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## OUTCOMES FOR GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PUPILS LITERATURE REVIEW

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*Anne Wilkin, Chris Derrington and Brian Foster*

### Introduction

- This literature review represents one strand of a study funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) focusing on the issues faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT)<sup>1</sup> pupils and what can be done to improve the educational outcomes for this particular group.
- The review was intended to only include current research evidence and literature (including official reports and guidance, as well as policy documentation) on GRT pupils and their parents from the UK over the last ten years. However, it was agreed with the Steering Group for this research that incorporating a European perspective would provide valuable context for the review.
- Ninety-one sources were selected as relevant and summarised for inclusion in the review. Although it can not be considered to be exhaustive, the review does highlight a number of important and influential issues arising from the literature.

### Pupil perspectives and experiences of the curriculum

- Several studies emphasise the fact that many young Travellers express positive attitudes about, and expectations towards, school and education, particularly in primary school. Attitudes tended to become more negative on moving to secondary school, particularly in the case of boys (Padfield, 2005).
- In some studies, GRT pupils reported feeling that their teachers generally had a limited understanding of their culture and situation in school, while some teachers could be less than sympathetic when racism was reported to them.
- The literature indicates an affinity between pupil and parental aspirations. The expectation for adolescent males to be economically active at an early age and young females to care for the home and children was found to disrupt attendance and negate the relevance of secondary education (Jordan, 2001; Reynolds et al., 2003; Padfield, 2005).
- Gypsy and Traveller children were found to encounter high levels of misunderstanding about the nature of their identity, including the common misconception that Gypsies do not constitute an ethnic group, or that 'housed' families could not be Gypsies (Warrington, 2006).

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report, GRT is used as an umbrella term embracing all Gypsy and Traveller groups, as well as Roma from Eastern Europe.



- The literature shows evidence of Gypsy Traveller pupils using their own language in school, but little recognition and acknowledgement of their bi-lingual skills amongst school staff (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Using their own language may also be perceived as exclusionary by their peers (Devine and Kelly, 2006).
- The perception of 'safety in numbers' is reported in a number of studies - however, Traveller pupils are often in the minority in schools which can make it difficult for them to assert their own identity (Kiddle, 1999; Ofsted, 2003).
- Reflecting Traveller culture in the curriculum is generally regarded as being important, however, introducing such links without sensitivity, or placing Traveller pupils in the spotlight was found to cause embarrassment for pupils who preferred to 'blend in' (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Derrington, 2006).
- The literature indicates a 'clash' between Gypsy and Traveller pupils' lifestyle and the education system, sometimes referred to as cultural dissonance (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Pupils may sometimes try to hide their ethnicity in school to avoid prejudice, or because it makes them feel safer in school (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008; Warrington, 2006).
- Name-calling by other pupils was found to be the strongest negative feature of school for Traveller pupils, who felt their schools provided them with little support to face it. Pupils were often reported to be reluctant to report incidents to teachers, mainly because they felt they would not be taken seriously (Bowers, 2004).
- Parents were reported to feel reassured by the presence of other Traveller children or family members at the same secondary school. It was found to be quite common for parents to expect older children to take care of younger siblings in school (Kiddle, 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- Pupils who stayed on in school until the age of 16 were most likely to be from homes where parents expressed a sustained positive attitude about the value of secondary education and an aspiration for their children to gain qualifications in order to gain employment (Derrington and Kendall, 2007a).
- Parents were found to be generally supportive of school rules, as long as they were communicated clearly and were considered justified (e.g. in terms of health and safety considerations) (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- Parents would not willingly subject their children to hurt or degradation, often only approaching schools where they felt their children would be welcomed and well-supported. This concern for their psychosocial well-being was believed to take precedence over educational aspirations (Derrington, 2006, 2007).
- A number of Traveller parents were found to support their children's professional aspirations in principle, but expectations tended to modify over time towards more traditional employment options (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Vocational skills were given a higher priority than educational qualifications, with a preference for more 'experiential family-based learning' (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008, p11). The literature reports increasing evidence of families encouraging school-based education in order for their children to develop the skills they need to respond to changes in employment patterns.
- Travellers' decisions to be open about their identity were found to depend on the quality of their relationship with the 'settled' community (Padfield, 2005). The reluctance of some parents to disclose their identity on official documents hinders robust ethnic monitoring and has led to Government guidance to encourage self ascription (DCSF, 2008a).

