

policies emerging from the Home Office, the DoH and the criminal justice system, contradicting the positive proposals set out in the race equality strategies. We need to see more evidence of consensus and joined-up thinking across government departments.

RW: Commissioning processes for health service provision should cover capacity-building for BME communities and organisations which deliver services. BME groups should be involved in consultation procedures at the very earliest stages.

MR: In Tower Hamlets people are not being treated for epilepsy, HIV and TB because of their immigration status. Some treatments may have to be met from community health budgets as a consequence. Not providing healthcare because of uncertain immigration status is a human rights abuse.

Sharon Grant: None of these issues is new. The government's published strategy on race equality and community cohesion should approach inequality in a systematic way by setting targets that must be met in order to retain funding. BME organisations will also be expected to meet these targets. The Health Care Commission recently published a document on achieving five separate standards in the NHS. This is potentially an opportunity to address equality issues. As well as the Health Care Commission we should think about the role of the Audit Commission, which is responsible for monitoring how the

money is spent.

We need to maintain pressure from below. The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health was set up to represent patients' interests. Local forums across the country are to relay information about needs, but at national level the Commission is being abolished. This will be an obstacle to bringing together BME groups across PCT area boundaries.

SP: What is the CRE's role in this area, and who is responsible for addressing the health inequalities set out in, for example, the Bennett Inquiry Report? There is rising anger that in response to critical reports being produced, reports which require action from the authorities, there continues to be no implementation of recommendations.

Shun Au: We need a national and regional structure for funding BME organisations. We also need a departmental structure which allows people more flexible work options to keep their career options open. A reluctance to provide core funding for small organisations leaves many under-resourced on administration.

RP: Lack of coordination between services at the local level makes it important to stress the need for the empowerment of local communities and early involvement in planning.

BM: Health issues are not so much about enhancing life-chances, but the chance to live. Immigration status is also a public health issue. Most doctors

and nurses believe in human rights and view these issues as integral to their work. Recruitment of staff and the often unused skills of asylum-seekers are very relevant to the debate about inequality in health.

The need for joined-up policy and work across PCT boundaries is clear, and we should press for structures to facilitate this. The role and funding of the voluntary sector needs to be emphasised: the NHS can never be as efficient as, for example, the Chinese Mental Health Association.

Richard Stone (Chair's Summing-up) Ideas to emerge from the discussion include:

- Funding for equality work should be based on a fixed percentage of the NHS budget and should include an element for core funding.
- There is clear concern about the vulnerable position of asylum-seekers and immigrants. NHS services should be provided to everyone resident in the UK.
- Information about good practice should be shared, and a joined-up approach should be taken. An NHS interactive website could be useful for this purpose.
- Racism between patients needs to be addressed – perhaps through the use of group psychotherapy – and anti-racism policies enforced.
- New ways to hold the NHS to account are needed – particularly since the abolition of the community health councils.
- There is a pressing need for a BME-led campaign in the area of mental health services. □

social and cultural capital, and we have paid too little attention to this area'.

Some schools may have powerful community strategies but require parental support for their existing agenda. Addressing the needs/issues of children has to be about adopting a less rigid or fixed way of operating, e.g. adapting the National Curriculum to meet the needs of the children.

Professor Dyson offered three examples of schools' responses to addressing the issues of gender, diversity and aspirations:

- trying to involve communities/families in supporting different expectations of family and school;



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SEMINARS**

Policy into practice seminars: (3) Education

Chair: Sahsi Sivaloganathan, Vice Chair, General Teaching Council for England
Presentations:

Alan Dyson, Professor of Education, University of Manchester
Keith Ajegbo, Headteacher, Deptford Green School

Note takers: Nicola Rollock and Olivia Skinner

Presentations

1. Alan Dyson on the Wider Role of Schools.

Professor Dyson has focused his research on education in an 'urban context', examining the relationship between schools and the communities they serve. His presentation focused on his research into 'full service' or 'extended' schools.

The full schools initiative requires schools to be involved in more than what has traditionally been seen as the core business of teaching. Community services will often be on a school site, and schools may thereby have direct involvement in other areas such as health, housing and employment. Schools are redefined as developers of their pupils' potential or

'capital', which can be categorised as:

- human capital – what pupils bring with them when they first enter the education system;
- cultural capital – knowing how to be, being part of more than one cultural group, learning how to be learners;
- social capital – how resources connect with networks of people, opening up new horizons of opportunity, thought and connection.

Models were provided of how certain schools defined the needs of their pupils, families and the wider community: 'Children come to school already locked into all kinds of



(L-R) Keith Ajegbo, Sahsi Sivaloganathan and Alan Dyson



COHESION, DIVERSITY, EQUALITY CONFERENCE SEMINARS

- working on inclusiveness with the children to counteract lack of local cohesion in the community;
- raising the energy levels of students to counteract community despondency in an area of industrial decline and unemployment.

These efforts would benefit from support and guidance to ensure that they are effective and suitably recognised as part of the proper role of schools.

