



Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 20th October 2010

Report from the Director of Children and Families

For Action/Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Report Title: Support for Somali pupils

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The number of Somali pupils in Brent Schools has increased significantly over recent years. In 2009 there were 3414 Somali pupils in Brent schools compared with 1805 Somali pupils in 2003. Somali pupils make up 8% of our school pupil population.
- 1.2 In Brent there has been a borough-wide drive to improve outcomes for its main underperforming groups, which includes Somali pupils.
- 1.3 This report aims to provide an update on the progress of Somali pupils in Brent and provide information on the ways in which the local authority and schools provide support for Somali pupils.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to note:
 - progress to date for Somali pupils in Brent
 - action being taken by schools and the local authority to secure future improvements.

3.0 Performance of Somali pupils in Brent

- 3.1 There have been some significant improvements for Somali pupils in Brent schools in recent years. Although there have been improvements, there continues to be underperformance, which is why this area has been a high priority for both schools and the local authority. The following paragraphs show some of the progress that has been made so far.
- 3.2 At Key Stage 1, although Somali pupils perform below borough averages in reading, writing and mathematics, there have been improvements in all areas. For example, the percentage of Somali pupils achieving level 2 or above in reading has increased from 65% in 2007 to 76% in 2010.
- 3.3 In 2010, at Key Stage 2, Somali pupils have improved in all three areas of English and mathematics and English and mathematics combined. The most significant improvement has been in the percentage of Somali pupils achieving Level 4 in mathematics from 57% in 2007 to 71% in 2010.
- 3.4 At Key Stage 4 there has been an increase in the percentage of Somali pupils achieving 5+ A*-C at GCSE: from 34% in 2005 to 52% in 2009. We are currently awaiting the Key Stage 4 results for 2010.
- 3.5 Although there have been improvements, we need to continue to narrow the gap for Somali pupils as they continue to perform below borough and national averages in all key stages. We also need to ensure that we accelerate the rate of progress made by these pupils.

4.0 Support provided for Somali pupils

- 4.1 Schools receive a significant amount of funding through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. This is a ring-fenced grant and schools are requested to use their allocations to:-
- enable strategic managers to lead whole school change to narrow achievement gaps and ensure equality of outcomes
 - meet the costs of some of the additional support to meet the specific needs of bilingual learners and underachieving pupils.

The majority of schools employ staff to provide targeted support as necessary in their schools. Where schools have underachieving Somali pupils, they use this additional support to provide targeted support for the pupils and ensure appropriate interventions are put in place.

- 4.2 The Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Service (EMTAS), on behalf of the local authority monitors the use of this grant through an annual audit. School Improvement Partners (SIPs) also play an important role in analysing performance and supporting schools in identifying strategies to tackle weaknesses. They do this through our well established approach to reviewing standards and supporting schools in setting challenging statutory and non-statutory targets. Last year, SIPs and schools were presented with individual

school data on their top five ethnic groups and the performance of each. Where particular groups were underperforming, SIPs provided support and challenge for improvement.

4.3 EMTAS provides support for all schools to help raise the achievement of underperforming pupils. The service offers schools advice, guidance, support and training on areas such as: raising the achievement of pupils with English as an additional language; developing an inclusive curriculum; race equality; and developing inclusive strategies in the classroom. The service also delivers three key national programmes which target underperforming groups, including Somali pupils. These programmes are: EAL programme, the Black Child Achievement Programme (Primary) and the Black Pupil Achievement Programme (Secondary). These programmes help schools to develop a whole school approach to raising standards for the target groups.

4.4 EMTAS has a Refugee Education officer who supports schools in raising the achievement of Somali pupils in particular. The support offered to schools includes: in-class targeted support, including language development; developing an effective induction programme; and developing and promoting positive home-school links. The service provides a range of training programmes for schools including raising awareness of the Somali culture and improving staff confidence in using a range of effective, inclusive strategies to support these pupils. The service also offers support in delivering curriculum meetings for parents, including surgeries to help raise Somali parents' awareness of the school curriculum and the British education system.

4.5 We have maintained our drive to improve outcomes for Black Caribbean and Somali children and young people, in order to reduce further the gaps in educational outcomes. A strategy group continues to meet regularly and is chaired by the Assistant Director of Children and Families. Three multi-agency groups have been set up to tackle different strands. The three areas are: improving outcomes for 9-13 year olds; improving outcomes for 14-19 year olds; and reducing Black exclusions. These multi-agency groups are chaired by Brent headteachers who report back termly to the strategy group.

A range of activity has been undertaken. For example, an analysis of performance in some Brent schools indicated that Somali pupils are achieving at or above the national averages. These are schools which buck the trend. The headteachers of those schools have been invited to attend a meeting to share what has made the difference and to consider ways in which this good practice can be disseminated more widely.

4.6 A Somali professional teaching network group has been established in Brent. The group meets once a term to share knowledge and information and effective ways to improve outcomes for Somali pupils. The group also shares ways of working that have made a difference, so that this practice can be replicated across Brent schools.

4.7 In order to raise Somali parents' knowledge and understanding of the British education system, Brent local authority has a regular educational slot on

Universal TV, which is an international Somali TV channel. This is organised by EMTAS. The Somali professional teaching network contributes to the programme. This is in its early days but will be monitored over the year.

- 4.8 In Brent, there is a small number of Somali community organisations which provide a range of services for schools. For example, there are after-school homework clubs and Saturday supplementary classes. These services are very well used. However, the community and voluntary sector services that provide support for Somali pupils are limited in Brent.
- 4.9 A supplementary schools co-ordinator has been working in partnership with one Somali supplementary school to support the school in achieving a bronze Quality Framework Award. The Quality Framework for supplementary schools can assist schools in improving the services they provide as well as providing a self-assessment tool to document their commitment to quality assurance and safeguarding.
- 4.10 Through locality partnerships, a range of projects have been set up to support children and young people, including some which have benefited Somali pupils. One example is the enhanced partnership work between Salusbury World and Salusbury Primary School. Salusbury World is a charity based at Salusbury Primary School. Extended services funding has been used to increase work with parents and improve partnership working with the school. Salusbury World works with refugee families and a large proportion of their work has been with the Somali community, providing after-school clubs, holiday activities and trips for the pupils.
- 4.11 Sixty-one schools in Brent have Parent Support Advisers (PSAs) in their schools. The PSA aims to improve home school links and support parents in supporting their children's learning. Some PSAs have been working specifically with Somali families to help them to improve their understanding of the education system and to support their children's learning at home.

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