### **Parents' beliefs, values and expectations about education**

- Several studies suggest that Gypsy Traveller parents remain largely positive about the value of education, even though their own experiences of schooling are often limited and may not always have been positive. However, the literature makes clear that positive attitudes are usually tempered by anxiety about name-calling, bullying, sex education, exposure to drugs and smoking and issues of moral welfare.

- Parental fears about racist bullying in school form a central feature of much of the literature. Parents generally preferred their children to be with other Gypsy Traveller pupils in school but worried about scapegoating (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- Although recognising the value of education, a number of sources suggest that some Traveller parents may see it as a source of 'Gorgification' (Bowers, 2004, p13), a process that erodes Traveller identity and values.
- A number of sources indicate that Traveller-specific or culturally relevant resources are not significantly reflected in schools. This lack of recognition, or denial, of cultural differences was believed to perpetuate teachers' ignorance (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008).
- Teachers' awareness about racism was reported to be varied (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Studies report that some schools are not making the connection between racism in the community and what happens in school, with most teachers (although not Traveller support staff) failing to make a connection between bullying, name-calling and racist behaviour (Lloyd et al., 1999; Power, 2004).

### **Teacher expectations and attitudes**

- The impact of teacher expectations and attitudes is emphasised repeatedly throughout the literature. Teacher expectations in relation to Gypsy Traveller pupils were reported by Ofsted (1999) to be unreasonably low and raising those expectations was identified as an urgent priority.
- Positive teacher attitudes are considered crucial to the achievement of Traveller children, although even the most sympathetic teacher can sometimes inadvertently exclude these pupils (Kiddle, 1999).
- The literature indicates that an understanding of, and respect for, Traveller culture is vital in order to accurately interpret what influences the educational participation of Traveller pupils (Reynolds et al., 2003; Hester, 2004) and to avoid labelling minority ethnic groups as different from the norm.
- Cultural dissonance<sup>2</sup> can also be experienced by teachers, for example, staff may interpret low attendance at parents' evenings as a lack of support and/or interest, while parents attribute it to anxiety factors.
- Traveller pupils were often found to respond to racist name-calling by fighting back, which teachers tended to attribute to cultural traits rather than seeing it as an emotionally-fuelled response to bullying. At the same time, inconsistencies in applying school rules or sanctions were found to reinforce negative teacher attitudes (e.g. avoiding giving after-school detentions because pupils, encouraged by their parents, would refuse to stay) (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- Neither initial teacher training nor in-service training (INSET) for practising teachers has sufficiently taken on board the need to educate teachers about Travellers (Kiddle, 1999; Parker-Jones and Hartas, 2002; Derrington and Kendall, 2004). More often than not, raising awareness takes place through informal opportunities.

<sup>2</sup> 'Cultural dissonance is the term commonly used to describe a sense of discomfort, discord or disharmony arising from cultural differences or inconsistencies which are unexpected or unexplained and therefore difficult for individuals to negotiate' <http://www.multiverse.ac.uk>

## Relationships

- Secure social networks involving non-Traveller and Traveller peers, together with good interpersonal skills, were positively linked with retention in secondary schools. Those that dropped out early displayed limited social contact with non-Traveller peers (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- Irregular school attendance was found to impact on social relationships Lloyd et al., 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2004), although this does not apply exclusively to traveller pupils (Malcolm et al., 2003).
- Generally, pupils were positive about their relationship with teachers, although there were cases highlighted of individual teachers being less sympathetic or even racist towards pupils.
- Conflict with teachers was found to lead to non-attendance by Gypsy traveller pupils although, equally, irregular attendance was reported to affect the quality of pupil/teacher relationships (Lloyd et al., 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- The fragility of home-school relationships has been recognised in a number of studies. Although largely favourable at primary school, the home-school relationship often changes once pupils transfer to secondary school (Derrington, 2005a).
- Trust between teachers and Traveller parents is crucial (Kiddle, 1999) although it can take years to develop. Approaches found to enhance the quality of home-school relationships include: having a named link member of staff for liaison; willingness by Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), school and education welfare staff to engage in outreach work with the community; designated support staff; a personal and individual response; and concerned, first-day contact with parents in relation to absence.

