Foreword

Welcome to the autumn edition of the National Strategies EMA newsletter, which contains examples of good practice across the whole range of EMA programmes.

This issue contains articles looking at the legacies from the Secondary EAL programme and Black Children’s Achievement Programme (BCAP), which join Primary EAL, Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme and Black Pupils’ Achievement Programme (BPAP) as part of our universal offer to all LAs, as well as sharing examples of good practice from LAs and schools.

It remains very encouraging to note the year-on-year narrowing of attainment gaps for key underachieving Black and minority ethnic groups, undoubtedly due to the efforts of many schools and LAs to identify and organise tailored and personalised provision for these pupils. As well as continuing to narrow gaps for these groups we now need to apply this established practice to narrow gaps for other vulnerable groups, most urgently for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Frances Bestley,
Senior Adviser EMA

If you have good practice to share, please don’t hesitate to get in touch. We are already looking for articles for our next edition.
Narrowing the Gaps autumn term priorities

- Targeted LAs and schools have selected an appropriate target group of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and Black and minority ethnic (BME) pupils and have strategies in place to narrow gaps by specifying the action they will take for each pupil.

- School plans are effectively monitored, evaluated and adjusted in the light of evaluation to raise the attainment of pupils eligible for FSM and BME pupils.

- All programme LA teams are aware of EMA guidance materials and EMA expertise and use them effectively to narrow attainment gaps.

Primary EAL

A focus on mathematics

Why worry about mathematics?

Mathematics is a national priority for all children. Numbers of children attaining level 4+ at the end of Key Stage 2 are lower for mathematics than for English. For the key groups of children who are learners of English as an additional language, for example Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African heritage pupils, in most LAs the attainment gap between them and white British pupils is greater in mathematics than in literacy.

Although standards for targeted underachieving ethnic, often disadvantaged, groups are improving, it is clear that there needs to be a focus on accelerating progress in order to narrow the attainment gaps with all pupils.

The Williams Review (Independent Review of Mathematics Teaching in Early Years Settings and Primary Schools) in 2008 acknowledged that mathematics is a demanding subject in terms of its need for in-depth subject knowledge, even at primary level, and that confidence and flexibility are essential for the successful teaching of mathematics. A key priority of the report was the need for continuing professional development (CPD) to support teachers in their development of depth of subject knowledge and understanding related to the pedagogy of mathematics and how this would inform teaching.

We have also focused on mathematics both as CPD and in the work of primary EAL consultants, considering both subject knowledge and pedagogy. Primary EAL regional hubs and LA teams of EAL and mathematics consultants have been working collaboratively with schools to overcome barriers in mathematics for EAL and other underachieving learners.

The language of mathematics

For many children and especially EAL learners, both those new to English and advanced learners, the language of mathematics can be a difficulty, particularly in terms of:

- understanding specialised vocabulary and language;
- understanding teacher explanations and instructions;
- lack of opportunities for speaking and listening in mathematics;
- reading word problems and other questions;
- contexts of examples, tasks and questions;
- applying and using mathematics;
- Assessment for Learning.

To overcome this, the development and use of mathematical language should be integrated alongside the content of the lesson. This has been the focus of the primary EAL consultant work. Mathematics is about meaning and concepts and there is a linguistic element of mathematics which is needed to articulate thinking and understanding. In other words, you need to ‘do’ mathematics and use the language at the same time to support learning. Mathematical language is complex but can broadly be divided into the following three groups:
Subject-specific vocabulary
For example: multiplied by, multiple, divided by, divisor, quotient, place value, inverse

General vocabulary but used in a subject-specific way
For example: times, goes into, double, relationship, related, factor, tens, difference

Language of reasoning and logic to articulate thinking
For example: if…then…; because…must be…; …can’t be…; …could be…, therefore…, however…

In order to articulate mathematical thinking, the language functions and structures children need to develop and use also need to be included in the planning. Language functions are the meanings and concepts which we want to communicate and language structures are the words and word order we use to express the language functions:

Teachers need to model the language and give children opportunities to use and practise it.

There have been some success stories, and the progress of EAL learners when compared with national groups has improved more rapidly, with a five per cent gain in mathematics between 2006 and 2008, but gaps remain as attainment levels for all pupils rise.

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Secondary EAL

The launch of Ensuring the attainment of more advanced learners of English as an additional language: CPD modules

I think this is probably the very best National Strategies programme I have been involved in. It has a tangible impact on children and goes some way towards breaking the link between deprivation and attainment. It embodies what the Key Stage 3 Strategy set out to do: Expectations, Progression, Engagement and Transformation.

