



Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 15th December

Report from the Director of Children and Families

For Information

Wards Affected: ALL

Improving outcomes for underachieving groups

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Improving outcomes for underachieving groups remains a high priority for the local authority and for the School Improvement Service in particular. This is reflected in the School Improvement Service action plans which refer to accelerating the rate of improvement of underachieving groups, narrowing and eliminating gaps.
- 1.2 In Brent there has been a borough-wide drive to improve outcomes for its main underperforming groups, Black Caribbean and Somali pupils.
- 1.3 This report will focus on the impact of that work and provide an overview of the five Every Child Matters outcomes for the White British, White Other and White Irish groups. The report will draw on data currently available to the local authority. It should be noted that information on outcomes in all areas is not available.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to note:-
 - progress to date for particular underachieving groups, namely Black Caribbean and Somali pupils
 - the overview of the performance of White British, White other and White Irish heritage groups in Brent
 - action being taken to secure future improvements.

3.0 Improving outcomes for Black Caribbean and Somali pupils

- 3.1 In Brent schools the six main ethnic groups are Asian Indian (15%), Black African (15%) of which Somali pupils form the largest group (8%), Black Caribbean (10%), White British (9%), White Other (9%) and Asian Pakistani (6%). For this report purposes it is worth noting that White Irish make up 1% of Brent school population. For the past few years, the lowest performing groups have been Black Caribbean and Black Somali pupils. Addressing this underperformance has been a high priority for the local authority.
- 3.2 There have been some significant improvements for these groups both in educational attainment and in other measures such as social care. The following paragraphs show some of the progress that has been made so far.
- 3.3 At key stage 1 the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in all four subject areas (reading, writing, mathematics and science) has increased for both Black Caribbean and Somali pupils.
- 3.4 There has been an increase in the percentage of Black Caribbean pupils achieving 5A*-Cs at GCSE from 32% in 2005 to 59% in 2009 and for Somali pupils from 34% in 2005 to 52% in 2009.
- 3.5 There has been a year on year reduction in the number of young people who are Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET). There was a 10% reduction in the percentage of Black Caribbean NEET (down from 23% in 2008) and an 8% reduction of Black African NEET (down from 14% in 2008).
- 3.6 However, there are areas where significant improvement is still needed. For example, in 2009, 41% of Black Caribbean pupils and 28% of Somali pupils achieved 5A*-C GCSE including English and Mathematics compared to the Brent average of 57/59% (provisional data). In addition, Black Caribbean pupils are still significantly over-represented in school exclusions, on the youth offending register and on child protection plans.
- 3.7 Whilst the areas of improvement are encouraging, we are committed to sustaining our improving outcomes drive so that gaps in educational attainment continue to be reduced and the outcomes for Black African and Black Caribbean children and young people across all five Every Child Matters outcome areas are brought into line with the outcomes achieved by children and young people as a whole across Brent.
- 3.8 A new structure for improving outcomes for Black African and Black Caribbean children and young people has been set up in order to continue this work. An improving outcomes strategy group is chaired by the Assistant Director of Children and Families. Three multi-agency groups have been set up to address different strands. The three areas are; improving outcomes for 9-13 year olds; improving outcomes for 14-19 year olds and reducing Black Caribbean exclusions. These multi-agency groups are chaired by Brent headteachers who report back to the strategy group termly.

