

# The Runnymede Trust

Briefing Paper No.1, July 1998

## 'Race' policy in education

This is the first in a series of regular briefing papers from The Runnymede Trust, each of which will deal with a topical issue.

### What has Labour achieved?

**T**HE Labour Government came to power last year committed to make education its top priority. In this Briefing Paper, we take a look at what has been achieved so far, in particular, how well we think the needs of ethnic minority children have been taken into account. We focus on those initiatives proposed by the Education White Paper 'Excellence in Schools', currently going through Parliament in the form of two Bills: 'The School Standards and Framework Bill' and 'The Teaching and Higher Education Bill', to be led by Stephen Byers MP (Minister for School Standards) and by Baroness Blackstone in the House of Lords. Both Bills should be on the statute books by the end of Summer 1998.

Runnymede's role is to seek to influence Government and draw to its attention the likely impact on ethnic minorities of any existing or proposed legislation. In this



THE GUARDIAN

Briefing Paper we offer comments on those initiatives outlined in the White Paper that we see as being particularly relevant to improving the welfare of ethnic minority children; and seek to assess, after just over a year in office, the progress of the Government's education reforms.

We also include views from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT), Runnymede having collaborated in particular with the CRE in providing direct feedback on the White Paper to the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE).

## General

**I**N the report by David Gillborn and Caroline Gipps *Recent Research on the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils* (OFSTED, 1996), the authors stress that during the last decade 'issues of race and equal opportunity have tended to slip from policy agendas'.

To a large extent this is borne out by the White Paper which, in our opinion, takes a relatively 'colour-blind', low-key approach to race. On the other hand, we applaud the overall thrust of the White Paper, which is aimed at raising standards for all.

It is also possible to see that some of the structures that the Government is proposing to put in place will be to the benefit of the more disadvantaged members of our community, black or white.

We welcome too the fact that specific mention is made of the special needs of some ethnic minority children who are underperforming, with plans to undertake some measurement both of good practice and of levels of achievement. In addition, the White Paper mentions tackling racial harassment and stereotyping, reducing exclusions of ethnic minority pupils who

are disproportionately represented in the number of exclusions, and examining the reasons for underperformance.

While we believe that the government is on the right track and applaud its attempts to be inclusive by

developing initiatives aimed at all pupils, we believe that there are instances where ethnic minority pupils will require special attention. For example, in the areas of language, culture and exclusion, it may

sometimes be necessary to focus particularly on ethnic minority needs. Those in leadership positions — LEAs, Head Teachers — need to have an in-depth understanding of some of the special dynamics of multiculturalism. The 'colour-blind' approach in the White Paper falls short of our ideal for dealing with some of the inequalities in the education arena, and we outline below some of our suggestions for strengthening the Paper with regard to race.

## Specific initiatives

**S**OME of the new initiatives being put forward by the White Paper and associated Bills could be significantly strengthened with regard to the welfare of ethnic minority pupils. These include:

### Education Action Zones

These will be local clusters of schools — usually a mix of not more than 20 primary,

*'The White Paper takes a colour-blind approach to race'*

# Key Facts About Ethnic Minority Pupil Performance

**1. MORE than a million youngsters skip lessons each year and over 100,000 are temporarily excluded. Of those pupils excluded, 83% are boys. Half are aged 14 or 15. African-Caribbean children are eight times more likely than average to be excluded, and children in care are ten times more likely to face exclusion. Those who are excluded are more likely to become teenage parents, unem-**

**ployed, homeless, or to end up in prison.**

*The Guardian, 12 May 1998 ("The Terrible Truth about Truants").*

**2. ALTHOUGH all pupils are doing better than they did ten years ago, pupils from economically advantaged backgrounds achieve the highest averages, and within each social class there are clear differences in the attainment of different ethnic**

**minority groups. Indian pupils do better than those of Pakistani and, markedly, Bangladeshi backgrounds, and perform as well as white pupils or, in some urban areas, even better.**

