

# Raising The Achievement of White Working Class Pupils

## **School Strategies**

## Acknowledgements

This research was commissioned by the London Borough of Lambeth in the light of the growing national concern about the low attainment of White British children from low income backgrounds. It is hoped that the findings will be of value to policy makers, schools and practitioners.

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- Christopher Ashley-Jones, Headteacher, Hitherfield Primary School
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## Section 1: Introduction

### 1. Background to the Study: A review of previous research

This literature review is concerned with developing an understanding of White British working class attainment and some of the factors that have impacted on attainment in different ways and at varying levels.

Underachievement is a major problem in schools serving a disadvantaged inner city community. Some of the lowest levels of achievement are to be found in these areas (Mortimer and Whitty, 1997; Demie et al 2002). A vital element of school improvement in disadvantaged areas is raising the levels of achievement of underachieving groups of pupils. This is now acknowledged by central Government in a number of its White Papers and Children Service Plans (DfES 1997, DfES 2000; DCSF 2008). The document recognised that inequality of educational attainment is a key factor and a pressing concern of national importance is to close the gap in educational achievement between different social groups (OFSTED 2009).

However, a lack of data and consensus over social class classification has made research on education and social class difficult in the past. There are a number of different measures of social class in education. The most commonly used measure of the socio-economic position of pupils used in education is free school meals because this data is available within schools. Others used a geographical area approach to identify areas of deprivation rather than individual social class. Census socio-economic classification, which is a measure of occupational position<sup>1</sup> is also used in national statistics and much academic research. It is not a measure used by professionals monitoring educational outcomes in schools despite a wealth of data available through the census.

McCallum and Tuxford (1993) took advantage of the availability of the 1991 census data at local authority level, to show GCSE performance correlated strongly with social class and levels of home ownership, and negatively with other measures that included unemployment, social deprivation and over crowding. Subsequent work by McCallum (1996) using GCSE results and social background estimates (i.e. proportion in social classes I and II) derived from the 1991 census at Greenwich LEA level obtained comparable results. The findings confirmed that the proportion of Greenwich pupils with five or more GCSE grades A\*-C in the highest 'social class quartile' was shown to be at least twice as great as in other quartiles.

This was supported by a Lambeth study which revealed that, regardless of ethnicity, students from more advantaged social backgrounds performed better and social class, educational qualifications, unemployment, and index of social deprivation were strongly related to school performance (Demie and McCallum 2001). The analysis found that poverty and social class were the most influential factors in predicting a student's performance. It also showed that the performance gap between schools that served areas with high levels of poverty and schools serving more affluent areas had continued to widen and the performance of individual students differed dramatically depending upon the overall level of poverty in the school they attended.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details of national census occupational classification see list below:

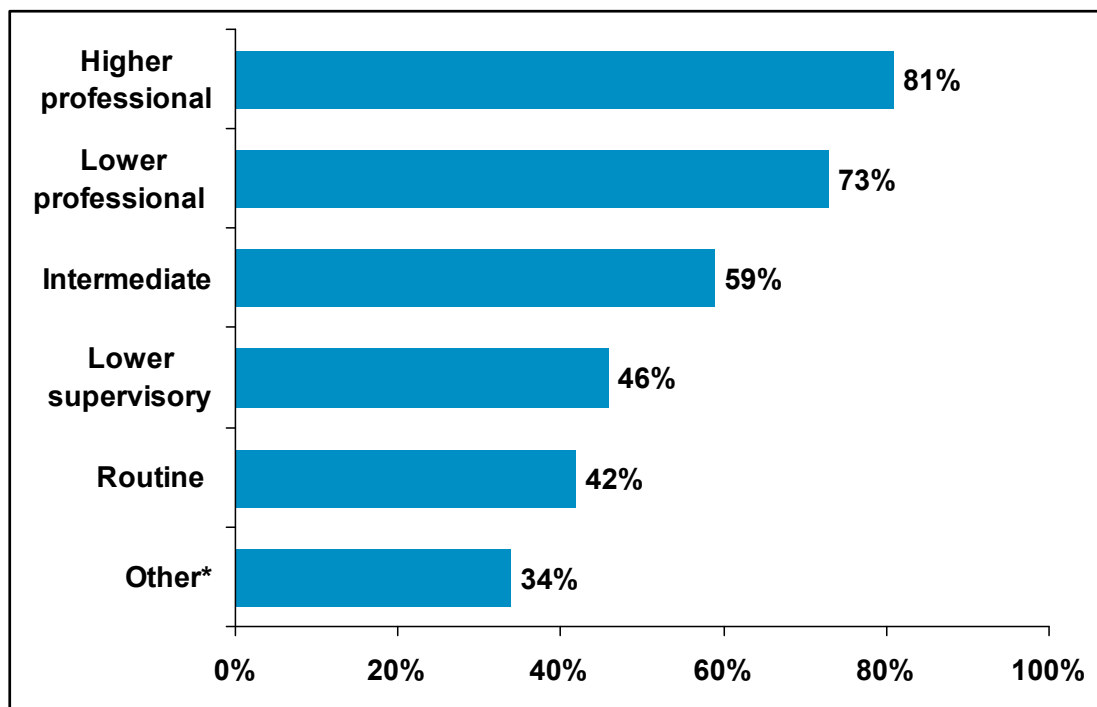
1. Higher managerial and professional occupations
2. Lower managerial and professional occupations
3. Intermediate occupations

4. Small employers and own account workers
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations
6. Semi-routine occupations
7. Routine occupations
8. Never worked and long term unemployed

Subsequent work by McCallum (2007) based on the 2001 census also provides incontrovertible evidence of a strong relationship between GCSE performance and the proportion of resident populations in 'managerial or professional' occupation at super output area (SOA) level. Overall these studies confirmed the usefulness of social class data collected as part of the census in exploring the effect of social background on performance.

More recent research on social class and attainment now provides another useful means of understanding and talking about social class and social class inequalities (Reay, 1998). Social class has been shown to have significant effects on educational outcomes and future life chances even when educational achievement is high (Marshall, 2002). Working class pupils are less likely to achieve 5+A\*-C passes at GCSE than their middle class peers and are less likely to go on to higher education (Babb, 2005; Ofsted, 2005). They are also less likely to attend a popular and successful school (Sutton Trust, 2005).

**Figure 1. 5+A\*-C GCSE Results by Parents' Social Class in England 2006**



\* Never worked and long term unemployed

Source: The Youth Cohort Study (YCS) 2004;  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000560/Addition1.xls> (accessed 3 November 2007)

The above findings are also supported by the national Youth Cohort Study (YCS) of England and Wales, which provides some of the useful data on attainment and social class background using parental occupation. Figure 1 and Table 1 show a clear picture of how different social class groups shared unequally in GCSE attainment.

The data reveals that social class is strongly associated with achievement and there is a considerable difference in attainment between pupils with a professional and a working class background. It confirms previous findings that pupils with parents with a higher and a lower professional occupation do significantly better than those with parents in a manual occupation at GCSE.

Trend YCS data also shows a rise since the 1999 survey in the proportion of young people gaining five or more GCSEs amongst all family backgrounds. Thus the percentage of 16 years old with parents of routine occupations achieving this level has more than doubled between 1999 and 2006. However, large differences remained in 2006, with 81% of pupils with parents having a higher occupational background gaining 5+A\*-C compared to 42% of pupils whose parents occupation was classified as routine with a gap of 39 percentage points. Nevertheless despite the high proportionate increase (see Table 1), there is still a long way to go before young people from lower socio-economic groups narrow the achievement gap to those from the higher socio-economic groups.

**Table 1. GCSE 5+A\*-C performance by parental occupation**

| Parental Occupation  | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2006 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Higher professional  | 75%  | 77%  | 76%  | 81%  |
| Lower professional   | 62%  | 64%  | 65%  | 73%  |
| Intermediate         | 49%  | 51%  | 53%  | 59%  |
| Lower supervisory    | 34%  | 34%  | 41%  | 46%  |
| Routine              | 26%  | 31%  | 33%  | 42%  |
| Other/not classified | 24%  | 26%  | 34%  | 34%  |

Source: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000795/index.shtml>

A statement from the DfES in 2006 clearly acknowledges that there is a long-standing association between social class and educational achievement:

*‘There is a strong, direct and long-standing association between social class and successful achievement in education’ (DfES 2006, Page 7).*

DfES figures for many years (1997–2003) show that pupils from advantaged backgrounds (management, professional) were more than three times as likely to obtain 5+ GCSE A\*-C grades than their peers at the other end of the social spectrum (unskilled manual). Indeed, although children from both social groups have improved, in percentage terms, in obtaining 5+ GCSE A\*-C grades, the gap between them is getting larger every year. A recent research review commissioned by the DCSF has also revealed that:

*“The attainment of white British pupils is polarised by social class to a greater extent than any other ethnic groups. White British pupils from managerial and professional homes are one of the highest attaining groups, while White British pupils from working class homes are the lowest attaining groups.” (Strand, 2008)*

These statements from recent research could hardly be any clearer about the association between social class and educational achievement, but there are still gaps in the research evidence, particularly when the analysis by social class is broken down by gender and ethnic group. However, more recent work by Cassen and Kingdon (2007) has begun to address this gap and found that:

*‘White British students on average – boys and girls – are more likely than other ethnic groups to persist in low achievement [although] boys outnumber girls as low achievers by three to two. Nearly half of all low achievers are White British males.’*

In addition research has suggested that white working class pupils are more likely to live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty on national indicators. Research into poverty, social class and achievement shows that children in these neighbourhoods and from disadvantaged backgrounds do worse than those from advantaged backgrounds. For example, a quarter of students receiving free school meals gain five good GCSEs or equivalent, compared to over half of the overall population. (DfES 2006)

There has also been a great deal of research demonstrating that middle class parents are likely to have access to advantages which working class parents may not have access to (Gewirtz, 2001; Vincent, 2001). Evans (2006) states that middle class children develop a love of formal learning in their early years as reading, speaking and listening, counting, problem solving are all incorporated into a caring relationship with their parents in an informal playful way. Therefore, she states, children by the age of 2, whose mothers are educated, are likely to be doing better in preschool learning and that this formal learning style is worth a great deal to a child when he/she enters a formal learning environment.

She suggests that the working class child is less prepared for and is at a disadvantage in an education system which rewards success and expects children at home to be prepared for formal learning tasks. Schools embody middle class values. Many working class pupils adjust to this. She also states that middle class mothers invest time in making sure that their children are 'clever' with formal learning styles in a way that will be valued at school. Having invested in their child, middle class parents are therefore more discriminating about what school they choose and are keen that school should continue their good work. Parents also have the self assurance to be vigilant about the education that their child is receiving.

In exploring strategies to raise achievement, West and Pennell (2003) have called for there to be a focus on what schools can do to help overcome the effects of disadvantage in the here and now.

*'This is because a societal programme to alleviate the underlying problems, for example, child poverty, cannot be achieved in the short or even medium term. Rather, these are long term goals; and the processes by which, for example, a reduction in poverty might improve achievement levels-assuming that the link is causal- are not clear. In the meantime teachers, policy makers and politicians who are concerned about social exclusion need to focus on what can be done in the here and now- not on what can be done in the future assuming the political will is still there.'*

### **The need for research into what works in raising achievement of white working class pupils**

The body of available research suggests that most previous studies have focused on reasons why working class children are underachieving (see Demie et al 2008; Demie 2008) but with scant research on the positive experiences of white working class 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 white working class pupils (see Demie 2008). However, in recent years the need for detailed case studies of successful schools in raising achievement has become apparent as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement.



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 white working class pupils. For these reasons, recently a number of studies have looked at examples of schools that provide an environment in which Black Caribbean pupils (Ofsted 2002; McKenley et al 2003), Bangladeshi pupils (Ofsted 2004), African heritage pupils (Demie et al 2005), Somali pupils (Demie et al 2007 and Demie and Lewis 2008) and Mobile pupils (Demie 2004) succeed. 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, 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 emphasis 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;
- Detailed, rigorous examination of performance undertaken regularly and followed by action that leads to improvement;
- Teaching and learning of a 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;
- A strong commitment to equal opportunities and a clear stand on racism.

The Ofsted reports on good practice in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in primary and secondary schools respectively concluded that relatively successful schools have amongst other things *'close links with parents ... based on shared values and expectations of behaviour, attitudes and habits of work. These schools had developed a working partnership with the parents to listen to their concerns.'* (Ofsted, 2002 and 2005)

We have not been able to identify successfully published evidence of what works in raising achievement of white working class pupils but a recent National College for School Leadership (NCSL) report into *'Successful leadership for promoting the achievement of white working class pupils.'* (Mongon and Chapman 2008) Records encouraging signs of improvement in the ways schools are addressing the underachievement of the white working class. Key findings in this study show that these are schools with strong leadership and strong systems and the headteachers did not accept social class as a reason for failure. They had high expectations of their students and a profound respect for the people and areas they were working in. Several also came from low income backgrounds and claimed working class roots.

A number of the headteachers in the study had also been in the post for several years and spoke about the importance of building a deep respect for the community they served. Headteachers encourage and value the active involvement of parents and the community in their children's education adopting a number of strategies to overcome some of the barriers to achievement including, effective use of staff with a working



class background, developing an inclusive ethos and inclusion curriculum that meets the needs of working class children and effective targeted support and mentoring. More importantly in the case study schools they drew in more role models and offered more inspirational experiences. There were many local people working at the case study schools both in teaching and non teaching posts. (Mongon and Chapman 2008)

Many of the success factors highlighted in the NCSL research report into raising the achievement of white working class pupils refer mainly to the experiences of these children in White British schools. For example about 95% of the pupils in one case study school are White British (Mongon and Chapman 2008). However, there is little research into raising the achievement of white working class pupils in schools which serve a range of ethnic minority pupils. These schools aim to prepare children to live in a multi-racial society by giving them an understanding of the culture and history of different ethnic groups.

A review of previous research highlights a clear need for detailed case studies of successful strategies in raising the achievement of white working class pupils in multi-racial schools as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement.

### **The aims and objectives of the research**

The aim of the research was to study the experiences of white working class pupils in multiracial schools. Specific objectives were to examine the attainment of White British working class pupils in schools and to explore strategies which need to be taken to raise achievement.

This research is similar to other studies that looked at examples of schools that provide an environment in which underachieving groups flourish but reflects the perspective of the white working class using detailed case studies to illustrate how policy and practice help to raise the achievement of white working class pupils with a strong emphasis on what works.

### **Terminology: What do we mean by the term white working class?**

One of the difficulties with our research has been in defining the term, 'working class'. Every one we talked to during the study gave us different interpretations and understandings of the terminology. As with many terms describing social class, 'working class' is defined and used in many different ways and for differing purposes. This is mainly due to the lack of an approach at national level in classifying the White British group by social class background. For example, the government seldom talked about white working class, preferring terms such as 'hardworking families' and 'social exclusion'. Class is still at the centre of how people see their place in Britain today, and socio-economic background is still a strong predictor of life chances but using clear terminology and returning to the issue of class inequality is therefore long overdue. (Runnymede Trust 2009)

In this study we asked headteachers, governors and teachers to tell us what they understand by the term white working class<sup>2</sup> (see Demie et al 2009). As we have argued elsewhere the discussion during focus groups and case studies regarding the terminology 'white working class' did not yield any precise definition to be used for

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<sup>2</sup> For details see Demie, F. and Lewis, K (2010). White working Class Achievement: A case study of barriers to Learning in schools, Research and Statistics Unit, London Borough of Lambeth, p.55-58.

this study. Headteachers, governors and teachers talked more in general about how they see the issue from their own school's perspective and experience. Casual usage of 'working class' differs widely.

The consensus from the focus group discussions suggests that it is difficult these days to define the term 'working class'. The variation between different socio-political definitions makes the use of the term as a subject of study contentious especially following the decline of manual labour in post-industrial societies. All argued that 'working class' is a term used in the past by academics to describe those employed in the lower tier jobs as measured by skill, education and compensation, but it is difficult to use the term with precise definition when many parents are unemployed.

However, despite a lack of consensus on the use of the term, researchers and policy makers continue to use the term 'white working class' in a number of recent studies. For example, Mongon and Chapman (2008) and Cassen and Kingdon (2007) defined for the sake of their research the group as pupils from a White British ethnic background who qualified for free school meals.

We would argue that the term white working class makes sense for an educational purpose as it clearly differentiates pupils by class background. It is useful to focus on underachievement issues in educational debates and it ensures that this focus is not lost or blurred in national policy formulation by providing unambiguous data for policy makers and schools. For this reason, in this study, we used the term 'white working class' to refer to pupils whose parents are skilled and in semi-routine occupations or others who depend on the welfare state for their income and all pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Free school meals data is available in schools to measure child poverty and has been frequently used as proxy indicator for social class by researchers. Parental occupation is also used by National Statistics to measure social class.

## Section 2: Methodological Framework of the Research

The empirical investigation of white working class pupil attainment is supported by an ethnographic study of the school experience of white working class pupils. The case study schools are located within the borough of Lambeth, inner London. Three complementary methodological approaches were adopted to explore performance; the views of teachers, White British parents and their children about schooling. These included data analysis, focus groups and case studies. Details of the methodological framework and activities are summarised below:

**1. Performance Data Analysis:** KS2 and GCSE statistical patterns of performance were analysed by ethnic background to illustrate differences in attainment.

### 2. Focus groups:

- **Parent focus group:** Interviews with staff and parents took place, including focus group discussion. The main aim of the parent interviews and focus group research was to ascertain the views of White British parents regarding their experiences within the local authority schooling system and what practical steps need to be taken in order to improve levels of achievement for White British pupils. Headteachers had been asked to invite parents to the focus group to be interviewed.
- **Pupil focus group:** The main aim of the pupil focus group research was to ascertain the views of White British pupils regarding their experiences in school and to find areas of strength and for development.
- **Teacher 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 White British pupils. Headteachers were asked to select a mixed group of teachers with a range of teaching experience, gender and ethnicity.
- **Headteacher focus group:** The main aim of the Headteacher focus group was to ascertain the views of Headteachers concerning what practical steps needed to be taken in order to improve levels of achievement for White British pupils and to tease out what some schools might do differently in order to raise the achievement of this group of pupils.
- **Governor focus group:** The main aim of the governor focus group was to ascertain the views of governors regarding their experiences of the Local authority schooling system and what practical steps need to be taken in order to improve levels of achievement for White British pupils.

### 3. Case studies:

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. Researchers visited each of the schools for two days, to observe lessons and hold discussions with headteachers, staff, governors and pupils to evaluate and gather evidence on how well White British heritage pupils are achieving and the factors contributing to this. 11 primary and 2 secondary schools were selected for case studies. These were:

### Secondary case study schools

1. Norwood school – Lambeth LA
2. Dunraven – Lambeth LA

### Primary case study schools

1. Johanna – Lambeth LA
2. Walnut Tree Walk – Lambeth LA
3. Allen Edwards – Lambeth LA
4. Hitherfield – Lambeth LA
5. Streatham Wells – Lambeth LA
6. Kingswood and Elmwood Federation – Lambeth LA
7. Loughborough – Lambeth LA
8. Stockwell – Lambeth LA
9. St Anne's RC – Lambeth LA
10. Glenbrook Primary – Lambeth LA
11. Crown Lane Primary – Lambeth LA

**Table 2. Case study Schools: Pupils profile and achievement data**

| Primary Schools    | Roll | FSM % | 1993    |       |         | 2008    |       |      |   | KS2 Average       |      |
|--------------------|------|-------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|------|---|-------------------|------|
|                    |      |       | African | Carib | British | African | Carib | Brit | Other Main groups                         | 2008              | 2009 |
| Allen Edwards      | 424  | 57%   | 16%     | 26%   | 34%     | 29%     | 16%   | 8%   | Portuguese (15%)<br>Other White (7%)      | 86%               | 88%  |
| Crown Lane         | 420  | 57%   | 5%      | 20%   | 51%     | 28%     | 24%   | 11%  | White/Caribbean (6%),<br>White Other (6%) | 57%               | 76%  |
| Glenbrook          | 390  | 60%   | 11%     | 31%   | 32%     | 27%     | 27%   | 8%   | Other (8%)<br>White Other (7%)            | 79%               | 60%  |
| Hitherfield        | 446  | 40%   | 9%      | 23%   | 33%     | 19%     | 20%   | 20%  | White other (10%)<br>White/Caribbean (6%) | 74%               | 71%  |
| Johanna            | 184  | 50%   | 12%     | 17%   | 31%     | 26%     | 10%   | 11%  | Bangladeshi (12%)<br>Other Asian (8%)     | 77%               | 94%  |
| Kingswood          | 427  | 56%   | 6%      | 19%   | 51%     | 16%     | 20%   | 15%  | White/Caribbean (8%)<br>White Other (6%)  | 88%               | 100% |
| Loughborough       | 494  | 52%   | 18%     | 33%   | 28%     | 27%     | 27%   | 8%   | Black Other (5%)<br>Portuguese (4%)       | 80%               | 85%  |
| St Anne's          | 424  | 31%   | 35%     | 3%    | 19%     | 40%     | 1%    | 7%   | Portuguese (27%)<br>Other (12%)           | 78%               | 85%  |
| Stockwell          | 450  | 43%   | 23%     | 31%   | 14%     | 24%     | 19%   | 6%   | Portuguese (19%)<br>White Other (6%)      | 94%               | 89%  |
| Streatham Wells    | 358  | 31%   | 5%      | 19%   | 53%     | 13%     | 16%   | 26%  | White/Caribbean (8%)<br>White Other (7%)  | 98%               | 91%  |
| Walnut Tree Walk   | 260  | 39%   | 21%     | 24%   | 24%     | 29%     | 12%   | 16%  | White Other (7%)<br>Mixed Other (6%)      | 75%               | 81%  |
| Secondary          |      |       |         |       |         |         |       |      |   | GCSE<br>(5+ A*-C) |      |
| Norwood Secondary  | 714  | 40%   | 10%     | 26%   | 39%     | 23%     | 28%   | 13%  | White other (7%)<br>Portuguese (6%)       | 43%               | 89%  |
| Dunraven Secondary | 1196 | 27%   | 7%      | 22%   | 43%     | 11%     | 16%   | 28%  | White/Caribbean (7%)<br>White other (5%)  | 72%               | 77%  |

The case study schools as a whole covered a range of ethnic groups, community languages spoken, free school meals (see Table 2). The key criteria for the selection of schools was the number of White British pupils on roll, free school meal entitlement and a headteacher and/or senior managers who understand and have a clear vision for the school with respect to inclusion.

The main method of data collection was open ended semi-structured interviews with senior management, teachers, administrative staff and support staff as well as white pupils. The aim was to then triangulate the voices of the various participants in order to understand more about the educational experiences of White British pupils. Interviews were conducted by two researchers. Draft reports were sent to the schools for respondent validation and the data was duly amended to take account of any inaccuracies or omissions. The findings which emerged from this part of project are given in Section 3.

