Improving the Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils

Literature Review

Anne Wilkin, Chris Derrington and Brian Foster

department for
children, schools and families

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Executive summary

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)[1] 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).

- 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).

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

- 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' 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.

- 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 psycho-social 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).

- 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.

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[2] 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.

- 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).

- Behaviour was reported to be generally good, particularly at primary level, although becoming more challenging by Y8. Sometimes GRT pupils 'open and direct' style of communication might cause friction if misinterpreted as rudeness (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Teachers need to be aware of this and how they interpret incidents in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation (Kiddle, 1999; Derrington, 2005a).

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[2] 2 '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).

- 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.

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 reason: 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 th 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.

1. Introduction

1.1 About this review

Although developments concerning the education of Gypsy and Traveller [and more recently Roma] *children have accelerated significantly over the past ten years, issues relating to access, attendance and attainment remain matters of concern. The situation is particularly serious for secondary age Gypsy* [Roma] *and Traveller pupils. Whilst increasing numbers are registered in the primary phase, this pattern is not maintained in the secondary sector.*

Derrington and Kendall (in Shevlin and Rose, 2003, p.206).

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)[3] pupils and what can be done to improve the educational outcomes for this particular group.

The specifications of the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF's) tender requested a review of current research evidence and literature involving GRT pupils and their parents, which was to include only evidence from the UK over the last ten years. However, it was agreed with the Steering Group for this research that, in order to provide valuable context, it would be important for NFER's review to also incorporate a European perspective. As a result, a number of European sources were selected for inclusion.

The review thus sought to identify relevant findings, evidence and discussion in the literature on GRT pupils and their parents, from 1997 onwards, in relation to the following criteria:

- empirically-based research;
- policy documents;
- evidence exploring academic and social issues;
- evidence on improving educational experiences and outcomes;
- good practice examples; and
- implications for future policy and practice.

1.2 Acquiring the relevant sources

After initial discussion with NFER's Library staff to establish the parameters for the review, the following databases were searched in relation to the UK aspect of the review:

- Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA);
- British Education Index (BEI);
- British Education Internet Resource Catalogue (BEIRC);
- Current Educational Research in the UK (CERUK);
- ChildData; and
- Social Policy and Practice (SPP).

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[3] Throughout the report, GRT is used as an umbrella term embracing all Gypsy and Traveller groups, as well as Roma from Eastern Europe.

Studies to be considered for the review dated from 1997 to the present. Search strategies were developed using the controlled vocabulary pertinent to each database. Terms were searched both as keywords and as free-text. The keywords applied are detailed in Appendix 1.

1.3   Identifying the research for inclusion

Initial searches identified 322 sources as relevant to the literature review. However, when research abstracts were examined, it was evident that a number of sources were focused predominantly on issues relating to social and educational disadvantage, ethnicity, mobility and vulnerable groups, but not necessarily in relation to Gypsy Traveller communities. These, along with opinion pieces, were therefore eliminated from the review. In addition, 42 of the sources identified by the initial searches were already held by the research team. As a result of this selection process (based on initial abstract information and sources already held) 59 further sources were identified for closer examination and application of the key review criteria outlined above.

Copies of these sources were then acquired by the project team and subsequently considered for inclusion. A list of relevant European literature provided by the Steering Group for the project identified another 12 sources. Detailed examination of all these sources led to the identification of a number of additional relevant sources and resulted in the final inclusion in the review of 91 pieces of literature fitting the required criteria.

1.4   Summarising the literature

Information and findings from these publications were then summarised according to a number of pertinent themes (including: attitudes; expectations; aspirations; relationships; parental involvement; attendance and mobility; behaviour; achievement etc) which subsequently formed the structure of the review.

Although this review can not be considered to be exhaustive, it does however highlight a number of important and influential issues arising from the literature.

