



**THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PORTUGUESE PUPILS IN  
LAMBETH SCHOOLS – EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE 2019**

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March 2020

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Report number RS 280/20

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The original Portuguese report in 2001, had this to say as an introduction.

*“English schools have been educating immigrant children for decades. Recently, however, new arrivals have brought challenges to schools as the majority are relatively new to English. Because of a lack of available data there is little research into the achievement of Portuguese pupils. There are no reliable statistics on the Portuguese population as a separate ethnic group in Britain and there is little clarity on the number of Portuguese pupils in schools. Additionally, the educational underachievement of Portuguese students in British schools has seldom been mentioned in the standards debate in the last decade. Yet the achievement of Portuguese heritage pupils lags far behind the average achievement of the majority of their peers and the gap is growing at the end of primary and secondary education. Despite much academic debate and policy makers' concern about underachievement in schools, the needs of Portuguese pupils have not been addressed and are overlooked by local and national policy makers because of the failure to recognise Portuguese as a distinct ethnic group in data collection.”*

Evidence in Lambeth showed a pattern of continuous underachievement of Portuguese children compared to the national average of White British, African, Caribbean, Indian and other ethnic minority groups (Demie et al 2006). However, in recent years, the achievement of Portuguese children has been rising and the gap with Lambeth overall has been closing. The KS2, KS3 and GCSE trend data in Lambeth also indicates Portuguese pupils were in most instances the lowest attaining of the major ethnic groups, although in 2011 they are higher than Black Other pupils for GCSE.

Broadly speaking, there are marked differences in performance between different ethnic groups at national level. Chinese, Indian and White British pupils are the highest achieving groups, followed by Black African, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean at all key stages. Portuguese pupils are the lowest achieving group. This is not surprising as the findings from a number of previous studies came to similar conclusions (Demie 2001; Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Gillborn and Gipps 1996). Perhaps the most important new evidence from the national data is that there is now some evidence that Chinese, Bangladeshi and Indian heritage pupils are improving at higher rates, leading to a narrowing of the gap between these groups and White British pupils.

Portuguese heritage pupils have also, like Black African and Black Caribbean pupils, shown sufficient rates of improvement to close the attainment gap. This, however, is still wide for KS1, KS2 and KS3. As with findings from previous studies the data highlights a particular disadvantage experienced by Portuguese and black heritage pupils in the British education system (Demie 2001; Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Gillborn and Gipps 1996). To date it has been difficult to draw generalised conclusions from research into Portuguese educational achievement because national level data in Britain does not distinctly categorize Portuguese pupils, making it difficult to accurately establish the relative achievement of Portuguese pupils compared to White British and other ethnic groups. Recently a number of London Local Authorities (LAs) with high populations of Portuguese pupils started monitoring and collecting data which provides interesting research evidence. The data collected by London LAs confirms that Portuguese pupils have not shared equally in increasing rates of achievement (see Demie et al 2006).

Previous studies attribute the roots of Portuguese pupil underachievement (Demie et al 2006) to a number of factors including lack of understanding of the British education system, difficulties in speaking English, poor school attendance, poverty, interrupted prior education, negative teacher perceptions, poor school to home liaison and lack of exposure to written language.

Research in Lambeth also suggests that Portuguese children are underachieving in schools and that they form one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in London (Demie et al 2007). One of the main reasons for Portuguese pupil underachievement is the lack of fluency in English, creating a considerable language barrier. About 68% of Portuguese pupils in Lambeth schools are not fluent

in English. The study also confirms that, as highlighted in other studies, underachievement of Portuguese pupils is perpetuated by factors such as low expectations, economic deprivation, poor housing, overcrowding, a disrupted prior education and parental lack of understanding of the British education system. The Lambeth study also identified strategies that have been adopted to overcome some of the barriers to achievement which face Portuguese children in schools. These include parental engagement, effective use of a more diverse workforce, developing an inclusive ethos and strategies, developing an inclusive curriculum, support for EAL, mentoring and role models, monitoring performance and the effective use of data for self-evaluation (Demie et al 2007).

Overall the review of literature confirms there is a lack of national comparative attainment data to identify patterns of achievement of children of Portuguese origin in Britain. This places serious constraints on effecting targeting policy and practice developments at national and local level. The body of available research suggests that most previous studies have focussed on reasons why Portuguese children are underachieving (see Demie et al 2007; Demie et al 2006) but with scant research on positive experiences of Portuguese pupils in British schools. Previous research has confirmed that there is a lack of understanding of the factors which contribute to the educational success and high attainment of Portuguese heritage pupils (see Demie 2006, McKenley et al, 2003). This highlighted a clear need for detailed case studies of successful schools in raising the achievement of Portuguese heritage pupils as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

This research project aims to raise the achievement of Portuguese heritage pupils at all key stages. Specific objectives are:

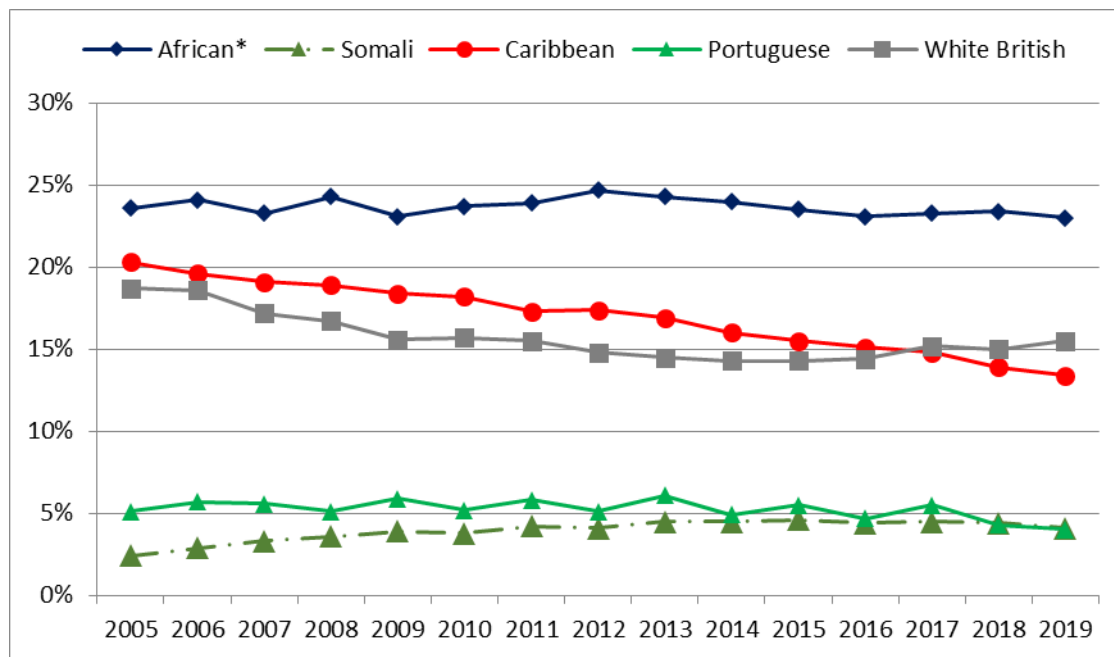
- To study the achievement of Portuguese heritage pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, and GCSE.
- To examine the school experiences of Portuguese heritage pupils.
- To identify reasons for underachievement.

### 3. THE LA CONTEXT

#### Number of Portuguese Pupils in Lambeth Schools

This research paper considers evidence from Lambeth, an inner London Authority. Lambeth LA is one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse boroughs in Britain. About 85% of pupils are from black and ethnic minority groups. The 2019 January Schools Census shows that there were 38,071 pupils in the LA's schools. Of these, African pupils formed the largest ethnic group with 23% followed by White British (15.5%), Black Caribbean (13.4%), White Other (11.3%), Mixed Other (6.8%), and Portuguese (4.0%).

**Figure 1. Changes in the School Composition in the LA by Main Ethnic Group**



\*African total includes Somali pupils

There has been a change in the overall composition of the black and ethnic minority population in Lambeth schools. The 1991 ONS census showed that overall 66% of pupils in the LA's schools belonged to black and other ethnic minority communities compared to 85% in 2011.

Of all English local authorities, Lambeth serves the largest proportion of Portuguese pupils and findings from this study are therefore of significant importance for formulating policies and strategies aimed at raising the achievement of Portuguese pupils at both national and local level.