Acting Head of Service (11–19)
Blackburn with Darwen

The Secondary EAL programme came to an end with the launch of the continuing professional development (CPD) modules and guided resource on 16–18 June in London, Leeds and Birmingham. Following a three-year pilot in 12 local authorities (LAs) and 44 schools, the programme is now universally available.

Delegates to the three events heard how the materials fit into the EMA ‘offer’, but also how they can contribute to the wider Narrowing the Gaps agenda by emphasising the development of thinking skills and academic language across the curriculum.

During the main morning session and at subsequent workshops, the ten CPD modules were introduced and delegates were given the opportunity to try out some of the activities and also to consider how they might be used within their LA. The modules are designed to be adapted to local contexts, but can be used in a linear way.

The delegates were also introduced to the guided resource DVD, which is a repository of case studies, film clips and useful materials which can be used for self-study, for discussion in staff or subject meetings, or by consultants in order to plan their own CPD sessions. The materials will be most effective when mediated by LA consultants or experienced senior leaders or EMA coordinators at school level.
Overall, the materials were very well received and as early as the week after the event, we heard of LAs using the modules to support school-based CPD. Many LAs have made plans to roll out their CPD starting in the autumn term.

Perhaps most importantly, many delegates noted that while the materials were aimed at improving outcomes for more advanced EAL learners, they were equally useful for underperforming English mother tongue speakers, and a number of LAs are now planning to make these materials a part of their strategy for Narrowing the Gaps for pupils eligible for free school meals.

To obtain *Ensuring the attainment of more advanced learners of English as an additional language* CPD modules and guided resource go to [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies) and search using the reference 00045-2009.

**Recipe for success**

**Blackburn with Darwen**

59% of secondary pupils in the local authority (LA) are from areas classified in the 20% most deprived nationally. Approximately 10% of each year group come from deprived, White British background and 10% of these fall into the bottom 1% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Many of our learners come from families where there is no recent history of paid employment. Over one third of the pupils in the LA are EAL learners.

We wanted to show how both the Secondary EAL and the LA Raising Achievement, Supporting Learning (RASL) programmes have impacted positively on teachers’ pedagogy and consequently on pupil outcomes, more widely than with the groups identified for tracking purposes. Lead practitioners in both programmes have recognised their knowledge and skills development, their increased awareness of and confidence when discussing language features, and when shared with pupils, the impact this has on their writing.

We first identified four schools with high numbers of EAL learners where we knew that the senior leadership team (SLT) would support work on the EAL programme. This meant that we had consistent attendance at training sessions and time to develop the work in school. We also had senior support for the Secondary EAL programme within the LA, which was very important.

A group of approximately 20 Year 7 learners was identified in each school for tracking purposes. These were those pupils who entered Key Stage 3 with a lower National Curriculum level in English than in science, and whose potential we thought could be restricted by their lack of language skills. Consultants analysed end of Key Stage 2 English scripts of the identified cohort to establish curricular targets for each pupil and the school cohorts.
One science or humanities teacher plus the literacy coordinator attended training sessions delivered jointly by EMA and English and science consultants. Training sessions were delivered on a half-termly basis: a half day of training, a half day for supported planning. However, we ‘kick-started’ the process by having two training sessions in the first term when people were new to the programme.

- Early training sessions focused on ‘quick wins’ for the teachers (introducing some grammatical language, but being careful not to intimidate). These addressed some of the curricular targets, for example sequencing, connectives and topic sentences.

- The non-fiction text types were introduced next. Teachers were asked to identify two or three which they required pupils to use most in their lessons. Teachers created displays of good examples with key features identified, particularly those that related to the curricular targets identified at the beginning of the year.

- Training sessions followed on ‘The sequence for teaching writing’; strategies for developing group talk; thinking skills; Socratic and dialogic talk; skimming and scanning; DARTs; Dictogloss; questioning; and a sequence of activities to develop spoken formal academic language.

Teachers were supported in their planning and delivery of the strategies either by a consultant or by their school literacy coordinator if they had attended the training sessions.

By the end of the second year of the Secondary EAL programme, 70 per cent of pupils across the LA were on target (or above) to achieve their Fischer Family Trust (FFT) D target. Two teachers achieved Advanced Skills Teacher status as a direct result of their involvement in the Secondary EAL programme. One teacher has been awarded lead practitioner status with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. One school has achieved leading edge status for EAL learners and Ofsted reports identify pupils’ positive attitudes to school.