**A growing gap is revealed between African-Caribbean pupils, especially boys, and their peers. There are, however, significant deviations in these patterns of attainment. In Tower**

**Hamlets, Bangladeshi children, although typically with parents from rural backgrounds and living in poor circumstances, have now become the highest achievers in the borough.**

**In Birmingham, where African-Caribbean children were shown to be ahead of white children in the Key Stage I assessments in 1992 and 1994, they had fallen behind significantly by GCSE**

secondary and special schools — working together with the LEA, local parents, businesses, Teacher Education Colleges (TECs) and others. The purpose of the Zones, to be located in areas of educational under-performance, urban or rural, will be to seek innovative ways to tackle disadvantage and to raise standards.

We support the intention to create areas of innovation that will engender positive new thinking that can be replicated elsewhere. However, our worry is that partnership approaches such as these can be very time-consuming, and use up resources without producing the results urgently needed to help those currently at a disadvantage in the education system. We would recommend that wherever possible the Education Action Zones concentrate on some 'quick wins' as well as on developing longer-term plans. We would also like to avoid a situation in which Zones become seen merely as 'problem

areas'. Learning from success stories will be of help, and we welcome the good practice documented in the Open University's forthcoming study on *Teaching and Learning Strategies in successful Multi-Ethnic Schools* to be published by the DfEE before the end of 1998.

### National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and Study Support

We are pleased to see extra resources and improved teaching methods directed at these areas, with specific targets to be achieved. We also welcome the Summer Literacy Schools and the National Year of Reading.

Our concern here is that ethnic minority pupils for whom English is their second language may continue to slip through the net and we would emphasise the need for coherent plans for dealing with such groups. It would be helpful to build on the many successful initiatives that already

provide support within ethnic minority communities, such as Saturday and after-school classes.

### LEA Behaviour Support Plans

LEAs will have to set out their arrangements for the education of children with behavioural difficulties. The lists of types of children this might concern include are:

- pupils who feature disproportionately in exclusions figures, such as African-Caribbean boys or Travellers' children;
- pupils with significant trauma histories, such as refugees.

This is a welcome initiative as it suggests just the focus we have been looking for. Our only concern is that pupils should be helped to 'move through' the particular behaviour rather than 'get stuck' or 'labelled' as a problem throughout their school lives. It will be important to provide opportunities for teachers to learn to recognise behaviours related to culture.

level. Teachers' expectations of ethnic minority pupils are 'both too low and wrong'. In schools where teachers had high expectations of these children, their students do well.

Stereotypical assumptions held by teachers: they see Asians as 'quiet, well behaved and highly motivated', especially compared to African-Caribbeans, 'with whom they had an unusually high degree of tension, even conflict'.

But some teachers hold

negative stereotypes about Asian pupils, especially girls, as subject to narrow parental expectations. Teachers also misinterpret language difficulties on the part of some Asian pupils as learning difficulties.

South Asian pupils are disproportionately subject to racial harassment by their white peers — 'as a regular fact of life'.

The number of exclusions is up to six times more likely for all African-Caribbean pupils, both boys and girls, in

both primary and secondary sectors. Two thirds of these children never go back to school. Teachers are quicker to discipline African Caribbean pupils in both sectors, thereby reducing their chances of high achievement.

Asian pupils tend to 'make rather better progress than their white peers' at secondary school but (except in part of London) ethnic minority pupils leave school with worse average attainments in

examinations.

While some secondary schools are more effective for certain groups "not all ethnic groups benefit equally from attending apparently 'effective' schools".

*David Gillborn and Caroline Gipps, Recent Research on the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils (Ofsted, 1996), extracted from The Runnymede Bulletin, September 1996.*

3. The Government has recently agreed to fund Muslim schools.

## Education Development Plans

From April 1999 each LEA must have an Education Development Plan (EDP) focused on raising standards.

