

Report to: Gypsy Traveller Advisory Board

From: Alex Gamby - Head of Learners with Additional Needs Education, Learning and Skills Directorate

Date: 19 July 2011

Classification: Unrestricted

## **Summary**

This report provides information about the current situation for and issues impacting on the Minority Communities Achievement Service.

### **1. Introduction**

In the context of national and local agendas, the current environment and operating framework for the Minority Communities Achievement Service (MCAS) is undergoing major changes. These will inevitably lead to significant change for MCAS itself. This report seeks to describe the changes and possible impact on MCAS.

### **2. MCAS**

MCAS is located in KCC's Education Learning and Skills Directorate (ELS) with Learners with Additional Needs and provides the following range of advice, support and training services in relation to minority ethnic groups, including Gypsy Roma Travellers (GRT):

- Admission procedures including accurate data collection;
- Supporting access to education, including for Children Missing Education;
- Assessment strategies;
- Home/school liaison;
- Classroom strategies to support outstanding teaching and learning;
- Accelerating learning for New Arrivals/beginners of English;
- Distinguishing between English as an additional language and special educational needs;
- Raising attainment of vulnerable groups through appropriate target setting and tracking of progress;
- Effective use of data;
- Racial incidents, policies and procedures;
- Enhancing race equality through the curriculum;
- Audit tools to support planning and identification of good practice;
- Impact assessment;
- Engaging with families from disadvantaged communities;
- Professional development for those in senior leadership roles, including those with designated responsibilities and all other staff groups including, teaching assistants, lunch time supervisors, governors, mentors.

### **3. Current local context**

KCC's Medium Term Plan 2011 – 2015, 'Bold Steps for Kent' has three objectives:

- To help the Kent economy grow;
- To put the citizen in control;
- To tackle disadvantage.

Based on the belief that education, learning and skills are pivotal to these three ambitions, 'Bold Steps for Education' has been introduced as a natural extension of Bold Steps for Kent, seeking to refresh and sharpen the focus on learning and achievement. In the context of Bold Steps for Education, ELS is currently implementing a '100 Plan' which incorporates the following work streams:

- defining its core business;
- consulting with schools on the further delegation of resources;
- developing EduKent as its trading arm;
- introducing The Kent Challenge, a strategy for improving standards in and quality assuring learning provision (including early years providers, schools, academies, colleges etc);
- developing a strategy for supporting learners across the 0 – 24 age range, who may be vulnerable either short term or long term to not aspiring, progressing and achieving to their full potential;
- driving forward its Review of provision for those with Special Educational Needs;
- developing an integrated commissioning plan for early years, schools and vocational delivery;
- reviewing its approach to 14 – 24 learning and skills provision;
- delivering challenging financial savings and identifying those for the future;
- developing a 'Kent Association of Schools';
- In the context of all of the above, considering its future structure.

#### **4. Impact on MCAS**

The 100 Plan work streams likely to have the greatest impact on MCAS are:

##### 1. The consultation with schools on the further delegation of resources

The consultation document sets out options for delegating from April 2012 a range of services and responsibilities to schools which have hitherto been provided or paid for centrally out of the government grant provided for schools and pupil services – the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

For each budget that KCC is suggesting could be delegated, the formula by which the funding would be distributed is set out, along with initial information on the choices likely to be available to schools to either buy back the service from the LA via Edukent, or make alternative arrangements. The implications of this approach include the effective “de ring fencing” of funds and the complete transfer of associated responsibilities to schools.

Responses from schools are invited by the 31 July. Final decisions will then be made; schools will be informed of these in the autumn and asked to indicate what services they will want to procure from KCC, so that provision can be planned for April 2012.

MCAS is currently funded from the DSG to the level of £2,381,000. The consultation proposes that £1,983,000 of this be delegated to schools by a formula based on Mosaic, prior attainment, AEN. The balance of £398,000 is proposed to be retained centrally to continue to provide

services which relate to Children Missing Education (CME) including unaccompanied asylum seekers. (This work also contributes to the safeguarding agenda).

## 2. EduKent

For each service proposed for delegation, there are outline proposals for how buy-back options might work through EduKent, and how current services might be made more flexible to allow schools greater choice.

Where funding is ultimately agreed to be devolved, MCAS will offer a range of prescribed 'bronze, silver and gold' annual 'packages' of services, drawn from those described in paragraph 2. MCAS will also work with individual schools (and potentially other learning providers) to create bespoke packages. (A 'platinum' package will be available, where the Specialist Teaching Service is also purchased, offering added value.)

## 3. The Kent Challenge

The Kent Challenge, which is 'the vehicle by which we will achieve significant improvements in educational outcomes for all children and young people in Kent'. Its aims include:

- Improving outcomes for all pupils at a faster rate than is currently occurring;
- Providing support for schools to break the link between disadvantage and low attainment;
- Ensuring access to high quality learning experiences for all children and young people whilst raising aspirations and expectations for every child;
- Maximising achievement for all children and young people.

The Kent Challenge will also make a significant contribution to the Government's stated aims to:

- raise the educational achievement of all children and young people
- narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers

Success will include significant improvements in educational outcomes for all but particularly for disadvantaged children and young people. Whilst The Kent Challenge is at this stage primary and secondary focused, it will be supported by strategies for Early Years and 14 - 24. The role for MCAS at the heart of The Kent Challenge and as a key partner in school improvement is evident.

## 4. Raising Aspiration, Supporting Progress, Ensuring Achievement.

*'Raising Aspiration, Supporting Progress, Ensuring Achievement'* is the strategy (draft at this stage) for supporting learners across the 0 – 24 age range, who may be vulnerable either short term or long term to not aspiring, progressing and achieving to their full potential. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups in general and GRT specifically are amongst who this Strategy is for.

Its vision statement is *'for a Kent 'learning world' that is inclusive, welcoming and embracing of diversity, where achievement exceeds aspiration and all children and young people achieve more than they ever thought possible. In this 'learning world' all relevant learning providers, agencies and partners work together in a child/young person centred way to consistently deliver joined up, seamless services'*.

The aim and purpose of this Strategy is to:

- ensure appropriate support for all learners across the 0 – 24 age range who may be temporarily or permanently vulnerable to not aspiring, progressing and achieving to their full potential;
- to support narrowing and eventual closing of the gap in achievement between vulnerable learners and others.

It also has a suit of underpinning principles which are enshrined either explicitly or implicitly in Bold Steps for Education, the Kent Children and Young People's Planning Framework and Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy,

There is a clear imperative to better understand the circumstances and needs of all learners across the 0 – 24 age range who may be temporarily or permanently vulnerable, including in this the narrowing of and working towards closing the gap in achievement. (GRT are of paramount importance in this respect). In responses to this, the following cross cutting strategic priorities have been identified:

- Equal access to learning (including In-Year Fair Access);
- More effective leadership and management;
- More effective engagement and involvement of parents and carers;
- Swifter and increasingly accurate Initial Assessment;
- Universal high quality teaching and learning which is differentiated and personalised
- Raising aspiration;
- Accelerating progress;
- Driving up attainment;
- Driving down exclusions;
- More effective support at points of transition;
- Collaboration within competition (quality assurance driven from within networks of learning providers, including the Kent Association of Schools);
- Meeting or exceeding national comparators;
- Have moved from 'Reactive Intervention' to 'Active Intervention' to 'Proactive Intervention';
- Recruitment and retention and workforce development.

The vehicle for delivering this will be to a significant degree (but not exclusively) the Kent Challenge.

## 5. Financial Savings

At this stage, no specific financial savings have been identified for MCAS in either the current or future financial years. Clearly, this is highly unlikely to continue to be the case.

## 6. ELS Restructure

In the context of the ELS defining its business, Delegation Proposals, the introduction of EduKent and the trading of services and the possibility of budget reductions, the future structure for MCAS is likely to be different to the current one, but at the time of writing this report it is difficult to predict quite what it might look like.

## **5. Summary and Conclusions**

The future holds some degree of uncertainty for MCAS. Key issues for GRT will include:

- Whether or not there will be any targeted resources;
- Will there be any ongoing work with other relevant agencies and if so what will this look like?;
- What are the risks for GRT in particular in light of proposals?

Anticipated milestones for the ELS 100 Day Plan are:

- Kent Challenge established by September 2011;
- Raising Aspiration, Supporting Progress, Ensuring Achievement Strategy to be ready for consultation by September 2011;
- Agreed levels of delegation or devolution take effect from April 2012:
- New education service delivery vehicle (EduKent) established from April 2012;

All of this is intended to bring clarity and purpose. A report can be brought to a future meeting of the Gypsy Traveller Advisory Board with the implications for MCAS should this be required.

## **6. Recommendation:**

The Advisory Board is asked to note this report

**Louise Simpson**  
**Acting Manager, Minority Communities Achievement Service**

**Alex Gamby**  
**Head of Learners with Additional Needs**

*Background documents - none*