After the second year of the EAL programme, the LA mirrored the project for those schools who had not been involved, this time focusing on any pupils who had entered Key Stage 3 with two level 3s and who were considered to be ‘language deprived’. This project was called ‘Raising Achievement, Supporting Learning’ (RASL) and the aim was to develop cognitive academic language proficiency. The RASL programme followed a similar format to the EAL programme: starting by analysing end of Key Stage 2 scripts to identify curricular targets; understanding what a level 3 pupil looks like in English (for science and humanities teachers); literacy and numeracy strategies that work with level 3 learners.

In schools where the impact has been greatest, the following were seen as significant factors:

1. Support of the SLT (including writing the EAL programme into the School Improvement Plan)
2. Consistent attendance at training sessions
3. Starting small

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Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme – raising the attainment of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish heritage pupils

Professional Learning Communities: Building local partnerships

The Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide a universal offer to local authorities (LAs) in raising standards for underachieving advanced bilingual learners. They emerged from the Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme, which focused on raising the attainment of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish heritage pupils, and from September 2009 will also be an offer to the Secondary EAL programme, which focuses on developing the reading, writing and thinking skills of advanced bilingual pupils. The PLCs were launched in October 2008 in six hubs: Leeds and Oldham in the north; Dudley and Luton in the centre; and Enfield and Newham in the south.

The role of the PLC is to share regional expertise and identified good practice across LAs and to develop partnerships at regional, LA and school level. The PLC participants are LA officers and it provides them with an opportunity to address local priorities, as well as an opportunity to discuss and think through challenges together. Each LA officer that attends actively participates in the Learning Community as an equal partner; the role of the hub LA is to facilitate events rather than to provide solutions. To date, more than 70 LAs have attended PLC events.

After three events, the range and variety of regional priorities can already be seen. In the north of England, Oldham LA has made close links with the Greater Manchester Challenge (GMC) to ensure that their work is aligned. The events have focused on pedagogical approaches and involving parents. Successful schools from Oldham and Rochdale presented classroom-based approaches that have led to improved progress for advanced bilingual learners, while Bolton LA shared their approach to raising Pakistani attainment using a multi-agency approach. In Leeds, LAs were given the chance to consider the key processes in leading successful change based on the work of John Kotter. In their second event, LAs explored how Assessment for Learning and Assessing Pupils’ Progress can support improved progress for the key groups. Calderdale and Bradford shared their work in this area.
In the central territory, Luton PLC has explored leading change and classroom-based approaches to developing active learning and thinking skills. Pupils from Challney Boys High School, now at sixth-form college, spoke about how the school had moved them from pupils working at level 3 and 4 in Year 7 to Year 12 students with 12 and 13 GCSEs at A* to B. In Dudley, LAs have discussed effective leadership in schools and how to engage and involve parents and the wider community. In the southern territory, Enfield and Newham plan and provide joint Learning Community events for up to 35 LAs. At these events, LAs have shared their own priorities and strengths and have linked with LAs with similar focuses so that ideas and approaches can be shared.

The participant list reflects the need to align and ‘mainstream’ work on vulnerable groups at LA and school level. In addition to those who have traditionally worked on Ethnic Minority Achievement, participants include LA strategy managers, and English, mathematics, science, and teaching and learning consultants, as well as those with specific responsibilities for key areas such as parental involvement. This has given people working in the same LA the chance to discuss advanced bilingual pupils together, sometimes for the first time, and to recognise that effective approaches for these pupils are effective approaches for all. Hopefully, as the PLCs develop, LAs and schools will work more actively in partnership than ever before.

Working effectively with parents and the local community to raise aspirations and achievements of pupils

Mulberry School, Tower Hamlets

Mulberry School in Tower Hamlets made a decision two years ago to try to work more effectively with parents, as very few parents were actively involved in the life of the school. The school’s mission is to encourage confidence, creativity, leadership and learning, and the focus on parents would support this. An additional senior leader was appointed from the Future Leaders programme.

Mulberry is committed to working with all members of our local community. We recognise the importance of building strong relationships with parents, schools and third-party organisations in the local area.

Mulberry is a core partnership school for the Extended Schools initiative and aims to offer or signpost activities and opportunities in the local area.

Headteacher

Tower Hamlets is an area of high socio-economic deprivation with high levels of unemployment and overcrowding. Mulberry School for Girls is a specialist arts college with 94 per cent Bengali pupils, who attain 60 per cent five A*-C GCSEs (including English and mathematics).

The journey for the school started in autumn 2007 when the senior leader arranged a consultation with Bengali staff followed by a questionnaire for parents, with a prize draw to encourage parents to respond. The consultation highlighted that parents wanted a range of classes to be arranged in the morning, with the provision of a crèche, and they wanted to widen their experiences by going on excursions.

