

Report to the Minority Communities Diversity Forum on Raising the Achievement of Derby's Black Children and Young People

Background

The achievement of black children and young people in Derby historically lags significantly behind the Derby average.

Appendix one gives a snapshot into some typical achievement gaps over time. The pattern of large variation is not unusual in the case, as here, of small cohorts which are individually unreliable for statistical comparison. The significance, however, comes in the aggregation over time revealing recurrent underachievement.

The reasons for this underachievement are complex and while the Council's Access Service provides schools with a range of targeted support programmes, the achievement gaps have been slow to close over time and in some cases have widened.

REACH

A recent national project focussed on black boys achievement (REACH; Raising the aspirations and attainment of Black boys and young Black men) concluded that;

"Black boys and young Black men face serious challenges in every sector of society. They are less likely to do well at school, more likely to be unemployed and much more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system than their peers.

There are, of course, many examples of Black boys and young Black men who excel at school, university and in all areas of life. But these young Black men are currently the exception rather than the rule.

As well as the many success stories from individual young people, there are many very different, community based organisations and schools making real, life-changing contributions to Black boys and young Black men. In many cases even those boys considered statistically 'at risk' can be helped to thrive."

REACH put forward a number of recommendations for communities to consider;

Recommendation 1 – the Government should introduce a structured role model programme for black boys and young men.

Recommendation 2 – Voluntary and community sector organisations working to support black boys and young men should form black led consortia supported by Government.

Recommendation 3 – the Government should construct a national framework for family/school partnerships ensuring that the needs of black families are integral to the framework.

Recommendation 4 – Ofsted, DCSF and relevant field forces should take urgent steps to strengthen existing systems to ensure that a) Ofsted effectively and consistently report on schools delivery of their race equality duties, and b) relevant field forces challenge and support schools in their delivery of their duties.

Recommendation 5 – Communities and local government should appoint a task force that will drive forward the delivery of the REACH recommendations within the wider agenda for black boys and black young men reporting to a minister for race.

The Children and Young People's Department convened a small group to consider these recommendations and their response is included at Appendix two.

A Strategy for Raising the Achievement of Derby's Black Children and Young People

The brief preamble above clearly demonstrates the need for a more strategic approach and The Children and Young People's Department used the recent "Educating our Black Children Conference" as a sounding board on a possible way ahead. This could involve;

1. Establishment of a Black Achievement Strategy and Action Plan

This would be based on analysis of:

- achievement and gaps by age group and gender over time
- inclusion and exclusion data
- progression to FE, HE and employment/NEET

and set out clear priorities and actions around raising achievement, improving inclusion and enhancing progression.

Some activity will inevitably be based on existing plans but in addition the strategy would contain three or four key REACH priorities, for example, role models for black boys and young men, the role of the School Improvement Partner, improving local community networks.

The strategy would need to relate to other issues which affect the achievement of black children and young people, for example, community cohesion strategy, gang strategy, however I do not propose that the board has a core role of focusing on these areas of work.

2. Black Achievement Board

The board would oversee delivery and renewal of the strategy and comprise 12 members drawn from;

- various professionals within Children and Young People's Department's ie, Access Service, Early Years, Aimhigher, Integrated Children's Services
- schools
- an equal balance of representatives from black community organisations and black achievers whose role would be to provide an interface with the black community as a whole.

The board would meet on a three monthly basis with a core purpose of ensuring:

- open accountability
- shared ownership of the Black Achievement Strategy
- monitoring of strategy and plan outcomes.

3. Timeline

Forming Black Achievement Board	end September 2009
Agreeing strategic priorities and plan	end October 2009
Launch of strategy and linked activities	January 2010

Next Steps

A number of delegates that attended the Educating Our Black Children Conference have indicated they would like to become involved in a Black Achievement Board.

It is requested that the Minority Communities Diversity Forum considers this report and gives a view on the plans which have been outlined.