**Table 1. Number of Portuguese Pupils in Lambeth Schools (1999-2019)**

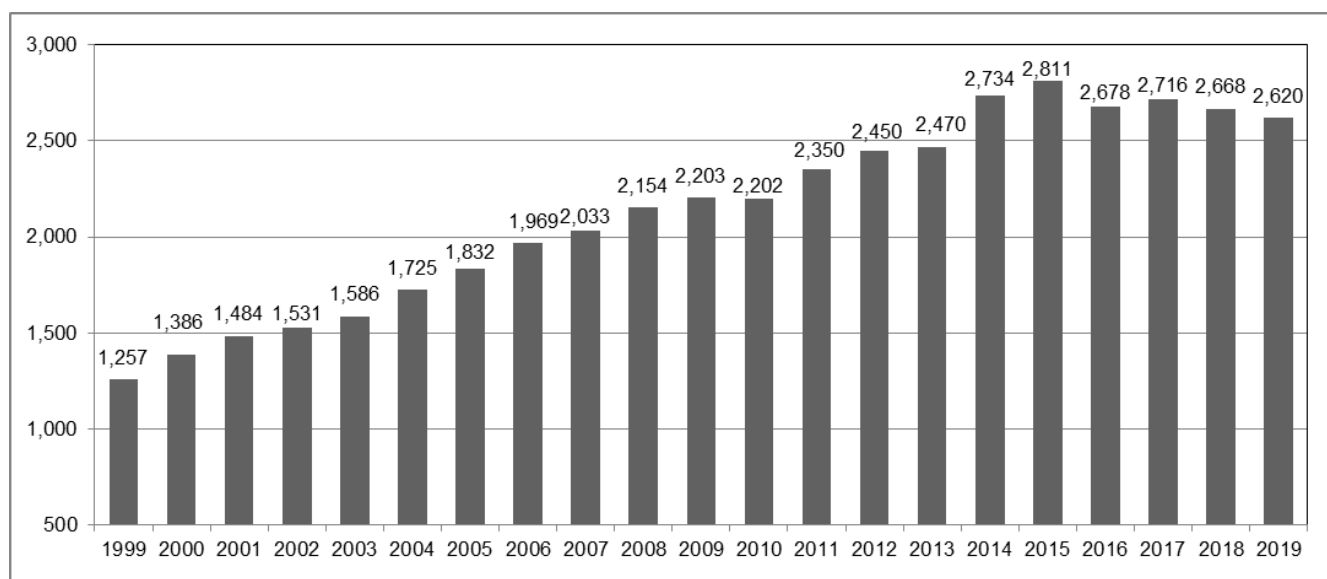
Year	All Schools	Primary	Secondary
1999	1,257	914	317
2000	1,386	1,002	348
2001	1,484	1,048	391
2002	1,531	1,109	379
2003	1,586	1,172	367
2004	1,725	1,308	382
2005	1,832	1,366	432
2006	1,969	1,452	479
2007	2,033	1,470	526
2008	2,154	1,532	575
2009	2,203	1,550	613
2010	2,202	1,534	631
2011	2,350	1,520	719
2012	2,450	1,568	832
2013	2,470	1,618	803
2014	2,734	1,587	970
2015	2,811	1,690	1,053
2016	2,678	1,707	933
2017	2,716	1,622	1,052
2018	2,668	1,604	1,015
2019	2,620	1,550	901

*The 'All Schools' figures include pupils in special and nursery schools, and pupil referral units.*

*Source: Research & Statistics Unit Pupil Survey 1998-2008, DfE Schools Census 2009 onwards.*

Table 1 and figure 2 illustrate that the overall numbers of Portuguese pupils attending Lambeth schools has more than doubled over the twenty year period, from 1,257 in 1999 to 2,620 in 2019. However, they have shown a slight decline over the last five years from the 2015 high point. The number of Portuguese pupils has increased by 40% since 1999, with a three-fold increase seen at the secondary level.

**Figure 2. Number of Portuguese Pupils in Lambeth Schools (2001-2019)**



## **The Dataset**

The sample consisted of pupils who completed National Curriculum Assessment tests at the end of KS1, KS2, and KS4. In addition, all the LA's schools were asked to provide details of their pupils' backgrounds such as name, date of birth, sex, ethnic background, free school meal eligibility, date of admission or mobility data and level of fluency in English for contextual analysis. Where available we also drew evidence from national data published by the Department of Families and Education (DfE).

## **Measures of Performance**

It is important to note that in the English education system, pupils aged 5 to 11 years are taught National Curriculum subjects and are tested in English, mathematics and science. These tests are age dependent and divided into two key stages: KS1 and KS2. They are intended to show whether children have reached the National Curriculum learning targets standard which range between Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2).

As of 2016, KS1 results are no longer reported using levels and have been replaced by scaled scores. Scaled scores are based on the total number of marks a pupil receives in a test or teacher assessment i.e. their 'raw' score, and this score is then translated into a scaled score using a conversion table. A scaled score of 100 will always represent the 'expected standard'.

Scaled scores enable results to be reported consistently from one year to the next, and therefore maintain their meaning over time so that two pupils achieving the same scaled score in different years will have demonstrated the same attainment.

The next section examines the achievement of Portuguese students in Lambeth schools at the end of KS1, KS2, and GCSE. Two methodological approaches are used. Firstly, the study looks at the pattern of the performance in the LA to establish the achievement of Portuguese pupils in Lambeth schools compared to the other main ethnic groups in the UK. This is followed by detailed data analysis of factors affecting the performance of Portuguese pupils. The main questions posed are:

- How well do Portuguese pupils perform in Lambeth schools?
- What are the differences in level of attainment at the end of KS1, KS2, and GCSE between schools?
- What are the factors influencing performance?



## 4. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PORTUGUESE PUPILS IN LAMBETH SCHOOLS

### Introduction

The issue of Portuguese underachievement is complicated by lack of identification of Portuguese pupils within data. Broadly speaking, Portuguese pupils are found within the wider definition of 'Other White' in national level data. As a result of this lack of data there are limitations in past research into Portuguese underachievement in British schools. The absence of national comparative data which identifies patterns of children of Portuguese origin, places serious constraints on affecting targeting policy and practice developments at national and local level. It is also important to note that some LAs' Portuguese populations are very small and so any percentages are prone to large fluctuations.

Somali and Polish results relate to language data, as opposed to defined ethnic groups (and only the former can be defined as an ethnic group). However, as both form large groups in Lambeth nowadays they are included in the ethnicity tables for comparative purposes.

### KS1 and KS2 Trend Evidence

Despite the lack of national data on Portuguese pupil achievement, since 1998 Lambeth has collected data on this group which has provided an interesting example in research evidence. The following section outlines outcomes and trends for Portuguese pupils and other ethnic groups within Lambeth over the past nine years.

