

Raising Achievement of White Working Class Pupils

National Conference: Wednesday 27 January 2010
Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ.

1. CONFERENCE AIMS

The aim of this conference is to look at the challenges and successes in raising the achievement of white working class pupils in schools. **Specific objectives are:**

- To examine the attainment of White British working class pupils in schools
- To identify barriers to learning and reasons for underachievement
- To share strategies to raise achievement

New research in Lambeth highlights barriers and strategies to raise achievement of White British working class pupils in schools. The conference is a unique opportunity to share the findings of the research report, to hear from nationally acclaimed speakers and to engage in practical workshop activities to tackle the underachievement of white working class pupils.

2. SPEAKERS

KEY LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) AND NATIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

- Estelle Morris, University of York and Member of House of Lords
- Christine Davies, Executive Director, Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services
- Phyllis Dunipace, Executive Director of Lambeth Children and Young People's Service
- Cllr Steve Reed, Leader of Lambeth Council
- Feyisa Demie and Kirstin Lewis, Lambeth LA
- Steve Strand, Associate Professor, University of Warwick
- Christopher Chapman and Denis Mongon, University of Manchester

HEADTEACHERS PANEL

- David Boyle, Principal, Dunraven School, Lambeth LA
- Jeanne Carrabine, Headteacher, Walnut Tree Walk, Primary School, Lambeth LA
- Erica Pienaar, Executive Headteacher, Prendergast-Hilly Fields College, Lewisham LA
- Alan Seymour, Headteacher, Gospel Oak Primary, Camden LA

There will also be breakout sessions that will address practical classroom solutions and good practice in raising achievement by Chris Chapman and Denis Mongon (University of Manchester), Craig Tunstall (Headteacher, Kingswood School), Jo Davey (Camden LA) and Zee Harrison (Teacher, Norwood School). The conference will be opened by Phyllis Dunipace and chaired by Anita Wright, Headteacher, Woodmansterne School, Lambeth LA.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

9.00 Registration and Coffee

9.30 Welcome and Opening Remarks

Phyllis Dunipace, Executive Director of Lambeth Children and Young People's Service

9:35 Inequality in Educational Attainment: LA and Schools Challenges for Narrowing Attainment Gaps

Christine Davies, Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

10.05 Raising Achievement of White Working Class Pupils: Barriers and School Strategies

Feyisa Demie, Head of Research and Statistics and Kirstin Lewis, Raising Achievement Research Manager, Lambeth LA

10.50 What Works for White Working Class Pupils? Headteachers Panel Session Including Q+A

Introduction and Chair: Estelle Morris, University of York and Member of House of Lords

Panel Members: David Boyle, Dunraven School, Lambeth LA, Jeanne Carrabine, Headteacher, Walnut Tree Walk Primary School, Lambeth LA, Erica Pienaar, Executive Headteacher, Prendergast-Hilly Fields College, Lewisham LA, Alan Seymour, Headteacher, Gospel Oak Primary School, Camden LA

12.00 Breakout Sessions

1. School Strategies for Raising Achievement of White Working Class Pupils, Camden LA
2. Successful Leadership for Promoting the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils, University of Manchester
3. Raising Aspirations in Deprived Communities, Kingswood Primary School, Lambeth LA
4. Effective Primary and Secondary Transition Support for White Working Class, Norwood Secondary School, Lambeth LA

1.00 Lunch

2.00 Disadvantage, Ethnicity, Gender and Attainment in Lambeth: The case for White Working Class Pupils

Steve Strand, Associate Professor, University of Warwick

2.35 Policy Makers Panel Session

Phyllis Dunipace, Executive Director of Lambeth Children and Young People's Service; Steve Reed, Leader of Lambeth Council and DCSF speaker (to be confirmed).

3.30 Close

3. KEY NATIONAL ISSUES

"One of the biggest groups of under-achievers is the white working class and their outcomes at both KS2 and KS4 are considerably below those achieved by all other major ethnic groups"

Raising Achievement of White Working Class Pupils: Barriers to learning and school responses, Lambeth Research Report 2009.

Central Government data also clearly shows that "pupils from advantaged managerial and professional backgrounds were more than three times as likely to obtain 5+ A* – C GCSE grades than their peers at the other end of the social spectrum... the unskilled manual working class". **DCSF, 2006. Social Mobility: Narrowing Social Class Educational Attainment Gaps.**

"The attainment of white British pupils is polarised by social class to a greater extent than for any other ethnic group: white British pupils from managerial and professional homes are one of the highest attaining groups, while white British pupils from working class homes are the lowest attaining group." **Steve Strand, 2008, Minority Ethnic Pupils in the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, DCSF Research Report.**

4. WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Headteachers
- Deputy Headteachers
- Teachers
- School Improvement Partners
- National Policy makers
- Heads of School Improvement
- Local Authority Officers
- School Governors
- Elected Members
- Head of Research and Statistics
- Community Partnership Managers

5. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Emily Fisher on 020 7926 9664 or Email: efisher@lambeth.gov.uk

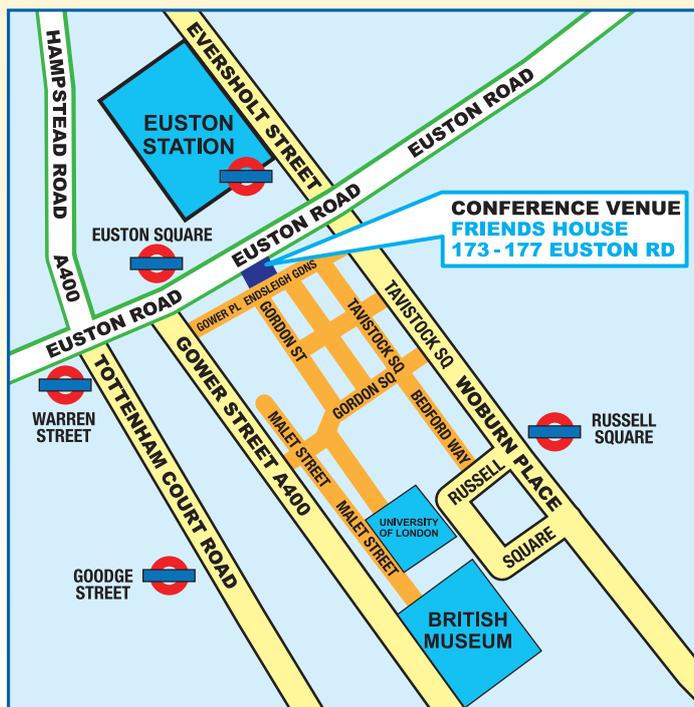
6. BACKGROUND TO THE CONFERENCE

This conference shares the findings of two groundbreaking research reports into White British working class pupils in schools. The study was commissioned by Lambeth LA against a background of growing local and national concern about the educational performance of white working class pupils.

The first research report **“Raising the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils: Barriers to Learning and School Responses”** draws on detailed statistical analysis as well as evidence from parents and 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. The main findings from empirical data confirm that one of the groups of under-achievers is the white working class. The worryingly low achievement levels of many white working class pupils has been masked by the middle class success in the English school system and Government statistics that fail to distinguish the White British ethnic group by social class background.

The data also suggests that there is a strong association between poverty, social class and successful achievement in education. One of the main reasons for pupil underachievement, identified from the case study schools and focus groups is teachers’ low expectations, stereotyping, and the failure of the National Curriculum to reflect adequately the needs of White British working class pupils. It is also perpetuated by factors such as economic deprivation; feelings of marginalisation within the community exacerbated by housing allocation; a lack of community and school engagement; a perception that their identities are not being affirmed in school; low literacy levels and parental low aspiration of their children’s education. The study argues that key to raising achievement is to have the highest expectations of pupils and the community. The research also suggests other measures that include developing strategies to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage, tackling generations of low aspiration and a disinterest in learning that prevents pupils from fulfilling their potential across a range of areas.

The second research report **“Successful Strategies for Raising the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils in Schools”** draws evidence on what works for white working class pupils from schools that succeeded against the odds. This part of the study identifies a number of strategies to overcome some of the barriers to achievement which face white working class children in schools, such as successful leadership, that recruits an effective diverse workforce; parental engagement; mentoring; developing an inclusive curriculum; effective support for pupils on the move from primary to secondary school and working closely with the white working class. The report will be formally published and circulated on the day of the conference. Successful practice in the study will be shared and discussed in detail at the conference by case study schools’ teachers, Headteachers and researchers.



Details of the conference are also available on the website at: www.lambeth.gov.uk/rsu

CONFERENCE VENUE

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London, NW1 2BJ.