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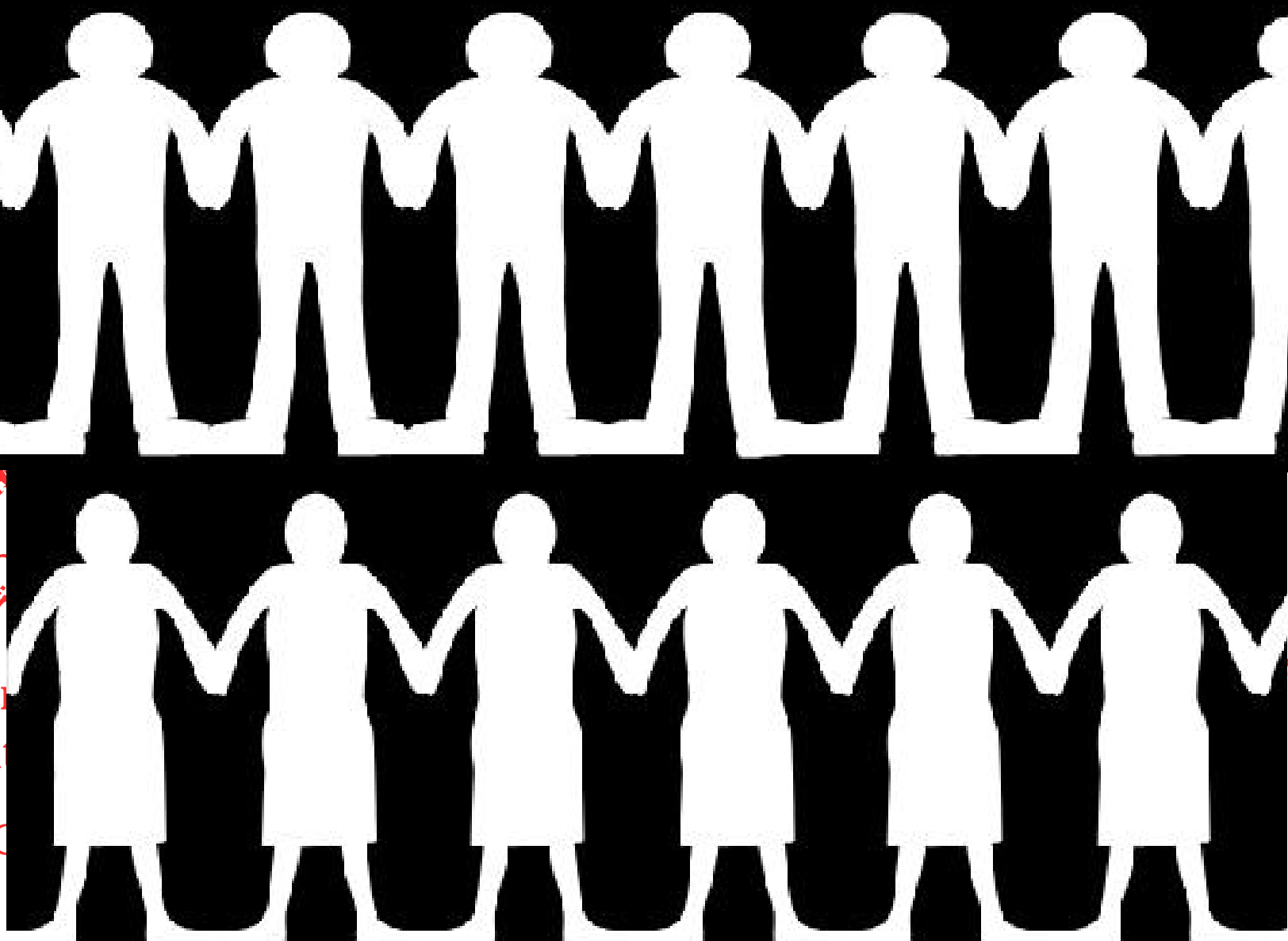
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Black and Ethnic Minority Young People and Educational Disadvantage

by The Runnymede Trust



Research review by
Kaushika Amin, David Drew,
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with Sean Demack

The Runnymede Trust

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Recent activities have included a large residential conference, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, addressed by the Home Secretary; a report on anti-Semitism; a major project on the curriculum of schools, involving the publication of a handbook for teachers: *Equality Assurance in Schools*, and a submission on racial discrimination to the United Nations.

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Research Strategies | 5 |
| Defining ethnicity | |
| Defining and measuring achievement | |
| From 'under-achievement' to educational disadvantage | |
| Putting the data in context | |
| 3. Achievement in the Early Key Stages | 7 |
| 4. Achievement at Secondary School | 9 |
| Educational achievement | |
| Educational progress and school effectiveness | |
| 5. Qualitative Research | 19 |
| The role of qualitative research | |
| Pupil-teacher interactions | |
| Exclusions from school | |
| Understanding and supporting success | |
| 6. National Initiatives | 23 |
| 7. Some Local Key Projects | 25 |
| 8. Research Overview | 27 |
| 9. Principal Findings | 29 |
| 10. Recommendations for Further Research | 31 |
| 11. Executive Summary | 33 |
| 12. Bibliography and Contacts | 37 |

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to collate existing knowledge and information in order to identify gaps in understanding and make recommendations for areas which would benefit from further research. The research is based on the primary and secondary education system. The three main elements of this study include:

- Mapping of current and projected experience of young black and ethnic minority people
- Assessment of national initiatives and significant localised action research projects which seek to address various aspects of educational disadvantage and inequality
- A meta-evaluation of prevailing views about the impact on young people of such initiatives. This will be set in the context of general forms of provision for the specific needs of ethnic minority groups

The key component of the report explores the extent and nature of educational change experienced by children and young people of ethnic minority background. In this review, we have built on our specialist knowledge of particular initiatives, on a critical examination of newly published research, and on the findings of the last major review in this field [Gillborn and Gipps 1996].

The description of national and local initiatives in sections 7 and 8 are not meant to be comprehensive. We have, however, aimed to highlight the projects which give an indication of possible solutions.

Our principal findings have been guided by the need to identify the most pressing concerns and to explore the main lessons that can be learnt from existing research. We focus, in particular, on issues that directly influence pupils' educational achievements, especially where they relate to education policy, life in schools and other issues that can be addressed at the level of practice and administration.

The report concludes with recommendations for further action in reducing educational disadvantage.

2. Research Strategies

The way in which research studies are designed affects the type of questions that can be answered by them. In an ideal situation the questions should come first and the research strategy follows from them, but many studies fall short of this ideal and research is almost always a compromise between cost and quality.

One particular and relevant example is the contrast between nationally representative studies and ones produced in particular cities. Research in the 1980s was bedevilled by the lack of nationally representative data. Since many of the studies on ethnic minority achievement were carried out in London, a distorted impression of ethnic differences in attainment at the GCSE stage was given. For example, the attainment of white pupils in inner London schools was far lower than that in other parts of the country [Drew and Gray 1991]. In one sense, such studies are of great use because comparisons are being made between pupils in similar areas. However, such studies may also be giving an unrepresentative view of educational attainment in relation to the national average.

Defining ethnicity

‘Although there is no single, universally accepted definition of ethnicity ... it is probably true to say that, if pressed for a definition, most academic commentators and policy makers would stress some sort of cultural distinctiveness as the mark of an ethnic grouping’ [Mason 1995: 12]. Ethnic groups are defined by themselves and others, as sharing a sense of *cultural* distinctiveness. Differences in language, religion, history and ‘ancestry (real or imagined)’ are the most common bases of ethnicity [Giddens 1993: 253]. In the United Kingdom, however, the term ‘ethnic group’ has increasingly come to be used as a convenient substitute for ‘racial’ groups. This partially reflects the fact that advances in the biological sciences have discredited previous attempts to define separate human races. Although ‘race’ is now redundant as a meaningful scientific category, the idea of ‘race’ (as a general descriptor of assumed national, cultural and/or physical differences) persists in society.

A reflection of the changing and complex nature of these debates can be seen in the terms used in the last British census: Respondents faced a choice between categories, some of which denoted *national* boundaries (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi) whilst others focused on *colour* and/or more general *geographical* distinctions (White, Black-Caribbean, Black-African). Such categories may capture the most crude distinctions that circulate in contemporary debates, but they exclude many ethnic groups and mask the wide range of variation between and within each named group. Most research uses some variation on the census categories and, in reviewing such work, we are forced to reproduce these distinctions. Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that these groupings are complex, varied and changing.

Defining and measuring achievement

The issue of ‘under-achievement’ dominated debates about the education of ethnic minority pupils until the beginning of the 1990s both in Britain and in the US. In the US, judgements about equality of *opportunity* were made by comparing the outcomes of different groups. In Britain, this led to a focus in the Swann report on black ‘under-achievement’. It has been argued that because teachers perceive black ‘under-achievement’ to be a national problem beyond their control, they might lower their expectations of certain pupils, creating a negative stereotype that effectively closes down opportunities. Conscious of these problems, we do not generally refer to ‘under-achievement’ in this review. We prefer instead to focus on the *relative* achievements of pupils of different ethnic groups, conscious that total equality of outcome is unlikely. Our position is that significant differences in the *relative* achievements of different ethnic groups may reasonably be taken as a cause for concern.

Having decided upon a focus of relative achievement, we must still make a number of choices concerning what we will be comparing. At GCSE level, for example, we could use some commonly published statistic, such as the percentage of pupils with five or more GCSE passes at grades A-C. This is a threshold measure which focuses on a group of pupils who are likely to progress to university. On the other hand, we could use a composite score based on the number and grades of GCSE passes, which are then added up into a score for each pupil. These are not arbitrary decisions. The threshold measure focuses on high attainment, and the average score takes into account all pupils. It is possible to conceive of a situation where the average scores of two groups are not very

different, but there are very different percentages in the high attainment group. This was revealed in an analysis of ethnic differences in GCSE scores in the late 1980s [Drew and Gray 1991]. Both sets of statistics are useful, but both convey different messages about relative attainment.

From 'under-achievement' to educational disadvantage

The notion of 'under-achievement' has dominated debates in this field for more than a decade. Nevertheless, the concept is widely misunderstood and may now play a part in reproducing familiar stereotypes.

In most research, 'under-achievement' refers to significant differences in the *average* achievements of different groups. For example, we would assume that if students were grouped according to a factor that should not influence their achievement in a certain test, then, on average, each group should experience similar degrees of success. Each group will, of course, include some members performing very well and some performing rather badly. But if talent is randomly distributed across the groups, each group should achieve similar averages.