**We would recommend that within each EDP there is explicit recognition of and support for the differences in achievement by particular ethnic groups.**

## Monitoring of Ethnic Minority Performance

The Government acknowledges that there is a need for better monitoring of information about all pupils and proposes methods to improve systems of data gathering. **It is imperative to have better and more consistent data, particularly on the performance of ethnic minority pupils. Without this data, effective plans for change cannot be put in place. There is a parallel in the employment arena, where some employers carry out monitoring to understand the cultural composition of their workforces with a view to removing barriers for particular groups, and where government surveys disaggregate data by ethnic minority group (as well as gender). By comparison, education statistics are poor in identifying ethnic minority elements — both with regard to subject choice and to achievement at all levels.**

## Section 11 Funding

This is a specific government fund to support the cost of employing additional staff to help ethnic minority pupils overcome language or cultural barriers. Last year the Government restored an £8 million cut from the Section 11 budget made by the previous administration. A restructuring of the fund is expected to be announced in July 1998 as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

**We recommend that future funding**

**should be available on a long-term basis, so that specialist teachers and support units can be developed strategically. Effort should be made to encourage the further integration of support elements into mainstream teaching. It will be important to consider how funding can be targeted to raise the achievement levels of ethnic minorities as a whole, as well as those with English as an additional language.**

## The General Teaching Council

This new professional body for teachers, to be established by the year 2000, will represent teachers' interests, and will have a role similar to that of the British Medical Association and other professional bodies.

**We welcome the professionalisation of teaching, but would like to recommend that the Council adequately represents the whole community. We would also like the Council to focus particularly on the recruitment of ethnic minority teachers who are presently seriously under-represented at all levels of the teaching profession, and that it be given the specific job of monitoring the ethnic background of all teachers.**

## Induction for New Teachers

All newly qualified teachers taking up first employment from September 1999 onwards will be required to undertake an induction period during their first year of teaching.

**We would like to recommend that included in the induction is a specific module on multi-cultural teaching. We would also advocate training for all teachers and Head Teachers in diversity awareness.**

## Exclusions

The Government has decided to place investigation into school exclusions at the heart of the new Social Exclusion Unit. Already we have seen some tough new

measures from the Government to address issues of exclusion and truancy — their stated objectives being to reduce both by a third, and responsibility for these reductions being given to schools, parents and the community.

**Clearly, exclusions is an area in which ethnic minority youths are deeply implicated. We are supportive of the Government's new measures, but would like to see them go even further in addressing some of the underlying causes of school exclusion, such as racial stereotyping and fundamental misunderstandings of the cultural dimension by some teachers.**

## Other Responses to the White Paper

**T**HE Commission for Racial Equality (*from Sir Herman Ouseley's Presidential Address to the North of England Conference: "Keys to Learning", 5-7 January 1998*):

- Urges elimination of the taboo around race and give it the same status as gender.
- Is concerned that the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority continues to argue for a curriculum that attempts to meet the challenge of a multiracial society by increasing the uniformity of the content and values of the curriculum.
- Is concerned that the National Curriculum is meant to deliver equally for all children in an education system in which there is a hierarchy of schools, with different levels of resourcing, status and effectiveness. Ethnic minority children may find themselves concentrated in certain cate-

gories of schools, thus creating a system of apartheid.

- Calls for the reinstatement of ethnic monitoring of teacher employment given the low numbers of graduates from ethnic minorities finding places on PGCE courses.
- Urges support for teachers to tackle the high levels of racial harassment and to overcome their own unwitting negative racial stereotyping.
- Urges a comprehensive system of ethnic monitoring linked to academic achievement, along with a system for responding to its findings.

**T**he NUT on the White Paper and Ethnic Minority Pupils (*From Response of the National Union of Teachers, October 1997*):

- It is vital that the Government establishes a strategy for schools and the education system to help build a fairer society and to prepare all pupils to live in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society.
- It is crucially important that the Government's education policies do not take a 'colour blind' approach to education. Issues of racism and race equality, ethnic, cultural and religious identity should be central to the Government's educational strategy.
- The NUT welcomes the Government's commitment to 'review the level and delivery of specialist support in schools for raising the educational achievements of ethnic minority pupils'.
- The NUT welcomes the Government's intention to undertake additional consultation on 'monitoring ethnic minority pupils' performance'.
- It is important that any Government strategy on meeting the specific edu-

cational needs of minority ethnic pupils includes the needs of Traveller and refugee pupils.