**Table 2. KS1 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2011-2019)**

Ethnic Group	Key Stage 1 Average (Reading, Writing, Maths)									
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
African	69%	73%	77%	79%	81%	74%	78%	78%	77%	
<i>Somali</i>	67%	66%	72%	76%	78%	75%	77%	74%	75%	
Black Other	62%	75%	72%	74%	86%	71%	71%	66%	71%	
Caribbean	59%	67%	71%	73%	76%	71%	70%	73%	68%	
<i>Polish</i>	67%	67%	77%	78%	82%	72%	86%	79%	82%	
Portuguese	53%	56%	62%	64%	62%	63%	61%	69%	67%	
White British	78%	83%	83%	87%	86%	83%	85%	83%	84%	
White Other	73%	73%	78%	78%	80%	74%	79%	77%	80%	
<b>Lambeth -all</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	

*Note: For KS1 from 2011 onwards the average is calculated using the teacher assessment outcomes at Level 2B+ in reading, writing and maths. There are no levels after 2015 and pupils are calculated on whether they have met the "expected" standard for their age group.*

Whilst 2016 cannot be compared to previous years because of the change from levels to "expected"; we can still compare relative gaps within the year groups. The performance of Somali pupils has also been included in this table (and the other key stage tables), and this group is a subset of the African data.

Of the major ethnic groups, Portuguese pupils have consistently been the lowest performing group, and the relative gap with the LA hasn't narrowed appreciably. Their result has fallen slightly this year by two percentage points, although the overall Lambeth outcome is also down by two points. The gap to the highest achieving group, White British pupils, has narrowed from 20 percentage points in 2016 to 17 points this year.

The gap between Polish and White British (the two highest performers) is only two percentage points in 2019. 'White Other' pupils are the third highest performers at 80%, with African pupils matching similar to the borough average again.

**Table 3. KS2 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2011-2019)**

Ethnic Group	Reading and maths average					RWM average			
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
African	85%	88%	90%	90%	92%	60%	70%	69%	72%
<i>Somali</i>	85%	89%	92%	91%	92%	62%	71%	72%	68%
Black Other	85%	91%	91%	85%	94%	65%	67%	66%	61%
Caribbean	79%	85%	87%	86%	87%	51%	62%	57%	60%
<i>Polish</i>	92%	92%	98%	95%	94%	58%	62%	80%	78%
Portuguese	78%	88%	88%	85%	86%	43%	54%	55%	54%
White British	89%	93%	96%	95%	96%	79%	80%	82%	80%
White Other	88%	91%	92%	95%	92%	63%	71%	74%	74%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>71%</b>

*The DfE changed the KS2 tests in 2013 to no longer include an overall English level, so the reading and maths average is now shown here. Also, there are no levels after 2015 and pupils are calculated on whether they have met the “expected” standard for their age group.*

**Table 3a KS2 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2018-2019)**

	2018				2019				RWM +/-
	Reading	Writ TA	Maths	RWM	Reading	Writ TA	Maths	RWM	
African	76%	83%	81%	69%	78%	85%	83%	72%	+3%
<i>Somali</i>	76%	83%	87%	71%	76%	87%	83%	68%	-3%
Black Other	79%	82%	79%	66%	71%	76%	79%	61%	-5%
Caribbean	72%	78%	68%	57%	69%	75%	73%	60%	+3%
<i>Polish</i>	86%	88%	91%	80%	84%	93%	87%	78%	-2%
Portuguese	66%	71%	71%	54%	61%	70%	69%	54%	0%
White British	90%	89%	89%	82%	87%	89%	87%	80%	+2%
White Other	81%	83%	84%	73%	80%	87%	82%	74%	+3%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>+1%</b>

*There are no levels after 2015 and pupils are calculated on whether they have met the “expected” for their age group.*

Similar to KS1, Portuguese pupils continue to be the lowest performing group, and they are 17 percentage points below the borough average this year in RWM combined. Their strongest subject was writing, and were 11 points below the corresponding LA outcome. Reading has been their weakest subject, with the difference to the Lambeth result being 18 percentage points in 2019.

On a positive note, the gap has narrowed from 36 percentage points in 2016 to 26 points this year.

The performance of African pupils has been on or around the borough average in each of the last seven years including 2019. African pupils comprise a third of the major ethnicities, with 72% at the expected standard compared to White British at 80%. Caribbean pupils, generally a lower performing group, were 11 percentage points below the borough average this year.