Mick Seller

Appendix 1

BOYS	2006	2007	2008
KS 2			
Black Caribbean (Cohort size)	22	18	18

GIRLS	2006	2007	2008
	21	23	16

Key Stage 2 English % achieving Level 4+

		2006		2007		2008			
		LA		LA		LA			
Black Caribbean	2006	06	GAP	2007	07	GAP	2008	08	GAP
boys	59	70	- 11	61	71	- 10	76	72	5
girls	64	81	- 17	74	79	- 5	100	84	16

Key Stage 2 Maths % achieving Level 4+

		2006			2007			2008		
		LA			LA			LA		
Black Caribbean	2006	06		2007	07	GAP	2008	08	GAP	
boys	64	75	- 11	33	74	- 41	71	76	- 6	
girls	59	71	- 12	43	70	- 27	100	76	24	

Key Stage 2 English and Maths combined % achieving Level 4+

		2006		2007		2008			
		LA		LA		LA			
Black Caribbean	2006	06		2007	07	GAP	2008	08	GAP
boys	45	65	- 19	33	65	- 31	65	66	- 2
girls	55	68	- 13	39	66	- 27	100	73	27

Appendix 2

REACH proposals and raising attainment of black children and young people - Response

Response to REACH proposals

Recommendation 1 – the Government should introduce a structured role model programme for black boys and young men. We agree that this is important, however, would stress that raising the achievement of black boys and young men should be seen as a challenge for the whole of local communities rather than a discrete issue that can be ‘parked’ with a small set of voluntary mentors/role models.

Recommendation 2 – Voluntary and community sector organisations working to support black boys and young men should form black led consortia supported by Government. Better engagement with community and voluntary sector organisations will require a greater streamlining of funding mechanisms in order to enable and encourage smaller organisations to create structures, bid for funds, join into networks. Whilst the creation of consortia is a positive suggestion, this alone will not galvanise black led voluntary and community sector organisations.

Recommendation 3 – the Government should construct a national framework for family/school partnerships ensuring that the needs of black families are integral to the framework. We agree that family/school partnerships need to be strengthened but would stress that the success of these partnerships would be reliant on the proactive support of school staff in order that these partnerships have a real chance of breaking down stereotypes which may exist, not just amongst staff, but also amongst peers.

Recommendation 4 – Ofsted, DCSF and relevant field forces should take urgent steps to strengthen existing systems to ensure that a) Ofsted effectively and consistently report on schools delivery of their race equality duties, and b) relevant field forces challenge and support schools in their delivery of their duties. We agree with this recommendation, particularly with respect to the consistent focus within Ofsted inspections on the achievement of black (and other) underachieving groups.

Recommendation 5 – Communities and local government should appoint a task force that will drive forward the delivery of the REACH recommendations within the wider agenda for black boys and black young men reporting to a minister for race. We certainly agree that the principle of raising the achievement of black boys and young men needs a high profile, both locally and nationally, for which a task force operating at a national level, does feel to be a good starting point. However, unless there are significant additional resources at a local level it may be difficult to cascade the work of the national task force down to a point where true impact is made.

Further discussion around raising the achievement of black children and young people in Derby

We agreed to work up a proposal for the creation of a more dynamic and cohesive approach across and between statutory services and voluntary organisations currently focused on raising black achievement. The territory is complex and the following groups are already actively involved (this list is not absolute):

- Black Boys Can
- Amara CHI
- Derby West Indian Centre
- Derby Black Parents Forum
- West Indian Association
- Parents Forum
- Open Doors After Schools provision
- Black Men and Boys Group (led by Brendan Whittaker, Youth Service, at Mandela Centre, Rosehill)
- Various provision at the Madeley Centre and the Southgate Youth Centre
- Various work in Sinfin (led by Wesley Davison, Youth Service) with Afro-Caribbean pupils
- Merlin Boxing Club (multi-cultural)
- One Nation (led by Clifton Mitchell)
- Trinity Dance
- Work of Access Service, Lorna Simpson and Maureen Rhule
- Various work through local churches

Action 1

We agreed it would be useful to build up a digest of groups and activities in order to map out the range of support/activity in Derby.

The work from the mapping exercise would be:

- Informed commissioning of activity through the Children and Young People's Partnership
- Better awareness of range of activities available
- Better access to available activity
- Better provision mapping and gap analysis.

The Challenge

In order to achieve a more strategic, cohesive approach to raising the achievement of black children and young people we discussed the possibility of creating a single over-arching Raising Black Achievement Forum but felt that it would not be practical or possible to impose a single way of working on such a wide range of self determined organisations. Instead, we felt it would be more productive to create a high profile single focus that organisations

could buy into while maintaining their autonomy. The focus would have to be broad enough to include a diverse and complex set of needs around:

- Children of mixed racial origin
- African black boys
- Looked after black children
- Black/white mixed race children (who we believe to be the fastest growing black group in Derby).

Next Step

To work up a proposal to share, in the first instance, with the Minority Communities Forum and also our Children and Young People's Trust in line with the REACH proposals and subsequent national strategy.