

Educational Underachievement of White Working Class Children

NATIONAL CONFERENCE Friday 27th June 2014 (9.30am-3.30pm)

Jeffery Hall, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

1. CONFERENCE AIMS

The achievement of White Working Class children in schools is increasingly becoming a matter of concern. The Education Select Committee has conducted an inquiry into the underachievement of White Working Class children. Ofsted and research by the London borough of Lambeth have also recently drawn attention to this issue. This conference aims to look at the barriers to learning and school strategies in raising the achievement of White Working Class pupils in schools. Specific objectives are:

- To examine the attainment of White Working Class pupils in schools
- To identify the reasons and factors for White Working Class pupils' underachievement
- To share strategies to raise achievement

The conference is a unique opportunity to share the findings of the research reports and to learn what has been proven to work from classroom practitioners and successful schools. The conference offers practical tips for teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to keep up to date in strategies used by successful schools.

2. SPEAKERS

This conference brings together some of the leading experts and practitioners to engage in panel discussions and to share best practice on what works to raise achievement

- **How can we tackle White Working Class underachievement in schools?**
Kenny Frederick, former Headteacher, George Green's School, Tower Hamlets LA
- **What does research and the Education Select Committee inquiry tell us about White Working Class pupils?**
Professor Steve Strand, Department for Education, University of Oxford
- **Raising achievement of White Working Class children: Barriers and school strategies**
Dr Kirstin Lewis, Goldsmiths (University of London) and Dr Feyisa Demie, Lambeth LA

HEADTEACHERS PANEL: School strategies to raise the achievement of White Working Class pupils

Chair: Jayne Mitchell, Headteacher, St Andrew's CE Primary School and Chair of Lambeth Headteachers Council

- Mark Adams, Headteacher, St Nicholas Priory CE VA School, Norfolk LA
- Paul Robinson, Headteacher, Woodmansterne Primary School, Lambeth LA
- Angela Ward, Headteacher, Perry Hall School, Bromley LA
- David Boyle, Principal, Dunraven School, Lambeth LA
- Kenny Frederick, former Headteacher, George Green's School, Tower Hamlets LA

POLICYMAKERS AND RESEARCHERS PANEL: What works in narrowing the achievement gap?

Chair: Cathy Twist, Director, Education, Learning and Skills, Lambeth LA

- **Raising the achievement of White Working Class pupils: Lessons from Ofsted research and inspections**
Dr Christopher Wood, HMI, Ofsted
- **Effective use of Pupil Premium to close the attainment gap for White Working Class pupils**
James Richardson, Education Endowment Foundation

The conference will be opened & chaired by Cathy Twist, Director, Education, Learning and Skills, Lambeth LA

3. WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers, Teacher, Governors
- Elected members, Heads of School Improvement, School Improvement Advisers, Local Authority Officers
- National Policymakers and Elected Councillors

PROGRAMME

9.00	Registration and Coffee
9.30	Chair Introduction <i>Cathy Twist, Director, Education, Learning and Skills, Lambeth LA</i>
9.40	Film - White Working Class Achievement - National Context
9.45	How can we tackle White Working Class underachievement in schools? <i>Kenny Frederick, former Headteacher, George Green's School, Tower Hamlets LA</i>
10.05	What does research and the Education Select Committee inquiry tell us about White Working Class pupils? <i>Professor Steve Strand, Department for Education, University of Oxford</i>
10.25	Film - White Working Class Achievement - Lambeth Context
10.30	Raising achievement of White Working Class children: Barriers and school strategies <i>Dr Kirstin Lewis, Goldsmiths (University of London) and Dr Feyisa Demie, Lambeth LA</i>
10.55	Question & Answer session
11.10	Networking Coffee and Tea Break
11:40	HEADTEACHERS PANEL: School Strategies to raise the achievement of White Working Class pupils (including Question & Answer session) <i>Chair: Jayne Mitchell, Headteacher, St Andrew's CE Primary School and Chair of Lambeth Headteachers Council</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Mark Adams, Headteacher, St Nicholas Priory CE VA Junior School, Norfolk LA</i>• <i>Paul Robinson, Headteacher, Woodmansterne Primary School, Lambeth LA</i>• <i>Angela Ward, Headteacher, Perry Hall School, Bromley LA</i>• <i>David Boyle, Principal, Dunraven School, Lambeth LA</i>• <i>Kenny Frederick, former Headteacher, George Green's School, Tower Hamlets LA</i>
13.00	Networking Lunch
13.55	RESEARCHERS PANEL: What works in narrowing the achievement gap (including Question and Answer session) <i>Chair: Cathy Twist, Director, Education, Learning and Skills, Lambeth LA</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">14.00 Raising the achievement of White Working Class pupils: Lessons from Ofsted research and inspections <i>Dr Christopher Wood, HMI Ofsted</i>14.25 Effective use of Pupil Premium to close the attainment gap for White Working Class pupils <i>James Richardson, Education Endowment Foundation</i>14.50 Panel Question and Answer Session
15.20	Closing Remarks
15.30	Close

GOOD PRACTICE RESEARCH REPORTS

Three research reports into raising achievement in schools will be launched and shared at the conference.

The first research report is an empirical study of *'The Educational Attainment of White Working Class Pupils'*. Drawing on detailed school census data for pupils who completed KS2 and KS4, this research examines the differences in performance between the main ethnic groups. The study confirms that one of the biggest groups of underachievers is the White Working Class. The data shows that at GCSE, 31% of White British pupils eligible for free school meals achieved 5+A*-C, compared with 63% of pupils who were not eligible. There is a gap of 32 percentage points for White British compared to smaller gaps for Indian, African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese pupils. The KS2 data shows a similar pattern. The data suggests that White British pupils are the ethnic group most polarised by the impact of socio-economic disadvantage. While poverty makes little difference to the achievements at school of some ethnic groups, it makes a huge difference to White British children on free school meals. In conclusion, the study argues that the worryingly low achievement of many White Working Class pupils has been masked by the success of middle class white children in the English school system, because Government statistics have failed to distinguish the White British ethnic group by social background. Effectively treating White British as a single group is extremely misleading.

The second research report *'Raising the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils'* highlights barriers and strategies to raise achievement in schools. The first part is a study of *'Barriers to Learning'* and draws evidence from parents, community focus groups and case studies based on visits to 16 Lambeth schools to explore the views of headteachers, staff, governors, White British parents and pupils. Empirical data confirms that one of the groups of underachievers is the White Working Class. The main reasons for pupil underachievement, identified from the case study schools and focus groups, are teachers' low expectations, stereotyping, economic deprivation, curriculum barriers, feeling of marginalization, low literacy levels, parental low aspiration of their child's education and lack of targeted support to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage. This is followed by the second part of the study that identifies good practice in successful schools. Schools have adopted a number of strategies to overcome some of the barriers to achievement which face White Working Class children in schools, such as strong and visionary leadership, inclusive curriculum, parental engagement, rigorous monitoring and effective use of data, supporting school transitions and targeted interventions to challenge poverty and underachievement through extensive use of teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors.

The third report *'Using Data to Raise Achievement: Good Practice in Schools'* explores what works in effective use of data. The main findings of the research show that one of the core elements of the schools' success in raising achievement is a robust focus on tracking and monitoring of an individual student's progress and forensic use of assessment data for progress tracking, target setting and support for students slipping behind with targeted interventions. Data is used effectively by senior managers, teachers, teaching assistants and governors to pose and answer questions about current standards, trends over time, progress made by individual pupils, to track pupils' progress and to set high expectations in case study schools.