## Section 3. The Achievement of White Working Class Pupils from Low Income

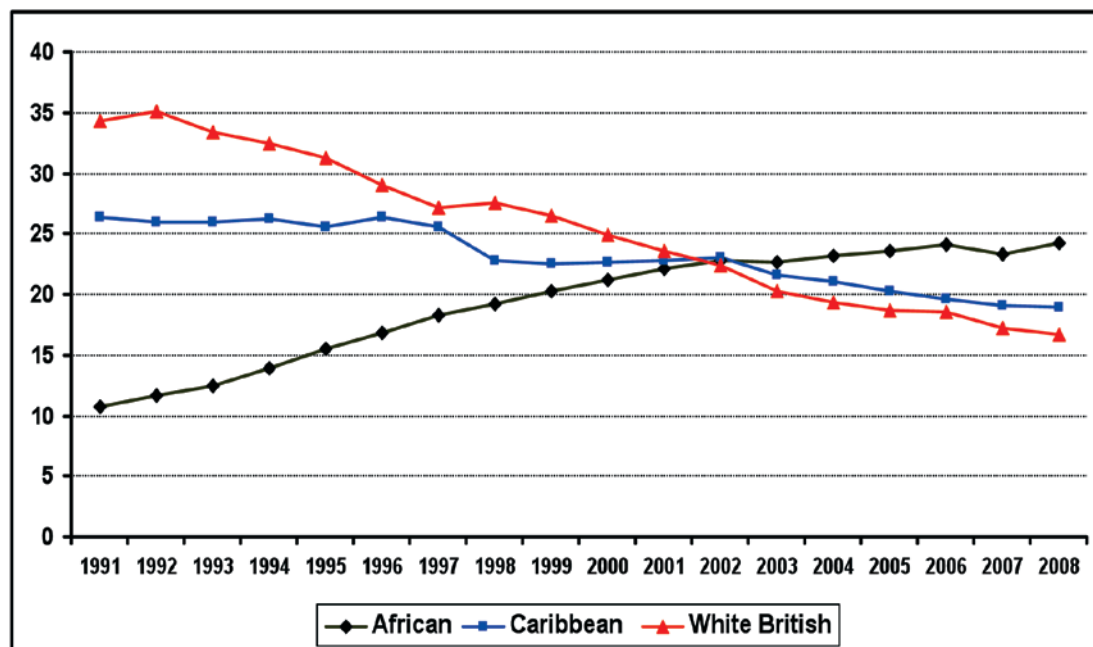
### Backgrounds

This section looks at the achievement of White British pupils at the end of primary and secondary school. Two methodological approaches are used. Firstly, the study looks at the changing patterns of the school population in Lambeth to establish the number of White British pupils in Lambeth schools. This is followed by detailed data analysis on the performance of White British pupils from low income backgrounds.

#### The context of the case study local authority

Lambeth is among the most densely populated boroughs in the country and its already rapidly growing population is projected to grow by a further 13% to 322,000 by 2028. The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) places Lambeth as the 5th most deprived borough in London and 19th most deprived in England.

**Figure 2. Changes in the proportion of White British, Black Caribbean and Black African pupils in Lambeth Schools, 1991-2008 (%)**



Source: Education Statistics, Research and Statistics Unit, London Borough of Lambeth, 2008.

Recent decades, however, have seen a displacement of the White British population due to rapid social and demographic change in Lambeth and in London. There was a significant dispersal of the White British population into the suburbs, Kent and Essex and increasing ethnic heterogeneity. As a result the LA is at present one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse boroughs in Britain. About 33% of the population are from ethnic minority backgrounds and about 67% are White British. The borough has the second highest proportion of Black Caribbean residents of any UK local authority and the fourth highest proportion of Black African people. About 10% of the ethnic minorities are from a mix of white and other ethnic groups and over 150 languages are spoken in the LA.

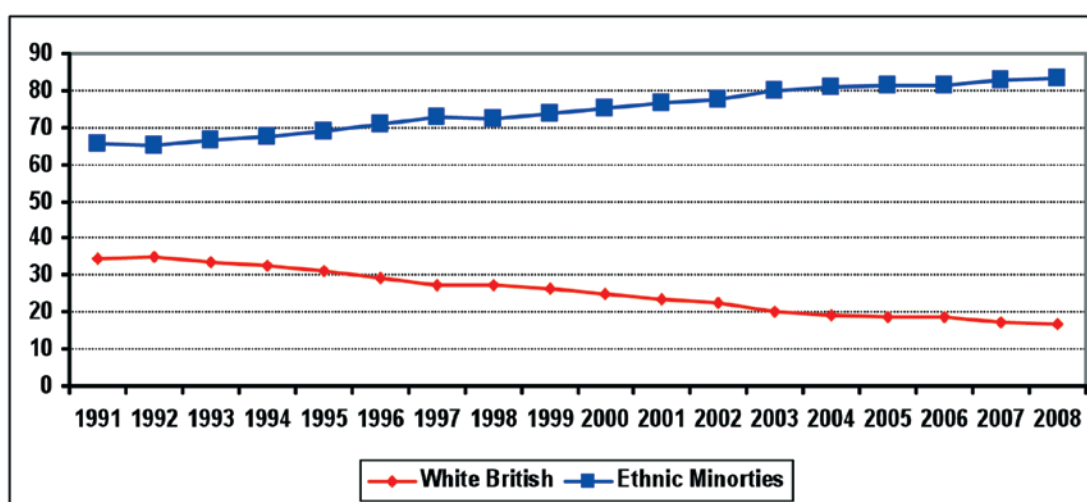
However, the school population suggests that about 83% of pupils are from black and ethnic minority groups and only about 16% are White British. For example the



2008 DCSF school census shows that there were 30,517 pupils in the LA's schools. Of these, African pupils formed the largest ethnic group with 24.3% followed by Black Caribbean 18.9%, White British 16.7%, White Other 6.7%, Portuguese 6.6%, Other Black 4.6%, Mixed Other 4.5%, Mixed White/Black Caribbean 4.4%, Mixed Others 4.1%, Mixed White/Black African 1.4%, Pakistan 1.1%, Chinese 1%, Indian 0.8%, Mixed White/Asian 0.8%, White Irish 0.6%, Turkish 0.4%, Vietnamese 0.4% and Greek 0.1%.

There has been a change in the overall composition of the black and ethnic minority population in Lambeth schools. Figure 3 shows the change in the composition of black and other ethnic minority pupils within Lambeth schools. The 1991 census showed that overall 66% of pupils belonged to black and other ethnic minority communities compared to 83% in 2008, an increase of 17% over the 17-year period.

**Figure 3. Change in the proportion of White British and Black and other ethnic minority pupils within Lambeth schools**



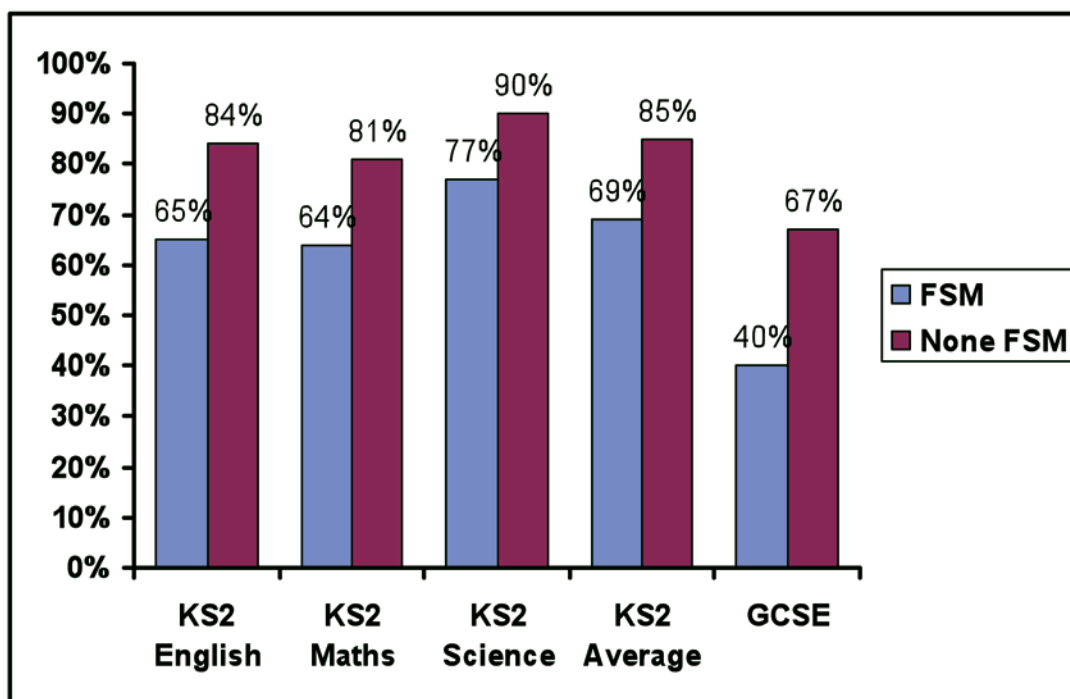
### The achievement of White British pupils from low income backgrounds

Overall recent research work has brought the link between deprivation and low performance at school back on to the agenda. Social class, poverty and attainment are an issue that research has highlighted as a central concern, but it is often neglected on the national and local policy formulation. However, the issue of white working class underachievement is complicated by the lack of identification of white working class pupils within national data. Broadly, white working class pupils are found within the wider definition of White British. As a result of this lack of data there are limitations in the past research into white working class underachievement in schools. The absence of national comparative data which identifies patterns of children's background, places constraints on affecting targeting policy and practice developments at the national and local level.

However, due to a lack of widely available data on the white working class, recent studies focused on students '*who can be reasonably described as White British and who come from economically poorer families who tend to do less than any other groups.*' (Mongon and Chapman, 2008:4). The free school meals variable is often used as a proxy measure for social deprivation and has been linked to underachievement in a number of studies (Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Demie 2001). Previous studies have confirmed the persistence of the trend for low achievement in White British low income groups. The DCSF 2008 data confirms the relative low attainment of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

This relative decline in performance by free school meals at KS2 and KS4 is shown in Figure 4. This figure illustrates that at KS2 there was a 16 percentage gap between those eligible for a free meal and those not, while the gap in attainment at GCSE was wider at 27 percentage points. Nationally, about 30% of White British boys and 39% of White British girls who were eligible for a free meal gained 5+A\*-C grades compared with the national average of 67% for those not entitled. This indicates that White British pupils eligible for free school meals are the lowest performing group. Eligibility for FSM is more closely associated with lower attainment for white boys and girls than for children from minority groups.

**Figure 4. KS2 and GCSE attainment by free school meals in England 2008**



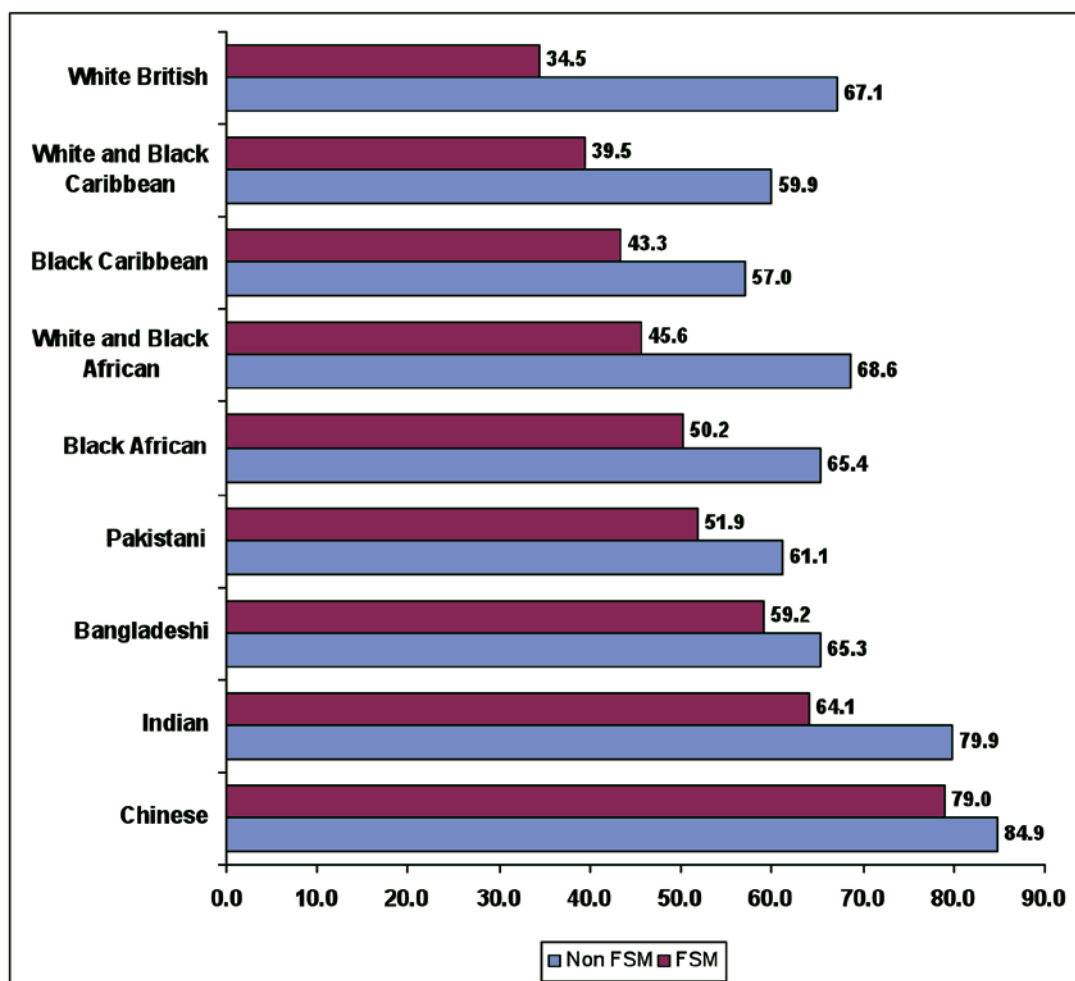
Source: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000822/SFR322008-allKS4noNITables2.xls#Table A1!A1>

**Table 3. GCSE attainment by free school meals and Gender in Lambeth and England 2008**

|                       | Lambeth |     |     | National |     |     |
|-----------------------|---------|-----|-----|----------|-----|-----|
|                       | Non FSM | FSM | Gap | Non FSM  | FSM | Gap |
| Black African Boys    | 33%     | 27% | 6%  | 65%      | 42% | 23% |
| Black Caribbean Boys  | 26%     | 17% | 9%  | 55%      | 39% | 16% |
| White British Boys    | 42%     | 14% | 28% | 63%      | 30% | 33% |
| Black African Girls   | 42%     | 25% | 17% | 72%      | 57% | 15% |
| Black Caribbean Girls | 39%     | 18% | 21% | 65%      | 48% | 17% |
| White British Girls   | 49%     | 18% | 31% | 72%      | 39% | 33% |

The data in Table 3 confirms that the White British pupil group living in disadvantaged circumstances is the lowest attaining group. At the end of KS4 all main ethnic groups have caught up with or exceeded the performance of White British pupils.

**Figure 5. GCSE attainment by free school meals and ethnic background in England 2008 (5+ A\*- C percentage)**



Source: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000822/SFR322008-allKS4noNITables2.xls#Table A1!A1>

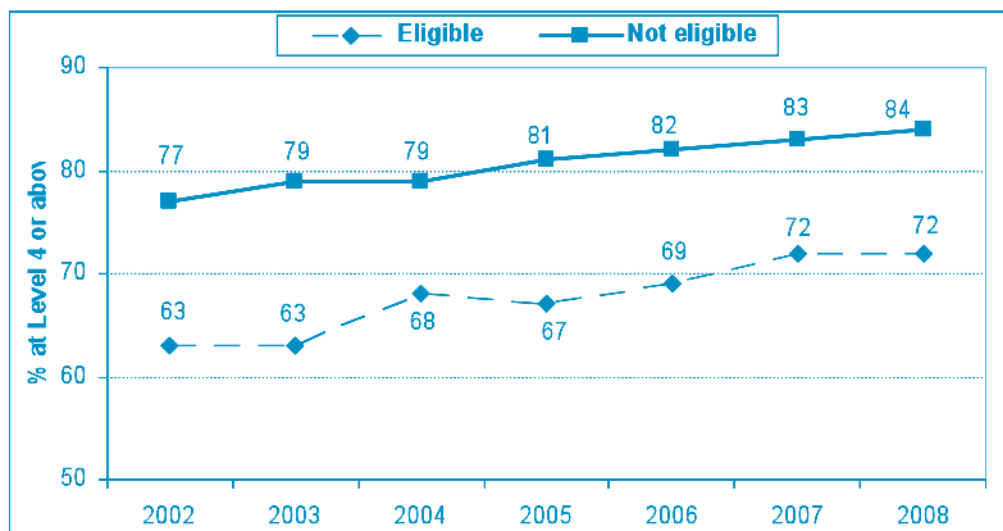
There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the national data is further analysed by pupils eligible for free school meals. Figure 5 shows that at GCSE, 35% of White British pupils eligible for free school meals achieved 5+A\*-C, compared with 67% of pupils who were not eligible, a gap of 32 percentage points. There was a 20% gap for White/Black Caribbean, 23% gap for White/Black African, 15% gap for Indian, 15% gap for African, 14% gap for Black Caribbean pupils, 9% gap for Pakistani, whilst the gap for Bangladeshi and Chinese pupils was smaller at 6% percentage points. Eligibility for free school meals is strongly associated with low achievement, but significantly more so for White British pupils than any other ethnic group. This finding underlines the importance of treating any measure of school or LA performance which does not include the influence of background factors such as social background factors and deprivation, with scepticism. Social class data is essential for the analysis of White British pupils in addition to other disadvantage factors. As we have argued in the previous section, our analysis is not complete due to a lack of data on social class in the authority.

Lambeth research into ethnic and gender differences in educational achievement (McKenley et al 2003, Demie et al 2006 and 2007, Demie 2001) and pupil mobility (Demie 2002) has also highlighted the importance of addressing underachievement in schools. The report concluded, while there were pockets of sound practice, many schools in the LA were not nearly as effective as they needed to be in tackling the

underachievement of, for example, Black African, Black Caribbean, Portuguese, white working class and mobile pupils in the LA's schools. Longstanding obstacles to progress were that there has been no strong lead to address the issues of poverty and underachievement by central government. In particular, the educational underachievement of White British working class pupils in inner city schools has seldom been mentioned in the achievement debate and national policy formulation.

However, in a number of Local Authorities there is increasing evidence that the performance of pupils from a White British background is beginning to fall behind that of the other ethnic groups (DCSF 2008). Analysis of results at all Key Stages within this local authority over the period suggests that the performance of pupils by ethnic group is complex and differences in performance within and between ethnic groups are rarely consistent either within one year, or year on year. In order to explain this lack of consistency in outcomes, other factors have had to be added to the model to ascertain if the explanation for variations in performance is due to factors in addition to, or other than, the pupils coming from one ethnic group or another. This should include gender, social class and poverty data.

**Figure 6. KS2 Average Performance by free school meals in Lambeth 2002-2008 (Level 4+)**



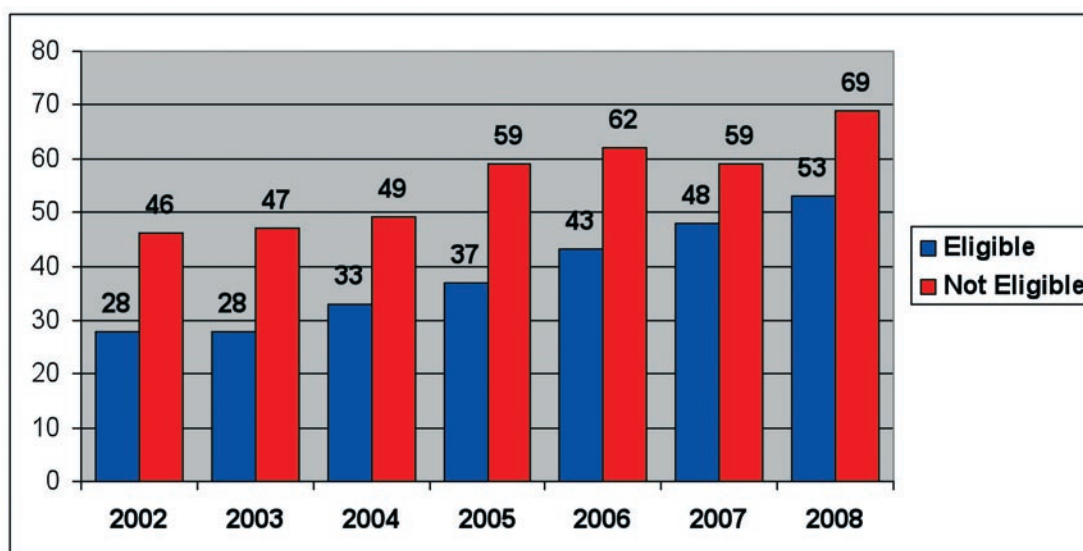
Schools in the authority experience extreme levels of social disadvantage relative to national norms. In Lambeth, school level data demonstrates a clear relationship between the concentration of poverty levels in schools and tests and examination results. The proportion of pupils taking KS2 in 2008 who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) was 37%, and for the GCSE cohort it was 40%. More than two times the national average of pupils are entitled to a free meals in primary schools and three times in secondary schools (Demie 2008).

**Table 4. Percentage of GCSE cohorts eligible for FSM by main Ethnic Group and Gender in Lambeth – 2008**

| Main Ethnic Groups    | Boys       |            | Girls      |            | All pupils |            |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                       | Paid Meals | Free Meals | Paid Meals | Free Meals | Paid Meals | Free Meals |
| African               | 50%        | 50%        | 55%        | 45%        | 53%        | 47%        |
| Somali                | 7%         | 93%        | 7%         | 93%        | 7%         | 93%        |
| Black Other           | 77%        | 23%        | 79%        | 21%        | 78%        | 22%        |
| Caribbean             | 51%        | 49%        | 62%        | 38%        | 59%        | 41%        |
| Mixed White African   | 50%        | 50%        | 67%        | 33%        | 60%        | 40%        |
| Mixed White Caribbean | 68%        | 32%        | 58%        | 42%        | 63%        | 37%        |
| Portuguese            | 41%        | 59%        | 67%        | 33%        | 56%        | 44%        |
| White British         | 68%        | 32%        | 68%        | 32%        | 68%        | 32%        |
| Lambeth               | 57%        | 43%        | 61%        | 39%        | 60%        | 40%        |

Figure 6 indicates that there is a marked difference in KS2 performance between pupils eligible for free meals and the most economically advantaged groups in schools. At the end of primary education, the difference between pupils eligible for FSM and those not is significant, with 72% of eligible pupils achieving level 4+, whereas 84% of pupils who are not eligible achieve at this level. The GCSE data also shows a significant gap, with pupils on free school meals gaining only 53% 5+ A\*-C in 2008, compared to 69% for those not eligible (Figure 7). Overall, the findings from the LA data confirms that pupils eligible for school meals did considerably less well than their more affluent peers.

**Figure 7. Percentage of GCSE attainment by free school meals in Lambeth 2002-2008 (5+A\*-C)**



The study confirms that class is the biggest factor in educational success. One of the largest groups of underachievers is the white working class and their outcomes at KS2 and KS4 are considerably below those achieved by all other ethnic groups. The research also suggests that, as highlighted in other studies, the cycle of underachievement of white working class pupils has been endemic and this is perpetuated by factors such as low expectations, economic deprivation, poor housing and parental low aspiration for their children's education.

## **Section 4: Raising the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils: School Strategies**

The review of literature confirms that much of the previous study focused on reasons for underachievement and there is little research on what works for raising achievement of white working class pupils. This places serious constraints on effectively targeting policy and practice developments at the national and local level. This section aims to study school strategies to raise achievement in schools.

Discussion with school staff, parents and pupils gave an insight into practices that minimise the impact of barriers to achievement for white working class pupils in Lambeth schools. The main practices relate to leadership and vision, use of data, the curriculum and language support, parental engagement, targeted support including the role of the learning mentor in supporting white working class pupils. One secondary school has also worked on successful transition to Year 7 from Year 6 which is having a positive impact on white working class pupils.

As part of the research we interviewed a variety of members of school staff and parents in order to get a range of perspectives on the main practices in schools. These included;

- 15 Headteachers/Principals
- 14 Deputies/Vice Principals
- 21 Class teachers
- 14 Teaching Assistants
- 8 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
- 2 Learning Support Teachers
- 2 Learning Support Assistants
- 1 Head of Referral Centre
- 8 EAL co-ordinators
- 2 Assessment Managers
- 8 Learning Mentors
- 1 Children and Families Support Worker
- 1 Family Services Manager
- 1 Extended Schools Co-ordinator
- 3 School Office staff
- 2 School Governors
- 39 White British parents
- 61 Pupils

### **Leadership and vision and white working class achievement**

The one essential feature that is shared by the most successful primary and secondary schools is strong leadership. The quality of management and leadership at all levels within the schools is generally good and in some cases outstanding. Headteachers are described as 'inspirational', and 'outstanding' and their leadership is at the heart of the school's ethos, shared by staff, pupils and parents. Their leadership has been the driving force behind change, new expectations and inspirational success.



