

RAISING ACHIEVEMENT OF SOMALI PUPILS

Good Practice in London Schools



Hampstead (Camden), Lilian Baylis (Lambeth), Little Ilford (Newham), Northumberland Park (Haringey), Southfields (Wandsworth), Stockwell Park (Lambeth), Hitherfield (Lambeth), Richard Atkins (Lambeth), The Orion (Barnet), Woodmansterne (Lambeth).

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the study¹

Since 1960 there has been a steady migration of Somalis to Britain, however large numbers arrived in the 1980s and 1990s following the civil war in Somalia. Somalis first came to Britain in the late 19th century (Little, 1948; Collins, 1957). *'The early migrants were working in the Royal or Merchant Navy and mostly settled in the docklands of London and Cardiff and a few in Liverpool, Hull, Bristol and other ports'* (Kahin 1997:31).

Several commentators have noted that little is known about the actual size of the Somali population resident in Britain (Harris, 2004). The 2001 census records 43,532 people born in Somalia being resident in the UK, with the largest concentration in London, Sheffield, Birmingham, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Leicester. However this is only a percentage of the full Somali population as it does not take into account UK born children of Somali parentage. Estimates of the actual number of Somalis in the UK vary considerably, ranging between 95,000 and 250,000 (Lewis 2002; Harris 2004)².

In recent years the nature of Somali immigration to the UK has changed from being composed of refugees leaving Somalia itself, to those leaving other host countries (such as Sweden, Norway and Holland) for the UK. It was this wave of Somali migration that set the current pattern of Somali settlement in the UK and has been a focus of concern recently among national policy makers.

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 and increasing numbers are from asylum families. Because of a lack of available data there is little research into the achievement of Somali pupils. The underachievement of many Somali pupils in British schools has been masked by government statistics that fail to distinguish between African groups. There are no reliable statistics on the Somali population as a separate ethnic group in Britain and there is little clarity on the number of Somali pupils in schools. Additionally, the educational underachievement of Somali students in British schools has seldom been mentioned in the standards debate in the last decade. Yet the achievement of Somali 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 Somali pupils have not been addressed and are overlooked by local and national policy makers because of the failure to recognise Somali as a distinct ethnic group in data collection. This apparent lack of recognition seems paradoxical considering Somalis have been present in British society since the late 19th century and are now a large ethnic minority in some local authorities. One explanation put forward by commentators and researchers (Harris, 2004; Diriye, 2006) is the 'social invisibility' of Somali people compared to the African Caribbean community in Britain:

'Both groups suffer racism, but African Caribbean are perceived to be part of British society... It is not the volume of research on African Caribbean (although this is considerable) that gives them a public presence, but their high visibility in a wider society. Somalis too are rendered visible by their dress. But the social distance between Somalis and... British culture increases their isolation.'

¹ This section was drawn primarily from research by Feyisa Demie, Christabel Mclean and Kirstin Lewis entitled: Raising Achievement of Somali Pupils: School responses and challenges. Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, July 2007.

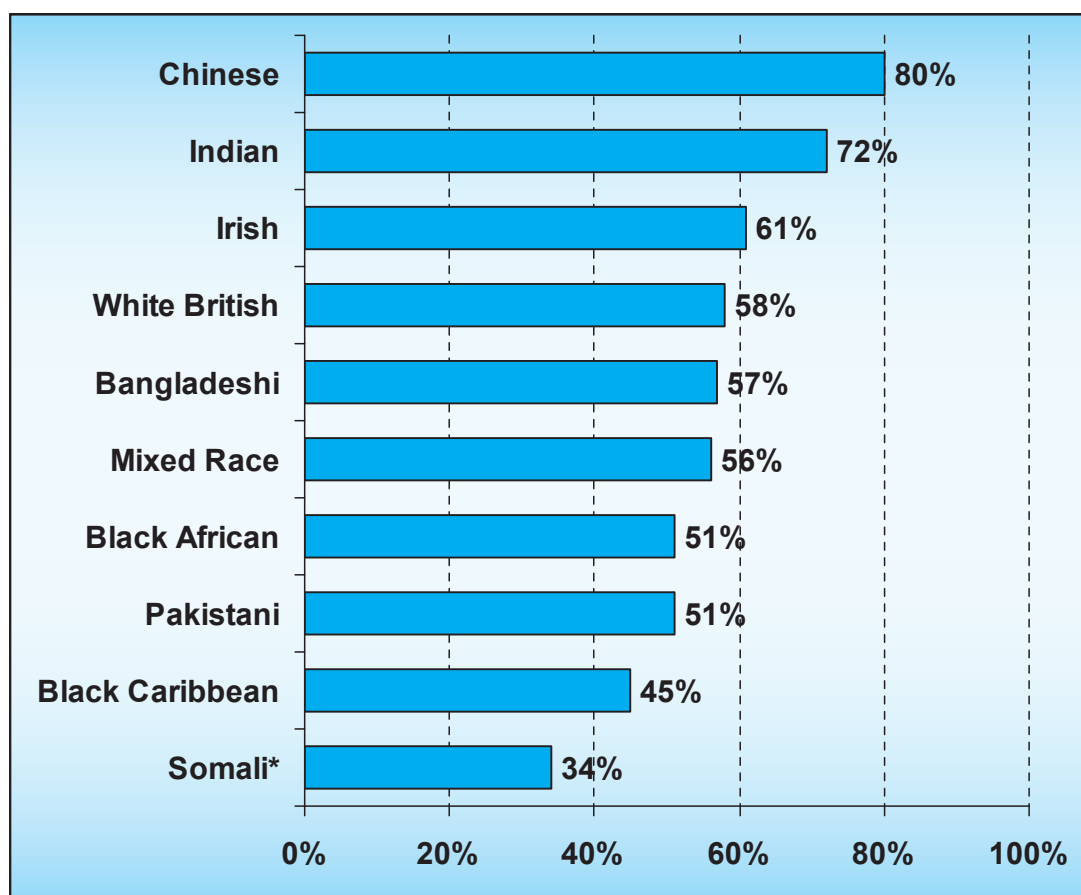
² For recent estimate of 250,000 see Ioan Lewis, Liberation Meeting, London, 26th November 2002.

There is therefore a dissonance between the amount of information which actually exists, and what is believed to be known' (Harris, 2004:13).

Recently available evidence in London shows a pattern of continuous underachievement of Somali children compared to the national average of White British, African, Caribbean, Indian and other ethnic minority groups (Demie et al 2006). The KS2, KS3 and GCSE trend data in a number of London LAs also indicates Somali pupils are the lowest attaining group (Rutter, 2004).

Figure 1 data confirms the attainment gap at GCSE and that on average Somali pupils have not shared equally in the increasing rate of educational achievement. The data from 10 London Local Authorities, with at least over 1000 Somali children in their schools, provides strong evidence that Somali pupils may generally be falling further behind the average achievement of the majority of their peers.

Figure1. Somali and Main Ethnic Groups GCSE Performance in England, 2006



Source: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000708/SFR04_2007Tables.xls

**The Somali figure here is the average of 10 Local Authorities in London (Demie, 2006). No reliable national Somali data is available or collected by DCSF.*

Previous studies attribute the roots of Somali pupil underachievement (Demie et al 2006; Diriye, 2006; Rutter, 2004) to a number of factors including lack of understanding of the British education system, difficulties in speaking English, single parent families, overcrowding and racism. Other factors reported include poor school attendance, poverty, the stress of living in large households, interrupted or non-existent prior education, negative teacher perceptions, poor school to home liaison, lack of exposure to written language and lack of role models.

Research in Lambeth also suggested that Somali 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 Somali pupil underachievement is the lack of fluency in English creating a considerable language barrier. About 87% of Somali pupils in Lambeth schools are not fluent in English. The study also confirmed that, as highlighted in other studies, underachievement of Somalis in the LAs is perpetuated by factors such as low expectations, economic deprivation, poor housing, overcrowding, a disrupted or non-existent prior education and parental lack of understanding of the British education system. The Lambeth study also identified strategies that have been adopted in the case study schools to overcome some of the barriers to achievement which face Somali 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 lack of national comparative attainment data to identify patterns of achievement of children of Somali origin in Britain. This places serious constraints on effecting targeting policy and practice developments at national and local level. The body of available research also suggests that most of previous studies have focussed on reasons why Somali children are underachieving (see Demie et al 2007; Demie et al 2006; Diriye, 2006; Rutter, 2004) but with scant research on the experience of Somali 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 Somali 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 Somali 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

The aim of this research was to study the experiences of Somali heritage pupils in London schools and to look at successes in raising the achievement of Somali pupils. Specific objectives were:

- To examine the attainment of Somali heritage pupils in schools.
- To examine how Somali pupils are helped to achieve high standards in schools.
- To identify good practice and strategies to raise the achievement of Somali pupils.

SECTION 2: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The case study schools are located in inner and outer London. Three complementary methodological approaches were adopted to explore performance, the views of teachers, Somali parents and their children, of schooling and of education. Details of the methodological framework and activities are summarised below:

A. Performance data analysis:

KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE statistical patterns of performance of selected London LAs were analysed by ethnic background to illustrate differences in attainment. Detailed data related to KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE and gender, ethnicity, free school meals was collected from 28 London Authorities with the support of the London Educational Network (LERN) and the London Ethnic Minority Achievement Group which represents each London LA.

B. Focus groups and parent, pupil and community groups interviews:

Interviews with staff, parents, pupils and community groups took place, including focus group discussion. The main aim of the pupil and parent interviews and focus group research was to ascertain the views of parents and Somali community groups regarding their experiences within the English and Local Authority schooling system and what practical steps need to be taken to improve levels of achievement for Somali heritage pupils. Headteachers had been asked to select a mixed group of pupils, parents and local groups.

C. Teacher interviews and focus groups:

The main aim of the teachers' focus groups was to ascertain the views of teachers concerning what practical steps needed to be taken in order to improve levels of achievement for Somali heritage pupils. The specific objectives were to identify what black and minority ethnic teachers see as key issues, to share the experience of minority ethnic teachers and to discuss their role in raising levels of achievement. Headteachers were asked to select a mixed group of teachers with a range of teaching experience, gender and ethnicity.

D. Case studies and observations:

- **Methodological approach for case study:** The methodological approach for this research comprised of case studies of selected schools. Case study schools were visited for observations with colleagues from schools to inform dialogue about what works and why. Consultants visited each of the schools for two days, to observe lessons and interview and hold discussions with headteachers, staff, governors and pupils to evaluate and gather evidence on how well Somali heritage pupils are achieving and the factors contributing to this.
- **Schools selected for case studies:** Using a case study approach, 4 primary and 6 secondary schools with high numbers of Somali pupils were selected.

These included:

Secondary case study schools

1. Hampstead School – Camden LA
2. Lilian Baylis Technology School – Lambeth LA
3. Little Ilford School – Newham LA
4. Northumberland Park Community School – Haringey LA

5. Southfields Community College – Wandsworth LA
6. Stockwell Park High School – Lambeth LA

Primary case study schools

1. Hitherfield School – Lambeth LA
2. Richard Atkins School – Lambeth LA
3. The Orion School – Barnet LA
4. Woodmansterne School – Lambeth LA

The case study schools as a whole covered a range of ethnic groups, community languages spoken, free school meals eligibility and EAL (see Table 1). Key criteria for the selection of schools were as follows:

- Good or strongly improving standards of achievement by minority ethnic pupils as well as all pupils.
- A headteacher and/or senior managers who understand ethnic minority achievement (EMA) issues and have a clear vision for the school with respect to inclusion and minority ethnic achievement.
- Somali heritage pupils in the case study school are making good progress.
- Strong links with the community.

Schools were identified with the assistance of the Local Authority EMA or school improvement managers. Each of the case study schools received a preliminary visit to collect background documentary evidence and to make arrangements for the interviews. The main method of data collection was open ended semi-structured interviews with senior management, teachers, administrative staff and support staff as well as Somali parents and pupils. The aim was to then triangulate the voices of the various stakeholders in order to understand more about the educational experiences of Somali pupils. Interviews were conducted by three researchers and the team was supported by a Somali translator for parent interviews. Fieldwork visits to each school lasted two days. Draft reports were sent to the schools for respondent validation and were duly amended to take account of any inaccuracies and omissions. The findings which emerged from this part of project are given in following chapters.

Table 1: Characteristics of the case study schools

	Primary Case Study Schools				Secondary Case Study Schools					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Roll	392	447	449	456	624	983	1024	1320	1289	1292
Somali Pupils on Roll	38	35	17	119	48	55	118	90	128	87
% Somali	10%	8%	4%	26%	8%	6%	11.5%	7%	9.9%	6.7
% EAL (School)	53%	47%	54%	55%	64%	50%	66%	96.7%	50.3%	48.8
% FSM (School)	51%	40%	22%	40%	73%	79%	59%	53%	33.8%	33.5

SECTION 3: THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SOMALI PUPILS IN LONDON SCHOOLS

This section examines the achievement of Somali students in London schools at the end of KS1, KS2, KS3, and GCSE. Two methodological approaches are used. Firstly, the study looks at the pattern of the Somali pupil population in London Local Authorities to establish the number of Somali pupils in London schools. This is followed by detailed data analysis on the performance of Somali pupils in London compared to the other main ethnic groups in UK.

The main questions posed are:

- What is the total number of Somali children in London schools?
- How well do Somali pupils perform in London schools? What are the differences in level of attainment at the end of KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE between Local Authorities?
- What are the factors influencing performance?

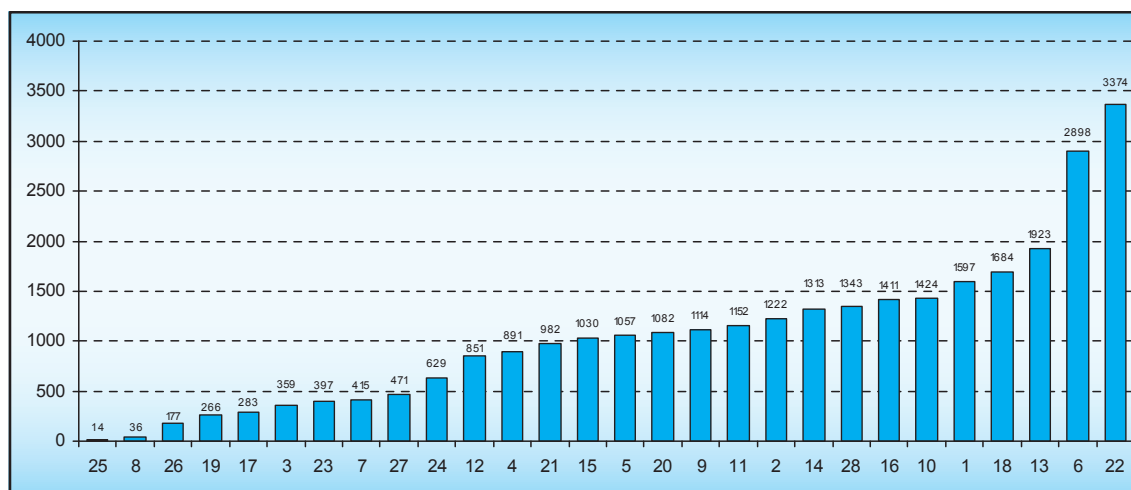
The London context

The focus of the research is London schools. As part of this study an extensive survey was carried in the 32 London LAs to collect data on the number of Somali pupils in primary, secondary and special schools, as well as performance data relating to KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4 by subject, FSM and gender. 28 authorities returned some or all of the data.

Table 2: Number of Somali Children in London Schools by Local Authorities

LA	Primary			Secondary			Special			All
Code	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Total
1	587	524	1111	249	223	472	8	6	14	1597
2	448	396	844	183	178	361	11	6	17	1222
3	142	130	272	30	50	80	3	4	7	359
4	285	274	559	161	166	327	2	3	5	891
5	368	354	722	165	154	319	11	5	16	1057
6	1003	907	1910	465	479	944	22	22	44	2898
7	170	133	303	43	62	105	5	3	8	415
8	13	16	29	5	1	6	0	1	1	36
9	400	371	771	161	172	333	6	4	10	1114
10	458	455	913	226	265	491	15	5	20	1424
11	429	382	811	170	159	329	9	3	12	1152
12	276	242	518	181	143	324	7	2	9	851
13	645	687	1332	321	262	583	4	4	8	1923
14	429	389	818	264	215	479	9	7	16	1313
15	326	325	651	176	187	363	11	5	16	1030
16	503	466	969	235	187	422	15	5	20	1411
17	129	105	234	24	24	48	1	0	1	283
18	648	477	1125	253	278	531	17	5	22	1684
19	108	106	214	28	20	48	3	1	4	266
20	402	399	801	144	114	258	15	5	20	1082
21	374	375	749	83	119	202	5	3	8	982
22	1175	1121	2296	454	538	992	29	17	46	3374
23	136	145	281	66	116	182	0	0	0	397
24	228	215	443	86	91	177	8	1	9	629
25	4	4	8	3	3	6			0	14
26	81	64	145	18	12	30	1	1	2	177
27	2001	167	368	22	75	97	5	1	6	471
28	493	513	1006	162	167	329	6	2	8	1343
All Pupils	12261	9442	20203	4378	4460	8838	228	121	349	29395

Figure 1: Total number of Somali pupils in London Schools



The variation in the number of Somali pupils in each London local authority is shown in table 2 and figure 1. The main findings of the survey show that:

- Over 29,000 Somali pupils were in London schools in 2007. Of these just over half were boys and 78% were eligible for free school meals.
- There were 20,203 pupils in primary school, 8,838 pupils in secondary, and 349 pupils in special schools.

The distribution of Somali pupils in London varies considerably between Local Authorities. Eight of the 28 LAs who responded, combined to have more than half of all the Somalis recorded. All eight LAs were outer London LAs, and the largest two in terms of cohort were Brent and Ealing, two adjacent authorities in North West London.

The Achievement of Somali Pupils: KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE Evidence

The issue of Somali underachievement is complicated by the lack of identification of Somali pupils within the data. Broadly, Somali pupils are found within the wider definition of 'African'. As a result of this lack of data there are limitations in past research into Somali underachievement in British schools. The absence of national comparative data which identifies patterns of children of Somali 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' Somali population are very small and so any percentages are prone to large fluctuations.

Table 3: KS1, KS2 KS3 and GCSE Attainment by Main Ethnic Groups in England 2007 (%)

Main Ethnic Groups	KS1 - Level 2+				KS2 - Level 4+				KS3 - Level 5+				GCSE
	Read	Write	Maths	Av	English	Maths	Science	Av	English	Maths	Science	Av	
White British	85	82	91	86	81	78	89	83	73	78	74	75	60
Chinese	88	86	95	90	85	92	92	90	80	92	81	84	83
Indian	88	85	92	88	85	82	89	85	82	85	78	82	74
Pakistani	77	72	83	77	72	67	78	72	62	66	54	61	53
Bangladeshi	79	77	86	81	77	72	83	77	66	69	57	64	58
Black Caribbean	81	75	85	80	74	65	82	74	67	64	58	63	49
Black African	79	74	84	79	72	67	79	73	66	66	56	63	56
Somali*	69	63	79	70	58	57	69	61	46	49	42	46	42
All pupils	84	80	90	85	80	77	88	82	73	77	72	74	62

N.B: *The Somali figure here is the average of over 28 London Local Authorities with over 2500 Somali pupils in primary school, and 1200 pupils in secondary schools. No Somali national data is available.

Source: London Local Authorities, Autumn Term 2007.

However, recently a number of London Local Authorities with high Somali school populations began monitoring and collecting data which has provided an interesting example in research evidence. Table 3 shows KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 results for each main ethnic group at national level including aggregated data for selected LAs in London which are noted as having over two thousand Somali pupils in their schools. The main findings from recent national shows that Somali children were the lowest performing group. We have noted from the data:

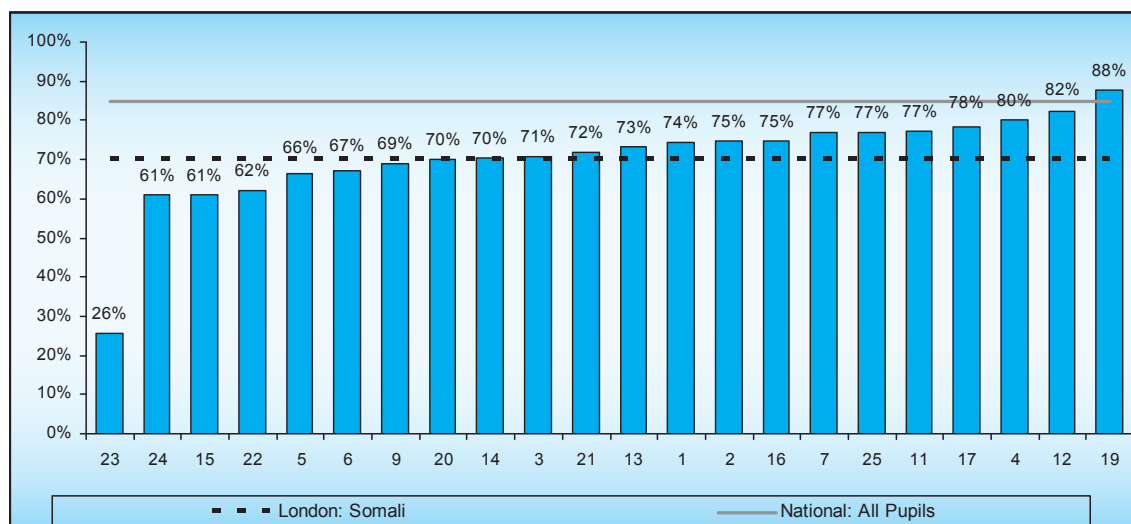
- At Key Stage 1, 70% of Somali children were gaining level 2 or above compared to 86% of White British pupils, 79% of African pupils, 80% of Black Caribbean pupils and 88% of Indian pupils.
- At Key Stage 2, 61% of Somali children were gaining level 4 or above compared to 83% of White British pupils, 73% of African pupils, 74% of Black Caribbean pupils and 85% of Indian pupils.
- At Key Stage 3, 46% were gaining level 5 or above compared to 75% of White British pupils, 63% of African pupils, 63% of Black Caribbean pupils and 82% of Indian pupils.
- At Key Stage 4, 43% were gaining 5+A*-C compared to 60% of White British pupils, 56% of African pupils, 49% of Black Caribbean pupils and 74% of Indian pupils.

Broadly speaking there are marked differences in performance between different ethnic groups. Chinese, Indian and White British pupils are the highest achieving groups, followed by Black African, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean at all key stages. Somali heritage 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 verification that Chinese and Indian heritage pupils are improving at higher rates and outperforming White British pupils. However, there have not been sufficient rates of improvement for Black African, Black Caribbean and Somali heritage pupils to narrow the gap (see Demie et al 2006). As with findings from previous studies, the data highlights a particular disadvantage experienced by Somali and black heritage pupils in English education systems (Demie 2001; Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Gillborn and Gipps 1996).

To date it has been difficult to draw generalised conclusions from research on Somali educational achievement as the lack of appropriate categorisation at a national level has made it difficult to accurately establish the relative achievement of Somali pupils compared to English/Scottish/Welsh and other ethnic groups. But the data collected by London LAs has been helpful in confirming that Somali pupils have not shared equally in increasing rates of achievement (see Demie et al 2006). The finding that Somali pupils are the lowest achieving group has important implications for strategies of raising achievement. These findings make it easier for researchers to examine the differences in experiences between pupils from different ethnic groups and for practitioners to identify appropriate strategies to tackle perceived problems of Somali underachievement in schools.

The above findings are supported by London LAs data known to have significant number of Somali pupils in their schools. Figures 2 to 5 shows the worrying picture of the performance of Somali pupils in these LAs. In almost all these LAs, Somali heritage pupils achieve below the national average. There is significant and consistent variation between the performance of pupils from Somali heritage backgrounds across the 28 authorities.

Figure 2. Average KS1 Results for Somali Pupils by London LA 2007 (level 2+)

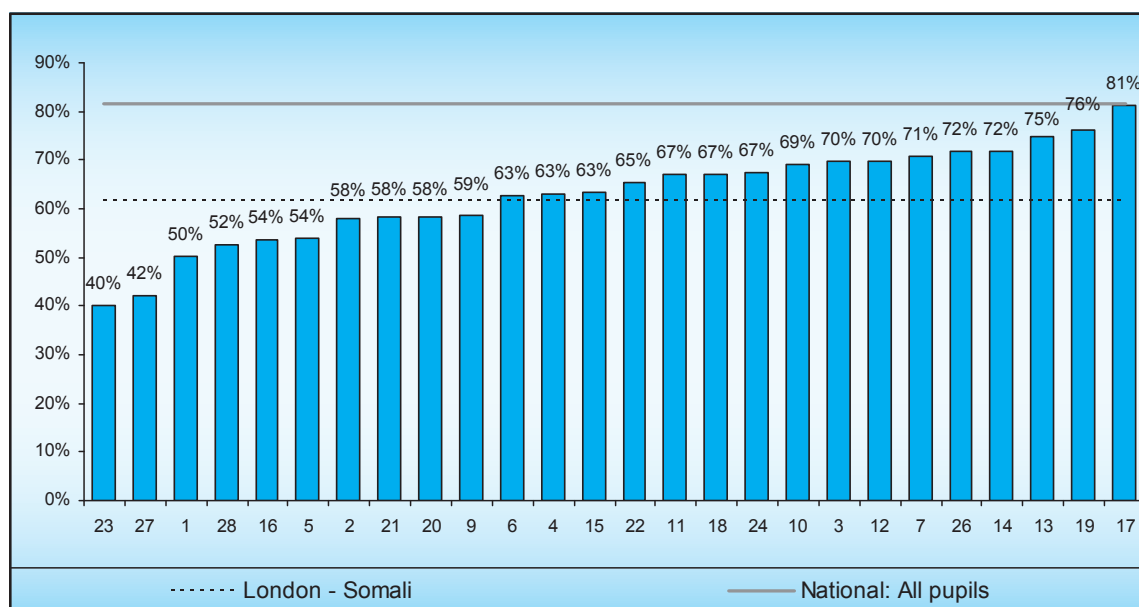


N.B: 28 London LAs data is used to calculate London average. However, two LAs are excluded from KS1 graphs as they had so few pupils in each cohort.

Source: London Local Authorities, Autumn Term 2007

At key stage 1, one LA had much lower results than the other authorities with an average of 26% gaining level 2 or above. The next lowest LA had 61% of pupils reaching the expected level, and only one LA had KS1 results above that of found nationally.

Figure 3 Average KS2 Results for Somali Pupils by London LA 2007 (level 4+)

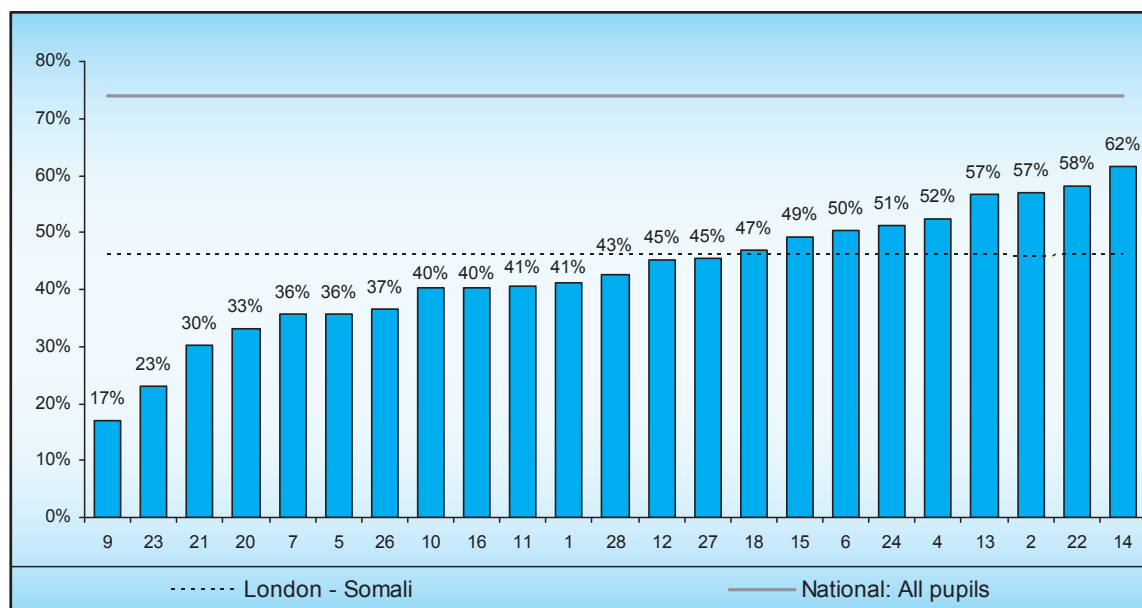


N.B: 28 London LAs data is used to calculate London average. However, two LAs are excluded from KS2 graphs as they had so few pupils in each cohort.

Source: London Local Authorities, Autumn Term 2007

An analysis of KS2 data across London also reveals a contrasting picture of performance between different Local Authorities and suggests that Somali pupils are achieving below the national average and that there is great variation in performance, with Somali pupils in the highest performing LA being twice as likely to gain level 4+ as those in the lowest performing LA.

Figure 4. Average KS3 Results for Somali Pupils by London LA 2007 (Level 5+)

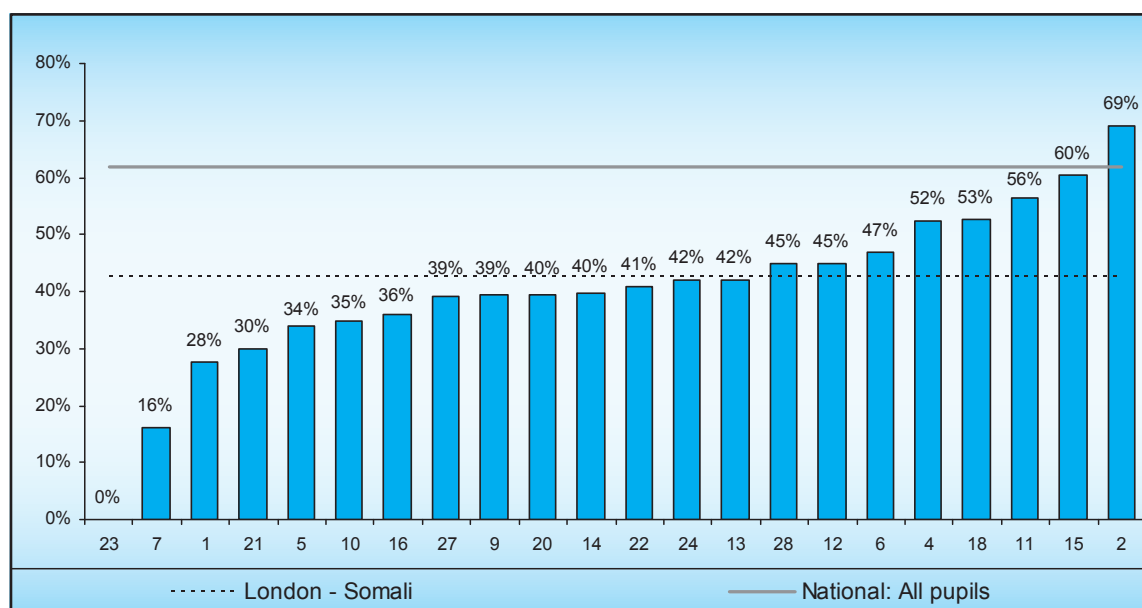


N.B: 28 London LAs data is used to calculate London average. However, five LAs are excluded from KS3 graphs as they had so few pupils in the cohort.

Source: London Local Authorities, Autumn Term 2007

At key stage 3, no LA had results for their Somali pupils that were above the national average. The spread of results ranged from 17% for the lowest performing LA, to 62% for the highest.

Figure 5. GCSE Results for Somali Pupils by London LA (5+A*-C) 2007



N.B: 28 London LAs data is used to calculate London average. However, six LAs are excluded from KS4 graphs as they had so few pupils in each cohort.

Source: London Local Authorities, Autumn Term 2007

In LA 23 no Somali pupils achieved five GCSE passes at Grade A*-C. But in five other authorities between 52% and 69% achieved 5+A*-C. There are a number of reasons for such differentials and it should also be remembered that some LAs have very small Somali cohorts.