1.5   Structure of the review

Findings from the review are presented under the following chapter headings:

- Pupil perspectives and experiences of schooling;
- Parents' beliefs, values and expectations about education;
- Teacher expectations and attitudes;
- Relationships;
- Levels of engagement;
- Pupil attainment;
- Pupil well-being;
- Effective practice;
- Inter-agency working; and
- The European perspective.

2. Pupil perspectives and experiences of schooling

2.1 Introduction

Key studies that aimed to explore pupil perspectives and experiences of schooling include:

- Kiddle's (1999) account based on 20 years' experience of teaching and working with, and amongst, several distinct Travelling groups including circus, fairground and New Travellers;

- Levinson's (2000) three-year ethnographic study of the interface between Gypsy culture and the education system involving interviews with 47 young people and follow-up study in 2005-6;

- A study carried out by researchers at the University of Edinburgh (Lloyd et al., 1999) which led to a number of related studies; and

- Derrington and Kendall's (2003, 2004, 2007) unique five-year phenomenological longitudinal study of 44 Gypsy Traveller pupils in English secondary schools sponsored by the Nuffield Foundation.

In addition, two important studies looking at the lives and experiences of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people in Cambridgeshire included educational perspectives within the methodology. These are Bowers' (2004) survey of 60 young Romani, fairground showpeople and Travellers of Irish Heritage and Warrington's (2006) participatory study of 148 Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, both sponsored by the Ormiston Children and Families Trust.

2.2 Attitudes and expectations

A number of studies emphasise the finding that many young Travellers express positive attitudes about, and expectations towards, school and education (Reynolds et al., 2003; Derrington and Kendall, 2004, Bowers, 2004). Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that only seven of the 44 pupils in their study expressed negative expectations about secondary school prior to their transfer at the age of eleven and, of those, only one completed more than two years of secondary schooling. Pupils' expectations, whether positive or negative, tended to reflect those of their parents (p28). In a study of Scottish Travellers, Padfield (2005) found that attitudes to school were generally positive in the primary phase but became more negative once they moved to the secondary phase, particularly so in the case of boys. Secondary-aged Travellers were said to prefer learning in 'out-of-school settings' (Padfield, 2005, p139). Reasons for this preference offered by Padfield and Jordan (2004) included a perception that 'the quality of teaching was better' (p79), particularly because of the lower ratio of pupils to teacher.

GRT pupils felt that their teachers generally had a limited understanding of their culture and predicament in school and some were less than sympathetic when racism was reported (Derrington and Kendall 2004, Bowers, 2004). Teachers that take a positive interest in individual Traveller pupils' lives and make attempts to know the family are appreciated and remembered with affection (Derrington, 2006).

Secondary school can be a frightening place for young GRT pupils, especially those that attended small, rural primary schools (Derrington, 2006). Values in relation to modesty can make changing for PE more difficult for some Traveller pupils (Kiddle, 1999), while older children may try to avoid taking showers (Save the Children, 2001).

2.3   Aspirations

Derrington and Kendall (2004) tracked the aspirations of the pupils in their sample over three years and then checked them again two years later (Derrington and Kendall, 2007). A third of the pupils correctly predicted at the age of 11 that they would have dropped out of school by the age of 14. Those that stayed on in school expressed aspirations for professional careers and higher education, although these aspirations adapted over time to gradually converge more closely with their parents' expectations of more typical cultural paths. This underlying affinity with parental aspirations was also noted in a later study by Derrington (2006). Males generally aspired to manual trades whereas young females considered a wider range of career options - most commonly within the beauty industry, teaching, nursing, law, entertainment, work with animals or factory work (options matched closely by those found by Knipe et al. (2005) and by Levinson and Sparkes (2006)).

