



Children & Families Department

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR BLACK AFRICAN AND BLACK CARIBBEAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRENT

OCTOBER 2006

Executive Summary

Over many years key statistics have indicated that academic and economic outcomes for children and young people from Black Caribbean and some Black African heritage groups continue to be below borough averages in Brent. In March 2006, the Brent Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board identified improving outcomes for children and young people from Black African and Black Caribbean heritage groups as a key priority. It noted that a range of targeted initiatives have been put in place and there is much good practice on which to build.

However, it noted that a more joined-up strategy needed to be developed with greater co-ordination across education, social care, health, community/voluntary sector and other agencies, with the engagement of the local community in both its planning and implementation, in order to make a real impact in improving outcomes and reduce the gap in outcomes being achieved by these groups compared to borough averages.

As a first step in developing and implementing this strategy, data has been gathered across a range of outcome-based and associated indicators and an initial mapping exercise has been carried out of the activities that are taking place in Brent to support outcomes for these groups. It is recognised that this report captures the situation at a snapshot in time and new initiatives and activities are being introduced on a continuous basis across Brent and more widely.

Key messages from the data are:

- There is a decline in Black Caribbean academic outcomes from Key Stage 1 onwards
- Ghanaian/Nigerian pupil outcomes are significantly better than Somali pupil outcomes
- Male academic outcomes start below and then decline more steeply than female academic outcomes for these groups
- Black Caribbean groups are significantly over-represented on exclusions-based measures and some social-based measures such as teenage pregnancies
- Black African groups are over represented on some exclusions and social-based measures but to a lesser degree than Black Caribbean children/young people
- Black Africans are under-represented on teaching and support staff compared to the demographics of the school population
- Both groups are over-represented in participation in youth activities
- There is some evidence of over-representation of both groups on health measures, but the data is less conclusive.

Key conclusions from the initial mapping work that has taken place to date are:

- An impressive number and range of activities take place in Brent which support the outcomes of Black African and Black Caribbean children and young people. Some activities have already received national coverage and the overall impression is of a great wealth of good practice on which to build.
- However, there are a number of areas for further development or where additional progress needs to be made. In particular,
 - There is a lot of activity and support for teenagers, but less for pre-teens: this situation could be exacerbated beyond 2008 pending national future policy developments to succeed the Children's Fund and On Track
 - The Somali community represents approximately 4% of the child population and this figure is rising. As a group their academic outcomes are the lowest (other than Key Stage 4 – see section 2) in the borough. It is arguable that there is insufficient tailored or focused support for children from this community
 - As identified in the setting-up of the improved outcomes drive, whilst there are lots of good individual projects and activities, there has been to date no overarching strategy for improving outcomes from this group and limited joining-up and co-ordination of activities across funding streams
 - The large number of projects can be viewed as both a strength and a weakness. Could greater impact be made with a smaller number of more targeted and focused activities?
 - Many of the activities described in the mapping are time-bound and do not have sustainable longer-term funding
 - There are several initiatives for black boys, but much less focus on black girls. Whilst it could be argued that this is commensurate with the levels of achievement, there is a risk that girls will be overlooked in future plans

- There is some, but arguably not enough, involvement of some key stakeholders in current activity, particularly parents/carers, the wider community and employers.

The provisional findings from the data analysis and mapping were presented at a multi-agency conference in July. Based on those discussions an initial outline action plan has been developed including:

- a range of actions to be carried out in partnership with schools covering, for example, further work in identifying and communicating the role of school ethos, culture and leadership in driving success, teacher training and development, and the sharing and publicising of knowledge and good practice across schools
- work with parents in schools and the community including more effective engagement of parents, and developing the parents' voice
- developing the voice of young people and young people's input
- targeted work with the community/voluntary sector including links with supplementary schools, involvement in the rollout of extended schools, work with parents
- further development of the improving outcomes agenda into the broader Council agenda and individual service operational and delivery plans
- mechanisms for ongoing performance monitoring and data analysis
- identification and dissemination of good practice from outside of Brent

It is important to note that improving outcomes for Black African and Caribbean children and young people will not only impact on them as individuals but will also make a positive impact on the wider community in Brent.