Firstly, performance could be related the number of years in British education, some pupils could be new arrivals which is common in a number of authorities. Secondly, it could be due to the fact that standards generally in these five authorities are higher than in other authorities.

Thirdly, the inclusion and EAL support policy and practices in these authorities could be more effective. It is impossible, on the basis of the information available to judge which of these three explanations is the most probable.

The differences in performance between authorities means that blanket statements about Somali attainment, either nationally or London wide, must always be treated with extreme caution until good data is available.

Factors Affecting Achievement of Somali Heritage Pupils

Four factors that are helpful in understanding the effect of background factors on attainment of Somali pupils in schools were considered – eligibility for free school meals (FSM), gender, pupil mobility and levels of fluency in English. The findings from table 4 confirm that Somali pupils are somewhat more disadvantaged. For example the table shows that about 86% of KS2 pupils were eligible for FSM, and about 80% of GCSE pupils. The national figure for FSM eligibility is less than a quarter of this rate.

Table 4. Social Characteristics of Somali pupils in London schools by Key Stage cohorts

Cohort	Total number	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Free school meals (%)
Key Stage 1	2684	52%	48%	84%
Key Stage 2	2510	52%	48%	86%
Key Stage 3	1684	50%	50%	85%
Key Stage 4	1236	50%	50%	80%

Source: London Local Authorities, Autumn Term 2007

Table 5: Somali pupils KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE Performance in London by Gender and Free School Meals – 2007

		Somali* ALL	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Gap (%)	Free Meals (%)	Paid (%)	Gap (%)
KS1 - Level 2+	Read	69%	66%	71%	+5	69%	69%	-
	Write	63%	57%	66%	+9	63%	64%	+1
	Maths	79%	78%	79%	+1	78%	79%	+1
	Average	70%	67%	72%	+5	70%	70%	-
KS2 - Level 4+	English	58%	54%	63%	+9	58%	59%	+1
	Maths	57%	58%	56%	-2	57%	58%	+1
	Science	69%	68%	71%	+3	70%	67%	-3
	Average	62%	60%	63%	+3	61%	61%	-
KS3 - Level 5+	English	46%	41%	51%	+10	45%	54%	+9
	Maths	49%	51%	47%	-4	48%	59%	+11
	Science	42%	43%	41%	-2	41%	51%	+10
	Average	46%	45%	47%	+2	44%	55%	+11
GCSE		42%	37%	47%	+10	40%	43%	+3

NB. Not all LAs were able to provide FSM breakdown, and so there may be a discrepancy between the aggregate of FSM and paid meals, and the overall Somali figure.

Source: London Local Authorities, Autumn Term 2007

Table 5 shows that Somali girls outperform boys in each subject in KS1 and KS2, most notably in English, whilst at KS3 it is only English where they outperform boys. There was a much smaller gap in attainment between those eligible for a free meal and those who paid for the Somali cohort than that found overall, at KS1 and KS2. Tables 5 and 6 repeat patterns established earlier, whereby girls tend to outperform boys at each key stage (Demie, 2001; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). Overall, the findings of the results between key stages indicate that girls achieve higher averages than boys by a quite noticeable margin for the main ethnic groups. However, this is not always true for Somali pupils.

Table 6: KS2 and GCSE National Performance in England by Ethnicity and Gender – 2007

	KS2 Level 4+				GCSE 5+A*-C			
	All Pupils	Boys	Girls	Gap	All Pupils	Boys	Girls	Gap
White British	83%	81%	84%	3%	60%	55%	64%	9%
Bangladeshi	77%	77%	78%	1%	58%	52%	64%	12%
Black Caribbean	74%	70%	77%	7%	49%	42%	56%	14%
Black African	73%	71%	75%	4%	56%	50%	61%	11%
Somali*	62%	60%	63%	3%	42%	37%	47%	10%

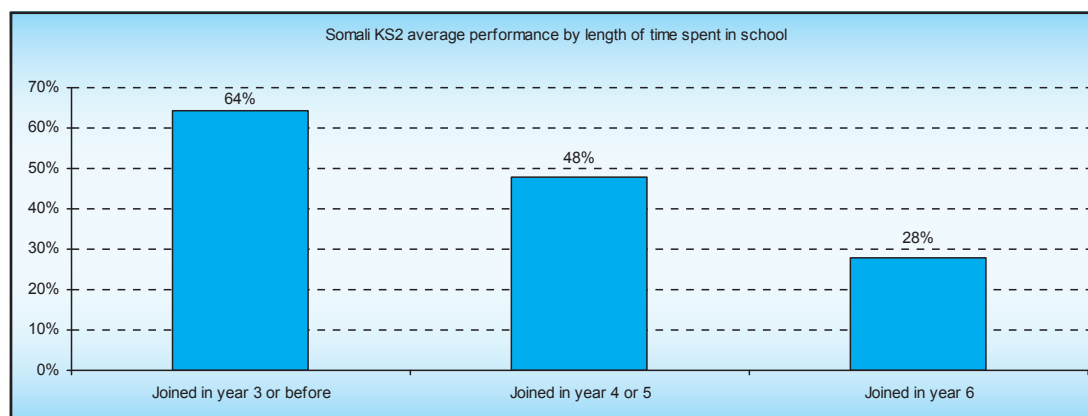
* No national Somali data available. Data here refers to London Local Authorities.

Pupil Mobility Factor

It is now widely recognised that mobility can have an adverse affect 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.

Pupils who were at the school at the start of KS2 were more likely than their peers of the same ethnicity to gain the expected level. Figure 6 clearly illustrates this point showing that, on average, pupils who spent all of KS2 in the same school achieved better than Year 4 arrivals, who in turn achieved better than Year 5 arrivals, and that pupils who arrived in the year of KS2 tests has the lowest levels of attainment. At KS2 about 64% of non-mobile pupils achieved level 4 or above compared with 28% of those who joined in year 6.

Figure 6. Somali KS2 Performance by Length of Time Spent in School

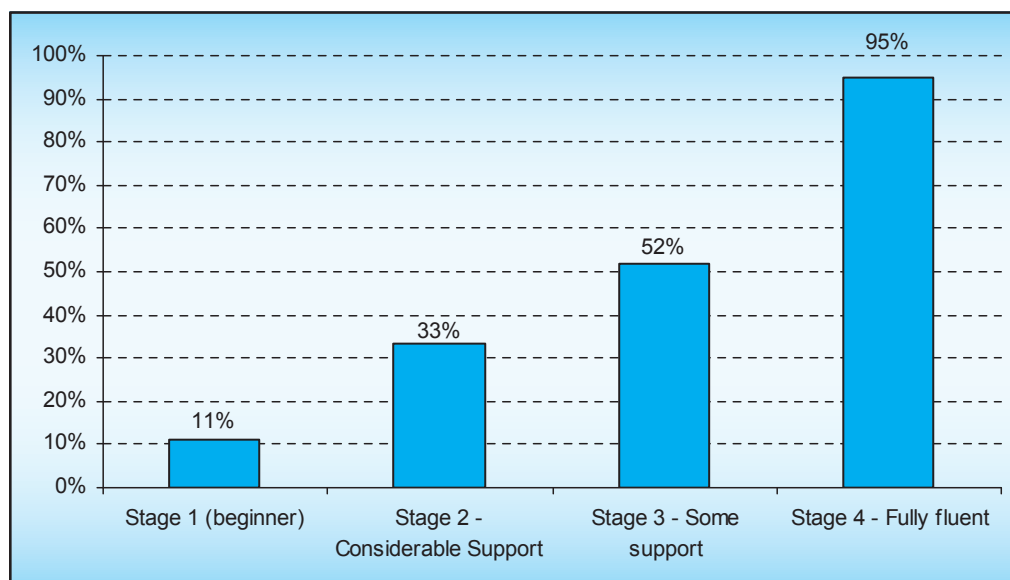


Source: Data based on one London LA with strong tradition of monitoring by pupil mobility

English Language Acquisition and Achievement

Another important factor relating to ethnic background and African heritage achievement is lack of 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 African heritage are fluent in English while others may not be.

Figure 7. Somali KS2 Attainment by Levels of Fluency in English (Level 4+)



Source: Data based on one London LA with strong tradition of monitoring by level of fluency in English

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 pupils who spoke English as an additional language scored significantly lower than those who spoke English as a first language or were fluent in English.

Figure 7 gives the average KS2 performance in the tests by level of fluency in English for the major ethnic groups in Lambeth. Somali pupils' performance at KS2 increases at the stage of proficiency in English increases. Bilingual Somali speakers who were fully fluent in English were more likely to gain level 4+ than pupils who only spoke English.

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.

Conclusion

The London data shows a wide range of performance between Local Authorities in London. It also reveals that Somali children are underachieving in British schools. *'This is not a new phenomenon, but one that can not allow to continue. Effective schools that have been dealing with the issues hold the key to the way forward'* (DFES, 2003:3). We now know a number of London schools are effective in tackling Somali underachievement. The next section looks at good practice in successful schools in London.

SECTION 4: CASE STUDIES OF SCHOOLS

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to explore factors which contribute to the success of Somali pupils in British schools.

The previous section covered the attainment of Somali heritage pupils in the context of their overall performance in London. However, in recent years the need for a detailed case study of successful schools in raising the achievement of Somali heritage pupils has become apparent as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement. A number of LAs and schools have good results for Somali pupils (Demie 2007).

The key challenge is to find out what successful schools are doing and why these strategies are proving to be effective in raising the achievement of Somali heritage pupils. For this reason, recently a number of studies have looked at examples of schools that provide an environment in which Black Caribbean pupils (Ofsted 2002:p.2, McKenley et al 2003), Bangladeshi pupils (Ofsted 2004), African heritage pupils (Demie et al 2005) and Somali pupils (Demie et al 2007) flourish. *'All these reports agreed on the key areas: Leadership and ethos, relationship in schools, expectation and commitment, parental engagement, monitoring and curriculum enrichment'* (McKenley 2003).

The research in this section is similar but reflects on a Somali perspective using detailed case studies to illustrate how the complex interactions of context, organisation, policy and practice help generate effective practice in raising the attainment of Somali heritage pupils in a number of London schools with a strong emphasis on what works.

Ten London schools were selected for detailed case studies. Each school was visited for two days. Lessons were observed and discussions were held with staff, pupils and parents. For each school researchers evaluated how well Somali pupils were achieving and ascertained the factors contributing to this.

They also considered areas which were key in previous Ofsted case studies (Ofsted 2002, 2004):

- Quality of school leadership and management.
- The school's curriculum.
- The quality of teaching and learning.
- How the school monitors pupils' performance.
- How it supports and guides pupils.
- The school's links with parents and the wider community.
- Parents' and pupils' views about the school and its support systems.

Hampstead Secondary School – Camden LA



© Hampstead Secondary School.

The context

Hampstead School serves a socially and culturally diverse community in the north of Camden close to the boundaries of Brent and Barnet. The school has specialist status as a Technology College. It has a long tradition as a progressive and inclusive school which staff and students wear as a badge of honour; the school welcomes students from across the full range of ability. The arrival of a new headteacher in 2005 has seen the school embark on a process of remodelling itself through the modernising and upgrading of its facilities, the introduction of a school uniform and a more focussed achievement culture. There has been a significant improvement in attainment in 2007 with the school achieving its best ever GCSE results.

In keeping with other secondary schools across the country, the school uses Family Fisher Trust data to set targets but this is proving increasingly problematic for schools with ethnically diverse, mobile and bilingual school populations. To address this Hampstead have designed their own internal Hampstead Challenge targets which have been really important in raising teacher expectations, particularly of EAL and black pupils; Somali pupils have also benefited from this more robust approach.

The school's vision for all students is to:

- Inspire a love of learning that will develop throughout their lives.
- Provide an outstanding learning environment that delivers the highest standards of teaching and celebrates success.
- Develop responsible and active citizens, community and family members who are tolerant and respectful of others.

Governors are very proud of the social and cultural mix of the school, not just in ethnicity but also class and see this as *'an enormous positive and strength of the school.'*

They acknowledge that the catchment is changing. The focus on 'Every Child Matters' has raised the profile on the importance of those children who need care and better links between home and school. The on-site support team has been developed and has shifted its focus on reducing challenging behaviour. The school has increased the diversity of its workforce in terms of role and non-teaching pastoral support. The pioneering work done by the Somali home-school link worker has been appreciated through his role as a staff governor.

Profile of Somali pupils in Hampstead School

Five years ago there were 30 Somali pupils in the school. Now there are 117 Somali pupils (61 boys and 56 girls) from a total roll of 1300. A number of students are related to each other and live in close supportive communities who have deliberately chosen the school for its increasing reputation as a place where their children can achieve and be safe. Many of the families have high aspirations for their children. The majority of Somali pupils are Muslim and from refugee/asylum seeking families. They were either born in Somalia or in a neighbouring African country to which their families had initially fled.

Case study of Student A: A is a Year 11 pupil who was born in Zambia where her family first moved as a result of the upheaval in Somalia. She speaks four languages: Somali, Arabic, English and Swahili. She comes from a large family including her three older brothers, two with degrees in Engineering who have returned to Zambia and another who manages a pharmacy. X says that diversity is celebrated at Hampstead and this is not the case in all schools.

The Somali parents who support Hampstead School see themselves very much as Africans and retain strong links with the region. A number of parents send their children to a private tutoring company in East London and take their GCSEs early. In addition they attend supplementary classes at the nearby Kingsgate Community Centre.

Achievement and standards

Standards of attainment, particularly among boys, are improving at Hampstead School. At KS3 there is a very mixed picture of achievement: attainment in maths rose in 2007 due in part to the attainment of boys which has been steadily rising since 2005, with some 81% of boys achieving level 5+; by contrast girls' attainment in maths has fallen in the same period. In English there has been a dramatic increase in the number of boys achieving level 5+, from 69% in 2005 to 83% in 2007; similarly girls' attainment rose from 75% to 90% in the same period. In science the rate of improvement has fluctuated over the past three years between 71% and 73%.

The school achieved its best results ever in GCSE with 60% of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades and 88% achieving 5 A*-G, also an increase on 2006 results. The percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more grades including English and maths increased to 50%. Against the national trend, boys outperformed girls.

The numbers of pupils of Somali heritage attending Hampstead School has been increasing year on year and is reflected in the numbers taking Key Stage tests in 2007. Achievement of Somali pupils in 2007 is above the school, Camden and national average. There is been a big improvement in performance since 2005 in the school.

Table 1. Key Stage 3: % Achieving Level 5+

	Somali	All pupils	Camden	National
English 2004	50	72	73	71
English 2005	40	72	76	74
English 2006	87	83	75	72
English 2007	89	86	77	74
Maths 2004	38	65	70	73
Maths 2005	60	78	72	74
Maths 2006	93	77	76	77
Maths 2007	89	78	74	76
Science 2004	25	63	63	66
Science 2005	60	71	67	70
Science 2006	80	73	71	72
Science 2007	95	71	68	73

N.B: No. of Somali pupils- 8 in 2004, 5 in 2005, 15 in 2006, 19 in 2007.

Key Stage 4: GCSE Achievement 5+A*-C

By contrast to KS3 the numbers in Key Stage 4 were much smaller and only 4 pupils took GCSE tests in 2007 which makes statistical interpretation somewhat difficult.

Table 2. GCSE Achievement 5+A*-C in Hampstead School

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Somali	33	14	30	75
All pupils	56	54	52	60
Camden	54	52	55	56
National	54	57	59	62

N.B: No. of Somali pupils – 6 in 2004, 7 in 2005, 10 in 2006, 4 in 2007.

Although the actual numbers taking tests in 2007 were small, the trends are rising and an increasing number of Somali pupils and their families are choosing Hampstead as a safe, happy and achieving school. This reputation among the local Somali community has been hard won. The confident engagement of Somali parents in the education of their children is a strength of the school and this is embodied in the partnership working and academic advocacy of the Ethnic Minority Achievement team and the Somali home-school link worker who is a key member of that team. The testimonies of Somali pupils and parents bear witness to the vision of inclusion which is at the heart of this school.

The work of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Department

Raising the achievement of pupils of Somali heritage at the school is led by the Ethnic Minority Achievement team, who work in close partnership with subject departments. One of the department's biggest achievements has been to break down the belief that proficiency in English language is a proxy for achievement. Through the school's engagement with the MEAP project and the support of the LA, school staff have come to understand that Somali family learning cultures are strong once the barriers to engaging with teachers and school systems are overcome. Similarly Somali parents have come to understand the importance attached to parental engagement by schools like Hampstead. A parents' guide is produced by the department for the parents of new arrivals, which is written in Somali and English.

Each September the EMA team produces a comprehensive background booklet for school staff, which details the names, form, country of origin, mother tongue, levels of English fluency and status of every bilingual pupil in the school. The first page reminds the reader that *'the language development of bilingual pupils is the responsibility of all teachers.'* The booklet outlines which pupils are having additional support, whether in or out of class. It provides teachers with checklists on the learning environment, helpful classroom organisation strategies, assessing language levels and other key questions which need to be answered to support bilingual pupils to raise their achievement.

Case Study Student B – Year 11 pupil: 'help for help' Student B values the support of the Hampstead EMA department highly and helps out at the base with younger pupils in return for continued study and language support. This enables her to gain what she calls *'help for help'*. This echoes an approach her mother has adopted as she takes her children for additional support at a private tutoring centre in Leyton run by Pakistani university graduates. Mothers provide childcare while their older children are being tutored on the same 'help for help' approach. B's mother was not able to complete her secondary education and go to university in Somalia and she is determined that this will not be the fate of her own children.

The EMA co-ordinator reported that the GCSE results for bilingual and ethnic minority pupils had been the best ever. Where the EMA team works most collaboratively with other departments, such as in English and maths, the subject teachers check the accuracy of levels with the EMA team. Furthermore, the EMA co-ordinator has recorded the Language in Common (LiC) levels on the shared drive so that all staff have access to this information. Updates of pupils' levels are made each half term. Three EMA teachers update progress portfolios of pupils who have been given LiC assessments. These updates include subject teacher assessment. Other barriers to pupils' learning include: involvement in cliques and gangs; mobility and interrupted prior learning. Good collaboration between the EMA team, the adult learning co-ordinator and the on-site support team provides a 'wraparound' approach which allows the school to move beyond the rhetoric of 'Every Child Matters' and offer personalised responses. Somali boys often come to secondary schools with a reputation for poor behaviour, but the school takes the view that this misbehaviour in EAL pupils is more likely to stem from frustration at progress and an inability to communicate this appropriately.

Case Study of Student C: Year 10 pupil Child C arrived in the UK when he was in Year 5. He attended two primary schools after remaining home for six months, awaiting a school place. He was not entered for the KS2 SATs and memories of his primary school include *'lots of fights.'* Child C compares this to his experience at Hampstead School where he says teachers are *'dedicated to help us.'* When Child C was not entered for his English KS3 SATs, the EMA department, recognising the progress he had made in a short period of time, advocated on his behalf that he be allowed to sit the test. Child C achieved a level 5 in English, maths and science. However, he is keenly aware of what he needs to achieve in KS4, and has high aspirations. He spoke of his disappointment in achieving level 5, understanding that it predicts a grade C or D at KS4. When he thought about the progress he has made since arriving in the UK, he was convinced that he should aspire to achieve As. He believes that *'the language of the questions'* and writing are two key barriers to his achievement. He stated *'if the test was talking, I would get higher.'* Above all, Child C observes that when he is challenged, he does well; when he is perceived as needing extra help and 'treated as a baby', he does not progress in line with his aspirations. Child C is on the Gifted and Talented list for languages and is planning a career in medicine.

Parental engagement

The involvement of Somali parents is a feature of the school and parents interviewed as part of this research testified to this. The school's strategy to raise the achievement of Somali pupils and the involvement of their parents began with the appointment of a home-school link worker of Somali heritage following action research conducted by the head of the EMA team in 2001. Somali pupils were interviewed about their school experiences and the case was made for a home-school link worker.

As a key member of the EMA team, the home-school link worker is now also a learning mentor and teaching assistant. But the worker has a range of roles in the school and in his community. At school he is the interpreter, the go-between and the social glue that binds Somali parents and their children to the school. He provides the same role in reverse for school staff who are confident in his interventions and advice. All members of the EMA team advocate on students' behalf.

The EMA team with the support of the senior leadership team has played a long game:

'Six years ago, the EMA team held our first Somali parents information event. About 10 parents attended. Last year, over 40 parents attended. These events are high profile: the headteacher and deputy headteachers attend, as do heads of year and department heads. Each year, the confidence and participation of parents grows. I would like to see them take over the chair and set the agenda of the annual event, or run termly follow up sessions for parents which Somali parents chair and minute. School staff would still attend as school links. Furthermore, we are also developing links with the local Somali community group. A representative attends our annual Somali parents' event. There is much more communication now between home and school. In the past language was a barrier but not now that there is a designated member of staff to act as mediator via email, phone and in person. Parents now have a better understanding of what's going on in the school where before they had to rely on children who were not always an appropriate channel.'

A growing feature of the success of this work is the increasing involvement of Somali fathers in their children's education at Hampstead School. They have responded particularly positively to the initiatives of the school's adult learning co-ordinator who runs the sessions on SAM learning and offers ICT courses to parents.

Case Study of Father D: D attended elementary, intermediate and secondary school in Somalia. After having a series of manual jobs when he first arrived, he now works in higher education and is an active parent in his community. His sons attend Hampstead but he sends his daughter to an all girls school in a neighbouring authority.

'I attended elementary, intermediate and secondary school in Somalia. The system is very different in the UK, I did not know what SATs were – we never heard of SATs before - when my daughter's primary school told me about her Key Stage 2 results. I set targets for my children at home – that everyone should achieve better than dad with his PhD. I had to prepare my son for his SATs in Year 9 because I know how important they are. He got just under level 8 in maths, level 7 in science and 5 in English. Now in Year 10 he is on his own and given the freedom to help himself. I have friends who send their children to Harrow so for my children to compete I must put in the additional support. I have concerns like everyone else about gangs, the number of Somalis in the prison population, I have woken up to that reality but the only way we can change things is through education. We live in England but our dream is to go back to Somalia if things ever change there.'

Conclusions

The headteacher is very clear about the features that contribute to an achievement culture among Somali pupils in Hampstead School:

- Culture of the school, its values and beliefs in equality of opportunity not uniformity, consistency and inclusivity.
- Work of the EMA team particularly the quality of their diagnostic procedures, the range of intervention strategies adopted within the department and with others involved in the achievement of the whole child in school. The impact of personalised interventions which have built on the learning from the National Strategies' MEAP and BPAP projects particularly in the area of academic mentoring and engaging parents.
- The committed quality of the work of the Somali home-school link worker who is part of the school's well-regarded Ethnic Minority Achievement team and the effective teaching strategies which they promote. The contribution of the team in raising the achievement of Somali pupils has been recognised in a recent DVD 'New Arrivals and Excellence' commissioned by the DCSF.
- Exemplary parental engagement strategy to increase the confidence and ability of Somali parents to feel part of the school community.
- Celebration of diversity through activities such as the international evening in which increasing numbers of Somali students and their parents participate. This is considered a highlight of the school calendar.

Together these have given the school the confidence to challenge stereotypes of under-achievement, disaffection and poor behaviour among Somali pupils and low aspiration. There is a growing understanding of family learning cultures that support achievement and that language is a barrier that can be circumvented with strong partnership teaching and confident EMA support. Somali parents believe their children can achieve their potential at Hampstead School and that their aspirations will be supported not ignored. The success of this approach is evident in the words below:

Case Study of Mother E: E came direct from Somalia five years ago and was able to find places for three of her children in Hampstead School. She had some education but had not been able to complete her secondary schooling and although she dreamt of going to university, this did not happen. Her children also attend supplementary school on Saturday at the local community centre and she has enrolled them in a private tutorial centre in East London. According to E many Somali parents follow this approach:

'How important is education to me? Isn't it obvious? I wake up early and come back home late to make sure that my children get the education that I could not get for myself.' 'I know they will miss something if they don't take part. Education is important. It is a moral imperative that children focus on their education in order to provide a future that is much better than the present. I know about levels. My daughter got 2 level 7s and an 8 in her SATs. She has already taken GCSE science though the private tuition and got 2 A's. This year one of my sons got level 4-6 and the teacher has told me the same grades this year - this is not good enough especially in maths. I advise other parents about the levels so they can check if their children are underachieving. In this school I expect my children to achieve highly.'

Lilian Baylis Technology School – Lambeth LA



© Lilian Baylis Technology School. Somali student addressing the Somali Achievement Conference in Lambeth.

The context

Lilian Baylis Technology School is a mixed, 11-16, non-denominational school located in a brand new building in Kennington Lane. It is a government specialist Technology College. The school was granted specialist Technology College status in 2005, for which the school has drawn up an ambitious action plan for the next 4 years.

In 2007 there were 624 students on roll at Lilian Baylis. 73% of students were eligible for free school meals. The school also has a high proportion of students learning English as an additional language. 25% students are not fluent in English and 64% had English as a second language. The inward mobility rate for the 2007 was 9%.

The school population is ethnically very diverse. Of the 624 on roll about 35% are African, 19% Black Caribbean, 11% White British, 8% Portuguese, 8% Somali, 4% Bangladeshi, 5% Mixed Race and 4% Black Other. A significant number of refugees and asylum seekers are unaccompanied minors who start at the school with very limited English. About 40 languages are spoken in the school. The most common mother tongue languages are: English (227 speakers), Portuguese (69), Yoruba (56), Somali (48), Bengali (29), French (26), Arabic (19), Twi/Fante (29), Spanish (17), Swahili (11), Chinese (10) and Vietnamese (10). The percentage of students with additional learning needs is very high.

‘Overall attainment on entry to the school is well below average and very low in mathematics and English. School analysis indicates that half of the students joining the school in Year 7 have reading averages below 9 years old.’ (Ofsted 2003).

Despite very low attainment at entry, evidence from value-added and students’ progress in the school suggests that children do make good progress between key stages and the school is in the top league in value-added nationally. This good improvement rate in the school has been nationally recognised with the Prime Minister stating:

*'This is a wonderful school that's improved dramatically over the past few years.'
'I want to pay tribute to all of you who are here, students and staff. All of you have worked extremely hard to improve your school and to make your move to this fantastic new building so successful.'*

(The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, Tuesday 26th April 2006 at the Ceremony to officially open the new building as Lilian Baylis Technology School).

Central to the school's success in raising achievement is:

- Strong leadership lead by an outstanding headteacher.
- Close links with parents and increasing community support, which earns the school the trust and respect of parents.
- Effective use of data.
- Effective use of a diverse workforce.
- Innovative curriculum which incorporates aspects of pupils' own culture and adds relevance and self esteem to pupils' view of themselves.
- Good care, guidance and support for Somali pupils.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made here includes interviews with the headteacher, staff, and Somali pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work and attainment data; classroom observation of lessons and a parent focus group and pupil focus group and interview with head of Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMAG). The school was visited for 2 days to gather good practice evidence in raising achievement of Somali pupils in June 2006. Details of the findings are discussed below.

Leadership and management

'The quality of leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding.' (Ofsted 2005/6.)

A school governor, the chair of the community and welfare committee, believe that the headteacher and deputy headteacher are key people in this school. They have been instrumental in its transformation and for this progress to be sustainable the excellent systems need to be embedded further:

'People make the difference but it is the systems which hold the pattern together.'

Through his establishment of key systems and through school self evaluation, the headteacher has a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas for development . He also has an excellent understanding of the barriers to raising achievement for individuals and groups of students that exist at the school. The headteacher and his colleagues have developed robust tracking systems that monitor individual student progress in raising achievement. The use of ethnicity data to identify individual strengths and weaknesses provides evidence that leads to early intervention. This is a key strategy for raising standards. This is confirmed by Ofsted judgements:

'There is a corporate determination to raise standards that stems from the headteacher. The drive, commitment and a sense of urgency coupled with a determination to raise standards and students' attainment are key characteristics. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is focused on supporting the individual student to ensure that his or her needs are met and are leading to improve learning. Ensuring that students are getting the best possible deal from the school is what the school is about.'
(Ofsted 2003.)

Evidence for this exists in the awareness that the headteacher has of the challenges that individual students are facing. These are obtained through formal structures such as meetings to review the support given to these students. Students themselves also appreciate the support they receive from the headteacher through encouragement, *'you can do it, never give up'* and praise in more informal settings, eg. a passing comment whilst walking through the school.

Somali students spoken to confirmed this with comments such as:

'Mr Phillips has made the difference in my life'.

'100% of the teachers support us here.'

This interest that the headteacher takes in the individual child has been a leading example to other teachers which Ofsted recognised when it stated:

'Teachers know their children well and are sensitive to their personal circumstances.'

Effective use of black teachers and a more diverse staff team

There is a great diversity in the workforce in Lilian Baylis School in terms of the range of roles, skills and ethnicity and these provide good and well co-ordinated support to Somali pupils. This is a strength of the school and one way in which the school promotes good relationships and racial harmony. Black African and Caribbean teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors are actively recruited from the local community and their loyalty to the neighbourhood is viewed as a real asset by the school. The diverse workforce provides a strong understanding of the pressures of wider society and their impact on pupils and their parents. The school has invested considerably in teaching assistants as part of their drive to complement and broaden the range of engagement for pupils and ultimately to increase standards. The headteacher is also looking for Somali teachers to support classroom teaching.

In this school Somali pupils viewed the presence of black staff as important. They saw them as someone who would listen and understand their issues without being stigmatised. Black staff in the school also saw their role as important in supporting the raising of achievement of all pupils.

Curriculum

Ofsted recently judged the quality of teaching and learning at the school to be *'good'* with particular features being *'outstanding.'* The learning environment is *'excellent'* and students are *'switched on to learning.'* There are high expectations of learning that are communicated well to students through clear learning objectives. Classroom management is often very skilled (2005).

'Teachers in the lessons observed were very aware of the need to provide a good range of varied activities in order to involve students in their learning. The activities in the English lesson observed were particularly creative and hence effective in actively involving all students.'

Ofsted survey on the achievement of different groups of learners

The Ofsted report in 2003 highlights a strength of the school as:

'Good teaching characterised by detailed planning, work that is interesting and engages the students, good assessments and very good relationships with the students. Teachers are strong role models and they bring a breadth of experience. There are good curriculum and enrichment opportunities.'

The school uses the local and wider community through visits such as to The Globe Theatre. There are also study programmes including residential weekends, for example to Juniper Hall to study filmmaking. These extend the usual learning activities and enrich the curriculum. Artists, dance groups, authors and poets contribute to the curriculum in creative and innovative ways. Other extra curricular activities include gardening, sports, ICT, music and art. Partnerships with South Bank University and Lambeth College have supported the school with its curriculum programme. These have also provided teacher placements which have benefited students at Lilian Baylis. Similarly a community language day at Kings College, where existing Somali students came and met with students at Lilian Baylis motivated Somali pupils at the school.

Digital literacy has worked well with Somali pupils. The school has been working with Southwark TV, a community TV station, which broadcasts on Sky digital 585, Telewest 233 as well as via the Internet. Somali students worked with a filmmaker making cartoon animations of their experiences. These animations were shown on Southwark hour in May, on the plasma screens around the school, at the Blue Elephant Theatre at their recent film night and will be shown at the South Bank and the National Film School. Developing students' literacy and oral skills has been a focus for the school and targeting staffing resources to raise standards has been carefully planned across the school.

Provision for English as an additional language is good and specialist support is focused primarily on those at the early stages of English acquisition, either through withdrawal or in class. This is based on a structured approach involving a published English course and a team of four learning support assistants led by the subject leader for ethnic minority achievement. Students learning English as an additional language respond well to specialist support. This combined with the care that the school takes of them, enables them to integrate well into the school community, relating to each other and adults with care and courtesy.

Students have access to special curriculum materials. Students, including Somali students, with a low reading age get one hour extra support a day. Bilingual books are also available for Somali students. All children have been given laptops and memory sticks to work with at home. There is an alternative accreditation – Grade Assessment Profile in English for the 6 students who will not get GCSEs. Their profile of work is sent to GAPE and they receive a certificate.