Bowers (2004) found that that young Travellers' aspirations related to material wealth rather than social status. Almost two-thirds of the young people in this survey believed that their identity would not limit their opportunities to succeed. More than half wanted to be self-employed and most male interviewees aspired to follow their fathers' manual trade. Bowers also found that Romani girls were more likely than young Traveller women of Irish Heritage to have vocational aspirations. The latter group anticipated a life caring for the home and children. According to Reynolds et al. (2003), the strong cultural imperative in Northern Ireland for young Traveller women to acquire domestic skills and find a marriage partner and for adolescent males to be economically active at an early age, disrupts attendance and negates the relevance of a secondary education. Similar findings were reported by Jordan (2001) and Padfield (2005) in their research on young Travellers in Scotland.

2.4   Identity

Warrington (2006) suggests that Gypsy and Traveller children encounter high levels of misunderstanding about the nature of their identity, including the common misconceptions (held by some non-Travellers) that Gypsies do not constitute an ethnic group or that 'housed' families could not be Gypsies.

Language and ethnic identity are closely bound together and this is especially true for oppressed peoples (Acton and Dalphinis, 2000). Derrington and Kendall's (2004) study of 44 Gypsy Traveller pupils found that the overwhelming majority of participants (39) said that they knew and used Romani (or Traveller) words although not all recognised it as a 'legitimate' language. This perception of Romani as having the status of a dialect or 'broken' language is true also for Sylheti and Jamaican Creole speakers and, as Acton and Dalphinis (2000) point out, these minority ethnic groups also underachieve in the British education system. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found some evidence of pupils using and sharing their language with pride in school, although there was little recognition and acknowledgement of their bilingual skills amongst staff. Devine and Kelly (2006) note that children regarded as being 'different' will sometimes use a language not understood by their peers in order to gain 'the upper hand' (p133). Such behaviour may be perceived as exclusionary by peers and result in them reporting the behaviour to a teacher. Derrington (2007) suggests that a secure sense of cultural identity coupled with a positive affiliation with mainstream culture (biculturalism) is linked with psychological adjustment and well-being in school.

Knipe et al. (2005) found that Traveller pupils enjoy being educated with family and friends. However, GRT pupils are often in the minority at school. They may feel particularly vulnerable because of this and it can make it difficult for them to assert their own identity (Kiddle 1999; Ofsted, 2003). This may be exacerbated by the lack of positive role models

(Derrington, 2006). The perception of 'safety in numbers' is reported in a number of studies (Bowers, 2004; Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Knipe et al., 2005). Bowers (2004) goes further and even argues the case for segregated community-based vocational educational provision, since the majority of young Travellers in this study felt that school did not teach them the skills they needed for the way they wanted to live.

Save the Children (2001) point out that segregation may be formal or informal and take place in several ways. Children may be instructed to sit in a different part of the classroom to their peers, or in a separate classroom altogether. The report also notes the establishment of segregated schools, a practice common in Central and Eastern Europe, which, it points out, has also been identified in the UK, for example in Northern Ireland (Save the Children, 2001, p257). It is argued that this type of experience constitutes racial discrimination and does nothing to persuade Traveller parents and their children to engage with formal schooling (ibid, 2001). In Ryan's (1998) survey of 231 mainstream teachers in Irish primary schools with Traveller pupils on roll, the majority of the teachers surveyed were of the opinion that integrated education was the ideal in order to encourage 'mutual understanding, acceptance and support' (p169).

Warrington (2006) found that young Gypsy Traveller children were extremely proud of their cultural heritage. Levinson and Sparkes (2006) also observed how girls spoke with pride about their domestic roles at home which symbolised maturity and status over non-Gypsy females who were perceived by them as 'lazy and slovenly' (p84).

Although reflecting Traveller culture in the curriculum is generally regarded as being important, placing Traveller pupils in the spotlight or introducing such links without consultation or due sensitivity was found to have caused extreme embarrassment for some secondary age pupils who just wanted to 'blend in' (Derrington and Kendall 2004, Derrington, 2006).

