

## Know the gap – narrow the gap

### Southwark's strategic approach to 'narrowing the gap' for pupils vulnerable to under attainment

February 2010

#### Aim:

Working within the Children's Services school improvement strategy the ethnic minority achievement team provide a range of core and targeted intervention programmes that focus on developing schools' capacity to raise attainment of underachieving groups as well as identification and sharing of effective practice. The team provides advice, support and challenge to

- Raise achievement of children in line with ethnicity performance targets for underachieving groups
- Develop integrated programmes to embed good practice and build local capacity (for example building on the Black Children's Achievement Programme)
- Assist schools to navigate through available data and identify attainment of vulnerable groups particularly in relation to poverty using free school meals as an indicator
- Break the link between disadvantage and low attainment , promote high standards and fair access to educational opportunity

#### Focus:

Recent data has identified widening gaps in attainment between Southwark overall and Black Caribbean pupils. BC pupils (as a group) have not made expected gains at KS 1 and 2. We are committed to narrowing the gap between this group of pupils and Southwark all pupils and this is a key focus of work.

#### What is the gap?

- In the Foundation stage:

Percentage of children achieving 6+ in all PSE and CLL combined and a minimum of 78 points

BC	31.8 %
Southwark LA – maintained only	41.6 %

#### \* Key Stage 1 the attainment gap (Level 2+) is:

7 percentage point gap in reading  
10 percentage point gap in writing  
10 percentage point gap in Maths

#### \* At Key Stage 2 the attainment gap (Level 4+) is:

6 percentage point gap in English  
10 percentage point gap in Maths

### **Raising standards for all - core offer to schools**

The CPD programme now offers specific training on the effective use of NS resources now available to support the learning of for Black children. Training (both school and centre based) will focus on the needs of low achieving BC pupils and the identification of strategies and good practice that can make a difference. Link EMA Consultants will assist schools in scrutinizing data and identification of individual pupils/groups that have not made expected progress. They will offer management and leadership advice and teaching and learning strategies as well as resources.

Specialist support is also available for schools to improve provision for gypsy, Roma Travellers and pupils with English as an additional language.

### **Raising standards for identified vulnerable groups – targeted intervention programmes.**

The following intervention programmes are time limited and have clear entry and exit criteria. They compliment the core offer of training, advice and support to schools.

#### 1. Leadership and management support - school improvement

Lead External Consultant: Carol Jones

This programme works in schools where BC pupils are not reaching expected levels. There is a sharp focus on leadership and management and aims to establish robust self evaluation and good practice. Working with the headteacher, the consultant considers school improvement planning and self evaluation, learning and teaching strategies and the way they impact on learners (progress/target setting/learning environment/curriculum offer).

#### 2. Target setting and aspirations – stretch targets for underachieving BC pupils

Lead External Consultant: Bruce Gill

This programme supports all senior leaders in schools in challenging target setting and encourages rigour and recognition of multiple factors when scrutinizing data - such as FSM/ethnicity/gender. It also focuses on progression and how this affects groups of pupils and the planning of support or intervention strategies. The support includes school based visits and seminars.

#### 3. Community cohesion - raising Black Achievement through Culture and the Creativity

Lead External Consultant: Sarah Nunn, Creative Elements

'The Hero Inside' project will focus on raising achievement of groups of children in selected schools who may be underachieving or not reaching their full potential. It will fuse culture, Literacy, ICT, History, citizenship and the arts

together to reflect the cultural diversity of Southwark. Using animation and drama identified key stage 2 pupils will explore how stories can provide a framework for problem solving and finding solutions. Through school based workshops with practitioners, the pupils will discover how to articulate their viewpoint in the visual arts, ICT, music or drama.

#### 4. Parental engagement – developing effective partnerships between parents and school

Lead External Consultant: Dr Jan McKenley

Action research on how we best build parental engagement processes with parents in homes where an effective learning culture may not be evident. New engagement strategies will be explored through this project which will lead to parental engagement at home as well as parental involvement in school. This project will work in identified schools identifying good practice as well as development opportunities and is based on the most recent research (Professor Alma Harris: Do parents know they matter – Raising achievement through parental engagement). It offers school visits and the possibility of learning networks

#### 5. Raising the achievement of White British boys on Free School Meals.

Lead External Consultant: Richard Harris

This is another group which has been identified as a cause for concern both locally and nationally. The project is in 2 parts. The first part looks at national research and the successful work in a number of Southwark schools/settings to identify strategies that appear to make a difference. The second part of the project will engage other Southwark schools that wish to narrow the gap and improve attainment of this group in their schools.

#### 6. Diversifying the school workforce; ethnicity focus

The importance of having positive role models for children and young people in school cannot be underestimated. Children's Services have a commitment to helping schools to recruit and retain a high quality workforce which reflects the local community. The current data on the schools workforce is being analysed by ethnicity, particularly focusing on staff in senior management posts. This information will be used as the basis of a report which will make recommendations about how we can improve current recruitment and retention strategies to work towards a better representation of the local community in the schools workforce.

Alongside this we are piloting a coaching programme for nine black and minority ethnic leaders in schools who aspire to headship. This programme will be evaluated for impact.