

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cyllid wedi'i dargedu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 18

Ymateb gan: Tîm Cymorth Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig & Ieuenctid Cymru

Response from: Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales



1. About EYST Wales - EYST Wales coordinates the All Wales BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) Engagement Programme, a three-year project to gather views and experiences of BAME people living in Wales and improve the evidence base from which to positively influence Welsh Government policies and public services to better reflect the needs of BAME communities. This project is one of seven Welsh Government Equalities and Inclusion Grants. Our team are building four regional fora which covers the whole of Wales and acts as a platform to unify and amplify the voices of various groups and people working to further racial equality in Wales. We are currently gathering evidence on the experiences of ethnic minority young people in schools in Wales. Working with partners, we are in process of writing a paper titled, "Schools, Ethnicity and Race in Wales: Educational Attainment, Racism in the Classroom and Diversity in the Curriculum." EYST would also request to give oral evidence when the inquiry begins, drawing upon the participation and knowledge of our regional forum members.
2. Diverse population Targeted support to improve educational outcomes must duly consider the needs and issues facing pupils of ethnic minority heritage. Wales is becoming an increasingly ethnically diverse nation and the percent of population who do not describe themselves as White British rose to 4% in the 2011 census. Currently, over 10% pupils in Wales is from an ethnic minority background. That represents an increase of 62% since 2003/4¹. BAME pupils account for 32% of pupils in Cardiff schools, 24% in Newport Schools, 14% in Swansea schools and 10.4% in Wrexham schools (Stats Wales Dataset). Though

¹ Lewis & Starkey (2014) *Ethnic Minority Pupils: Evidence Review & Practice In Wales*, p. 9, <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2014/140610-ethnic-minority-pupils-en.pdf>

BAME pupils are concentrated in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea², they live in each of Wales' 22 local authorities and are becoming more widely diffused geographically³. As the number of ethnic minority pupils is increasing, the amount of funds dedicated to their support has been decreasing steadily since 2013 with funding “moved into broader initiatives for all learners,”⁴ resulting in cuts to centralised specialist services and reduction of BAME/Gypsy Traveller staff members.

3. Lack of teacher diversity - Whereas pupils in Wales are becoming a more ethnically diverse group, teachers in Wales are not. BAME teachers account for less than 3% of teachers and there are currently no BAME headteachers in Wales. In 2015/16, 25 people of colour embarked upon Initial Teacher Training in Wales – 2% of the cohort⁵. This figure has been declining since 2010 and there is some evidence that aspiring BAME teachers avoid or leave the profession due to racism in schools⁶.
4. Racist incidents and hate crimes in schools: Racist incidents and hate crimes can have profound effects upon educational outcomes. In 2016, Show Racism the Red Cardif (SRtRC) published a groundbreaking research report titled “Racism and anti-racism in the Welsh education system”. SRtRC worked with 1157 learners, teachers and trainee teachers through focus groups, consultation voting, questionnaires and electronic surveys across Wales. Nearly all learners felt that racial discrimination happens in their school. Four out of ten Welsh BME students have suffered from racial discrimination and a fifth of children admitted to using racist language against a peer in school setting. There is anecdotal evidence of children accessing online education due to mainstream schools ineffectiveness to address racist bullying.
5. Addressing achievement of specific groups: In Wales, gaps within ethnic minority achievement have generally been closing with a few exceptions. In the last 10 years, Bangladeshi and Pakistani students have caught up with or surpassed the national average at Key Stage 4. However, attainment figures for several Black and Mixed ethnicities are below the national average with some showing a decline in

² Over 60% of BAME pupils in Wales live in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea.

³ Lewis & Starkey (2014) *Ethnic Minority Pupils: Evidence Review & Practice In Wales*, p. 9-10, <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2014/140610-ethnic-minority-pupils-en.pdf>

⁴ Brentnall J, “Consultation Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic Children” 2016

⁵ StatsWales dataset <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Higher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Training-ITT/students-in-Wales/firstyearsonitecoursesinwales-by-ethnicity-year>

⁶ BBC Wales 17 June 2017

achievement through key stages 1-4⁷. Within Wales Black Caribbean students have been showing some same pattern for a long time. In a 2003 study, EALAW found Black Caribbean pupils attained higher than the national average at Key Stage 1 and then decline to 28% below the national average for 5+ A*-C grades at Key Stage 4. Gypsy Traveller and Roma pupils have the lowest attainment with 24.2 percent of pupils in 2014-16 achieving Level 2 inclusive⁸ at Key Stage 4, compared to White British at 58.8%⁹. White other pupils attained 51.9 %, also lower than the national average.

6. Much attention is focussed on the link between socio-economic status (SES) and student attainment, but that link may not be as strong for non-White ethnic groups. In Wales over all, students eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) lag behind non-FSM students in educational attainment at GCSE level. In Wales, Pupils from Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller, Black African, Black Caribbean, and Black African and Mixed backgrounds have high levels of FSM eligibility, whereas pupils from Chinese, Indian and Other White backgrounds are much less likely to be eligible for FSM. Some studies show that the link between SES and student attainment varies across ethnicities. In one study, White British eFSM pupils achieved far less than their non-White eFSM counterparts¹⁰. Another study showed that living in a deprived neighbourhood has less impact on Black & Asian students compared to White students¹¹. A 2003 study by EALAW found that SES factors don't completely account for difference in attainment between White British and BME pupils in Wales¹². Likewise, there is a strong link between high SES and high student attainment in White pupils, whereas that link is not as pronounced with Black African Students¹³. High SES is not translating into increased education attainment for Black students in the same way that it is for White students. The Wales School Census 2017 gives figures for overall FSM and non-FSM achievement but does not analyse how that may vary across ethnic groups.
7. Exclusions and behaviour management – In Wales Black and Mixed ethnicity students are excluded at higher rates for all forms of school exclusions, a pattern observable for many years with numerous explanations: teachers' stereotyping and low expectations, student

⁷ Nicholl, Jones & Holtom, *Breaking the Links Between Poverty & Ethnicity in Wales*, p. 16, Joseph Rowntree Foundation:2016

⁸ 5 CGSE with A-C grades, including Math and English

⁹ Welsh Government Wellbeing Review 2017:32

¹⁰ Gillbourn D, "The Monsterisation of Race Equality: How Hate Became Honourable," In *The School Report*, p. 7, Runnymede:2015

¹¹ Burgess, Simon "Aspirations, Language and Poverty: Attainment and Ethnicity," In *The School Report*, Runnymede:2015

¹² EALAW "The Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils in Wales: A Report for the Welsh Assembly Government", 2003

¹³ Ibid.

teacher conflict, pupils challenging authority¹⁴. Gypsy, Traveller and Roma students also face higher rates of exclusions. Many studies have found that Black African and Caribbean students face more extreme consequences for behaviour in the classroom when compared to white counterparts. In fact, some studies show that Black and mixed ethnicity boys are often excluded for behaviour that is in reaction to perceived racist incidents or institutional racism¹⁵. There is evidence students who actively “perform ethnicity,” e.g. take pride in markers of ethnic difference such as African hairstyles, are perceived and treated as “bad students” by teachers¹⁶. EYST has heard of one school in Wales which has banned braided hair extensions, a hairstyle associated with African descended culture and people as an “extreme hairstyle.” Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds are overrepresented in BESD diagnoses even when socio-economic differences are controlled for, suggesting that school processes may be involved including racist attitudes and differential treatment by teachers¹⁷. The United Nations has recommended that all UK nations review the disproportionate rate of school exclusion of pupils from Gypsy, Traveller, Roma or African Caribbean communities in order ensure they fulfil obligations as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD).

8. Setting and Banding – Research consistently finds that White teachers disproportionately place Black students in low ranked groups and there is anecdotal evidence that some schools have a limited number of ethnic minority students placed in higher tier exams¹⁸. Professor Jonathon Brentnall suggests we need more evidence and data to understand the extent to which this is happening in Wales¹⁹. The following suggestions arose from an workshop at which educators discussed engaging and improving academic achievement for Black and Mixed Ethnicity in Wales²⁰.