Pupils may feel they are being pulled in two different directions by their parents and their teachers (Kiddle, 1999). Levinson and Sparkes (2006) highlight that this can lead to confusion and unhappiness (p87) and refer to 'an intrinsic discord' that cannot be ignored (p.91). Reynolds et al. (2003) notes 'a clash' between lifestyle and the education system. Derrington and Kendall (2004) describe this phenomenon as cultural dissonance. They found that some pupils attempted to mask or hide their ethnicity in school in order to fit in with peers and avoid prejudice or exposure to racism, and Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) note that some children may conceal their identity because it makes them feel safer in school. Warrington (2006) also describes children hiding their identity to avoid conflict. This response is acknowledged by Gyspy commentators such as Hancock (1997) and referred to as 'passing'. Cline et al. (2002) previously identified this defence mechanism in their study of minority ethnic pupils in mainly white schools as 'playing white.' Derrington (2007) also identified this as one of three maladaptive coping strategies that some pupils in the longitudinal study used to deal with dissonance and social exclusion. Those who coped well with secondary school did so by adopting a bicultural identity, forging secure social networks with both Traveller and non-Traveller peers and by rationalising and cognitively re-framing dissonant events.

According to Lloyd et al. (1999), name-calling by other pupils was the strongest negative feature of school identified by both Gypsy and Fairground children and they felt unsupported by their schools in facing it. Guidance on inclusive educational practice in Scotland identified taunting and name calling as particularly prevalent, as well as some instances of discriminatory treatment from school staff (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003). Reynolds et al., (2003) report that all the Traveller children they interviewed in Belfast had experienced name-calling or worse and that this was a major deterrent to secondary school attendance. Warrington (2006) found that children as young as five displayed an awareness of racism

and this was the single largest problem facing Gypsy children and young people in school, with many expecting to encounter name-calling on a daily basis. Derrington and Kendall, (2004) found that racism was prevalent (the majority of participants told researchers that they had encountered racism in school, especially in Y7) but in most cases this was described as occasional rather than regular. Less than half of the pupils who had been racially abused reported this to teachers, mainly because they believed it would not be treated seriously. Bowers (2004) also found that the majority of young Travellers in his survey said they had experienced racism or prejudice and that they dealt with this in their own way rather than report it. In Derrington and Kendall's (2004) study, more than a third of the pupils believed that some teachers held racist attitudes towards them.

3.   Parents' beliefs, values and expectations about education

3.1   Introduction

This chapter draws upon a range of sources, including the key studies outlined on page 4. Derrington and Kendall (2004; 2007), for example, conducted approximately 80 interviews with parents of the 44 pupils in their longitudinal study over a three-year period. Levinson and Sparkes (2006) explored attitudes about education during interviews with 50 Gypsy adults as part of their ethnographic study. Reynolds et al (2003) interviewed the parents of 28 Traveller pupils who had transferred to secondary schools from an all-Traveller primary school in Belfast.

A further study which focused specifically on the changing views of Gypsy Travellers on their children's education was conducted by Bhopal (2006). This research involved interviews with GRT parents from 20 different families.

3.2   Attitudes and expectations

Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) and Derrington (2005a) suggest that Gypsy Traveller families have varying experiences of school-based education and thus may have very different perspectives on its relevance. Bhopal (2006), for example, suggested that many parents perceived education as a 'stepping stone' to enable their children to gain more respect in society, particularly in a world where traditional Gypsy means of making a living were less viable. However, as Padfield and Jordan (2004) point out, attitudinal differences exist even within families. Levinson and Sparkes (2006) observed conflicting responses from some individuals who, whilst recognising the value of education, remained obstructive in terms of involvement in an education system that could tarnish the outlook and behaviour of their children.

