



**Children & Families Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**
9th November 2006

**Report from the Director of Children
and Families**

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Report Title: Improving Outcomes for African Caribbean and
Black African Pupils**

What are the main issues? What is the policy background?, How does it link to the councils corporate priorities?

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. For example, their achievement levels as measured by results at Key Stages 1 to 4 at school and their participation levels in education, employment and training post-16 are generally, although not always, below borough averages. In addition, these groups are often over-represented on measures such as school exclusions, under 16 births and youth offending, which, in turn, can impact on both academic and economic outcomes and their adult lives.

Within the children and young peoples' strategy and plan in Brent, improving the outcomes for these children and young people is a fundamental issue for all services which is central to the borough's strategy for reducing inequalities and which can bring benefits both to the children and young people themselves and to the broader community in the future.

Why are we looking at this area? Have there been recent legislation/policy changes? Are there any performance or budgetary issues?

In March 2006, the Brent Children and Young Peoples 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. In conclusion, the Board committed to making a step-change in Brent's approach to this area.

Since March, a project has been carried out:

- identifying and analysing outcomes achieved and representation by ethnicity for Black African and Black Caribbean children and young people across over 40 measures covering the full range of Every Child Matters outcomes (i.e. being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being)
- mapping the services and activities currently being delivered in Brent supporting these groups and analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the coverage of these services and activities
- developing an initial action plan based largely on a multi-agency workshop held in July

This area has also been targeted as a priority policy area by the Home Office who have set up a national task group to tackle it and by the Government Office for London who have set up an action group as part of their wider Young London plans.

Given the ethnicity profile of Brent relative to many other parts of the country, it is appropriate that Brent should strive to be considered a leading local authority on this area.

What should the review cover? Give brief outline of what members could focus on, which partners to engage with, how residents/public can be involved.

The review would provide an opportunity to:

- review Brent Council's policies and practices and their effectiveness in driving this agenda forward
- review the recent project work on data, mapping and action plans, for example, identifying gaps in its coverage, analysing its conclusions etc
- help to identify how specific communities, including parents and children/young people, can be engaged more effectively to improve outcomes for these groups
- help shape the consultation, review and evaluation processes for this agenda
- help to identify appropriate governance arrangements for this agenda, including defining the roles Members could play in its development and implementation

What could the review achieve? influence policy change?, improvement to service delivery?, budget savings?, develop partnerships?.

The review could:

- influence the Council's policies, practices and plans for improving outcomes for these groups
- help to identify how specific communities, including parents and children/young people, can be engaged more effectively to improve outcomes for these groups
- help shape the consultation, review and evaluation processes for this agenda
- help to identify appropriate governance arrangements for this agenda, including defining the roles Members could play in its development and implementation
- influence resource allocation to help achieve improved outcomes for these groups