This model has been applied to the educational achievements of black and other ethnic minority students, usually comparing their average results with those achieved by their white peers. Where there is a significant short-fall, the minority group has sometimes been described as 'under-achieving'. Unfortunately, the term has come to be interpreted as signifying widespread failure among pupils, as if all black students are somehow destined to fail [Troyna 1984]. Also, some commentators feel that the term (inadvertently) shifts responsibility away from the educational system and onto the student and/or their families. People speak, for example, of 'black under-achievement', not the under-achievement of the system in providing for black students. For this reason, many writers now prefer to speak of *disadvantage* or *inequalities* of achievement/opportunity, as a way of clearly signalling that the figures denote a cause for concern — a likely area of injustice rather than an unavoidable variation in performance [Drew 1995; Gillborn 1997; Wright 1987].

Putting the data in context

If significant differences in the relative achievement of different ethnic groups are a cause of concern, this begs the question, relative to whom? What type of comparisons need to be made? One comparison is with similar white pupils. But we also need comparisons between gender and social groups. For example, if we take African Caribbean females, the gender comparison is with African Caribbean males, and the ethnic comparison is white females. These two comparisons will help answer two different types of question.

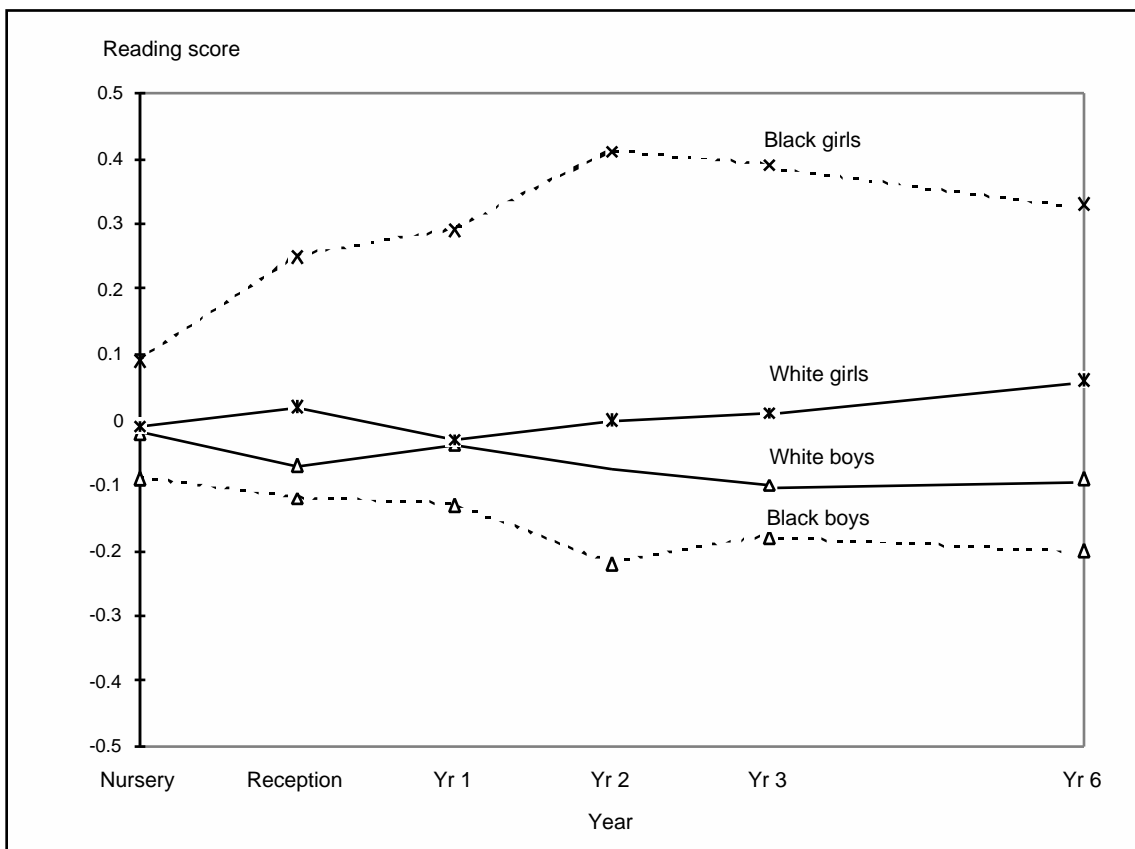
When information on pupils' social background is collected, there is usually a direct relationship with academic achievement: the higher the social class, the higher the achievement. This is due, amongst other things, to the advantages that accrue to those with parents in the professional and managerial classes as a result of higher income, social networks, the benefits of having parents who have received higher education and other factors. We know that ethnic minority young people are more likely to be in the lower social classes and to be disadvantaged as a result. It is also important to note that the numbers of ethnic minority young people whose parents are in professional and managerial occupations are increasing. (For a discussion of social class mobility amongst the Indian group see Robinson 1988.) This means that to think of any ethnic group as being homogeneous is a mistake which can result in simplistic generalisations. These social class factors will also be related to geographical ones. Thus, a study about Pakistani children in the inner city part of Bradford will predominantly be about working class children, whereas a nationally representative study will have children from all social backgrounds.

The other manner in which data can be put in context is by the use of statistical models which allow for a number of factors to be taken into account simultaneously. This enables us to answer more detailed questions, for example, about the effects of differences between schools on pupil outcomes once differences in pupil intake have been taken into account. Although this leads to a greater level of statistical complexity in the analysis, it means that very important hypotheses can be tested.

3. Achievement in the Early Key Stages

- African Caribbean children and those of Asian background were found, during the mid 1980s, to score significantly lower in reading than many other ethnic groups. On mathematics, the scores for the African Caribbean pupils were below all the other ethnic groups [Mortimore et al 1988].
- At the end of junior school, pupils who were described by their teacher as not fluent in English obtained significantly lower scores in reading and mathematics than those who were fluent [Mortimore et al 1988].
- A new analysis of the data revealed a strong association between poor school performance and indicators of poverty and low social class. There was a significant association between receiving free school meals, a measure of low income, and reading and mathematics scores — with those eligible performing poorly [Sammons 1994].
- It is known that some secondary schools appear to be more effective for certain groups of pupils. They are able, for example, to support greater progress amongst pupils at the higher or lower end of the achievement spectrum. In contrast, there is not, at present, any firm evidence to suggest that primary schools are being more or less effective for particular ethnic groups [Mortimore, Sammons and Thomas 1994].

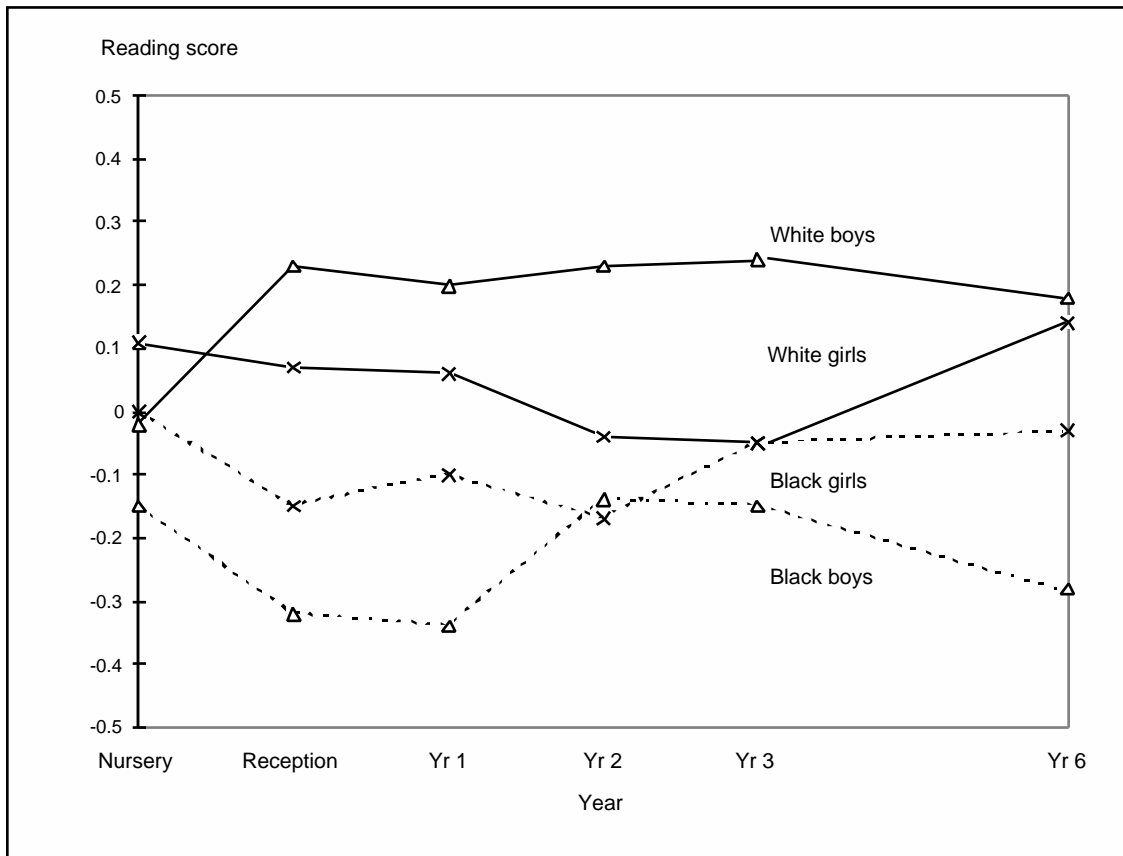
Figure 1: Reading test scores by ethnic group and gender.



Source: Plewis, 1991.

- A second cohort of pupils examined five years later, showed that at the end of infant school, black girls had made the most progress (improvement while at school) but black boys had made the least progress in reading. In mathematics, white boys had made the most progress but black boys the least progress [Plewis 1991, see Figures 1 and 2].
- A recent study compared teachers' assessments against pupils actual SAT results in spelling and number. There were marked ethnic differences with more black pupils than white or Pakistani pupils being given a teacher assessment lower than the SAT assessment (Plewis 1997).
- Analyses were carried out by a number of LEA's between 1992 and 1995 of ethnic differences in key stage tests. The findings from the London councils were in line with those of earlier studies. Children from the African Caribbean and Bangladeshi groups had lower performances than white and Indian children in all key assessments. Results from Birmingham, however, show that African Caribbean pupils obtained results at least as good as white pupils in all key areas [Camden 1996a, Tower Hamlets 1996 and Lambeth, 1995].

Figure 2: Maths test scores by ethnic group and gender.



Source: Plewis, 1991.

4. Achievement at Secondary School

Educational Achievement

The two most frequently used measures of education's achievement are:

Five or more higher grade (A-C) passes in GCSE examinations.* This is the most frequently cited measure of achievement. It has featured in every set of national 'performance tables' published annually by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Historically, five higher grade passes has operated as an important cut-off point for those seeking access to higher education or the professions. For these reasons, this measure has become something of a bench-mark against which the performance of schools and local authorities are compared (see Gillborn 1995). Nevertheless, the measure is not necessarily a good means of inter-group comparison: Only a minority of young people attain five or more higher passes, and so the measure is rather simple and concentrates only on the top end.

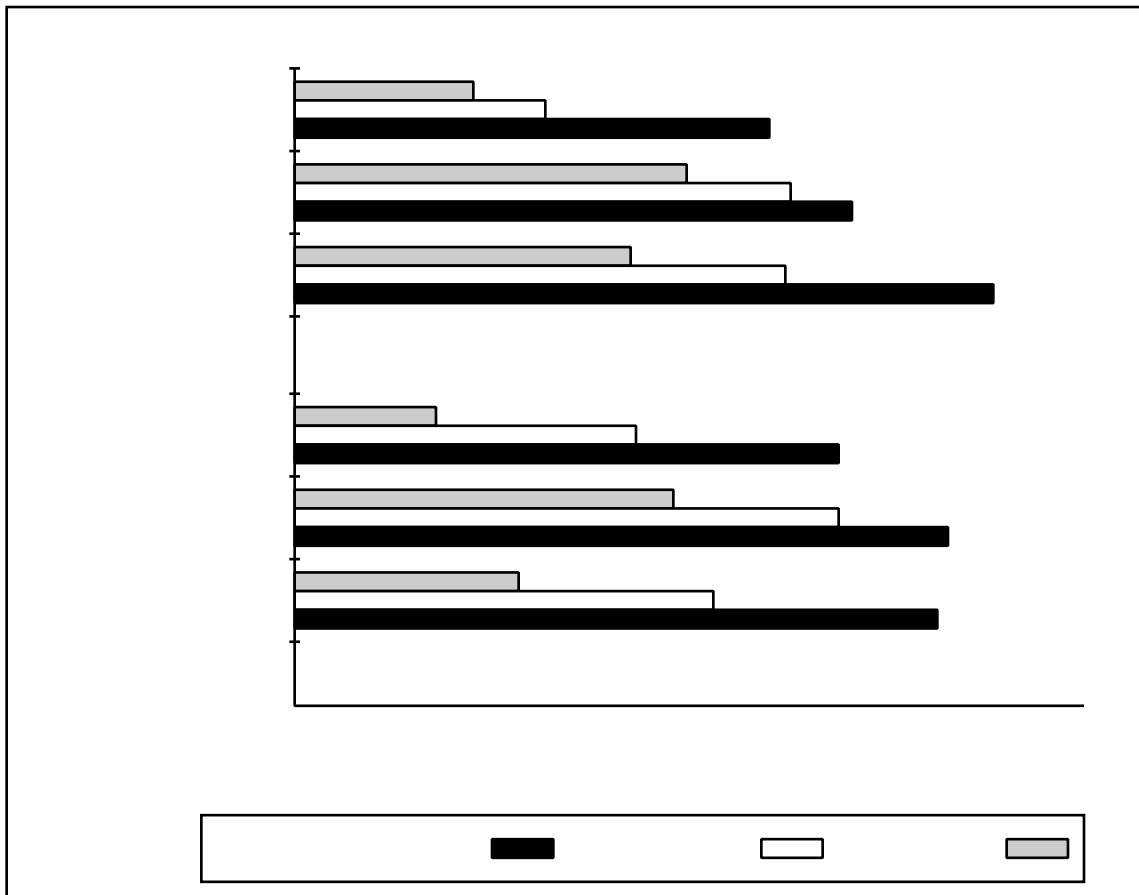
Exam Score. For this measure a numerical score is assigned to each pass grade achieved (eight points for a grade A*, seven for a grade A, six for a grade B, and so on) and a total for each pupil is obtained. Although this measure is less commonly used, it has the advantage of crediting *all* grades and, therefore, reflects both the quantity and quality of grades achieved.

Table 1: Average examination scores by social class, origin and gender (1985).

| Ethnic and Social Class Group | Average exam score | | Number of Cases |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------|
| | Male | Female | |
| African Caribbean | | | |
| Professional | 27.1 | 24.9 | 12 |
| Intermediate | 21.1 | 18.1 | 68 |
| Manual | 14.3 | 15.6 | 115 |
| Asian | | | |
| Professional | 30.7 | 27.8 | 17 |
| Intermediate | 27.2 | 25.9 | 95 |
| Manual | 23.3 | 22.5 | 189 |
| White | | | |
| Professional | 30.4 | 32.3 | 2,118 |
| Intermediate | 23.7 | 25.6 | 3,903 |
| Manual | 17.6 | 20.6 | 5,218 |

Adapted from Drew and Gray, 1990, page 114, Table 5.

Figure 3: Average exam scores by ethnic origin, gender and social class, England & Wales, 1985.

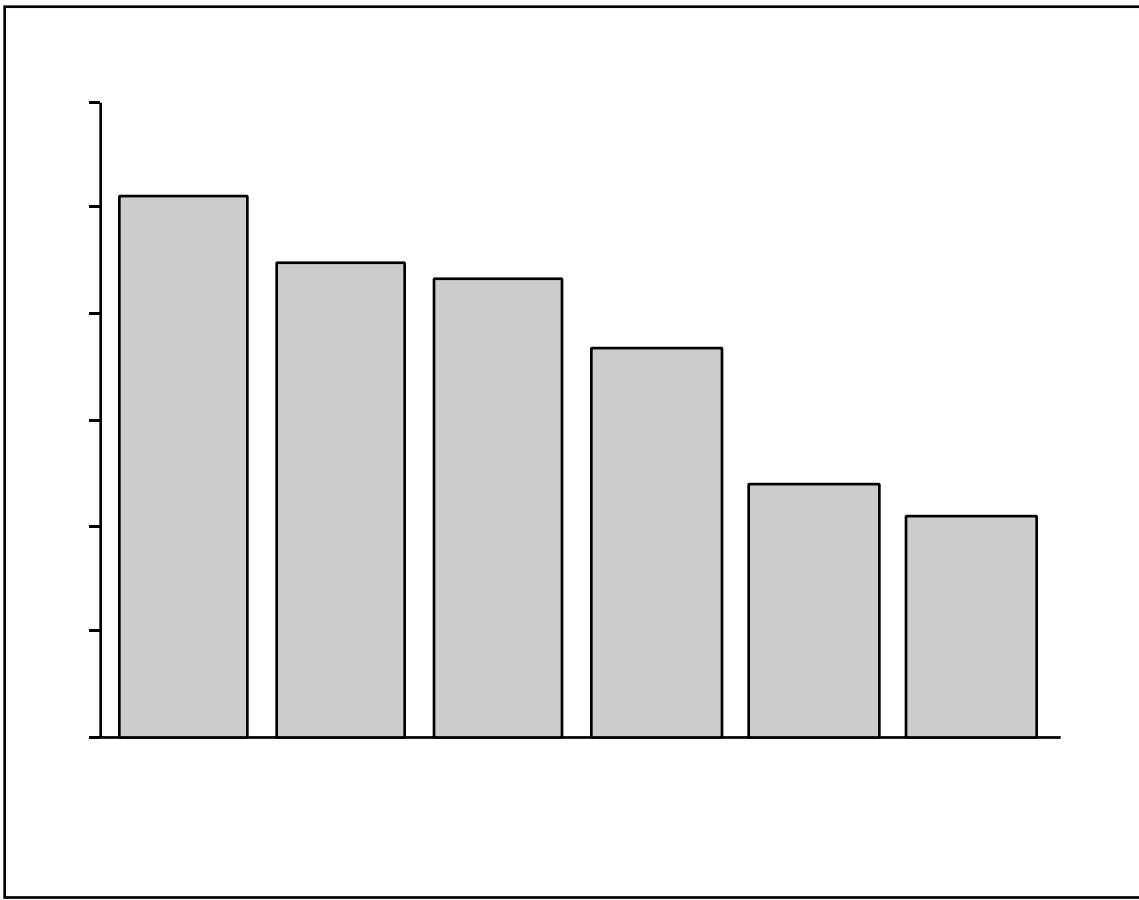


Source: Adapted from Drew and Gray, 1990.

The 1980s

- The results from the Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales (YCS) show that on average, African Caribbean pupils (of both sexes) achieved below the level attained by the other groups (Table 1 and Figure 3). Asian pupils, on the other hand, achieved almost as well as, or better than, whites of the same class and gender [Drew and Gray 1990]. Data from the YCS are especially interesting because, unlike most other research in the field, the sample is large and representative of the country as a whole. To date, most studies rely on small and unrepresentative samples.
- Social class is strongly associated with achievement *regardless of gender and ethnic background*. Whatever the pupils' gender or ethnic origin, those from higher social class backgrounds do better on average.
- The relationship between gender and achievement is not a simple one; the pattern of girls doing better than boys was only uniformly true for white pupils. For black students, middle class boys out performed girls from similar social class backgrounds [Gillborn and Gipps 1996: 17].

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A-C, 1994.

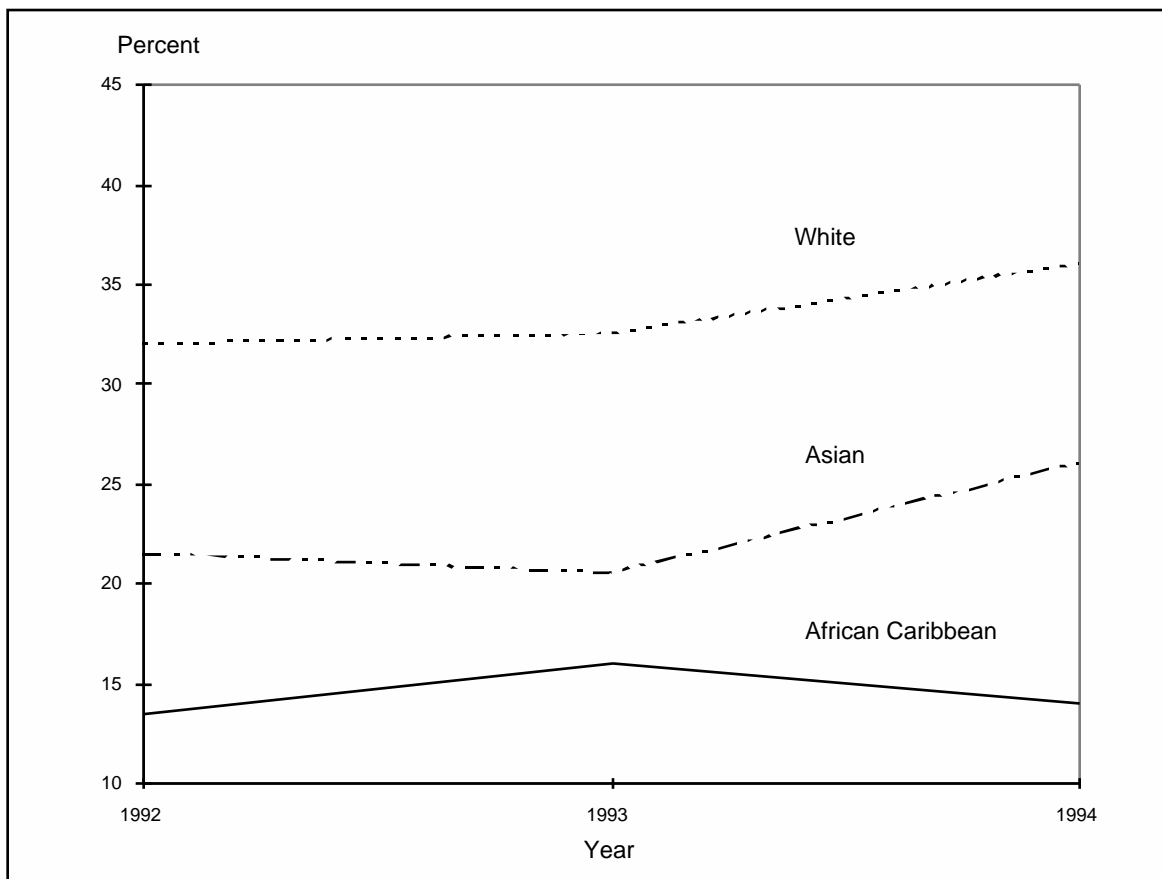


Source: Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales in Office for National Statistics, 1996.

The 1990s

- More recent data are available from the Youth Cohort Study in 1994 (Figure 4). As we have argued already, a focus on those pupils who obtained five or more GCSE higher passes (grades A-C) concentrates only on high attaining pupils. This has the effect of differentiating quite sharply between different groups. This is the case, illustrated above, with Chinese/Other Asian and Indian pupils out performing white pupils, and Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black pupils doing least well. *There are, therefore, persistent and significant inequalities of achievement between different ethnic groups.*
- There has been a general improvement in GCSE achievement in the 1990s and this has also been the case for the main ethnic minority groups. It is the case, therefore, that ethnic minority students are now achieving more highly on average than ever before.

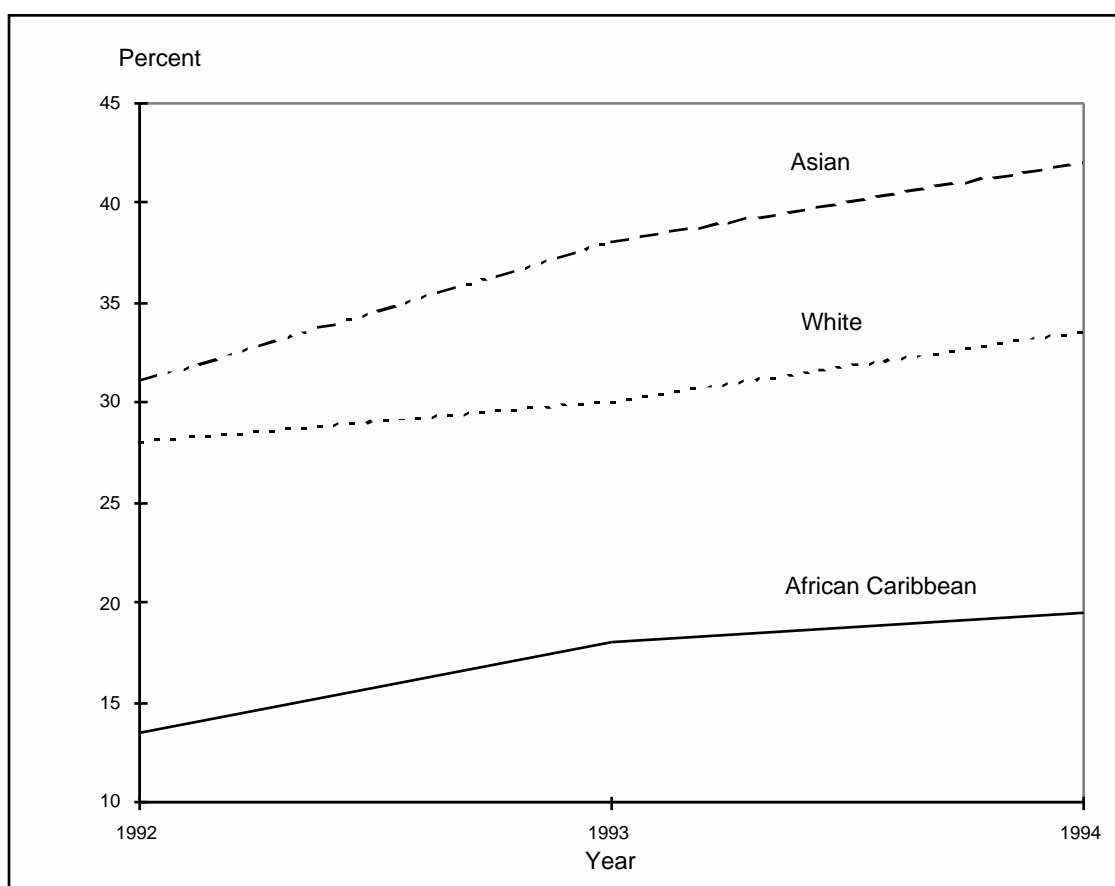
Figure 5: Pupils gaining five or more GCSE higher grade (A*-C) passes by ethnic origin. Birmingham 1992-1994.



Source: Birmingham Local Education Authority in Gillborn and Gipps, 1996.

- However, not all groups have improved at the same rate. In many areas *the gap has widened between the most successful and least successful groups* (Gillborn and Gipps 1996: 22-3). This has often impacted harshly on African Caribbean young people who, despite doing better than their predecessors, often find themselves falling further behind their white and Asian counterparts. See, for example, the data on Birmingham (Figure 5). The greatest gains have often been made by those ethnic groups already doing best prior to the general improvements in GCSE scores, e.g. in Brent where Indian students have historically been the highest achieving group (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Pupils gaining five or more GCSE higher grade (A*-C) passes by ethnic origin. Brent 1992-1994.



Source: Brent Local Education Authority in Gillborn and Gipps, 1996.

African Caribbean students

- As a group, African Caribbean students frequently achieve average results that are worse than those of their white peers and most other ethnic minority groups. In Birmingham in 1995, for example, only 18 percent of African Caribbean students achieved five or more higher grade passes, compared with 39 percent of Indians, 36 percent of whites, 29 percent of Bangladeshis and 21 percent of Pakistanis [Gillborn and Gipps 1996: 33]. White students were twice as likely as African Caribbean students to achieve this bench-mark level.
- The situation is especially difficult for African Caribbean young men. In many areas they are the group most likely to finish compulsory schooling with no graded examination result and the least likely to achieve five or more higher grade passes [Office for National Statistics, 1996]. They are also the group most likely to be permanently excluded from school and thereby denied access to full-time mainstream education (we examine this in detail below).
- African Caribbean young women tend to achieve rather higher average results than their male counterparts [Mirza 1992]. However, it would be a mistake to assume that African Caribbean girls do not face a situation characterised by significant inequalities of opportunity. When the performance of black young women is compared with their white counterparts of the same sex and social class, the picture is less encouraging. African Caribbean young women consistently end compulsory schooling less well qualified than their white peers. Indeed, for two years out of four (for which data are available) in Birmingham, the gap between the average performance of black girls and white girls was greater than the gap between black boys and white boys [Gillborn 1997].

- An additional area of inequality concerns African Caribbean students' relative achievements in particular subjects. The African Caribbean Network for Science and Technology has published material (including data from local authorities that refused to be publicly identified) which suggests that black students suffer markedly lower achievements in science and mathematics. This is especially damaging since these subjects enjoy high status (both are designated as 'core' subjects in the National Curriculum) and failure to secure higher grade passes in them can be used as an additional selection device in higher education and employment markets. Data from one large municipal authority show whites as five times more likely than their African Caribbean peers to achieve a higher grade pass in mathematics [Rasekoala 1996].
- Pupils of Black African background often achieve relatively higher results than their peers of Black Caribbean origin, where statistics allow distinctions to be made (Table 2). It seems likely that both social class and gender play a part in this, but further research is required.

Table 2: Average examination scores by ethnic origin and gender. Lambeth (1993).

| Ethnic Group | Average exam score | | | | | Percentage of age group |
|------------------|--------------------|-----|--------|-----|------|-------------------------|
| | Male | N | Female | N | Mean | |
| African | 21.9 | 50 | 26.5 | 48 | 24.2 | 9.9 |
| Caribbean | 15.1 | 110 | 26.6 | 124 | 21.2 | 23.5 |
| Eng, Scot, Welsh | 19.8 | 88 | 27.5 | 140 | 24.5 | 22.9 |

Source: Lambeth 1994, adapted from Appendix F.

- There is overwhelming evidence, therefore, that, as a group, African Caribbean young people face considerable inequalities of opportunity. Their educational disadvantage is such that many are left ill-prepared for competition in the youth labour market which itself has been shown to operate in racist ways that deny equal opportunities to many minority groups [Drew 1995]. Nevertheless, we should resist falling into the stereotype that such experiences are inevitable or uniform; many African Caribbean young people achieve excellent levels of educational certification. The blanket label of 'under-achievement', therefore, is too crude; research highlights real inequalities of opportunity, but also reveals a situation that is both complex and open to change.

'Asian' students

In the 1980s it was found that the Asian group was doing as well or better than the white group on average. In some areas this remains the case (for example in Brent, Figure 6) and in some areas the reverse is the case (for example in Birmingham, Figure 5). However, these figures can be misleading. The usefulness of a simple, broad, 'Asian' category increasingly is being challenged, not least because it ignores important differences in the economic, social and religious profile of different communities with roots in the Indian sub-continent.

Indian students

- The best available data suggest that, on average, Indian students are the highest achieving of the main South Asian groups. This may reflect the somewhat different social class profile of the Indian community, which has the highest proportion of households categorised as 'non-manual': 58 percent compared with 56 percent of Whites, 47 percent of Pakistanis and 37 percent of Bangladeshis [Runnymede Trust 1994: 26].

- Indian pupils are achieving average levels of success consistently in excess of their white counterparts in some (but not all) urban areas. Again the influence of social class may be significant. It is known, for example, that the white population of London is considerably skewed towards working class occupations [Nuttall and Varlaam 1990]. This may explain cases such as Brent (in the north of the capital) where Indian students have consistently higher results than their white peers.

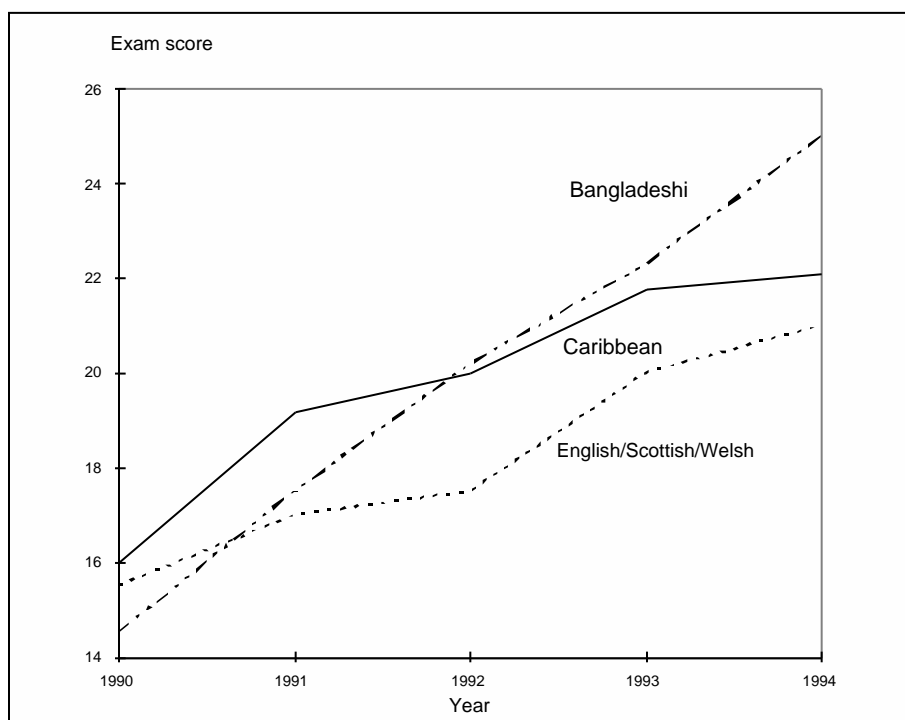
Pakistani students

- In view of the size of the Pakistani population surprisingly little research has focused exclusively on this group. To date, research suggests that Pakistani pupils are not achieving as highly as their white peers. In London this may not be the case but the influence of social background is rarely taken into account in these studies, and that is likely to be of importance.

Bangladeshi students

- Bangladeshi pupils are more likely to come from working class backgrounds than any other ethnic group and, in many areas, experience high levels of economic disadvantage. Additionally, Bangladeshi students are known to have relatively less English language fluency than other Asian groups. *In comparison with other ethnic groups, Bangladeshi students frequently experience marked inequalities of achievement* [Gillborn and Gipps 1996].
- Recent research in the London Borough of Camden between 1993 and 1995 shows that the attainment levels of Bangladeshis actually worsened. The percentage with five or more passes at GCSE halved between 1993 and 1995 (Camden Council, 1996). The researchers cite poverty, relatively low fluency in English, poor attendance, lack of pre-school experience and low levels of parental involvement amongst the contributing factors.
- In marked contrast, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (serving a quarter of all Bangladeshi children in England) seems to be an exception (Figure 7). In this borough, Bangladeshi students have become the highest achieving of the three largest ethnic groups. This is a significant turn-around that suggests that even where students face multiple sources of disadvantage (e.g. widespread poverty, and low levels of English language fluency) real improvements in achievement are possible, given sufficient political will, appropriate levels of targeted resourcing, and commitment. The Tower Hamlets data also demonstrates clearly that traditional patterns of inequality in educational achievements are by no means inevitable.

Figure 7: Average exam score by ethnic group. Tower Hamlets 1990-1994.



Source: Tower Hamlets, 1994.

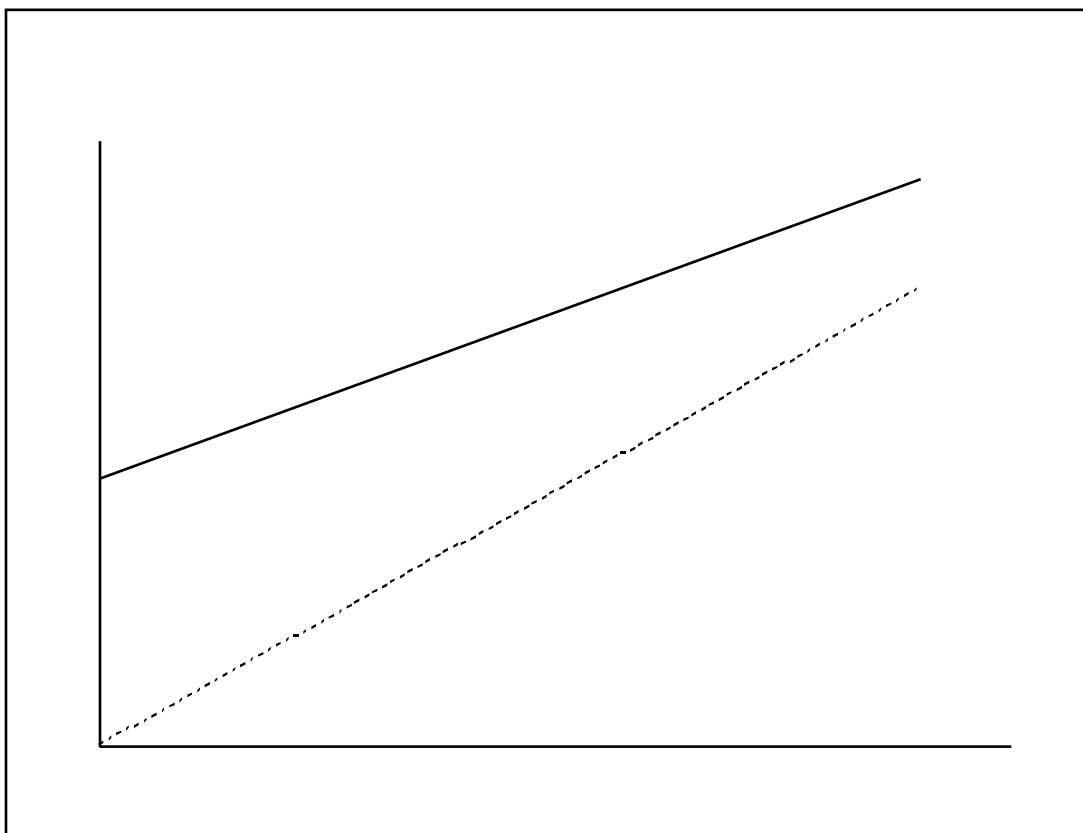
Other ethnic minority groups

- The groups we have considered above account for almost 80 per cent of Britain's ethnic minority population. There are many more ethnic minority groups whose experience and achievement in education is worthy of attention. Unfortunately, because of the geographical spread of these groups, many local education authorities fail to gather (and/or publish) separate statistics. This makes it difficult to draw any general conclusions with certainty.
- Children of Gypsies and other Traveller communities present a case in point. Where relevant data are gathered, there is evidence of considerable and consistent inequalities of opportunities. In many cases, however, schools and local authorities do not accept any special responsibility for such communities, or view the situation as unsuitable for action. Consequently, the situation can go unrecorded and the needs of students remain unmet [Swann 1985, ch. 16; OFSTED 1996].
- Available statistics indicate that Chinese students appear to achieve relatively good results in comparison with their white peers. However, these figures are often based on small samples and rarely take account of social class or other relevant factors.

Educational Progress and School Effectiveness

Recent advances in educational research methods have included the development of 'multi-level' modelling techniques, which attempt to separate out the influence of various factors upon school achievement [Goldstein 1987]. In particular, such work has prompted interest in questions of 'school effectiveness'. That is, whether some schools can produce better results than others, when serving the same type of pupil in terms of poverty levels, prior attainments and other relevant factors. This has led to a greater concern with the relative progress made by different ethnic groups. The findings here are summarised in figure 8.

Figure 8: Differences in progress are not the same as differences in achievement.



- Progress and achievement are not the same. *Progress* refers to the degree of improvement in scores over a certain period: *Achievement* usually refers to a single measure of attainment (such as GCSE performance). It is possible, therefore, for a group to make greater progress than a second group, and yet still attain lower average achievements. This is represented in Figure 8.
- Asian and Chinese pupils tend to make better progress than their white peers. Differences in progress between the white and black pupils are small or not significant [Thomas and Mortimore 1994; Thomas, Pan and Goldstein 1994].

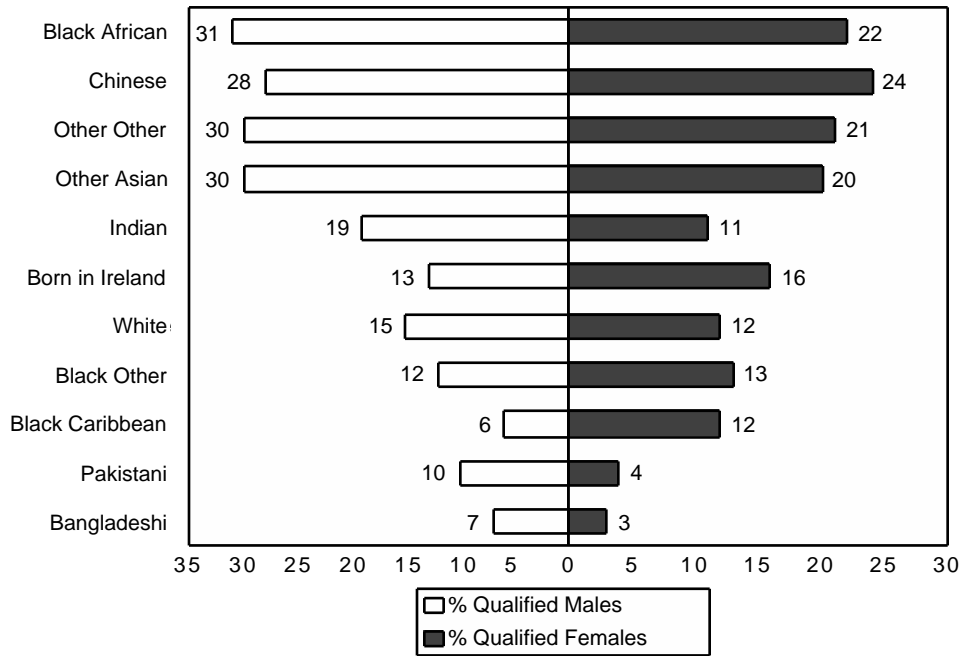
Table 3: Social class by ethnic origin, Britain 1991 (percentages).

| Ethnic Group | SOCIALCLASS | | | | | | | Number of cases |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------|-----------------|
| | Professional | Managerial | Skilled Non-man. | Skilled Manual | Partly Skilled | Unskilled | Total | |
| White | 4 | 27 | 24 | 21 | 17 | 7 | 100 | 586,362 |
| Black Caribbean | 2 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 9 | 100 | 5,414 |
| Black African | 8 | 27 | 25 | 12 | 18 | 10 | 100 | 1,487 |
| Black Other | 2 | 25 | 31 | 19 | 18 | 6 | 100 | 1,098 |
| Indian | 8 | 25 | 24 | 17 | 23 | 4 | 100 | 7,878 |
| Pakistani | 5 | 21 | 18 | 25 | 26 | 6 | 100 | 2,462 |
| Bangladeshi | 5 | 11 | 16 | 28 | 34 | 7 | 100 | 702 |
| Chinese | 11 | 25 | 26 | 23 | 10 | 4 | 100 | 1,492 |
| Other - Asian | 11 | 32 | 27 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 100 | 1,887 |
| Other - Other | 10 | 30 | 26 | 14 | 15 | 5 | 100 | 2,196 |
| | | | | | | | | 610,978 |

Source: 1991 Population Census, Sample of Anonymised Records

- School effects are significant but prior attainment and social background are of much greater importance. Educational background of parents is known to exert a strong influence on their children's progress over and above social class factors. Ethnic differences in attainment at diploma and degree level for the adult population are shown in Figure 9, illustrating the relative disadvantage of those in Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups. By contrast, the Black African group has the highest attainment at this level. There are also marked ethnic differences in the social class distributions with some groups. The Bangladeshis, for example, have much larger numbers in partly-skilled and unskilled jobs — jobs which are likely to be low paid and insecure (see Table 3). By contrast the Black African group has relatively large numbers in both the highest and lowest social groups. This underlines the need to avoid generalisations which treat groups as though they are homogeneous. When educational background and social class background are combined, it comes as no surprise to find that economic disadvantage is particularly high for some groups. The Bangladeshi group is a particular example of this (Figure 10). All these factors affect the educational opportunities and life chances of ethnic minority young people.