The consultation exercise was followed up by some ‘quick wins’ which included the prize draw from the returned questionnaires, a theatre trip and a parent-voice trip with London Borough of Tower Hamlets, targeting Year 7 parents. One of the key elements of successfully involving parents was making use of a Bengali teaching assistant, who has a daughter at the school and lives in the local community; she was able to give advice as to what would be most effective and what would not work. Gradually, the parents’ confidence in the school has increased and a large number of parents visit the school on a regular basis.
Mulberry School now offers a wide range of adult learning and family learning activities, information sessions on a range of curriculum issues, many trips and visits that the parents have chosen to make, and community events. The community work targeting adult and family learning offered classes in the following (the numbers in brackets show how many people attend classes):

- Arabic language (20)
- first aid (30)
- Open University taster courses (100)
- jewellery making (30)
- calligraphy (20)
- yoga (20)
- aerobics (20)
- ICT (beginner (40)/intermediate (22))
- keep fit (71)
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) (40)
- cooking from around the world (37)
- food hygiene (21)
- swimming (63)

The school also provided parent information sessions on a range of topics. These ranged, for example, from Year 11 GCSE preparation and a Year 6 parent transition event to managing depression, cancer awareness, and drug and alcohol awareness. The cancer awareness parent information session was presented by the Primary Health Trust and the 50 mothers attending were given relevant information concerning different types of cancer. They then had a chance to discuss different issues from the presentation. It became particularly moving when one of the mothers spoke about her personal experience.

Trips and visits have also taken place, among others to Regent’s Park Mosque, Brighton, the cinema, the Science Museum and to some London shows: *Mamma Mia* and *The Lion King*.

Community links have been developed with other local schools and a children’s centre where the pupils have siblings. Last year a successful community day was held where 1500 people attended, and this year over 2000 people from the local community enjoyed a day of dance, workshops, entertainment and food. A quote from the day:

*Mulberry is at the heart of our community and it is good to see the school opening its doors and providing so many things for our girls to move forward in the future. Today has been a really good day with so many people from the local community here to celebrate and have fun!*

The impact of all this work at Mulberry School is not only on the learning, confidence and self-esteem of the parents attending the classes, but on the positive relationships developed by the pupils knowing that their parents are now taking a more active role in the school. Improvements for pupils have been seen in terms of better attendance, completion of homework, and the attitude and behaviour of particular pupils.

Community links have flourished and grown from very limited activity to having a wide range of events for parents (with classes now being oversubscribed and with long waiting lists) and optimistic plans for the future. The school is now viewed by many parents as being at the heart of the community.

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Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme

Supporting Roma children

In primary schools: Altmore Infant School, Newham

At Altmore Infant School 95 per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language, with the main home languages being Sri Lankan, Bengali and Urdu. The school now has increasing numbers of Polish and Slovak Roma pupils for whom English is a third language, their parents speaking both Romani and Slovak or Polish at home. On arrival pupils are matched with others who speak the home language.

There are 12 Roma pupils on roll. Some of the families are newly arrived from Poland and the Czech Republic, while others have been in the country for several years. The seven Roma pupils now in Year 2 have all been mid-term arrivals, none having started at the school in Reception. The school has very close links with the nearby Lathom Junior School and together the two schools employ a family support worker whose working week is split between them. This ensures that families have one point of contact in common for both schools and helps to aid smooth transfer. The junior school also has Polish-speaking staff who can be called upon when necessary.

Transition for the Year 2 pupils, including the seven Roma pupils, started early in the year with pupils visiting the junior school for lunches and infant school staff being involved in the planning of the Year 3 curriculum. Team teaching and writing sessions before transfer encourage smooth transfer and transition into the junior school.

For the past year the school has been involved in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme, which is effectively led by the headteacher and EMA coordinator. At the beginning of the programme a continuing professional development (CPD) session was held to raise staff awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture, history and issues. This was provided by Save the Children. Staff acknowledged that in some cases their own knowledge had been very limited and the training had been very beneficial. In common with all the programme schools, staff carried out an audit of policy and practice regarding Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. This identified a lack of resources that reflected Roma culture. As a result staff are now actively researching and purchasing suitable resources, including books and games.

As for all pupils, the attainment and progress of the Roma pupils is closely tracked. The school has collated Roma pupils’ attendance data along with performance data in literacy, numeracy and science and has also detailed interventions accessed by individual pupils. For this group attendance is an issue, with a clear link between attendance and progress made. The school is proactive in following up absence by teachers speaking to individual parents as well as visits from a family support worker.