9. Mental Health services in schools – Do not meet needs of BAME students and BAME students take them up in low numbers²¹. Providing

¹⁴ Brentnall J, “Promoting engagement and academic achievement for Black and Mixed ethnicity pupils in Wales, February 2017.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bradbury A, “Identity Performance and Race: The Use of Critical Race Theory in Understanding Institutional Racism and Discrimination in Schools,” p. 24, In Ed. Race R and Lander V *Advancing Race and Ethnicity in Education*, Palgrave Macmillan: 2016

¹⁷ Lewis & Starkey (2014) *Ethnic Minority Pupils: Evidence Review & Practice In Wales*, p. 15,

<http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2014/140610-ethnic-minority-pupils-en.pdf>

¹⁸ Gillborn D “Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and Educaiont Reform,” p. 17-18.

¹⁹ Brentnall J, “Promoting engagement and academic achievement for Black and Mixed ethnicity pupils in Wales, February 2017.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

pastoral care to BAME pupils can require high level of expertise to deal issues of culture, language, faith, and racism effectively. There are not sufficient numbers of teachers or counsellors with ethnic minority backgrounds to offer appropriate pastoral care with adequate cultural understanding or (when required) in pupils first language.

10. Focus Group evidence - EYST has recently conducted focus groups with ethnic minority young people across Wales about their experiences of education in Wales:
 - Good relationships with teachers are important to academic achievement. The best teachers can motivate towards a goal “without focussing on the negative” and are able to coach pupils through setbacks, whilst maintaining high expectations;
 - One group of students lauded the specialist workers who support them in school as “they just get us.”
 - Some ethnic minority students perceive that teachers treat them more harshly than their White peers;
 - Most students had experienced or witnessed a racist incident;
 - For some pupils, racist incidents and bullying are an everyday experience: “Anything could be turned into a racist comment about you ... It makes you feel very alone;”
 - Many students lacked faith that teachers or staff in schools would respond appropriately to a racist incident and did not report “because they wouldn’t understand;”
 - A few students feared discipline if they reported a racist incident and some were told to stay away from the perpetrator, leading to a feeling they weren’t allowed to “roam free in school;”
 - Only one had experienced restorative justice after a racist incident, though nearly all thought that would be the best response;
 - Most felt that diversity in the curriculum is very important for their own self esteem and also to help other students understand their experiences and values: “I want us to be represented in our culture and religion; you need to know where we came from.”
 - Most students felt their identities and histories were not reflected in the curriculum and that when they were it was in a negative way: “White people made Black people slaves – That’s what we learned [about Black history].”
 - Pupils were aware of and critical of “whitewashing” of history – “It’s all the majority white. It’s like White people took it in and made it their culture. You don’t hear where it comes from;”
 - Pupils are concerned with large class sizes and dwindling resources and link this with austerity; they also feel it puts undue pressure on teachers.

11. Lack of progress - Many note that at the same time as ethnic diversity is increasing in Wales and the UK, there is an “overriding view” that race and race-related issues are at the margins of the

current political agenda²² and argue that in order to achieve equity in education that race must take centre place in frank and probing discussions about how schools work to reproduce the systems and practices that decades and generations on, keep empowering White people over people of colour. Thirty years ago, the Swann report, “Education for All,” called for equity in education and referred to a need for curriculums that reflect the ethnic diversity of students, argued that all students should achieve in equal opportunity, noted classroom bias against particular ethnic minority groups and called for all teachers to be trained in ethnically diverse classrooms. Many current researchers lament that, 30 years on from the Swann report, we are still making those same demands.

12. Our recommendations - In order to provide targeted support for students with ethnic minority heritage, we underline the argument for:

- Promote recruitment, retention and progression of BAME educators;
- Specific requirements for regular anti-racist education throughout key stages;
- Monitoring and reporting of racist incidents and racist bullying in schools;
- An authentically diverse curriculum that involves engagement with pupils and community in its creation and is embedded across the curriculum. The ongoing redevelopment of Wales curriculum after the Donaldson review presents an excellent opportunity;
- Teachers are trained in a) cultural competence, the skills to reflect upon on their own identity and privilege and how that may affect pupils; b) to recognise and respond effectively to racism and c) to development authentic diversity in curriculums;
- Concerted and systematic programmes to raise the attainment of Gypsy Traveller Roma and Black and Mixed ethnicity groups that have had lower achievement in recent history. Developing those programmes should involve pupils and parents;
- Rigorous monitoring of the benefits of the Educational Improvement Grant for ethnic minority and Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller pupils.

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²² Race R and Lander V, *Advancing Race & Ethnicity in Education*, Palgrave MacMillan:2017.