These headteachers:

- Provide a culture of achievement with a positive can do attitude. Central to their work are high expectations and the provision of intensive support so that pupils meet them. They strongly believe their key priority is leading teaching and learning and they allocate a lot of time to being in the classroom with teachers and pupils
- Provide multiracial schools where the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and circumstances are celebrated. Whatever their background, schools ensure that they succeed
- Monitor pupils' progress by ethnicity and social background. Headteachers monitor details of learning, pupils' work, marking, record keeping, teacher assessment, quality of teaching and learning and the progress made by individual pupils and collectively by the whole class. Pupil tracking is rigorous. The data enables senior staff to have the confidence to challenge assumptions about and attitudes to pupils' performance
- Regard liaison with parents as vital in the school's drive to raise achievement. They have developed genuine partnerships with parents and the community they serve.

A number of these headteachers discussed their own working class backgrounds; they were brought up on council estates and have a pride in their family roots. They expressed a firm commitment to raising achievement in disadvantaged areas and communities. Headteachers employ staff who have a good understanding of pupils from white working class backgrounds, either because they are local or because they have previous experience teaching in white working class communities. Staff play a key role in teaching and supporting these pupils.

### Case Study – Dunraven Secondary School

In Dunraven the percentage of students achieving 5+ A\*-C grades at GCSE has consistently improved, from 43% in 2001 to 72% in 2008. This performance in 2008 is well above LA average of 62% and national of 65% in 5+A\*-C. White British students have shared in the success of the school. In 2008, 73% of White British students attained 5+ A\*-C, compared with 72% African and 57% Black Caribbean and 88% Mixed White/Black Caribbean. The value added of the school is also very impressive and students in the school progress much more than similar students nationally.

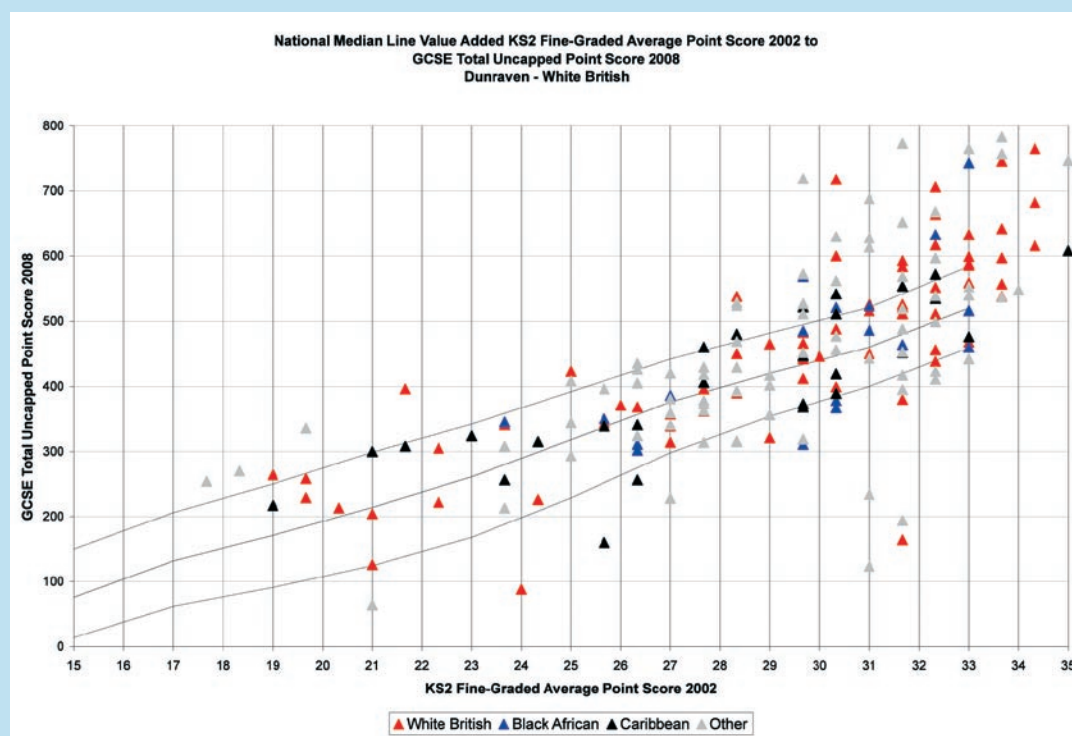
This is shown in Figure 8, which compares the relative progress made by students in Dunraven School with the progress made nationally by all students in England between KS2 and GCSE. The findings from the school suggest that the students in this school have made good progress in terms of value added. The school uses ethnicity value added data to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. The median line graph confirms that the school progress (White British, Black Caribbean, African and all major ethnic groups) is well above national expectation and average<sup>3</sup>. One of the main reasons for such big improvement is strong leadership. The impact of the Principal's inspirational leadership and outstanding management is evident in the school's sustained success over the last 5 years and in its determination to become even better.

<sup>3</sup> For details of the value added evidence by ethnic background see Dunraven Secondary School, RAISEonline 2008 Full Report, OFSTED and DCSF, 15th June 2009, p1-60; Dunraven Secondary School, FFT School Self-evolution Report and data, FFT, December 2008.

The Principal sets high expectations for the Senior Team and the staff as a whole. There is a relentless focus on improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, effective use of data and a drive for higher achievement by students.

The Principal is very well supported by an exceptionally effective Senior Team in guiding, monitoring and evaluating the many aspects of the school's work. Clarity of roles and responsibilities are evident at every level. The Deputy Principal characterises the leadership team as: *'cohesive... it is not negatively competitive, it is cohesive.'* Moving on to the next tier of leadership, she comments: *"progress with middle leaders has improved capacity considerably, and subject and year leaders became Directors of Learning. We changed the name three years ago because both groups focus on learning and progress. We wanted to give them more autonomy. It is about staff taking responsibility for outcomes... everyone is clear about their roles and everyone is supported!"*

**Figure 8. KS2 to GCSE Value Added in Dunraven School**



There is an exceptional sense of teamwork across the school. This is reflected in the consistent and committed way leaders at all levels work toward the school's aim to raise achievement. The school is proud of its efforts to maintain its inclusive ethos. This is seen in the very good progress made by all groups of students. A strong culture of self-evaluation pervades all areas of the school. At senior level it is particularly incisive. Areas perceived as less than good are examined meticulously to determine how best they can improve. Some subject teaching, for example, that was previously no better than satisfactory, was analysed carefully and supported consistently to become good. Teachers appreciate the school's positive professional ethos as well as the talented support staff who also benefit from well-planned training.

This finding is further supported by a recent OFSTED Inspection report which states:

*“The Principal leads the school with passion, commitment and integrity, and he is determined to ensure that Dunraven becomes an outstanding school in every respect. He leads by example and is not afraid to acknowledge and tackle any weaknesses. For example, robust action was taken to improve those subject areas that were underperforming, resulting in raised standards.*

*The Principal is ably supported by very effective senior colleagues, and there is a strong sense of purpose and direction throughout the school. The Principal and Senior Team embody the inclusive motto 'excellence for all' in all aspects of their work. Staff and students speak extremely warmly of their direct day-to-day involvement in school life, and they are viewed as a powerful motivating force throughout the school.*

*The senior team works closely with a very good team of middle leaders, who are actively involved in the leadership and management of the school. They share effective practice, and they are well supported by members of the senior team. As a result, the school is making significant progress with the aim of ensuring that the performance of all departments matches that of the very best. A culture of openness and trust permeates working relationships among senior and middle leaders. The impact of their leadership can be seen in the high-quality education provided by the school, the good progress made by students, and in the creation of a school ethos that is friendly, welcoming and mutually supportive.” (Ofsted, 2009)*

Ofsted inspection evidence also shows that Governance is excellent and, through regular meetings and fact-finding visits, Governors ably challenge and support the school. They strike a happy balance between holding the school to account and not unduly disturbing its smooth, efficient running.

*“The governing body is very effective and plays an active role in the life of the school, questioning and carefully monitoring the school’s performance. Governors, senior and middle leaders all share the same high aspirations for the students, and they approach their work with enthusiasm.” (Ofsted 2009)*

The views of students and parents are sought regularly, are much valued and used to inform worthwhile changes. Relationships between the school and the wider community have gone from strength to strength over the last few years.

### **Case Study: Allen Edwards Primary School**

Allen Edwards is a larger than average urban school that serves a highly deprived community and housing estates in the Stockwell ward. Over 90% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and about 10% are White British. Nearly two thirds of the pupils have English as an additional language. Many different languages are spoken. The school continues to provide an outstanding education for its pupils. Learners make excellent progress in their academic work and in their personal development because of the school's ethos and excellent relationships. One of the reasons for such improvement is the:

*“dynamic and enthusiastic school leaders who form an outstanding team. The headteacher has excellent vision, is a strong and vibrant presence, knows the school very well and has built a very effective team.”*

*Leaders at all levels contribute successfully to school improvement and ensure that the school offers the best possible opportunities to all its pupils. The two assistant headteachers work very well together. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their roles, monitor efficiently and have clear action plans. The whole staff work very hard to maintain the exceptionally caring and supportive ethos and to improve the school's performance in every area. The pupils' learning experience is outstanding because teachers and support staff are dedicated and the quality of teaching is good and improving. The curriculum is lively, diverse and engaging, with a strong emphasis on music and art. Excellent systems track pupils' progress and help to spot those who may not be doing as well as expected. This means that those with learning difficulties receive the help they need, whether it is emotional or academic. Pupils who need support in learning English are equally well provided for. Pupils know and understand their targets and are clear about what they have to do to improve. The school involves parents very fruitfully, both as part of the community and in developing their children's learning. As a result, the rate at which learners' progress has accelerated over recent years. Governors challenge and support the school effectively. Partnerships with others, including the local secondary school, are excellent.” (Ofsted 2009).*

Researchers agree with Ofsted conclusions and that the leadership of the headteacher is excellent and is a strength of the school. The headteacher believes that she and her staff can make a positive impact on every pupil who enrolls at the school. She strongly believes the challenges of the local council and housing association estates cannot defeat their effort in raising standards in the school. The school simply does not accept poverty as an excuse for underachievement. They have high expectations for all pupils. Staff working at all levels have responded well to the headteacher's clear vision and outstanding leadership. The headteacher is passionate about inclusion. She has established the school as a centre for the community and has developed a wide range of extended services in collaboration with five neighbouring schools. The major strength of the school is the team spirit, strong attitude that the team can raise achievement and the belief that they are part of the community the school serves. Our observation during the two day visit suggests that everybody recognises the needs of the child and how best to support them.

There is a positive commitment to include all White British pupils who are the minority in school, in all activities. The school uses Extended School provision such as the 'Shine Saturday School' to provide additional support to all groups including White British pupils. Pupils who need additional support with school work are offered this extension. The care and concern for all pupils is a high priority and successful strategies have been put in place to support them. There is a strong focus on providing Family Learning opportunities and community engagement in this school. The headteacher believes in the school and parents working together.

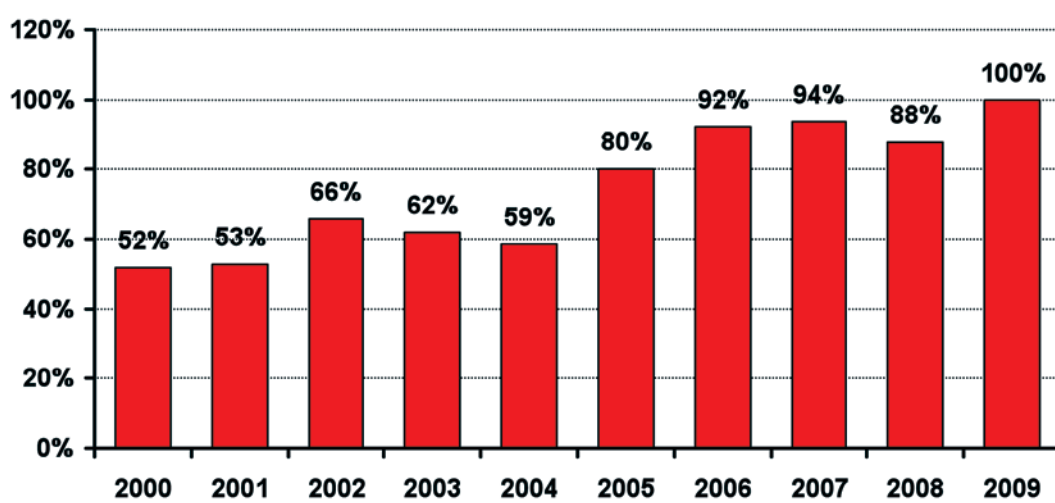
### **Case Study: Kingswood Primary School**

Kingswood primary school serves a highly deprived ward. Almost all of the pupils come from the local community, and live mainly in council or housing association accommodation. More than half the pupils at Kingswood are eligible for free school meals. It has more pupils of minority ethnic heritage than most schools of this size.

Many pupils are at the early stages of learning English and thirty seven languages are spoken in the school. It has a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, mainly low language and literacy skills. A high proportion of pupils join and leave the school at unusual times, more so than is generally found.

**Table 5. Key Stage 2 Tests (Level 4+)**

|         | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| English | 42%  | 48%  | 65%  | 63%  | 55%  | 68%  | 93%  | 95%  | 88%  | 100% |
| Maths   | 53%  | 52%  | 65%  | 56%  | 57%  | 73%  | 83%  | 88%  | 85%  | 100% |
| Science | 61%  | 59%  | 67%  | 67%  | 64%  | 100% | 100% | 98%  | 91%  | 100% |
| Average | 52%  | 53%  | 66%  | 62%  | 59%  | 80%  | 92%  | 94%  | 88%  | 100% |



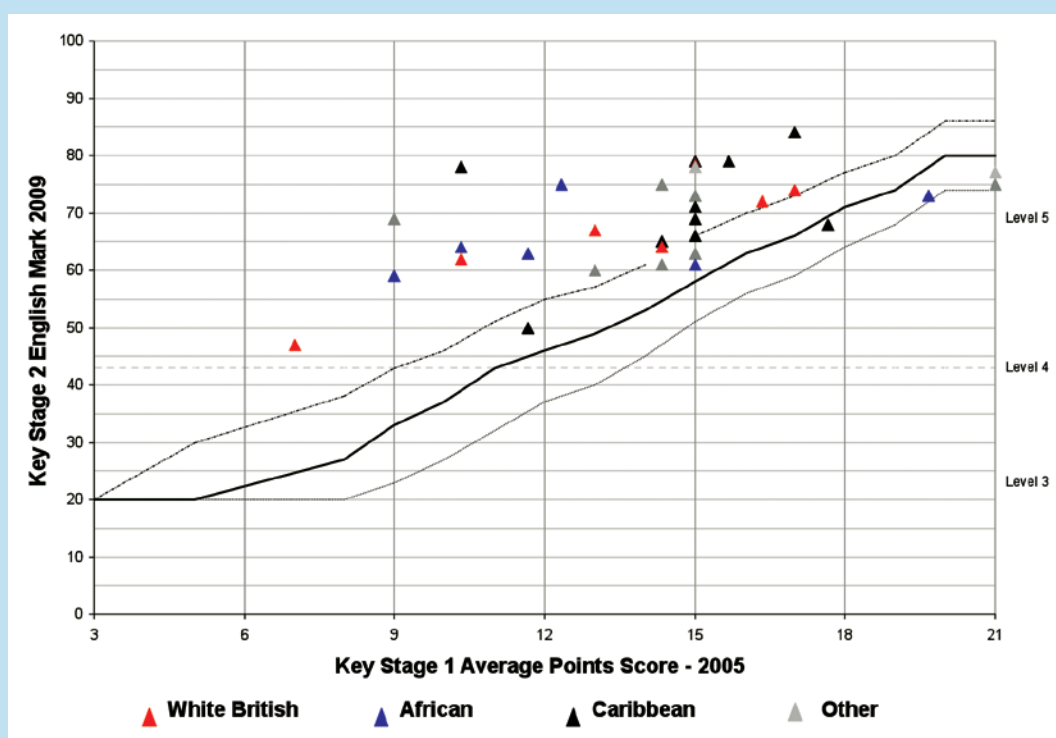
Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Despite the high levels of disadvantage in the local area and pupils low level of attainment on entry, evidence from KS2 results and value added progress in the school suggests that pupils do make good progress between key stages and the school is in the top league in value added nationally (see Table 5 and Figure 9).

The key stage data shows that the school has an impressive improvement rate over the last seven years since the new headteacher was appointed. Overall the performance of pupils attaining level 4 and above has increased from 52% in 2000 to 100% of pupils gaining the expected level in each of the three subjects by 2009.

This is significantly above the national average of 82% and LA average of 80% in 2009. This is a school where all pupils, including white working class, make impressive progress.



**Figure 9. National Median line Relating Pupils' KS1 APS in 2005 to their KS2 English Mark 2009 – Kingswood Primary School**



The school has a good record in improving performance for all groups. Close monitoring and interventions throughout the Foundation Stage to Year 6 ensures all pupils receive the support they need to provide the opportunity to attain the best result they possibly can.

The 2009 inspection by Ofsted has recognised the school's achievement and judged all aspects of the school's work to be outstanding. The first few lines of the report sum the school up well.

*'Kingswood is an outstanding school that flourishes under the inspirational lead of the executive headteacher. In the last four years the school has not only continued to improve itself, but has provided excellent support to promoting community cohesion. This is exemplified by the very effective support given in the last year and a half to Elm Wood, now its federated partner. Senior managers from Kingswood took over leadership in Elm Wood. Such was the rapid improvement under common leadership that it emerged from special measures and was judged to be good with several outstanding features. Senior leaders have been effective in raising achievement and standards and maintaining very high levels of care. Kingswood benefits from a very stable, capable and innovative senior leadership team and there is excellent capacity to improve further. Very effective links with the Education Welfare Service, combined with very robust measures, have resulted in a very marked rise in attendance levels. Whereas the proportion of pupils who are persistent absentees was average last year, through concerted action there are currently none. There are excellent links with the community. As a Children's Centre, the school offers courses including English, mathematics and parenting skills that are well attended. The school works with the Portuguese Embassy and the Somali community to organise mentoring and additional translation services, as well as organising on-site parents' groups and homework opportunities to support pupils in maintaining their home language.'*



*Kingswood was the first Lambeth school to receive the Leading Parent Partnership Award. The school has established international links and the pupils have an excellent understanding for their age of a wide range of issues relating to different faiths and cultures’.*  
Ofsted February 2009

### **The headteacher, at Kingswood, is himself from a ‘working class’ background**

*‘I come from a white working class background myself, my parents worked as a mechanic and in a shoe factory, and my grandad down the pit. My family valued education and learning. Education was my chance to do something they didn’t do. I’ve clawed my way to where I am now. My lesson is that perseverance pays off.’*

Kingswood school uses the curriculum to raise aspiration by giving children different experiences that they might not necessarily have with their parents, experiences that widen horizons and give them access to opportunities that they may take up later in life. The headteacher has a belief that ‘money should not be a barrier’ and refers to the provision as ‘stunning’; it is evident that the rich and exciting range of extra curricular activities contributes considerably to pupils’ great enjoyment of school.

The headteacher is a strong and persuasive role model for white working class pupils and the community he serves. He has played a key role in raising the aspiration of the disadvantaged community in terms of education. His confidence and achievement is justified by the upward trend over seven years of the school’s result in national tests.

## **Use of data**

Use of performance data for school improvement is a strength of the case study schools. Data is used as a driving force for raising standards and is central to the school self-evaluation process. There are four main data sources used by case study schools for self-evaluation, planning for improvement and setting targets. This includes schools’ own data including teacher assessment; RAISEonline, Fischer Family Trust (FFT) and local authority data.

These schools are now in a data rich environment and children are assessed at age 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 using key stage assessments, Cognitive Abilities Test (CATs) and GCSE public examinations. Schools use spreadsheets and school management software to keep careful records of all pupils. It is possible to look at attainment using baseline assessments/tests on entry, FSP, KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE by any combination of ethnic origin, gender, free school meal status, mobility rate, EAL stage, SEN stage, years in the school, term of birth, previous teachers, previous school, number of schools attended, date of admission and pupils address and postcodes. Schools produce their own internal teacher assessment that is widely used by senior managers, assessment co-ordinators, heads of year and heads of department and classroom teachers.

In addition to their own school produced data, the case study schools use alternative external data sources and a range of different data and analysis to make sound judgements about their school performance and progress. The case study schools effectively use the national performance and assessment data in DCSF/Ofsted

RAISEonline reports that includes contextual information, raw attainment data, contextual value added and target information. This is supplemented by other national data produced by Fisher Family Trust which is similar to those contained in RAISEonline. The FFT and RAISEonline are circulated to the senior management team.

The schools also use a range of historical comprehensive benchmarking, contextual and value-added data provided by the local authority. Schools use the Local Authority School Profile which provides a comprehensive set of benchmarking data to support governors and headteachers in developing their roles and exercising their responsibilities for the strategic management of schools. The school profile data is used to identify possible strengths and weaknesses of the school and asks a number of questions of overall school performance such as *‘what does it tell me about my school? Do we know why we are in that position? Are we happy to be where we are? Where do we want to be in one or two year’s time and how do we get there?’* (Demie 2003a:463).

The case study schools also use extensively customised local authority contextual and value-added data. (Demie 2003a:463). The FSP, KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 contextual report provides analysis by factors such as gender, ethnic background, fluency in English, free school meals and mobility rate. Value-added data is also used extensively in schools to track the performance of individual pupils to monitor their educational progress. This value-added information includes scatter plots by ethnic background, free school meals and gender and is *‘seen in the schools, along with other pupil performance information, as essential to enhance teachers’ abilities to analyse their effectiveness in terms of the progress their pupils have made and to enable them to take necessary steps for improvement.’*

The schools and governors use contextual and value-added reports to monitor progress over time and to identify factors influencing performance, to identify key areas of action, to ensure improvements and to set targets and address issues of underperforming groups of pupils. Over time the schools’ own data, the local authority contextual and value-added reports and RAISEonline reports have been very useful in asking a number of the following questions in the context of factors influencing performance in the school:

- How does the school compare to other borough schools in respect of performance at entry KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE, by gender, free school meals, mobility rate, and terms of birth and levels of fluency in English?
- What is the relative performance of different ethnic groups and mobile pupils in the school compared to the local authority and national averages?
- What is the relative performance of different ethnic groups by free school meals and gender in the school compared to the local authority and national average?
- How many pupils appear to be achieving less than expected levels in the end of KS2, KS3 and GCSE tests?
- What are the school’s strengths and weaknesses?
- What must be done to improve?

These questions are debated and discussed at staff and governors meetings as a basis for self-evaluation and raising standards in all schools. As a result the senior management team, teaching staff and governors are well informed of the performance trends of the schools.

Overall, in all case study schools, monitoring and tracking performance is seen as an effective method of raising achievement levels. The schools make detailed analysis of data to enable them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of its performance not only across phase, subjects and groups of pupils, ethnic groups, socio-economic indicators, but also class by class, pupil by pupil and question by question, using the full range of raw, contextual and value added data produced by schools, LA, DCSF/ Ofsted and FFT. This has helped the case study schools to diagnose the reasons for any variations in performance, to identify priorities for improvement, to plan the actions and to put in place the support to bring about that improvement. For white working class pupils the data on White British was further analysed by gender and free school meals to identify underachievement. White working class pupils are as well targeted as any another group. The schools regard improving the use of data as the key element of improving schools and identifying underachieving groups.