## GCSE Trend Evidence

**Table 4. English and Maths 9 to 4/A\*-C Attainment by Ethnic Background (2014 – 2019)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	+/- 18-19
African	64%	61%	66%	61%	65%	64%	-1%
<i>Somali</i>	62%	57%	81%	60%	78%	59%	-19%
Black Other	49%	52%	62%	53%	62%	37%	-25%
Caribbean	52%	47%	45%	50%	43%	47%	+4%
<i>Polish</i>	67%	71%	68%	56%	76%	78%	+2%
Portuguese	50%	51%	59%	58%	47%	50%	+3%
White British	61%	66%	67%	60%	63%	64%	+1%
White Other	69%	65%	71%	65%	71%	67%	-4%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>+1%</b>

*From 2017 the grading system changed from alpha to numerical, so grade 9 to 4 is the equivalent to A\* to C. Results remain comparable year on year.*

Contrary to the outcomes seen at KS1 and KS2, Portuguese pupils are not the lowest performing group at GCSE (generally Caribbean have been the lowest). Results have fluctuated over the six-year period, and peaked in 2016 when they were only three percentage points below the borough result. The gap this year was nine points. Their relative gap to the African and White British cohorts, two large groups, was 14 percentage points in 2019. The gap had narrowed to single figures in the intervening years, but has widened again.

Of the largest ethnic cohorts in Lambeth, African and White British pupils have had similar performance since 2016, with no appreciable improvement over the six-year period. Caribbean pupils remain well below the borough outcome, despite improving by four percentage points this year. The increasingly large number of Polish pupils are well above both the Lambeth and national results (19 points above the borough figure this year).

The new GCSE indicators mean that “5 or more A\* to C including English and Maths” has now been superseded by new indicators, so the DfE are not releasing national data at a socio-economic level any more. Instead, the new progress measures of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 have been introduced. Table 5 shows the achievement over the last 2 years in these indicators for the main ethnic groups. However, data for Portuguese pupils is not available nationally.

**Table 5. Attainment 8 and Progress 8 by Ethnic Background (2018 & 2019)**

	Attainment 8				Progress 8			
	Lambeth		National		Lambeth		National	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
African	46.0	45.5	47.5	47.3	0.08	0.13	0.31	0.33
<i>Somali</i>	48.1	41.6	n/a	n/a	0.17	-0.13	n/a	n/a
Black Other	42.7	35.6	43.0	43.0	-0.26	-0.40	0.08	0.08
Caribbean	36.3	36.4	39.6	39.4	-0.60	-0.61	-0.30	-0.31
<i>Polish</i>	57.1	57.8	n/a	n/a	0.85	1.09	n/a	n/a
Portuguese	43.1	43.5	n/a	n/a	0.10	0.28	n/a	n/a
White British	47.1	47.4	46.1	46.2	-0.22	-0.11	-0.14	-0.14
White Other	51.0	50.2	47.0	46.8	0.69	0.50	0.51	0.45
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>-0.05</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>-0.02</b>	<b>-0.03</b>

The Attainment 8 measure is calculated using a pupil's best eight GCSE results, then averaging the results for the school, LA and different socio-economic factors. It is worth noting that if the Attainment 8 score is divided by 10 this gives an average grade. Therefore, an Attainment 8 score of 50 is equivalent to an average grade of 4 across all eight subjects.

In 2019 Portuguese pupils had an attainment score of 43.5, and were above three of the groups shown in table 5, albeit below the overall Lambeth and national outcomes.

African and White British pupils scored above the Lambeth and national averages, with the Caribbean cohort being well below at 36.4. The 'Black Other' group also had a low attainment 8 score this year, 7.1 points lower than last year.

Progress 8 is a value added measure of the progress a student makes from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 by comparing the pupil's average grade and the average grade achieved by those pupils on a similar starting point/prior attainment. A positive score shows a higher progress than similar pupils. Likewise, a negative score shows lower progress. Nationally, Progress 8 is always statistically close to zero. When interpreting scores it is important to note that a score of +1.00 is equivalent to a pupil, institution or socio-economic group achieving on average one grade higher than pupils with a similar KS2 starting point nationally. Equally, -1.00 is one grade lower, +0.20 one fifth grade higher, -0.53 about a half grade lower etc.

Portuguese pupils had positive progress scores for both years shown, being the third highest in 2019 behind the Polish and 'White Other' groups. In interpretation, this may show good progress from a low starting point by Polish and 'White Other', and indeed African pupils, possibly due to language acquisition at KS2. However, it also shows not as good progress by White British and Caribbean (both having negative scores).

## 5. FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF PORTUGUESE HERITAGE PUPILS

Four factors that are helpful in understanding the effect of background factors on attainment of Portuguese pupils in schools were considered – eligibility for free school meals (FSM), gender, pupil mobility and level of fluency in English. The findings from table 6 confirm that Portuguese pupils are somewhat disadvantaged. For example the table shows that 21% of KS1 pupils were eligible for FSM, and 23% of KS2 pupils.

**Table 6. Social Characteristics of Portuguese pupils in Lambeth schools by Key Stage Cohorts 2019**

Key Stages	Total Cohort	Gender		FSM (%)	EAL		Mobility rate
		Boys (%)	Girls (%)		Stage A-D Not fluent in English	Stage E Fully fluent in English	
Key Stage 1	97	45%	55%	21%	89%	9%	8%
Key Stage 2	113	54%	46%	23%	78%	21%	17%
Key Stage 4	111	50%	50%	20%	50%	34%	5%

### Gender Differences and Achievement

Tables 7 and 8 repeat patterns established in earlier research, whereby girls tend to outperform boys (Demie, 2001; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). Furthermore, when broken down by ethnic group, there are some notable differences (see table 8 overleaf).

