their children's progress and what they can do to help. Many also want to know about their children's behaviour and are concerned about the cultural gap opening up as their children reach adolescence. They are afraid that their children will slip from their control and become involved in subcultures, which can be detrimental to their education. They want teachers to share with them their specialised knowledge about young people in the UK today.

For a variety of reasons, communication with parents in multi-ethnic schools often requires greater resourcefulness and a more innovative approach than in other schools. Parents do not always find it easy to contact schools about their concerns. Non-English speaking parents and Traveller parents can feel intimidated and excluded by schools whose structures and culture may be alien to them.

Some schools have addressed the communication issue by formalising the roles of 'link' teachers, bilingual teachers and home school liaison workers and also by providing direct telephone lines to an identified member of the school staff. It was often found that the personal phone call was the most appreciated and effective method of communication.

A Parent Interview Project has been running for many years. Following home visits by the Home-School Liaison Teacher, the school fixes appointments for parents and books an appropriate interpreter for each session. The pupil joins the meeting for the last five minutes

to discuss the targets that have been set with the parents and, importantly, to see that the parents and teachers were in agreement on these targets.

Infants School

For effective communication schools had:

- made arrangements for home visits;
- ensured that every family can access a direct telephone line to a "link" member of staff whom they know and trust and who preferably speaks their language;
- arranged one-to-one consultation with parents, either individually or at Parents' Evenings and ensured that interpreters are always available, if required;
- been flexible in setting times for parent interviews or other collective events;
- held open door sessions on set days of the week;
- developed good 'front desk' reception practice, including bilingual office staff where appropriate;
- ensured that all material sent to parents – newsletters, prospectuses, letters home, is in an appropriate language;
- developed individual strategies with and for particular families.

"If I am in communication with the parents, the odds are that the child will do his or her best. There has got to be a good triangle of communication between the school, the parents and the students where everyone is clear about the expectations. You've got to work with the parents on individual strategies for the child."

Deputy Head of Comprehensive School

Successful schools have developed partnerships with parents to enable them to become more fully involved in the curriculum. In some schools this partnership extended to the development of parent and toddler groups, a toy and video library and the use of the school premises at weekends for community classes and cultural events.

"They work together as a team and they help the parents as a team. Basically, in this school, the students, the teachers and the parents are one big team."

Black Parent at Primary School

At one school in the study a series of bilingual workshops for groups of bilingual mothers of Year 7 students were organised by the Year Head and the bilingual Community Liaison Officer.

The Head Teacher's report to the Governors stated that:

"Group Tutors used their knowledge of the students in their groups to nominate those whose families might benefit most from the opportunity to participate in this scheme. This provided an opportunity to meet and discuss with the Head Teacher, Head of Year and Group Tutor, as well as see several departments at work."

The six workshops included an introductory session, sessions on special needs, on science, modern languages, a tour of the school, a brief session on the computers and a feedback session.

Head of Year 7

Schools also gained valuable support by recognising the skills and expertise which many parents had to offer, and made use of these in the classroom and curriculum wherever possible. Parents were encouraged to participate as volunteer helpers in the school, as members of the Governing Body, or as active members of the school Parent Teacher Association.



The school introduced a new way of working with parents through a reading project. Several parents were paid for half an hour, three to five mornings a week, and given training to work with small groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 who needed extra help.

Apart from the support for the pupils and the school, parents came to understand better the school's way of teaching reading. The Head commented that the project had *"massive spin-off"* and was *"part of the community, family feel"* of the school.

Primary School

The schools recognised the importance of holding special cultural events at which the whole community could meet together.

The school had an active parents' and community association, mainly involved in fund-raising for the school but also acting as a pressure group where necessary, for example, campaigning on secondary transition in the LEA. The school was also producing a booklet, 'Helping Hands for Teachers', for parents who offer support in the classroom. In recent months, efforts to extend committee membership had begun to pay off with the election of two African-Caribbean women as co-chair and treasurer.

Infants School

The outcome of these initiatives is a genuine sense of partnership between school and parents that enhances the success of the school.

"I can come in, I don't need to make an appointment, and have a quick chat with my son's teacher at any time." "If anything happens, they'll phone me up and I'll pop in and check on him to see how he's getting on, and things like that." "We always get letters home, always, about what they're doing - newsletters always come home."

Black Parents at Primary School

Schools had actively involved parents by:

- setting up parents' groups and associations;
- encouraging parents to act as volunteers in the classroom or on projects which benefit the school;
- encouraging parents to join the board of governors;
- running family events and assemblies to encourage parents to stay on after bringing their children to school;
- holding classes for parents;
- providing comprehensive information on curriculum issues and homework, including running curriculum evenings;
- actively involving parents in target setting;
- giving particular attention to such issues as extended leave to visit relatives overseas, sex education and dietary needs.



ethnic monitoring

Academic achievement

Many schools found systematic and detailed ethnic monitoring an effective method for raising achievement levels. Ethnic monitoring was not viewed negatively as a way to stereotype children but as a means to identify learning problems and shortcomings in provision to make target setting more responsive.