### **Case study: Use of data in Dunraven School**

Use of performance data for school improvement is a strength of Dunraven School. The school sees this as an essential part of school improvement and has used data as one of the key levers of change and improvement. The use of data involves all 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 management information and pupil tracking system that suits the needs of Dunraven School. It allows a good range of telling evidence to be collected, analysed and evaluated including:

- detailed CATS, KS2, KS3 and GCSE assessment data
- 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 teachers class has been attended, attendance rate, types of support, postcode data.

The school continues to refine the data held in its information and data tracking system, ensuring the data are simple, accessible, easy to understand and manageable. The systems can identify 'threshold' students and so trigger interventions. Using red, amber and green to indicate actual against expected levels of progress, attainment is clear and easy to grasp, which is useful for discussion with families. Families are regularly informed about their child's progress.

**Table 6. Sample class spreadsheet for pupil tracking and monitoring**

| Surname Forename | KS4 Course Work Concern- Progress Report | KS4 Effort- Progress Report | KS4 Effort- Progress Report | KS4 Home Work Concern - Progress Report | KS4 mock- Progress Report | KS4 Current Performance- Progress Report | KS4 Dunraven Target |
|------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Pupil 1          | A  |                             | B                           |   | *A                        | *A                                       | *A                  |
| Pupil 2          | A  |                             | A                           |   | A                         | A  | *A                  |
| Pupil 20         | C  |                             | A                           |   | NA                        | A  |                     |
| Pupil 21         | C  |                             | B                           |   | A                         | A  | A                   |
| Pupil 33         | C  |                             | B                           |   | C                         | C  | A                   |
| Pupil 34         | A  |                             | A                           |   | B                         | A  | A                   |
| Pupil 35         | A  |                             | A                           |   | B                         | A  | B                   |
| Pupil 47         | A  |                             | B                           |   | B                         | A  | A                   |
| Pupil 49         | A  |                             | A                           |   | B                         | A  | B                   |
| Pupil 50         | A  |                             | B                           |   | C                         | B  | A                   |
| Pupil 52         | A  |                             | B                           |   | B                         | A  | A                   |
| Pupil 55         | C  | X                           | B                           |   | C                         | B  | B                   |
| Pupil 56         | A  |                             | B                           |   | B                         | A  | B                   |
| Pupil 57         | A  |                             | B                           |   | B                         | A  | A                   |
| Pupil 61         | B  |                             | C                           | X                                       | C                         | C  | A                   |

| % Grade     | Target        | Mock          | Current Performance |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| *A          | 3.2%          | 4.3%          | 4.3%                |
| A           | 20.9%         | 10.3%         | 21.8%               |
| B           | 23.0%         | 12.4%         | 8.5%                |
| C           | 38.0%         | 33.5%         | 27.1%               |
| <b>A*-C</b> | <b>85.0%</b>  | <b>60.5%</b>  | <b>61.7%</b>        |
| D           | 11.8%         | 17.8%         | 20.7%               |
| E           | 3.2%          | 14.1%         | 14.9%               |
| F           | 0.0%          | 5.9%          | 2.7%                |
| G           | 0.0%          | 1.6%          | 0.0%                |
| <b>A*-G</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>100.0%</b>       |
| U           | 0.0%          | 0.0%          | 0.0%                |
| X           | 0.0%          |               |                     |
| APS         |               |               |                     |
| With result | 187           | 185           | 188                 |



Student exceeded this predictive data

Student on par with predictive data



1 Grade below predictive data  
2 or more grades below predictive data/data missing

Periodically, the data is updated and progress towards targets is estimated. Students and staff have regularly updated grids including: the student's current attainments and personal targets; cohort list; detailed background, attainment and target data; classwork concern; homework concern; KS3 and KS4 mock results; key stage current performance based on teacher assessment; and the Dunraven targets. Targets are based upon Cognitive Ability Tests (CATS), Fischer Family Trust (FFT) estimates, RAISEonline predictions and Dunraven's additional challenging targets. Indicative grades are set for Key Stage 3 and GCSE.

This data enables the schools to identify what steps they need to take to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The data system in the school is highly flexible. Data can be retrieved in many combinations at any time, to look at the performance, for example, those with English as an Additional Language, Gifted and Talented, ethnic background, language spoken, free school meals, SEN stage, mobility rate, attendance rate, types of support, etc.

**Table 7. Sample of Target spreadsheet based upon CATs, FFT, RAISE predictions**

| Name    | Attendance (%) | Ethnic background | Gender | EAL | SEN | CAT Prediction | FISCHER Prediction | RAISE Prediction | FINAL GCSE GRADE | % Grade     | CAT   | Fischer | RAISE  |
|---------|----------------|-------------------|--------|-----|-----|----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------|---------|--------|
| Pupil1  | 84.2           | other Black       | F      | 4   | N   | B              | *A                 | *A               | *A               | *A          | 0.0%  | 58.6%   | 35.3%  |
| Pupil2  | 85.8           | Other group       | F      |     | N   | C              | *A                 |                  | A                | A           | 33.3% | 20.7%   | 17.6%  |
| Pupil3  | 82.4           | White British     | M      | 5   | N   |                | C                  | C                | C                | B           | 23.8% | 13.8%   | 17.6%  |
| Pupil4  | 82.4           | White British     | M      | 5   | N   | B              | *A                 | *A               | A                | C           | 33.3% | 6.9%    | 29.4%  |
| Pupil5  | 67.4           | White             | M      |     | N   | A              | *A                 | *A               | B                | A*-C        | 90.5% | 100%    | 100.0% |
| Pupil6  | 82.1           | Caribbean         | M      | 5   | N   | B              | *A                 |                  | *A               | D           | 9.5%  | 0.0%    | 0.0%   |
| Pupil7  | 80.8           | Caribbean         | M      |     | N   | C              | C                  | C                | B                | E           | 0.0%  | 0.0%    | 0.0%   |
| Pupil8  | 77.3           | African           | F      |     | N   | A              | A                  | A                | *A               | F           | 0.0%  | 0.0%    | 0.0%   |
| Pupil9  | 78.1           | White British     | F      |     | N   | C              | B                  | C                | A                | G           | 0.0%  | 0.0%    | 0.0%   |
| Pupil10 | 80.8           | White British     | M      |     | N   | A              | *A                 | *A               | *A               | A*-G        | 100%  | 100%    | 100%   |
| Pupil11 | 84.2           | Caribbean         | M      |     | N   | A              | *A                 |                  | *A               | U           | 0.0%  | 0.0%    | 0.0%   |
| Pupil12 | 75.7           | White British     | F      |     | N   |                | B                  | C                | C                | X           | 0.0%  | 0.0%    | 0.0%   |
| Pupil13 | 75.4           | Chinese           | F      |     | N   | B              | A                  | A                | *A               | APS         | 45    | 54      | 50     |
| Pupil14 | 87.2           | Vietnamese        | F      | 4   | N   | C              | A                  | B                | *A               | Reliability | 0.25  | 0.59    | 0.64   |
| Pupil15 | 85.0           | Bangladeshi       | M      | 4   | N   | D              | B                  | B                | B                | Residual    | 1.52  | -0.28   | 0.24   |
| Pupil16 | 80.2           | Chinese           | M      |     | N   | A              | *A                 |                  | *A               | -           |       |         |        |

|             |                                       |             |   |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|---|
| <div></div> | Student exceeded this predictive data | <div></div> | 1 Grade below predictive data                       |
| <div></div> | Student on par with predictive data   | <div></div> | 2 or more grades below predictive data/data missing |

There are a number of good practices in the use of data in Dunraven School and evidence provided during the school visit confirms that:

- The school produces it's own internal CAT, key stages assessment and GCSE information which is widely circulated and used by senior leaders, Directors of Learning, classroom teachers, learning mentors and classroom 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 for self-evaluation, tracking individual pupil performance and target setting. Local Authority and nationally available data is effectively used for tracking students' progress between entry and KS2, KS3 and KS4 and to set challenging targets. The students are well aware of their targets and how they might achieve them, with a wide range of support mechanisms in place
- Teachers have ready access to student data including attendance, behaviour and assessment results. Test results and teacher assessments are analysed to illuminate aspects of student performance



Subject teachers and tutors use data and other assessment information to review the performance and expectations of students. Teachers also make particularly effective use of data to monitor and review individual pupil progress, especially to identify signs of underachievement or unusual potential and to provide support for differentiated groups of students and to help set targets for students and subject departments

- Attendance data is extensively used at all levels to support teaching and learning. The data team provide all teachers and the senior team with colour coded data where green refers to 95% and above attendance, yellow 90-94% and red below 90%. This data is prepared by year group, class and for individual pupils and is well used in the school
- Data is made available across the school and is used to help review students' progress and set targets. The Principal, the senior team and teachers have an accurate assessment of the school and individual student progress. As a result the school is effective in tracking and identifying any individuals or groups of all abilities who are not achieving as well as they could
- Teachers make effective use of data to evaluate the quality of provision and to identify and provide targeted support for differentiated groups of students. 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 and making changes to the teaching programme or curriculum, such as, more personalised or differentiated teaching to meet the needs of EAL students or SEN students in targeted initiatives to improve performance. This effective use of data and targeted support was demonstrated to us as part of the classroom observation we attended in the mixed ability group. Data is also used in the school effectively to review student setting and teaching groups and this has helped in raising achievement.

The above good practice is well articulated by the school's Data and Intervention team at the school. Interviews with the Principal, Deputy Principals, teachers, Learning mentor and Teaching assistants also further confirmed that the school uses data to track student progress, set targets, identify underachieving students for further support, inform learning and teaching and strategic planning and to inform the setting and grouping of students. The school understands how well their students are doing. The school routinely monitors not just students' academic standards, but also teaching, learning and other aspects of their provision to evaluate the extent to which they are adding to students' education, well-being and care. The monitoring is linked to evaluation and the identification of priorities for improvement. These self-evaluation processes have helped the school to identify further potential strengths and areas for improvement. Overall, the school is thorough and rigorous in the use of target setting, assessment and tracking individual students' performance to raise achievement. Data is used well to inform school improvement planning and self-evaluation. The recent Ofsted inspection supports the views of the Data Team and the school leadership team and states that:

*"The detailed monitoring data based on GCSE module results and submitted coursework demonstrate that standards have not only been maintained this year but have improved from last year. These indicate that the challenging GCSE targets will not only be met but exceeded. The percentage of students leaving with 5+A\*-G is very high and demonstrates the inclusive nature of the school."* (Ofsted 2009)



The successful use of data owes much to the Principal's vision to set up a strong Data and Intervention team led by a Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal for Assessment and Data Manager. They are responsible for collating and monitoring trends and analysing how the school performed in relation to similar schools and schools nationally. Comparisons are made between subjects using raw, contextual and value added analysis data. Directors of Learning are expected to identify and target specific areas of improvement in their Departmental Development Plan. Teachers are also asked by the Data and Interventions team and the senior team to identify and monitor the progress of individual students who are underachieving. The school developed a strong sense of unity of purpose in its effort to improve through effective use of data in teaching and learning. The rapid analysis of data by the Data and Intervention team in the school means that areas for development are picked up and can become a priority for targeted intervention. Our observation during a two day visit to the school confirms that school leaders identify what does or does not seem to be going well at a very early stage and they act upon it swiftly to counteract underachievement, poor behaviour and any unsatisfactory attitudes to learning.

To conclude, one common feature of the strategies for raising achievement in Dunraven School is the intelligent use of assessment data, progress- tracking, target setting and targeted support for students who might be slipping behind, with targeted interventions. Every student is expected and encouraged to achieve their full potential by teachers in Dunraven Secondary school. These high expectations are underpinned by the effective use of data to pinpoint underachievement and target additional support:

*'Data is critical for raising standards. It is useful to track student progress and identify strengths and weaknesses.'* (Deputy Principal)

### **Case Study: Use of data in Crown Lane Primary School**

Use of individual pupil progress and achievement data are at the heart of Crown Lane school improvement agenda and is a strength of the school. The school keeps records of all pupils and it has its own good tracking systems developed by the headteacher who uses an excel database for data management. (see Table 8 and 9)

The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for driving up standards. He believes that there needs to be a shared understanding of performance data across the school and how it is used to raise pupil performance. In order to facilitate this, after an assessment week three times a year the school holds a Learning Assessment Forum Week (LAFW). Each class teacher is released for a day to work in the morning with the headteacher to analyse their class data and the Inclusion Manager and SENCO in the afternoon to discuss targeted support, to *'discuss the groupings, whether particular children would benefit from extra reading support or to start the statementing process for a particular child. It's about balancing out the resources we have'*. At present there are target groups of children, 6 in reading, 6 in writing and 6 in maths. *'The idea is that teachers must turn these children from red, at the beginning of the year, to green (national age related expectation colour on the tracking chart). The idea is for the class teacher and TA to take ownership for the learning of those children. I want them to be empowered to make the difference.'*

*I want them to say.. this is the resource I need to make the difference to this child. I want this to be self perpetuating rather than all from me, I want the phase leaders to take over this role and report back to me.'* (headteacher)

The Key Stage 2 teachers always have access to the KS1 results so that they can assess progress from Year 2. There are many moderation meetings throughout the year, both whole school and in phase groups. There are whole school priorities e.g. writing but sometimes LAFW meetings with individual teachers can highlight that the whole school priority is not appropriate for a particular year group e.g. in Year 5 this year writing was not the priority but maths achievement overall. *'We need to learn this lesson by November so that something can be done about it quickly.'* (headteacher)

Data is used for a number of purposes and it is widely shared with classroom teachers and senior staff. There is evidence that individual teachers within the classroom use data for lesson planning, to track the progress of pupils, to inform targets for individual pupils and ethnic groups; to identify weaknesses in topics or aspects of class teaching as a whole. The school uses data for targeted support and staff spend a good deal of time during the year *'drilling down'* to individual needs. The headteacher has brought in new, extra, teachers since he started at the school to ensure flexible high quality support where it is needed. An example of this is that children in Years 2, 4 and 6 have had high quality guided reading and writing support from teachers, rather than TAs on top of their daily curriculum which has had an impact on their achievement. One of the extra teachers is an experienced literacy teacher who is able to teach collaboratively with class teachers. In September there is a 'transition year' for the Reception children going into Year 1. There will be three cohorts of 20 children. *'This is because even the children who get 7's on the Foundation Stage Profile don't necessarily progress all the way to 1a by the end of Year 1, usually an indication that they will get a level 2b. Sometimes they need some extra input in Year 1.'* (headteacher)

The Inclusion team has 3 part time teachers who cover teaching interventions such as EAL support, Gifted and Talented, Talking partners, group support in the Foundation Stage, team teaching in maths and reading comprehension support in Year 6. Teachers plan together with their parallel year group teacher for 9 days of learning. The 10th day is their PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time when their class receive a maths workshop and an English workshop either side of lunchtime.

*'Children get consistency with their PPA time as they know the teachers and the PPA teachers are not picking up someone else's planning.'* (headteacher)

Teachers also work across both classes, for example there might be a Year 1 phonics intervention group for the whole year group. This is mutually supportive and means that teachers can draw upon each other's expertise which has benefits for the children they teach.

Sixteen children have had ten weeks 1:1 tuition, funded by City Challenge, all on writing. These were children that were low level 3's, *'they've been turned into high level 3's which has made them overall level 4 in English. This has made a difference to white working class children here.'*

**Table 8. Sample of spreadsheet to track Pupils progress for Year 5 – Reading**

| Name     | Reading- Pupil Progress Year 5 |     |         |     |               |     |               |     |               |     |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----|---------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|
|          | KS1                            | APS | July Y4 | APS | Autumn Term 2 | APS | Spring Term 4 | APS | Summer Term 6 | APS |
| Pupil 1  | 2b                             | 15  | 2a      | 17  | 3b            | 21  | 3b            | 21  | 3a            | 23  |
| Pupil 2  | 2b                             | 15  | 3b      | 21  | 3a            | 23  | 4b            | 27  | 4b            | 27  |
| Pupil 3  | 2c                             | 13  | 3a      | 23  | 3b            | 21  | 3a            | 23  | 4c            | 25  |
| Pupil 4  | 1c                             | 7   | 2b      | 15  | 2b            | 15  | 2a            | 17  | 2a            | 17  |
| Pupil 5  | 2a                             | 17  | 4c      | 25  | 4c            | 25  | 4b            | 27  | 4a            | 29  |
| Pupil 6  | 1c                             | 7   | 3c      | 19  | 3b            | 21  | 2a            | 17  | 3b            | 21  |
| Pupil 7  | 2a                             | 17  | 4c      | 25  | 4c            | 25  | 4b            | 27  | 5c            | 31  |
| Pupil 8  | 2a                             | 17  | 4b      | 27  | 4c            | 25  | 4b            | 27  | 5c            | 31  |
| Pupil 9  | 2b                             | 15  | 4c      | 25  | 4c            | 25  | 4c            | 25  | 4c            | 25  |
| Pupil 10 | 2b                             | 15  | 3b      | 21  | 3a            | 23  | 3a            | 23  | 3a            | 23  |
| Pupil 11 | W                              | 5   | 1c      | 7   | 1c            | 7   | 1c            | 7   | 1c            | 7   |

N.B:

1. School use for all year groups progress including for writing, reading and maths. This is a sample for Reading.
2. Red is behind age related, yellow is in year on track but not at (therefore could be one or two sub levels behind depending on when in year); Green is at age related and purple in advance of age related. These are all considered to end of year expectations.

**Table 9. Sample of spreadsheet to track pupils progress for Y5 – Reading, Writing and Maths 2008-2009**

| Name     | WRITING |         |               |               |               | READING |         |               |               |               | MATHS |         |               |               |               |
|----------|---------|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|          | KS1     | July Y4 | Autumn Term 2 | Spring Term 4 | Summer Term 6 | KS1     | July Y4 | Autumn Term 2 | Spring Term 4 | Summer Term 6 | KS1   | July Y4 | Autumn Term 2 | Spring Term 4 | Summer Term 6 |
| Pupil 14 | 2a      | 3a      | 3a            | 3a            | 4c            | 2a      | 4c      | 4b            | 4a            | 4a            | 2b    | 3b      | 3b            | 3b            | 3a            |
| Pupil 15 | 1a      | 3c      | 3c            | 3c            | 3b            | 1a      | 2b      | 2a            | 3c            | 3b            | 1c    | 2b      | 2b            | 3c            | 3b            |
| Pupil 17 | 2b      | 3b      | 3a            | 3a            | 4c            | 2b      | 3b      | 3a            | 3a            | 4c            | 2b    | 3b      | 3c            | 3b            | 3a            |
| Pupil 18 | W       | 1b      | 1a            | 2c            | 2c            | W       | 1c      | 1a            | 1a            | 2c            | W     | 2c      | 2c            | 2a            | 2a            |
| Pupil 19 |         | 2b      | 2a            | 2a            | 3c            |         | 4c      | 3b            | 3a            | 4c            |       | 3b      | 3c            | 3b            | 3a            |
| Pupil 20 | 1a      | 2b      | 2b            | 2a            | 3c            | 2c      | 2b      | 2a            | 3c            | 3c            | 2b    | 3b      | 3c            | 3b            | 3a            |
| Pupil 21 | 2b      | 3b      | 3b            | 3b            | 3a            | 2b      | 3b      | 3a            | 4c            | 4b            | 2b    | 3c      | 3c            | 3c            | 3a            |
| Pupil 23 | 2b      | 3a      | 3b            | 3a            | 3a            | 2b      | 3b      | 3a            | 4c            | 4b            | 1a    | 3b      | 3b            | 3b            | 3a            |
| Pupil 24 | 2a      | 3b      | 3a            | 3a            | 4c            | 2a      | 4c      | 4c            | 4b            | 4a            | 2a    | 3a      | 3a            | 3a            | 4c            |

N.B: The data system is highly flexible. The spreadsheet has all social background data and can be retrieved by English As Additional Language, gifted and talented, ethnic background, language spoken, free school meals, SEN stage, mobility rate, attendance rate, types of support, class attended and used by classroom teachers.

## Use of a relevant inclusive curriculum

The case study schools have worked hard to include the many cultures, backgrounds and languages of the children within school life through celebrations, displays and the daily curriculum. However many staff recognise the need to include more 'white working class culture' in the school curriculum. They are reflecting on what it means to be white working class and how that should be represented in the life of the school. For some this means a move towards a more community based curriculum.

As a staff we have reflected on the curriculum on offer and are aware of the attention to Black History Month and other cultural content which has supported some children in different groups enabling them to flourish. We are aware that not only does the curriculum not necessarily meet the needs of the white children but it might also *'impede their sense of identity and put them in a situation where they are marginalised with a perceived lack of cultural heritage, traditional dress etc. Therefore we are rethinking the curriculum to meet the needs of all children. Instead of focusing on Black History Month we want to plot black history across the year and to also think carefully about including events from the Christian calendar in the curriculum. Also we want more flexibility in the curriculum so for example in Year 5 they are studying a 'famous person' so we are letting the children choose their own famous person to study.'*  
(Allen Edwards Primary School)

*'We are moving towards 'themed learning'. There has always been a traditional curriculum here anyway, but we are moving towards a 'Hitherfield curriculum' to reflect our local community. We are addressing the question, 'what would White British working class culture look like for this community?'*  
(Hitherfield Primary School)

*'The school is developing a curriculum for the community. Children have done a lot of history on the local area and next term plan to study the history of our school. Staff take advantage of the school's central location e.g. all of KS2 visited the Royal Albert Hall for the Proms having talked about the Albert Memorial statue first. We're also linked to the Oval cricket ground for cricket training, the David Beckham Academy. We linked with the Old Vic, (gifted and talented pupils wrote scripts and performed at the Young Vic) and to museums, art galleries and concert halls around South Bank. It's all about widening horizons and getting the history out of each visit or event.'*

Music is a strength of the school and there is a dedicated full-time music teacher who teaches all classes, leads the choir and has established instrumental music tuition. The choir have had the opportunity to perform at the Royal Festival Hall which is nearby.  
(St Anne's RC Primary School)

In some schools the curriculum is child-focused, inclusive and creative. This has benefited the white working class pupils as they feel valued and can see themselves and their place in the curriculum.

*'The reason I like it here and want to stay is because our curriculum is child led. We look at the children we have got and plan accordingly. When we develop the curriculum it starts from the children. The reason that inclusion is good in this school is because the curriculum is child-based. It is hard to make a curriculum inclusive if you are just taking things from outside the school, because whoever developed those materials doesn't know the children. The Arts have always been a strength of this school. Speaking and listening that goes along with the Arts, and maths and science. When the National Strategies came in, some schools lost it because they tried to deal with subjects discretely. Because the Arts are a strength here we have held on to our belief that art is a great way of acknowledging children's achievements. Every member of staff knows that the leadership supports this way of working. We have confidence that we are doing well. Each class leads an assembly on a rota basis, which is topic based and includes music, story telling, poetry, drama and pupils sharing their work. It takes place on Friday mornings and parents and governors are invited to attend. The children prepare the assembly, they plan it, arrange the music and technology. I cannot understand it when schools say: 'we don't have time to do that anymore'. The sharing, the social skill development, all of this promotes the children's confidence and engenders a desire to perform. They also receive immediate feedback from parents and other pupils. All classes have 2/3 visits to places of interest per term to enrich their experience. We do have our curriculum plan and we don't go away from them. We know what is to be covered but at the point of delivery there is more freedom, 'our way of doing it.'*

Key-Stage Co-ordinator: Walnut Tree Walk Primary School.

The Centre for Language in Primary Education Heritage Writing Project has motivated many children in the school in that it allows children to explore their own heritage so their learning is relevant to them. The main aim behind the writing project is to support teachers in developing children's sense of their own cultural heritage and identity using texts and approaches in order to enhance writing development. Teachers use a range of 'emotionally powerful' texts that reflect the cultural background of the children in school and deal with important themes relating to identity, for example, places and journeys, memories and racism.