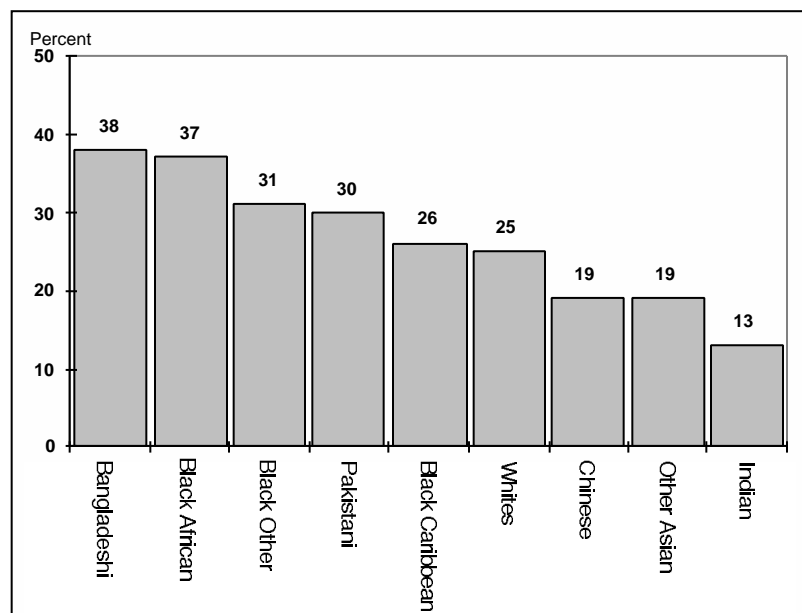
Figure 9: Percentage of adults qualified at diploma and degree level, by ethnic group and gender, 1991.



Source: 1991 Population Census in Drew and Fosam, 1994

- There is some evidence for ‘differential school effectiveness’ for ethnic minorities, that is, some schools are particularly effective for ethnic minority pupils [Drew and Gray 1991; Nuttall, Goldstein, Prosser and Rasbash 1989; Smith and Tomlinson 1989]. However, results in this field have not always been detailed in full, and the precise situation remains rather unclear. This is an area where further research could be especially useful.
- In an analysis of over 20,000 pupils in 143 schools by NFER, raw exam scores show fairly consistent patterns with previous analyses. ‘Value added’ results (indicating the difference made by individual schools) appear to be only available to LEAs. An analysis of schools in Haringey shows that South Asians and whites are much more likely to go to the most effective schools [Runnymede Trust 1996].

Figure 10: Percentage of individuals with no earners in the household by ethnic group, 1991.



Source: 1991 Population Census, Sample of Anonymised Records in Kershaw, 1996.

5. Qualitative Research

To this point we have principally drawn on quantitative research. Much of this field has been dominated by statistical work that attempts to map out general patterns of progress and achievement between and within different groups. Unfortunately, such approaches cannot explain *how* such patterns come to be. This is one of the reasons contributing to the rise in qualitative research over the last decade or so.

The role of qualitative research

'Qualitative research' is a term applied to an extremely broad range of approaches, from short interview-based projects to detailed case studies that follow teachers' and pupils' experiences over long time periods, sometimes involving the researcher spending a year or more in a single institution. Such work is sometimes criticised for the relatively small number of people who can be sampled, but its key strengths lie in the detailed and nuanced understanding that qualitative research generates about the nature of social processes in schools.

Qualitative research is characterised by its attempt to understand the everyday life of schools. By observing lessons, interviewing students, teachers and school managers, qualitative researchers have been able to penetrate the facade of schools, casting light on the often hidden processes by which some students are selected for success, whilst others (sometimes sharing the same classroom) are denied the same opportunities to succeed. Often these processes are highly complex and not fully understood by any of the participants; in particular, teachers' differential expectations of certain groups (based on class, gender or ethnic identities) can act as a powerful barrier to success, and yet operate through assumptions and actions that appear to teachers to be 'common sense' and without controversy.

Pupil - teacher interactions

Over the last decade or so an increasing amount of qualitative research has focused on multi-ethnic schools and classrooms. The findings have often raised fundamental questions about the way that students are experiencing schooling and the hidden processes that can deny equal opportunities whilst claiming to operate in a 'colour-blind' fashion.

The experiences of African Caribbean students

- African Caribbean students frequently experience relationships with white teachers that are characterised by relatively high degrees of control and criticism. This finding has been replicated in infant and primary classrooms [Connolly 1995; Wright 1992] and in secondary schools [Foster 1990; Gillborn 1990; Mac an Ghail 1988; Mirza 1992; Wright 1986].
- Even where teachers are genuinely committed to equality of opportunity as a goal, research suggests that they often perceive African Caribbean students as presenting a more frequent and severe challenge to their authority — a perception largely at odds with students' intentions and degree of motivation [Gillborn 1990].
- African Caribbean students are often singled out for criticism even where peers of other ethnic origins are engaged in the same behaviour but escape punishment; furthermore, they may be criticised for actions (in their general demeanour; language; or dress) which break no clear school rule but are nevertheless judged to be inappropriate by staff. For example, teachers' perceptions of what constitutes a sign of 'bad attitude', 'arrogance' or 'insolence' have been found to operate to the marked disadvantage of black students [Gillborn 1990; Wright 1992].
- The greater conflict between teachers and black students can have widespread and highly damaging consequences. Even where they have scored highly on tests, African Caribbean young people can find themselves placed in low status teaching groups because teachers believe they will be a disruptive influence [Foster 1990; Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Wright 1986].

- In this way, qualitative research has revealed the complex and sometimes subtle nature of racism in schools. Despite many teachers' conscious attempt to treat all students equally, their racialized expectations of black misbehaviour and threat operate in the classroom to disadvantage black students. The situation is especially difficult for adolescent black boys, where both racialized and sexualized stereotypes come into play [Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Sewell 1995].
- So called 'colour-blind' approaches, therefore, not only fail to address the reality faced by black school students, they risk promoting an approach to education that steadfastly refuses to accept the commonplace and subtle role of white racism.

The experiences of South Asian students

- Teachers often hold negative and patronising stereotypes about South Asian students, especially concerning the nature of their home communities (frequently thought to be repressive and backward looking) and linguistic abilities [Shepherd 1987].
- Problems with *language* can sometimes be misinterpreted as signifying a deeper seated *learning* problem, leading to South Asian students sometimes being placed in teaching groups of a lower standing than their abilities might warrant [CRE 1992; Troyna and Siraj-Blatchford 1993].
- There is some evidence that the composition of school populations might impact upon the way that teachers' stereotypes are played out in the routine life of multi-ethnic classrooms. In particular, where Asian students are the dominant or sole minority group, the stereotypes appear to have negative consequences (see above). However, where there are also significant numbers of African Caribbean students, the same stereotypes might be played out rather differently, with Asian students' home communities being seen as stable and highly supportive of school. Unfortunately, there is simply too little data to reach a firm conclusion in this case.
- Asian students suffer a disproportionate amount of racial harassment in schools. This usually takes the form of verbal attacks, but also includes physical violence. In both primary and secondary schools such harassment can be a routine, almost daily occurrence [Gillborn 1990, 1995; Troyna and Hatcher 1992].
- Teachers are often unaware of the extent and especially damaging nature of racial harassment in their schools. Even when the events are witnessed by staff, the adults frequently fail to respond, viewing the incidents as high spirits or simple boisterousness [Gillborn and Gipps 1996: 49-50].

Exclusions from School

- Since national figures were first published in the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic and persistent increase in the number of young people being permanently excluded (expelled) from school. In 1990/91 almost 3,000 students were permanently excluded. By 1995/96, it was estimated that the annual figure had risen to 13,400 [Times Educational Supplement 1996] — a fourfold increase in five years.
- Whenever exclusion statistics are broken down by ethnicity, black students are always over-represented. *The most recent figures suggest that African Caribbean students are between four and six times more likely to be excluded than their white peers.* South Asian students are generally excluded at rates similar to, or below, the level of their white counterparts [Gillborn and Gipps 1996: 53].
- These figures demonstrate that the exclusions system is currently operating in a racist manner. Proportionately, many more black young people are being removed from education. For the majority of permanently excluded students, the chances of returning to mainstream education are poor. Latest calculations suggest that *a return to full-time mainstream education is achieved for only around one in three primary students, and one in five secondary students* [Parsons 1995]. *The rate of return for black students may be even worse*, but unfortunately the relevant study failed to collect ethnically-based data.

- Exclusion is a highly controversial issue and one where remarkably little research has been conducted. In particular, there is an obvious need for work that explores the processes behind the over-representation of black students. We have already mentioned that existing research shows how African Caribbean students are often in conflict with teachers. We believe that similar processes of disproportionate control and criticism may lie behind the exclusion figures. For example, people commonly associate exclusion with very serious offences such as violence or threatening behaviour. Yet the last available national statistics suggest that only 27 per cent of exclusions were for physical aggression and bullying (DfE 1992). Hence, *almost three out of every four exclusions related to a much broader range of offences*, described officially in terms of ‘disobedience in various forms — constantly refusing to comply with school rules, verbal abuse or insolence to teachers’ [DfE 1992:3].

Understanding and supporting success

It is important to avoid the trap of assuming that educational failure is inevitable for minority students or a characteristic of all multi-ethnic schools. Research has begun to explore the characteristics of successful multi-ethnic schools. More work is a priority here, but to date we can see that the following are significant findings:

- Headteachers and senior management colleagues are vitally important. Their support can be crucial in initiating and sustaining change.
- In large secondary schools, small groups of staff may be the best way of initially exploring and promoting anti-racist changes [Gillborn 1995]. In smaller primary schools, whole school change may be possible at an earlier stage [Siraj-Blatchford 1994].
- Parental and community input can be especially useful. Schools are often uncertain about how best to achieve genuine involvement. Where such developments do occur, they frequently challenge taken-for-granted assumptions. White parents and communities must be included, as well as ethnic minority groups [Macdonald et al 1989].