This year the school has employed a Romanian teaching assistant (TA), now with qualified teacher status, who speaks Romanian as a first language and has experience of teaching Roma pupils both in her home country and in other London LAs. The TA supports Roma pupils in literacy lessons and also teaches them in small groups to develop literacy skills. The curriculum is differentiated
and pupils follow individualised programmes personalised to their needs. In addition they have access to a number of interventions and clubs. Roma children who are new to English learn quickly through careful planning and resources. Activities are modelled with lots of visual support and practical activities to develop vocabulary and confidence. They are also supported throughout the year by the EAL team.

The headteacher has established a wide range of partnerships with outside organisations. At parents’ evenings there is representation from a number of agencies including health and social services, organised by the family support worker, which aims to offer support as well as signpost families to appropriate agencies. Roma families attending these parents’ evenings are beginning to feel confident in seeking advice to access these services.

The EMA coordinator and family support worker work closely together to encourage parents to engage in school activities and have run an outreach programme to Roma families. It has been successful in engaging Roma parents in mother and toddler sessions. Families are also encouraged to join family learning programmes as well as English classes, which are provided by the school in connection with community learning organisations.

A recent Roma celebration day was very successful. Roma children were involved in presenting dance and drama, reflecting their culture, in an assembly to their classmates, parents and other Roma children from the local junior and secondary schools. Roma parents provided food for the occasion.

New Roma children now settle in to school quickly. They are happy and confident and therefore ready to learn. They are quick to develop English skills which enable them to access the curriculum confidently. All Roma pupils are making very good progress and are happy and confident in school. All Year 2 Roma children obtained level 2 in mathematics and science, and have also progressed by several steps in reading and writing, with some gaining a whole National Strategies level over the year.

Parents and children are becoming increasingly confident and proud in explaining and celebrating their culture in school. There is raised awareness of Roma culture amongst the school community and this is reflected in the curriculum and resources of the school. The attendance of Roma pupils has risen, with 75 per cent of Roma pupils now achieving above 80 per cent attendance.

The school’s recent Ofsted report notes:

*Pupils’ understanding of different cultures and religions is very good.*
The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of different pupils very well and allows them to work creatively. This has an outstanding impact on their enjoyment.

**In secondary schools: Thrybergh Secondary School, Rotherham**

Thrybergh Secondary School in Rotherham is a relatively small school with a mainly white, monocultural intake. The past 18 months, however, have seen an increase in pupils enrolling at the school from the city’s new East European Roma community. This mix of cultures, something the school had not previously worked with, was a challenge in itself; but further challenges stemmed from the fact that the new cohort of pupils were English as an additional language learners and that for many of the pupils there was little expectation at home of regular engagement and participation in secondary school.

A number of fundamental changes took place to shift the emphasis of the school’s responses to these learners so that it was right within the heart of its learning. A designated EAL staff member was appointed and a primary practitioner was redeployed to focus on the pastoral needs of the Roma pupils. This was underpinned by a more robust line management structure and the assignment of key workers to specific year groups with Roma on roll. Being part of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme gave the LA some funding to appoint TAs from the local Roma community. One young male TA was deployed to the school and offered an excellent role model, a source of information about the communities and direct liaison links with families, as well as learning and teaching support.

To improve attendance, the school introduced a breakfast club and positive rewards were given for good attendance. The Roma TA was a boon in making contact with parents, including home visits, to respond when pupils did not attend. The profile of attendance actions was also raised by ensuring that they featured as a key issue within staff performance objectives.

A personalisation approach has boosted learning and teaching. This begins by initially ensuring that assessment findings are shared with all staff and is then followed up by the close monitoring of individual achievement. Beyond this, the English as an Additional Language Induction Programme (EALIP) is utilised to acquire English skills quickly, while alignment with the whole-school learning and teaching policy maximises quality assurance. All of these initiatives were discussed through whole-staff inset where evaluations showed clear advances in staff perceptions and their knowledge base about East European Roma, their countries of origin and current situations.
Ascription was revisited, especially at the moment of admission, and has led to the involvement of the Roma TA and 100 per cent accurate ascription levels. Family support sessions run every Wednesday morning and a dialogue has begun to be developed with parents around academic achievement and the general welfare of learners.

Much still remains to be done; however, so far the school has seen some very marked improvements:

- student Gypsy, Roma and Traveller voice surveys show positive responses;
- attendance data analysis shows a marked upward trend;
- there is increased participation by the Roma pupils in mainstream lessons;
- there is reduced truancy among the Roma pupils;
- there are emerging positive relationships between Roma and non-Roma pupils through increased integration.