*'This has had the effect of motivating different children, especially boys. Moving towards a more creative curriculum which makes wider connections, shows a wider world is good for the White British children.'*

(Loughborough Primary School)

An assistant head at one primary school has reflected on the fact that one can't make assumptions about the life experiences that children have had, whether they were born here or not. One cannot assume that all children that were born in this country have been to the park or the seaside. The school has adopted an experiential approach to the curriculum to give children a practical experience of what they will be learning about and a chance to be immersed in the vocabulary before they begin to write. By offering them experiences in different ways with a big focus on a visual curriculum it is hoped that all children will have an equal access to the curriculum:

*'We make sure that they have different experiences in different ways, visits, school trips and children bringing in things from home. There has been a tradition of this in Key Stage 1 but we have implemented it throughout the school. We have noticed that some children can become pressurised into keeping up with the*



*curriculum. As a school we have become more flexible, we'll give them time to learn. There is an emphasis on slowing down and broadening out, quality not quantity.'* (Assistant Headteacher, Hitherfield Primary School)

At one school, reflecting on the language and literacy difficulties faced by many pupils, staff aim to address language within all subject areas.

*'Students can see Art as a way to avoid writing but we now link Art to the Literacy curriculum. Students are studying the poem, 'The Lady of Shallot' in literacy and art; we are discussing visual interpretations of the poem, stories based on the picture. This will really help with students' written work.'* (teacher, Norwood School)

The Art department works hard to engage students with different art forms – e.g. Photoshop and with a project on shoes which involves a study of Andy Warhol and graffiti as well as the more traditional art forms. It also provides a foundation in artistic concepts which could lead to a variety of careers choices e.g. cake decoration, design etc.

Norwood Secondary School

In other schools there is a conscious effort to include White British culture in the life of the school.

At the time of case study visits the Year 5 pupils were being 'evacuated' to the Lincolnsfields Centre, Bushy for a World War Two experience. This is a three day experience of war time England in the 1940's to experience life as a child evacuee. Before the visit children had been making their own ID labels and Gas mask boxes and listened to many World War Two (WW2) songs. Children were evacuated by coach and taken to the WW2 heritage site which was once the headquarters of the USAAF fighter command from 1942-1945 and still has 12 WW2 buildings. During their three day stay children shopped for food using ration cards, use pre decimal coinage and weights, experience a bombed out London street, visit a 1940's house and handle clothing and artefacts from the period, take part in drill sessions and air raid procedures and respond to an air raid alert. Their meals are based on WW2 food. They have an evacuee's day where they help as Land Army volunteers in the farm, trying 'make do and mend' activities and helping with washing in the 1940's kitchen. On the final day they have a VE day victory lunch.

*'We sell poppies in school and have an assembly about Remembrance Day to educate the children about this issue. We also had a Queen's Jubilee celebration a few years ago with a 'street party' in the playground with decorations and food outside.'*

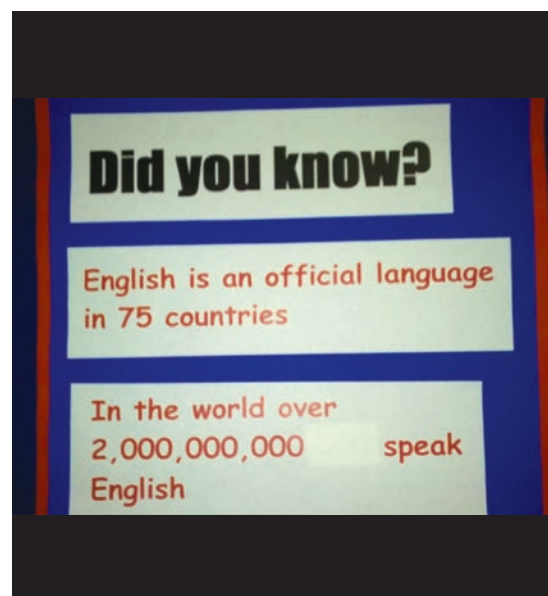
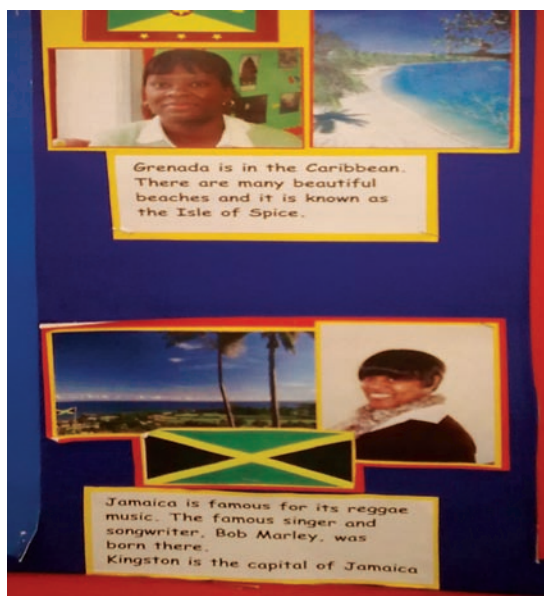
(Deputy Headteacher, St Anne's RC Primary School)

The Language of the Month is displayed prominently in the school foyer. The language this month is English, but the fact that English is a language spoken all over the world, and by people of all ethnicities, is acknowledged. Because of the diversity of staff at St. Anne's, there is a greater understanding between all members of the community, of the links between them, for example English is the official language in 75 countries and that Portuguese is spoken by Angolan and Brazilian pupils as well as those from Madeira!



There is a display to celebrate languages spoken at the school which changes termly. At present this display is to celebrate that English is spoken in the school – it includes which countries are represented in the school which speak English e.g. Canada, USA, Grenada, Jamaica and New Zealand. It also includes some information about that country.

St Anne's RC Primary



Schools use the curriculum to give children different experiences that they might not have with their parents, experiences that widen horizons, raise aspiration and give them access to opportunities that they may take up later in life.

*'At Kingswood we never let money be a barrier to achievement. We use the curriculum to kill class barriers. We find positive ways of transcending the class barrier, of widening children's horizons. We also provide a range of first hand experience for children to learn from.'* (Headteacher)

The school strives to provide a range of experiences for children and their parents. As part of 'keeping Healthy Week' the school paid for 90 children to have horse riding lessons, 90 to have sailing lessons and the same amount to have dry ski-ing lessons. *'We inspire children to want to learn more, to wet their appetites. We want them to say that when they grow up they want to try them again. As part of our programme of teaching Mandarin here we took 30 children to have lunch in Chinatown; we took 40 children to the opera, Don Giovanni as part of the Gifted and Talented programme exploring the idea of plot and language beforehand. All children experienced Japanese drummers, Chinese dance theatre as part of Arts Fortnight and as part of World Week all children had the opportunity to go on a sight seeing trip of London on a routemaster bus. They must know that London is their wider community, those buildings belong to them.'*

*The next step for us is to take the parents and carers to museums and other key places. 'We want them to know that 'this belongs to you', we will target parents for this in a discreet way. It all feeds into pupil achievement. 'The key for us is putting the children at the core of every decision we make in school.'*

The PE co-ordinator highlighted the lack of opportunities for children to play sport etc after school in the area.

*'We make links with organisations through school, the Brixton Bulls, Surrey Cricket Club, and encourage children through these channels if they show a passion for the sports. We can tell from children's holiday news that they spend a lot of time in front of video games, the television.'*

Again the Reception teacher highlights *'it's about working around the children's interests, the hardest barrier is to get them engaged. I was lucky enough to go to Australia with a group of teachers where we learnt about this issue. An example is planning around Superheroes, teaching the basic skills through books and stories that the class might be interested in. We celebrate British cultures through stories e.g. Jack and the Beanstalk, we are now planting seeds for the Easter garden.*

The headteacher believes in the importance of providing a fantastic environment for our children, a building fit for purpose. *'The toilets, the lunches, having breakfast ready in my cupboard for any child who hasn't had it; it's about having the fundamental care things in place. We now employ a housekeeper to show our attention to detail in this area.'*

Kingswood Primary School

Some schools have thought carefully about the flexibility of their timetables and curriculum in order to ensure that students 'get something out of their schooling.'

*We have a Supported Curriculum for students that are below national curriculum levels when they enter in Year 7. This will be for 15 students and will focus on literacy and numeracy support. In Year 10 and 11 we have curriculum support for students and many white boys benefit from this. They do fewer GCSEs and get extra help with their homework. We might say- bring your essay, let's have a look at it together.'* (Dunraven Secondary School)

The SEN department works with the two Year 7 classes. In the first few weeks of the year they team teach with PSHCEE teachers and identify the students that would benefit from this intervention. *'We withdraw 10 students and work on independent learning skills around the five SEAL themes e.g. empathy. As a result there have been fewer incidences of challenging behaviour. If there is, it is located around individuals rather than groups. We are constantly working on how to articulate frustration, how to approach different situations. It's about making high quality relationships. An aim of the school is that every student should have a trusting relationship with at least one adult within the school.'*

Dunraven Secondary School

One primary headteacher had said,

*'We have to look at a more vocational type of education in our secondary schools for our young people, as we did years ago, when if you didn't go to College you could do an apprenticeship somewhere or work in an office or factory.'* (School L)

At Dunraven School this issue has begun to be tackled through the Increased Flexibility Project.

### Increased Flexibility Project

By Year 10/11 some of the students want to be doing something a little more flexible, something practical within their learning. Dunraven has links with various colleges e.g. Lambeth and Southwark. These students, many of whom are white working class students, go to college once a week to do, for example, Car Mechanics or study Child Care.

*'These might be students who sometimes struggle at school but yet are the first to change a wheel on the college course! They are always on time for college, they like it, they get treated like adults, it's a more relaxed environment. It's a bit of a carrot and stick- going to college keeps them on track at school and many of them go onto college full time at a later date. They catch up with their missed lessons in Curriculum Support time.'*

Child A in Year 10 goes to college once a week for motorbike maintenance. He states, *'I've always been interested in fixing bikes.'* He expressed that he doesn't feel overwhelmed with school work anymore and that college has helped with his behaviour and attitude because he gets treated more like an adult at college. It will also help him with his future plans to join the army which his Director of Learning found out about for him.

*'I've had a lot of support here, I didn't do anything from Year 3 to Year 6 at primary school but here I've had an extra adult sat helping me because I have dyslexia'. A member of staff said of Child A- 'the college course has had a big impact on him. We hope he gets into the army- it will be a way out for him.'*

Child B is in Year 10. She has been to 4 primary schools including a Language Unit.

*'The school picked 20 of us and explained what a college course was about. We had a booklet with different courses and I chose Child Care. I go to Southwark; I like it because I'm meeting new people in a different community. We get treated like adults too. It's relaxed at college. I've had a lot of 1:1 support here.'*

*'If I get my 5 GCSEs I want to do Sociology and Health and Social Care because I want to be a nurse or a midwife when I leave school.'*

Dunraven School

## Support for language development amongst white working class children

Staff in schools recognise that many white working class pupils in Lambeth schools have not moved from Stage 3 in their language development and are struggling with the academic language needed to access the curriculum and to succeed in public examinations. Schools use the strategies within the EAL pilot to enhance language development across the school population.

The EAL pilot project was developed by the Primary National Strategy and the DCSF EMA team in order to increase the confidence of mainstream primary teachers in meeting the needs of advanced bilingual learners, those identified by Ofsted as having had exposure to an educational environment where English is the first language so that they are no longer in the early stages of English acquisition.

This project has enabled schools to embed language development across the curriculum. In some schools it was clear to see that particular attention has been given to inclusive teaching styles and teachers use a variety of styles and methods to take account of the ways in which children learn. There is an awareness of the learning preferences of pupils (visual, auditory and kinesthetic) and lessons include collaborative talk and practical activities.

Teachers acknowledge that many pupils receive their language models through:

*'the media, sound bites and local free papers. The language used in free newspapers is different from the national papers. Pupils are dealing with Streatham, South London and South East London accents. They say 'I dropped for 'I fell over'. I'm aware of what they mean as I grew up here. They need to know that there are differences in the way that people speak.'* (Lambeth teacher)

Some schools are using their EMA grant to tackle underachievement generally. This takes the form of TA support as well as differentiation in the planning. *'If it is the White British children that are underachieving then it is them who get the support.'* (Lambeth headteacher).

Hitherfield has adopted the approach outlined in the EAL pilot to benefit all pupils in the school whether or not they have EAL needs. The main focus has been an experiential approach to the curriculum; collaborative learning and 'code switching' with language. This is also of huge benefit to some white working class children too.

The concept of code switching has underpinned work on academic language. Many of the children need appropriate grammatical language structures in order to succeed in our academic system. The EMAG co-ordinator acknowledges that *'Code switching is what we model in literacy. There is an appropriate way to talk when you are reporting back- using grammatical sentences and using the appropriate language structures. We are the academic institution, it is up to us to model this for them, to show them the appropriate language for the appropriate situation.'*



The EMA co-ordinator has worked alongside teachers planning specific language structures for learning sessions, modelling the use of talk partners with a focus on response, in the correct way in whole sentence answers use of responding in formal grammatical sentences using characteristics of the language structure e.g. hypothesising. The aim is for this to extend to other curriculum areas. The practice is embraced throughout the whole school and the Assistant Head for Early Years noted the positive impact it had had on their CLL scores. A class teacher described the use of talk in her classroom;

*'I use talk in all my teaching. It shapes what their writing will look like. We rehearse orally what we will write; it helps with word finding difficulties and sentence structure. Children work in Buzz groups; they discuss a concept with their talk partner and then bring those ideas to their buzz groups.'*

(Hitherfield Primary School)

When they enter the Nursery and Reception classes, many White British pupils were reported to be well below average in a number of areas of learning, including language and literacy. One Reception class teacher comments: *'they can make up stories, but cannot write or recognise their names – they can engage in social chat so we use talking frames to encourage language for learning. We do this all the way through the school.'* The EMA and Year 6 teacher reiterate the need for emphasis on language and literacy across the curriculum for all pupils, including White British.

All staff, including TAs are trained in these strategies. Teachers use talk partners, talk frames and encourage language for learning from the Foundation stage as many of the White British children only have *'playground, chatting language'*. Teachers report that they have poor language structure with an inappropriate use of tenses e.g. I looked. Teachers have linked the strategies to promote language for learning that have been successful in literacy with mathematics lessons, *'a lot of work on mathematics vocabulary in mental maths.'*

*"We teach mental maths in Years 1 to 6 and focus on the language of mathematics. We now use talk partners in mathematics as it worked so well in English and other subjects. All our children need that. Year 6 pupils are talk partners with younger pupils in Reception and are lunchtime playground buddies. Year 5 pupils are Happy Helpers, volunteering to spend one lunchtime per week modelling good spoken language in the Nursery. We focus on all learning styles, practical activities and lots of songs. Some of the White British need this more than EAL pupils because their language skills are very poor. Some EAL pupils have a better facility with language."*

St Anne's RC Primary School

In the Nursery, language development is crucial and adults model spoken language clearly. The Nursery Teacher explains: *"We build on the language that they are using, but add more complex language to it, moving them on and challenging them. In the Nursery we do a lot of work on 'talk'. White British children are generally confident and quite fluent, although one boy needs a lot of encouragement to speak out loud, because the anxiety of his parents is causing him to be stressed. He is only three. We have to be careful not to switch him off – we have found ways to make him feel more relaxed and happy. We give him lots of time, praise and encouragement."*

At Key Stages 1 and 2 opportunities to develop pupils' spoken language continues with the use of writing and talking frames, to scaffold learning. Citizenship and the SEAL programme have been very helpful in encouraging children to talk about things that affect them. The school places emphasis on the citizenship curriculum/PSE using SEAL, encouraging children to talk about social issues that affect them. Most of the classes have 'worry boxes' that are anonymous; these 'worries' form the basis for circle time.

Loughborough Primary School

Cambridge Education Associates ran a Language in Literacy Project across the curriculum in Norwood School which was aimed at raising the fluency levels of Stage 3 learners. This was a theoretical and practical course in making lessons, whatever the subject, more literacy focused.

*'This benefits all students. Many White British students are stuck on stage 3 and are not fully fluent in English so cannot access academic language.'*

Staff from the modern foreign language department, do some teaching in other departments; the school sees this as a model for teaching in all subjects. The EMA co-ordinator told us:

*'I do some geography teaching in Year 8 and teach the lesson like an mfl lesson. This is really structured around the reading and writing elements. This is as critical for the White British as it is for the EAL students.'*

Norwood Secondary School

## Strategies for engaging with white working class parents

The majority of schools in this research reported that the white working class families were the hardest to engage within the life of the school and their children's learning. School staff expressed frustration at the mismatch between the high aspirations of the school and low aspirations of the parents for their children's learning, and have therefore worked hard on strategies to engage white parents with a view to raising achievement. School staff were aware that they had to draw parents in for positive reasons as a counter balance for the negative experiences that many had at school themselves.

*'Children and adults work together. We will target all those families on free school meals. The rationale is to break the cycle of low aspiration, for adults to learn new skills, to be motivated to go on learning. Then this will have a positive impact on their children.'*

*'There is a good level of parental engagement because we 'carry them...we are the driving force, we are the first port of call for them when things go wrong. We are a source of support for all our families. Sometimes we have carried families for years, parents rely heavily on our school, it's because we are the centre of the community and when our Children's Centre is built this will make it even more the case.'*  
(Assistant Headteacher, Hitherfield Primary)

Another member of staff talked about the relationships the school builds with parents being crucial to their engagement in the life of the school.



*'Attendance is an issue for our white working class families. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) makes a difference. An example is a parent who was cross with a teacher about homework; her daughter's attendance was in the 70's- she was able but underachieving. With the work of the EWO she became 100%!*

*(Assistant Headteacher, Kingswood Primary)*

*'It's always about the relationship that you make with the family. We have a White British family who have Social Services involvement; there are drug issues, parents at odds with each other. The success of the children is totally about the relationship we have with the family now; even if it starts in Nursery and takes until Year 4. We are in it for the long haul, we invest in families-chatting, positive phone calls, saying 'thank you for the part you are playing in x's progress.'*

*(Assistant Headteacher, Kingswood Primary)*

On arrival at Hitherfield it is possible to see the strong staff presence in the playground to greet families at the beginning of the school day. The headteacher and deputy and three assistant heads as well as the learning mentors are around to pre-empt issues and listen to parents. This was noted by parents who were interviewed who felt that staff were visible and approachable.

Staff have been reflective about how to build up trust amongst their parental community. White working class parents were not engaged at first but through a range of initiatives and a questionnaire they have become fully integrated into the life of the school. They are not complacent and where they have been successful they are keen for it to continue.

The headteacher is confident that the Children's Centre will offer many benefits to the local community. Much needed Speech and language therapy will be available via more dedicated time from speech and language therapist, along with a range of other services. *'There are still services out there that do not have the resources to do their work, e.g. the family support worker, who services a cluster of schools. Schools have to pick up the work that other professionals are unable to do.'*

Hitherfield Primary School

St Anne's RC school encourages parental involvement. Parents are engaged in a variety of activities in the school and the local parishes. They help prepare pupils for Holy Communion in the parish and they run prayer groups and are involved in children's liturgy as well as supporting parish youth groups. In addition the school holds regular workshops for parents in English, maths and science, sharing what their children are being taught and explaining how they can help at home. There are Family Reading Classes (run by an EMA Co-coordinator) for any parent who would like support (not just for those with EAL). The headteacher and PSHE co-ordinator lead SEAL assemblies at the beginning and end of each topic and parents are informed of what the children are being taught in each subject in a termly curriculum letter, *"this breaks down the cycle that the parent and child may have got into and it gets them involved in doing things with their children"*. School administrative staff address welfare concerns of families and will guide parents towards support from charities where there is social need. The school's administrative officer commented *'we constantly look for whether we can solve a problem for the family within the school in the first instance'*.

As a result of the excellent communication with parents, relationships are very good and parents understand their role and are supportive of the school.

There are only isolated incidents of parents not wanting their children to attend Booster classes, Saturday morning classes and not allowing them to take part in school journeys.

St Anne's RC Primary

Schools use specific strategies to get parents into school.

*'We had a 'Bring your dad to school day in the nursery' and were really impressed at the turnout, 25 dads; they were not all middle class. There were a lot of Black fathers. This is good but we are keen to hold on to this and to continue this up the school.'*

*The Children's Centre will be a good way to engage with parents straight away.'*

One way this has continued is the way in which staff encourage parents to attend Year 6 booster classes. Parents attend and learn the methods used to support their children's learning. It also has the added benefit of children seeing their parents learning too, as in the words of an excited Year 6 pupil, 'You got it wrong dad, I'll show you!'

Hitherfield Primary School

The Family Reading Project is an excellent example of parental engagement at the school. It has been running for 2 years and is targeted at Year Reception (YR) and Year 1 children and their parents. The rationale behind the project is to encourage parents to join their children, be a part of their learning, promote the importance of reading and show the impact reading can have on individual children and most importantly to see reading as fun. The school designed the project in consultation with parents. It is run by TAs which is felt by the school to have a big impact on parental participation as the TAs live in the community and know the parents. The project runs weekly after school with a mixture of activities to suit all needs and interests. It consists of some phonics input, a big book session and an activity related to the story – a game etc. The focus is on early reading skills and learning to read and sharing stories together.

*'There has really been a positive impact on some children. One boy who was new to the school really benefited from the reading. He came along with mum and his behaviour has really changed, he is really focused now, his behaviour had been a real barrier to his learning. We have targeted the 'vulnerable families' and have some dads that come too.'*

Hitherfield Primary School

An Assistant Head specifically targets certain parents to go on school trips. This is a way of getting them:

*'to realise the opportunities that exist in London, to expand their horizons. It's all a case of how big is your world. One parent didn't realise that it was free to go to a museum. I know that she has been back since with her son!'*

(Hitherfield Primary School)

**Kingswood** – In 2002 Ofsted noted that 'partnership with parents is currently poor.' Parental engagement at the school is now good.

'We don't believe it is hard to reach parents in this school. How we engage with parents underpins pupil achievement. The way that we value people is part of our ethos, our hidden curriculum. I have to model these messages as a school leader-respecting each other, judging individuals as individuals. I have made a deliberate and conscious effort to form a relationship with these parents; I use humour, and relate to people as people. I am not frightened to talk about issues, none of my staff hide behind people; it's important to get everything out on the table.

I am out there in the playground in the morning and evening.

A testament to our parental engagement is the fact that parental attendance has gone up to 93% from 19% in the last 6 years. We do make it a pleasurable experience for parents; we provide refreshments, music, and a crèche. We are flexible, if people don't come the class TA will contact the parents to arrange another time, if that doesn't work, the office will ring, as a last resort I will write a letter. We do all we can to get the parents in.' (headteacher)

The school invites parents of children in the Foundation Stage and KS1 to read with their children every Friday morning. 'There is a good turnout with dads and grandads. We again provide them with Danish pastries, tea and coffee as a "thank you" for doing this.' The Reception class teacher highlights, 'the White British boys I have are very keen to show off their reading to a parent.'

The school runs a parents forum which sets the standards agenda for our community. The forum enables parents and carers to drill down to specific practice. The agenda for the latest parents forum focused on spelling, how to help your child with spelling through games and theory. 'We provide a free crèche and have good attendance of parents from all backgrounds and genders through constant reminders. We are always explicit that children's achievement is at the heart of this.'

Kingswood Primary School

Numeracy and Literacy workshops are run for targeted groups in school to make games that they take home to play with their parents. For example, they learn maths skills/concepts.

The EMA Assistant Head is using some of the EMA grant to run other Family Learning projects which are not necessarily curriculum based. The AST with an ICT specialism runs a parent and child film group where they are supported to make a film together. Although this initially has an EAL focus the aim is to extend it for all once the equipment and Children's Centre facilities are in place.