## Levels of engagement

### *Attendance*

- According to the literature, the attendance of GRT pupils continues to be identified as a significant problem, particularly at secondary level (Ofsted, 1999, 2001, 2003).
- Reluctance to self-identify has been found to hinder robust monitoring of the numbers of GRT children attending school, as well as those not attending (Padfield, 2005; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008).
- Recent guidance (DCSF, 2008a) recognises that those willing to self-identify may only be a small percentage of the estimated cohort of Traveller children.
- Retention of Traveller pupils in the secondary phase is of widespread concern and is not restricted to mobile families. Parental concerns at this stage about negative cultural influences, bullying and racism contribute to a cumulative negative effect on attendance (Marks, 2006).
- There is also a growing trend towards Elective Home Education (EHE), although concerns have been expressed about the quality of such provision (Ofsted, 2003; Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- Some studies note that absence is not always followed up quickly by schools (Kiddle, 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2004) with inconsistencies reported in the way non-attendance is recorded owing to a lack of understanding of the regulations, particularly in relation to the use of the 'T' code (DfES, 2006c).
- Mobility issues still impact on access and attendance for some children, although the majority of Gypsy Travellers in the UK are no longer nomadic for the purpose of employment because of social, economic and legal constraints (ODPM, 2004).

- However, it is estimated that there may be 1,500 families forced into a transient lifestyle and vulnerable to being moved on at short notice. Unpredictable travelling patterns can make connection with the current school system increasingly challenging (Marks, 2004).
- The literature recognises that it can be difficult to isolate the effect of pupil mobility on attainment from other variables, such as the school's ability to respond flexibly, e.g. by passing on records and personal interaction with parents (Ofsted, 2002).
- Distance learning programmes have been found to be effective for highly mobile pupils, but need to be focused on the needs of Travellers (Jordan, 2000).
- Recent ICT projects in Scotland and England have made innovative and effective use of the technology to support mobile pupils, e.g. TOPILOT, the Flexible Learning Environment experiment (FLEX) and the E-Learning and Mobility Project (E-LAMP). However, in order to fully meet the learning needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils, sufficient sustainable technological resources and support should be made available for school staff, pupils and their families (Padfield, 2005).

### *Inclusion*

- Resources reflecting Traveller culture were found to help children new to a school to feel at ease. Willers (2005) suggested that once Gypsy Traveller pupils were in school, schools should be proactive and committed to their education in order to encourage them to remain.
- At secondary level, the relevance of the curriculum becomes crucial for GRT pupils and their parents (Warrington and Peck, 2005).
- The literature suggests that schools need to broaden their approach to inclusion by re-framing perceptions of Traveller pupils as departing from the norm (Reynolds et al., 2003).

### *Extra-curricular involvement*

- Gypsy Traveller pupils were found to have negligible involvement in extra-curricular activities (Ofsted, 1999).
- Derrington and Kendall (2004) identified a clear link between involvement in such activities, attendance and retention and went on to suggest that this involvement may be an indicator of parental trust in the school, as well as reflecting levels of social inclusion. Non-compulsory participation and engagement in the life of the school was also associated with pupils and their parents who displayed an apparent sense of belonging to two cultures (bi-culturalism).

### *Parental involvement*

- Where parents are invited into schools to share knowledge and skills, this was found to raise confidence and trust, as well as awareness (Ofsted, 1999; Kiddle, 1999).
- Some studies found that parental involvement was limited to attendance at parents' evenings or to meetings to discuss their child's work or behaviour. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that parental reluctance to attend parents' evening was almost always because of anxiety rather than lack of interest.
- The literature highlights that there will always be some Traveller parents who, for a range of reasons, choose not to be involved with their child's school. Equally, there are others who may wish to but are prevented from doing so, which appears at odds with the current emphasis on inclusion and recognising diversity (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008).

### *Exclusion*

- The literature consistently highlights the over-representation of Traveller children in official statistics on exclusion. The use of exclusion as a sanction for GRT pupils is said to be particularly ironic given that their attendance at school is reportedly so poor (Parker-Jenkins and Hartas, 2002).