Many of the areas for action identified by Thrybergh in their initial Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme audit have now been significantly developed; the challenge ahead is to build closer integration, celebrate cultural heritage and, of course, further raise achievement and attendance.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller guidance materials

In November *Moving Forward Together: Raising Gypsy, Roma and Traveller achievement and Building Futures, Developing Trust: A focus on provision for children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage* will be published. These are the final additions to the Narrowing the Gaps portfolio of guidance materials for schools. The guidance aims to support schools and settings in improving the progress and achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, who are the lowest attaining minority ethnic groups in our schools.

*Moving Forward Together: Raising Gypsy, Roma and Traveller achievement* consists of four interrelated booklets:

*Booklet 1: Introduction*

*Booklet 2: Leadership and management*

*Booklet 3: Learning and teaching*

*Booklet 4: Parents and community*

The guidance materials aim to support schools to raise standards, narrow achievement gaps and accelerate progress through:

- an exploration of learning and teaching approaches that will maximise the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people;
- providing conditions for learning that value diversity and build and promote self-confidence;
- challenging racism and promoting racial equality throughout the school;
- developing effective partnerships with parents, carers, families and communities.

All booklets are interspersed with case studies and quotes from practitioners, pupils and parents, programme LAs and schools.

*Building Futures, Developing Trust: A focus on provision for children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage* consists of a booklet and a DVD-ROM which contains the written materials with additional case studies and footage to exemplify the experiences of LAs and individual settings that are developing effective practice. The guidance invites practitioners across the whole range of Early Years Foundation Stage settings to reflect on the quality of their provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and their families.

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Working with ZJ

Sellincourt Primary School, Wandsworth

ZJ joined Sellincourt in Year 4. Initially no school records could be found for him; his parents explained that this was because he had been educated in the private sector. In fact, some of ZJ’s education history had been omitted. He had started his education in a state school and due to increasing behavioural, social and emotional issues which arose he had changed school six times in five years. Finally his parents had transferred him to a private school in South London.

ZJ was quickly identified as underachieving. He also displayed some serious anger management issues. He soon became known for his extreme rudeness and failure to cooperate with the adults around him. He would refuse to become involved in any work in class and was openly hostile towards anyone who made any overtures of friendship. He was alienated from his peers and menacing in the playground, never overtly starting fights but frightening children by his manner and hurting them with the things that he would say.

As the situation worsened, his parents were called in and discussions arose regarding referrals to Behaviour Learning Support or Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services. ZJ’s parents refused to be party to the possibility that there were any problems and reported that at home ZJ was a caring, loving child.

Towards the end of ZJ’s Year 4 the school became involved in the Black Children’s Achievement (BCA) Programme and ZJ was one of the group of children identified within the target group. The targeted children, including ZJ, began by working in a small group where they investigated famous people of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage. This was the first school activity that ZJ became involved in and it was the first bit of writing that he undertook willingly. Even on occasions when he had comprehensively failed to cooperate in class he would complete tasks set by the school BCA Programme lead. She would often work with ZJ in class.

When ZJ entered Year 6 the school decided to use its BCA Programme funding in a slightly different manner. Assessment had shown that there were more underachieving girls than boys and so the school employed a learning support assistant (LSA) who worked with the targeted group (now much broader than the original group) in a range of ways. This included the LSA mentoring some children, providing targeted small-group work, supporting children in class, providing ‘time out’ where necessary, helping children with their homework or tasks that they had not understood in class, and hearing children read. The LSA provided ZJ with one-to-one support outside the classroom, where she took him through work which he had not previously grasped in class and so enabled him to function increasingly well in his class.

The results were impressive: ZJ became interested in learning and concentrated on his work, he completed homework tasks, he spent less time in trouble, he was less sullen and, after his initial rudeness to his LSA, he began to work alongside her. Then he began to discuss his understanding of tasks and to complete homework!

ZJ’s concentration in class improved and he developed an appropriately respectful relationship with his class teacher. When ZJ left Sellincourt he achieved level 4s in English and science and narrowly missed a level 4 in mathematics. He hardly ever gave us (or himself) cause for concern about his behaviour, was much better able to manage himself and was developing as a successful learner – interested in what the curriculum could offer him. We all feel that had we begun this intervention sooner we could have been even more effective. This year the school has employed a full-time BCA LSA who works not only with the targeted Black African and Black Caribbean children but also with other children who are underachieving.
Developing Patois in the curriculum through partnership teaching

Walter Halls Primary School, Nottingham City

The school has a number of pupils from Caribbean backgrounds and the initial BCA Programme audit indicated that currently Patois is not used very much within the curriculum. The school has links with a school in Jamaica and has previously covered a unit of work on Jamaica, but wanted to develop this further. Staff initially took part in a professional development meeting focusing on the use of Patois, which was led by the BCA consultant. She then followed up the development meeting by partnership teaching with the Year 3 teacher.