### **Forthcoming studies and initiatives**

- *Teaching and Learning Strategies in Successful Multi-Ethnic Schools* — Open University, commissioned by the DfEE and to be published by the end of 1998. The research is intended to highlight good practice in a range of schools which have been particularly successful in raising the achievement of certain groups of ethnic minority pupils. This will also be useful for the Education Action Zones, which will have a chance to experiment with new applications of good practice.
- The DfEE has also commissioned OFSTED to undertake a series of focused inspections to look at how schools seek to raise the achievement of ethnic minority pupils in relation to racial harassment and teacher stereotyping. That work is on-going.
- As part of the Social Exclusion Unit's focus on what steps can be taken to reduce truancy and exclusion from school, the DfEE has recently written to the Chief Education Officers of 52 LEAs where black pupils are disproportionately excluded, providing them with the relevant data for their authority alongside comparative data for other authorities. The DfEE hopes that the LEAs concerned will find this information useful in preparing targets for reducing levels of exclusion, as part of the process of drawing up Behaviour Support Plans.
- The DfEE also plans to consult on revised guidance on the exclusions process.

- The Teacher Training Agency is currently undertaking a number of initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of ethnic minority teachers, including an on-going advertising campaign targeted at ethnic minority groups; working with LEAs to help them develop a programme of recruitment; commissioning research on issues related to the recruitment of ethnic minority teachers; and monitoring the ethnicity of those receiving Headship training.

### **People behind the action** Advisory Group on Raising the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils

Chaired by Estelle Morris, Minister for Education, this was an initiative taken by the last Government, including a 10-point plan, which the present Government has decided to continue. Some recent achievements include the launch of a video on Travellers, an initiative with Bangladeshi parents, a study of good practice in schools and a report on exclusions. Estelle Morris is a member of the new Ministerial Task Force on Truancy and Exclusion, chaired by Stephen Byers.

The group has been set up to ensure that the specific actions set out in the White Paper are fully implemented, and has been divided into four sub-groups with the following remits:

#### **FINANCIAL RESOURCES SUB-GROUP**

- To advise on issues related to the deployment of financial resources available specifically to raise ethnic minority pupil achievement.
- To identify any significant gaps in existing provision and to consider how to address these.

#### STANDARDS SUB-GROUP

- To examine evidence of the impact on ethnic minority pupil achievement of policy initiatives to raise standards.
- To advise on the development and implementation of policies with reference to their potential or actual impact on the achievement of ethnic minority pupils.

#### TEACHERS' SUB-GROUP

- To review the programme identified by the TTA in relation to its work to raise the achievement of ethnic minority pupils.
- To advise on the development and implementation of policies in relation to initial

and in-service teacher training, teacher recruitment and the career structure for specialist EAL (English as an Additional Language) and bilingual assistants, to raise ethnic minority pupil achievement.

#### EXCLUSION SUB-GROUP

- To review the Social Exclusion Unit's report and recommendations on Truancy and Exclusions from Schools.
- To advise on the development and implementation of policies in relation to exclusion and to address the particular concerns of ethnic minority communities and the needs of ethnic minority pupils.

#### Each Sub-Group to:

- Discuss issues within its remit
- Consider relevant Government policies and initiatives.
- Provide a link to complementary work being undertaken in other forms.
- Be pro-active and take a forward-looking approach in identifying solutions to specific identified problems.
- Set its own specific work programme and timetable for action.
- Formulate advice on the development and implementation of policies.
- Report back to the main Advisory Group.