- The most common reasons for exclusion of Traveller pupils were reported to be physical aggression towards peers and/or staff, verbal abuse towards staff and persistent disruption (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; DfES, 2006b).
- Reasons underpinning decisions to exclude were not always explored by schools and attributions differed (Derrington, 2007). At the same time, some studies found evidence that fixed-period exclusions were not always recorded.
- Some parents believed that their children deliberately behaved badly in order to be excluded (Lloyd et al., 1999; ACE, 2007; Derrington, 2007).

### **Pupil attainment**

- Throughout the literature, there is recognition of the educational barriers and underachievement experienced by Gypsy Travellers. The first Ofsted report to look specifically at their education found their achievements to be below average, particularly in literacy skills.
- Two new ethnic categories were included for the first time in the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data in 2003: Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage. Analysis of data collected in this way so far signals serious concerns about the attainment of these groups (DCSF, 2008a).
- However, success and achievement are suggested to be culturally determined concepts (Bowers, 2004). As such, practical skills and economic independence may be rated more highly than academic qualifications by some Traveller families.
- A number of barriers to Travellers fully accessing the curriculum have been identified throughout the literature, including: poor attendance / participation levels (especially in the secondary phase); high mobility and interrupted learning; perceived lack of relevance of the curriculum; racism; bullying; negative teacher attitudes; disproportionate levels of exclusion of Traveller pupils; lack of continuity of work; inconsistent or inadequate support; difficulties

associated with sharing of information when pupils are registered at more than one school; records / evidence of attainment not being passed on by schools; and children identified inappropriately with special educational needs.

- Inability to access the curriculum because of weak literacy skills was also identified. Parker-Jenkins and Hartas (2002) speculate that the importance of literacy to Travellers will increase due to the written element of the driving test. The authors argue that being able to drive is crucial to enable Travellers to continue a more mobile lifestyle (Parker-Jenkins and Hartas, 2002).
- In national tests, Traveller pupils were found to achieve the lowest results of any minority ethnic group (Ofsted, 2003), although some improvement was noted in Y2 and Y6 end of key stage tests.

### **Pupil well-being**

- An overall lack of suitable accommodation, insufficient or poorly maintained sites and the threat of eviction have all been identified in the literature as impacting on the physical well-being of Gypsy Traveller children and young people (Hester, 2004; Lawrence, 2005).
- Every Child Matters (ECM) promotes the safety of all children from accidental injury, maltreatment and neglect (HM Government, 2004), yet most Traveller sites lack safe play areas for children and even the most basic fire-fighting equipment (Lawrence, 2005).
- Racism has been found to adversely affect children's well-being and confidence, as have medical absences from school which may signal psycho-social stress, although this might not always be recognised by schools (Derrington, 2007).
- Approaches employed to enhance pupils' well-being are highlighted in the literature, including: effective pastoral support; sensitive and flexible approaches in relation to particular needs; peer support and peer mentoring; and identified staff with designated responsibility for supporting the learning and well-being of Traveller pupils.

- Traveller pupils are reported to employ a range of coping strategies to deal with racism including avoidance, retaliation and hiding their identity (Warrington, 2006; Derrington 2007).

### **Effective practice**

- It is inherently difficult to judge what constitutes effective practice, for example, what Gypsy Traveller parents see as effective is not necessarily what educationalist would consider effective, and vice versa.
- Effective practice is reported to rely on effective collaboration between government departments, local authorities, schools and GRT communities. A number of studies emphasise the importance of TESS in building schools' and local authorities' capacity to respond to the complex and multi-dimensional issues involved in improving outcomes for GRT pupils.
- Recent national policy and guidance designed to support the education and inclusion of Gypsy Traveller pupils has contributed to the increased visibility of this group. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 imposed a duty on local authorities to promote race relations and equal opportunities, and to eliminate racial discrimination. Yet, many local authority staff may not be aware that this also applies to Gypsy Travellers (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008).
- The literature suggests that school policies to promote race equality should specifically reference Gypsy Traveller pupils and should involve whole-school commitment to the development and application of such policies (Bhopal et al., 2000). At the same time, those responsible for developing policies should consult with representatives of Gypsy Traveller families (Padfield and Jordan, 2004).
- An inclusive and supportive ethos underpinned by informed leadership and a sense of respect have been shown to be effective in challenging racism and changing attitudes (Bhopal et al., 2000; DfES, 2003b). The more holistic primary school ethos has been found to fit more closely with GRT parents' demands than

that of secondary schools where the emphasis is on conformity and academic excellence.