They met to plan the sessions; as the class were studying Jamaica, it was decided to extend this theme and immerse the children in many aspects of Jamaican life, including art and music, stories and poetry, and history looking at famous Jamaican role models past and present. A range of resources were used to support this work, including video clips, maps, food, drink, photos and CDs. A Caribbean storyteller came in to work with the class and led a whole-school assembly which was well received. Pupils had the opportunity to work with stories and poems written in Patois and used literacy skills to try to translate words and phrases. Pupils were able to taste various Jamaican foods and dishes purchased from a local Jamaican takeaway. They were also shown how to make a fruit punch.

The pupils became more familiar with Jamaican culture and more aware of Patois as a language. Pupils were able to recognise differences and similarities between Jamaican and English schools. Pupils of Caribbean heritage showed increased engagement and motivation. The class teacher felt more confident using Patois in the curriculum. The unit of work developed will be embedded in the Year 3 curriculum.
Sharing practice and developing futures: Events for BCA school leaders and LA BCA lead managers and consultants

The Black Children’s Achievement (BCA) Programme began in 2005 as the African Caribbean Achievement pilot. In 2006 the five local authorities (LAs) which began the work at that time were joined by 15 additional programme LAs (and about 45 associate LAs). These authorities were supported and challenged through regional adviser visits, they developed the programme through BCA managers’ and consultants’ meetings and they raised standards through applying the work which we had all done together.

After four years working together, the summer term 2009 was the starting point for the programme to move into its universal phase. Two events were organised, in Leeds and in London. St Mary’s CE Primary School, Birmingham, a programme school which wanted all of its children to attain at higher than nationally expected levels, provided the keynote speakers for the London event. The detail of their work, especially on building children’s confidence as learners and on transition and transfer, was inspiring. Their input went well with the recently analysed progress data which showed accelerated progress for the target group in BCA schools from 2006 to 2008.

Key Stage 2 L4+ English and mathematics attainment comparisons for BCA Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BCA Pupils in Target Schools</th>
<th>Other BCA Pupils in Target LAs</th>
<th>BCA Pupils in Non-Target LAs</th>
<th>All Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Achieved level 4 in English and mathematics

- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
It will be fitting if the 2009 data shows even more rapid progress being made.

The May Sharing Practice events were positive, forward-looking events where school and LA staff worked together to provide many inspiring seminars for their colleagues. The days were highly successful and many new working partnerships are being built across the country with raising Black children’s achievement as the core activity.

**Black Pupils’ Achievement Programme**

**Raising the attainment of Black pupils using action research**

**Bristol Metropolitan College, Bristol**

This work has been an ongoing priority for us for a number of years. We have learned that there was no ‘quick fix’. It has taken a sustained effort over time with lots of trial and error to effect change. Initially there were three major ‘drivers of change’: Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) research (2001/2002), Aiming High (2003/2005) and the Black Pupils’ Achievement (BPA) Programme (2005–present) which provided us with time, resources, evidence, LA consultant support and a school-based lead professional.

EMAS wanted to carry out a piece of research in Bristol schools. We were already aware of underachievement in some of our pupil groups, and in particular in our African Caribbean pupils, and so we asked if they would conduct their research in our school so that we could try to recognise and address the causes of underachievement.

The research involved:

- pupil interviews
- teacher questionnaires
- staff interviews
- analysing resources and schemes of work for linguistic and cultural relevance
- ‘school tours’ looking at displays within classrooms and the images presented
- observing pupils at break times and lunchtimes
- parents’ meetings.

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Our journey began – painfully!

These are some of the comments made by the pupils during their interviews:

Too many teachers do not want the ‘hassle’ of trying to make Black students work.

**Year 9 and Year 11 pupils**

The pupils felt that there was a lack of encouragement from some teachers, who did not challenge them to work.

If we don’t disturb them, they leave us alone.

However, the point was eloquently made by another pupil that:

The good teachers would cajole, encourage and if necessary demand that the students work. There was the expectation that the students would and could do the work.