Use of data

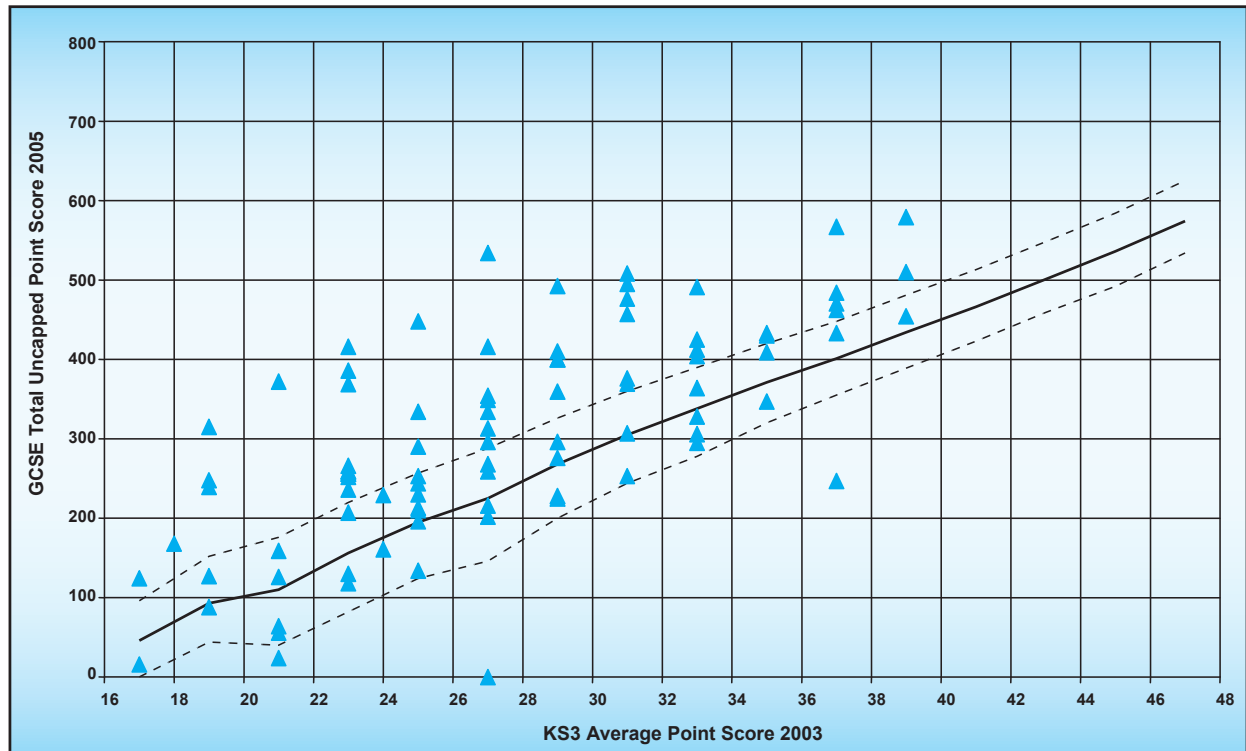
Use of performance data for school improvement is a strength of Lilian Baylis School. The use of data involves all interested parties: staff, governors and parents. One of the core elements of the school's success in raising achievement is its robust focus on tracking and monitoring individual student's progress and achievement in the widest sense of the term. The school has a well developed pupil tracking system and it has detailed CATS, KS2, KS3, GCSE and non-statutory assessment data followed by background data such as ethnic background, language spoken, level of fluency in English, date of admission, attendance rate, eligibility for free school meals, EAL stage of fluency, SEN stage, mobility rate, years in school, which teacher's class has been attended, attendance rate, types of support, postcode data. This good practice is recognised by Ofsted and the inspection report states that:

'There is thorough and rigorous monitoring of performance and other indicators such as attendance and exclusions, by gender and ethnicity. The information is used well to inform school improvement planning. The focus on improving the performance of Black Caribbean boys is bearing fruit and this group of students is now doing much better, with the 2004 PANDA report identifying Caribbean and African students as performing better than the school average. Girls in every ethnic group performed particularly well in the GCSE examinations in 2005, and though boys achieved well at GCSE relative to their prior attainment, their actual attainment remained significantly lower than that of girls. This is being tackled with challenging targets set for 2005.'

'Observations of lessons indicate that there is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups. Black Caribbean boys, a group highlighted as underachieving, are now well represented in higher ability sets.'

'Assessment is well used to support students' progress.' (Ofsted 2005/6).

Figure 1. National Median Line Value-added KS3 Average Point Score 2003 to GCSE Total Uncapped Point Score 2005 - Lilian Baylis



Data is used to set challenging targets for attainment. The students are well aware of their targets and how they might achieve them, with a wide range of support mechanisms in place.

'There is a corporate determination to raise standards that stems from the headteacher.' (Ofsted 2003).

The school also uses contextual and value-added reports provided by the local authority and Ofsted PANDA/RAISEonline reports for self-evaluation and target setting for the whole school, year groups, KS3, KS4 and individual pupils. The value-added data of the school is particularly impressive. This is shown in Figure 1, which compares the relative progress made by pupils in Lilian Baylis School with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England between KS3 and GCSE. The findings from the school suggest that the pupils in this school have made good progress in terms of value-added. About 56% of the pupils in the case study school are in the upper quartile, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. 40% of the pupils progressed as expected and 3% are in the lower quartile and progressed less well than expected. This evidence from the national median line was also used by schools to ask questions, such as, which pupils have made significantly better or worse progress than others and to identify the reasons for this.

The school uses ethnicity data to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. Early intervention based on detailed analysis of need is a key strategy in the school's drive to raise achievement. This is further confirmed by an earlier Ofsted inspection which states that:

'The school has excellent practice in relation to self-evaluation. Every year findings from a thorough review of the whole school, including parental views feeds into the school development plan. All staff are aware of the key priorities under the excellent leadership of the headteacher.'

'Staff share a common purpose and are well supported by senior staff through well resourced projects to help raise the achievement of specific groups such as Caribbean boys and gifted and talented students. The easy and flexible access to good quality ICT resources and good quality books in the library are of particular benefit to boys.' (Ofsted 2005/6).

Specific projects to support particular groups of learners help to:

'Promote a culture of learning and raise the personal aspirations of students right across the school. The impact of these projects on students' self esteem is most noticeable and clearly gives them greater confidence in their capacity to achieve well.' (Ofsted 2005/6).

This school bases its improvement strategy on thorough monitoring and evaluation including the identification of what most needs to be done and decisions about the actions to be taken. The school uses data to identify pupils who are particularly underachieving for long time. The school looks very early on at the students who are underachieving against the KS2 and KS3 results and this has led to a number of interventions or strategies where data analysis highlighted issues to be addressed in the school. The most commonly reported interventions in the school as a result of looking at the data were providing additional support, including one to one, booster groups, tailoring teaching levels, mentoring and target setting and English language support.

Parental engagement

The headteacher regards liaison with parents and the Somali community as vital to the school's drive to raise standards. The headteacher is well known and respected in the Somali community. He has done much to assist in establishing strong links and this is clearly a contributing factor. Somali parents interviewed for this research were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Comments from a group of Somali parents at a Somali Education forum conference where the headteacher made a presentation confirm that:

'We are lucky to have Gary Phillips as the headteacher at Lilian Baylis. He is an excellent headteacher who understands African values, Somali culture and issues very well. We want all our children to go to the school but its now getting more difficult to come here because everybody wants their children to go to Lilian Baylis. Our children are well supported in the school and they are also very happy in the school.'

Education is clearly of great importance to these Somali parents. Somalis and other parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education through termly reports, individual consultations and academic review days where individual student targets are set. The pastoral team also reaches out to parents. Although Somali parents might not attend general academic evenings they always attend meetings to discuss their child's academic progress.

The 2003 Ofsted inspection confirms that the school seeks an active partnership with parents and that through the target setting meetings there are good opportunities for parents to be informed about their child's progress.

The school runs family learning activities based on arts activities and parenting. The school also reaches out to the local community by providing adult education, Sure Start and hiring out its premises for activities.

Support and guidance

The overall range of support for students is extensive and innovative. The pastoral system is effective. A support co-ordination group reviews any students whose welfare or progress has been identified as causing concern every two weeks. This group includes the assistant head, SENCO and EAL subject leader. Other staff are invited as appropriate. They co-ordinate provisions including:

- A full time social worker funded partly by Kids Company.
- A range of therapists funded externally.
- Counsellors.
- The Home and Away link.
- Access to mental health support team for students made homeless through war or civil conflict.

The Ofsted report in 2003 highlights:

'The very high level of support the school provides to individuals to help them achieve and the very good use of the developing partnerships within the broader community to raise students' aspirations and support the work of the school.' *'The staff show an appropriate and professional affection for students. They want the students to succeed and genuinely enjoy their success.'* (Ofsted 2003).

Students are well supported in personal matters through Connexions, the agency that deals with careers and academic options. Students with difficult circumstances or who are at risk of underachieving through behavioural problems are further helped by school mentors and counsellors from the voluntary community eg. South Bank University and King's College.

The school recognises that proficiency in English is the key to educational success for their bilingual learners including Somali children. Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) funding is in the main, used to meet the needs of early stage learners of English. A number of good practices are carried out to support EAL, including the needs of Somali pupils:

- The English language assessment for new arrivals is done in the Ethnic Minorities Achievement department.
- There is an induction programme and the pupils are shown around the school.
- Bilingual Somali translators help in any translations for pupils and parents.
- There is an after-school homework club for bilingual students and Somali children.
- There are parents' literacy classes, lunchtime clubs and after school clubs for refugees and Somali children. There are links with Somali community groups.
- A checklist has been produced for all teachers who work with refugees including Somali pupils.
- Somali pupils are supported individually in class and bilingual resource packs are provided by schools, including books.

Their mobility is an added difficulty. In order for them to gain the most from their time at school the school uses external services such as interpreters, the Ivorian Coast Woman's Association and Somali Association. As part of a strong mentoring tradition in Lilian Baylis, the school works with mentors from the Somali community. Lilian Baylis has an unofficial head girl and boy from the Somali community. These students might liaise with staff and Somali students and let staff know of any friction within the community.

Refugee and asylum seeking students benefit from the support of a strong pastoral system, including good induction arrangements for newly arrived students with buddies and peer mentoring including 'Bullywatch' a specific strategy that the school uses to help students to feel safe. Individual and group support helps these students to integrate fully into the school community and achieve well in developing their personal, social and basic skills in English.

The headteacher and his staff care deeply for the social and emotional lives of the students and this is an important focus for the school. Teachers show an awareness of matters that affect their pupils' lives and recognise the need to develop all students' personal and social skills including their individual self esteem. The citizenship programme at the school provides good opportunities to explore human rights and responsibilities. Year 10 and 11 students enjoy the responsibility of becoming school prefects and many show a caring attitude towards younger pupils. In Religious Education younger pupils learn about other faiths and moral codes. This area of the curriculum is supported by outside agencies.

Further to its commitment to inclusion, the school has a supportive curriculum for Year 7 and 8 students whose behaviour is a cause for concern. Students are taken out and taught in a small group environment where they can focus on extra literacy and numeracy skills, an '*alternative planned curriculum*.' There is also an emphasis placed on identifying particular patterns of behaviour and developing methods to manage these. For example, being guided in how to respond to classroom incidents and difficult situations through role play. Withdrawal is planned carefully and students earn the right to re-enter mainstream classes.

'The maturity, personal aspirations and quiet self-confidence of many Year 11 students is testimony to the school's success in the way it tackles students' low aspirations and poor self esteem and the good provision it makes for moral, social and cultural and citizenship education in order that students achieve good standards in their personal development. A success of the school is that the majority of students go on to further education.'

'Students especially in older classes generally want to succeed and do well. Students have developed a loyalty to the school. They want the school to do well and be successful and want to be part of the community of a school of which they are proud.'

'Students at Lilian Baylis have the advantage of working in a very ethnically diverse yet very harmonious community. Students get on very well with one another and relationships between them and staff are generally very good.' (Ofsted 2003).

The school has an excellent commitment to equal opportunities and has an inclusive ethos that fosters achievement of all the students. All members of staff are good role models and contribute to the process of raising aspirations. Staff are well aware of the issue of attainment for different groups and are well supported by management and through well-resourced EMAG projects to address language needs and to help raise the achievement of Somali children. Despite the difficult circumstances which Somali children face as refugees and newcomers here, the support system in Lilian Baylis is effective in raising the achievement of Somali children. There is strong evidence, as can be seen from the case history below, that the school progresses the Somali children well.

Student F Case History: Child F was born in Somalia and came to the UK in August 2002 directly from Somalia with her mother, twin sister and older brother. She had previously been in the Yemen for 3 years where she had attended school but had had no formal education in Somalia. When she arrived in the UK she attended a school in South West London; she found this very hard as she had no English and was the only black girl in her class. She experienced bullying which she felt was not dealt with effectively and ended up in a fight to protect her sister. She came to Lilian Baylis when the family moved to Tooting where she settled quickly. She was at level 1 for English when she started at Lilian Baylis but she feels her English has improved *'day after day'* and now she is at level 3, having made this progress in a year. Teachers are very impressed with her progress in the school and she is aiming for a level 5/6 at KS3. She still finds the vocabulary difficult but is now a level 3 in science and is a level 4 in maths. She finds the teachers very helpful here, stating that *'Mr Phillips the headteacher has changed my life. He cares what level we are on. He encourages us saying 'never give up.'* Child F goes to extra English classes to learn the English language, and her cousins help with the alphabet, handwriting and spelling. Child F wants A-levels and to go to university. She has been predicted C's and B's at GCSE. The school has given every available resource to meet her aspirations.

The evidence from our observation and data suggests that many Somali children progress as well in the school as Child F, despite all the odds. In this school it is the leadership of the headteacher, the caring pastoral system in the school, an excellent ethnic minority achievement service, good teaching staff and the head's strong community links that have made a difference. Showing that with appropriate support, Somali children can do well.

Overall Lilian Baylis is an effective school and provides good education for Somali children and all pupils. It does well by its students. It identifies their many diverse needs and provides them with effective support to raise their achievement. Somali children like the school and receive effective support to meet their needs.



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Little Ilford Secondary School – Newham LA



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The context

Little Ilford School is a large comprehensive school with over 1300 pupils aged 11 to 16. It serves a very disadvantaged, inner-city community but is a vibrant community with pupils from over 50 different countries, including many from the Asian sub-continent. Almost 54% of students are entitled to free school meals, a proportion which is well above the national average. 94% of the students come from a range of minority ethnic groups and almost 90% have English as an additional language. This includes a significant number of students who are at an early stage of learning English. Many ethnic groups are represented in the school. The majority are Bangladeshi (30%), Indian (14%), Pakistani (16%), African (14%) of which Somalis represent 8%, East European (7 %), Other Asian 4%, Caribbean 3% and White British 3%.

The proportion of students with special educational needs is significantly above the national average and the numbers of pupils who join or leave the school at unusual times is very high. The school has increasing numbers of students who join after Year 7 or who leave before Year 11.

One of the many strengths of the school in raising the achievement of Somali pupils and other ethnic minorities pupils is its outstanding leadership and management, valuing cultural diversity, the effective use of the EMAG team, a diverse workforce and partnership with parents and the wider community the school serves. As part of the two day case study visit and research into good practice in raising the achievement of Somali and other ethnic minority students the team decided to focus on this key aspect of good practice to gather evidence.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made includes interviews with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, governors, staff and Somali pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work and attainment data; classroom observation of lessons and a Somali parent focus group.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's aspiration for every child to succeed is successfully transmitted to middle managers, teachers and students. Her ambitious vision is driven through with both rigor and passion. There is an unswerving focus on raising standards and achievement. This is well recognised and praised by Ofsted in their last inspection report:

'The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher, ably supported by a committed leadership team, is the driving force behind a shared vision of exciting improvement and high achievement. Middle managers and all staff share this vision. The school's performance is rigorously monitored and evaluated. There is no complacency.' (Ofsted 2006).

When asked to describe her vision for the school the headteacher stated:

'We are needs driven. We unpick the needs of the children. The first thing for us to understand was why our Bangladeshi pupils were underachieving. It was to do with aspirations. We carried out interviews with everyone to find out why and it was all about aspiration. Parents thought it was the school's job to deal with learning, so consequently they left it to the school. We had the answers so we set about the task.'

Pondering on what has enabled Somali pupils to achieve successfully at Little Ilford school, the headteacher commented:

'If you are going to listen to the student voice you have to do something with it. We ask the students – they tell us and we listen. We wanted to know what they were aspiring to. Did they feel that their identity was recognised in school and if it wasn't we asked them how we might do that? We listen to the students because they will give us the answers. We have a dialogue. We asked boys who the role model was in their family and some said it may not be their father; so then we probed to understand the culture at home. Number one they wanted their identity valued and recognised. This was our first port of call and we fed this back to staff – we are a learning school. We do not claim to have all the answers but will ask and find out. In terms of self-evaluation, we max this. We find similar patterns with our other groups of students, eg. Caribbean and African pupils. The best part of my job is listening to the kids – this is my job – I need to know about the kids. I am not an authority figure. The first thing we need to do is build relationships. You can have a better relationship when you know each other.'

Building the relationships between parents and school has been a key feature of the school's approach, recognising that perhaps the most critical task facing the children of immigrants is reconciling the culture of home with the dominant British culture. The school is playing a vital role in ensuring that a bridge is made between the two, thus minimising the risk of alienation. Nationally the school is recognised for its transition arrangements with local primary schools.

Language is not only an instrumental tool for communication, but also inextricably linked to identity and the carrier of cultural values and attitudes. It is through language that the emotions of family life are expressed. Thus, the leadership's interest in students and their identities, language and culture has created an ethos in the school which the deputy headteacher describes as 'family.' The headteacher also describes the school as a family:

'We make assumptions in schools that our parents understand the British education system. That is ridiculous. We have 30+ meetings a year for parents. My view is make no assumptions. If we want parents to support, we have to help them. Now our mothers are a key part of our family.'

The school's commitment to the community it serves is another outstanding feature.

The headteacher describes herself as a 'community leader' and says:

'The next thing we have to do is to reach out more to the (wider) community.'

The school has always considered the needs of its community. A teacher-governor illustrated this:

'I started the first Somali parents group ten years ago. At that time we were having some issues with our Somali boys in particular, they were not learning anything and behaviour was not good, so we set up the parents' group. Straight away we realised how interested the Somali community were in education; how much they wanted to learn English and be part of the country. We got a teacher in to teach those parents English. We got to know the families really well. The governing body is challenging; they ask searching questions about initiatives and are good at thinking 'out of the box.' Our image as a school has changed dramatically since it was in special measures ten years ago... we talk about the Little Ilford School family.. use the same language and talk the same talk. Yvonne (the headteacher) unified a sense of family with parents, community, staff and pupils.'

Standards have risen rapidly in the last few years, especially in English and mathematics where almost half the pupils attained a higher grade at GCSE in 2005. Progress in the school is very good. The headteacher's belief is that every child can succeed and it is the school's job to make sure that they do. She says:

'My values are that everyone can achieve, it may take different amounts of time. Any headteacher who believes otherwise is capping their children and their staff.' 'It is about viewing children as contributing at school, not looking at a deficit model. For example, some pupils might write five pages in their home language and we recognise that they are writers – it might not be in English but they may be fluent in their home language. A third of our children are refugees and we do not use any of this as a reason to cap them, we just offer them more encouragement and direction instead of saying there-there.'

As might be expected, in this dynamic and exciting school, staff recruitment is not an issue. Indeed the only teaching vacancy this year arose because a staff member was promoted to work within the local authority. The leadership is adept at considering the changing needs of the school community when vacancies do occur. The diversity of the staff is a striking feature of the school. About 71% of their staff are of an ethnic minority background. 29% of staff are White British, 18% Indian, 8% White Other, 8% Mixed Race Asian, 7% Black Caribbean, 7% Bangladeshi, 7% Asian Other, 5% Pakistani, 3% Irish, 3% Mixed Race Other, 3% Mixed Race African/Caribbean and 1% Black Other. Many highly skilled and motivated minority ethnic staff already work in school supporting pupils. They make a valuable contribution to removing barriers of achievement.

The decision to recruit a Somali student support worker, who is also a family learning co-ordinator, has proven a significant asset to the school. She has gained a Primary Diploma in Education and a BA in Foreign Languages in Italy, and speaks Italian, English and Russian as well as Somali. The confidence this has given to the Somali community and parents and pupils is remarkable. In addition, there are staff who speak Romanian, Albanian, Polish, Urdu, French, German and Spanish.

The key to the school's success is the leadership's ability to create an ethos and atmosphere that affects the thoughts, feelings and actions of other individuals. Consequently the leadership of Little Ilford School has developed a sense of 'family', which includes a diverse community of people, under a common vision of learning for all.

Parental engagement

One of the success factors of the school is its good links with the community it serves and good practice in engaging parents. Researchers held a focus group discussion with parents and although many parents were not able to speak English confidently, contributions were facilitated by the Somali family learning co-ordinator. Parents interviewed had varied backgrounds. For example, one parent lived in Sweden for 13 years before coming to the UK in 2003. She has 3 children in Little Ilford and one in primary school. Another parent has lived here for 3 years and prior to that lived in Holland for 12 years. A third parent moved from Somalia in 2005. She has 2 pupils here and one in primary school. Others came from Somalia or via other neighbouring countries. Reasons given for coming to UK were varied:

'My husband was working here, I was happy in Sweden.'

'My brothers were living here and my mother, so I left Holland.'

'My relatives were here and we joined them as it was not safe to stay in Somalia.'

The Somali parents interviewed felt their children's education was of great importance. They were also ambitious for their sons and daughters. When asked how important a good education is, they responded:

'Very, very important. The reason is they need to get a better life for themselves.'

'Very important because they can achieve their dreams. Without education you cannot make any steps to improve your life.'

'Without education you cannot do anything or have a good life.'

'A good education gives independence to make choices in life.'

'If you have good education you have everything in life.'

'To have a good education carries high social prestige in Somali society. It also provides the opportunity to secure a good job and to make a good contributions to the community.'

'Somali families do care about education but some don't show it. Living in a different society is a matter of balance. Sometimes you have too many other things to understand.'

The parents spoken to were very positive about the school. They spoke warmly of the help given to them and their children:

'They make the children feel confident.'

'The children enjoy coming to school and are very happy here. They also get help straight away when needed.'

'They really care for Somali children and all pupils.'

'The school has made effort to involve Somali parents and this has been helped by employing a Somali teacher. This is appreciated.'

'All children are very proud of their origins in this school.'

Somali parents prefer their children to attend a local multicultural school and they argued this helps their desire that their children should play a full part in a diverse British society. In this case the school responded well to the wishes of Somali parents. The headteacher sees relationships with parents as of paramount importance. In educating our children she argued *'we believe there should be an excellent relationship between parents and staff. We are one community, the Little Ilford community, committed to the same ideals and values.'* The school provides excellent support for parents in the education of their children. There is a parents meeting every three weeks to discuss how to improve pupil standards and parents can book appointments easily. There are also English classes and the school is proud to have a Somali teacher who understands and can explain the culture to other teachers. Parents and pupils see the school as inclusive and where Somali children and all other pupils do well. They praised the school ethos and the leadership of headteacher and commented:

'We are pleased with this school and proud to have our children in this school. Our headteacher is good and you can talk with teachers when you need them. Our headteacher is always around with the children, she takes them out. She makes sure they are safe in the road. All staff ensure the children leave the school and make sure no child gets hurt. I have never seen another headteacher who is out at the bus stop at a school – never! She speaks to shopkeepers. She is special because I have never met a headteacher who is so near to our children and to us. She calls us at home and she respects us and our culture.'

As can be seen from the above comments there is a positive relationship between parents and the school. This had been founded on direct contact between parents, other key staff and the headteacher who listen to their needs and provide support in whatever way possible.

The school also has established good practice in celebrating cultural diversity. A broad range of activities take place both within and outside the school day. These include organising the school heritage day to celebrate Somali Independence Day; organising Black History Month and a focus on black and minority achievement through organising heritage days. The events on Somali Independence Day elicited praise from parents, teachers and pupils. This was highly appreciated by the Somali community and pupils. One parent commented:

'All Somalis came together as a Little Ilford family to celebrate Somali independence which we have never done in this country before. We enjoyed the day and we are grateful to the headteacher, EMAG staff and teachers for this as it helped our children to understand their history and heritage. Every culture and history is recognised and this is a great thing about this school.'

Another parent said:

'I appreciate the way the school celebrates the culture of all children in heritage day and as part of Black History Month. We really enjoy the school's events when parents bring international food from around the world to share with others and dress with cultural dress.'

The school uses a range of strategies for engaging parents in the education of Somali children in the school. The school believes in employing a diverse work force that represents the community it serves. The governors have employed a number of bilingual home-school liaison workers and teachers that embody local diversity. There is a Somali teacher who is highly valued and respected in the community and her work linking with the Somali community is valuable and appreciated, as is the work of the EMAG team in which she is based. She has been instrumental in helping to draw Somali parents' attention to the school's emphasis on raising achievement. One pupil commented:

'The support from EMAG teachers and the Somali teacher in the school helped me to become more confident in my English. I enjoy my school education and I am high achiever. I am determined to get good GCSE's and go to university to be a doctor.'

Somali children share the views of their parents on the importance of education. All pupils interviewed commented on the value of a positive and productive educational experience. Somali pupils in the focus group talked about how their school helps in their education. They praised the work the classroom teachers did and the support of the EMAG team. All students seem to like maths, science, English and in other cases, drama and sport. They are highly motivated have high aspirations, reporting that they aimed to be accountants, doctors, lawyers, teachers and police officers. These views were supported by their parents who want them to attain good standards of achievement to enable them to attain professional employment in British society.

Care guidance and support

The school's position with regard to the care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils is clearly articulated by the headteacher:

'We have a clear philosophy at this school. Common values are simple: we care for each other and we look out for each other. It is part of our everyday role.'

Ethnic minority achievement

The Ethnic Minority Achievement team is a strength of the school and central to the headteacher's vision in ensuring equality and achievement for all pupils. The work of the EMA team is pivotal to the success of pupils and is highly valued by parents and pupils. With over 90% of pupils with English as an additional language, the team itself includes five members who are bilingual, thus a significant proportion of pupils are able to access support from an adult who speaks their home language. It is the responsibility of the team to interview and induct mid-term arrivals to the school and to ensure that new students feel settled and supported. Translation is provided for EAL pupils who have been in the country for three years or less when they take Key Stage 3 science and maths examinations.

The EMA team have a high level of credibility within the school as they are involved in teaching the mainstream curriculum. In the past partnership teaching has been a feature of their work but more recently the EMA team are involved in a workshop approach, as the majority of pupils have EAL. Consistent whole school practice which include VAK approaches to learning, collaborative talk and an emphasis on writing, ensures that students' levels of achievement are raised. EMA is seen as central to the school and how it works. Everyone has a place in raising achievement of students and EMA is completely focused on English. The workshop approach means that pupils drop a GCSE and then study the English curriculum in more depth. The development of higher order thinking skills and the writing of poetry are areas in which Somali pupils do well. The following poem was cited by a Year 9 pupil as an expression of what it means for him to be Somali:

'Somalia is my Pride'
I am born to a unique race called Somali
They aren't like the rest, they're simply the best
I belong to a race that is a brave warrior
Understand my words and take them as an assurance
My people are known for their mighty endurance
My people are born winners and survivors
My people are known to stand out as we are our own
No-one dare put a price on my people's soul and claim to own
My people are born free and free they shall remain
Take a seat and about my people allow me to explain
My people are the race of Sayyid Muhammad and his Darwish
To keep their legacy alive is my ultimate wish
Ahmed Gurey paved the way and passed on the torch
If my people unite I promise you, to the heavens we touch
Today is my turn to finally lead my beloved people
Gurey and Sayyid Muhammad philosophy is what I preach to my pupil
My Somali people's history is second to none
Every nation in the world created its corrupt and false history
Listen to the whispers of the wind it tells my Somali people's story

The EMA department have been featured on Teachers TV programmes on inclusion which are used as part of training material for teachers seeking CLT (Chartered London Teacher) status. The programmes have generated much interest in the school, which is regularly visited as a centre of good EMA practice.

Pupil mobility is high and at times five new pupils have arrived a week. All members of staff are given essential information about pupils prior to entry. The Somali teaching assistant meets parents and pupils separately following an initial interview with the head of department, specifically to discuss Somali language issues. A photograph of the pupil is taken and shown around the school, with a date given to start the following week. This ensures that pupils quickly make friends and settle into the school. The displays around the school provide a testimony of the value and pride the school places in its pupils.

The national TV news carried a feature on the school as a result of the way teachers' of different ethnic origins are given opportunities to develop their practice at the school, particularly refugee teachers. An EMA teacher from Albania, who is himself a refugee, spoke to us about the shared advantages (for pupils and for himself) of being at Little Ilford:

'I came to Britain in 1999 and started in Barking and Dagenham with a refugee project. I worked with a number of refugee groups which gave me a very good background of different communities, cultures and languages. In this school I teach RE, I am an EMAG teacher and translator. I also work in a youth club and teach football – many of our Somali students come to the club and this has helped to build relationships. I work closely with the Somali community.'

'I get on well with other nationalities and Somali parents. We developed together a successful refugee group, which Somali pupils named 'Unity.' The Somali children decided on that name. I worked for over three years as an outreach worker with a Somali youth club. I was involved in heritage and Somali independence celebrations. I worked with the community and the school to organise and make it successful. I wore Somali traditional clothes on the day and sang with them their traditional music. I work very closely with people and bridge myself to the wider community. I also participated in organising Black History Month. Somali pupils and parents were very happy that I wanted to know their culture. They see me now as one of their teachers. I enjoyed the Somali Independence Day and Somali pupils were amazed to hear I am a refugee teacher and one of them. They value that I am like them – a refugee. Students respect me.'

Pupils speak highly of the EMA team:

'I enjoy school, you learn a lot of stuff, and the teachers are good. You can be appreciated in the school. Not everyone knows about Somalia. We celebrated Somalia Independence Day; this showed appreciation of our culture. The EMA department helps us with our work, homework clubs. Ms Powell has raised standards, she respects everybody equally, all the cultures here.'

The impact of Somalia Independence Day and heritage days (where pupils learn about each other's countries of origin and culture) which are organised by the EMA team, cannot be over-emphasised. We heard of the joy and pride this gave pupils and their families. Pupils said:

'This was the first time I celebrated Somali Independence Day, it was important for all the others to know.'

The Somali family learning co-ordinator explained how Little Ilford is working with a school outside Mogadishu:

'We are asking our pupils to raise funds to buy books, resources and pay the teachers' salaries for these pupils who want to have an education.'

Parents also praised the work of EMAG in language support for their children and commented:

'I was worried because my child didn't know English. I used to say to the teacher 'he cannot speak English', so I asked the teacher to help him. I went to some of his classes and his teachers helped him. After six months he spoke English and there was no problem.'

'English support is very important, without that they cannot understand what teachers tell them. How they communicate with friends is very important. School makes it easy for them by giving help with languages.'

'The children's home language and culture are seen as integral to the school.'

As stated above Somali pupils are very involved in the work of EMA Departments. The extent to which pupils make progress is evident in a number of discussions we had with pupils and parents. This can also be clearly seen from the case study outlined below for a pupil who has only been in the UK for 2 years.

Case History of Student G: This case study focuses on the experience of a 14 year old boy who is currently a Year 10 student and includes his reflections upon his learning experience and his aspirations for the future.

G is currently a Year 10 student. He is also attending a football course 3 evenings per week. He speaks Dutch, English and Somali. G began his education in Holland where he was born. He started school in Amsterdam at the age of six. The whole family moved to the UK 2 years ago in 2005, a difficult decision for G and his younger brothers: *'I liked to live in Amsterdam. I had load of friends there and enjoyed spending my time playing football.'*

He has never been to Somalia, nevertheless when he was asked to describe his identity he said *'I am Somali, my family is Somali.'* G says that his knowledge of Somali is not good but in *'my heart I am a fluent Somali speaker.'*

G describes his arrival in UK as a time of waiting: *'I couldn't get into school as soon as I arrived. I waited for 7 months'*. This has hindered his confidence, he explains. *'I thought, why can't I go to school? It's not right! In Holland you go straight to school. Here, the teachers explained to me that is common to wait. But my brother got into LIS many months before me'*. While waiting for his school place, G spent his time reading books and watching TV. He says he felt very lonely and speaks distressingly of having no friends apart from his siblings.