**Table 7: Portuguese Pupils KS1, KS2, and GCSE Performance in Lambeth by Gender – 2019**

Key Stage		All Portuguese pupils	Boys	Girls	Gap
KS1 – at Expected Standard	Reading	64%	52%	74%	+22%
	Writing	64%	52%	74%	+22%
	Maths	73%	64%	81%	+16%
	Average	67%	56%	76%	+20%
KS2 – at Expected Standard	Reading	62%	59%	65%	+6%
	Writing TA	70%	61%	81%	+20%
	Maths	71%	67%	75%	+8%
	All RWM	55%	51%	60%	+9%
GCSE	9 to 4 English and Maths	50%	45%	56%	+11%
	Attainment 8	43.5	40.4	46.7	+6.3
	Progress 8	0.28	-0.21	0.77	+0.98

For the Portuguese cohort, gender outcomes in 2019 show girls performing better than boys at each key stage, with the gap in writing at both KS1 and KS2 being notable, together with reading at KS1. At GCSE this year, progress rates indicate Portuguese girls achieved a grade higher on average than boys with a similar starting point at KS2.

**Table 8: Lambeth KS2 and GCSE Performance by Ethnicity and Gender  
2016 to 2019**

Ethnic Group	Year	KS2 (Reading, Writing, Maths)				9 to 4 (A*-C) English and Maths			
		All	Boys	Girls	Gap	All	Boys	Girls	Gap
African	2016	60%	57%	62%	+5%	66%	59%	73%	+14%
	2017	70%	65%	74%	+9%	61%	51%	70%	+19%
	2018	69%	67%	72%	+5%	65%	62%	69%	+7%
	2019	72%	66%	78%	+12%	64%	57%	69%	+12%
Somali	2016	63%	60%	65%	+5%	81%	69%	89%	+20%
	2017	71%	64%	78%	+14%	60%	57%	65%	+7%
	2018	72%	70%	74%	+4%	78%	74%	81%	+6%
	2019	68%	59%	75%	+16%	59%	47%	74%	+27%
Caribbean	2016	51%	49%	53%	+4%	45%	36%	55%	+19%
	2017	62%	58%	65%	+7%	50%	46%	55%	+9%
	2018	57%	54%	59%	+5%	43%	36%	49%	+14%
	2019	60%	55%	65%	+10%	47%	44%	50%	+6%
Portuguese	2016	43%	41%	45%	+4%	59%	49%	67%	+18%
	2017	54%	53%	56%	+3%	58%	57%	59%	+2%
	2018	55%	49%	61%	+12%	47%	47%	48%	+1%
	2019	55%	51%	60%	+9%	50%	45%	56%	+11%
Polish	2016	59%	63%	54%	-9%	68%	61%	77%	+16%
	2017	62%	61%	62%	-1%	56%	62%	50%	-12%
	2018	80%	70%	87%	+17%	76%	59%	90%	+31%
	2019	78%	85%	92%	+7%	78%	79%	76%	-3%
White British	2016	79%	77%	81%	+4%	67%	69%	65%	-3%
	2017	80%	78%	82%	+4%	60%	56%	67%	+11%
	2018	82%	76%	88%	+12%	63%	59%	66%	+7%
	2019	80%	82%	79%	-3%	64%	60%	70%	+10%
Lambeth	2016	62%	60%	63%	+3%	62%	58%	66%	+8%
	2017	69%	67%	72%	+5%	60%	54%	65%	+11%
	2018	70%	66%	74%	+8%	60%	57%	63%	+6%
	2019	71%	68%	74%	+6%	59%	55%	62%	+7%
National	2016	54%	50%	57%	+7%	59%	55%	64%	+9%
	2017	61%	58%	65%	+7%	59%	55%	63%	+8%
	2018	64%	61%	68%	+7%	59%	56%	64%	+8%
	2019	65%	60%	70%	+10%	60%	56%	64%	+8%

## Social Background and Achievement

The free school meals variable is often used as a proxy measure of the extent of social deprivation in pupils' backgrounds and has been linked to underachievement in a number of studies (Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Demie, 2001). School level data demonstrates a clear relationship between the concentration of poverty levels in schools and tests and examination results.

The proportion of Portuguese pupils taking KS2 in 2019 who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) was 23%, and for the GCSE cohort it was 20%. Compared to the other ethnic groups shown in table 10 these figures are relatively low.

In general terms at all key stages, FSM Portuguese pupils performed below their paid meal peers. However, at KS1 the reverse was true this year with a significant improvement seen by the FSM cohort, and a drop in performance by the paid meals group. It will be interesting to see if this improvement is maintained next year.

The gaps in performance have widened this year at KS2 and GCSE, but the smaller cohort sizes need to be borne in mind at this level of analysis e.g. 20 FSM pupils at KS1 in 2019, and 22 at GCSE.