“Each year when GCSE results come out, Heads of Department have to prepare a very detailed response including their conclusions of race and gender monitoring. We also use the monitoring to target individual students.”

Deputy Head, Comprehensive School

Through ethnic monitoring, it is possible for a school to observe the performance of different groups and to consider possible explanations and strategies for action. This makes it possible for a school to question why some groups achieve well in some subjects. It can also lead to departments questioning whether the syllabus or scheme of work is appropriate for that particular group. It might highlight the need for staff from different departments to share information about, for example, particular strategies used for pupils acquiring English as an additional language.

All the schools studied were committed to raising the academic achievements of their pupils. However, only those schools that monitored results by ethnicity were able to see whether all groups were achieving equally. The results of ethnic monitoring helped to dispel unwarranted assumptions and raised challenging questions about practices. A ‘colour blind’ approach can mean that factors important to the education of minority group pupils are overlooked.

One frequent outcome of monitoring is that it encourages schools to examine the results in terms of shortcomings in provision rather than as problems with the pupils.

Detailed LEA monitoring of progress had shown that bilingual pupils were doing better on spelling than on reading comprehension. The opposite was true for monolingual pupils. This had implications for classroom practice and the staff were discussing how to deal with this.

Without detailed monitoring, this might not have been picked up because pupils’ strengths and weaknesses within a subject area were often rolled up into the same overall result.

Primary School

In order to be useful, statistical analysis needs to be based on accurate and detailed collection and compilation of data. It is important for schools to find out 'where they are', to get a sense of comparison, both locally and nationally to enable them to keep standards high and raise aspirations still higher. Some schools had developed sophisticated analytical systems, which could compare a number of variables and give focus to the monitoring. Many also obtained information from other schools for comparison and used data from their LEA. All LEAs now monitor achievement as a requirement of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant.

The school kept careful records. Using a spreadsheet, it was possible to look at attainment at KS1 and KS2 by any combination of ethnic origin, gender, eligibility for free school meals (an indicator of socio-economic disadvantage), EAL stage, SEN stage, years in the school, whether a pupil had attended a nursery class, summer birthdays and which teachers' classes had been attended. At the time of the study, performance seemed associated with socio-economic rather than cultural factors, certainly as far as African-Caribbean students were concerned.

Primary School

"A few years ago, we looked at how many African-Caribbean students we had in the top group in Years 9, 10 and 11. What we noticed was that they were often there in Year 9, sometimes in Year 10 but had gone by Year 11. So as teachers, we targeted African-Caribbean students in Year 9, picking up on them, concentrating on particular difficulties they were having and trying to re-motivate them."

Head of Mathematics



This school had a largely 'monocultural' (Muslim) profile but senior management was not complacent about the possibility of different groups having different experiences. Gender and ethnic monitoring of results was routine. It was discovered that not only did female students perform better than male students on nearly all counts but that Pakistani students generally did not perform as well as Bangladeshi students. In particular, some Year 8 male students were causing concern. They had little confidence that they could achieve anything and they felt they were 'going nowhere'. They were targeted for special encouragement and support and there was regular communication with their parents.

Comprehensive School

Behaviour, truancy levels and exclusions

Where there is a significant level of exclusion, schools will want to discover whether any patterns exist in the type of behaviour leading to exclusion. Ethnic monitoring can be used to detect whether any one group is at higher risk of exclusion and thereby assist the school to develop preventive strategies.

Benefits from ethnic monitoring are not confined to minority group students. At this school, the Head of Ethnic Minority Achievement talked about the concern for the underachievement of white working class students. Ethnic monitoring of attendance and absence had revealed that most of the truants were white and the school was looking at ways to deal with this. Through predicted grades and exam analysis, the school was able to refine its monitoring systems to help both individual students and groups.

Northern Comprehensive School

Points to consider in the use of ethnic monitoring:

- monitor by ethnicity to highlight facts about pupil attainment;
- be prepared to question why some groups achieve well in some subjects and not in others;
- look at the results in terms of shortcomings in provision rather than as problems with the pupils themselves;
- monitor by levels of English as an additional language;
- try to detect patterns of behaviour leading to exclusion and whether this sanction is applied disproportionately to any particular ethnic group;
- scrutinise the school's own systems and processes to determine whether they might be contributing to or compounding low attainment;
- monitor performance against national and Local Authority norms;
- develop school baseline assessment.

"I think we've moved on. We don't talk so much about faults lying with the child. We are looking much more closely at our teaching."

Head of Primary School



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE