

By: Managing Director (Children, Families and Education)

To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – July 2009

Subject: Update: Progress on improvement access and achievement for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people

Classification: Unrestricted – for information

Summary: This report updates members on progress to improve access to education and achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people. It includes data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census, attendance returns and monitoring of key stage outcomes. The report gives some illustrative examples of strategies to promote access and achievement.

Improving access and achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children

1. Background

(1) In September 2008 the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board received a report on the implementation of the National Strategies: Gypsy Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme in Kent LA. At this meeting members requested a progress report on access and achievement during the 2008/9 academic year.

(2) The Department for Children, Schools and Families and Ofsted have expressed concern at the achievement gaps that exist between children of different ethnic groups and the need to narrow the gap in attainment between different ethnic groups including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.

The DCSF in 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All – More Choices for Parents and Pupils (2005) stated:

'There is a way to go before every child, regardless of their ethnicity, has an equal chance of reaching their potential. We will, therefore, build on Aiming High to ensure that every school receives advice and support to meet the aspirations of Black and Minority Ethnic parents and pupils. We also recognise the severe underperformance in Gypsy and Traveller communities, and will introduce a targeted programme to address this issue.'

(3) As a result the DCSF introduced the National Strategies (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme) and guidance for schools and Local Authorities (*The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People (2008)* and *Attendance Advice: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children (2008)*). KCC Children, Families and Education have led on the implementation of the programme and guidance.

2. Pupil Level Annual Schools Census

(1) Ethnicity of children attending schools is collected as part of the Schools' Census.

Table 1: Schools Census Data

Ethnic Group	2007	2008	2009
Gypsy Roma	540	887	1040
Irish Travellers	86	82	85
White Eastern European	978	1257	1529

The data shows a year on year increase in the number of children and their families declaring their ethnic background to schools, including those from EU Accession States. Families declare their ethnic heritage across all the groups set out in Table 1. In March 2009 the DCSF wrote to all Directors of Children's Services proposing schools should present 3 ethnic categories to families: Gypsy, Roma and Travellers with a view that this approach would promote a higher level of declaration. Kent LA will need to consult with schools and community members. There is no mandatory timescale for the implementation of the changes and they will not imply any change in the way data is held at Local Authority or National level.

(2) Actions taken to improve data include:

- Providing training to school administrators (who are often the first point of contact with families) to enable accurate ethnic declaration in schools.
- Reviewing data to identify schools with high numbers of children for whom the ethnic declaration is 'refused' or 'not known' and offering support to address this issue.

Access and Attainment

3. Children Missing Education – Data

(1) As part of the KCC Children Missing Education Protocol, MCAS receives referrals for Children Missing Education from vulnerable minority ethnic groups (mainly Gypsy Roma and Traveller children). MCAS Family Liaison Officers work with the families and other agencies to secure access to education within the shortest timescales and to prevent the case going to In Year Fair Access Panels within each locality. Table 2 shows the number of children referred to MCAS in the period October 2008 to March 2009 and their status on the case load monitoring system 30 days after the referral.

Table 2: Referrals to MCAS for Children Missing Education (October 2008 to March 2009)

All Referrals	Day 30 Status
School Place Taken Up	57
School Place Accepted	22
School Place Refused	11
School Place No Offer	20
Moved Out of Area	9
Reported Missing	11
Other (including not yet reached the 30 day status, or where we are still trying to resolve the case)	31
Total	161

Monitoring of this caseload shows that approximately 40% of children access education within 30 days of referral. After 30 days the Family Liaison Officer works with families and other agencies to seek a resolution to the case and overcome barriers that exist to accessing education. Family Liaison Officers also track children who have moved out of the area or are reported missing.

(2) Attainment – data

Monitoring of attainment shows the gap in attainment between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and all Kent children at end of Key Stage 2 and 4. As a result of targeted action and interventions monitoring identifies an upward trend in Key Stage 2.

Table 3: Attainment at Key Stage 2

Ethnic Group	% of children achieving Level 4+ in English and Maths	
	2007	2008
Gypsy Roma	18.3	29.5
Irish Travellers	33.3	0
White Eastern European	Not available	33
All Kent pupils	66.8	69

Table 4: Attainment at Key Stage 4 (5 A to C at GCSE)

Ethnic Group	% of young people achieving 5 A* to C at GCSE including English and Maths	
	2007	2008
Gypsy Roma	0	8.6
Irish Travellers	0	No students in this cohort
White Eastern European	36.4	43.8
All Kent pupils	48.2	49.7

Table 5: Attainment at Key Stage 4 (5 A to G at GCSE)

Ethnic Group	% of young people achieving 5 A* to G at GCSE including English and Maths	
	2007	2008
Gypsy Roma	41.2	11.4
Irish Travellers	100	No students in this cohort
White Eastern European	78.2	45.8
All Kent Pupils	90.8	92.9

(3) Attendance - Data

Following improvements in data quality with the Schools' Census (Ethnic background) monitoring of attendance by ethnic group commenced in the Summer Term 2008. This shows the gap in attendance and how that widens at secondary school.

Table 6: Attendance Primary - % Absence of total possible attendance

Ethnic Group	Summer Term 2008	Autumn Term 2008
Gypsy Roma	15.2	14.9
Irish Travellers	19.7	5.9
All Kent pupils	5.1	5.4

Table 6: Attendance Secondary - % Absence of total possible attendance

Ethnic Group	Summer Term 2008	Autumn Term 2008
Gypsy Roma	23.9	18.2
Irish Travellers	8.7	20.3
All Kent pupils	8.5	6.9

In order to improve attendance MCAS and the Attendance and Behaviour Service are working together to:

- Implement the DCSF guidance *Attendance Advice: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children (2008)*. In June 2009 all Education Welfare Officers will receive training on the guidance to enable them to effectively support schools in improving attendance of Gypsy Roma and Traveller children.
- Gain a greater understanding of the reasons for absence from school (for example, accommodation, travelling away from the area).

4. Examples of effective Strategies

(1) **Exemplar 1: Unauthorised Encampments.** Family Liaison Officers have worked with mobile families living within Unauthorised Encampments in the Swale area since September 2008. As a result of the site being tolerated Family Liaison Officers were able to work with the families to identify appropriate school places or alternative curriculum provision. The team has worked with up to 8 families on a weekly basis, where some children have not accessed formal education for some years. Strategies have included working with a home tutor to support children in accessing a Pupil Referral Unit, identifying school places through In Year Fair Access Arrangements, supporting families with admission and induction to school and working through the Children's Centres to encourage access to early years and health provision. More work is needed to establish the attendance of children.

(2) **Exemplar 2: Children Missing Education Protocol** has enabled Roma children newly arrived to the UK to access education. In Gravesham Local Children's Service Partnership the Roma have been identified as a vulnerable group in terms of access to education and other statutory services. As a result Education Welfare Officers and Family Liaison Officers work together to identify Children Missing Education and ensure that they are placed in school. The Minority Communities Achievement Service has been proactive in raising awareness of the needs of the Roma through training to Children's Centres, schools, Health Visitors and School Nurses. KCC Youth and Community and the Baptist Church provide a Roma Youth Club which enables outreach to young people and a gateway to support from Connexions and other agencies. Schools in Gravesham have been developing their practice to respond to the needs of this group in terms of induction and teaching and learning strategies.

(3) **Exemplar 3: Local Children's Service Partnerships** receive targeted and ring fenced funding through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant to enable them to narrow the gap in attainment for minority ethnic groups. Shepway 1 Local Children's Service Partnership identified Roma as a significant vulnerable group where there were concerns

in terms of access and achievement. As a result specialist staff have provided networking opportunities for schools to share effective practice and a suite of Continuous Professional Development opportunities focused on raising achievement of new arrivals. A group of schools have developed a bespoke induction package for new arrivals and this is being shared across all schools in the locality.

(4) **Exemplar 4: KCC Anti Bullying Strategy** has provided opportunities to engage schools in addressing racist bullying. A number of schools had contacted the Minority Communities Achievement Service as a result of their awareness of racist incidents relating to Gypsy Roma and Traveller children. As a result schools were offered a new training package focused on addressing bullying perpetrated on the basis of race, religion and culture. Evaluations from training delivered have evidenced a positive impact in that school staff has felt more confident in understanding and addressing racist bullying. Recording of racist incidents has improved in Local Children's Service Partnerships where the training has been a focus.

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

- (a) Note the progress made in addressing concerns relating to access and achievement of Gypsy Roma and Traveller children.
- (b) Receive a further report on the Kent LA pilot of the National Strategies Gypsy Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme in September 2009.

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