**Table 9. Performance of Portuguese pupils by Free School Meal status (2018 & 2019)**

Key Stage		2018			2019		
		Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap	Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap
KS1 – Expected	Reading	44%	72%	-28%	80%	60%	+20%
	Writing	44%	70%	-26%	80%	60%	+20%
	Maths	56%	79%	-23%	80%	71%	+9%
	Average	48%	74%	-26%	80%	64%	+16%
KS2 – Expected	Reading	60%	66%	-6%	46%	67%	-21%
	Writing TA	68%	71%	-3%	62%	72%	-10%
	Maths	60%	73%	-13%	54%	76%	-22%
	RWM	48%	55%	-7%	42%	59%	-17%
GCSE	% 9-4 E&M	35%	50%	-15%	36%	54%	-18%
	Attainment 8	37.9	44.2	-6.3	34.3	45.8	-11.5
	Progress 8	-0.32	0.18	-0.50	0.36	0.26	+0.10

There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the data is further analysed by eligibility for free school meals. Table 10 shows that at GCSE, 54% of Portuguese pupils not eligible for free school meals achieved 9 to 4 in English and Maths, compared with 36% of pupils who were eligible; a gap of 18 percentage points. There was a much larger gap for White British pupils of 37 percentage points. This finding underlines the importance of treating any measure of school or LA performance which does not include the influence of background factors such as social class and deprivation, with scepticism. As we have argued in the previous section, our analysis is not complete because of a lack of data on social class. Care must be taken in generalizing the results particularly of White British pupils from this study to a wider context.

**Table 10. Performance by Key Stage, FSM and Ethnic Background in Lambeth, 2019**

	Reading Writing Maths (% Expected)			9 to 4 English and Maths		
	% of pupils eligible	Eligible	Not Eligible	% of pupils eligible	Eligible	Not Eligible
African	32%	68%	74%	27%	60%	65%
<i>Somali</i>	36%	64%	70%	41%	70%	51%
Caribbean	36%	51%	65%	31%	46%	47%
Portuguese	23%	42%	59%	20%	36%	54%
White British	12%	64%	83%	23%	35%	72%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>61%</b>

### English Language Acquisition and Achievement

Another important factor relating to ethnic background and Portuguese achievement is English fluency. For students to have access to the curriculum it is clear that they need to be fluent in the language of instruction. Some students of Portuguese heritage are fluent in English while others may not be.

A number of studies have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand (2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate. The results indicated that, in general terms, pupils who spoke English as an additional language scored significantly lower than those who spoke English as first language or were fluent in English.

Tables 11 and 12 give the average KS1 and KS2 performance by level of fluency in English for a range of ethnic groups. Overall, Portuguese pupils' performance at KS1 and KS2 increases as the stage of proficiency in English increases. For example, bilingual speakers who were classed as competent in English (stage D) were well above the Lambeth averages at KS1 and KS2.

However, due to the small cohort sizes involved, results can fluctuate year on year and should be treated with caution.

**Table 11. KS1 Average Attainment by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2019**

Proficiency	African		Polish		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stage A - New to English	21	40%	3	46%	9	22%	8	58%	2	50%
Stage B - Early Acquisition	101	64%	27	79%	32	73%	37	53%	3	78%
Stage C - Developing Competence	156	79%	40	80%	51	80%	29	80%	9	59%
Stage D - Competent	113	89%	26	96%	19	96%	12	89%	12	92%
Stage E - Fluent	92	88%	15	90%	6	72%	9	63%	12	92%
Non - Fluent (Stage A - D)	391	76%	96	81%	111	76%	86	68%	26	76%
English Only	98	71%	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	562	85%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>84%</b>



**Table 12. KS2 attaining Reading, Writing and Maths by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2019**

Proficiency	African		Polish		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stage A - New to English	2	0%	1	0%	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
Stage B - Early Acquisition	28	21%	5	0%	14	36%	13	8%	1	0%
Stage C - Developing Competence	126	47%	25	72%	49	57%	38	45%	4	50%
Stage D - Competent	200	74%	42	79%	53	72%	37	73%	4	75%
Stage E - Fluent	238	89%	34	97%	44	84%	24	71%	14	93%
Non - Fluent (Stage A - D)	356	60%	73	70%	116	61%	88	9%	56	9%
English Only	128	74%	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	1	0%	404	80%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>80%</b>

Analysis of GCSE results (see table 13) also shows that fluency in English continues to have an influence on the performance of pupils with EAL. The stage D 'competent' cohort were above the Lambeth figure this year by six percentage points, with the fully fluent stage E pupils 13 points above, at 63% achieving the 9-4 in English & maths threshold.

In 2017 the DfE introduced Proficiency in English as a national measure. The results indicated that pupils who were at the early stages of proficiency achieved significantly lower outcomes than those who spoke English as a first language, or were fully fluent in English.

**Table 13. 9 to 4 English & Maths Attainment by Ethnicity and Proficiency in English – 2019**

Proficiency	African		Somali		Polish		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stage A - New to English	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	3	0%	0	n/a
Stage B - Early Acquisition	10	0%	3	0%	1	0%	5	0%	0	n/a
Stage C - Developing Competence	34	38%	12	50%	12	58%	20	30%	3	0%
Stage D - Competent	90	59%	31	58%	17	88%	27	56%	4	25%
Stage E - Fluent	231	68%	45	64%	9	89%	38	63%	21	71%
Non - Fluent (Stage A - D)	134	49%	46	52%	30	73%	55	38%	7	14%
English Only	165	67%	0	n/a	0	n/a	2	50%	218	64%
<b>All Pupils*</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>64%</b>

\*We do not have access to some Academy EAL fluency so figures may not add to total

There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the KS2 and GCSE data is further analysed by levels of fluency in English. Tables 11 to 13 show that performance for all main ethnic groups increases when combined with improved English acquisition amongst the bilingual cohort. These findings support a number of studies that have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand (2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate.

These findings offer much encouragement for policy makers and school improvement practitioners. They demonstrate that once the language barrier is overcome, it is possible to attain good levels of achievement for all key stages.

## Pupil Mobility and Achievement

It is now widely recognised that mobility can have an adverse effect on educational attainment. Mobile pupils are those who join or leave a school at a point other than at the age they would normally start or finish their education at a school. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector reported that high pupil mobility was one of the greatest problems, if not the greatest problem that any school can face.

**Table 14. Attainment of Portuguese Pupils by Mobility 2018 & 2019**

Key Stage		2018			2019		
		Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap	Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap
KS2 % expected	Reading	73%	24%	-49%	63%	59%	-4%
	Writing TA	78%	29%	-49%	70%	71%	+1%
	Maths	75%	48%	-27%	71%	71%	0%
	RWM	60%	19%	-41%	55%	53%	-2%
GCSE % achieving	9 -4 EM	47%	100%	+53%	49%	80%	+31%
	Attainment 8	43.2	37.0	-6.2	43.1	51.8	+8.7
	Progress 8	0.10	n/a	-	0.29	-0.12	-0.41

At KS2, non-mobile pupils were more generally more likely than their mobile peers of the same ethnicity to gain the expected level. Tables 14 and 15 illustrate this point with, on average, Portuguese pupils who spent all of KS2 in the same school achieving better results than the new arrivals, although the differences were much less pronounced this year. In contrast, historically at GCSE the mobile cohort performed better than their non-mobile peers. However, it should be borne in mind that the mobile cohort always constitutes a small number at GCSE.

**Table 15. Portuguese Pupil Attainment by Length of Time Spent in School, 2018 & 2019**

Key stage	Mobility by Length of Time Spent in School	Number		Performance	
		2018	2019	2018	2019
KS2 – expected standard RWM	Joined in Year 3 or before	111	96	60%	55%
	Joined in Year 4&5	18	14	17%	57%
	Joined in Year 6	3	3	33%	53%
9-4 English and Maths	Joined in Year 7	83	88	48%	49%
	Joined in Year 8&9	15	18	40%	50%
	Joined in Year 10	0	5	n/a	80%
	Joined in Year 11	1	0	100%	n/a

## **6. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

In this study we examined educational inequalities and the underachievement of Portuguese pupils in schools. The general conclusion from the evidence is that Portuguese pupils are often the lowest achieving of all the main ethnic groups, with the differences being stark in some instances. Of particular concern is how they have remained in this position for some time now.

There is a need for strategies to be developed to raise levels of achievement of this group and to reverse trends in the LA and at national level. A number of factors were identified in the underachievement of Portuguese pupils, including the language barrier, teachers' low expectations, stereotyping, exclusion, lack of awareness of Portuguese culture and history, institutional racism, inappropriate curriculum and the failure of the National Curriculum to reflect adequately the needs of a diverse and multi-ethnic society.

### **Policy Implications**

The challenge from this research for national policy makers is that both the LA and government need to recognise the underachievement of Portuguese pupils as an important part of raising standards in schools. Unfortunately it is an unacknowledged problem at national level and there are no specific initiatives to address the situation. The biggest obstacles to raising Portuguese achievement is the 'colour blind' approach which has put the group at a disadvantage and the failure of the National Curriculum to adequately reflect the needs of a diverse, multi-ethnic society (Gillborn 2002; MacPherson 1999). All government education reform acts and white papers failed to explore the specific needs of Portuguese and other new emigrants from the European Community.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The LA data shows that Portuguese children are underachieving in British schools. 'This not a new phenomenon, but one that cannot allow to continue. Effective schools that have been dealing with the issues hold the key to the way forward' (DFES, 2003:3). The body of available research suggests that there is lack of research into factors that contribute to educational success and high academic achievement among ethnic minority groups in United Kingdom. There has been also little research into how the experience of successful schools may be disseminated within the LA to address underachievement in other similar schools. The first step in answering these questions is to identify factors that contribute to their success. Recent research into other ethnic groups including Somali, Black African and Black Caribbean by the LA (McKenely et al 2003; Demie et al 2004 and 2007) has identified characteristics of successful schools and discussed in detail these features including strong and purposeful leadership, high expectation for all pupils and teachers, effective use of data, effective teaching and learning, and developing an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of underachieving groups.

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