*The emphasis is on, 'how can we attract parents/carers into school for positive reasons as so many of them had a negative experience when they were at school.'*

Through a rigorous push on open days for prospective parents and pupils, the school markets itself as 'open and approachable', selling the attitude that 'it is an honour for us for you to send your child here.'

Each prospective parent receives a postcard thanking them for visiting our school during 'Open Season' with a quantity of positive feedback comments from prospective parents from the day.

There is also a permanent role for the head of Year 7 to liaise with primary schools – this year there are 25 feeder primary schools.

*'The intake didn't used to be comprehensive in terms of ability and social background. The perception of the school has changed in the area.'*

*The uniform impacts on the way the students behave; they don't push the boundaries in the same way. The Norwood Achievement Partnership played a part in getting parents in the area back into work'*

*'The school's specialist status has had an impact. The whole school is involved; there is drama across the curriculum. This adds an extra dimension to children's education and attracts a different type of parent. Norwood is attracting parents of children who had a focus on arts in their primary education and want to continue this. They have to travel across the borough but they don't mind.'* (headteacher)

The school has a monthly 'Parent Voice' which includes 14 parents. They have an audience with staff and meet a range of people involved in the school, as well as observing lessons during the school day. If the school wants to introduce anything they will involve the 'Parent Voice'. There is an emphasis on transparency.

The staff at Norwood believes that it must do everything possible to engage parents. The home school liaison officer takes the initiative to engage and the school is seeking every avenue for parents to come and see positive things at Norwood. Every form tutor makes 5 'positive phone calls' a week so that the emphasis is on parents hearing positive things about their children. This is paramount for parents who might not have had positive experiences at school themselves.

*'This has the effect of parents thinking. I will encourage my daughter to go to school now. There appears to be a different perspective on what school is like now.'* (headteacher)

Also there are letters home, lapel badges, 'student of the week' and all provide motivation to students to achieve their best. There is also an ethos amongst the staff that if a parent rings you up you ring them back. All books are marked, homework is set and marked.

Staff feel there is now less parental dissatisfaction with the school. Parents want their children to go to Norwood. Every effort is made to get parents into school, to engage with their child's learning. At the last Parents' Evening there was 80% attendance as a result of constant reminders e.g. tutors ringing home or sending text messages. The school decided to give out students' reports to their parents at last year's Year 11 parents' evening. Students needed their reports for college interviews so they encouraged their parents to attend.

Parental engagement is also sought through the curriculum. An example is the Year 7 Summer booklet that the Art department sends home, which suggests activities that parents and their children can do together e.g. crafts and visiting museums.

Norwood Secondary School

### **The use of the children's centre to forge relationships with families**

Relationships with parents start when children are of a young age. The Family Services manager knows the families very well, well enough to 'knobble' the white parents and have a joke with them when they don't turn up to progress meetings with their key workers. He has a wide range of activities in the Children's Centre which engage parents; a Stay and Play, Computer courses, (which are popular

with white working class mothers, Arts projects with two qualified artists), and First Aid. Since September a Speech and Language Therapist has been in attendance for two days per week, running groups and parent 'drop-in' sessions. This is seen as helpful in cutting down the long referral process as it gives immediate access to parents who are concerned that their children may have language delay. There is a rigorous system of home visits by the Childcare team to children entering the Children's Centre. The child's needs are known and catered for in advance of starting at the Centre. Information, predominantly about the child goes into a Child Profile, with information also about family adults, employment status, working tax credit etc. This information gives trends about who is accessing Children's Centres. The transition for these children to the Nursery is thorough with information coffee mornings about the process, the curriculum etc.

Loughborough Primary School

## Targeted support for white working class children

### Adult support in school

One of the main ways that white working class pupils can be supported in Lambeth schools is through the deployment of extra adults to support their learning. Examples of where this has had an impact are through the support of teaching assistants, learning mentors and in one case a dedicated Family Support Worker paid for from the school budget.

With over twenty years experience in various specialist teams concerned with children and families, the Family Support Worker is a valuable asset to the school. The headteacher speaks glowingly of the difference the Family Support Worker has made to the school and community. Her role benefits the whole community,

*'I am able to assist families, make them comfortable in talking about their problems. I am not a teacher and I do not hang out in the staff room, I have my own room. I can be impartial. I have printed a huge sheet with my photo and a piece of blurb about how I work in the school. Children know me because I talk to the classes, they come and find me and tell me if they are unhappy. It is not about parents, children or teachers; it's about the whole school community. Teachers might tell me a particular child looks sad. I would meet with that child and tell them your teacher says you are sad.' The child said 'yes, I am sad; my heart is breaking – at only eight years old.'*

*'Because of my experience I know which agencies to refer children and families to where necessary. I will carry on reviewing the situation with that agency, linking all these services up, family/agency/school.'*

*'It is important that parents understand how an organisation works. They are just given access to services. Its about making parents clear about how the organisation works, and that we all need help in getting over difficulties in our lives.'*



*'Rather than the school taking a reactionary position, we say lets have a look at what's happening here because it matters to us because your child comes to our school.'*

The Family Support Worker uses a wide network of people to support children and families. For example, an art therapist comes to the school twice a week to work with children who find it difficult to express their feelings in writing, or verbally. The Children's Country Holiday Fund have developed their role from simply providing a country holiday once per year for children from inner city areas, to weekend breaks and whole class visits away together.

*'It develops life skills and socialisation, working in groups. The reality is that not all children have any of this before they enter school. They do not because they come from all sorts of backgrounds and values. Children's Country Holiday Fund are branching out further and following up children who have transferred to secondary schools now. All of this gives parents a sense that their children's education is wider than just coming to school. It enables parents and children to see the bigger picture and how they can be part of it. How do the staff help? I encourage them to be very clear on their referral forms – I ask them what do you want to achieve for this family? What are the outcomes you want the child to work towards? It is not just a matter of passing things on to me. It is about us working together as a staff. The work that I do benefits what happens in the classroom, that classroom is the community. If a child is acting out in the class it affects the whole community. For some families, coming into a school is like going to another country. Its not that we want to be nosy about what is going on in their lives, we need to know. A lot of parents do not know what difference it can make to a school if we don't know their mobile number. Part of my work is about letting families know why we need things in place.'*

*'Sometimes parents do not want to comply with the rules and they think it is none of our business if they want to bring their children late to school. You cannot lump people together, we need to understand what is unique to that family. This is part of the challenge in my job – to understand. I think everyone is resistant to some extent unless they think it will work for them.'*

*'My role is advocacy for children and families. What I like about working here is that there is flexibility. Whilst we are enabled to work within the constraints of the institution, it is important to have a measure of autonomy.'*

Walnut Tree Walk Primary School

## Targeted support from TAs

A higher level TA at Kingswood supports a group of 10 Year 3 and 4 children with basic Numeracy skills. *'We concentrated on basic counting 1-20 and 20-30 and writing of these numbers. Every week we added 10 more, now we are at 200. Also, the maths vocabulary. They didn't get their number bonds to 10 so we made a rap about it, this really helped. I have 2 girls and 8 boys in my group. One Year 6 White British boy who had erratic behaviour wanted to be a peer mediator. We told him that if he wanted to be then he had to turn himself around. He is now looking at a level 4 with the help of this group.'*



*In a class of 30 it takes a lot for a child to say in front of his peers, 'I don't understand.' In our small group if they say it, they are a hero because everyone is thinking it! They often can't do their maths problems because they can't read well. I say 'I'm not here to check your reading.' These are the children who will panic in a class situation when they can't do the maths, they diffuse the situation by messing around and getting sent out.'*

Kingswood Primary School

The deputy head looks at children's books regularly to monitor how teachers are planning for a range of abilities and tailoring for different needs. We ask, 'Are we extending those that need challenging?' She also interviews the children. There are regular pupil progress meetings with the SENCO, class teacher, head and senior managers, 'we focus in on individuals causing concern; if they are not achieving, why, what can we do? Its about bringing children into our consciousness, having a professional conversation, is there something going on at home?

At the end of the year the SENCO does a provision map looking at targeted support across the school. There is an ethos of not withdrawing from class unless essential. 'The focus is always on quality first teaching.'

'Our White British children are on School Action. Many have targeted reading support from TAs, we know that sometimes their negative attitude comes from home, it might just be that they need 10 minutes a day from a TA to give them push in the right direction.'

The TAs are trained on how to read with the children, they've had ECAR training, how to use the reading folder, how to use targeted reading time. The TAs use the reading session in two parts, the first part is to practice key vocabulary or sounds, the second part is reading the book, they have sheets to fill in to note children's progress'.

'We have a system of decentralised leadership. Within our phases we do a peer scrutiny of books and planning; we use this opportunity to share good practice as do we for peer observation- an opportunity to go and watch each other and learn from each other's practice. At a phase meeting there might be 13 teachers, everyone has got something to bring to the table.'

People knew what was expected from them when they started here, we have high expectations, and there are high expectations from us as professionals. This is an organisation full of highly skilled teachers, we all have something to offer; we all know that we can learn from each other. There is a harmony here, we all feel valued and supported, and we have the confidence to have our practice moved on by our peers. People are not frightened of being judged. We pick each others' classroom apart, constantly refining our practice. The TAs are part of this, without them we would struggle, they know that they are valued, they are the key ingredient.'

In response to the needs of the community the school now employs a full time speech and language therapist. 'We know that it is a pre requisite for high quality literacy'. Every child in the Nursery and Reception and new arrivals throughout the school are screened by the speech and language therapist, they are then screened again in Year 3.

Kingswood Primary School

There is a range of targeted and global support for students at Norwood. All Year 8s receive group work intervention around social skills, anger management, conflict resolution and restorative justice and mediation.

There are other forms of targeted support for students at Norwood. The Year 8 reading mentor project is designed to raise the literacy levels of pupils with low reading ages. About 24 students are split into smaller groups who visit primary schools and share a story and literacy game with Year 1 classes. Not only does this raise literacy levels but also student confidence and a sense of responsibility. A Year 9 Effective Learning Project is aimed at students whose attainment levels have dropped to get advice with learning strategies and exam guidance. As part of the Year 10 Coaching for Success project, external coaches come into the school to meet with an allocated group of students in year 10 to raise their attainment levels.

More general support for students was explained by a teacher at the school,

*'We have a strong relationship with students in the Art department. Support is tailored to needs. We have an open door policy so that students can come and do homework here; some have the focus on being a carer at home so their homework can suffer. We provide them with paper and post their homework online. We give them a checklist as they move towards GCSE.'*

Norwood Secondary School

Centre 44 is a unit within the school where students are able to go when they have a problem during the school day. It is managed by the Inclusions Manager and run in conjunction with two teaching assistants. Students that come to the Centre learn about reparation, conflict management and mediation, do role play and circle time as appropriate as well as being able to have 1:1 sessions with an adult. At the time when we spoke to the Inclusions Manager there were 10 students in Centre 44.

*Child A Case Study: A Year 8 white boy had 13 days exclusions throughout the school year over 6 different incidents. This boy had had difficulties in managing primary school with several school moves and found the transition to secondary school difficult. He lives with his mother, who works long hours, and older brother who is violent towards him and indulges in recreational drugs and alcohol, and a half sibling who is a baby. The family has suffered domestic violence. His father lives in Kent, and doesn't see him very often but when he does go to stay there he 'does not get fed properly.' The family talks frequently about moving to Cambridge but have threatened frequently that if his behaviour does not improve he will not be able to go with them. Although keen at first to go and live with his father he has reflected in the last year that that would not be the best option for him. He left primary school with a 3b in maths and a 2c in Science and no recorded score in English (Child A hates to write).*

*He spent a lot of time in Centre 44 involved in role play, circle time discussion, talking 1:1 reflecting on his behaviour, and learning about reparation. He also had a pastoral support plan with which his mother was involved.*

*Due to the various support that Child A has received he has now settled and his behaviour has improved. One of the reasons behind this is that he is now better able to articulate what he becomes stressed about.*

Norwood Secondary School

One teacher has recently been to Baltimore to explore how the Americans raise the achievement of boys.

As a result he has 'become more focused on what we are delivering, what difference we can make in children's lives.'

He has set up a 'Boys to Men Club' at Loughborough which works with boys selected by their teachers who would 'benefit from a male role model.' The 17 boys learn about the social aspects about growing up, read together, do activities which build self esteem and learn about how to take care of themselves.

Boys we spoke to spoke enthusiastically about the Boys to Men project 'They (the three male adults involved) help us with our reading, we go on trips to Minet Road Library; if we don't understand our homework he helps us.'

Loughborough Primary School

### The work of the learning mentor in supporting white working class families

The main aim of the learning mentor is to break down barriers to pupils' learning. Examples of barriers might be; lack of self esteem or confidence, moving school often and poor erratic or intermittent attendance.

At some schools the work of the learning mentors was imperative to family engagement and raising achievement. Mentors know their communities very well. In one school the headteacher talked about the common sense, empathetic approach which has worked with engaging some of the White British families in the community, to the extent that now some families will refer themselves to the mentors for support. One mentor summarised the secret of his success:

*'The greatest skill we have is empathy and following our own instincts. We reflect on our own practice and modify it according to the situation. We are always out there in the playground every day, accessible to parents. We talk to them at a lower level, not about the curriculum. We ask about their lives, how they are. We are non judgemental about what is going on in their lives. The children know us; the parents know us often using us as their intermediaries when they need to talk to school managers.'* (Hitherfield learning mentor)

All mentors had an excellent relationship with other staff in the school and their work was seen as integral to raising standards. Many support family learning and workshops in schools by encouraging targeted families to support, often those they have good relationships with and support. In one school they run the homework club twice a week, encouraging teachers to suggest children that they might target to attend this. They try to help children to find their own learning style.

A big part of the learning mentor's work to support families is their liaison with and signposting of parents to other services, much of this is done through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Learning mentors have a key role in initiating CAFs and getting other agencies involved. One learning mentor recently accessed a Family Support worker through the CAF for a child whose mother had recently died. Her transfer to secondary school was eased through a carefully thought out action plan, supporting her to get a uniform grant. One school talked of the link they have with Young Carers which offers children the opportunities for days out in the form of residential trips and seaside visits. They have referred a number of children to them. The role of young carer can act as a barrier to achievement for many children. A learning mentor found herself in this situation:

*'My parents separated when I was 13. I was the only female in the house; I had 3 brothers to look after. I couldn't go out anywhere but I wanted to hold onto my boyfriend. I had a baby at 15.'*

An example of the lengths that learning mentors will go to in supporting pupils/families are summarised below in three case studies of white working class families.

#### **Case Study: Family A**

This family has 6 children and lives on a local estate in a two bedroom flat. They are finding it impossible to move house. There is involvement from Social Care as there is disruption in the family. Dad is illiterate and mum has poor literacy skills. Both find it difficult to cope and the older children are self parenting and looking after the younger ones. There were big issues around attendance and therefore the learning mentor collected the children from the flat to take them to school each day. The parents have now started to take responsibility for this task and are bringing the younger children in Key Stage 1 to school. They are sometimes late but they always come along.

#### **Case Study: Family B**

A Year 2 child was brought to the attention of the learning mentor with persistent stomach aches. The child was living with mum who had mental health issues that weren't being controlled and dad, who the child saw regularly had a bad back and depression. A Social Care assessment showed that mum was abusing him emotionally. A Child Protection Order was taken out on the child and a good Social Worker assigned who was able to engage with dad and talk about future care. The child went to live with dad in a one bedroom flat. CAHMS wanted to keep Mum and child together, seeing Mum as their client. It was decided that dad should be the carer. Dad needed a lot of mentor support to keep his son with him and a lot of discussion in response to 'I've had enough.' The mentor made himself available to talk to dad at the beginning and end of each day. The child's social and emotional achievement is greatly improved.

#### **Case Study: Family C**

A child had generalised anxiety disorder, free floating anxiety. This manifested itself in the child not being able to go into class and at times the school grounds. Mum had anxieties of her own. The learning mentor worked closely with the family mapping out how to remove the barriers. The mentor involved CAHMs and a Specialist Anxiety Clinic and raised the expectation that the child would come into school.

One father, who, together with his child, has had extensive learning mentor support, told us that *'the work of the learning mentor means that no one in the school gets left behind. I'm really impressed by the things that get picked up on; it means the teachers are left to teach.'*

The learning mentors talked of their close working relationship with the Streatham Rangers who act as officers on the estates. They act as a preventative measure for anti social behaviour in the community and have built up good relationships with the children doing outreach work within the school.

Hitherfield Primary School

The school's learning mentor has been working closely with a student from Year 11. The student has literacy difficulties, difficulties in concentrating, and a low reading age and is 4B in mathematics and science. His pattern was to start behaving badly when he didn't understand the work in the classroom and he became very skilled at masking his literacy difficulties. The student is having curriculum support and is on the Lexia programme.

*'He has always had the attitude that education is not for him so a lot of our work has been on changing his attitude towards education and changing his language from, I can't do this to I can do this. The student now understands the correlation between putting the effort in and getting the results. He will be the first child in his family to get any GCSEs. The family has never placed any emphasis on education. This student has really benefited from having someone on his side.'*

Dunraven School

### **Peer mediation service (solving conflict in peace)**

On average, one third of students targeted for learning mentor support at Norwood School are of White British heritage. Many will have been referred through members of staff who have noticed a change in their behaviour. Examples of reasons for White British referrals are poor attendance, and because they are young carers.

The learning mentor offers 1:1 support by appointment only, once a half term. As students become older their support is usually lessened. Support might take the form of help with priorities and 'staying on track'; improving behaviour towards adults at school and at home; learning strategies to control temper/anger and put them in to practice. The learning mentor also runs the Peer Mediation Service (Solving Conflict in Peace), which is the best in Lambeth. The mentor trains students in skills such as patience, diplomacy and empathy to support their peers. The students complete 12 weeks of training followed by an interview which equips them to resolve conflict during the school day. *'Students request mediation themselves. During mediation students sign an agreement.'*

*'My mediators are role models for the school. They have to display positive behaviour with their uniform, their attendance. Mediation becomes a tool to monitor them. They lead fundraising e.g. Children in Need. Currently I have 34 White British mediators.'*

There is one day's training for Year 7 to introduce them to the basics of mediation and what it means, to encourage students to apply to do mediation training. The Norwood peer mediators are part of the young mediators network who facilitate conferences and workshops where they are able to meet mediators from around the country.

Child B was suffering after the breakdown in her parents' relationship. She had had a 'very sheltered upbringing' and was not allowed to go anywhere on her own. Her attendance was suffering as was her health. Her role as a mediator 'saved her'. She led a workshop at a mediation conference which built her confidence to stand up in assembly and talk.

Norwood School



At Loughborough primary school the work of the learning mentor is integral to parental engagement and raising standards across the school. She builds strong relationships with the parents through empathy, 'I'm a parent too,' they see her out and about on the street and not as a figure of authority and this helps her to work with them more easily.

*'We have worked hard on building strong relationships and I always make the point that I am a parent too. I am not an authority figure; they know me as Laura on the street. They tend to work with me. They are happy to meet with me. I am not as important and therefore not a threat. I think we do things here that other schools may not do. We have given our children alarm clocks and shown them how to set them up. I have told parents if they can get their children out of bed and dressed, we will feed them at Breakfast Club. They wouldn't pay for it. I do think it is the parents' responsibility but in the same breath I see it as safeguarding the children, what would they do at home? I have seen parents sitting drinking cider with their children in buggies.'* The learning mentor ran a coffee morning for parents, including 8 white mothers, at Loughborough, at which she suggested that they read a book together. The focus was on 'let's read a book together'; they read a chapter each week and read a bit at home too. One parent stated:

*'I've never read a book in my life before. I don't like books. I didn't think I'd like to read a book but I can't put it down now, I never knew I'd like it.'*

*'It was so good for their children to see them reading. It offers them an alternative from going to bingo. Maybe they might read instead. Many of these mums don't read with their children. The books they brought home are often too difficult for them. I say to them, you don't have to read with them, just pick up the book and talk about the pictures, make up a story. This developed into a parents' class, how to read with your children.'* (Learning mentor)

This reading club led on to other literacy sessions, an example is the session the learning mentor led around how to fill in a form for a job, *'we just did one altogether. Some mums went onto work in the school kitchens; I gave them a reference, this has changed their attitude towards school, they are really on board now. Lots of our parents who were on these courses are now working in the school. One parent has five children in the school and she is now actually working here.'*

A session on behaviour management was also well attended as were sessions led by a Health Visitor, Educational Psychologists, and all professionals that parents might come across in school. *'They had negative ideas about these people beforehand – stereotypes. They would never have done this unless it was in an informal setting. The volunteers were mainly White British.'*

The learning mentor started a non smoking group with parents, the emphasis on giving up together, staff and parents. Again the emphasis was on an alternative; having more money that can be spent on something else.

*'We have to build a good relationship with parents, the school has become the meeting place for everything, we have their children from 16 months to 11 years, they go away for 5 years and then come back again, some as parents.'* Maybe the most telling evidence of the strength of parental engagement at Loughborough is summed up in the following statement:

*'It is difficult to work out staff from parents at 3.30pm.'*

Loughborough Primary School



Many mentors play a key role in secondary transfer, supporting parents with application forms and taking pupils/families to open days when necessary.

The learning mentor has a detailed knowledge of local secondary schools; she knows the children and therefore reflects on what school would suit them best when it comes to secondary transfer. The school invites secondary school staff into Loughborough so that parents can ask questions about the school. The learning mentor looks in the South London Press for Open Days and organises visits to local secondary schools for groups of Year 6 parents and nothing is left to chance. She takes the families or individual children to Open Days at secondary schools and if parents do not raise questions with the school she does it for them. Much work has gone into supporting parents with transition to secondary school: *'We try to get into all local schools. We notify local schools of our Secondary Transfer Meetings for parents. Parents can then ask headteachers' questions about the school. Charles Edward Brooke, Stockwell Park, Evelyn Grace and Norwood are popular choices. It is a huge achievement that our girls now get into St. Martins.'*

#### Loughborough Primary

The learning mentor is a qualified teacher who having worked part-time at the school as an EMAG co-ordinator was offered the role of learning mentor too. Her wide range of skills enables her to support pupils holistically with a firm vision of where they need to get to academically, 'what they need for a level 4.' With her EMA experience she also has a firm understanding of how EAL children linguistically develop. She monitors the work output of all the children she supports.

She supports children who are at risk of not achieving, those with a change of family circumstance, those with emotional needs and LAC by liaising with professionals involved in their care. *'Even the quietest child, we know that they might not be listening, we keep a check on them so that they don't fall through the net.'* Sometimes too, parents might refer to her for support with, for example, behaviour at home. The tracking system enables teachers to identify quickly those children who might be candidates for learning mentor support as does the fact *'my teachers are very good at picking up straight away if there is a change in children's behaviour.'* (Headteacher).

With all the children that she supports the learning mentor uses solution focused brief therapy, focusing on what the child wants to achieve through learning mentor support rather than the problem itself. The learning mentor encourages the child to think about their preferred future and then to start working together to achieve this. Together, they make an action plan which all parties, including the parents, sign. The support lasts for as long as it is needed with much of it taking place in the mainstream classroom, although the initial meeting with the child is out of the classroom. There are planned review meetings and an exit strategy if needed. *'It is a fluid process; some children need support all the time. It's based on individual needs.'* (headteacher)

The learning mentor has an assistant who works on attendance issues and in class support for science, numeracy and literacy, mainly for children *'who can't process it, where it needs to be reinforced'*.

*'The assistant spends an hour every morning doing first day's absence calls for children not in school, encouraging them to come in if possible. This works with most families, I do go and get children out of bed if necessary, we are usually able to sort it out before it gets to the EWO.'*

Streatham Wells Primary School

## **The role of faith in the achievement of white working class children**

*'The emphasis on Catholicism is important in the school. The sense of community, the ties with the church, the strong spiritual element makes a difference to the behaviour. Many of the assemblies are based around PSHE themes, selfesteem, following Jesus, what makes a good friend etc. When children have assemblies they face the mission statement (see below). It is displayed on the walls around the school and in every classroom.*

*The prayer times bring a fresh start to every part of the day. 'Every child is aware of each part of the day as a fresh start, e.g. at the beginning of the day, 'thank you for helping to get me to school safely.' Each prayer time, when children face the classroom prayer corner, ends with a time of reflection. 'At the beginning of the school year every child makes their own prayer book and we select prayers from these books for children to read out during prayer time'. This time is reflected in the curriculum, children are encouraged to evaluate their work, their behaviour, what they have done, what they could do better.*

*'The assemblies, the prayer time, the reflection time, the singing, two hours a week of Religious Education lessons all add to the sense of community at St Anne's. The ethos is strong. The staff get on well and do a lot together, the children see that and it is reflected in the way they are towards each other. We also have some big Catholic families here. I have only been teaching here for 3 years and already I have taught 2 or 3 children in the family, I know the parents well.'*

*We teach the children to reflect. They are encouraged to look back on what they have done, in their work and in their behaviour, and reflect on how they might improve.*

St Anne's Primary

## **Support for the transition of white working class pupils from Primary to Secondary School**

Some headteachers talked about the impact of transition on white working class pupils who they had worked hard to nurture at primary school. One example is the nurturing environment of Walnut Tree Walk and its excellent behaviour management strategies which provide a much needed security for pupils. Sadly, the size and organisation of most secondary schools inhibits the formation of supportive relationships and some children fall victim to this as the headteacher describes:

*'primary schools do a great job but it is when pupils leave the problems start. When they get to secondary school pupils want to know that there is someone there who will listen to them, but in most cases there is not.'*

*'Some boys struggle in their first year at Secondary school, there are generally organisational issues. We are good here at behavior management and we know the pupils well, so things are diffused so opportunities for disruption are minimised. We had two boys who were fantastic pupils here and the tales of what happened to them at secondary school were awful. Here they feel part of a family and communication is strong. It is not that the secondary schools are uncaring, but in Year 7 they do not know the pupils and parents don't know who to go to.'*  
(Headteacher, Walnut Tree Walk)

*A lot seems to go wrong in Year 7 because people don't seem to care about them and that's when things fall apart. I think Years 7 & 8 should be taught more like primary. I understand why it cannot happen later on. If they had that one person to relate to it would help them settle.'* (Year 6 teacher, Walnut Tree Walk)

The teacher in Year 6 explained that in 2006, his pupils transferred to 18 different secondary schools, with the majority of pupils transferring to schools outside Lambeth. He felt that secondary schools didn't seem to make any effort to link up with Walnut Tree Walk, and he never heard from them. When former pupils returned to visit their primary school they would complain that some of them had been put in a 'Behaviour Unit' in secondary school. There had been no contact with Walnut Tree Walk to discuss these pupils.

### **Norwood School: Transition arrangements with primary schools – Year 6 to Year 7**

However in 2008 a new headteacher at Norwood School became proactive in developing relationships with Lambeth primary schools. In Norwood there is a dedicated transition co-ordinator in Year 7 who is a static Head of Year which aids continuity. She has always had an interest in student transition between primary and secondary phase, having focused on this topic as her dissertation at university. Within this she looked at the role of PE and the different expectations between primary and secondary school. She has a vision for transition at the school;

*'I want to broaden the community view of Norwood through linking with the primaries and getting a wider range of students into the school, to bridge the gap between primary and secondary school and to keep a strong link with parents throughout children's education career.'*

These three areas guide her work at Norwood school. When children apply to Norwood school the transition co-ordinator writes to their schools – 49 last year – introducing herself and requesting a visit to the primary school.

*'I am keen to visit the primary schools where only one child has applied. I was the only child transferring to my secondary school from my primary and it was lonely so I try hard to go and meet the child so that they don't feel too daunted coming on their own.'*

Last year she visited 30 of the feeder primary schools. On the visit to Walnut Tree Walk she was accompanied by twelve pupils, six from Year 7 who were former Walnut Tree Walk pupils as well as 3 members of staff. Staff and pupils run a 'road show lesson' with the Year 6 primary class.

*'Last year I took the Citizenship co-ordinator to Walnut Tree Walk – she started the process of making masks with the children on the theme of Citizenship and Survival. The children were left to finish their masks with their teacher so that it was like an ongoing project. We try to take Year 7 children back to their primary school- sometimes those that might have lost their way a little and may need pulling back in.'* The year 6 teacher asserted that:

*'The whole class had lots of fun! They brought with them various maths activities and games. We have received very good feedback this year from pupils who transferred to Norwood. This kind of co-operation between schools really helps put the kids' minds at rest because they are so anxious at that time of the year.'*

*'There has been more contact from Norwood following Secondary Transfer as they have invited the headteacher and me to visit their school and see how pupils are settling in their new school.'*

The Year 7 transition co-ordinator commented that:

*'At another school we did a science experiment – the sort of thing that they can't do at primary school – making a bomb! The process of the road show lesson is good for everyone but especially those who struggle with emotional or behavioural issues – it means we have met them, and they us.'*

*'After the road show lesson the Year 6 children get an opportunity to ask the Year 7 pupils the 'real questions,' for example, what are the dinners like?'*

While the road show lesson is taking place the transition co-ordinator discusses each child coming to Norwood with the class teacher using a proforma. She is able to glean information such as 'family background', strengths and weaknesses, students who shouldn't be put with other students etc.

The information from the student proformas gets discussed back at Norwood between the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, the Citizenship co-ordinator, Inclusion manager and the teacher in charge of the Every Child Matters agenda. Each child gets discussed and a provision map of support is made, examples being; social support, anger management, family liaison worker; behaviour support; learning mentor, *'we don't set them up to fail.'* (transition co-ordinator)

The Transition co-ordinator also goes to local primary schools to talk to Year 6 parents, often about transition issues – what happens between June and September, when to buy uniform, about the induction day, what they are welcome to attend at Norwood before their child starts there. Other secondary schools did not attend these meetings.

In the July, before the Year 7s begin at Norwood there is an induction day at the school. This involves an introductory talk by the headteacher and an opportunity for parents and children to meet their form tutors. Children get the opportunity to make a name card drawing pictures to depict their interests around their name and choosing one to talk about to their peers.

*'We had our photos taken and then put on to a bookmark which we could take home, we also had two lessons and a certificate to take home for completing the day. Our parents got to stay until 10.30 am.'* (Prospective student)

Similarly there was a parents' evening before September where parents have the opportunity to meet the form tutor in a more formal way as well as senior members of staff talking to parents about the nature of their roles. There is also a tour of the school. Students from Year 7 performed in a dance group to show parents what their children could be doing. In Year 7 there is a parents' evening in November of the first term to discuss progress,

*'There was a 73% attendance at this event. If parents don't come to this parents' evening they do not get their child's report. We have a lot of competitions in school – it works. So, the Form that gets the most parents attending parents' evening – they get a party at the end of the week!'*

Many of the children due to start at Norwood in September attend a Summer School for a week at the beginning of the summer holidays. There they have a maths, science and literacy lesson on the three days until lunchtime and an activities morning on the fourth day and music, language and dance lessons in the afternoon.

*'We also do 'Norwood's got talent', which is a little bit like the X-factor, and an Olympics event on the Friday afternoon. The children get a certificate for surviving Norwood for the week. The children don't wear uniform and they get a chance to find their way around the school. We pay the Year 11s to come back to make the sandwiches for lunch time so it gives them all a chance to meet the oldest children.'*

Norwood Secondary School

## Diversity in the workforce

Diversity in terms of the range of staff roles and skills has provided good support to some white working class pupils in the case study schools. It is a way in which schools promote good relationships and racial harmony. Headteachers believe that by recruiting staff from the local community they send a strong message to the community that it is valued. This helps the school to become the central point of its local community and builds trust.

Six headteachers described themselves as coming from a 'working class' background. This, they say, makes them acutely aware of the challenges which beset under-privileged children and motivates them to ensure that children get the best possible start in life.

### Case Study: Johanna Primary School

Johanna primary school is set just behind Waterloo station in the north of the borough, near to the many attractions of London's Southbank – the National Theatre, the British Film Institute (BFI) Imax, The Royal Festival Hall and the Oxo Tower. It is set in Lower Marsh, a historic street which has operated as a street market and local shopping centre since the mid-nineteenth century. It is also home to the local Coin Street Community Builders, a social enterprise and development trust which seeks to make the area a better place in which to live, work and to visit, through establishing co-operative homes, galleries, shops, cafes and the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre. This offers families and children high quality and affordable programmes, integrated childcare and early years education.



However, through discussion with staff and parents it would seem that white working class parents in the area do not use the local facilities. A parent governor in Waterloo expressed his concern about the huge take up of local community facilities by the white middle class, but not the white working class families. He states:

*'The purpose of the Children's Centre is to enable parents of young children to get back into work but what you get is your Children's' Centre full of middle class parents who are working'.*

Similarly a teaching assistant who had lived all her life in the area reported:

*'Much of the new housing that's been built here is for key workers not for the local community. This is dividing our community- the young people are being forced out.'*

The LA identifies the school catchment area as one of the most socially deprived areas in the borough. About 50% of the pupils have a free school meal and 70% are EAL pupils with 42% not fluent in English. Despite this in 2009, pupil attainment at the end of KS2 was 88% reaching level 4 or above in English, 94% in maths and 100% in science. The CVA is very high placing the school in the top 5% nationally. The schools' average KS2 results improved from 77% in 2008 to 94% in 2009. This achievement in our view is because of the leadership of the headteacher, diversity in the school workforce, good teaching and targeted support for white working class pupils and all pupils in school.

The headteacher at Johanna talks about her own working class roots. She was brought up on a council estate and then went to a grammar school. 'We had pride in our family and a make do and mend' attitude towards life.' She is in tune with many of the issues that face the diverse community that her school serves and the experiences of the white working class community within this. An above average amount of pupils at the school have English as an additional language and learning difficulties at the school. She states that:

*'The diversity in our workforce is helpful here. We have a number of staff who have a good understanding of a working class background in the white community, through first hand experience and because they have taught in these contexts.'*

The deputy headteacher agreed:

*'Maybe in this school the white families might not feel marginalised as they have family members on the staff and representatives from their community amongst the school workforce. Some of the children know staff here. C's nan works here. D knows all the families and socialises with them. The white children might feel quite empowered by this, not marginalised, these particular children mix well with all cultures.'*

Two senior staff at the school had previously taught in mainly white schools on the outskirts of London. One was able to articulate the issues involved but also reflect on how the white community at Johanna differed from those in her previous school.



*'In this (her previous) school white working class parents did not want their children to do better than them. They wanted to keep them close, they didn't want them to move away but live with them or on the same street. But it's not like that here (at Johanna), the parents want their children to do well, they just don't want to play a part in this.'*

Other staff, such as one TA had lived in the area all their lives. The headteacher reflected that although the white working class children might lack role models in general, at Johanna 'N', the office administrator, is a good role model. *'She is able to talk to them (parents) like they are friends and they trust her.'* N says of herself, *'I come from a family that has worked down the generations.'* Again she is reflective about the differences in her own community in Bermondsey and that of the school's local community. *'I used to work in a school in Bermondsey. There you had to fight to keep parents out of the school. Here, it takes lots and lots of nagging to get them in. In Bermondsey there is a real sense of community, I can see my mother-in-law's window from mine. It's that sense of community that is lacking around here.'*

The diversity of the workforce has helped with engaging the parents. The headteacher states:

*'I am in the playground every morning and afternoon. There is rarely trouble between parents. I know all their names and say to the teachers that they need to know all the parents' names. There are only two mornings that I have not been in the playground for a particular reason and those were the two mornings that we had some trouble.'*

She talks of the constant effort involved in working with particular parents; *'We had a family of boys who were not achieving, who were lazy and had no aspiration to do well at school. We kept on and on working with Mum; the messages are starting to get through and the boys are starting to make some progress.'*

A class teacher stated, *'We do whatever we can to break down the barriers. We find so many positive ways of bringing the parents into school.'*

One TA stated; *'this school does everything it can to help the children and the parents. With secondary transfer the school takes the burden and does it for the parents. There are two boys – the school has done everything for them – speech therapy, behaviour therapy....'*

The school adopts other ways of diversifying the adults to which the pupils come into contact. Every Year 6 child at Johanna has a university student from King's College London as a mentor, a role model. This service is funded by the Shine Charitable Trust and enables 80 student tutors from 4 universities across London to provide support to 160 disadvantaged children from four of the most deprived London boroughs. In addition to raising pupils' academic achievement, self esteem and motivation, the project aims to provide pupils with positive role models and introduce them to the world of higher education.

The students visit Johanna once a week and read with their mentees, talk with them and work with them in/out of the classroom. The success of the scheme lies in the fact that the children look up to the mentors:

*'They represent a different world, university, which many of our children would not know of, but they are also cool, they might have a flash phone and trainers. It gives them aspiration. They might have more of an influence than us teachers. I just have to see the look on C's face when her mentor arrives - she beams. One girl didn't speak to her mentor for a whole year, by the end of the year she was chatting away; it was a huge social development for her.'*

Johanna Primary School.

## Section 5: Pupils Views

The main aim of the pupil voice research was to examine the schooling experiences of White British pupils in relation to classroom experiences, and relationships with teachers. It was also to identify pupils' views on the actions which they think need to be taken to raise levels of achievement for white working class pupils in particular, and all pupils in general. Two methodological approaches were used to explore the views of pupils. These include focus group discussion and attitudinal surveys using questionnaires.

All the schools were large multi-racial schools. Teachers were asked to select a number of pupils with a range of academic ability, to include a number of white working class children for the focus groups. These focus groups were run outside of mainstream classes in a quiet room to ensure confidentiality and to encourage open discussion.

The questionnaire survey was carried out in all participating schools over the period of the research. Pupils were required to tick boxes in response to a variety of questions with a few opportunities to comment. Heads of year and headteachers co-ordinated this process. The questionnaires were collected from schools or posted. Interviewers explained the purpose of the focus group discussions and the questionnaire survey and that the approach adopted was intended to maximise opportunities for feedback on effective practice, as well as identify practical solutions for issues and concerns. Key findings of both the focus group discussions and the attitudinal survey are discussed in the following section.

### The Pupil Focus group evidence

Sixty one children were interviewed in schools during the research regarding their attitude to and views about their school and education.

Although we interviewed an ethnically mixed group of pupils, in many cases the School Council, we have focused here on the views of the White British children. Interestingly, some parents preferred to identify themselves as White English rather than British yet their children broadly defined themselves as a mixture of Irish, English, Scottish and American.

Pupils felt that they liked coming to school, if only to see their friends. They stated that many of their mothers were keen to move out of the area but:

*'I like it here, it's close here, my friends are here but I don't feel protected. There are fights in my block and shootings.'*

All of the children in two primary schools expressed fear and concern regarding living in their immediate environment. They talked of gangs, gangsters, shootings and drug dealers and said they did not feel protected. A couple of pupils talked about certain 'people' on the street of whom they were afraid. One girl in Year 3 from a family who are seeking to be rehoused, said:

*'the teenagers outside keep me awake at night - they are noisy but I am in bed worrying that bad things will happen to them because I watch the news and know what can happen to children. There are always broken bottles on my estate, once I cut my foot and I'm worried I will do it again. I wish people would put them in the bin or the recycling.'* (School E)

When asked, although some pupils stated that they received no help with their homework or reading at home, the majority said that they did receive support from one family member, a parent or sibling. They felt that the biggest barriers to their learning were the likelihood of being distracted by classmates and for some the fact that they didn't have their fathers at home and that they did not spend any time with them.

At one school despite what their parents reported, the children we spoke to had a good understanding of the story behind the Christmas and Easter celebrations. Pupils at this school reported, *'we enjoy learning through fun, the Year 4 cookery lessons, we make new recipes, learn about safety in the kitchen, do science experiments.'*

The children talked of the recent election of President Elect, Barack Obama.

*'It will stop people thinking there are differences between white and blacks - who shouldn't be treated differently. It will provide hope to anyone that is black around the world.'*

One girl talked of a website that she had been on that claimed that Obama could never be elected in the UK.

One White British girl showed us the Home Learning project that she had done, on her Family tree.

At the same school the pupils all showed aspiration for their future. Four wanted to go to University. Careers they aspired to included being a judge, scientist, bank manager, teacher, fashion designer, footballer and model. One pupil wanted to be a 'part time' hairdresser.

At another school children enjoyed the 'fun' element to their learning. We,

*'Learn about the world, make things we've seen on the internet.'*

*'We paid attention when we learnt about Muslims and the mosque in RE.'*

*'We dressed up like Muslims.'*

*'We get loads of chances to do different things in after school clubs; we have sports tournaments, netball etc.'*

*'Our trips help us to learn. We looked at different buildings when we were learning about London, the Imperial War museum.'*

*'We went to Chiswick to investigate the Thames water, to make sure that we are going to ask lots of questions in science.'*

*'We went to interview the old people and paint portraits of them.'*

*'We went to Colour escape inside the tents for art and science and Pizza Express to make pizzas.'*

The children all had high aspirations of themselves, hoping to pursue careers such as; actress, writer, teacher, fashion designer, business man, formula 1 driver, footballer and pilot. Most wanted to go to University after school. (Two white working class boys wanted to be footballers)

For students at School H the School's specialist status has had an impact on their aspirations for the future. *I like fashion – the school's specialism has helped us with this.* Many wanted to study at the London College of Fashion.

We spoke to both the Student Executive at a secondary school as well as a group of White British students. Students spoke warmly of their school:

*'I like school; especially performing Arts'*

*'The teachers are kind and welcoming. We all work as a team. There are always people that you can talk to. Our teachers really care about us. They can have a joke but are also strict'*

*'I like the uniform; the school has made a lot of progress; the headteacher is good. We have a good mediation service'*

*'The school has good After school facilities.'*

We asked the same questions to pupils at the focus group in another school. What do you like about your school and what has helped you to do well at school? The pupils felt the teachers really listened to them and they spoke with enthusiasm about things they liked about the school:

*'The teachers in this school give us a lot of confidence. If we don't understand our work the teachers point it out to us in a different way - if it's boring they make it fun.'*

*The teachers don't punish us for no reason - they give us chances*

*'The PTA does a good job for us - they put on fayres and discos and Christmas parties'*

*'There are a lot of clubs here - gym, French, football, cookery lessons*

*'We do lots of singing - lots of music'*

*'Our parents are involved a lot in school'*

*'We go on trips- Isle of Wight, Science museum, the Fire Brigade'*

*'It is a good school for disabled children'*

*'Year 6 get to play rounders against the teachers - it's part of fundraising'*

*'We have class assemblies- they are about sharing stories, telling lessons at the end.'*

The children were clearly very happy with their experience. They felt valued and treated equally. The pupils rated the care, guidance and support the school provided as good during the focus group discussion. *'You get individual support with the teachers and teaching assistants and this helps us to do well at school.'*

## **Pupil Attitudinal Survey Evidence**

As part of the research, pupils in the project schools were given a questionnaire to complete. This was a survey to ascertain pupils' views and opinions on school and learning, friendships, support from home and aspirations for the future. The survey was given to specific year groups in the schools, and it was completed as part of a standard lesson or registration. Pupils were clearly told that:

- They did not need to provide their name
- There were no right or wrong answers
- The questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The survey was divided into five parts:

- Gender and ethnic background of the pupils
- How important pupils consider a good education to be

- Pupils' career preference when leaving school
- Pupils' experience of school and attitudes to school, teachers and lessons
- Pupils' views on what they like best about school.

### Background of the pupils

Questionnaires were returned by 449 pupils in ten primary schools and one secondary school.

- 238 respondents (53%) were female and 210 (47%) were male. One pupil did not reply
- 365 pupils (81%) were in primary school, and 84 (19%) were in secondary school.

**Table 10. Ethnic Background**

|                         | Primary    |             | Secondary |             | All        |             |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                         | Number.    | %           | Number.   | %           | Number.    | %           |
| Black Caribbean         | 82         | 22%         | 20        | 24%         | 102        | 23%         |
| White British           | 58         | 16%         | 10        | 12%         | 68         | 15%         |
| Mixed African & White   | 9          | 2%          | 2         | 2%          | 11         | 2%          |
| Other White             | 25         | 7%          | 2         | 2%          | 27         | 6%          |
| Black African           | 63         | 17%         | 24        | 29%         | 87         | 19%         |
| Mixed Caribbean & White | 18         | 5%          | 9         | 11%         | 27         | 6%          |
| Mixed other             | 25         | 7%          | 1         | 1%          | 26         | 6%          |
| Portuguese              | 26         | 7%          | 2         | 2%          | 28         | 6%          |
| Other                   | 57         | 16%         | 12        | 14%         | 69         | 15%         |
| Missing                 | 2          | 1%          | 2         | 2%          | 4          | 1%          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>365</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>84</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>449</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The largest group overall was Black Caribbean (23%), Black African (19%), and White British (15%). See for details Table 10.



## The importance of getting a good education

**Table 11. How important is it to get a good education?**

|                         | Miss-<br>ing | Very<br>important | Import-<br>ant | Quite<br>important | Not<br>important | Total      |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| Black Caribbean         | 0%           | 91%               | 6%             | 3%                 | 0%               | 102        |
| White British           | 0%           | 88%               | 10%            | 1%                 | 0%               | 68         |
| Mixed African & White   | 0%           | 82%               | 18%            | 0%                 | 0%               | 11         |
| Other White             | 0%           | 89%               | 11%            | 0%                 | 0%               | 27         |
| Black African           | 0%           | 94%               | 3%             | 2%                 | 0%               | 87         |
| Mixed Caribbean & White | 0%           | 78%               | 19%            | 4%                 | 0%               | 27         |
| Mixed other             | 0%           | 77%               | 15%            | 8%                 | 0%               | 26         |
| Portuguese              | 0%           | 82%               | 11%            | 7%                 | 0%               | 28         |
| Other                   | 1%           | 86%               | 13%            | 0%                 | 0%               | 69         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>0%</b>    | <b>88%</b>        | <b>10%</b>     | <b>2%</b>          | <b>0%</b>        | <b>449</b> |

Overall, 88% of respondents thought it was “very important” to get a good education. A slightly higher proportion of girls than boys gave this response, as did more primary aged pupils than secondary pupils. No pupils gave the response “not important”.

The most highly positive responses were from African pupils, with 94% thinking it was very important to get a good education, followed by Caribbean pupils (91%). The groups least likely to give this response were “Mixed Other pupils” with only 77% giving the most positive reply, and a similar response was noted from Mixed Caribbean and White pupils. However, note the small cohort sizes which may reduce representativeness.

**Table 12. Do you want to go to university or college after school?**

|                               | Missing   | Yes        | No        | Number     |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Black Caribbean               | 4%        | 94%        | 2%        | 102        |
| White British                 | 1%        | 90%        | 9%        | 68         |
| Mixed Black African & White   | 18%       | 82%        | 0%        | 11         |
| Other White                   | 0%        | 93%        | 7%        | 27         |
| African                       | 0%        | 99%        | 1%        | 87         |
| Mixed Black Caribbean & White | 0%        | 93%        | 7%        | 27         |
| Mixed other                   | 4%        | 88%        | 8%        | 26         |
| Portuguese                    | 0%        | 96%        | 4%        | 28         |
| Other                         | 6%        | 91%        | 3%        | 69         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>3%</b> | <b>93%</b> | <b>4%</b> | <b>449</b> |

Nearly all the respondents wanted to go to University (93%). The figure for girls was even higher at 97%, compared with 89% for boys, while secondary age pupils were more likely than primary, although by a small proportion.

Of the three largest groups in the survey, White British pupils were the most likely to say “no”, with 9% of responses. This compares to 2% of Caribbean pupils and only 1% of African pupils.