- Factors reported to inhibit successful transition and achievement in the secondary phase include economic and social barriers within Traveller communities, institutional factors such as the impact of league tables on the attitudes of schools to low achieving and/or mobile young people, and barriers within schools such as unrealistic expectations and inflexibility (Green and Stokoe (in Tyler Ed), 2005)).
- The quality of the induction process can determine the future attendance and achievement of pupils (Bhopal et al., 2000). Examples of effective practice in the induction process include: initial meetings between parents and secondary school teachers; shadowing arrangements where primary pupils are partnered with secondary pupils; and buddying systems once transfer has taken place. In addition, finding ways of demonstrating the relevance of the secondary curriculum for future life chances are recommended (Padfield and Jordan, 2004).
- The value of incorporating Traveller culture in the curriculum is recognised throughout the literature. However, too often this only takes place incidentally (Ofsted, 2003). Equally, resources reflecting Traveller lifestyles should not be restricted to schools with Travellers on roll, but should be addressed by all schools (Kiddle, 1999).

### **Inter-agency working**

- The literature indicates that poverty is clearly an issue for many Traveller families and can lead to a range of health, safety and accommodation difficulties, all of which impact on educational opportunities.
- Inter-agency working, including the voluntary sector, is recognised as a key strategy in ensuring every child can reach their potential (HM Government, 2004).

- The review looked particularly at how the following services respond to the needs of Gypsy travellers: TESS; Health; and Social Services.

#### *The work of Traveller Education Support Services (TESS)*

- A number of studies have examined the work of TESS and the important contribution they make to increasing access to education. Their early commitment to a multi-agency approach was highlighted as pioneering, as was their development of distance learning provision (Danaher et al., 2007).
- The work of TESS is reported to involve a range of skills and focus on the areas of supportive advocacy and practical help for parents, and negotiating between Traveller families and statutory services.
- A number of studies have concluded that schools sometimes have a tendency to over-rely on TESS rather than communicating directly with parents themselves.

#### *Health*

- The ECM agenda sets out the Government's aim for every child to receive the necessary support to 'be healthy' (HM Government, 2004). In spite of this, the literature indicates that young GRT people experience disadvantage in access to health services and, as a result, poorer health (Pona, 2007).
- Lack of suitable living conditions and basic amenities impacts on the health of Traveller families. Gypsies and Travellers are reported to suffer poorer health than the settled population, as well as higher levels of stress, lower life expectancy, higher rates of miscarriage and stillbirth, and infant mortality (Power, 2004; Lawrence, 2005).
- Mobility and poor attendance at school can result in Traveller pupils missing health checks in school, especially those concerned with hearing and vision (Jordan, 1999).

- Together with bureaucratic structure and systems, the 'criminalisation' of Travellers' nomadic lifestyle may result in 'cursory treatment' of their medical symptoms and a subsequent lack of care (Power, 2004, p36).
- The role of a specialist health worker in addressing the health of Gypsy Travellers by advocating and mediating on their behalf has been highlighted (Power, 2004; Warrington and Peck, 2005).

#### *Social Services*

- The literature identifies low levels of engagement nationally between Gypsy Travellers and social services departments.
- Geographical boundaries and working to specified criteria can adversely affect the ability of social services departments to provide effective services to Travellers. Equally, Travellers are often deeply suspicious of social services departments, particularly in relation to a perceived threat to take their children away from them, or to criticise their approach to childcare (Cemlyn, 2000; Power, 2004).
- Improvements to the department's work suggested include: a commitment to establishing and improving relationships with Traveller communities and improvements to departmental processes and procedures to better meet needs (Cemlyn, 2000).

#### **The European perspective**

- The European perspective is considered important to this review for three main reasons: Roma are one of the largest minorities in Europe and the European Union (EU); it would be useful to consider the extent to which the issues faced by Roma in Europe are the same as, or different from, those in the UK, and whether the strategies found to be effective in other European countries could be applied here; and the increasing number of Roma who have arrived in the UK since the mid- 1990s - the outcomes for pupils from these communities may have an impact on improving their educational outcomes in the UK.