It was difficult to hear some of these comments but our response was extremely important. While we felt that some of the perceptions of our pupils did not reflect our views, particularly some expressed by older pupils, these feelings deserved to be taken seriously and it was important that the issues should be addressed. Inclusion is clearly not something that can be ‘done to someone’ and it is vital to involve our young people in the process of developing an inclusive school.

Understanding our pupils in this way enabled us to approach the problem of underachievement from a different angle. We put a lot of effort into helping pupils to develop a more positive self-image and perhaps more importantly to understand that it was OK to make mistakes and that when they did, things could be ‘fixed’.

Our pupils, and especially our boys, were supported by Black male learning mentors who set firm boundaries but also acted as advocates for the boys when things went wrong.

We instituted a leadership rota. Whenever there was a conflict situation in a classroom a member of the senior leadership team would be called. This prevented conflict from escalating because the pupils quickly realised that if they left quietly with the member of staff they would be listened to. If the student was in the wrong they knew that they would be helped to ‘fix’ things. If they had a genuine concern they were helped to deal with it in a more appropriate way and at a more appropriate time.
Pupils were also encouraged to use our social skills base if they were upset and needed a quiet place to calm down. We engaged with a Bristol-based project called Right Track. Workers from the project came into school to work with our Year 9 boys on issues such as identity, feelings, peer pressure and gang culture. This was then followed up in Year 10 with a project called ‘boys to men’, put together by our female learning mentors.

All of the above raised self-esteem and started to change the ethos of the school. However, we could not ignore other comments about systems that had been made by the pupils when they were interviewed.

It was recognised that few minority ethnic pupils made the ‘top sets’ after Year 9. The reason given was that the majority of Black pupils preferred to stay with their friends rather than remaining in a top set, so they would misbehave and then be allowed to go down a set.

_It is too easy to get out of the sets._

_Year 11 pupil_

It was important that we found ways to ensure that pupils were placed in appropriate sets according to ability rather than according to behaviour.

One of the actions stemming from the EMAS research was to set targets for pupils and use them to set appropriately. Now every student has a minimum target grade and a challenge target grade and they and their parents know the target for each subject. Every teacher has a record in their mark book of minimum and challenge targets for each student that they teach, takes responsibility for their own pupils and is held accountable for pupils’ achievement.

It had become clear during our conversations with parents that they were very committed to helping their children to achieve. What they needed from school was clear information about how their children were performing and what they could do to support them. In addition this information had to be available throughout the year and not just at the end of a year or just before exams when it was often too late to change the course of events. Using individual targets and an ongoing reporting system provided what our parents said they needed.

Our efforts have been recognised by Ofsted.

_The school knows in great detail what each individual student’s performance is like…_

Students successfully develop the attitudes needed to live in an inclusive society… Students say they feel safe in their school – they have a good relationship with their teachers.

**Working with Gifted and Talented Black pupils**

The aim of the continuing professional development (CPD) module and resources is to support schools and settings in identifying and engaging underachieving able pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, including minority ethnic and Black pupils. The materials and resources were piloted with Bolton, Lewisham and Walsall local authorities (LAs).

In a Bolton primary school the leading teacher for Gifted and Talented (G&T) developed a staff questionnaire made up of questions derived from part of the initial session in the materials. This was followed up at a staff meeting where a short presentation, using quotes from national priorities, and school data on the size and make-up of the school G&T register were used to start the staff talking and thinking about Black pupils’ achievement in the school and how this compares to the national picture. The questionnaire asked staff to consider a range of perspectives on Black pupils’ achievement, with the outcomes informing decisions by the leading teacher and school leader about where to progress next with this work.
In a Walsall secondary school a group of very able Black and minority ethnic (BME), free school meals (FSM) and G&T pupils in Years 10, 11 and 12 was identified, who had the potential to progress to university including courses with demanding entry requirements. Teachers talked to pupils about their aspirations and set up a programme of activities to raise their aspirations, increase their cultural awareness and increase their confidence through visits to universities, concerts, law courts and museums. They also felt that the standard pupil review meetings were not wholly appropriate for this group of pupils, and established a more tailored approach to target setting and monitoring of progress. The involvement of parents was a key aspect of the programme: the leading teacher for G&T established regular communication with parents by email so that any issues which arose – either on the part of the school or that of the parent – could be quickly shared and addressed.

The school now plans to work with teachers to ensure that G&T Black pupils can be supported in meeting stretching targets through tailored classroom provision and to use the G&T Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) as the basis of pupil feedback.

The booklet, CD-ROM and LA Management Guide are being distributed to LA G&T Leads and to named Black Pupils’ Achievement (BPA) Programme leads in September 2009. The materials will be available online in the autumn term and launched at the G&T networks in November 2009.

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