## Pupils' career choice when leaving school

**Table 13. What type of job would like to do when you leave school/become an adult?**

| Job  | % of responses |
|--|----------------|
| Football player  | 16%            |
| Doctor   | 13%            |
| IT e.g as scientist, computer programmer, games designer | 10%            |
| Dancer/Singing/Arts                                      | 9%             |
| Teacher  | 9%             |
| Lawyer   | 9%             |
| Actor  | 7%             |
| Other  | 7%             |
| Fashion designer   | 4%             |
| Business   | 4%             |
| Sportsman (other than football)                          | 4%             |
| Accountant   | 3%             |
| Don't know   | 3%             |
| Pharmacy, Nursing, Healthcare                            | 2%             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>524</b>     |

Many pupils gave more than one answer to this question and so Table 13 is based on the number of responses rather than pupils. A wide variety of replies were given to this open question, ranging from the conventional doctor, footballer etc to very specific jobs such as running a car tuning business, or owning a water park.

Many children expanded on their job choice by adding an explanation of why they had picked it; usually because they thought they'd be good at it and enjoy it, or because they felt they would earn a lot of money, or because of some family connection:

- I will like to become a solicitor or a doctor because I like helping people
- I would like to be a scientist, it's fun and you make stuff
- I would like to work in tourism using the different languages I want to learn in the future
- I would like to become a lawyer because I want to achieve my dream and people do say the world is full of possibilities
- Either a doctor or footballer or a lawyer, basically some one who makes a lot of money and is great in that job
- I'd be a sports athlete because I like sports and it's got great pay
- I want to be either a singer, actor, dancer, vet or artist. Because I like all those things and I feel like I am good at them

- I would like to be a doctor and follow in my father's footsteps
- I would like to become a social worker just like my mum. Or work with adults with a learning disability.

The most popular job was football player with 16% of responses. A further 13% wanted to be a doctor, the next most frequent choice. Many pupils wanted a computing job, and several replied that they wanted to make computer video games with friends. Children who wanted to be a dancer/singer (9%) were likely to comment that they were good at this and that was the reason for pursuing it as a career. Only 3% of responses were from pupils who didn't know what they wanted to do.

### **Pupils' experience of school including their attitude to school, teachers and lessons**

One part of the questionnaire comprised a grid with a series of statements, and column headings of "strongly agree", "agree", "not sure", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". Pupils were required to tick the box relating the statement to the level of agreement.

The first series of questions related to the school. 90% of pupils were positive (agreed or strongly agreed) about their school and believed it to be successful. However, 40% also strongly agreed or agreed that most of the time they were bored at school, whilst 85% felt that there was a lot to do at school.

About one in five pupils did not agree with the statement that their views counted in school, but almost all (94%) felt that their teachers expected them to do well at school, and in response to another question, 89% felt that their teachers cared about how well they were doing. The reply to the question about teachers listening was also positive but not by such a great margin, at 74% of responses.

**Table 14. Pupils' experience of school – in percentages**

|  | All Pupils |                |       |          |                   | White British         |                             |
|--|------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Missing    | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Strongly agree/ agree | Disagree/ strongly disagree |
| This is a successful school  | 3%         | 37%            | 53%   | 6%       | 1%                | 91%                   | 7%                          |
| Most of the time I am bored at school                                    | 2%         | 11%            | 29%   | 42%      | 16%               | 29%                   | 69%                         |
| In general there is a lot to do at school                                | 3%         | 38%            | 47%   | 10%      | 2%                | 86%                   | 11%                         |
| My views count at school   | 8%         | 29%            | 43%   | 14%      | 6%                | 81%                   | 14%                         |
| Most of my teachers expect me to do well at school                       | 2%         | 64%            | 30%   | 3%       | 1%                | 94%                   | 4%                          |
| Most of my teachers expect me to do my homework and will chase me for it | 4%         | 43%            | 36%   | 11%      | 5%                | 85%                   | 10%                         |
| Most of my teachers really care about how I am doing at school           | 4%         | 49%            | 40%   | 5%       | 2%                | 94%                   | 3%                          |
| Most of my teachers listen to what I say                                 | 3%         | 27%            | 47%   | 17%      | 6%                | 83%                   | 13%                         |
| I am often in trouble with particular teachers                           | 4%         | 8%             | 23%   | 28%      | 37%               | 19%                   | 77%                         |
| Usually the teachers seem to like me                                     | 6%         | 27%            | 54%   | 10%      | 4%                | 87%                   | 7%                          |
| I feel I am making good progress at this school                          | 5%         | 53%            | 37%   | 4%       | 1%                | 93%                   | 3%                          |
| I enjoy learning at school   | 4%         | 40%            | 47%   | 7%       | 2%                | 91%                   | 4%                          |
| I get given a lot of responsibilities at school                          | 5%         | 34%            | 40%   | 17%      | 4%                | 79%                   | 18%                         |
| The teachers expect the best of me                                       | 5%         | 57%            | 34%   | 3%       | 1%                | 92%                   | 4%                          |
| Teachers give me respect at school                                       | 5%         | 37%            | 44%   | 12%      | 3%                | 91%                   | 4%                          |
| The school shows respect for children of all races and cultures          | 5%         | 58%            | 29%   | 6%       | 2%                | 90%                   | 6%                          |
| The school does not tolerate racism                                      | 6%         | 66%            | 21%   | 4%       | 3%                | 95%                   | 2%                          |
| Most lessons are interesting   | 4%         | 32%            | 46%   | 13%      | 4%                | 95%                   | 2%                          |

Just under a third of pupils felt that they were often in trouble with particular teachers (with 8% strongly agreeing with this statement). However, most pupils agreed or strongly agreed that usually the teachers seemed to like them.

Nine out of ten pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they felt they were making good progress at the school (90%) and 87% felt that they enjoyed learning at the school. Whilst 74% of pupils were positive that they were given a lot of responsibilities at school, 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.

Only 4% of pupils disagreed or strongly disagreed that the teachers expected the best of them, whilst over half (57%) strongly agreed with this statement. About four in five pupils felt that teachers gave respect at school.

58% of pupils strongly agreed that the school showed respect for children of all races and cultures, and 66% gave this response for the statement that the school does not tolerate racism. For both of these statements, about 8% of pupils either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### **The views of white pupils on what they like best about their school**

In this section pupils were asked to write down what they liked best about their school. As can be seen in the comments below the vast majority of respondents felt that their school is a good school and they get education and teaching that is of a high standard. A number of them used the phrase 'our school is an outstanding school.'

#### **What do you like best about this school?**

- The teachers are cool and the teachers give respect
- Everyone is nice, I think it's the best
- I enjoy it a lot and it is a nice and friendly place to be in
- I enjoy this school than any other because I have really got used to this school and I have got really good friends and I don't want to miss them
- I like going outside getting to know all of the children and getting along well
- I like that the teachers are nice to me
- I like the school because it outstanding
- I like the teachers in the is school and they help us with our work
- I love this school. I think I will achieve something in this school. Thank you for all the teachers
- I really like the atmosphere around me and I like how the school is big. The school is a wonderful school
- I really need help in maths and the school is great
- I think it is good that we go on lots of school trips
- I think it is the best school in Lambeth
- I think my school is amazing and I'm going to miss it
- I think that my school is outstanding and good. This school teaches you a lot of things

- I think that this is a good school
- I want to say that it is a good school and there are helpful teachers and I really like the subjects
- I would like to say that this school is the best school I've been in
- I would like to say this is a good school
- It gives a lot of school support. It's a friendly school. It's a caring school, and it really safe
- It has the best teachers. But not all of them
- It is a good place to learn
- It is a good school
- It is a great school!!!
- It is very good
- It is great!
- It is outstanding
- It's very nice and there are some great teachers.
- It's a good school
- It's the best school I've ever been to!
- It's a very good place to have fun
- It's really fun and children are very kind
- It's very caring
- It's very fun and I enjoy learning here
- My school is a really good school, and everyone (staff) is very polite
- My school is fantastic. I've been here since nursery right up until year 6
- My school is fun and great as everyone are good people and they are there for you
- My school is quite fun and I have good friends
- Teachers are really good, most of them really make you get into what you are supposed to learn and they make us enjoy what we learn
- The school is fun
- The school is good, nice and educates me well
- The school is safe for children
- The teachers and assistants help you when you need it
- The teachers are good and strict
- The teachers are very good
- The teachers show more respect
- There are good teachers
- They are very good at teaching children and very good at making lessons fun
- They give us a lot of support and it is really fun and you meet new friends
- They respect every one doesn't matter where you come from
- This is an excellent place to learn.



## Conclusion

This section aimed to find out about how pupils feel about their school. Pupils' views regarding their experiences at school were gathered during focus group discussions and using a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised a series of statements which pupils were asked to "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree" with. Generally pupils attending the case study schools spoke with enthusiasm about their experiences in school and gave good evidence about what successful schools do to raise pupil achievement. White British pupils were positive about the school and over 91% 'strongly agreed'/'agreed' with the statements:

- The case study schools are successful schools
- They enjoy learning at school
- Most of the lessons are very interesting
- Most of my teachers expect me to do well at school
- I feel I am making good progress at this school
- The teachers expect the best of me
- Most of my teachers really care about how I am doing at school.

## Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of the research is to study the experiences of white working class pupils and to identify strategies used in schools to raise achievement in multiracial schools. The main findings from the study confirm that the worryingly low achievement levels of many white working class pupils has been masked by the success of middle class white children in the English school system because Government statistics have failed to distinguish the White British ethnic group by social background. This study confirms that one of the biggest groups of underachievers is the white working class. The empirical data shows that at GCSE, 35% of White British pupils eligible for free school meals achieved 5+A\*-C, compared with 67% of pupils who were not eligible. There is a gap of 32 percentage points for White British compared with a 20% gap for White/Black Caribbean, 23% gap for White/Black African, 15% gap for Indian, 15% gap for African, 14% gap for Black Caribbean pupils, 9% gap for Pakistani, whilst the gap for Bangladeshis and Chinese pupils was smaller at 6% percentage points. While poverty makes little difference to the achievements at school of some ethnic groups, it makes a huge difference to White British children on free school meals.

However, despite underperformance at the national level, in a number of case studies schools, the white working class pupils buck the trends. For example, in one case study school all white working class pupils from a low income background attained level 4 and above at KS2. In another primary school, despite challenging circumstances and low attainment at entry, 94% achieved level 4 and above. In the two case study secondary schools GCSE results have shown significant improvement and the percentage of pupils achieving 5+A\*-C is 86% and 77% respectively. The value added of a number of the case study schools was also in the top 5% nationally.

There are a number of reasons why white working class pupils and other groups are doing well in the school despite low attainment at entry and challenging socio-economic circumstances in the area served by case study schools. 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, 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. Although each school has its own character and emphasis it is clear, from the evidence of the study, that they have common characteristics which underpin their success. These include:

- Strong and inspirational leadership by the headteacher;
- High expectation for all pupils and teachers;
- An inclusive curriculum that raises aspiration and meets the needs of white working class pupils and parents;
- Close links with parents and increasing community support, which earn the schools the trust and respect of parents;
- Effective use of data and rigorous monitoring systems which track individual pupil performance;
- Good and well targeted support for white working class pupils through extensive use of teaching assistants and learning mentors;
- Effective support for language development amongst white working class pupils;
- Good support for the transition between primary and secondary;
- Celebration of cultural diversity and a strong commitment to equal opportunities.

These findings are also supported by the pupil voice and attitudinal survey. Generally pupils attending the case study schools spoke with enthusiasm about their experiences in school and gave good evidence about what successful schools do to raise pupil achievement. White British pupils were positive about the school and over 91% 'strongly agreed'/'agreed' with the statements that the case study schools are successful schools and in the main they enjoy learning at school.

The children were clearly very happy with their experience. They felt valued and treated equally. They rated the care, guidance and support that the school provided as good during the focus group discussion. *'You get individual support with the teachers and teaching assistants and this helps you to do well at school'*. The children's confidence in their school is justified by their exceptional results, achieved in spite of very low starting points.

## Recommendations

We now have evidence to show that the performance of white working pupils consistently lags behind that of their peers. This should not be allowed to continue. Our research in the case study schools shows that effective schools that have been dealing with these issues over a number of years, hold the key to the way forward. Schools will want to learn what has been proven to work and the factors that make a difference. Their good practice and strategies needs to be disseminated.

The recommendations for schools with ethnically diverse populations, Local Authorities (LAs) and Department of Children and Families (DCSF) emerging for this study are:

### The Department for Children, Schools and Families

The government needs to recognise that the underachievement of White British working class pupils is not only a problem facing educational services but a daunting and profoundly serious challenge. This research also suggests a series of measures which include developing strategies to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage, a legacy of low aspiration and a disinterest in learning that prevents pupils from fulfilling their potential across a range of areas. Key to raising achievement is to have the highest expectations of pupils and the community.

1. There should be statutory DCSF led national annual collection of social class data from schools through the School Census
2. The DCSF should introduce targeted funding to support schools and LAs to address underachievement of working class pupils. However, this should not result in taking away EMAG funding to support white working class pupils
3. Identify examples of effective practice in addressing white working class underachievement at the local and national level
4. Support schools and LAs to develop a multicultural curriculum that treats White British identity in the same way as ethnic minorities. This curriculum should give confidence to White British pupils to proudly assert their identity as an ethnic group
5. More research should be commissioned into good practice in raising the achievement of the white working class and how it can be transferred from classroom to classroom, school to school and LA to LA.

## Local Authority (LA)

1. The LA should work together with the case study schools in sharing good practice
2. The LA should continue using data effectively to identify underachieving groups and to improve teachers and management awareness in understanding the roots of white working class culture
3. Continue to raise awareness amongst teachers and school management staff of the issues of white working class underachievement through the effective use of data and organising training programmes. This will aim to improve teachers' understanding of white working class children as learners, how and why some underachieve and what teachers can do to target these issues
4. Support schools to develop a more relevant and culturally sensitive curriculum for white working class pupils
5. Continue to promote community cohesion and celebrate diversity so that all pupils understand and appreciate others from different ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds in UK
6. The LA should commission research into the barriers and strategies to raise the achievement of mixed race pupils. Data from this research suggests that mixed race pupils are another fast growing group that is underachieving in schools.

## Schools

To help raise the achievement of white working class children from low income backgrounds, schools should ensure that:

1. Performance data is used to raise awareness about underachievement issues amongst the white working class and to monitor and guide pupils' progress
2. Aspects of the cultural heritage of white working class pupils are reflected in the curriculum
3. All schools should be encouraged to audit their curriculum to reflect the diversity of the school community and the needs of all pupils. In the light of this audit, all schools should map provision across years and subjects and ensure that coverage is coherent and addresses the needs of the white working class
4. A flexible approach to implementing intervention strategies, including those by specialist language teachers, learning mentors and other support staff is in place
5. A strong partnership is developed with a wide range of agencies to provide social, emotional, educational and practical support for white working class pupils and their families in order to raise their aspirations
6. Use creative and flexible strategies to engage parents to make them feel valued and to enable them to support their children's education
7. Schools should promote community cohesion so that all pupils understand and appreciate others from different backgrounds with a sense of shared vision, fulfilling their potential and feeling part of the community. Specifically through the school curriculum, pupils should explore the representation of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in the UK.

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## Glossary – A guide to acronyms

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| BME    | Black and Minority Ethnic                     |
| CAF    | Common Assessment Framework                   |
| CAHMS  | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service    |
| CATs   | Cognitive Ability Tests                       |
| CVA    | Contextual Value Added                        |
| DCSF   | Department for Children, Schools and Families |
| DfES   | Department for Education and Skills           |
| EAL    | English as Additional Language                |
| ECAR   | Every Child A Reader                          |
| ECM    | Every Child Matters                           |
| EMA    | Ethnic Minority Achievement                   |
| EMAG   | Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant             |
| EMAS   | Ethnic Minority Achievement Service           |
| ESL    | English as a Second Language                  |
| EWO    | Education Welfare Officer                     |
| FFT    | Fischer Family Trust                          |
| FSM    | Free School Meals                             |
| FSP    | Foundation Stage Profile                      |
| HMI    | Her Majesty's Inspectorate                    |
| IMD    | Index of Multiple Deprivation                 |
| GCSE   | General Certificate for Secondary Education   |
| KS1    | Key Stage 1                                   |
| KS2    | Key Stage 2                                   |
| KS3    | Key Stage 3                                   |
| KS4    | Key Stage 4                                   |
| LA     | Local Authority                               |
| LAC    | Looked After Child                            |
| OFSTED | Office for Standards in Education             |
| PSHE   | Personal, Social and Health Education         |
| SEN    | Special Education Needs                       |
| QCA    | Qualification and Curriculum Authority        |
| SLT    | Senior Leadership Team                        |
| SMT    | Senior Management Team                        |
| SENCO  | Special Educational Needs Coordinator         |
| TA     | Teaching Assistant                            |
| YR     | Year Reception                                |
| Y1     | Year 1  |

## Annex 1 GCSE and KS2 Attainment in Lambeth by ethnic background and FSM

|                        |      | GCSE 5 A* to C |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |       |
|------------------------|------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|
|                        |      | Boys           |       |       | Girls |       |       | All Pupils |       |       |
|                        |      | FSM            | Paid  | Gap   | FSM   | Paid  | Gap   | FSM        | Paid  | Gap   |
| Black African          | 2004 | 8.5%           | 35.9% | 27.4% | 13.8% | 35.9% | 22.1% | 12.0%      | 35.9% | 24.0% |
|                        | 2005 | 24.8%          | 27.7% | 2.8%  | 13.0% | 46.5% | 33.5% | 17.2%      | 39.7% | 22.5% |
|                        | 2006 | 19.7%          | 28.6% | 8.8%  | 19.1% | 39.1% | 20.0% | 19.4%      | 34.9% | 15.6% |
|                        | 2007 | 28.8%          | 29.5% | 0.8%  | 20.7% | 44.7% | 24.1% | 23.6%      | 39.3% | 15.7% |
|                        | 2008 | 26.8%          | 33.3% | 6.5%  | 25.1% | 42.1% | 17.0% | 25.7%      | 39.0% | 13.3% |
| Caribbean              | 2004 | 16.8%          | 18.8% | 2.0%  | 12.9% | 28.1% | 15.2% | 14.2%      | 25.2% | 11.0% |
|                        | 2005 | 15.6%          | 21.9% | 6.3%  | 10.8% | 35.8% | 25.0% | 12.3%      | 31.3% | 19.0% |
|                        | 2006 | 7.5%           | 34.6% | 27.1% | 13.6% | 38.8% | 25.2% | 11.5%      | 37.4% | 25.9% |
|                        | 2007 | 19.6%          | 23.7% | 4.1%  | 12.3% | 32.0% | 19.7% | 14.7%      | 29.3% | 14.7% |
|                        | 2008 | 16.8%          | 26.3% | 9.5%  | 18.3% | 39.1% | 20.8% | 17.8%      | 35.0% | 17.2% |
| White British          | 2004 | 7.2%           | 27.7% | 20.5% | 6.9%  | 33.3% | 26.4% | 7.1%       | 30.3% | 23.2% |
|                        | 2005 | 6.6%           | 42.8% | 36.1% | 8.5%  | 33.0% | 24.5% | 7.4%       | 39.0% | 31.6% |
|                        | 2006 | 7.5%           | 50.3% | 42.9% | 9.1%  | 29.1% | 20.0% | 8.2%       | 41.2% | 33.1% |
|                        | 2007 | 9.3%           | 41.6% | 32.3% | 7.7%  | 38.5% | 30.8% | 8.7%       | 40.5% | 31.7% |
|                        | 2008 | 13.9%          | 42.4% | 28.5% | 17.9% | 49.1% | 31.2% | 15.5%      | 45.0% | 29.5% |
| All Pupils             | 2004 | 12.0%          | 26.3% | 14.3% | 12.8% | 31.4% | 18.6% | 12.5%      | 29.2% | 16.7% |
|                        | 2005 | 15.4%          | 31.6% | 16.2% | 13.9% | 37.9% | 24.0% | 14.5%      | 35.3% | 20.8% |
|                        | 2006 | 14.7%          | 35.3% | 20.5% | 14.4% | 39.0% | 24.6% | 14.5%      | 37.3% | 22.8% |
|                        | 2007 | 18.4%          | 34.7% | 16.3% | 17.9% | 36.2% | 18.4% | 18.1%      | 35.6% | 17.5% |
|                        | 2008 | 21.4%          | 36.6% | 15.2% | 21.6% | 44.1% | 22.5% | 21.5%      | 40.8% | 19.3% |
| Key Stage 2 (level 4+) |      |                |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |       |
|                        |      | Boys           |       |       | Girls |       |       | All Pupils |       |       |
|                        |      | FSM            | Paid  | Gap   | FSM   | Paid  | Gap   | FSM        | Paid  | Gap   |
| African                | 2004 | 67.6%          | 83.0% | 15.4% | 72.6% | 87.6% | 15.0% | 70.1%      | 85.3% | 15.2% |
|                        | 2005 | 66.7%          | 80.8% | 14.2% | 66.7% | 86.0% | 19.4% | 66.7%      | 83.7% | 17.0% |
|                        | 2006 | 67.9%          | 78.9% | 11.0% | 67.6% | 83.2% | 15.6% | 67.7%      | 81.1% | 13.3% |
|                        | 2007 | 67.7%          | 83.0% | 15.3% | 74.5% | 83.7% | 9.2%  | 71.1%      | 83.3% | 12.2% |
|                        | 2008 | 68.0%          | 85.0% | 17.0% | 80.0% | 85.0% | 5.0%  | 74.0%      | 85.0% | 11.0% |
| Caribbean              | 2004 | 57.5%          | 57.9% | 0.4%  | 69.6% | 76.6% | 7.0%  | 64.3%      | 66.7% | 2.4%  |
|                        | 2005 | 63.7%          | 67.4% | 3.7%  | 68.2% | 73.2% | 5.0%  | 66.1%      | 70.2% | 4.0%  |
|                        | 2006 | 58.7%          | 66.2% | 7.5%  | 69.9% | 75.9% | 6.1%  | 65.3%      | 71.6% | 6.3%  |
|                        | 2007 | 59.7%          | 68.5% | 8.8%  | 75.9% | 78.0% | 2.1%  | 68.4%      | 73.3% | 4.9%  |
|                        | 2008 | 68.0%          | 74.0% | 6.0%  | 72.0% | 84.0% | 12.0% | 70.0%      | 79.0% | 9.0%  |
| White British          | 2004 | 67.1%          | 87.0% | 19.9% | 66.2% | 90.8% | 24.7% | 66.7%      | 89.0% | 22.3% |
|                        | 2005 | 61.2%          | 87.5% | 26.3% | 61.1% | 93.1% | 32.0% | 61.2%      | 90.4% | 29.2% |
|                        | 2006 | 55.6%          | 88.6% | 33.0% | 74.6% | 93.5% | 18.8% | 63.2%      | 91.1% | 27.9% |
|                        | 2007 | 72.2%          | 85.1% | 12.9% | 71.4% | 89.4% | 18.1% | 71.8%      | 87.1% | 15.4% |
|                        | 2008 | 65.0%          | 93.0% | 28.0% | 75.0% | 86.0% | 11.0% | 70.0%      | 89.0% | 19.0% |
| All Pupils             | 2004 | 64.0%          | 75.0% | 11.0% | 71.0% | 84.0% | 13.0% | 68.0%      | 79.0% | 11.0% |
|                        | 2005 | 65.0%          | 78.0% | 13.0% | 69.0% | 84.0% | 15.0% | 67.0%      | 81.0% | 14.0% |
|                        | 2006 | 63.0%          | 78.0% | 15.0% | 71.0% | 84.0% | 13.0% | 69.0%      | 82.0% | 13.0% |
|                        | 2007 | 69.0%          | 81.0% | 12.0% | 73.0% | 83.0% | 10.0% | 72.0%      | 83.0% | 11.0% |
|                        | 2008 | 69.0%          | 83.0% | 14.0% | 76.0% | 85.0% | 9.0%  | 72.0%      | 84.0% | 12.0% |

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