- Roma are not only the largest and fastest growing minority in central and Eastern Europe, they also tend to be concentrated in the poorest countries (Save the Children, 2001). Roma are ten times poorer than the majority population.
- Access to education and educational attainment of Roma and Travellers are influenced by their overall conditions of life, which are characterised by high unemployment, sub-standard housing and poor access to health services (EUMC, 2006).
- Despite a lack of monitoring by ethnic group, the literature suggests that achievement amongst Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities is very low across all EU member states. Many Roma are educated in special schools or ghetto schools where standards of teaching and facilities are poor.
- Available data shows Roma significantly under-represented at secondary level and in higher education, attending poorly and underachieving (Ringold et al., 2005). Equally, Roma frequently lack pre-school education, crucial for early assimilation of school norms and expected behaviour patterns, but also for language acquisition (Unicef, 2007b).
- Institutional factors have been found to discriminate against Roma inclusion, including the absence of Traveller-related curriculum resources and a lack of training for teachers to enable them to teach ethnically mixed classes (EUMC, 2006).

#### *Responses to the situation of Roma in Europe*

- The EU, national Governments and major international Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) are engaged in addressing the issues of social, economic and educational disadvantage of Roma that have been highlighted.
- A conference in 2003 (Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future) led to a commitment to launch the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005, which aimed to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma. It focuses on the priority areas of

education, employment, health and housing. Each of the nine participating countries has developed a national action plan specifying targets and indicators in the priority areas.

- Progress since 2005 has been assessed by Decade Watch, a group of Roma activists and researchers. The priority area of education was found to be the one in which action plans were 'most developed and convincing' (OSI and World Bank, 2007).
- Although evidence of progress towards a greater and more systematic focus on Roma inclusion across the participating countries was found, 'integrated inclusion policies with a focus on achieving and demonstrating results remain a distant goal' (OSI and World Bank, 2008, p17).
- The social exclusion of Roma and its consequences is a cause of grave concern to national Governments across Europe and the European Union. The scale of the issue has led to it being addressed at the highest level. In the UK it is frequently seen as a minor or marginal concern. (DfES, 2005).
- There are significant similarities between the situation of GRT communities in the UK with that of Roma across Europe. The UK would appear to have better developed inter-cultural practice but there is evidence that there is still a long way to go before the curriculum fully affirms the identity, history and culture of all GRT pupils, and they can feel safe from racist bullying and abuse.
- The NGO sector in Europe is larger and better developed than in the UK reflecting international concern about Roma issues. The role of TESS in the UK often replicates the role of NGOs.
- The lack of pupil-level systems of ethnic monitoring in Europe is a weakness, which will make it difficult to establish whether the comprehensive programmes taking place are achieving their desired results.

## Concluding comments

This review has highlighted the vast array of literature and, more recently, official documentation and guidance relating to improving the outcomes for Gypsy and Traveller children that exists. Equally, examination of the sources included within this study has revealed many examples of good practice in working with these groups. However, in spite of this, the school attendance and achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils remain well below expected levels. Discriminatory school policies and practices, low expectations of Gypsy Traveller pupils, negative attitudes and stereotyping, racism, bullying, lack of curriculum relevance, lack of understanding of Traveller culture, as well as social and economic disadvantage, have all been identified in the literature as factors adversely affecting this.

The review has highlighted a number of recurring themes:

- the need for greater flexibility of, and recognition of GRT culture within, the curriculum;
- school policies need to specifically reference GRT pupils and be underpinned by a whole-school commitment to their development and application;
- the need for increased and more appropriate formal training opportunities for both new and practising teachers, which are quality assured. Training programmes also need to be incorporated into wider policy objectives and designed with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller input to ensure their cultural appropriateness.
- the encouragement of greater involvement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents in supporting their children's learning, which could have benefits in terms of breaking down cultural barriers and reinforcing the benefits of education, both for their children and for them;
- Increased co-ordination between those working in children's services (particularly in relation to issues affecting Gypsies, Roma and Travellers) and those responsible for broader policies, such as health and housing. Currently,

there appears to be a gap between policy and effective service provision;

- the need to involve representatives of GRT communities in any national and local policy developments; and
- greater recognition and focus at a national level of the scale of the social, cultural and economic issues still affecting GRT communities in the UK.

## Additional Information

The full report (DCSF-RR077) can be accessed at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/)

Further information about this research can be obtained from Tammy Campbell, 4FL-SARD, DCSF, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Email: [tammy.campbell@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tammy.campbell@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

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