Student G finally got a place in LIS in July 2006. He came across as intelligent, shy and polite. He said that he was happy to come to school. It hadn't been always been easy, he reminds me: *'If you don't speak the language it's is difficult to make friends. Sometimes I felt lonely.'* On a more positive note G says that the EMA department and the teachers in school have helped him to become part of the LIS family. *'I met the EMA staff and the Somali teacher. She told me to join the football club and introduced me to other Somali students. She supported me in my English lessons and maths. I also joined the homework club. She encouraged me to study because this will help me to integrate faster and I did, I read at break times, during lunchtime and in the afternoon. I showed that I was strong'*.

The school has made a big impact on his learning and academic progress by boosting his confidence with extracurricular activities and supporting him in his daily lessons has made the transition very successful.

G's levels showed a remarkable improvement, particularly in maths, science and German. Now in Year 10 he comes regularly to tell the EMA staff his progress. Just a few days ago, he said *'I now know that I will be able to achieve at least 7 GCSEs all of which will either be As, As or Bs.'* What a reward to see a happy student!

Somali children are given a considerable amount of support in the school, demonstrating the amount of care afforded to pupils. The school has made significant efforts to involve Somali pupils and help those who are new to English education. As a result G will join a growing list of Somali pupils who attended LIS school in the past, left the school with high GCSE results and went on to study at university and college.

Ethos and activities to ensure good progress for high mobility pupils

The school has a post with particular responsibility for mid-phase arrivals and one period per week is allocated for the assessment of midphase admissions. The school sets a high priority in working with parents, particularly offering English classes. This is a strand of the mini-achievement zone, which has funded a home-school liaison worker who does a lot of casework with refugee families.

There is a regular audit of staff to see who speaks, and so can help with, different languages. The school has a clear approach to mid-term admissions set out in the handbook which is available in ten languages. It says that welcome and induction is a whole school responsibility, describes the different roles people can play and how the curriculum can be planned, prepared and used to support it.

Use of data

There is good practice in the analysis of data in the school. The school has robust systems for assessing and mapping the progress of all pupils including ethnic and bilingual pupils at individual and group level. High quality assessment and tracking pupils is therefore the feature of the school. A wide range of data including KS2, KS3, and QCA optional assessments/tests is analysed by ethnicity and gender. GCSE examination data is rigorously analysed to identify areas for improvement and to identify support needs and organise the deployment of resources appropriately. Procedures for initial assessment, especially for newly arrived pupils are well developed. Interviews are held and detailed pupil profiles sheets, including home languages, are completed by the EMAG department. Students are set clear targets and are given good advice by staff on how to reach them.

The headteacher describes the school approach to target setting as follows:

'We prefer to talk about 'predictions' and we depend on good pupil level data. There are unknown variables affecting pupil success – it is very difficult to know what factors have led to success or failure. Our predictions are based on known evidence and are all the more challenging and vigorous for that.'

'Our teachers negotiate and agree shorter-term predictions with pupils and their parents on our 'academic review days', daytime events which successfully replaced parent evenings. Experience shows that pupils might not stay long when they arrive so we do a quick and efficient assessment straight away (using EAL Assessment). From this – or from the academic review days for settled pupils – we can derive the termly and annual targets for day to day teaching and learning. We also offer accelerated provision for mid-term entrants through a variety of 'clubs' in and out of school hours.'

'For the end of key stages it only makes sense to set targets on the basis of the pupils who are there at the time of target setting.'

'Analysis of what has worked or not is how we learn our craft and begins on the day the GCSE/GNVQ results are published. On the first day of the autumn term the senior management team (SLT) and the curriculum teams receive a subject by subject analysis from each of my curriculum team leaders which then goes to the governing body. The SMT and governors discuss the report with each individual curriculum leader. The approach is rigorous and – importantly – focused on what they (SLT and governors) can do to help move achievement forward.'

'By the end of the key stage, only some of the pupils sitting the exams and tests are those we made predictions for two years earlier, so our analysis focuses on those we did make a prediction for and the gap – either way – between what we predicted and what the pupil achieved. We are happy to be accountable for that and I protect my staff from being accountable for what is beyond their control.'

The school is effectively implementing the self-evaluation process and conducts a focus group consultation and a survey every year with pupils. The aim of the focus group questionnaire survey is to ascertain the views of pupils about their experience within the English education system in general and the school in particular and to ascertain what practical steps might be taken in order to improve levels of attainment.

Focus Group Questions

What do you like about being at Little Ilford School?

What do you think is important to the staff at Little Ilford School?

Who is the most important adult to you at Little Ilford School?

What makes a good lesson?

Do you feel you are being challenged in lessons?

How do you know how well you are doing in different subjects?

Is homework important to you?



Northumberland Park Community School – Haringey LA

The context

Northumberland Park Community School (NPCS) serves an ethnically and culturally diverse community in Tottenham, adjacent to Tottenham Hotspur's football ground. NPCS has approximately 1015 pupils on roll. Of these 62% have English as an additional language (EAL) and do not speak English as their main language at home. The main ethnic groups are Turkish/Kurdish, White British, Black African and Black Caribbean. Pupil mobility is high and a significant number of students are new to the UK on entry to the school.

The school welcomes students from across the full range of ability and shares its campus with The Vale School which is a day special school for students with physical disabilities. The arrival of the current headteacher in 2004 signalled the start of an impressive journey of improvement, which has seen the school's achievement at GCSE rise from 27% in 2004 to 70% in 2007. The headteacher is uncompromising in his view that the focus of the school is to ensure the achievement of all. There is zero tolerance of poor behaviour and an unrelenting belief articulated in the prospectus that *'self-centred, disruptive behaviour should not be allowed to damage the education of our students'* and that the school has clear sanctions in the event of inappropriate behaviour. He is suspicious of targeted interventions based on ethnicity and believes passionately in fostering a culture based on individual pupil progress and achievement. Notwithstanding pupils of Somali heritage at NPCS are clear beneficiaries of this approach and are the highest achieving group at the school; in 2007 all pupils of Somali heritage entered for GCSE tests were successful.

The school's improvement strategies are clearly effective in raising the achievement of pupils of Somali heritage who have become the benchmark for attainment in the school. The school's aims and purposes are evident in the life of the school at work and at play. The factors identified by the headteacher as significant in accelerating the progress of individual pupils, namely effective use of data, high quality targeted interventions led by confident and talented practitioners, CPD, behaviour management and an ethos which sets the school on course as first and foremost a successful learning community. The work of the EMA team in building a strong supportive culture for EAL pupils through finely tuned interventions such as peer buddies for newly arrived pupils, advocacy, a strong appreciation of mother tongue which allows teachers to confidently pair and group pupils in ways that accelerate learning and enhance the esteem of those pupils who are able to offer a lead in lessons – all contribute to a culture in which pupils of Somali heritage thrive and succeed.

The headteacher was asked to identify any additional factors leading to successful achievement of Somali pupils in school. He cited the following, which he felt benefited all pupils:

- Effective data analysis and management. The school has moved from being data-aware to being data-responsive. Sets are changed after end of module tests in English and maths every 6 weeks. Modular curriculum suits the school's teaching styles.
- All targeted interventions are based on the school's testing regime and are managed within school not as after-school projects. The most effective teachers are deployed to work with intervention groups – those teachers, which the headteacher calls *'change agents'* who know how to accelerate improvement. These kinds of targeted interventions motivate pupils.
- Increasing focus on the pupil voice to act as checks and balances in the school – actively involved in designing rewards, sanctions and appeals.
- An behaviour management policy which makes it clear to pupils and their parents that this is a school not a youth club and that the achievement of the many will not be disadvantaged by the poor behaviour of the few.

- An excellent CPD programme called ESL in the mainstream provided by the EMA department which enhanced the language development skills of 15 participating teachers and teaching assistants and which is to be rolled out across the whole school in a language development programme.
- Involvement in a curriculum pilot to accelerate KS3 and extend KS4 has also been important.

The diversity of the school workforce at NPCS is also an important factor in the ethos of the school. A significant number of staff come from the ethnic groups represented in the school including a teaching assistant of Somali heritage who offers a range of services including acting as translator for the headteacher and as an informal link worker. Many of the teaching staff closely identify with the aspirations of pupils and their families.

Governors are very proud of the achievements of the school, whilst recognising that levels of exclusion have been very high in the past four years. Levels of achievement have been secured with the same profile of pupils – there has been no significant change in the catchment area of the school, although increasing numbers of pupils of Somali heritage and children from Eastern Europe are joining the school. Governors feel they have a better understanding of the different communities joining the school and recognise that there is more scope for community engagement. The school is building on its growing international links.

The school takes its role as a community school very seriously and this is constantly reinforced by the headteacher *'this is your school.'* The ethos of the school is friendly, inclusive and purposeful. Both NPCS students and The Vale students seemed to take each other's presence in their stride as evident on a tour of the school by one of the team during the lunchtime.

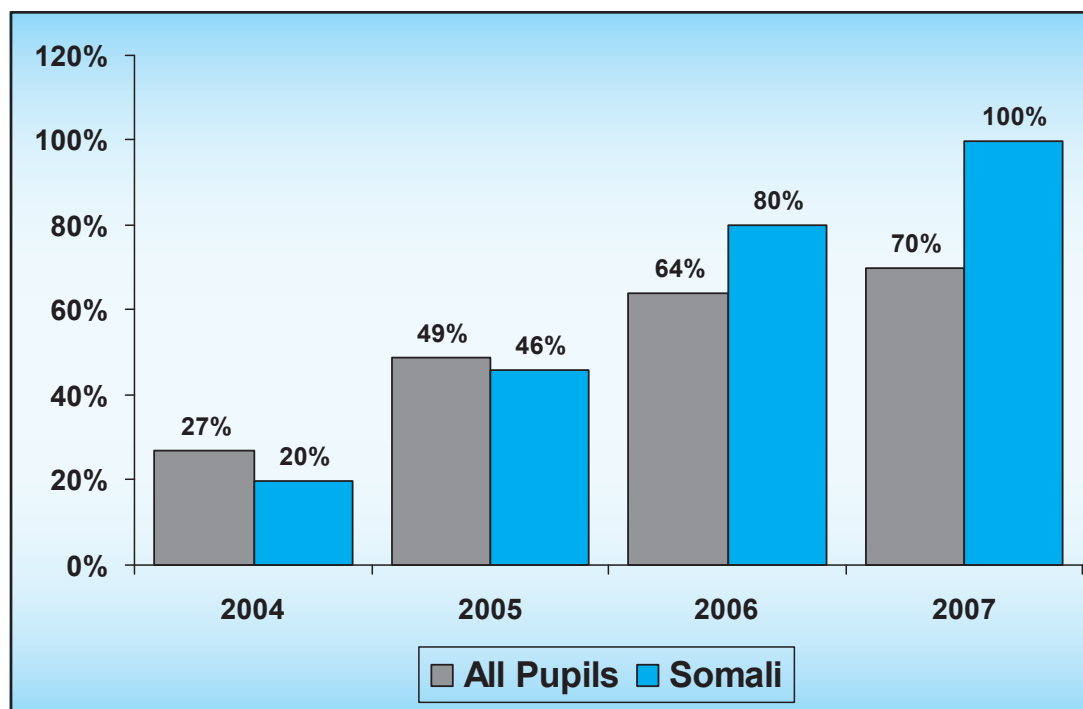
Achievement and standards

Despite challenging circumstances and low attainment at entry, examination results for all students at GCSE have improved consistently over the past three years. Figure 1 shows that 70% of students achieved 5+A*-C GCSE grades in 2007. This is a great improvement on the 2004 figure of 27% and is now 11% above the national average.

The number of pupils of Somali heritage attending NPCS is growing. Their personal histories of migration and settlement differ: some pupils spent time in Scandinavian countries before coming to the UK; others in Holland; some came direct from Somalia and others are first generation born in the UK. Many of the families have high aspirations for their children. In common with other Somali parents across London, a number of NPCS Somali parents send their children to a private tutoring company in East London.

Somali pupils have been the highest achieving group in the school for the past two years. Figure 1 shows that all Somali students obtained 5+A*-C grades in 2007. The improvement from 20% 5+A*-C in 2004 to 100% in 2007, a rate of 80%, is outstanding. Somali pupils and parents' attitudes to education are good and school work is highly valued. Pupils are motivated to succeed and are well supported by teachers and parents to achieve.

Figure 1. GCSE Attainment in Northumberland Park School for Somali and All Students, 2004 -2007



Contextual value-added data of the school is as impressive as the raw data above and confirms all students and Somali pupils have made very good progress from Key Stage 3 to GCSE/Key Stage 4. The same is also true between KS2 and KS3. Progress between KS3 and GCSE/ KS4 is shown in figure 2. This compares the relative progress made by all students and Somali pupils in the school with progress made nationally by all pupils in England. The median line graph shows whether Somali students and other pupils in the school are doing better or worse than other pupils nationally. The findings suggest that Somali students have made good progress in terms of value-added and that the school is in the upper quarter in terms of national value-added.

The school has a good record in improving performance for all groups. Close monitoring and intervention throughout Key Stage 4 ensures all students including Somali pupils receive the support they need to provide the opportunity to attain the best results they can.

Teaching and learning

The successful use of data in the school owes to the headteacher's strong assertion that data should be used as a lever of change. The school has invested heavily in system development and in classroom support. The use of data is also a significant factor and is very well-managed by an experienced assistant headteacher. His main role is to collate and analyse data in order to ensure teachers use data in class and that heads of departments and the SMT use data effectively to inform planning, self-evaluation and to set realistic but challenging targets. He provides individual classroom teachers and head of departments with automated SIMS data that is easy to use with a coherent interface. This data is useful, he says:

'To track individual performance, for teachers to review student performance, to have a reflections and good conversation on their current and expected performance. I also encourage and support individual teachers to look more into their own teacher assessment and evidence, to challenge the evidence produced centrally including FFT and RAISEonline data and to review their target setting process. There are plenty of opportunities for teachers to reflect on the data provided using their own experience and knowledge about individual pupils performance and progress.'

Teachers and heads of department responded well to this challenge and have made a number of changes. This evidence is used to review our targets setting process and to produce realistic but challenging targets in the school.'

This he argued:

'has helped to improve the quality of evidence related to target setting and school self-review and tracking individual pupil progress in the school.'

There is good dialogue at all levels about the use of data. The school helps busy teachers to interpret the information and to use it to support improved teaching and learning using straightforward, manageable techniques for recording data on pupil performance.

The excellent quality of teaching and learning described above was seen in a Year 7 humanities lesson taught by the school's humanities AST. Six pupils from a class of 27 were withdrawn for literacy support with a Turkish-speaking member of the EMA team, while the rest of the class were put into mixed groups to develop their groupwork and study skills which the teacher explained they would need to have to really do well in KS4. Five pupils of Somali heritage were observed taking part in the lesson. All were fully engaged and active participants in the tasks. Classroom routines were quickly established at the beginning of the lesson and the standard set for the task and its objectives: to build memory and study skills and to work cooperatively to complete the task. Discipline was maintained by a discourse on mutual respect and giving good attention to others. Pupils were encouraged to evaluate the task and their skills at working as a team. These and other approaches are underpinned by the school's strong focus on citizenship and community which is reinforced by the curriculum designed by the head of citizenship/PSHE and her work in leading the school council.

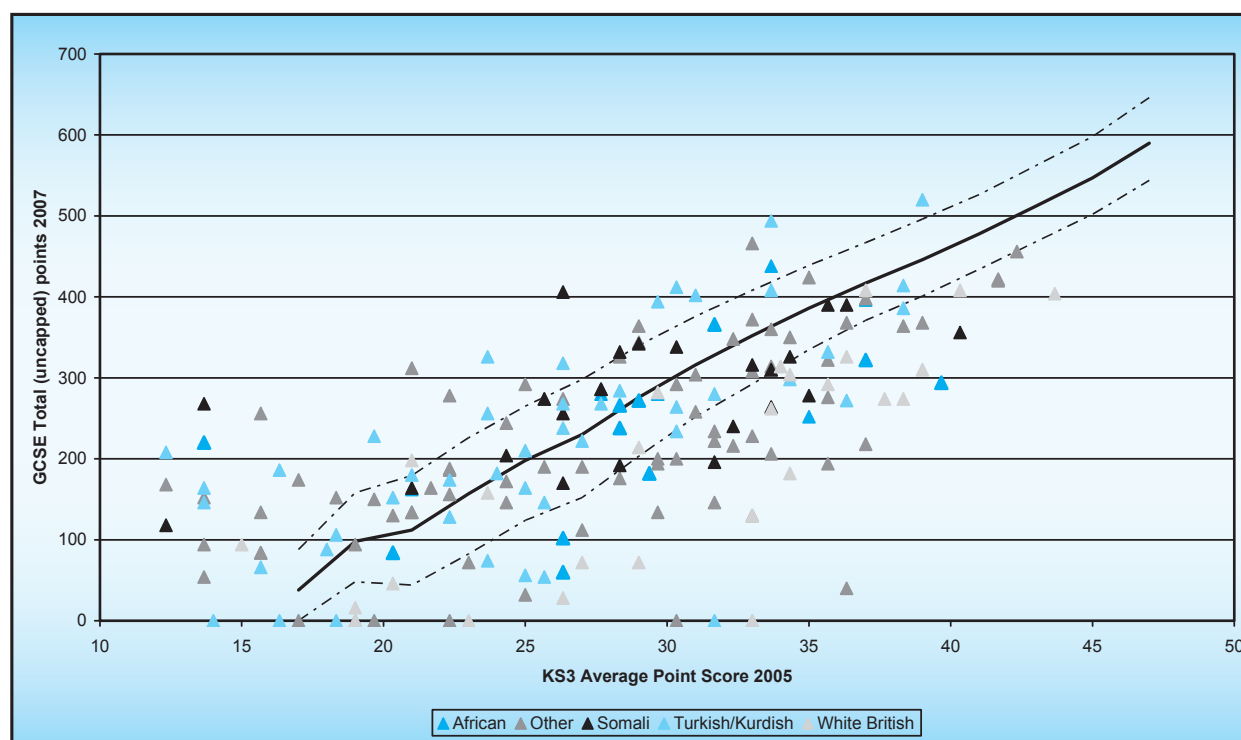
Not all teachers in the school share the headteacher's aversion to targeted intervention by ethnicity. For example in the maths department, ethnic profiles are used to design interventions based on knowledge of cultural norms and aspirations. Data is used extensively for lesson planning and grouping pupils by mother tongue; to inform accurate targets for individual pupils and to track progress of pupils; to identify weaknesses in topics or aspects in the class as a whole; to set high expectations with pupils and to challenge the expectations of pupils and parents. This was clearly noted during an interview with one of the school's leading maths teachers:

'I do focus on ethnicity and every child in my class knows their previous maths results, what they should achieve at KS3 and KS4 and also how far they are from their target. Without using pupil background data and understanding cultural differences and barriers in achievement it would be difficult to set realistic but challenging targets. Ethnicity data is critical in understanding how different groups progress and achieve. For example one Somali girl was predicted a C from centrally produced data including by FFT and RAISEonline. But on evaluation I came to the conclusion that the target was wrong as the data had not reflected the number of factors that influence her performance.

I carefully looked at her background and came to the conclusion that with good support, encouragement and intervention, this girl can achieve an A at GCSE. This certainly was the case and in the final stage she achieved an A in maths. I use a number of motivation styles to help pupils to understand maths concepts and Somali pupils respond very well in my maths class. Without doubt they are a high achieving group. I work closely with Somali parents to ensure they know how their children are progressing in school. Somali parents are very supportive in my approach. I see ethnic monitoring as an effective method of raising achievement, to identify underachieving groups and prioritise our support systems.'

Use of data

Figure 2. National Median Line – KS3 2005 and GCSE 2007 – Northumberland Park



One of the factors that has helped the school to raise achievement is the effective use of data. The school recognises that *'it needs to use assessment information unremittingly to inform planning and teaching in order to improve the progress of all students'* (Ofsted 2006). The headteacher sees this as an essential part of the school improvement process and has used data as one of the key levers for change. Data has helped the school to pose and answer questions about current standards, trends over time, progress made by individual pupils, to track pupil progress and to set high expectations.

The headteacher also shares the views of the assistant headteacher that:

'Data analysis, data management and the effective use of data is a strength of the school and we see this as an important tool in raising achievement.'

He argued that:

'We are not like those schools who are data rich but do not know how to use it. We are a school that is effective in the use of data and is responsive and able to act on what data tells us. We base our academic success on inspiring learning through setting each student challenging but realistic targets and carefully monitoring progress towards targets. This has made a big difference in our vision to raise standards.'

The school is managed on a six weekly timetable. Setting is by ability and led by the core subjects which are modular. Pupils sit end of module tests every six weeks and are re-allocated to sets depending on the outcomes. The EMA team acts as guardian of the system for EAL pupils to ensure that English language proficiency is not the main criteria for placements in lower sets. The school has evolved a culture in which individual teachers, the leadership team and governors analyse and share data at all levels. There is a PC in every classroom for teachers to access key data for recording attendance and progress. The school has well developed management information systems (MIS) so that all staff have quick and easy access to basic pupil data and timetables. This has guaranteed a consistent flow of information across all areas of the school. The system allows for individual pupils to be tracked, registered, reported on and monitored at all times.

Using the MIS system the school produces good KS2, KS3, GCSE and QCA optional test data in a format that is easily accessible to the SMT and classroom teachers. Unlike other schools who prefer to re-test using CATS and other measures, this school uses KS2 data from its local feeder primary schools. This data is further used for tracking pupils progress between entry and KS3 and KS2 and KS4. The school also extensively uses FFT and RAISEonline data for school self-evaluation, tracking individual pupil performance and target setting. The headteacher, the SMT and teachers have an accurate assessment of the school and individual pupil progress.

Data is used for a number of purposes and is widely circulated to senior managers, heads of year, heads of departments and classroom teachers. There is strong evidence that individual teachers within the classroom use data for lesson planning; to inform accurate targets for individual pupils, gender and ethnic groups; identify weaknesses in topics or aspects in the class as a whole; arrange groupings for teaching and learning; track progress of pupils; set high expectations with pupils and identify implications for planning for different groups.

Data is also used by the leadership team for deciding priorities; planning and reviewing activities including resourcing priorities; school improvement planning; monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the effectiveness of initiatives and strategies; professional development; curriculum planning; analysis of year on year performance; target setting reviews; challenging expectations of staff, pupils and parents; and for reporting to governors and parents.

Support and guidance

The work of the Ethnic Minority Achievement team

The work of the EMA team has been critical in raising the achievement of pupils in a school where over 60% of pupils are bilingual and have EAL. Mobility is also high and the school regularly accepts pupils for whom this is their first experience of full-time schooling. There have been significant changes to the EMA team in NPCS over the past four years. Initially the department was abolished by the headteacher in 2004 but was reinstated and given a new remit in September 2006.

The EMA team at that point consisted of 2 part time teachers who had previously been part of the SEN team. They were encouraged to attend an accredited EMA course for one afternoon a week, for two and a half terms and, with this new knowledge, to write a policy for the school on additional admissions and implement systems and strategies that would enhance the learning of pupils with EAL. By September 2007 the department was drawing from the knowledge gained from the EMA course, a head had emerged to lead the department and two additional teachers recruited. One of these new teachers was also funded to attend the year long EMA course and the head of the team completed a MA from the Tavistock in emotional factors in teaching and learning with a dissertation that specifically analysed how pupils and teachers cope with language and ethnic diversity in the classroom. Up-to-date and relevant training is the key to the success of the department and has certainly shaped the philosophy and effective delivery of the EMA team. Unlike in some other schools, there is no dedicated home-link worker although a teaching assistant of Somali heritage in the SEN team fulfils some of these functions on behalf of the headteacher.

The current focus of the department is on additional admissions, (especially those coming from abroad), EAL option (extra language support for those in Key Stage 4) and on partnership teaching with subject teachers across NPCS.

Arrangements for newly arrived students

The EMA team have two teachers that speak the most popular community languages, however when necessary, interpreters are booked. Students and their parents/carers are interviewed, guided through a welcome booklet and taken on a tour of the school. Any questions are answered and discussed before the parents depart. Pupils are then asked to write a short essay in their first language, complete a formula based maths test and join in a library quest. This assessment is a basis for a conversation with each head of core subjects and helps to decide which set the new student will be placed in. Buddies are introduced to pupils at this stage and options finalised if appropriate. Once pupils with EAL are identified and their needs assessed, the EMA team then design individual programmes of support for the vast majority in place for their starting date on the following week.

The student described below is typical:

Case Study of Student H - Year 9: H had a full and uninterrupted education in France until he arrived in the UK and joined Year 8. His family came because of their personal circumstances and experience of racism which had left M nervous and unsure. Because of his tall and broad physique there was a mismatch between his physical and psychological profile which made him vulnerable. The EMA team were able to keep an eye on him through induction and small classes for the first few weeks and intervene when he experienced bullying.

A French beginner teacher was identified to help him discuss his difficulties, which stemmed from a lack of shared cultural background with other Somali pupils. He was also moved to a new tutor group where he could really begin his learning journey without barriers.

Case Study of Student I - Year 10 female: Recently joined from Denmark with a good previous education and a working knowledge of English. She was placed within a supportive buddy group during her initial assessment and when she started school invited to take the EAL option. She was therefore supported both emotionally and academically during this transition. She is receiving extra support in terms of extra language development at Key Stage 4 and has also been invited to join a homework club for those attending EAL option. She has been placed in middle or top sets that are suited to her cognitive ability and previous educational experience even though her English language doesn't yet reflect her true ability. If her progress remains steady it is predicted she will achieve the required clutch of A-C's.

Case Study of Student J - Year 10 female: This female Somali pupil joined the school in Year 9 with no previous education. She was linked into a group of buddies, most sharing her home language and was invited to attend an induction group for 5 hours withdrawal a week where she completed World Talk (a computer programme that extends the English vocabulary) and received extra English tuition. She also received some in-class support. In Year 10 she was invited to join an EAL option group that concentrated on language development for those that had received a limited and disrupted education before coming to London. She is also able to draw on any extra pastoral support the EMA department can offer her.

Language development for all staff

Supporting teachers to raise the achievement of EAL pupils is a strong focus of the school. The EMA department organised a course of 10 twilight sessions for 15 teachers and teaching assistants last year that looked specifically into language development delivered in the mainstream classrooms to benefit bilingual pupils that had been in English schools for over two years. The strategies promoted in this training also benefited the monolingual pupils in the classroom because it advocated collaborative learning, modelling and responding to various learning styles. Similar training for all staff is planned to run from September 2008. The initiative has involved the local authority EMA adviser who was invited to take part in a one-day conference to devise a plan for changing the language focus in the school. The imperative for change had been set by the headteacher who is of the view that NPCS has made a huge amount of progress in a very short time. In order to sustain and build on this, it is imperative to harness that skills and abilities of those students (some 60%) who speak English as an additional language (EAL) as their academic abilities and therefore potential educational attainment is not being exploited.

Senior leaders from the school, the head of EMA and the head of citizenship worked with local authority consultants for English and EMA, a consultant from London Challenge and the head of diversity and achievement from LB Islington. As an introductory task, participants shared an understanding of how the curriculum could/should respond to the language needs of EAL and other students by giving greater recognition to the multilingual nature of the school; acknowledging the cognitive abilities of the students were often not converted into educational success because of restricted language repertoire and emphasising the importance of oracy as a support for literacy.

They then moved on to focus on the day's work, which was to examine how to put these ideas into practical application through devising action plans for whole school issues including monitoring and evaluation; curriculum planning; staff training and development; and enrichment activities. The starting point was that every member of staff, regardless of subject discipline, would have a role to play in implementing this understanding and that any teacher joining the school would have to undergo a week's training before taking up a post in the school. By the end of the day the four action plans had been drafted and were to be circulated within the group before being shared more widely. The person leading the initiative, an assistant headteacher, is very energetic and determined to drive things forward and it is planned to begin this initiative in September 2008.

Building family links through the NPCS community development manager

The EMA team see advocacy as one dimension of their work and often refer pupils to other members of staff for support.

Two years ago the Year 11 EAL option group had several new arrivals in quick succession that changed the dynamics of the disparate class in a negative fashion. Six Somali boys who had all recently arrived in the UK through a variety of routes began to create tensions amongst themselves within the classroom. Meanwhile the community development manager mentioned to the head of EMA that she had a few places available for pupils to participate in a project she was running called The Indelible Footprint in a neighbouring primary school.

This was a graphics project based on respect for individual routes which used the metaphor of a tree to explore the notion of identity coming from many roots. The head of EMA referred the six boys to this project and they were accepted. She felt it would give them a forum to celebrate and explore their identities, ponder on their futures and provide a space to negotiate friendships within the group away from the constraints of an academic classroom.

It would also give them a space to talk about any other anxieties. A number of issues emerged. The boys expressed the difficulties they faced without male role models and being brought up in female-led households and a number of critical issues of identity, faith and confirming to British and Muslim values were all spoken about. Furthermore most of these young men carried high expectations to become doctors and follow other professional careers but they were angry and frustrated at their parents' decision to disrupt their education in Holland, Scandinavia or the Yemen and come to the UK. One boy in particular felt that one more year would have made such a difference to his educational options meaning he would have come to the UK with a clutch of qualifications instead of starting midway through Key Stage 4 and finding that his lack of English language was a barrier to him reaching his potential. These six young men returned to the class after ten sessions and were able to work much better together and concentrate on their studies.

The community development manager feels that the Somali community has difficulties in addressing some of the issues their young are coming up against and as a consequence feels this makes some boys vulnerable and angry and a potential target for older boys to influence adversely.

The school has recently applied to the Refugee Council for funding to deepen its work with parents and carers, specifically those from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. The school has good links with its local Children's Centre, local FE college, the WEA and the Haringey Adult Learning Service. They already run an extensive programme of accredited courses for parents and carers, which have been particularly successful with the Turkish community and are now hoping to extend that reach to parents of Somali heritage.

Parental engagement

Having a member of staff from a Somali background has been an important ingredient in the mix of provision which has ensured the rising attainment of pupils of Somali heritage. The member of staff grew up in Holland having left Somalia via Norway. Her mother moved to the UK in order to safeguard her children's Muslim identity in the face of liberal Dutch society. She began to work at NPCS in 2003 with a remit to focus on the progress of Somali pupils with SEN or EAL needs as a teaching assistant but also plays a key liaison role on behalf of the headteacher acting as an interpreter on sensitive matters such as exclusion. She endorses the core message that:

'This is your life, your school, make the most of it.'

Parental perspectives on education

Four parents of Somali heritage were interviewed about their experiences of migration and settlement, education and their aspirations.

Case Study of Mother K: K works as a translator for the local authority and is also has a daughter in Year 7. She defines herself as multi-cultural as someone whose parents are Somali and Ethiopian, who is married to a Palestinian has lived in Sweden and Cairo before arriving in the UK. She speaks a range of languages fluently as a result. Her core identity is as a Muslim and an African. Her daughter attended a local primary school before joining NPCS where she has settled well. She feels very confident about raising an achieving daughter as both her elder sons are at university, having gone through the education system here.

Case Study of Mother L: Left Somalia 14 years ago and came via the Netherlands. She has children in Year 7 and Year 10. Her children were born in the Netherlands. She values the communication with Miss Ali, the teaching assistant of Somali heritage who acts as the link between the school and home, and feels confident about attending parents meetings at school. If her daughter asks if she can stay in school for an extra hour, she rings Miss Ali to verify her daughter's request. She hopes her children go on to higher education.

Case Study of Mother M: Four children including her nephew live with her. Three of her children attend college and she has one son in Year 10. She has been in the UK for six years. She does not feel her children are under any adverse peer pressure and has no complaints. She is in regular contact with the school by mobile. She would like to return home and be of benefit to her community.

Case Study of Father N: Came to the UK in 1988 to do a MA in Applied Linguistics having completed his first degree in Somalia. He was unable to return once war broke out and successfully applied for asylum. He was joined by his wife in 1989. They have five children – the oldest is sixteen and the youngest is three. His wife is also educated and does the vast majority of the support to their children at school. All three of his children who are at NPCS are doing well. The school offers good access to teachers, guidance and reports on progress are clear; parents evenings are run very well. Nevertheless he sends his children to private tutors – Best Tutors in Leyton and has sent them in the past to Superior Tutors in Enfield as well as to Kumon.



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The context

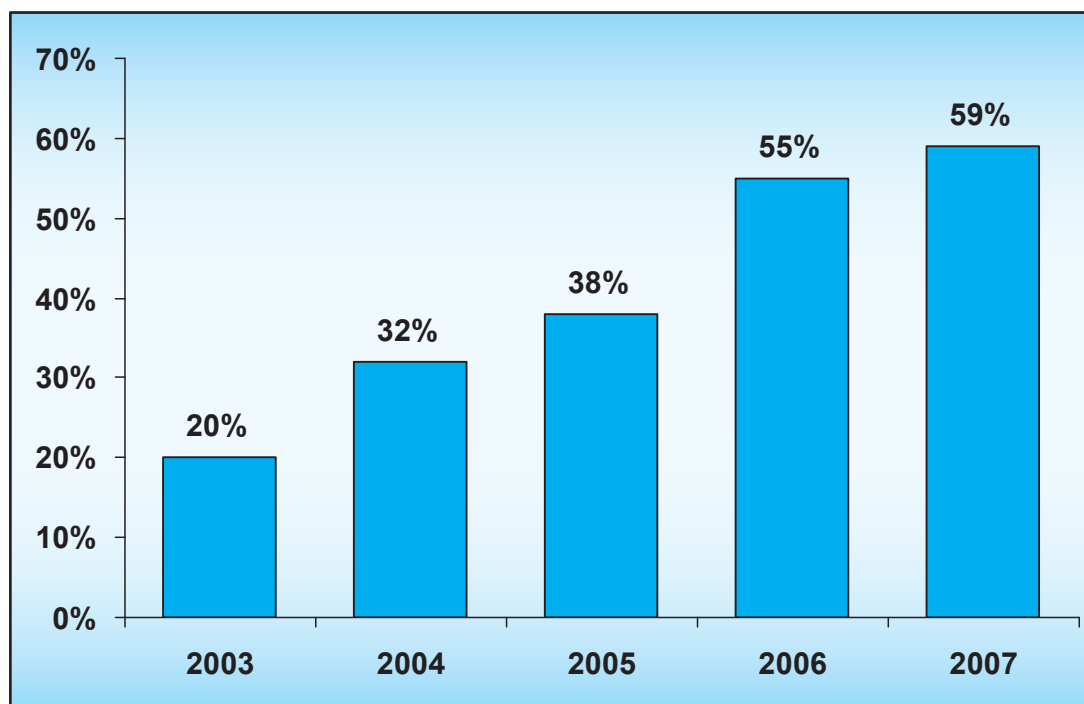
Southfields Community College has 1350 students and is Britain's most ethnically diverse school. This inclusive community school draws students from a range of minority ethnic groups that speak more than seventy different languages. A sizeable proportion of pupils have English as an additional language. The number of students with a statement of special educational need is well above average. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is very high. The headteacher believes with a passion that the cultural diversity of the school adds an enormous depth to school life. Somali parents praised its inclusive policy and indicated that the school gave an excellent opportunity for their children to attend school that has strong community values. Other schools in the area operate a policy of selection and Somali parents commented that it is occasionally difficult for Somali pupils in particular and children from disadvantaged backgrounds to get into those schools.

Student attainment at entry is very low and some of the Somali children have never been to school, but Southfields is outstanding in progressing students whatever their background to reach their potential. This is highly valued by Somali parents and community members interviewed in the focus group.

Achievement and standards

'Students' achievement overall is outstanding in relation to their starting points because they receive strong support from staff and their needs are met by a creative and skillfully tailored curriculum. Systems for tracking students' progress are exemplary and staff are quick to spot any underachievement and take appropriate action. The college sets challenging targets that are met' (Ofsted 2007).

Figure 1. 5+A*-C GCSE Performance in Southfields Community College, 2003 – 2007



Source: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/cgi-bin/performance/tables/dfe1x1_05.pl?School=2125405

School provisional data

There is a trend of improvement in standards in each key stage. Results in 2007 indicate that 59% of students achieved five higher GCSE passes compared to 20% in 2003 and 38% in 2005. This is a huge improvement on the previous year's results and shows that standards at the end of Year 11 in Southfields Community College are now the same as the national average. Figure 1 shows that the school has made an excellent improvement rate every year and has improved by 39% since 2003 and 21% since 2005. Given students' exceptionally low attainment on entry to the college, this is a remarkable achievement and Somali students with EAL achieve well, as do those whose home language is not English.

The value-added data which shows the progress pupils make from when they start in the school is very impressive and is in the top quartile of national value-added. School and RAISEonline contextual value-added data confirms this school is outstanding in progressing all pupils and groups very well. This is also true for Somali pupils.

Central to the school's success in raising achievement of Somali children in Southfields Community College are:

- Strong leadership lead by an excellent headteacher.
- Effective use of a diverse workforce.
- Effective use of EMAG.
- Good primary/secondary transition.
- Good care, guidance and support for Somali pupils.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made includes interviews with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, and Somali pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils work and attainment data; classroom observation of lessons and a parent focus group which was well attended by 20 Somali parents.

The school was visited for 2 days to gather good practice evidence in raising achievement of Somali pupils. Details of the findings on factors leading to success are discussed below.

Leadership and management

Clearly the leadership of the headteacher and her senior team is outstanding and has been decisive in sustaining a long tradition of high quality education at the school. There is a real sense of teamwork and commitment to realise the shared vision of ensuring all pupils reach their potential. Ofsted confirmed that:

'The excellent leadership demonstrated by the headteacher permeates the development of leadership at every level. Strong teamwork among the staff and governors has meant the momentum of improvement has continued apace. Together, they ensure there is a clear, shared vision placing the needs of students at the heart of the day to day life of the school. As a result, most students, whatever their background, achieve exceptionally well.'

Somali parents also speak very highly of the headteacher's leadership. In the focus group they argued that:

'This school is a highly inclusive school where Somali pupils have the potential to do well. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has been instrumental in maintaining the improvement the school has made over the years. She has a passion in making things better for Somali children and is very committed to community values. Everyone matters for the headteacher. She ensures there is no room for complacency and helps every pupil to reach their potential.' (Somali parents focus group).

The leadership team knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well and this is evident in the high quality of the school's self-evaluation, which was praised in the last Ofsted inspection:

'Self-evaluation is well founded and used effectively to raise students' achievement. An improvement cycle of planning, doing and reviewing is established and highly effective. The professional development of all staff is given a high priority. Leadership and learning are bound together in the sense that the adults in the college community are regarded as learners and every learner, including students, is expected to develop their capacity for leadership.' (Ofsted 2007).

Interviews with teachers, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, EMAG teachers at the school and reviewing available school documents and observations in classroom confirms there is a very good performance monitoring system in place and there are effective procedures for tracking the performance of pupils. As a result, intervention strategies have been effective in raising standards. Self-evaluation procedures are thorough and accurate and their findings have led to effective change. They include a very strong belief that teaching and learning opportunities must address the needs of all individual pupils. Somali children have greatly benefited from this approach of rigorous monitoring.

Staff know Somali students very well and enjoy a positive and purposeful relationship. This is based on a clear focus from staff to ensure that teaching and learning recognises and responds to individual differences. The school attaches great importance to the effective use of data for tracking and monitoring performance and target setting. The deputy headteacher for assessment empowers heads of years with data analysis and this information is cascaded down to class teachers. All staff are aware of and use school tracking sheets.

Data is used effectively to monitor individual students' academic progress and identify those who may be underachieving. Clear targets are provided for students and a range of support is available for those who are underachieving. Students are involved in setting targets and are increasingly provided with information to ensure they make appropriate progress.

Reporting to parents is thorough and provides information which clearly identifies student targets.

The headteacher stated that:

'Failure is not an option at Southfields. If, from the data, students look at risk of underachievement a number of strategies are put into place; senior staff might take on extra teaching, seeing parents, individual support in specific subject areas and pastoral support.'

She believes that it is how you interact with students that makes all the difference to their achievement. As an example she uses the concept of a self service restaurant such as . MacDonalds in order to convey the message of independent learning to the students.

One Somali boy verified this when he said that independent learning is important:

'Because nobody is going to do it for you at university.'

All staff focus on the culture for learning, asking students questions such as:

'Is your behaviour appropriate for learning?'

Diverse workforce

The headteacher is aware of the school's areas for development related to improved support for the Somali community. She has a very strong recognition of equal opportunities and believes community representatives provide a key positive role model in the school. This school is effective in the use of a diverse workforce, which represents the community served by the school. She has an innovative approach in employing ex-school 6th formers to develop this culture. Positive role models who work in the school reception are former pupils, as are some of the teaching assistants. There is a strong desire to employ a Somali teaching assistant.

Care, guidance and support

The personal development and well-being of the Somali students is outstanding. A distinctive feature of the school is the equal importance placed on the academic and personal development of all students. Students develop into well-rounded individuals, with a real sense of community, responsibility and a confidence that they can succeed. Opportunities for spiritual, moral and social education are highly developed and as a consequence, students report that they enjoy a school where they are *'safe, happy and able to learn.'* It is a harmonious learning environment that celebrates the wealth of cultures within the school. One Somali parent commented:

'I greatly appreciate this school environment, which is not only conducive for education, but also mental, physical and spiritual growth.'

Students are proud of their school and feel safe within it. They display genuine regard for the safety and well-being of each other and show a sensitive awareness of customs and cultures other than their own. Their enthusiasm and appreciation of the learning opportunities and resources around them is very impressive. Separate swimming facilities for female and male students means that many Somali girls go swimming which appears to have had a positive effect on their self esteem.

Students are very clear that they know how to obtain help if they need it, both from their peers and from adults in the school community. Relationships between Somali students and staff are courteous and respectful. Somali students in the focus group told the researchers *'staff really care about us.'* Another Somali student said, *'This school is a community.'* This summarises the excellent racial harmony which is clearly evident in relationships throughout the school. This was also apparent in a Year 9 lesson observed relating to sexual relationships. This potentially could have been a difficult lesson with students representing a variety of religions and some students with challenging behaviour yet the ethos in the lesson was one of mutual respect and tolerance for each other's views and a keen desire to learn.

EAL students and those with learning difficulties are exceptionally well supported in lessons and make outstanding progress in this school. The school works very well with an extensive range of external agencies to promote students' welfare and to guide them in career choices as they move through the year groups. Mentors from business and industry, alongside school staff, regularly provide good role models to inspire students to achieve.

Students certainly have a voice in the school. Some pupils are trained in the Ofsted criteria and observe lessons. The voice is embedded around the school with posters – the pledge wall and 'saying no to knives' posters.

Transition from primary school

At Southfields there is a dedicated member of staff for primary transition who recognises this can be a vulnerable time for many students that come to the school. This member of staff works with primary schools to organise tours of the school for students prior to transition with their parent/carer. The Somali home school support worker accompanies Somali families on these tours and, because she works across the borough, she is often already known to these families through their primary schools.

For some students, including Somalis, outside agencies with which they may be involved ease the process further. The Junior YIP and Oasis work with identified students with behavioural and emotional difficulties at KS2 and provide transition support. The Junior YIP tutor provides weekly support talking through the student's needs, accessing the curriculum, providing literacy support and co-ordinating with the SEN department. Parents and carers are involved at every stage.

Careful thought is given to placing Year 7 students in tutor groups. Students also receive weekly circle time support with transition issues e.g. bullying, loss of friendships etc and the PSE curriculum deals with issues of transition. Programmes such as Learning to Learn (which is an induction program for Year 7s) helps students to develop their social and communication skills. Students receive a Year 8 volunteer buddy to assist them during their first week in school and daily support from the EMA team is provided, where appropriate, for as long as is needed. Before the end of the first term staff evaluate how students have settled and interventions are put into place where necessary.

The transition member of staff works closely with the EMA department interviewing new students and one member of the EMA staff specialises in Year 7 students. The Year 7 systems are also used with casual admissions throughout the year.

Feedback from the feeder primary schools has been very positive. They appreciate the support that Southfields give to Year 6/7 transitions and the fact that there is just one point of contact within the school. This makes the process manageable. Teachers from Southfields go into feeder primary schools in order to gain an insight into the context from which their Year 7 students come.

Effective use of EMAG

The level of care and commitment to EAL students by the EMAG team at Southfields is exceptional. Each student on entry to the school has an interview with the head of EMAG who aims to *'tease out their story, because we need to be able to provide emotional support if they need it'*, sometimes with the use of an interpreter, which is then fed back to the head of year who will later do a second interview. Information sheets on new students are also given out to members of staff. They receive a reading, maths and spelling test. All of this information helps staff to place them in appropriate tutor groups.

Careful thought is given to integrating students with students from other cultures and backgrounds whilst also ensuring that students from similar ethnicities are in contact with each other.

Many Somali students newly arrived receive language support in a 'beginners group' for a period a day as well as support within lessons, especially maths, English and science. Withdrawal is only favoured at the beginning *'because they have to integrate. And they do pick up English incredibly quickly,'* and even then there is extensive feedback into the lesson in order to maintain the link. There are also booster classes for Year 9 and 10 in the Somali language. All staff receive INSET on strategies to support new arrivals and give them the specific skills in teaching EAL students. They recognise that:

'Even students who come from primaries have playground talk but their fluency levels are geared towards oral communication but even if they are on a stage 3 they need so much more help.'

There are six EMAG staff in the school. One member of staff, who is funded by the LA, teaches a group of Year 11 students new to the country. This 'International group' enables the school to accept these students. At present this group includes 21 students including Afghanis and Somalis. Many of these students do a GCSE in their home language. Last year an educational psychologist ran a post traumatic stress group in school. This was a group for traumatised students which included students from Somalia as well as the Ivory Coast, and Angola. This group focused on relaxation techniques and other approaches to enable students to address issues of trauma such as nightmares and feeling unsafe.

An impressive feature to the EMAG department is the 'open door policy' that enables students to access the department during the day. At break times it is usual to see many Somali and other students in the department generally:

'catching up on experiences that they have missed- playing with jigsaws, cards and chess which is a popular one. They read the Metro and have conversations where English is the only common language. They have cross age friendships.'

There is always someone available for homework support:

'A large group of Somali girls come for this support and to use this facility as a social thing. We often help them to redraft their work- make it more grammatical - proof read their work.'
'Across the board they need support with their coursework - Year 8 and 9 they struggle to get the written work done.'

The head of EMAG runs an Amnesty group to which many Somali girls go. Each week this group explores cases of injustice across the world and writes letters to governments calling for the release of prisoners. The head of EMAG models these letters for the students. Some students copy and some write their own:

'The group finds the countries on the map and discusses current international affairs. This helps with their knowledge of the world and letter writing skills.'

A Somali home-school liaison worker and an ex-science teacher is attached to the school. She is funded by the Local Authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and works across 7 schools in a week (three primary and four secondary schools). Her role is to support families, teachers and community participants in their efforts to assist students in achieving educational excellence and to bridge the gap between home, school and the community. She speaks four languages; Arabic, Italian, English and Somali and is currently studying a course in Law. She:

'Improves the self esteem of Somalis in class, gives them 1:1 support in reading and writing, and using Somali and English language...does first language assessments, has set up parents' group, homework club, parents' meetings...contributes to INSET and does translations.'

She also runs parents' projects such as a programme with the theme of Memories that enabled parents to use Photoshop, write down stories in Somali languages and undertake quizzes about Somalia. There is also ongoing support for parents in dealing with housing issues and other bureaucratic and routine tasks.

'The children refer to me as mama and Auntie and if I go into the classes they pay attention. I know their parents you see.'

The school also holds an international evening once a year; this is co-ordinated by the EMAG department. This evening is a celebration of diversity where students, parents and staff come together to share poetry, dance and song with food representing different cultures; all, including the staff, dress in a variety of national dress. Students present poems and other performance media in their home language with someone accompanying them to translate. The textiles teacher supported students to make clothes to wear to the international evening. This event is hosted by the sixth form head girl and boy. The school believes strongly in social cohesion and integration and all teachers have seating plans that reflect this. However, there is also an ethos of enabling students to take pride in their cultural identity. It was observed that Somali students were able to express such pride in their heritage.

The EMAG department supports teachers with issues that are presented by the Somali groups. An example of this is an issue with bullying that arose with some Somali girls. One very dominant girl who moved from Dubai to Holland and then came to Southfields had built up a group of 12 Somali girls from her tutor group. The teacher, with the support of the EMAG department, spoke to one of the fathers who plays an important role in the Somali community. He described in detail the clan system in Somalia and how this particular girl might be behaving in such a dominant way because her family would have had a higher status in Somalia. As a result of this insight the form tutor was able to channel this characteristic in a positive rather than negative way. The teacher gave the student additional responsibilities in class to mediate between teacher and students and be a monitor for certain tasks. This conversation with the father also shed light on other issues that were presenting themselves within the tutor group. This group of Somali girls were being very reticent in dance and drama and did not appear to be taking it very seriously; The father was able to tell her that in Somalia dancers and musicians do not have respect.

Recognising that it is not always easy to have this dialogue with parents, the EMAG department is looking to arrange some training for teachers on speaking to parents with no/little English. The EMAG support has a major impact in this school in raising achievement for new arrivals. A number of success stories were encountered, where students have gained good GCSEs even within 2 or 3 years arrival in this country. As can be seen from the following case study EMAG support is critical in raising achievement, and the leadership team value the support EMAG team give to ethnic minorities pupils.

Case Study of Student O: Child O came from Somali in 2004. She started in Year 9. She came with a big family of 5 children and lives with both parents who have a little English. Her mother is attending South Thames College for ESOL. On arrival at Southfields she was in the daily withdrawal group and had some in class support. Child O had a lot of support from the EMA department – support with course work after school and at lunchtimes. She worked hard on her spelling. She obtained 5 A-Cs with a C in maths, science and English. Her family supported her well and she was highly self motivated. She liked to get involved in school life. She took an active part in the Amnesty group and international evening, although was a little reticent about being a spokesperson. She played sports and swimming.

Parental engagement

All Somali parents interviewed were highly aspirational for their children. They were supportive of Southfields as an:

'Inclusive school where Somali pupils have the potential to do well. They are supported well. If they want to be a doctor, even if they are at a low level they don't put off her.'

'We want them to have what we haven't. If they don't get a good education we know where they will end up, maybe on the streets, maybe with a gun. They cannot survive without education. Some Somali parents are not educated, there has been war for a long time, most children have no basic education. They need more support.'

Many of them are paying for extra tuition. Some pay for private tutors to come to their homes, although they would prefer this extra support to come from the school as the teachers know their levels. Also as many of them were on benefits, buying books and tuition can be a financial strain.

All of the parents shared concerns about their confusion in understanding the UK education system. They were aware that children here automatically progress to the next year of learning whereas in Somalia that does not necessarily occur. Parents were unanimous in expressing the need to have more information regarding the school day and systems in order to get a better understanding of their children's learning. As many of them do not have any English language they expressed frustration that although they know if their child is not achieving in line with age related expectations they cannot support them. Because their child is translating for them at parents' evenings they are not always sure that they get the whole story!

Views of Somali pupils

All the Somali pupils spoken to were adamant that they belonged at the school. They felt valued and treated equally. Somali students rated the care, guidance and support the school provides as outstanding during our focus group discussion. This was summarised in the words of one student,

'You get individual support with the teacher. She explains it to you again to check your understanding. They would never give you homework unless they knew you would be able to do it independently. They encourage you to work independently because that's what you have to do when you go to university.'

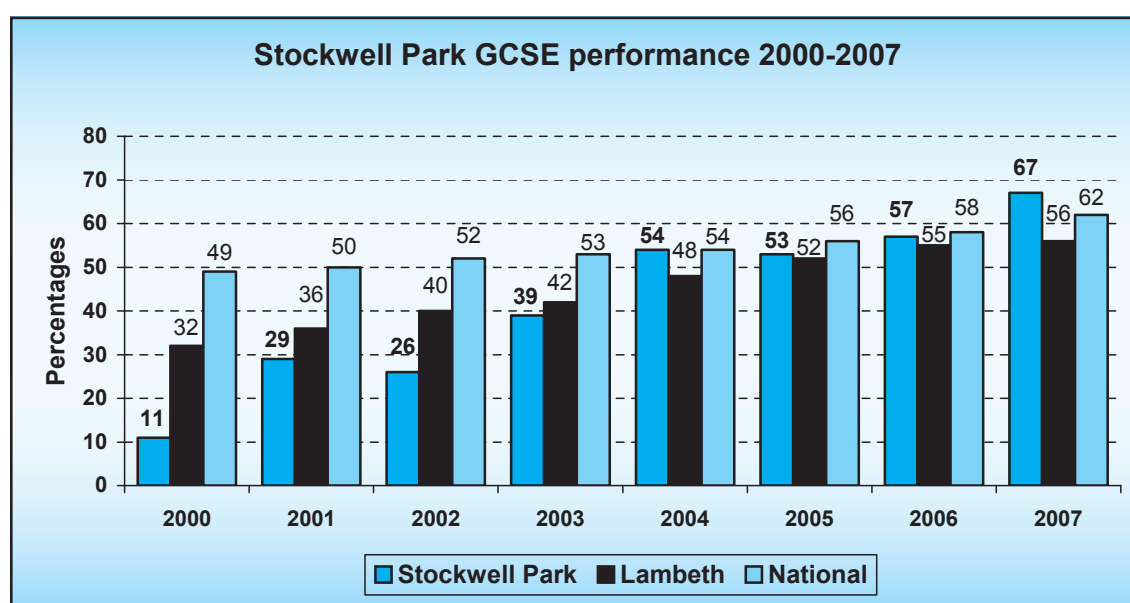
Stockwell Park High School – Lambeth LA

The context

Stockwell Park High School is a specialist Business and Enterprise College located in an area of high deprivation. Many students come from disadvantaged economic home circumstances. The number of students taking up free school meals is well above average. There is a high proportion of students joining and leaving the school at other than usual times. The majority of students are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and more than fifty languages are spoken at the school. Almost half the students are from homes where English is not the first language. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is less than average but the number with learning difficulties and disabilities is very high, constituting over half of the school. There are nearly 1000 pupils on roll.

GCSE results have shown significant improvement over the last few years and it is one of the fastest improving schools in Lambeth. Since 2000, the percentage of pupils achieving 5+A*-C grades at GCSE has consistently improved, from 11% to 67% in 2007. African and Somali pupils have shared in the success of the school. Standards are rising faster in the school, with 56% improvement rate the last 7 years.

Figure 1. Stockwell Park GCSE Performance 2000-2007



The value-added by the school is also very impressive. KS2 to KS3 value-added data in the graph below which compare the relative progress made by students in Stockwell Park School with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England, show that students have made very good progress in terms of value-added (see Figure 2). About 42% of the students in the school are in the upper quartile compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress.

The interquartile range performance is 52% compared to 50% nationally suggesting the students progressed as expected. Only 6% are in the lower quartile range making less progress, compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar evidence was also recorded between KS2 and GCSE for the school, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups, including Somali pupils. This is a school where African pupils in general and Somali in particular make impressive progress between KS2 and GCSE and KS3 and GCSE³.

The most recent Ofsted inspection described the school as:

'Excellent', Where 'parents rightly feel that it gives their children every chance of succeeding in life. It is a purposeful place where everyone's right to work and learn is respected.'

Levels of achievement are described as exceptional and students' personal development as excellent. Further, *'positive attitudes are sustained through excellent care, guidance and support. Learning is monitored very carefully. Students are set appropriate targets that are reviewed regularly. Programmes of support are tailored to meet individual needs.'* The report also highlights the fact that many students enter the school with low levels of attainment and that high expectations by staff and good teaching enables students to succeed. The leadership is described as excellent and has a good understanding of the needs of pupils, using data effectively to impact teaching and learning.

During the two days spent at the school for the case study, the following members of staff were interviewed:

- Deputy head of inclusion.
- EMA teacher.
- Two class teachers.
- One learning mentor.
- One teaching assistant.
- Two parents.
- Chair of governors.
- Nine pupils across the school.

One lesson observation was carried out in a Year 8 supported curriculum classroom where a science lesson was being taught that introduced conductors and insulators. The report considers the evidence collected from these interactions and draws conclusions from these and more informal observations, conversations and discussions made during the two days.

Leadership and management

The impact of the strong ethos and vision of the headteacher and leadership team is apparent throughout the school. High expectations are demonstrated by all members of staff and pupils alike. The ethos of success for all and the celebration of achievement is communicated in overt and more implicit ways throughout the staff. Pupils interviewed expressed high aspirations and respect for staff at the school. They were focused on achieving good examination results and most wished to go to university. Parents also expected their children to go onto higher education, whilst retaining their own Somali cultural identities. Prior to moving to the area, one Somali parent had been told that the school was not a good one:

3 Details of KS3 and GCSE performance and value-added from:

- Stockwell Park High School, *School Profile: Making Figures speak for Themselves*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2006; p.1-18.
- Stockwell Park High School, *GCSE contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2006; p.1-4.
- Stockwell Park High School, *KS3 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2006; p.1-4.
- Stockwell Park High School, *GCSE contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2006; p.1-4.
- Stockwell Park High School, *KS2 to GCSE and KS3 to GCSE Value-added Analysis of Pupil Progress*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2006; p.1-4.

'This school was not my choice but it was the only school who offered places. But I have had no problems at all and the children are doing well.'

The chair of governors also emphasised the importance of understanding that the school operates a non-selective policy, where all members of the community can be helped:

'Every child can achieve and everyone is welcome. We can improve everyone's life chances. We put high expectations into their ears and this is reflected in all aspects of the school.'

The teachers spoken with reiterated that their task was to enable pupils to succeed.

Pupils also recognised that many teachers:

'Work quite hard with us. They put a lot of effort into helping us.'

Apart from academic support, the school has a number of structures in place to help pupils socially and pastorally. There is a counsellor at the school who can talk through issues with pupils. One pupil interviewed had used this service and found it very helpful. A house system has been established, where each head of house, who is a non teaching member of staff, deals with pastoral issues. Support staff interviewed were clear that they gave support in classrooms to teachers dealing with behavioural, social and pastoral matters. They expressed the view that because they were not teachers, students were often more inclined to present difficulties to them.

All members of staff felt that they were well supported by senior managers at the school and knew who to go to for support and help. There were regular meetings with staff to discuss particular students in order to put strategies in place to address any issues raised. Additionally, continual professional development was encouraged both through in-school training and access to external courses.

The leadership team is also very responsive to staff members and will support initiatives put forward by members of staff, as appropriate. The leadership style has become more distributive as staff demonstrate the skills and understanding to deal with more complex management and leadership tasks. The pace of change is speedy, but manageable and staff appreciate the support they receive from senior managers and other staff members.

These aspects of leadership have clearly contributed to the raised levels of attainment of all pupils in the school. Somali pupils with their particular needs have also benefited from the ethos and vision of the headteacher and are responding appropriately to it.

Inclusive strategy

The inclusion policy for the school is strong and demonstrable throughout. The post of deputy head of inclusion itself is an indicator of the importance of inclusion in the school. The supported curriculum structure and the vocational curriculum for Year 10 and Year 11 are overt expressions of the policy.

The EAL teacher works closely with the English department as many Somali pupils find written English difficult, even though their oracy skills are good. The EAL teacher conducts her own assessments with pupils and keeps a register with detailed information concerning ethnicity of pupil, languages spoken and entry into the UK and the school. She will then make decisions concerning the interventions need by each pupil. The pupil may be withdrawn from class for up to four periods a week, although not during core curriculum lessons. At Key Stage 4 pupils are taught English linked to the curriculum, which emphasises academic vocabulary. This strategy is particularly appropriate for Somali pupils, who may have difficulties accessing the curriculum because of lack of academic language.

There is special support for pupils taking GCSEs and a homework club. Teachers demonstrate effective differentiation within lessons and this can be supported by the EAL teacher and bilingual assistant. The differentiated curriculum is clearly a crucial part of the inclusion strategy at the school. The lesson observed had clearly differentiated aspects and drew on knowledge and understanding already achieved by pupils. Additionally, lessons have specific language targets for groups of pupils and for individuals, linked to their targets. Teachers differentiate at least four classroom elements based on the profile. These are:

- Content (what the student needs to learn).
- Process – activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content.
- Products – culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit.
- Learning environment – the way the classroom works and feels.

This indicates a way of thinking about teaching and learning that values the individual and this is translated into classroom practice in different ways.

Pupils expressed appreciation of this ethos of inclusion and said that there were staff members they could go to who would listen to them and help them with both personal and academic problems. Completion of coursework could be flexible, where a need was identified. There is an ethos of respect discernible in the school, with adults and pupils engaging appropriately. During the lesson observed, students were reminded to listen to each other and were helped to communicate their understandings in positive ways. The parents spoken with said they felt welcome at the school and able to discuss issues with teachers and other members of staff.

Innovative pedagogy

Using robust data from a range of tests and assessments, targets are set with pupils and lessons are planned according to a class profile and specific language objectives for pupils who have English as an additional language. Lesson planning and differentiation has been a school focus for some time and teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at planning appropriate material, resources and interactions to enable pupils to achieve the outcomes.

The school has supported curriculum classes, where pupils are taught in smaller groups mainly by one teacher. These groups are usually single gendered, with boys in classes of around 16 and girls in classes of around 20. Sixty five percent of the time these pupils will spend with one teacher, in a base room. There are thirteen of these classes and the number of pupils taught in this mode represents thirty five percent of the school population. Teaching assistants are deployed in these classes to support learning. Many of the teachers teaching in these classes are primary trained or have a primary school background and the pedagogy employed has much in common with primary practice. This classroom arrangement also provides emotional stability for pupils, which may be particularly important for Somali pupils who may have experienced trauma and difficulties in their circumstances.

During the lesson observation, the teacher (who had been trained in secondary education but who had had teaching experience in primary classrooms) demonstrated pedagogical strategies that emphasised involvement, construction and instruction. The lesson developed and built on pupil's existing understandings. Key concepts were taught with information and skill acquisition and encouraged the development of metacognitive skills. The teacher had been with the class of Year 8 girls for nearly two years. The observed science lesson was about conductors and insulators and also had clear language targets. Many of the pupils in the classroom had low reading ages and levels of comprehension.

Half of the class had fluency levels of English below level 3. In order to address these needs, the teacher effectively used a number of strategies to enable understanding of the subject. There was much emphasis on oral work and explanations to be spoken and subsequently written. The students were asked to read aloud, which they were willing to do. This represented a significant confidence level in the pupils and the teacher enabled all pupils to participate by asking appropriate questions and reframing these as necessary. She encouraged other students to build on answers already given and reminded them that *'listening is a skill we need to learn too'*, thus reinforcing inclusion and respect for individuals.

The teacher was skilled in linking connected areas of knowledge and concepts in science, using concrete examples and a variety of words, images and text based resources. She also used pupils' descriptions of their reasoning to help establish understandings and address misconceptions. The teacher communicated implicitly that she reasoned that all the pupils in the class could learn the concepts involved. Additionally, a lively pace was maintained throughout, keeping pupils engaged and on task at all times.

A teacher of a Year 9 supported curriculum class of boys also expressed this approach to pedagogy. She also had primary school experience and taught in concrete ways initially, gradually moving towards abstraction. This approach to pedagogy benefits all learners, and especially those Somali pupils who require teaching that develops their knowledge and literacy skills, enhances their confidence and self esteem and gives them social and emotional stability.

Diversity of staff

The school has successfully recruited staff and governors who reflect the school and local community. The learning mentor interviewed mentioned that this was an important feature of the school's success. He said:

'Some pupils are able to relate more to you because you might share certain experiences. It is very important to be a role model. It makes a positive impact on students. If you feel it you know it, and you can bring different understandings to the work you do.'

Bilingual members of staff are clearly able to communicate effectively with parents and pupils who share those languages. For example, one teacher was able to speak in Swahili and was therefore able to communicate with some Somali pupils and parents who could also speak Swahili. This can enable students to understand more effectively and may also enable pupils relate more effectively to adults and other students. One member of staff expressed the opinion that:

'Pupils respect other people's culture and we value diversity. It is important we can communicate this through our actions.'

Use of data

The headteacher acknowledged that underachievement had been endemic in the school for some time and that the use of data for self-evaluation was in an early stage of development at the time of her appointment. Examination results were low at approximately 11% 5+A*-C grades in 2000. On taking over as head she was determined that raising achievement would be a priority. In order to ensure this she pooled a new effective school improvement plan which is now well updated by SEF. Raising achievement through the effective use of assessment data formed a key strand of the school's priorities. These improvements, resulting from an enhanced role for target setting and monitoring within teaching and learning, have been supported by the headteachers decision to rationalise the way in which data is managed and used by school. The rate of improvement in the school is very impressive and it is not surprising that the school Ofsted inspection report confirmed it is an outstanding school.