#### Advisory Group Membership:

Estelle Morris MP (Chair)  
Sukhvinder Stubbs, CEO, The Runnymede Trust (Deputy Chair) ● Professor Michael Barber, Head of SEU, DfEE ● Mrs Yasmin Bevan, Headteacher ● Gilroy Brown, Headteacher ● Dame Tamsyn Imison, Headteacher ● Sandy Finnigan, CEO, Careers Bradford Ltd ● Sir Herman Ouseley, Chairman, CRE ● Paul Patrick, Headteacher ● Michael Peters, Director of Educational Services ● Jim Rose, Director of Inspection, OFSTED ● Polly Sealey, Professional Officer, Professional Association of Teachers ● Rowie Shaw, Director of Professional Services, NAHT ● Samidha Garg, Race Equality, NUT ● Christine Keates, NASUWT ● C Kiddle, Devon Traveller Education Service ● Tom Levesley, Policy Adviser, QCA ● Peter Mercer, General Secretary, East Anglian Gypsy Council ● Anthea Millett, CEO, TTA ● Peter Smith, Gen Secretary, Association of Teachers and Lecturers ● Anne Sofer ● Hugh South, Chair, NALDIC ● Chris Vieler-Porter, Chair, ALAOME ● Janet White, Professional Officer, QCA 2.

#### The Standing Committee

##### Membership: Schools

##### Framework and Standards Bill:

Stephen Byers MP (Lab) (Minister for School Standards) ● Estelle Morris MP (Lab) ● Stephen Dorrell MP (Con) ● Angela Browning MP (Con) ● Don Foster MP (Lib Dem) ● Phil Willis MP (Lib Dem)  
Backbenchers:  
Bob Bizzard MP ● Graham Brady MP ● Roger Gale MP (Co-Chairman) ● Peter Hain MP ● Phil Hope MP ● Beverley Hughes MP ● David Jamieson MP ● Helen Jones MP ● John McWilliam MP (Co-Chairman) ● Tony McNulty MP ● Sir David Madel MP ● Gordon Marsden MP ● Theresa May MP ● Kali Mountford MP ● Joan Ryan MP ● Rachel Squire MP ● Nick St. Aubyn MP ● Dr George Turner MP

##### The Standing Committee Membership: Teaching and Higher Education Bill

Stephen Byers MP (Lab) (Minister for School Standards) ● Kim Howells MP (Lab) ● Stephen Dorrell MP (Cons) ● David Willetts MP (Cons) ● Don Foster MP (Lib Dem) ● Phil Willis MP (Lib Dem)  
Backbenchers:  
Frank Cook MP (Chairman) ● Christine Butler MP

● Jamie Cann MP ● Vernon Coaker MP ● Valerie Davie MP ● David Jamieson MP ● Melanie Johnson MP ● Chris Leslie MP ● Tony McNulty MP ● Sir David Madel MP ● Bill Rammell MP ● John Randall MP ● Andrew Reed MP ● Jacqui Smith MP ● Caroline Spelman MP

Baroness Blackstone has led both Bills in the House of Lords.

#### Standards and Effectiveness Unit

This was set up by the government to bring together all work by central and local government to improve standards of pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of schools.

##### Staff:

Professor Michael Barber (Head) ● Michael Stark (Effectiveness Division) ● Sandy Adamson (Standards Division) ● Robert Wood (Pupil Performance Team) ● Lesley Jelly (Management Unit) ● Pam Bailey (School Intervention Team) ● Paula Tansley (Education Development Plan Team) ● Judy Sebba (Research Coordination Team) ● Sue Dasey (Education Action Zone Team) ● Ruth Gill (External Relations Team) ● Alison Jeffrey (Home-work and Schemes of Work) ● Virginia Berkeley (National year of reading, summer schools and standards fund team) ● Dave Sleep (Literacy and Numeracy Team)

*This Paper was researched and written by Sandra Sanglin-Grant of Schneider-Ross, Consultants in Diversity and Equality.*

Schneider-Ross is a team of specialist consultants who advise organisations on developing equality systems and a diversity culture. It advises clients in the UK and internationally across all aspects of equality opportunities including race, gender and disability.

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