4.0 Overview of White British/White Other and White Irish

Enjoy and Achieve

- 4.1 In 2009, both White British and White Irish pupils (boys and girls) performed at or above the Brent average for all pupils at all key stages except at key stage 4. White British pupils performed 2 percentage points below the Brent average for 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Mathematics. White Irish pupils performed 20 percentage points below the Brent average for the same measure.
- 4.2 In 2009, White Other pupils, performed below Brent averages in all areas and key stages except in mathematics at key stage 1 and against the indicator 5A*-C GCSE at key stage 4. At key stage 1 girls tend to perform better than boys whereas at key stage 2 White Other boys' performance is better than girls. It is worth noting that within the White Other heritage group, a large proportion of pupils are of either Eastern or Western European heritage and are therefore more likely to be bilingual. Once these pupils acquire English they tend to excel in their educational achievements.
- 4.3 In 2009 31% of White British pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) achieved 5A*-C GCSE including English and Mathematics compared to 40% of all Brent pupils in receipt of FSM.
- 4.4 At key stage 4 White Other pupils who are in receipt of FSM perform better than pupils who are not in receipt of FSM and perform above the Brent average. This bucks the national trend.
- 4.5 In 2008 White British pupils were the third largest group for fixed term exclusions (8% of total exclusions) followed by White Other (5.7% of total exclusions). This is broadly in line with their percentage of the school population. For White British pupils the greatest reason for exclusion was disruptive behaviour and for White Other it was for physical assault against a pupil. This is in line with the two most common reasons for fixed term exclusions for all pupils in Brent. In terms of permanent exclusions, 12.5% of White British pupils were excluded from Brent schools in 2008 and 2.5% of both White Irish and White Other pupils.
- 4.6 White British pupils have the second highest number of referrals to the Education Welfare Service (EWO) in Brent (9% of referrals). This is in line with their percentage of the school population. This is usually triggered if there is persistent absenteeism. The EWO service then works with both the school and the family to improve attendance.

Stay safe

- 4.6 The number of children in care from White British and White Irish heritage groups has decreased since September 2008. However, the figure for White Other has increased from 4.2% to 5.4%. Although there has been an increase this figure is still lower than for White British (9.1%) and White Irish pupils (7.4%).

- 4.7 There has been an overall increase in the number of children becoming subject to Child Protection Plans. The percentage of White British pupils on these plans has increased from 5.2% to 8.7%. The number of White Other pupils subject to Child Protection Plans has also increased from 3.6% to 8.3%. This upward trend has not had an impact on White Irish pupils; there has been a decrease from 4.7% to 0% of White Irish pupils who are subject to Child Protection Plans in 2009.
- 4.8 The number of core assessments for White British and White Other pupils has decreased for White British from 8.1% in 2008 to 7.9% and for White Other from 5.3% in September 2008 to 4.8% in September 2009.

Making a positive contribution

- 4.9 The number of young people known to the Youth Offending Service from both White British (2.8%) and White Other (2.3%) groups is relatively low in comparison to the White Irish group (12.2%).

Achieving economic well being

- 4.10 The number of pupils from White British heritage who are NEET is growing. Black Caribbean is the largest group followed closely by White British pupils. In 2009 8.8% of NEET young people were White British. In 2008 it was evident in the 'Annual Activity Survey' (which is a point in time survey of Year 11 leavers) that the white categories (including White British, White Irish and White Other) had a far higher percentage of young people who were not entering education compared to all other groups. This trend has been discussed at the Brent 14-19 Strategic Steering group, the 16-19 Funding and Commissioning Steering group, the Locality Partnership Boards and the Brent NEET Strategy group. Connexions Personal Advisers have delivered information, advice and guidance to support young people in making informed choices and effective transitions. Personal Advisers have also worked hard to keep in contact with young people. This includes outreach out into the community and visits to homes of young people who are out of contact with the service. This is significant in ensuring that the numbers of young people whose current activity status is not known remains below target levels.
- 4.11 The School Improvement Service has devised an action plan in partnership with three other neighbouring local authorities to improve the attainment of FSM pupils. The plan has a particular focus on improving the attainment of white boys on FSM. A range of activities are identified in the action plan, for example, appointment of a strategic lead to work across all three local authorities, all three local authorities to develop an action research based model to work in partnership with schools and a joint conference to be delivered at the end of the project to disseminate outcomes. London Challenge is likely to provide funding to the collaborative to implement the plan.
- 4.12 The improving outcomes strategy group will be looking at additional data for these three heritage groups to consider whether or not there is a case to widen the focus of the improving outcomes group to include this strand of work.

Contact Officers

Rik Boxer, Deputy Director – Children and Families Department, Achievement and Inclusion Division, 020 8937 3201

Naureen Kausar, Head of Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Service, 020 8937 3344