The school is now data rich and uses KS2, KS3, KS4 and CATS assessments and non-statutory optional tests for monitoring performance. In the word of the inclusion manager:

'The school is good in assessing all pupils and teachers look at data carefully. We use data incredibly well for personalised learning and we have a well developed tracking systems with detailed assessment data and background information including ethnic background, language spoken, level of fluency, SEN stage, data of admission, mobility rate, years in schools, which teacher's class has been attended, attendance data, type of support and postcode data that is used for tracking pupil progress.'

There is good practice in the use of data in Stockwell Park school and evidence provided during the school visit confirms that:

- Key stage data is gathered as early as possible and analysed carefully by gender, ethnicity, and mobility, supplemented by other tests such as in English, mathematics or verbal reasoning tests.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) are identified through individual consultation to enable smooth transfer from their primary school.
- Data is used as a baseline to monitor and review individual pupil progress, especially to identify signs of underachievement or unusual potential and to help set targets for pupils and subject departments.
- Subject teachers and tutors use data and other assessment information to review the performance and expectations of pupils.
- Test results and teacher assessments are analysed to illuminate aspects of pupils performance.
- The school produces their own internal CAT, key stages assessment and GCSE information which is widely circulated and used by senior managers, heads of year, heads of departments, classroom teachers, learning monitors and classroom bilingual assistants.
- The school also uses a range of other comprehensive benchmarking, contextual and value-added reports provided by the Local Authority, FFT and national data from RAISEonline.
- Data is made available across the school and are used help review the pupils' progress and set targets.

Interviews with the inclusion manager, teachers, learning mentors and teaching assistants further suggested that the school uses data to track pupil progress, set targets, identify underachieving pupils for further support, inform teaching and learning and strategic planning and to inform the setting and grouping of pupils.

Teachers make effective use of data to evaluate the quality of provision and to identify and provide support for differentiated groups of pupils. At the classroom or pupil level, effective use of data enables the school to highlight specific weaknesses of individual pupils, identify weaknesses in topics for the class as a whole, inform accurate curricular targets for individual pupils and provide evidence to support decisions as to where to focus resources and teaching.

The most common type of interventions employed in the school where data analysis had highlighted issues to be addressed were providing additional support including one to one support or booster groups and making changes to the teaching programme or curriculum such as more personalised or differentiated teaching to meet the needs of EAL pupils or SEN or pupils in targeted initiatives to improve performance. Data is also used in the school effectively to review pupils setting and teaching groups and this has helped in raising achievement. The school also works to target and involve parents through home school partnerships and to encourage mentoring of pupils.

The school uses different sources of data in setting targets and the school self-evaluation process. The inclusion manager who leads the use of data in the school strongly believes:

'When setting targets and using data for self-evaluation it is important to take into account different data including key stage results, CAT data and teacher classroom assessment and forecasts, national and LA data to check the level of validity of the evidence. In some cases they will be consistent but other cases the CAT results may indicate the key stage results differs from what is usually expected by teachers. This is particularly useful information when setting future targets and using data to provide evidence to support decisions as to where to focus resources and teaching in classroom.'

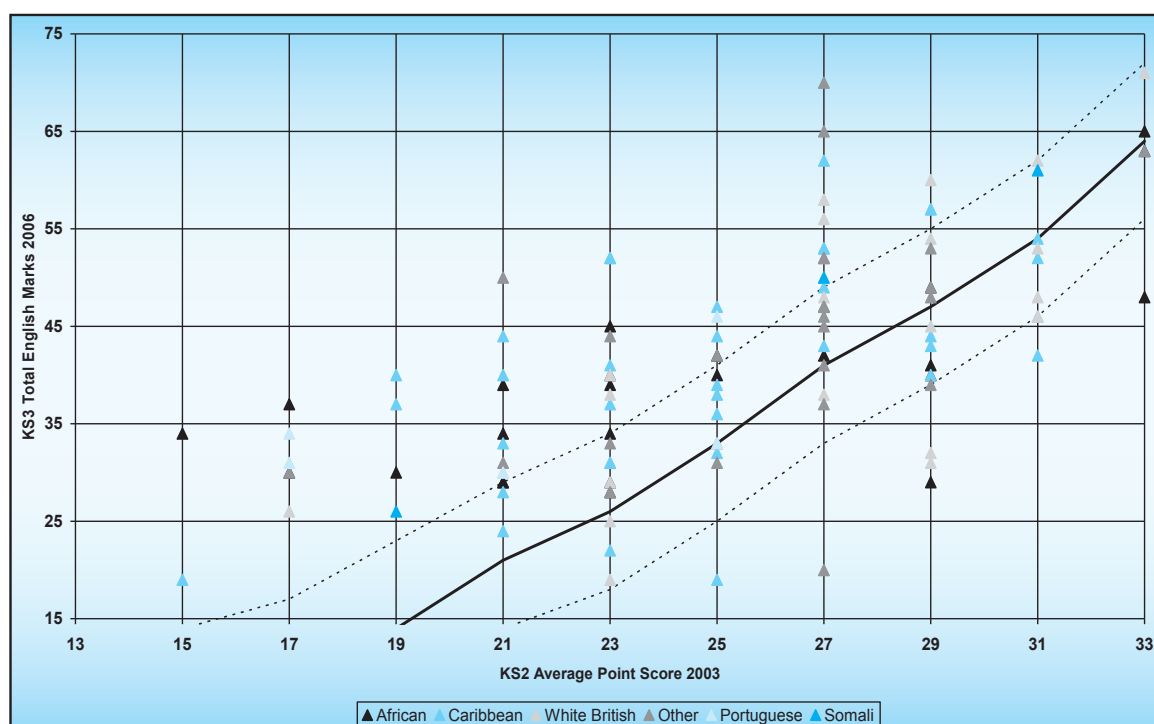
The effective use of data has a major effect on teaching and learning in the school. The quality of teaching is well informed by effective assessment and data. Teachers in the school analyse and build into their planning national curriculum test and CAT information in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum areas. They structure their curriculum and teaching plans carefully and assessment and monitoring are an integral feature of the teaching planning process. Work is planned carefully to match prior attainment and individual education plans are devised for all pupils with a below average profile including EAL pupils SEN pupils. Staff think very carefully about strategies for grouping pupils and targeted support. Classroom lesson observation confirmed the standard of QTS teaching is very high and teachers unobtrusively and skillfully target questions, using their knowledge of individual pupils to good effect. There was evidence that detailed assessments of pupils work are written and followed with helpful questions to aid pupils learning. The children's contribution to the dialogue and discussion is impressive and there is good evidence of excellent teaching in the school.

In the words of one teacher interviewed, the focus on the use of data and targets in the school has:

'Raised the expectation of staff and pupils and makes you focus on what children are actually learning.'

To conclude every pupil is expected and encouraged to achieve their full potential by teachers in Stockwell Park Secondary School. These high expectations are underpinned by the effective use of data to pinpoint underachievement and target additional support.

Figure 2. National Median Line Value Added KS2 Average Point Score 2003 to KS3 Total English Marks 2006 – Stockwell Park



Hitherfield Primary School. Lambeth LA

The context

Hitherfield is a larger than average sized primary school. The school is ethnically diverse with over 40 languages spoken. In 2006 there were 430 pupils on roll, 76% of the school is of an ethnic minority and 41% on free school meals. The largest groups are White British (24%), Black Caribbean (21%), African (20%), Mixed Race (12%), Other White (4%), Bangladeshi (4%), and Turkish (3%). 41% of pupils are on ESL stages 1-3 and 45% are on stages 1-4. The school has 30 Somali children - 7% of the school population. Other groups include Yoruba speakers 8%, Bengali speakers 8%, French speakers 8% and 8% from the Ivory Coast and the Congo. Some Somalis came into the school in the mid 90s, but until 2000 when they started to be housed in the area, there were few.

In its last Ofsted inspection it was recognised that,

'The manner in which pupils of both sexes and from a wide range of ethnic and cultural groups get on well with each other is a strong feature of the school.' (Ofsted 2003).

The school provides a caring, supportive environment. The headteacher and her staff know the children and families well. This is confirmed by Ofsted in 2003 which states;

'The result of the positive and consultative leadership that is now the hallmark of the school is a thriving community that serves all its pupils well. It is a happy school where pupils feel safe and secure and where they are encouraged to develop their talents to the full. The spirit of learning is strong.'

Achievement and standards

Children in the school perform significantly above LA and national average. In 2006 Key stage 2 tests 88% of pupils attained level 4+ in English, 88% in mathematics and 98% in science, an average of 91% overall. The school was inspected in 2003:

This is a good school. Standards are rising at an impressive rate and pupils achieve well. By Year 6 standards in religious education, art and design, design and technology, dance and singing are good. Pupils show a positive attitude to learning and behaviour and relationships are good. Teaching is good across the school and makes a significant impact on rising standards. The leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors are good. The school provides good value for money (Ofsted 2003).

Effective use of EMAG

The role of the EMAG co-ordinator is pivotal in raising the standards of EMAG pupils in the school. She is guided in her work by the need to create a situation in which children with an EAL background can really develop their academic potential in a holistic environment where their emotional, social, cultural and religious needs are met. It is clear to see how her desire for children to achieve their academic potential and therefore to acquire academic vocabulary underpins her work at the school.

'They have to understand the UK education system- they need to get their GCSEs and A-levels. It is often why they've been brought here- it is our job to recognise this and support the aspirations of their families. If we accept low standards then we are blighting their lives.'

She sees education as a global responsibility – we are all educators. It shouldn't be that certain children should get a certain education just because of where they live in the world. She has a strong knowledge of the local area and has built links with parents and the community. She is eager to engage with barriers to achievement for EAL pupils and updates her own knowledge to support children's learning eg. about Islam, either through INSET or seeking the advice of community leaders and parents. She tracks the progress of all children with EAL needs and is reflective about the teaching strategies and curriculum that will engage them.

One Somali pupil stated;

'Our EMAG teacher is very supportive. She is a guide to Somali children as well a teacher. She has high expectations of Somali children. She believes in us that we can achieve and do better. We go to her when we have problems.'

Induction arrangements for families arriving new to the school are thorough. The EMAG co-ordinator who has now been at the school for 10 years has a great empathy for newly arrived pupils. She herself has come from overseas to work in London, which gives her strong insights into the issues facing those newly arrived from abroad, one of which is the danger of stereotyping people's situations and cultures. She understands what it means to come into a country so culturally different where society is organised in such a different way – where it might be hard to access doctors/dentists and different facilities. She makes this part of the induction process for new children and their families believing that children are not only coming into the school but the community and if that support to access the community facilities is given to the whole family it will build a relationship between home and school and the family will support the school to better educate the child.

When children newly arrive at the school the EMAG co-ordinator prepares the teachers beforehand with background information on the child, if it is available, and alerts the lunchtime supervisors and other children who speak the same language in school. New children have a buddy. Each EAL child has 15 hours of bilingual assistant support from the Lambeth Interpreting and Translation Service and the EMAG co-ordinator is well aware that all teachers should be able to plan for the needs of these EAL learners in their delivery of the curriculum.

The EMAG co-ordinator manages 3 specialist EAL teaching assistants, one for each phase group. They assist in the induction process. For 2 weeks they work each morning in the class of the newly arrived EAL child. In this time they might set up resources for the teacher to use with the child/class, support the child to engage in group work. This process builds trust between home and school as it shows parents that the school is making special arrangements for their child to settle them in. The TAs also work on special projects with EAL pupils which are often experimental in nature and relate to the science curriculum. An example is a KS2 group of 8 children working around growing seeds where there was plenty of opportunity for adult child interaction eg. 2 adults for 8 children. TAs taught age related academic vocabulary which related to growing seeds.

There are daily half hour reading sessions for EAL children as appropriate as well as half hour slots around discussing maths using relevant vocabulary. These are guided by teachers' planning so that these children will have familiarised themselves with the vocabulary before learning it in class. These sessions occur at the least disruptive time for class learning in the school day as the EMAG co-ordinator prefers for EAL learners to be in class.

There are flexible arrangements for some newly arrived pupils eg. when they arrive, Somali pupils might join younger classes for conversational purposes. When they can converse they will move up to their chronological age classes. This is dependent on the class size and how well they might progress.

The two learning mentors in the school play a valuable role in pupils' care. This has included involvement with Somali families on occasions when their children might have been slower to settle than the school would have wished.

Tracking and monitoring of EAL pupils

'Assessment procedures in English, maths and science are good. They are used to track pupils and monitor their academic progress as they move through the school. This information is used to set personal and class targets and to inform teachers' planning.' (Ofsted 2003).

The EMAG co-ordinator keeps a register of all children with EAL needs in the school by year group. This register records their name, sex, date of birth, date on roll and whether they have received nursery education, SEN, family origins, home language/s, their stage of English fluency (Lambeth assessment scales) by each year throughout their school career. This information is updated once a term. All class teachers are given this information so that they have an up to date picture of their children's EAL stage. There is an expectation that teachers will use this information in their individual target setting for children during independent activities.

Each class also has a year group profile, which is copied to the headteacher, assessment co-ordinator, literacy and numeracy subject leaders, SENCO and EMA co-ordinator. This sheet records EAL pupils' national curriculum levels. Target groups of children who will need pushing to get a level 4 in Year 6 are shaded. This information can be cross referenced with children's stage of English. It is possible to see that a particular child in Year 3 who is at level 3a in maths and 2a in English does not have the academic language for recording. This tracking forms the baseline from which the EMAG co-ordinator supports teachers to plan interventions that will support EAL pupils to learn such as talk partners, scaffolding academic language and a visual curriculum.

Curriculum organisation and provision/teaching and learning

The curriculum on offer at the school is broad, relevant and excites the children. The school enriches the curriculum and uses the resources in the local and wider community. Visiting poets, authors and performers add to the pupils' literacy development and cultural experience, as well as giving them the opportunity for developing their talents and interests.

The provision for EAL learners focuses on a visual curriculum and more collaborative work. There is a focus on *'slowing down, broadening out, quality not quantity'* with a move towards culturally based units.

The EMAG co-ordinator has moved away from the model of taking small groups out of the classroom to working within classrooms with teachers. She supports the teachers in one year group a term with planning, modelling lesson delivery and peer teaching. She supports teachers to develop their practice with talk partners, collaborative groups, a visual curriculum and planned specific language structures per lesson leading to academic language and oracy for writing.

She focuses her support on literacy as her time is precious and teachers use the principles they learn from her in other subjects.

'Teachers here are positive – people are building a little more into their daily practice. I model the different methods of a visual curriculum – with a topic on aliens/planets I provided a slide show of images of planets as a back drop to the lesson as well as images on paper'.

She is clear about the need to model every part of the lesson for children.

'This is vital for stage 2 and 3 learners. It gives them the information they need. When I wanted them to make a story box of their planet, for the aliens work, I made my own and modelled it for them.'

'I encourage teaching of language structures through talk partners with a focus on response. They must respond in the correct way, in whole sentence answers. We rehearse the question together - I model first - they repeat, say it to their talk partner and then we focus on the response. In the planets work for example we rehearsed the request tell me a name for your planet and explain why it is a good name for it. The response was scaffolded for them but they needed to use the structure and the conjunction 'because'- My planet is called _____ because_____.'

This practice is developed throughout the school. The nursery began a recent focus on 'Responding to talk' which supports adults to refine children's responses into academic language/whole sentences when discussing as a class or in small groups.

One Somali pupil described how the talk partner approach is working for him:

'It is hard to understand some words in maths but my talk partner helps me.'

Somali pupils felt that the teachers at their schools were:

'good at explaining things. They show you something and if you don't understand they show you again.'

Whole school INSET on EAL issues also supports this work with an emphasis on training the teachers rather than targeting certain groups of EAL speakers as a more effective strategy for supporting pupils as there are no real significant language groups in the school. This enables all teachers to become EAL experts.

'Teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching which enables them to make progress in learning English.' Pupils receive high quality support from EMAT teachers and support staff. In addition they are supported effectively in lessons by teachers and primary helpers who ensure they play a full part in all lessons. A strength of paired and group work is the support pupils receive from their peers.' (Ofsted 2003).

When interviewed, Somali pupils generally enjoyed first hand learning.

'I enjoy science, you get to do stuff, experiments and building something and working with money- this is the most important thing.' A boy in Year 5 felt that learning science was important as *'you can tell the doctor where the pain is'* - a curriculum relevant to his life.

Pupils at the school learn about a diverse range of cultures through the curriculum and visits and cultural events. They have good opportunities to gain confidence about their culture through the study of religious education, assemblies, celebrations of festivals, and art and musical events. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Respect for feelings and emotions is central to the school's teaching and learning policy and the discipline policy makes clear links between individual rights and the impact of behaviour on others. Learning about other cultures is central to this. Pupils learn about cultures through a range of musical styles and instruments, traditional cultural tales and visits. However the EMAG co-ordinator strongly believes that other children in the school need educating about the life experiences of those children coming from overseas.

'There should be more emphasis on global citizenship, through literature, citizenship, assemblies as well as other areas of the curriculum such as geography and maths. Pupils need to talk about what is happening in the world; watch 'Newsround' etc outside of school.'

Links with parents and the community

The school works hard to engage all EAL parents. The headteacher and EMAG co-ordinator have a good rapport with Somali parents who appreciate their honesty and clearly communicated expectations of behaviour. Interpreters and translators are provided when appropriate. The school makes good use of bilingual parents to translate for non-English speakers, to support with the translation of important letters and parent/teacher discussion. This has worked particularly well with one Somali mother, with whom the school has forged a close relationship, to support other members of her group who speak only Somali.

The EMAG co-ordinator is reflective about the best ways to engage Somali parents. The school is planning to arrange informal meetings with Somali parents to discuss aspects of the curriculum and their children's learning, which have yet to be broached e.g. faith, sex education and health. She is keen to accommodate parents' wishes where appropriate and if able to.

'I will deal with the situation and then the what ifs, if needs be. I look for the solution that will accommodate the needs of the parent, child, teacher and the class. I understand the needs of all parties and see it as my role to balance them out. Sometimes our community religious adviser will come and talk to me, the class teacher and the parent to advise on solutions, suggest alternatives. He appreciates the need to balance the needs of the individual and the class. An example might be when we offered a Somali mother the option of her daughter dressing into her PE kit in a private cubicle as a compromise. She was then able to do PE. We will do our utmost to accommodate the needs of the families- it is up to them to decide whether they are comfortable with the situation that we can offer.'

Somali mothers were grateful for the support and care their children receive at the school. One mother, a recent arrival straight from Somalia arriving on the 26th May 2001 and the other who was privately educated in Somalia until her arrival in London in 1999, felt that despite cultural differences their children had settled into school quickly;

'they cope because they are children. We haven't seen any problems integrating with others.'

They felt that there was no need for their children to underachieve,

'they should be able to do as well as any children here. They should do the same – they are the same age.'

They praised the school for its intervention with children with EAL needs.

'If they get support with their language they can do everything better.'
'Education is important, you can't live without education, it's for the future.'

The Parent Teachers' Association is working hard to include more representation of the ethnic mix of the school. It is an inclusive group which is moving away from the traditional model of a fund raising body. It is aware that Somali mothers have their own form of mutual support and do not necessarily need to attend coffee mornings to meet other parents. It is appreciated that work needs to be done to engage Somali parents, to gain a deeper understanding of any learning barriers and to marry this up with expectations.

Pupils and parents spoke enthusiastically of the Global Citizenship Week, organized by the citizenship history co-ordinator earlier in the year. Families were invited to share recipes and cultural tales. Somali pupils enjoyed their mothers' contributions to this event so that they could celebrate their culture with their friends.

Child Q Case History: Child Q came from Somalia with her cousins in 2004 to live with her grandmother who had come from Somalia earlier. Child Q aged 2 and her sibling were left with grandma by her parents who were both involved in the war and who grandma never saw again (she knows that the father is dead). Grandma said that Child Q had been to school in Somalia, and was able to read and write a little Somali on arrival in London. However Q has told the school that in Somalia she didn't go to school much but looked after *'the babies'*, which she felt was more important than school. When she first arrived at school she found it difficult to socialise with the other children. The school put her in Year 3 as she had no English language and needed to learn the school routines.

The school helped in determining her birth date. She became unhappy in Year 3 as she grew impatient with the other children and the school moved her to Year 5 to match her chronological age and because they were mindful that she would soon be transferred to secondary school. Although the children were generally supportive of her she has not found a close friend and will often exhibit negative behaviour to attract attention from other girls. Child Q is diligent in her approach to work. She now feels it is really important to take advantage of educational opportunities. She finds most of her lessons interesting. She said, *'I like all my lessons because I always get homework that is English, maths and literacy and am very happy with my school'*.

Teachers expect her to do well and care about her progress and achievement. Staff at the school treat her fairly, respect her and take a strong stand against racism. She feels that at her school all children get the same chances whether black or white. After a non communicative phase she is now able to understand English to stage 2. She is able to access the curriculum at a low level responding to a visual stimulus. The children in the family are well supported at home, *'my brothers help me'*, and they attend a Somali club two evenings a week.

Strengths

The role of the EMAG co-ordinator which encompasses:

- A rigorous focus on academic language for learning throughout children's learning.
- Target setting that informs planning/teaching on a daily basis.
- Empowering teachers with strategies that focus on EAL pupils including talk partners, collaborative groups, a visual curriculum and planned specific language structures per lesson.
- Planning a broad, relevant curriculum that excites the children. The school enriches the curriculum using the resources in the local and wider community.
- Strong links with parents and reflection about the best ways to engage Somali parents.
- An empathy for newly arrived families and is clearly focused on the needs of EAL learners.

Richard Atkins Primary School – Lambeth LA



© Richard Atkins Primary School. Somali Parent and Community Conference.

The context

Richard Atkins Primary is a larger than average primary school located in an area of rented council housing. There is a very diverse mix of ethnic groups in the school. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is well above average, the most common languages being Somali, Spanish and Portuguese. Pupil mobility is high and just over half of the school population are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average. The school has a well developed working relationship with the Somali community in the area and has good practice in raising achievement of Somali pupils. The school had developed strategies such as effective leadership and management, effective support for EAL pupils, effective use of learning mentors, an inclusive curriculum that meets the need of Somali pupils, parental engagement and effective use of community resources including Somali bilingual teaching assistants.

Leadership and management

The current headteacher took up post in September 2004. The challenges she faced were significant underachievement, some unsatisfactory teaching, poor attendance, high pupil mobility, large numbers of children on the SEN register and inconsistent home school communication.

Information about pupils was inaccurate, for example 60% of pupils were on the SEN register with many remaining there for years with their needs unmet. The culture of the school was such that the SENCO and the EMA teachers would remove pupils from the class and they were not seen as the responsibility of class teachers. Parents rarely entered the school building and parent conferencing did not take place; they were simply asked to sign an end of year report on their child.

During the second year of her headship, the headteacher worked closely with the local authority on developing a new staffing structure. In the re-structuring process nine teachers lost their posts as well as various administrative staff. A new leadership team was established which included three assistant headteachers and an extended schools co-ordinator. The school joined the EAL programme in September 2005 and the local authority Best for All our Children Project in September 2006 and as a consequence, has received a high level of support from advisers and teaching and learning consultants.

The headteacher is very experienced (this is her fourth headship) and is strong and determined. Her desire to provide the best education possible for children and their families is what has motivated her to tackle every challenge presented. Examples of these challenges include overcoming prejudice and negative attitudes to pupils by some staff no longer in the school, who believed educational failure was the fault of the children and parents. The headteacher managed the change process very well, taking with her some very experienced long-serving teachers as well as newly recruited high quality staff.

Her vision for the school is shared by the staff who remained in the school, as well as those she appointed. She has the confidence to hold firmly to her professional judgement about the importance of valuing the cultural identity of the children and their parents. The contribution of the community she is serving is also sought (the largest group being Somali) and many recent appointments, for example the learning mentor, were made through community involvement. Other appointments include a part-time Somali teacher and bilingual Portuguese and Spanish teachers, to reflect the language and cultural heritage of pupils. The establishment of good relationships with all stakeholders has been her main priority. This she sees as a secure foundation on which she is building a new culture of high achievement.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2006 and inspectors reported:

'The headteacher provides strong leadership and sets out a clear vision for the school. She has a good understanding of what needs to be done to move the school forward, particularly to improve teaching and learning.'

The headteacher's approach to school improvement is supported by educational research by David Hopkins' in 'Changing the School Culture', he writes:

'The nature of human relationships is at the centre of attention in a school development programme. If ownership of the change process and co-operation among teachers are to be achieved, basic communication built on trust and openness thought the school is vital...if the school is to be 'in charge', it needs to mobilise energy and motivation. If it is to learn to live with change in an ongoing learning process, the roles of learners, adults and children, have to be redefined. It is also clear that not only the formal leadership of the school, but also the informal leadership (among teachers and students as well) need to be fully utilised to achieve good results. In other words, the new learning organisation asks for major changes in norms and values that have a direct impact on human relationships.'

A significant number of Somali parents responded to our invitation to join a focus group seeking their views of the school (with the support of an interpreter). They were positive about the changes made by the new leadership, declaring:

'Administration, communication and education are all good!'

The headteacher being of Caribbean heritage is able to empathise with the particular challenges presented to Somali parents and pupils:

'Whilst Caribbean parents understand the British education system, Somalis do not. However, their life situations are similar, for example, housing issues, absent fathers, lack of money. With this in mind, you have to run a school a different way. You have to work with parents.'

Clearly the school's success in involving parents as partners is paying off, as many more Somali families are enrolling their children in the school.

Teaching and learning

In its own self-evaluation the school describes teaching and learning as good. Termly observations of teaching and learning are made by the leadership team and the link adviser. Significant improvements in teachers' subject knowledge have impacted positively on teaching and learning. Teachers are given opportunities to observe good models of teaching from within the school, by teaching and learning consultants or by visits to other schools. Teachers are now carefully targeting the needs of pupils with SEN and EAL.

Although some ethnic groups are still underperforming when compared to the local authority and national averages, outcomes for Somali learners are showing improvements. Strategies are in place to enable all pupils to access the curriculum. These include mentoring for targeted pupils, support for Somali pupils and parents and a family learning together programme for targeted pupils and parents. There is significant improvement in the school's assessment and target setting practice, both formatively and summatively. Some teachers use interactive marking to involve the learner and engage them in assessing their own work. The school has improved their strategies for diagnosing and making provision for individual learning needs, for example, teachers plan strategically for EAL learners and use a range of enrichment activities to ensure that the entitlement of each learner is met whatever his or her starting point.

Effective support for EAL and mentoring

The school speaks very positively about the support it has received from the local authority EMA consultants who have tailored their advice and support to fit in with the school's work. EAL pupils' progress is tracked carefully and the leadership team meet weekly to discuss concerns and any emerging issues which might impact on achievement. There has been a significant shift in terms of the accountability of teachers for the progress pupils make, but they have also received high quality support:

Good practice in EAL teaching

Increasingly teachers at Richard Atkins are allowing opportunities for talk and this talk is explicitly planned with the aim to immerse children in a language rich environment and to use language in meaningful and purposeful contexts for both linguistic and academic success. Under the umbrella of the EAL programme, the Primary EAL Teaching and Learning Consultant and the Primary EMA Consultant have delivered training and taught in partnerships with teachers to develop teaching strategies focused on this use of oral language across the curriculum. This has included:

- The use of talk partners, when a child is matched with a partner who provides a good language model and discusses work with a specific focus.
- Planning activities which require exploratory talk, when children work collaboratively in small groups, thus extending both their thinking skills and language.
- Planning for guided talk. There are many differences between oral and written language and guided talk provides an oral rehearsal of those forms needed for writing. The teacher identifies specific sentence structures (often those needed for a written piece of work), models the structures and following discussions or group working, scaffolds a child's responses either verbally or with a talk partner. For example, *'We believe that The is used to make because'*

Thus the emphasis at Richard Atkins has been on developing strategies and activities which require children to use carefully identified and planned language, integrated into the teaching sequence.

The school has used its partnership with the Clapham Park Project and funding from the Lambeth Endowed Charities to subsidise residential visits for some learners and full subsidy for those learners who would miss out because of financial difficulties.

The recently appointed learning mentor makes a very positive contribution to the school. In addition to his mentoring role, he is a youth worker in the local community. He greets Somali parents with '*Aslami Meleku.*' This immediately engages their interest and curiosity. He believes that Somali parents are much more open now, but acknowledges that they were reluctant to share at first:

'It takes time to gain the confidence of pupils and parents.... But this is a comfortable school, we discuss ways of trying to make people feel at home. Simple questions to parents such as 'how are you', and 'what did you do over the weekend', help them to know you are just a normal person like them.'

He has worked as a mentor through the Clapham Park Project and very closely with the Somali community in the Streatham and Clapham areas. He has visited Somalia, Ethiopia and other African countries and is knowledgeable about Somali culture. His role is to liaise with parents and pupils and to ensure that they are properly inducted into school procedures and practices. He accompanies pupils on school trips and residential journeys and recently had the opportunity to model an appropriate response for pupils to a racist comment made by white pupils on a school journey. He reflects:

'London is very different from the rest of the country, pupils pick this up. They noted that there are fewer black people out of London. White pupils at the residential centre told them: 'we are not allowed to speak to black people.' When they told us I talked to them about perceptions of life and the impact of the media on peoples' perceptions. I am interested in their views. In this school they wouldn't get that reaction so maybe it is good that it has come now.'

The learning mentor spoke to staff at the residential centre about the incident and reached out in friendship to the staff and pupils in the other visiting school and by the end of the week's school journey the pupils were mixing well. The learning mentor believes that it is essential that pupils' retain their cultural identity, whether Somali or from any other ethnic group:

'I try to learn other languages so that I can greet people in their own language. Manners, chivalry and courtesy are important for all pupils. We encourage pupils to open doors for their elders, and to humble themselves as children. We try to reinforce what is taught at home.'

Curriculum

The school is concerned that the curriculum is relevant to all pupils. It has introduced key skills in English, mathematics and science which are taught through all subjects and curricular links are made between foundation subjects. A recent development is a personalised approach where pupils are asked what they would like to know about a particular topic. This is used as a starting point for future work.

If it is a history topic, they are asked what historians do. The aim is to make work child focused. Like many schools they are moving away from the QCA schemes of work and plan to build projects around Somalia, Spain, Portugal and the Caribbean so that all pupils in the school will have the opportunity of learning about their own cultural heritage, as well as their peers.

There are also plans to develop a Reminiscence Project to build on the experiences of pupils' families, for example learning stories and rhymes in pupils' own languages and parents reading stories in theirs.

The assistant headteacher with responsibility for the curriculum meets regularly with subject leaders to discuss strategies to enrich each subject area. Learners go on visits every term and visitors come in to enhance learning opportunities. Many practical experiences, visits to museums and places of interest are planned for each year group to encourage talk and broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. Children work collaboratively to develop both their thinking skills and exploratory language. Teachers plan guided talk when the children's responses are scaffolded orally or with talk planners. Talk partners are used in all lessons for exploratory talk and also when children are required to use identified sentence structures, often those required for subsequent writing.

Learners participate in a wide range of activities and workshops and events both in school and in the wider community. They have worked with the English Pocket Opera and the Royal Ballet and have visited the French Institute. Year 2 pupils sang at the recent re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall. The good ICT resources, including interactive whiteboards in every classroom and digital cameras across each key stage, together with weekly ICT lessons in the ICT suite are enhancing learning across the curriculum. Displays around the school reflect the variety of languages spoken in the school and parents' batik prints sit alongside children's work. A Caribbean style carnival brought together all the children and their parents and photographs of the event form a display as a reminder that diversity is valued. A wide range of extended school activities are available, including a gardening club, African/Caribbean dance, music and sports.

In the foundation stage a significant challenge for the school is the need to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and their language and communication skills. Attainment on entry to the nursery is significantly below what is expected of children of this age. Lack of knowledge by Somali parents of what is available in this country and how to access it can mean that the school has to address issues which are way beyond what would normally be expected. This challenge is embraced by the leadership and Somali parents and pupils are benefiting enormously from the school's efforts. The headteacher articulates this empathetically:

'We take children out to post letters, (as they have not had this experience) sometimes the children are not able to dress or feed themselves as these things are done for them by their mothers. Nutrition is an issue, we make lunchtime a learning experience. They will now have a go and try new things like cauliflower – there is an awful lot of vocabulary work to be done. Children do not know the names of simple nouns like 'cushion' or 'purse.' We set targets for pupils for speaking, shyness, dressing or undressing....early intervention is vital.'

Parental engagement

A major strength of the school is in its work with Somali parents. Staff are proactive in their approach and they go the extra mile to support, engage and involve parents, so that there is now active parental participation. Examples of good practice include Somali parent focus groups where they have been enabled to give their views. Some of their requests are:

- We need more Somali teachers in the school.
- We do not want our children involved in RE.
- How can we support our children in school?

Time and effort has been spent recruiting a part-time Somali teacher so that explanations concerning RE lessons have been given. Parents have appreciated that these are about teaching children to respect other peoples' beliefs rather than trying to convert them. Practical workshops in mathematics and English for parents have boosted the confidence of parents and enabled them to perceive that the school is listening to them. Somali children however say that they do not want to be treated any differently from their peers when it comes to celebrating Christmas. The headteacher recalls that she initially tried hard to be sensitive to different faith groups in the school at Christmas:

'Initially I sent every child a card at Christmas but I would buy special cards for Muslim pupils with no mention of Christmas. They came back and said 'no, we want a Christmas card', so I explained this to their parents.'

Another example of good practice in developing effective partnerships with parents was a very successful Families Learning Together conference. It was held on a Saturday in May 2007, to enable as many parents as possible to attend. A crèche was also provided. The conference was part of a long term plan to raise standards at the school by working in partnership with parents, in order to maximise pupils' achievement. Ten pupils opened the conference by welcoming parents and participants in their first language. Speakers included the Executive Director of Lambeth's Children and Young People's Service.

Parental responsibility was a key feature of the conference, especially in ensuring children arrive at school early and ready to start the day. Other aspects included parents showing their children that they respect education, setting positive role models themselves in the language used at home and supporting homework. Advice was given on managing behaviour, nutrition and health. An outline of the English education system was provided in a workshop led by a Lambeth primary ethnic minority achievement consultant and details of the national curriculum and the assessment levels were given. The importance of continuing to develop the first language at home was explained and parents were put in the position of a child who has EAL, having to navigate a literacy lesson without translation. The parents reported that they found this really useful and commented on the difference they perceived when they had support in their own language. This crystallised for them the importance of supporting their children in developing basic English skills. Many parents expressed the importance of the school in providing basic English skills lessons. Since then the school has planned family learning in literacy for 20 targeted parents.

The school has a volunteer programme for parents who want to help in the school. Parents are encouraged to develop skills and experience as part of this programme to support their future employment opportunities. Some parents also use this programme as a means of developing their own English skills. Examples of ways that parents work in partnership with the school are:

- Reading with learners.
- Supporting small groups of learners.
- Making costumes' backdrops for school performances.
- Organising the library area.
- Preparing resources.
- Supporting learners during the lunch break.

The Orion Primary School – Barnet LA



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The context

The Orion school serves an area of high social and economic deprivation. The catchment area of the Orion school is largely the vast rented Grahame Park housing estate which many Somali families moved into over the last twenty years.

The school has 456 pupils. The pupils are from a very wide range of backgrounds, reflecting the ethnic and cultural diversity of the area the school serves. The greatest majority (69%) of the school population are from ethnic minority groups. The largest groups are African (35%), White British (21%), Other White (9%) and Mixed Race (8%). There are also significant numbers of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other ethnic groups in the school. Somali pupils form about 26% of the school population and this is the largest ethnic group in the school.

There are many things that are unusual about this school which make it special. At the heart lies a clear commitment to children from disadvantaged communities in the Grahame Park housing estate and the area it serves by recognising the star in every one of the school pupils. In the word of the headteacher:

'The children have fun learning experiences every day through the learning journey and aspire to be real stars in their own way.'

Ofsted recognised this in 2006 and said:

'This is an outstanding school which is very successful in meeting its aim of recognising the star in everyone.'

The school is a happy and successful school whose pupils flourish because of the good quality education they receive and extensive Somali parental engagement. Pupils love their school and achieve exceptionally well. This is appreciated and valued by Somali parents in the school.

Achievement and standards

This school is an outstanding school because the highly effective leadership team and staff successfully ensure that pupils make excellent progress in their academic and personal development.

High priority is placed on providing first rate care and support to enable pupils achieve to their full potential. As a result, pupils achieve outstandingly from well below average starting points to high standards by the end of Year 6. In 2007, 94% of pupils achieved level 4 or above in both English and science. The school has improved from 79% to 94% since 2004, particularly in English, which is critical for Somali children to access the national curriculum. Over 90% of Somali pupils achieve level 4 or above at KS2. This is an impressive result as English language is not the mother tongue for these pupils. In this school Somali and other bilingual pupils are achieving above the national average at KS1 and KS2. The value-added of the individual pupils is very impressive and a significant number of pupils are in the top quartile.

Central to the school's success in raising the achievement of Somali children are the high expectations that staff have of themselves and their pupils, strong leadership led by an excellent headteacher, a very capable senior leadership team that keeps a very close check on school performance, high quality teaching and learning in the classroom, effective use of an innovative curriculum that reflects the cultural background of children in the school, effective use of data for self-evaluation, parental engagement and community involvement in the lives and development of the school and the high value Somali parents place on their children's education. The evidence used to inform judgements includes interviews with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, chair of governors, staff, and Somali pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and attainment data, classroom observation of lessons and a parent focus group which was well attended by 27 Somali parents. The school was visited for 2 days to gather evidence of good practice in raising the achievement of Somali pupils. Details of the findings are discussed below.

Leadership and management

The Orion was formed from two failing schools which were amalgamated and opened in January 2000 with the ethos of *'recognising the star in everyone.'* Under the Fresh Start scheme the school was declared no longer in special measures in November 2001. When inspected by Ofsted in November 2006 the school was judged to be outstanding in all areas and the leadership of the headteacher described as *'inspirational.'*

To have taken a school from a very low base to become one that is outstanding requires a special kind of leader. In the case of The Orion it is a leader with a heart who seeks the very best for children with a strong commitment to equality and social justice. In essence, the leadership of The Orion School recognises, supports and celebrates the diversity of its pupils and creates an environment where there is mutual respect and strong, positive relationships.

The school is a uniquely cohesive community with a common vision articulated by all its members. The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are viewed as positive assets and not barriers. Consequently during our short visit, we heard the views of 27 Somali mothers, met the local vicar who is the chair of the governing body and observed a visit by a group of local rabbis. The chair of governors is committed to improving conditions on the vast Grahame Park estate. He explained the different experience pupils have when they come to The Orion:

'The school breaks down the barriers which exist on the local estate where children play but are made to feel unwelcome by some residents. We work hard at not defining people here, breaking them down in terms of language, colour, belief or background, but we do say: 'if this child's progress is very different from others', we need to know why.'

The school works very hard to provide children with a real chance in life and help them exceed all expectations. The leadership's commitment to the recruitment of high quality staff is at the core of its success. It is also forward looking in its approach to flexible working arrangements, for example the two deputy headteachers are part-time and job share. One recalls her reasons for applying for a post at The Orion when it first opened:

'This school is very attractive to teachers who want to make a difference to children's lives... but it is also very hard work!'

As with any school of this sort, there is quite a turnover of staff but the leadership is able to accommodate this because the school wants teachers to be passionate about teaching and learning.

'For all children there is a friendship with teachers, we would respect their view and try and listen to their opinions but we also put clear boundaries in place for them.'

The headteacher feels that:

'Teachers can learn a lot here. I have a mix of experienced and inexperienced teachers. Around February/March I know how many vacancies I will have, we have two runs of adverts so we look at the best possible people early. We watch them teach and we have an open day for them and from that we can see who is passionate, energetic and optimistic – these are the attributes we seek. You need people here who are open-minded, who can empathise with difficulties on the estate.'

Despite the rigorous process, there is no shortage of applicants and some teachers state as a reason for applying that they want to work with the headteacher. A deputy headteacher stressed the importance of induction for staff.

'In September new staff are inducted into the way we are. Existing staff are reminded of the way things work here. We keep examples of pupils' work and we share the four levels of achievement with the teaching assistants and explain this is what a Year 2 child's work should look like in January.'

The leadership team have developed tried and tested methods of teaching literacy which have impacted very positively on the academic achievement of pupils. It has developed unique methods which emphasise daily sessions of reading and writing with specific literacy targets for individual pupils. The teaching and learning policy 'The Amazing Learning Journey', gives clear guidance to teachers new to the school on The Orion's way of delivering the best possible teaching and learning. The headteacher believes that the 'star' concept is forward looking and children love it, he believes that all children will learn despite their challenges *'happy kids always learn.'* Consequently the curriculum is exciting and there is a real buzz about the school.

The school works hard to involve all members of the school community and the staff profile reflects the diversity of its intake. Home visits are made when children enter the nursery and a photo taken which is put up for them to see when they start school. A deputy headteacher with early years expertise feels this practice is crucial to teacher's understanding of the children:

'It provides huge insights for staff. I would encourage every member of staff to go to visit the nursery teacher so they can get to the nitty gritty of where the children are coming from.'

The deputy headteacher, who is also the SENCO, observed that Somali parents are very interested in their children's achievements, are supportive and respectful of teachers and of the school in a way that other groups might not be. Somali parents say they feel very welcome at the school. This is because the school actively reaches out to show them they are valued. Teachers make themselves accessible to parents by being in the playground at the start and end of day. Parents recently attended a performance of 'Grease' by pupils which was held at a local theatre.

The teaching assistants feel valued for their expertise and their opinions and knowledge of the children. An EMA teaching assistant who is also a parent, shared her views of the school. Arriving in the UK as an asylum seeker herself, she is able to empathise with pupils who are recent arrivals and new to English. She spoke highly of the teachers and the school which she contrasted with her own experience of school:

'When you come here you notice that the staff and the teachers are so close to the kids. They are of different languages, colours, religions and they all come together. In my country we were separated. When one man came into power he changed everything and he divided our country.' On the leadership of the school she commented: *'Any team needs a good manager and Mr Flathers is that. This school is fantastic.'*

The headteacher's approach as a leader is informal and relaxed and the atmosphere in the school is friendly and warm with a great deal of humour. There is respect for the headteacher from all members of the school community and respect for each other. His style is inclusive rather than dominating and he creates the conditions for all members of the school community to contribute. Expectations are clearly articulated and boundaries established. As a result parents have confidence in the school and are able to support their children's learning more effectively.

Teaching and learning

'Pupils' outstanding achievement is a consequence of the very high expectations of teachers. They plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and present learning in interesting and exciting ways that really motivate and stimulate them.' (Ofsted 2006).

The school describes their teaching and learning policy as:

'The learning journey: The Orion's way of delivering the best possible teaching and learning for children... it provides teaching techniques that work with Orion children and that go beyond the basics.'

Teachers receive detailed guidance on making the classroom *'a wonderful place to be'*, creating a supportive learning environment to develop appropriate behaviour, ideas for brain gym, the school's own systems for planning, and briefing teaching assistants on their role and the use of resources to support learning.

Lessons are exciting and challenge children at all levels of capability. Support from teaching assistants is targeted to various groups of children and the school prioritises this support in the Early Years and at Key Stage 1 where there is a very high adult to pupil ratio within lessons. This is because of the very high percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Active learning is embedded throughout the school which helps all children make connections in their learning (not just those with EAL). The deputy head explains this rationale:

'Where you have a school where the majority of children are EAL learners or they do not originate from the UK, how do you decide which child is more important? That is very divisive. I feel very passionate about this. In this school we treat all children equally, they are different, but those differences are never highlighted. I believe you can enhance children by highlighting their needs and nurturing them, bringing groups together to do something about it. I don't think it is helpful to label children e.g. this is an EMA child. If you train as a teacher and are committed to helping children learn you should be able to facilitate learning for a range of children. Teachers are therefore responsible for all children, so they are responsible for EMA as well as children with SEN.'

Literacy is a key area in the school and the focus on the development of language and literacy skills has also impacted on pupils' achievement in mathematics. The deputy headteacher explained how literacy is taught:

'Every teaching assistant is deployed in KS1 and pupils are taught in ability groups and in chunks of time for one hour per day and an hour and 20 minutes at KS2. Teachers change groups each term so they have experience teaching each ability group. Five minutes is spent on word level work, 10 minutes on sentence level activities which include games, speaking and listening and talk partners. There is 15 minutes reading. Monday we focus on grammar, Tuesday creative writing, Wednesday they edit their writing, Thursday comprehension and Friday spelling and phonics. On Tuesday evenings teachers set objectives for individual children for the writing they will edit the next day, in addition to class targets for punctuation and presentation.'

During lessons teachers use a variety of styles and methods to take account of the way children learn. There is an awareness of the learning preferences of pupils (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic) and there is usually some practical element to the lesson. Teachers make learning such fun that pupils are highly motivated and have very positive attitudes. Their behaviour is also excellent. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and provide very good support to pupils.

Curriculum

The school aims to ensure that the curriculum reflects the cultural background of as many children as possible. It believes that by valuing linguistic diversity, this will enhance the learning of all pupils. By assisting bilingual children to become proficient users of English, this will enable them to achieve their full learning potential in the language of the curriculum. The school states that all bilingual pupils, including inexperienced users of English, have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Orion aims to provide a curriculum that is appropriate to the needs and abilities of all the children. They plan their teaching and learning in such a way that enables each child to reach for the highest level of personal achievement.

The curriculum offers a new academy lesson, a wide range of enrichment activities including music tuition, sports, and African drumming. Visits to places of interest are an important part of the curriculum and children from Years 1 to 6 have a trip every term. This provides children with further experiences they may not have at home. Year 6 are taken on a residential school journey, for example caravanning in Clacton or an outdoor activity centre in Norfolk and this year a trip to France is planned.

Use of data

The school uses data effectively and staff know their pupils performance and school strengths and weaknesses very well. Teachers closely monitor work in the classroom and pupil progress is tracked rigorously so that any at risk of underachieving is identified and pupils are given the support they need. The school uses QCA optional tests, foundation stage assessment data, KS1 and KS2 assessment and test data and EAL and other background data to set targets and track pupil performance. The outcomes of the careful scrutiny of test results and contextual background data are used very well to identify areas needing improvement and resourcing and these are tackled robustly. Those learning English as an additional language are well supported and monitored by an able deputy headteacher whose responsibilities include ethnic minority achievement. EAL support is a strength of the schools and Somali pupils are well supported.

As a result EAL pupils in general and Somali pupils in particular make rapid progress and achieve outstanding results at KS2 as they are monitored and supported closely. Somali children value highly the support of their classroom teachers and the EMA co-ordinator and they enjoy the education provided in the school.

Child S Case Study: S is the oldest of four children, she has two younger sisters in Year 4 and nursery and a younger brother in Year 1. S's mother is from Somalia and her father is from The Yemen. She was born in London and at that time her parents were living in a bed and breakfast. They were moved to Burnt Oak and by the time S was one, the family were living on the main concourse on the Grahame Park estate. In 2005 they moved to the new flats on the other side of Grahame Park. S's father works in a factory and her mother stays at home. S and her sister in Year 4 both wear a traditional headscarf and their mother wears traditional Somali dress.

S entered The Orion nursery in January 2001 for afternoon sessions (most popular with the Somali community). S was an energetic and enthusiastic child when she attended nursery and was always eager to start the day. She was a very dominant child and in nursery played mainly with friends from the Somali community, often organising the play. S loved creative activities and singing. In nursery her spoken English was already quite good as her parents had been speaking English with her at home. S started reception class in January 2002.

The results at KS1 for child S were a 2b in writing and reading at the end of Year 2 (in line with national expectations). She achieved 2c in mathematics (slightly under average). By the end of Year 3, S was a 3b in reading (working above the average level) but had not made as much progress in writing (2a, which was on target). By the end of Year 4, S achieved 4b in reading, making a year's progress of one whole level (level 2/3 is average). She also achieved 4b in writing (progress of over a level). By the end of Year 5, S achieved level 5c in reading and 4a in writing and is targeted to achieve level 5 literacy in her Year 6 SATS. In maths by the end of Year 3, S had achieved a 2a in maths. By the end of Year 4 she had reached 3a. By the end of Year 5 she had reached 4a. S is on line to achieve a level 5 maths result in KS2 SATS.

Parental engagement

Another important factor which has had a major impact in raising achievement of Somali children is the work the school is doing in constructively engaging Somali parents. There is a close link between Somali parents and the school and Somali parents are positively encouraged to play a full part in the life and the development of the school. Evidence gathered during the focus group discussion (which 27 parents attended) and observations in the two days visit confirm that:

- The majority of Somali parents came to the UK during the period 1989 – 1998 and have had a number of children who have passed through the school. They understand English even if they cannot speak fluently.
- The school treats Somali parents as equal partners. This positive relationship has been founded on direct contact between the parents, the headteacher, teaching staff, the SMT and the chair of governors.
- The school makes Somali parents welcome and responds respectfully to their needs and concerns about their childrens' education.

- Somali parents feel the school is safe for their children and a happy place to be.
- Somali parents value that the school breaks down barriers and that their children get support in school which often they cannot get at home.
- Somali parents have respect for the authority of the school and the headteacher. They respond very well to the school ethos of high expectations and they like the strong leadership of the headteacher who does an effective job, values their community culture and tells them what pupils need to do to achieve their full potential.
- Some Somali parents see the headteacher as a paternal figure which their children may lack at home, as a large numbers of fathers are absent or not able to support their children's education.
- Somali parents perceive the school to be an inclusive school, where all pupils have the opportunity to do well. The value they place on their active involvement in their education is good.

The school places a high value on children's cultures and home languages. Materials are available in the Somali language to ensure Somali parents receive important information from the school. The school also makes the premises available for Somali and other communities to use for language schools, food harvest, celebrating cultural food and international cloth day to celebrate cultural diversity and shared values, thus demonstrating the value the school places in cultural diversity and community engagement. Overall, Somali parents value education highly and see it as an important step out of poverty. They respond well to the school ethos of high expectations. The value they place in education is well noted by the chair of governors who argued:

'In this school the common trend is that Somali children achieve very well and buck the national trend that black children in general and Somali pupils in particular are underachieving.'

The views and experiences of the chair of governors were also confirmed by Somali parents who were invited to be part of a focus group meeting and comment about their own experience in education. Parents in the focus group were full of praise for the school as an inclusive school and emphasised the importance of education. When asked how important they thought it was to get a good education, parents commented:

'Education is not just important for Somali pupils, it is important for all children and every mother would like their child to get a good education.'

'If you get a good education it will help you in life.'

'Somalis like to study. My dad had a Ph.D in Chemical Engineering. I did not have the opportunity to study here, but we still believe education lasts for life. If you make money you can lose it but education is for life.'

When asked if they feel the school is an inclusive school where Somali pupils have the potential to do well, parents agreed the school is an inclusive school and that Britain is a welcoming society. Parents again commented that:

'It is an inclusive school not just for Somali students, it is for everyone. If the child doesn't get the education they need from the school and parents may not have had an education either, it is so important for the schools to provide it. This school definitely supplies that.'

'This school does definitely support parents but it is up to the parents to seek it. Personally they have supported me.'

'When you look up schools in Barnet, this school is one of the top schools.'

'There is good communication and a good working relationship between parents and the school.'

'Britain is a welcoming society. The main reason is that Britain used to have a presence in Somalia and they know the system very well. Here they can get an understanding of the system because it's family. There is more understanding of the UK, unlike Holland and Denmark.'

This perception of the school by parents was also confirmed by the comments of one pupil:

'My mum guides me. My mum is a good model for me. She values education highly and completed university. I get support in my homework at home. I also get good support in school. I do well in my school and enjoy.'



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Woodmansterne Primary School – Lambeth LA



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The context

Woodmansterne Primary School is situated in Streatham Vale in the south of the borough. It is a large infant and junior school with a nursery. There are 440 pupils in the school with a further 28 full-time and 39 part-time pupils in the nursery. About 39 languages are spoken in the school. 50% of the pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, the main languages being Urdu (46 speakers), Gujarati (32 speakers), Somali (30 speakers), Punjabi (15), French (14 speakers) and Portuguese (13 speakers). This figure is very high and well above average nationally and includes children who are refugees. The school population is socially diverse and 31% of the pupils are eligible for a free school meal, a figure which is above the national average. On entry to the school, the pupils' attainments in English and mathematics are substantially below that which would be expected for children of a similar age. 9.2% of the pupils have a special educational need, which is broadly average. Of these, 1.2% has a statement for their special educational need.

Somali pupils began arriving in the school in the early 1990's following political unrest in Somali which resulted in families fleeing to Europe. Over the last few years the numbers of Somali pupils has increased at Woodmansterne as more children have arrived at the school from various European countries, or from other parts of the UK. These historical factors have impacted significantly on the Somali community in the area, on the quality of family life and as a consequence, on the progress some children are making at school.

Achievement and standards

Standards among Somali children joining the school are well below average for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal development. Almost all join with very little knowledge of English and many continue to have very limited experience of hearing and using English outside school.

A significant number have started their primary education in other countries or other schools in various parts of the UK. The pattern of achievement reflects these circumstances. Pupils take longer than average to master and consolidate the basic stages of learning in all subjects.

The value added of the school is very impressive and pupils in the school progress much higher than similar pupils nationally in maths, English and science. For example, Figure 1 shows there a higher proportion of pupils in the upper quartile (51%) compared to 25% nationally. The interquartile performance is even higher as 40% are in this range compared to 50% nationally. Only 9% are in lower quartile range making less progress compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar trends are also for maths and English in 2007 and confirming the school is progressing well its pupil between KS1 and KS2.

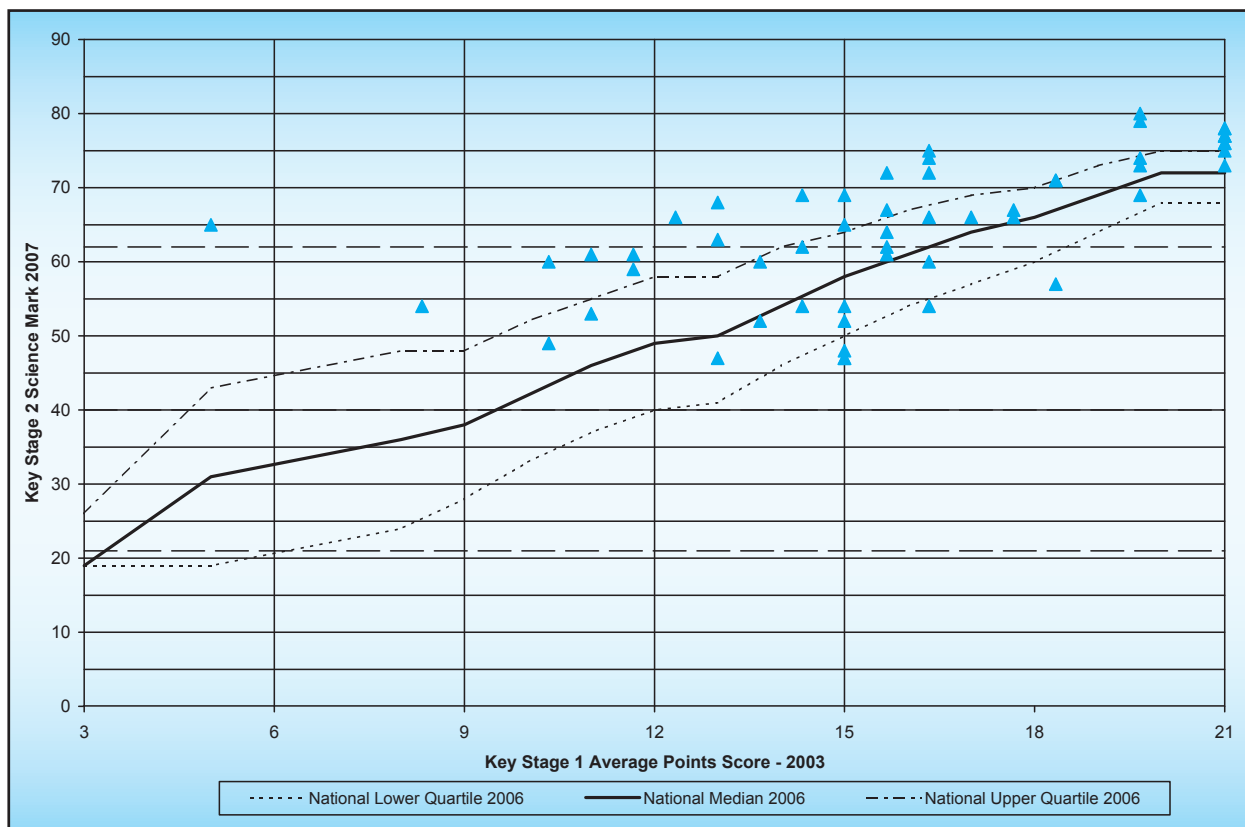
The school feels that, considering the challenges that Somali pupils face, that they progress well although standards of achievement may be below expectations for children of the same age.

The EMA teacher gave examples of how well some children are progressing:

'When..... who is now in Year 3 came into Year 1, she was very quiet and she spoke Dutch and Somali. At the end of Year 2 she was very close to getting 2a in maths and 2b/c in English. EAL children who are on to their third language will quickly fly. When she started here she was stage 1 in English fluency, she had been to nursery in Holland.'
'A child now in Year 6 who came in during February or March in Year 4, should get level 3s in SATs, he is doing OK. His sister, who left last year, joined in Year 5 and I have a feeling that she will manage level 4 in maths. It varies from family to family.'

The school's promotion of harmonious relationships enables pupils of all backgrounds to thrive in a friendly and caring environment. Excellent relationships ensure pupils have great confidence in the care and guidance offered.

Figure 7. Woodmansterne National value added median line, KS1 2003 and KS2 2007



Support and guidance

The ethos of the school is very positive and a friendly, welcoming approach by staff when visitors, new parents or children enter the school, does much to make them feel at ease.

'Relationships within the school community are very good and a strength of the school. There is a very high degree of racial harmony, with pupils from all ethnic groups playing and working happily together.' (Ofsted 2001).

The experience, knowledge and diversity of the staff in the school are invaluable in enabling children to overcome barriers to learning. The excellent leadership and high quality of its teaching are the school's most important strengths. Class teachers have a very clear understanding of the range of learning needs among the pupils and plan work in great detail to ensure that all are fully engaged and interested in their work. Teachers and assistants create a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere throughout the school, so that pupils enjoy their work, feel they can succeed and try very hard.

Pupil data is used effectively to track the progress pupils are making and their language and learning needs are identified on entry to the school and appropriate interventions planned. The adaptation of work by class teachers to meet additional learning needs is good. It ensures that pupils with learning difficulties learn consistently and develop effective relationships and social skills.

Teachers' planning is particularly strong in all aspects of English, both in literacy lessons and in other subjects. Long term planning has recently been revised to encourage a more creative and innovative approach to the curriculum. The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to learning and to pupils' personal development. It has been planned with great care to meet the needs of all pupils and to ensure equality of access and opportunity. There is an excellent range of learning and other enrichment activities. For example, at least two visits to places of interest are planned for each class every term.

The school has very high expectations of behaviour and most pupils meet them, especially in the classroom, where behaviour is very good.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the school council, which has been used to good effect in seeking and acting upon their opinions about the development of the school. The excellent relationships fostered by all adults ensure that pupils' views are taken into account informally as well as formally. The pupils speak candidly about their own experiences of school and the challenges they have had to overcome:

'When I started here I wasn't speaking English and my teacher was teaching me. Everything was brand new. It took me two years to learn to read and write.'

'I started here in Year 3. I was at Richard Atkins before that. I speak Somali at home and I was born in Somalia.'

'I started here in Year 5. I was born in Somalia. I went to London and then to Scotland and I started at school there in Year 4. Then I came to this school.'

A child now in Year 3 had also experienced many changes of school:

'I was in Granton from Year 2 but before that I was in Leicester and then we moved to Northampton. I have been to four schools.'

Only one out of the six children in the group was born in the UK and attended the school's nursery.

All pupils interviewed speak Somali as well as English and some speak a third (European) language. They identify themselves as Somali.

An articulate Year 6 pupil had this to say:

'I speak English and I speak Somali, but I think I am mostly Somali. I went back there last year and I was scared. I saw lots of people with guns. It was a nice place, kind people, lots of animals, big houses.' Would she like to live there? *'If there was a president and it was run properly. If the war stopped I would think about living there.'*

The children enjoy school, particularly clubs: cricket, football, Indian dance, and art. They like the teachers and the way they teach and enjoy the chance to go on school trips.

At the end of the school day, Somali pupils attend a Madrassar until 6.30pm. Some children reported that they completed their homework in bed at around 9pm or after their evening meal. An older sibling might help with homework but the children felt that their mother's lack of understanding of the English language did not enable them to help. They did not talk about school to their parents and of the children interviewed, only one had a father who was working (in Tanzania) whilst all the rest are unemployed.

The school employs a learning mentor whose role is to try to remove barriers to learning, she explains:

'Children underachieve for a variety of reasons, could be economic, social, family bereavements, learning difficulties in general. Children are referred to me by class teachers via the inclusion manager, we look at an issue together and identify needs, then put a programme in place.'

The learning mentor gave the following example of a Year 4 Somali pupil who she had worked with:

'He had great difficulty settling into Year 4 and making friends. One issue was that if someone upset him then his reaction was to hit them. He would stand his ground. It could be that the war in Somalia had affected him, his father was absent. His relationship with his mother was turbulent as he would try to take on the role of the father. When his dad returned home he perked up, but when he left he went back. I thought we had a good relationship but then he seemed to be ignoring me. When he was with me he was enthusiastic and he would leave really wanting to achieve his targets, but something seemed to prevent him. I never got to meet his mother, she didn't turn up to our meetings and now he has moved to another school.... I think he did learn about respect and I think we would have got him there had he stayed.'

The learning mentor and a teaching assistant touched on the importance of having black role models as part of the school staff:

'In society we have these stigmas where people put you into certain brackets and you just need a positive influence in your life. Boys especially need positive father figures. Boys idolise their fathers... if dad's doing this I am going to do it. Dad is like a superstar, they are pivotal.'

The school has an excellent relationship with parents and very good partnerships with the local community. Parents have very positive views of the school. They were particularly happy with the quality of teaching and with their children's achievements. Parents said that their children were happy in school.

Discussions with parents reveal further challenges not only as members of the Somalian community but also as families in difficulties. One of their main concerns is that their children become fluent in English and integrate into the British way of life. Parents view themselves as African first, then Somali. This is in contrast to the children who see themselves as Somali, whereas parents view their children as British.

A Somali mother of three children, whose eldest daughter is now studying at Lambeth College, was anxious that her daughter had some knowledge of Somalia, even though she did not expect the family to return there in the future:

'Our children see themselves as British. I took my daughter back home to Somalia... she liked it. She speaks just a little Somali at home. The children there are very different. In Somalia the girls wouldn't work, they would stay at home and look after the children. Here there are more opportunities.'

What these opportunities might look like are different for pupils and parents. For example three boys aspired to become footballers, two pupils had not thought about what they might become, whilst only one girl saw herself going to university. One parent commented:

'We would like our children to become doctors... but we don't have a fixed view.'

Parents are content with the information they receive in the form of reports on the progress their children are making and what they are being taught. When asked how they helped their children at home, parents said that they did try to help their children with homework but also observed:

'Some parents do not know how to help. It is the language that is the issue, they might understand how to do the maths but can't explain it in English. They need help with the language. The school is the main teacher. The children do not have enough language and neither do the parents.'

Parents felt that Lambeth should invest in helping parents learn to speak English. They felt that this teaching of parents should go on during school time:

'Lambeth should support this... in teaching... if you understand the language you can learn other things.'

The school provides a translation service for meetings with parents, especially when new children are inducted to the school. The EMA teacher describes the process:

'Parents who put their children's names down for places, are offered an interview and we provide an interpreter if needed. At the induction meeting, we help parents to complete forms and I will carry out a short assessment with the child, for example 'can you draw me a picture' or 'can you write your name' or 'can you write in Somali?' Sometimes for casual admissions I might give them a short maths test and some reading. There may be issues around free school meals and while the interpreter is there I deal with any social/welfare issues. We phase in children who have never been to school before. We show the family around the school, discuss school uniform and provide them with a welcome booklet in their home language using the Mantra Lingua translation software. Children who start school in the nursery or reception classes receive a home visit from foundation stage staff.'

A parent governor talked knowledgeably about the school's induction processes for new children with English as an additional language.

'As a governor, my priorities are to see every child happy, staff happy and try to ensure that the support is available. I have been in school monitoring teaching assistants working with EAL children. I noticed that they were not holding the class up. I have been amazed at the number of languages that are spoken here. I am very impressed by the support here; children are made to feel so welcome. I went out on a trip yesterday and I noticed that children are paired: one child fluent in English and one not, a lot of thought goes into it beforehand. I find the preparation they (the teachers) put in before the children start school, enable the children to settle in and they are very happy here.'

The parent governor is sensitive to the challenges posed when parents cannot speak English and she comments:

'Parent partnership is crucial now as teachers do not have the time to give individual attention, so it is vital for parents to know how they can help their children. The whole point of school is to be community focused so we need to make things available. As a parent I make a point of finding out what is going on, but what about those who cannot speak English or are very shy? I see the teachers really trying hard to engage parents to come into school, they really do their best. Anything that helps parents communicate with the school will be good for their children. Everyone needs help and you can never get enough help or support. We are prioritising the children but the other part of the partnership is the parents.'

Teaching and learning

Excellent teaching was observed in a Year 6 class where the teacher's skilled questioning using a KS2/KS3 transition unit text, included a wide range of pupils with EAL, SEN, both boys and girls. She clarified any misunderstandings and developed pupils' vocabulary as the lesson progressed. The lesson included many opportunities for pupils to be 'actively' learning and to use language in an appropriate context.

Within this Year 6 class of 29 pupils, only four pupils do not speak another language and whilst this is not unusual in Lambeth schools, the range of different countries of origin: Sri Lanka, Poland, Pakistan, Romania, Nigeria, Somalia, France, Cyprus, Bangladesh, Congo, Portugal, Kosovo, India, Ghana, Albania, make it quite unique. Some pupils have joined the school since Year 4 and there are three pupils with statements of special educational need. This diversity presents wonderful opportunities for all the school community, but also many challenges. Teachers are able to draw upon this diversity to support the children's understanding and respect for other cultures and the school is a haven of peace and tolerance.

However, the challenge presented to teachers is great, as they seek to include children from very different backgrounds, cultures, languages, religion and lifestyles and prepare them for life as UK citizens and to meet a range of targets in core subjects.

The school has used a range of strategies to support pupils with EAL and is always seeking new ways of working. A Year 6 teacher reflected on this topic:

'We tried setting pupils in English but of course, they need good models for English speaking so it didn't work well. Families with supportive parents just fly... one father taught himself English and took such an interest in the children's progress. His daughter kept quiet until she could speak English well and then she really took off.'

Pupils who enter the school in Year 6 are a particular concern to this teacher:

'With the speed and pace I go at, it's a matter of planning something for them and as a teacher I feel so frustrated when I look at them and feel guilty that I didn't have time. In Year 6 we have so much to cover.'

When asked what might help, the teacher responded thus:

'Induction: time to adjust, perhaps they could just come in the mornings and be in a little group. Time to talk and find their way. Not just Somali pupils, others too. But there is an oral tradition in Somalia. It might be easier lower down the school, but the pressures of testing, league tables, restrict how much we can do. I have to prepare all children for their secondary schools. There needs to be some consideration of the local context. The pressures on Year 6. I am bound by the SATs.'

Teachers were asked which subjects Somali pupils enjoy. One teacher responded thus:

'They seem to enjoy science – the experiments, they want to learn more and question, they feel more on the same level as the rest of the class because no-one knows the answers. Although shy about their home language, they can be persuaded to share. Children of this age do not like to be different – they just want to be the same as everyone else.'

'Maths: Pupils can cope with basic numerical skills but the language needed often limits them. Perhaps translations would help. We put up the vocabulary around the room, but if they don't recognise a written form of their own language that doesn't help.'

'English: Boosting the value of learning English should be a priority. It will give parents access to much more. Perhaps parents could be encouraged to pair up and befriend other parents in the playground. Sometimes the culture doesn't encourage this however, despite some mums wanting to take this up.'

Curriculum

The development of pupils' cultural understanding is at the centre of the school and the curriculum. Pupils firmly understand their own cultures and how cultures can be different. The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to learning and to pupils' personal development. It has been planned with great care to meet the needs of all pupils and to ensure equality of access and opportunity. Indeed, the children themselves have been involved in generating the questions about what they will learn, for example. *'What do we want to know about?'* The school has planned a curriculum based around these questions and careful thought has been given to mapping out themes across the school using the National Curriculum rather than the QCA schemes of work which were considered to be:

'Too limiting... we wanted more visual input, especially as we have so many children with EAL and our focus is on skills and knowledge. We identify topics that can be taught with a history – geography environment, or science/health related area. Our planning identifies specific vocabulary and language structures. Literacy is planned on a two week cycle with one week focus on speaking and listening and one week on reading and writing.'

The entire curriculum has been worked out in this way. It starts with us asking the children who are going to be doing the work what they would like to find out and that question may last up to two weeks. We ensure that the National Curriculum content is in there and it is underpinned with the six keys to learning which include reflection, planning, presenting ideas, and working co-operatively. At the end of every term we hold concerts and exhibitions to share our work. Children acted as curators to show parents and visitors their history work on display, confidently explaining what they had learned.'

The assistant headteacher devised the curriculum with colleagues.

'Our curriculum is very structured and planned carefully and we create time for staff to come together collectively to discuss EAL and speaking and listening strategies.'

The headteacher reinforced this point by adding:

'We put a high focus on speaking and listening through role play, hot-seating, speaking and listening partners and scaffolding structured talk and repetition of language. The make up of the school is more diverse than it has ever been so we have developed whole school approaches to speaking and listening and EAL.'

Children receive reminders about what they will be learning each term via letters or postcards sent to their homes during school holidays. This is valued by children and parents, especially those sent out to children just starting at the school. An example of a postcard sent to each child entering the reception class reads:

'We hope you are having a lovely holiday! We can't wait for you to start in reception. Your first day will be on Friday 6th January and you will be in Miss X's class. Next term we are going to be learning about jungles.'

The letter then sets a challenge for the child (and their parent/carer) to find out about an animal that lives in a jungle and drawing a picture of it on the back of the postcard to bring in to school. Clearly this presents a challenge to parents and pupils who have English as an additional language, but nevertheless, where translations are available, it effectively engages parents in a partnership with the school.

Teachers use opportunities very well to explore and support the gaining of knowledge of other cultures, often through first hand experience. The school understands the cultures within its community and uses them fully as a resource for learning. For example during a whole school assembly the story of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' was re-told by pupils and members of staff, drawing on the languages spoken, eg. Urdu/Gujarat, Swahili, Polish, Arabic, Somalian and Polish. Pupils were surprised to learn that there are forty different languages spoken in the school and were thrilled to hear them celebrated. Another very good example of how the school is using local expertise to enhance the learning of its pupils is in the Indian dance classes which involve pupils in learning the meaning of hand, eye and foot movements in classical Indian dance.

The school was recently awarded the Gold Arts mark for its emphasis on high quality visual and performing arts activities.

Conclusion

The development of pupils' cultural understanding is at the centre of the school and the curriculum. Pupils firmly understand their own cultures and how cultures can be different. The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to learning and to pupils' personal development. It has been planned with great care to meet the needs of all pupils and to ensure equality of access and opportunity.

The school has a curriculum which is specifically tailored to the school community, many of whom have EAL needs with an emphasis on literacy – speaking and listening, specific vocabulary and language structures.

The ethos of the school is very positive and a friendly, welcoming approach by staff when visitors, new parents or children enter the school does much to make them feel at ease.

The school has an excellent relationship with parents and very good partnerships with the local community.

SECTION 5: COMMENTARY: GOOD PRACTICE FOR RAISING ACHIEVEMENT

Introduction

The educational underachievement of black students in British schools has seldom been absent from the achievement debate in the last decade. Yet the achievement of pupils of Somali heritage 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. This report seeks to identify the strategies which are successfully raising the achievement of Somali children in London schools, sometimes at a faster rate than that of their peers, and to disseminate the key messages to others.

Key characteristics of the schools in the study

All ten schools selected for the study are in London, both inner and outer. Four are primary and six are secondary schools. All have a high proportion of pupils from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds. One secondary school is described as Britain's most ethnically diverse school. The schools serve areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage, which often include housing estates accommodating refugee families among a diverse population. In all these schools the number of other languages spoken – African, Asian and European – ranges from 39 to 70 languages, so that a very high proportion of their pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL).

The schools in the study were selected on the basis of recommendations from their local authority as schools with a strong and successful commitment to working with Somali parents and communities and a common desire to raise the attainment of all their pupils. Key criteria for the selection of schools were as follows:

- Good or strongly improving standards of achievement by minority ethnic pupils as well as the whole school.
- A headteacher and/or senior managers who understand ethnic minority achievement (EMA) issues and have a clear vision for the school with respect to inclusion and minority ethnic achievement.
- Good evidence in progressing pupils based on previous value added data.
- Strong links with the community.

Although there has been a Somali presence in Britain since the 1960s many Somalis came to Britain in the 1990s, fleeing war and disorder in Somalia. In recent years there has been a steady influx of Somali families from other African and European countries in which these families first took refuge. For parents and children these moves bring all the difficulties of settling in to a strange culture, a different education system and of acquiring a working knowledge of yet another foreign language. The evidence is that once Somali children reach a competent level of English, they forge ahead in their learning and can reach the highest standards.

Common features of the schools' responses to these challenges

In the face of such difficult challenges, these schools show a consistency of response to the most salient needs. All the schools create an ethos that is above all **inclusive**. Whether it is a primary school with up to 500 pupils or a secondary with over 1300 pupils, headteachers lead their staff in creating an ethos of the school as a 'family'.

There is an attention to the needs of each individual child that creates trust and respect among parents and a sense of belonging among children. At one secondary school the leadership *'has developed a sense of family which includes a diverse community of people, under a common vision of learning for all'*. In a primary school, re-formed from two failing schools, the new leadership created a school which recognises, supports and celebrates the diversity of its pupils and an environment where there is mutual respect and strong, trusting relationships, and where pupils now achieve very highly.

All schools take strong action to **help children acquire fluency in English** as soon as possible, recognising that this is the first barrier to achievement that must be overcome. All schools choose their staff with care from a wide diversity of ethnic minority backgrounds, so that teachers and teaching assistants, as well as other school staff, provide good role models and can show understanding of their pupils' difficulties.

All schools make particular efforts to **talk to parents, to treat them with respect and as partners in educating their children**. They make sure that the curriculum embraces the school's cultural diversity and they celebrate cultural achievements and historic events, which makes parents and children feel that their lives and experience are valued.

As a result, **increasing numbers of pupils in these schools are raising their achievement and reaching high standards**. In one primary school serving a deprived estate with a significant Somali population, there has been a dramatic rise in achievement over the last few years. Pupils enter the school with well below average starting points, yet in 2007 94% of pupils in the cohort achieved a level 4 or above in English and science. This is an impressive result as English is not their mother tongue.

In a secondary school with a high proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, including Somali, the arrival of the current headteacher in 2004 signalled the start of an impressive journey of improvement which has seen the pupils' achievement at GCSE rise from 27% five or more A*-C grades to 70% overall in 2007 and 100% for the Somali cohort.

All the schools in the study show **rising trends of pupil achievement, sometimes well above the national trends**. A few schools have been outstandingly successful in doing this. Their work, together with aspects of the work of all schools, is highlighted here.

Engaging parental support to create inclusive, community schools

This stands out as a major aspect of schools' success. One primary school, described as *'a uniquely cohesive community with a common vision'* serves a vast, rented-accommodation housing estate into which many Somali families have moved.

'The school breaks down the barriers which exist on the local estate where children play but are made to feel unwelcome by some residents. We work hard at not defining people here, breaking them down in terms of language, colour, belief or background, but we do say: If this child's progress is very different from others we need to know why.' The school treats Somali parents as equal partners. This positive relationship has been founded on direct contact between parents and the headteacher, senior managers, the teaching staff and the chair of governors. All place a high value on children's culture and home language. Parents are positively encouraged to join in the life of the school.

Parents respond well to this approach. They commented: *It is an inclusive school, not just for Somali students it is for everyone.'* They feel the school is a safe and happy place where their children are learning well, and they respect the authority of the school and headteacher.

A secondary school, where building the relationships between parents and school has been a key feature of the school's approach, recognises that perhaps the most critical task facing the children of immigrants is to reconcile the culture of home with the dominant British culture. The headteacher said *'We make assumptions in school that our parents understand the British education system. That is ridiculous. We have 30+ meetings a year for parents. My view is make no assumptions. If we want parents to support, we have to help them. Now our mothers are a key part of our family.'* She sees her next task as *'to reach out more to the wider community.'*

Many schools have a home-school liaison worker, often a Somali speaker. One secondary school has recruited a Somali student support worker who is also a family learning co-ordinator. She speaks four languages including Somali, and the confidence her work with families *'has given the Somali community and parents is remarkable.'* In a large primary school, the liaison role is taken by a learning mentor. He is also a youth worker in the local community and has learned enough Somali to be able to greet parents. He acknowledges that *'it takes time to gain the confidence of pupils and parents. ... But this is a comfortable school, we discuss ways of trying to make people feel at home.'* He has visited Somalia and other African countries and works to ensure that parents and pupils are carefully introduced to school procedures and practices.

Local authorities also support schools in reaching out to ethnic minority communities. One north London authority has established and maintained five Somali supplementary schools and has created links across services, including mental health services for refugees. This strengthening of the partnership between the Somali community and the authority has led to the appointment of between six and nine Somali school governors and three secondary schools have a permanent link worker. A primary link worker to work across schools has also been appointed.

In a south London authority, a primary school with a significant Somali population held a very successful conference in 2007 on Families Learning Together. It was held on a Saturday to enable as many parents as possible to attend and a creche was provided. The conference was part of a long-term plan to raise standards at the school by working in partnership with parents. Ten pupils opened the conference in their first language and the speakers included the authority's Director of Children and Young People's Services, to emphasise the importance the authority gives to partnership with parents. Parental responsibility was discussed and how to model parents' own respect for education at home with their children. Other topics included how to help with homework, managing behaviour, nutrition and health. Many parents expressed the importance of the school providing lessons in basic English skills. Since the conference the school has planned family learning in literacy for a targeted group. This school also has a volunteer programme for parents who want to help in the school, for example by reading with learners or supporting small groups.

Somali parents, like most African parents, value education very highly as the way for their children to better their lives. Parents who were interviewed said: *'Education is very, very important. The reason is they need to get a better life for themselves. Without education you cannot make any steps to improve your life.'*

'To have a good education carries a high social prestige in Somali society. It also provides the opportunity to secure a good job and to make a good contribution to the community.'

One comment brought to mind the difficulties faced by Somali parents, often single mothers. *'Somali families do care about education but some don't show it. Living in a different society is a matter of balance. Sometimes you have too many other things to understand.'*

Many Somali parents pay for their children to have extra tuition after school and at weekends.

Raising achievement among Somali pupils

In all the schools there is evidence of continuing upward trends in the progress of Somali pupils, as marked by their attainment in key stage tests and GCSE examinations. Most Somali pupils enter primary school with levels of attainment well below average but often make rapid progress. For example, in a south London primary school serving an area of socio-economic disadvantage and where Somali pupils comprise 7% of the school roll, the Key Stage 1 tests in 2005 showed that an average of 62% of pupils reached the expected level 2b or above while at Key Stage 2 82% reached level 4 or above. This is an indicator of the value the school adds. In a north London secondary school, where 9% of pupils on roll are Somali, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 and at GCSE have risen steadily since 2004. By 2007 the attainment of Somali pupils was 89% at KS3 level 5+ in English and mathematics and 95% in science, in all three subjects well above the levels reached by all pupils. At GCSE 75% of the Somali pupils in the cohort attained 5+ A*-C grades including English and mathematics. This was 25% above the average of the whole cohort.

Key factors in raising achievement

The most outstanding rise at GCSE was achieved in a north London school where the percentage of the cohort achieving 5+ A*-C grades rose from 27% (20% for the smaller Somali cohort) in 2004 to 70% overall (100% for the Somali cohort) in 2007. Somali pupils overtook their peers in 2006 with 80% attaining 5+ A*-Cs. This dramatic improvement – for all pupils not only those of Somali background – in what was a failing school, is built on several factors. Firstly, there is zero tolerance of poor behaviour and an unrelenting belief that *'self-centred, disruptive behaviour should not be allowed to damage the education of our students.'*

It is also due to an extremely effective regime of data analysis and management. The headteacher's vision is that *'Data should be used as a lever for change.'* Each student is set challenging but realistic targets and their progress is closely monitored. The most effective teachers are deployed with intervention groups. Pupils are placed in sets and these are changed at the end of six-week modules in English and mathematics, in the light of progress. The Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) team is building strong support for pupils with EAL through a training programme to equip all teachers and teaching assistants with EAL teaching skills. All teachers are seen as responsible for improving pupils' language skills.

All schools collect test and assessment data which teachers are expected to use in curriculum and lesson planning. The difference in the effectiveness in the use of data is one of the characteristics which defines outstanding schools. This is not a matter of monitoring pupil progress, since all good schools do this. Nor is it one of offering support and intervention such as booster classes or withdrawal for one-to-one support, since these too are standard practice in many schools. It lies more in the expectation that assessment, intervention and target setting **will** result in higher achievement, and a relentless pursuit of that goal with each pupil.

The one essential feature that is shared by the most successful primary and secondary schools is **outstanding leadership by the headteacher**. Headteachers are described as *'inspirational'*, *'visionary'* and *'outstanding'* and their leadership is at the heart of the school's ethos, shared by staff, pupils and parents. In some schools they have been appointed in recent years, on occasion to head previously failing schools. Their leadership has been the driving force behind change, new expectations and inspirational success. In one primary school the newly-appointed headteacher had to overcome prejudice and negative attitudes to pupils by some staff, no longer in the school, who believed that educational failure was the fault of the children and parents. She has managed change very well, taking with her long-serving and newly-recruited teachers. Her vision for the school is to value the cultural identity of the children and parents. Children in the school now thrive.

Another factor in schools' success in raising the achievement of its pupils of minority ethnic, and Somali, background is how they **help pupils to acquire a working knowledge of English as rapidly as possible**. All good schools assess children's language needs on entry and plan for their continuing support and monitor their progress. The most successful schools recognise the importance of talk in language development. One primary school received substantial local authority help from advisers and teaching consultants who have taught teachers strategies to develop oral skills across the curriculum. Children are matched with talk partners who provide good language models. Teachers plan oral activities as exploratory work when children work in groups. Such activities lead on to guided talk which models structures needed for writing, so that children learn specific sentence structures to be used orally and in writing. Their progress is tracked and the leadership team meets weekly to discuss concerns. This whole-school approach to English language teaching has resulted in a significant shift in terms of the accountability of teachers for their pupils' progress.

In secondary schools, the entry of pupils to school at non-standard times, sometimes speaking very little or no English, makes individual assessment and good strategic planning of intervention essential. Some schools have very effective EAL/EMA teams and procedures, who may offer pastoral care as well as language support. Typical of this holistic approach is that of a south London secondary school where *'the level of care and commitment to EAL students by the EMAG team is exceptional. Each student on entry to the school has an interview with the head of EMAG who aims to tease out their story because we need to be able to provide emotional support if they need it.'* Information sheets are passed to the head of year, who also interviews new entrants, and to members of staff. Students are tested in reading, mathematics and spelling. All the information is used to place them in an appropriate tutor group, integrating them with pupils from other cultures and backgrounds as well as those from their own.

Whether schools delegate responsibility to an EAL or EMA team, it remains the fact that **the most successful schools engage all teachers in the responsibility of developing pupils' language**. This is even more effective when specific training is provided as part of teachers' continuing professional development.

Overall, the evidence presented here enables the conclusion to be drawn that the schools in this study demonstrate the many ways in which they work to support pupils, from all ethnic minority backgrounds as well as Somali children, through a wide range of imaginative and inclusive strategies. Their success in raising the achievement of their pupils is a tribute to their vision, and to the very hard work that is needed to make it a reality. Each school has its own character and emphases but it is clear, from the evidence of the study, that they have common characteristics which underpin their success. These include:

- Strong, inspirational leadership by the headteacher supported by a capable management team;
- Close links with parents and increasing community support, which earn the schools the trust and respect of parents;
- Effective support to pupils for whom English is an additional language, by trained and experienced teachers;
- Detailed, rigorous examination of performance undertaken regularly and followed by action that leads to improvement;
- Teaching and learning of high quality informed by assessment of performance;
- A broad curriculum which incorporates aspects of pupils' own culture and adds relevance and self esteem to pupils' view of themselves;
- Teachers and staff from ethnic minority backgrounds who provide role models for pupils and who understand their needs.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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Conclusions

The aims of the research were:

- To study the achievement of Somali heritage pupils.
- To examine the school experiences of Somali heritage pupils.
- To discover factors which contribute to the success of Somali heritage pupils in schools.

The main findings of the research show that:

- There are over 29,000 Somali pupils attending London schools in 28 LAs. No data was reported from 4 London LAs. We have not also collected data from nursery schools. It is estimated there is over 35,000 Somali pupils in 32 London LAs.
- 86% of Somali pupils in primary schools and 80% in secondary schools are eligible for free school meals. The data confirms a high level of deprivation in the Somali community.
- Many Somali in London schools came to Britain in the 1990s, fleeing war and disorder in Somalia.
- Language is a barrier in accessing national curriculum and about 87% of Somali pupils are not fluent in English. However, our research evidence also show Somali pupils are highly motivated and once Somali children reach a competent level of English they do better than English, Scottish and Welsh.

- There has been a substantial and impressive rise in performance in the case study schools. In one primary school serving a deprived estate with a significant Somali population, there has been a dramatic rise in achievement over the last few years. Pupils enter the school with well below average starting points, yet in 2007 94% of pupils in the cohort achieved a level 4 or above in English and science. This is an impressive result as English is not their mother tongue. In a secondary school with a high proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, including Somali, the arrival of the current headteacher in 2004 signalled the start of an impressive journey of improvement which has seen the pupils' achievement at GCSE rise from 27% five or more A*-C grades to 70% overall in 2007 and 100% for the Somali cohort.
- The value-added score of the case study schools which measures the progress pupils make between key stages, is very impressive and pupils in the schools progress much higher than similar pupils nationally.

There are a number of reasons why Somali heritage pupils have made huge improvements in the in the case study schools. The main findings of the research identified the following factors and key areas of good practice where schools were successful in raising achievement.

- **Leadership and management:** At all the case study schools the ethos of the headteacher and senior managers was effectively communicated to the school community, including support staff, governors, parents and students. All school leaders managed change and turbulence effectively, challenged negative attitudes and refused to accept educational failure. Vision and ethos was communicated by senior managers in both overt and more implicit ways in the schools. The physical environment, with positive images and an orderly structure, contributed to this communication. A more tangible quality was the respect shown by staff to students and parents that enabled pupils to express high aspirations for themselves and regard for staff at the schools. For Somali pupils, this was communicated in terms of valuing their own cultural identity which was fostered through the general ethos and particular structures at the schools, including diverse staff, sensitive use of learning mentors and making links with community organisations. All the schools were in the process of developing positive relationships with stakeholders and the wider community.

Leadership style in the case study schools had shifted from a centralised model towards a more distributive one, enabling staff to demonstrate the skills and understanding to deal with more complex management and leadership tasks. Whilst the pace of change was speedy in all the schools, staff appreciated the support they received from senior managers.

- **Inclusion strategy:** An important aspect of the vision and ethos at the schools was the notion that all pupils could achieve both academically and socially. Robust support systems, such as the presence of counsellors and learning mentors were the manifestation of this. Learning mentors at the primary schools were key individuals in implementing the inclusion strategy and had made a significant contribution in making community links with the schools.
- **Innovative pedagogy:** The inclusion policies in the school were most evident within pedagogical approaches. Where teaching was most successful, innovative approaches to pedagogy and curriculum were apparent. Most particularly this was demonstrated at one secondary school, where the supported curriculum classes used primary trained teachers, who taught smaller groups in a more concrete and holistic way. Other innovative initiatives included the talk partner programme at one primary school and a more

integrated approach to the curriculum in Key Stage 2. Approaches at another primary school included the teaching of key skills within all curriculum areas and the adoption of a more personalised approach to teaching and learning.

- **EAL support:** EAL teachers at the schools clearly contributed to raising levels of achievement. At one secondary school, the EAL teacher worked closely with the English department and focused on written English. The most effective practice was evident where EAL teachers conducted robust assessments with pupils and kept a register with detailed information concerning pupils' first language, level of fluency in English and other relevant data. This data was regularly updated so that pupils' progress could be tracked. Additionally, the communication of these assessments to teachers and support staff enabled pupils to be supported more effectively in their learning.
- **Diversity of staff:** Many schools had successfully recruited staff and governors who reflected the local community. Bilingual staff at all the schools were important in communicating with parents and pupils, enabling pupils to relate more effectively to adults and other students. Similarly, Somali learning mentors had made successful links with the local community, which contributed to raising levels of trust in the school by parents.
- **Parental engagement:** Somali parents value education very highly. Parents at all the schools expressed their concern that their children receive a good education, whilst retaining their own cultural identities. The support of parents and engagement of the local community contributed to raising levels of achievement for pupils. The case study research indicated that this was a particular strength at a primary school where a conference had been organised which focused on enabling parents to understand more about the school system in the UK. Parental responsibility was also highlighted, with advice on managing behaviour, nutrition and health. The school volunteer programme at the school encouraged parents to develop skills to support their own employment opportunities. The engagement of parents enabled a mutual trust and understanding to develop between school and home and enabled the construction of a bridge between the two environments for pupils.
- **Use of data:** High quality assessment, tracking and target setting procedures, for individuals and groups are the features of all the schools. The use of robust data from a range of tests and assessments were key in ensuring that all pupils in the case study schools had appropriate targets so that lessons could be planned accordingly. Observations of teaching and learning by senior managers and local authority advisors also contributed to significant improvements in teachers' subject knowledge and impacted positively on teaching and learning.
- **Use of heritage languages and celebration of cultural diversity:** These schools are good in celebrating the cultural diversity of all groups in Refugee Week, Black History Month, Somali Independence Day and international evenings. In addition there is a good range of mother tongue teaching provision in collaboration with Somali community groups and others. Schools have excellent links with supplementary schools.
- **An inclusive curriculum:** Somali pupils and parents sometimes feel that the media presents a negative image of their culture and country because of the war in Somalia. These successful schools are creative in their attempt to reverse these perceptions. They are sensitive to the identities of pupils and make strong efforts to include Somali history, languages, religion and culture. These schools without doubt have created an environment where students and parents feel their cultural and individual identities are respected and valued.

Recommendations:

Local Authority (LA)

1. The LA should work together with the case study schools to share good practice with all London schools. Attention should be given to offering appropriate training/ consultancy support, using staff in case study schools to disseminate good practice.
2. The LA should continue to use data effectively to identify underachieving groups and to improve teachers and management awareness in understanding the roots of African culture in general and in particular Somali culture.
3. Support schools with high numbers of Somali children to develop a more relevant and culturally sensitive curriculum for Somali pupils.
4. Develop extensive Somali English language supplementary schools for parents and pupils through extended school programmes.
5. Robust education programmes for parents at the school, including ESOL classes and basic skills courses to enable parents to more fully support their children's education.
6. Schools need allocated EMAG funding for raising achievement of Somali pupils and the LA funding formula needs to take into account underachieving groups such as Somali pupils.

Schools

To help raise the achievement of Somali children, schools should ensure that:

7. Performance data is used to monitor and guide pupils' progress.
8. A range of strategies are used to improve the English language skills of pupils at different levels.
9. Somali bilingual staff are used effectively to build links between schools and Somali families.
10. Aspects of the cultural heritage of Somali pupils are reflected in the curriculum.
11. Further steps are taken to encourage Somali parents to become more involved in school life including as school governors so they can support their children's education.
12. Organise Somali pupils' and parents after school English classes with bilingual teachers.

Somali parents and communities

13. Somali volunteers should assist teachers in the classroom, especially in language support for new arrivals.
14. Somali volunteers should encourage parents and community leaders to be involved in the school's governing body.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families

15. There should be statutory, DCSF led national collection of Somali data from schools through the school census.
16. The DCSF should introduce targeted funding through the London Challenge to support schools and LAs to address underachievement of Somali pupils.

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Somali Pupil Attainment (All Pupils) in Selected London LAs in 2007, KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Total	
Cohort																														
Primary	1111	844	272	559	722	1910	303	29	771	913	811	518	1332	818	651	969	234	1125	214	801	749	2296	281	443	8	145	368	1006	20203	
Secondary	472	361	80	327	319	944	105	6	333	491	329	324	583	479	363	422	48	531	48	258	202	992	182	177	6	30	97	329	8838	
Special/PRU	14	17	7	5	16	44	8	1	10	20	12	9	8	16	16	20	1	22	4	20	8	46	0	9	0	2	6	8	349	
Total	1597	1222	359	891	1057	2898	415	36	1114	1424	1152	851	1923	1313	1030	1411	283	1684	266	1082	982	3374	397	629	14	177	471	1343	29395	
Key Stage 1																														
Cohort	143	110	34	80	111	262	46	7	106	110	99	89	178	101	66	139	29	147	22	117	99	323	39	42	2	18	49	116	2684	
Reading 2+	71%	74%	68%	80%	65%	65%	72%	100%	65%	75%	78%	82%	74%	62%	55%	74%	72%	79%	86%	68%	71%	63%	28%	57%	0%	56%	76%	71%	69%	
Writing 2+	68%	70%	62%	78%	60%	61%	72%	86%	61%	77%	68%	78%	64%	67%	52%	66%	79%	70%	82%	63%	66%	53%	21%	52%	0%	44%	71%	32%	63%	
Maths 2+	84%	80%	82%	83%	74%	75%	87%		80%	86%	86%	88%	82%	81%	77%	84%	83%	82%	96%	80%	78%	71%	28%	74%	0%	72%	82%	80%	79%	
Key Stage 2																														
Cohort	140	94	34	88	79	241	32	2	78	87	91	86	140	97	68	352	25	111	21	80	66	246	31	52	0	13	34	122	2510	
English 4+	47%	54%	65%	63%	48%	63%	66%	50%	53%	64%	66%	61%	72%	64%	53%	51%	84%	60%	67%	58%	55%	62%	42%	71%	0%	69%	41%	47%	58%	
Maths 4+	45%	51%	65%	57%	54%	56%	66%	50%	55%	61%	65%	73%	71%	68%	62%	48%	72%	67%	76%	53%	52%	63%	36%	58%	0%	69%	38%	45%	57%	
Science 4+	58%	69%	79%	69%	59%	69%	81%	50%	68%	82%	70%	76%	81%	84%	75%	62%	88%	74%	86%	65%	68%	71%	42%	73%	0%	77%	47%	66%	69%	
Key Stage 3																														
Cohort	86	67	7	70	63	141	14	1	65	82	53	60	101	77	46	241	4	107	8	52	28	171	13	28	2	10	14	73	1684	
English 5+	40%	60%	57%	43%	37%	49%	43%	100%	9%	40%	41%	47%	58%	61%	50%	40%	100%	52%	38%	35%	26%	60%	39%	54%	50%	40%	50%	43%	46%	
Maths 5+	47%	56%	29%	59%	40%	56%	36%	100%	25%	43%	38%	48%	63%	64%	52%	45%	100%	48%	38%	35%	33%	62%	15%	57%	50%	40%	43%	47%	49%	
Science 5+	37%	55%	29%	56%	31%	46%	29%	100%	17%	38%	43%	41%	49%	61%	46%	35%	100%	41%	38%	31%	32%	53%	15%	43%	50%	30%	43%	38%	42%	
GCSE																														
Cohort	67	39	5	42	59	110	25	3	38	63	32	73	67	53	48	53	7	110	5	38	20	144	15	31	0	4	18	67	1236	
5 A*-C	28%	69%	40%	52%	34%	47%	16%	33%	39%	35%	56%	45%	42%	40%	60%	36%	57%	53%	20%	40%	30%	41%	0%	42%		0%	39%	45%	42%	
5 A*- C inc E&M	15%	54%	20%	36%	24%	28%	12%	0%	26%	27%	31%	19%	31%	32%	35%	21%	29%	23%	0%	24%	10%	29%	0%	19%		0%	39%	33%	26%	



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