2. Keith Ajegbo on Education and Community Cohesion. Having begun his presentation with a description of his own school (Deptford Green High School, Lewisham: 77% minority ethnic, 50% free school meals) Keith Ajegbo went on to describe his involvement with the Home Office's Community Cohesion Unit, specifically in supporting schools to address the achievement gap in terms of class and race to meet standards required for the race equality and community cohesion objectives of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

He recommended that issues of equality and representation should be foregrounded. The policy on professional development for all teachers and governors on race equality should be made very clear. An inclusive, representative environment can be preferable to a reliance on role models. The curriculum has to be relevant to all – so the pupils should be more involved in deciding how to shape and adapt the curriculum appropriately. Teaching styles should also be reviewed (with pupils and parents in mind) and a one-size-fits-all approach eliminated. Schools could and should do more in particular to audit the material they teach, and how it is received by pupils and parents, to encourage a culture of achieving and of community engagement.

Standards have improved, the literacy strategy has helped, but the next stage is to look at the involvement of parents and the wider community.

Pupils will only achieve if they believe something is worth achieving – they have to see their education as leading to something worthwhile, and for this there has to be an interface with society. There can be potential in schools working together in different kinds of partnerships, for example across monocultural areas, to the benefit of pupils and teachers. Also targeted parent groups can be useful to help focus on individual concerns such as the underachievement of certain pupils.

He gave examples of initiatives and

projects within his school regarding citizenship education – some more successful than others – including schemes to bring outside speakers, such as MPs and councillors, or pupils' own choices, into the school to meet the pupils or to take part in debates. He emphasised the need to listen to pupils' concerns about some groups feeling ignored at the expense of others; or detached through lack of interactive teaching and poor classroom discipline. Given the right mechanisms and support, students can be very effective action-researchers.

Discussion points

The discussion ranged widely over both the theory and research of Alan Dyson and the experience of Keith Ajegbo as a practising headteacher.

There was approval for Ofsted's new role in monitoring equality and diversity, discussion about the pros and cons of different kinds of partnerships, the importance of teachers' emotional intelligence, and how to ensure pupil inclusion. Both speakers stressed that there have been significant improvements in all areas of education over the last 20 years and that we are at a point where many new ideas of what schools could become are now emerging to be debated.

1. Emotional intelligence of teachers

Both speakers highlighted the potential of rethinking the roles of schools and the opportunities to learn from successful initiatives from the past. They commented on the importance of inspirational leadership and role models for under-achieving pupils. Keith Ajegbo asserted his belief that teachers should better reflect the ethnic make-up of a school.

DN asked whether the underlying challenge for all schools in promoting equality, diversity and cohesion was the emotional intelligence and competency of teachers. Keith Ajegbo agreed and noted that since the 1980s his school staff – passionate about equal opportunities – have recruited staff with the same passion. He regards emotional intelligence as one of the school's main strengths, which has helped in learning to create harmony between groups. The headteachers' own ethnicity may have had some influence on developing this intelligence.

2. School twinning

One delegate (AM) questioned the use of school twinning, as it had the potential to cause problems – in Northern Ireland one example had led to a racist incident. She also asked whether the speakers could give any good examples of the use of private finance initiatives in England to encourage greater interaction between schools and communities. Alan Dyson pointed to the ways in which PFI in England is creating opportunities that vary widely between local authorities. There are both negative consequences (e.g. community provision on site but separate entrances to cater for safety concerns), and positive (examples that show real imagination about what school buildings could become).

Keith Ajegbo gave an example of successful school twinning – pupils from his school and an all-white college in Devon were brought together, with good results. But he stressed that it is very difficult to achieve and can be disastrous if done badly.

3. Ofsted's new role

Delegates picked up on the importance of Ofsted's role in ensuring that diversity and equality are at the heart of schools' policies. KH said that as Ofsted inspections are about to change radically, there is scope to come up with sound ways of reaching parents and pupils to discover how well they think schools are dealing with diversity and equality.

4. Faith schools

The speakers were asked by SS which aspects of their presentations might be applicable to faith schools. Alan Dyson acknowledged that the English system has always included faith schools, but said there were huge dilemmas surrounding them. 'We talk about the relation between school and community but we don't know what we mean by "community"'. Keith Ajegbo explained that his school is almost entirely secular in approach; assemblies are educational about morality and different faiths but are not acts of collective worship.

5. Engagement of children with school

Keith Ajegbo had emphasised in his speech the importance of ensuring that pupils engage with school processes in order to facilitate a culture of achievement for all pupils. HV asked how you engage with children who are excluded from school processes, and whether there could be equal recognition for informal learning.

Keith reiterated his conviction that it is extremely important for children to feel that they are part of the management of the school and that they are listened to. Elected School Councils are often useful in accessing the views of pupils, including the disaffected. Alan Dyson noted that some schools are giving disengaged pupils access to people and organisations who are not teachers, such programmes often make a real difference and are another example of the kinds of partnerships that schools can successfully enter into in order to meet the needs of their pupils.

6. EMAG

An EMAG team leader noted that in her borough (Lewisham) they are moving away from the notion that the ethnic minority achievement grant is specifically for ethnic minority teachers and pupils to work in isolation from the rest of the school. They are increasingly looking at outcomes, at how the money is used and embedded in the school. She also emphasised that EMAG is not intended to be the single source of funding to address the ethnic achievement gap, and that it should be considered in relation to other funding sources. □