Students themselves can provide an incisive and sensitive perspective on school-based change. Where staff have sought mechanisms for including student perspectives, the resulting changes are often more widely shared and supported within the institution [Gillborn 1995; Harris 1994].

6. National Initiatives

Statutory Measures

In September 1996, the government announced a **10 point Action Plan** to raise the achievements of ethnic minority pupils. As part of this plan, the government has commissioned research to identify schools which have effectively improved the performance of black and ethnic minority pupils. The research is being undertaken by the Open University, and focusses upon good practice in effective schools. The government also intends to introduce monitoring of ethnic minority pupils' progress through National Curriculum assessment.

Section 11 refers to that section of the Local Government Act 1966 which allows the Home Office to pay grant aid to local authorities in England and Wales which have significant numbers of 'Commonwealth Immigrants' in their areas. It is the only central government grant specifically concerned with race relations. In 1994, the Home Office transferred into Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) the portion of Section 11 funding devoted to urban programme areas. It is now confirmed that Section 11 will continue until April 1998. This raises opportunities for multi-disciplinary funding, and it is likely that a major review will take place in 1997.

Gest is a government funded grant for education support and training. Among other things, it targets the needs of bi-lingual pupils from ethnic backgrounds. The grant aims to provide mainstream teachers with in-service training to equip them with the skills needed to develop pupils' English language skills across the curriculum.

Voluntary Sector

The Basic Skills Agency recognises that the UK has been a diverse multi-cultural society for many years. Its recent research shows that a considerable number of people from linguistic minority communities would be able to contribute more effectively if they were given opportunities to improve their English language skills.

CIS — Cities in Schools works with children and young people up to the age of nineteen who experience educational or training difficulties. The aim is to reduce truancy and exclusions. CIS recognise the fact that the underlying issues require a multi-disciplinary approach. CIS adopt a partnership structure which encompasses education, the business community, social services and relevant voluntary organisations. These working methods enable existing resources to be utilised more effectively and result in beneficial outcomes for the young people concerned.

ACE — Advisory Centre for Education is an independent national education advice service offering confidential advice to parents. ACE publications aim to cut through educational jargon to help parents understand the school system. It also offers legal advice for parents challenging a decision to exclude their child from school.

The Windsor Fellowship aims to enable black and ethnic minority young people to reach their full academic and social potential. Towards this aim, the Fellowship is involved in a number of projects, including the provision of intensive, high quality personal skills and development training for undergraduate fellows. The objective is to enable them to meet the needs of prospective employers and maximise their potential for employment. The Fellowship also provides mentoring programmes which have proven very successful with teachers and students in schools. Based on this experience, they are embarking on an ambitious Junior Fellowship programme designed to support 13-16 year olds and improve their GCSE and GNVQ results.

7. Local Key Projects

Ealing Education Centre is involved in two initiatives in partnership with the local black community, black parent forums, teachers and social workers. The aim of the project is to raise the achievement of African Caribbean students, focussing particularly on exclusions. A school was identified in Ealing which had a high proportion of black and ethnic minority pupils. The centre provided a worker to be placed in the school 3 days a week. The target exclusions reduction was 50%. The centre adopted a two pronged approach: to reduce exclusions, and also to examine the pastoral care procedure. Integral to the success of the project was the policy of keeping the parents informed. The project lasted a year and throughout that time no member of the target group was excluded.

Capital Voluntary Sector Initiatives is a mentoring initiative which is well publicised throughout the London Borough of Merton. The project is self financing, although it has recently received substantial sponsorship from the General Municipal Building Union. CMS operates via a referral system, and offers comprehensive training for each of its mentors. CMS seeks to provide support and encouragement to young Black people to help them fulfil their potential and raise their expectations at school and beyond.

Lennox Lewis College is the brain-child of boxer Lennox Lewis. The college offers a second chance to young people between the ages of 15 and 19 who have not succeeded in mainstream education. The services offered can be distinguished by the fact that they offer one-to-one teaching. The areas covered include Art and Photography, Sport and Recreation, Sports Science, Music Technology, and Electrical Installation. Work experience is integrated into each area, as is numeracy, literacy and information technology.

Watford African Caribbean Education Project. The project is community based, and is concerned with the educational development of African Caribbean young people through pre-school to post secondary school. The project offers three distinct services to young people. Firstly, they offer a Saturday supplementary school. The main theme running through the work of the project is to ensure that parents play a central role in the education of their young people. Secondly, the project provides a youth centre for youngsters who have not benefitted from mainstream education. The youth club also provides help with various aspects of the school curriculum. Thirdly, the project seeks to provide support to young children at pre-school. This is a particularly important area of work for the project because it seeks to equip children with basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. The project also seeks to instill in young Black children a positive sense of self. The opportunity for young people to work with Black teachers within the classroom also creates positive role models.

Camden Black Parents and Teachers Association has been in existence for ten years and receives 90% of its funding from the London Borough of Camden. The association focusses on the key stages of the curriculum. It also runs a supplementary school which creates a working environment within which young people can interact with black role models. The group also provides an exclusion advocacy service and a job-hunting centre.

Kaleidoscope provides exclusion advocacy and advice. It also runs a supplementary school which offers Mathematics, English, and Black history. The project is funded by parents and by the London Borough of Merton.

Routeways to Success is a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) government funded scheme which is people based. The aim of the project is “for those residents and communities in Kirklees who have traditionally missed out on employment opportunities to be able to compete on an equal basis and participate fully in the labour market”. The project works with families to develop literacy skills at both parental and pre-school levels. The project also works closely with schools and local business to create valuable links, and raise self esteem and motivation among pupils.

Genesis is a Children’s Society project based in Warwick Park School, offering free advice, support and counselling to young people on a wide range of issues, ranging from education, family and relationships to bullying. Genesis provides confidential and independent advice to 800 pupils aged between 11 and 16. The project works closely with the teachers and parents to create a positive learning and social environment within the school.

The North London Mentoring Project is Britain's first major mentoring project and it has attracted funding from various private sector organisations such as BP Oil, Unilever and National Westminster Bank. The aim of the mentoring project is to promote ethnic minority achievement. It has enabled 380 successful African Caribbean and Asian entrepreneurs and professionals to partner young, ambitious students. In Britain, many young people from ethnic minorities have very little opportunity to meet high achievers from their own communities. The mentors encourage self-esteem, ambition and educational attainment. Crucially, the mentors help to guide students through the socio-political system in Britain.

8. Research Overview

- **Sensitive and rigorous ethnic monitoring:** proper use of ethnically-based statistics can identify areas of inequality at a school, LEA and/or national level. Such schemes need not be complex and expensive, but they do need to be driven by a commitment to identify potential problems and to respond constructively.
- **Education reform:** the last decade has witnessed changes in the state schooling system that are unprecedented in the post-war period — issues of ‘race’ and ethnicity have been largely removed from the agenda. This has allowed existing inequalities to remain unchanged and, in some cases, to actually worsen. Future reforms must be interrogated for their likely impact on different ethnic groups. Additionally, the drive to improve overall ‘standards’ (which currently focusses on the top end of the achievement scale) should also pay attention to the gaps between different groups and the growing injustices experienced by low-achieving students.
- **Language support:** the results in Tower Hamlets (detailed above) demonstrate that targeted and well resourced language support can make a dramatic difference to students for whom English is an additional language. Such provision is currently funded mainly through ‘Section 11’ projects: this form of provision (although valuable) is too often characterised by short-termist, inadequate funding and low staff morale. There is a clear need to place this funding on a firm footing: funding should be by right (not via competitive ‘bidding’ as at present) and the continued existence of some form of additional provision should be assured. (Section 11 has been poised on the brink of abolition for many years.)
- **School inspections:** all principal political parties are committed to an important role for the schools inspectorate. Although OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) has avowed its intention to address ethnically-based inequalities in provision and achievement, these aspects of the framework for inspection should be strengthened and their application monitored in future inspection reports.
- **Teacher education:** issues related to ethnic diversity and racism in schools have never featured highly in teacher education in this country. Recent moves to shift initial teacher education (ITE) into schools have further weakened the situation. Resources should be directed to support and extend the consideration of these issues in the education of beginning teachers, and in the ongoing professional development of experienced staff — (in-service education and training — INSET.)

9. Principal Findings

- It is important that research on attainment is kept in perspective. Some pupils in all ethnic groups are doing very well. Focusing on inner city areas only gives a partial picture of attainment overall.
- Pakistani students, Bangladeshis and particularly African Caribbean boys are performing relatively poorly. Some changes are taking place but the rate of improvement nationally is unclear. Social background and gender need to be taken into account as well as differences between schools. The factors associated with low levels of attainment include high levels of economic disadvantage and attendance at less effective schools.
- Qualitative research illustrates that racism is not always obvious or crude. Detailed studies of school life suggest that racism (often unintended and unrecognised by teachers) is a commonplace, routine and divisive influence in many schools and classrooms.
- Colour-blind approaches have failed to engage with the processes which support inequality and threaten further to extend current disadvantages.
- Exclusion from school is the most severe sanction available to schools. Exclusion is now used more often than ever before; black students are the most likely to be excluded and only a minority return to full-time mainstream education.

10. Recommendations for Future Research

- **Assessment systems and labelling in schools:** The education system is becoming increasingly characterised by testing that occurs earlier and with more frequency than ever before. Previous research suggests that such mechanisms may operate to the disadvantage of ethnic minority students, but no-one is examining the current moves from this perspective. This is an urgent area of concern since apparently 'fair' and 'objective' tests may be institutionalising gross inequalities.
- **Exclusions:** The disproportionate use of exclusions against black young people represents a major area of inequality that may cast a shadow over entire communities, as well as the adult lives of the students involved. Research should focus on the school-based processes that are producing the current situation. Additionally, we need to know what happens to young people of ethnic minority backgrounds when they are excluded: do they experience particular problems re-entering education or making the transition into employment?
- There are many **encouraging initiatives** which show positive results at local levels. Croydon LEA, for example, has succeeded in reducing the overall number of exclusions, while the Lambeth 'Raising Achievement Project', which works with many disaffected young people, demonstrates that examination success is possible even for students with problems in their past school careers. The experiences of such initiatives could be brought together, analysed and disseminated nationally. Unless such information is shared, it is likely that many initiatives will not succeed.
- **High achieving multi-ethnic schools:** Some work has already begun to identify the means by which multi-ethnic schools can become more effective. This work signals an important direction for future research.
- **Home background and school success:** Poverty and deprivation reduce a young person's chances of success within the education system. The manner in which this affects ethnic minority young people both in early childhood, primary school experiences and later life needs to be explored.
- **Changing identities:** Young people's ideas about themselves, their ethnic and other identities are complex and changing. We need a more broadly based and sensitive understanding about how young people see themselves and their futures. How does education, employment and the family feature in their thoughts?
- **Exploring community-based provision:** In many urban centres, ethnic minority communities have developed their own educational support structures and initiatives. Saturday schools and Mosque-based classes are among some of the many developments that may provide a novel and important dimension that is lacking in many state schools. Unfortunately, such initiatives are usually ignored or seen as peripheral by mainstream educators. There may be considerable resources of expertise and good practice that remain untapped.

11. Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to collate existing knowledge and information in order to identify gaps in understanding and make recommendations for areas which would benefit from further research. The research focusses on the years of compulsory schooling in the primary and secondary education system. The three main elements of this study include:

- Mapping of current and projected experience of young black and ethnic minority people
- Assessment of national initiatives and significant localised action research projects which seek to address various aspects of educational disadvantage and inequality
- A meta-evaluation of prevailing views about the impact on young people of such initiatives. This will be set in the context of general forms of provision for the specific needs of ethnic minority groups

Educational Disadvantage: Current Features

From 'under-achievement' to educational disadvantage

The issue of 'under-achievement' dominated debates relating to the education of ethnic minority pupils until the beginning of the 1990s. Nevertheless, the concept is widely misunderstood and may now play a part in reproducing familiar stereotypes. It can lead to lowered expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies of failure. It may also shift responsibility away from the education system and onto students and their families. We would assert that the failure is in the under-achievement of the system in providing for black students. Bearing this in mind, the focus within the report is on the *relative* achievements of pupils of different ethnic groups. And upon the disadvantages, or inequalities, of achievement and opportunity.

Many comparisons of the academic achievements of ethnic and non-ethnic children fail to take into account key influences such as social background. Ethnic minorities are more likely to belong to socio-economic groups which will increase their academic disadvantage.

The argument is also put forward that the measures used to assess educational attainment can themselves influence achievement levels. The most frequently used measures concentrate upon high attaining pupils. These methods often create sharp differentiations within student groups.

Achievement

There has been a general improvement in GCSE achievement in the 1990s. This improvement has been reflected in the achievements of minority groups. Ethnic minority students are now achieving more highly on average than ever before. Not all groups have improved at the same rate. In many areas the gap has widened between the most successful and least successful groups. This has had a harsh impact upon African Caribbean young men in particular. Despite doing better than their predecessors, they often find themselves falling further behind their white and Asian counterparts. In Birmingham in 1995, for example, the percentage of students achieving five or more higher grade passes is shown below.

| 5 or more higher grade passes <i>(Gillborn and Gipps 1996)</i> | |
|--|-----|
| African Caribbean | 18% |
| Indian | 39% |
| White | 36% |
| Bangladeshi | 29% |
| Pakistani | 21% |

Although African Caribbean young women tend to achieve higher average results than their male counterparts it would be a mistake to assume that they do not face significant inequalities of opportunity. When the performance of young black women is compared with that of white women of the same socio-economic group, the picture is still less encouraging.

Where statistics allow distinctions to be made, pupils of Black African background often achieve relatively higher results than their peers of Black Caribbean origin. It seems that both social background and gender play a part in this.

In the 1980s it was found that, on average, Asian groups were performing better than white groups. In some areas, like Brent, this remains the case. But in Birmingham, for example, the reverse is true. However, these figures can be misleading: the usefulness of a simple, broad 'Asian' category is increasingly being challenged. It ignores important differences in the economic, social and religious profile of different communities with roots in the Indian sub-continent.

There are many other ethnic minority groups whose experience and achievement in education are not recorded. For Children of Gypsies and other Traveller communities — where relevant data are gathered — there is evidence of considerable and consistent inequalities of opportunities. In many cases, however, schools and local authorities do not accept any particular responsibility for such communities.

Educational Progress and School Effectiveness

Educational *progress* and *achievement* are not the same. It is possible for a group to make great progress and yet still attain lower average achievements. The influence of the school is significant but social background is of much greater importance. There is, however, some evidence for 'differential school effectiveness' for ethnic minorities. That is to say that some schools are particularly effective for ethnic minority pupils.

Teacher - Pupil Interactions

An increasing amount of research has focused on classrooms and pupil-teacher interactions. The findings often raise fundamental questions about the way in which students are experiencing schooling. Such research highlights hidden processes that can deny equal opportunities, whilst claiming to operate in a 'colour-blind' fashion.

African Caribbean students frequently experience relationships with white teachers which are characterised by relatively high levels of control and criticism. Teachers often hold negative and patronising stereotypes about South Asian students, especially concerning the nature of their home communities and linguistic abilities.

Black students are always over-represented when exclusion statistics are broken down by ethnicity. Whereas exclusions are commonly associated with very serious offences such as violence or threatening behaviour, there is some evidence to suggest that less obvious conflict with teachers may lead to disproportionate expulsions of black pupils.

Racial Violence

Asian students suffer a high level of racial harassment in schools. Teachers are often unaware of the extent and especially damaging nature of racial harassment in their schools. Racial harassment plays a large part in students' confidence and ability to perform well at school.

Local and National Initiatives

National Initiatives

There are very few national initiatives which focus on the educational disadvantage of ethnic minority people. Apart from 'The Childrens Society' and 'The Basic Skills Agency', it is difficult to find examples of mainstream bodies targeting issues relating to ethnic minorities. Key areas of concern for ethnic minorities such as bullying and racial harassment do not appear to be addressed by the national organisations.

Many of the national initiatives, such as the work on exclusions, are merely interested in proving, by way of research, that educational disadvantage exists rather than taking any practical measures to minimize it.

There are, however, exceptions. The DFEE has recently initiated a project on gathering good practice. Moreover, projects such as 'Cities in Schools' aim to engender a multi-disciplinary approach, in partnership with companies, to help improve opportunities.

Local Initiatives

Mentoring has emerged recently as one of the most significant areas of activity at both national and local level. The Windsor Foundation, for instance, is in the process of launching a junior mentoring programme. Many of the more successful local initiatives such as KWESI in the West Midlands and the Lambeth 'Raising Achievement Project' use mentoring as a means of counteracting and reducing disaffection among African Caribbean young men.

Most other local initiatives are local authority funded and based around the supplementary schools model providing additional tuition and intensive support.

Research Review

The picture that emerges is one of extreme disadvantage on the one hand, and a patchy and incomplete support structure on the other. The greatest area of concern is for African Caribbean youth who have attainment levels reaching only half that of their white peers.

Much of the research has traditionally focused on describing and analysing the disadvantage. Only recently has attention started to be given to methods of good practice and innovation in counteracting the systemic discrimination. The research commissioned by the DFEE and undertaken by the Open University, for example, specifically aims to collate good practice from effective schools. This should establish a useful bench mark for emphasising practical action and information exchange.

Small scale research is prone to become marginalised. Despite the abundance of information on differential exclusion levels for black youth, there is no clear policy line. The amount of research on the education of ethnic minority groups, commissioned by government or its agencies, is still relatively limited. The most significant recent reports include OFSTED's reports on Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils, and The Educational Needs of Traveller Children, and CRE's report on the Cost of Exclusion. Other major agencies such as the NUT and The Runnymede Trust have also commissioned work on exclusions. Further independent research may help to influence the necessary change in policy.

There appears to be a dearth of research on the impact of changes at the local level, such as in funding mechanisms and shifts in the social services. The youth services in particular have been decimated, resulting in a consequent lack of role models, and a rise in disaffection. At the same time, the voluntary sector has taken on more of the responsibilities for making up the educational deficit. Yet many of these local bodies work in isolation and are struggling for financial survival. Often, they have only insecure or insubstantial funding to rely upon.

Similarly, the success of certain multi-ethnic schools has gone largely unnoticed. What is lacking is not just examples of good practice, but also an analysis of qualitative factors. For example, it would be helpful to have a better understanding of the value of religious and moral instruction in schools.

The influence of supplementary schools has been underestimated. Ironically, it is often parents themselves who have played down, or even tried to hide their children's attendance of supplementary schools, for fear of stigma. A positive analysis could help to make better use of local education funding, and ensure that pupils and their parents gain full value from their schools. Indeed, there may be considerable benefits in further analysis of the potential advantages of multi-disciplinary working at the local level.

Another significant gap in research concerns the emergence of new identities and youth cultures. Teacher training should increasingly take such factors into account to examine pastoral care, discipline and relationships in the classroom, and the handling of conflict among young people. There are also indications that the number of black teachers is decreasing, but no firm proposals have been offered on how to counteract this development.

Recommendations

It is important that any further research into *known areas* of educational disadvantage is commissioned by statutory bodies, and that it be followed by practical action. This means ensuring that the resources are there to provide sustained and effective solutions, rather than piecemeal responses. In such circumstances, charitable trusts could usefully fund the type of independent study which will help to influence the policy makers. The main areas of policy revision include the following:

- Assessment systems and labelling in schools
- Response to exclusions levels
- High achieving multi-ethnic schools
- Home background and school success
- Changing identities and youth cultures
- Teacher training and encouragement of new recruits
- Exploring community based provision and multi-disciplinary working
- Section 11 and alternative funding systems
- Counteracting bullying and racial harassment
- Relative success of other ethnic minority groups

In less well researched areas of disadvantage, pressure can also be brought on the authorities by independent funders. The more individual and family based issues such as changing identities, home background, and to some extent bullying, can benefit from an alternative, independent perspective to ensure that statutory proposals are adequate and thorough. Other potential areas of interest for funding might include the following:

- Whether composite measures raise educational expectations or lower real standards
- Teaching materials for teachers on conflict resolution and mediation
- Funding mapping of school provisions
- Newsletter exchange seminar
- Segregation and religion
- Home/school contracts and breaking the poverty trap. What are the real issues of poverty?
- Peer groups, inter-ethnic bullying, support from adults
- Study of provisions
- Schemes to improve literacy in early childhood and primary education
- Projects to work with teachers and parents, both in primary and secondary schools
- Mentoring and role model schemes for those at risk as well as those heading for Higher Education
- Conflict management schemes in schools, working with young people with school attendance and behavioural problems
- Schemes to encourage links between education and business

We are convinced that the burden of educational disadvantage should not be passed to the parents and families of black and ethnic minority children. However, there remains a dearth of materials or guidance specifically for black parents. Support is required to help black parents build positive relationships with teachers. There is also a need to encourage and train parents to become involved in governing bodies to assist in the process of empowerment.

The voluntary sector is instrumental in developing opportunities for ethnic minorities. There are many encouraging initiatives which show positive results at local levels. Croydon LEA, for example, have succeeded in reducing the overall number of exclusions. The Lambeth 'Raising Achievement Project', which works with many disaffected young people, demonstrates that examination success is possible for students with problems in their past school careers. The experiences of such initiatives could be brought together, analysed and disseminated nationally. As yet, there is no comprehensive mapping of the provision that exists. Unless such information is shared it is likely that many initiatives will flounder. The commitment and level of activity at local level, though, provides considerable scope for optimism that the will and the potential exists to equalise educational opportunities for all ethnic minorities in Britain.

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