A number of studies (Bhopal, 2006, Reynolds et al. 2003, Derrington and Kendall, 2004, Bowers, 2004; Padfield and Jordan, 2004; Marks, 2006) have suggested that parents remain largely positive about the value of education, even though their own experiences of schooling (particularly in the secondary phase) are often limited and may not always have been positive ones. However, positive attitudes are almost always tempered by anxiety about bullying, racist name-calling, sex education, moral welfare, exposure to drugs and smoking, all of which appear repeatedly in the literature (Kiddle, 1999, Parker-Jenkins and Hartas, 2002; Ofsted, 2003; Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Bowers, 2004; Padfield, 2005, Levinson and Sparkes, 2006). Derrington and Kendall (2004) observed that those parents who emphasised these concerns most frequently were those whose children were more likely to leave secondary school early. Levinson and Sparkes (2006) suggest that such anxieties are more likely to be expressed in relation to daughters than sons (p89). Having other Traveller children or relatives at the same secondary school was a source of reassurance for parents, provided these peers were well-behaved and liked by staff. It is not uncommon for Traveller parents to expect older sons and daughters to take responsibility for the care and well-being of their younger siblings in school (Kiddle, 1999, Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

Where parents are critical of education, or see schooling as irrelevant to their needs, a preference for educating their children outside the school system is sometimes articulated (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Padfield and Jordan, 2004; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008). Indeed, Levinson and Sparkes (2006) note that more parents are now aware of their right to opt for alternative forms of education, including Elective Home Education (EHE).

Positive parental attitudes can help to support GRT pupils to approach school with confidence and to take ownership of the educational process for themselves. Derrington and Kendall (2007a) found that the pupils who stayed on in school until 16 came from homes where parents expressed a sustained positive attitude about the value of secondary education and a wish for their children to gain sufficient examination passes to get a 'good job' (p22).

Parents were generally supportive of school rules providing they were communicated clearly and were justified in terms of health and safety considerations (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Parents would not compel their children to attend school if it was making them unhappy, and, as Jordan (1999) notes, would not willingly subject their children to 'hurt and degradation'.

Derrington (2007) concludes that parents' subjective appraisal of their child's psycho-social health invariably takes precedence over academic aspirations and that secondary schools are therefore effectively placed on trial by parents. Jordan (2000) notes that Traveller parents only approach welcoming schools where they believe their children will be supported and taught effectively, or where they perceive staff to have knowledge of, and respect for, their culture (Parker-Jenkins and Hartas, 2002). Thus, the child's psycho-social well-being is the overriding factor outweighing educational aspirations (Derrington, 2006, 2007).

3.3 Aspirations

A gradual but discernible shift in parental aspirations was noted by Kiddle (1999), Scottish Executive, STEP (2003) and later by Derrington and Kendall (2004).

Some parents express the wish for their sons to learn a family trade and for their daughters to take on domestic responsibilities and these aspirations may negate the need for academic qualifications and place doubt upon the relevance of the traditional secondary curriculum (Kiddle, 1999). Guidance from the Scottish Executive on inclusive education for Gypsies and Travellers noted an inherent tension for these groups between maintaining their lifestyles and participating fully in education (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003). Other Traveller parents, however, were found to support and endorse their children's professional aspirations in principle, although it was observed that expectations modified over time and gradually shifted towards more traditional employment options (Derrington and Kendall, 2004) and vocational skills were given a higher priority than academic qualifications (Derrington, 2007). Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) also note the preference amongst Traveller communities for 'experiental, family-based learning' (p11). Financial and social sacrifices were reported for those families (particularly Showground Travellers) that gave up more traditional livelihoods to ensure the continuity of their children's education, with concerns expressed that this may result in the demise of travelling shows and even of the Showground community itself (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003). Cemlyn and Clark (in Preston, 2005) report increasing evidence of Gypsy and Traveller parents encouraging their children to take up school-based education, in order to develop the skills needed to respond to changing employment patterns (p.152). Padfield (2005) notes more parents valuing ICT skills and accreditation in practical subjects, such as building and gardening, to help their children access 'an ever changing labour market' (p138). A more general problem, highlighted by Bhopal (2006), is that the secondary school curriculum is not tailored to enable the maintenance of a nomadic way of life.

3.4   Identity

Greater awareness is needed that Gypsies and Travellers do not form one homogeneous group but are made up of a number of distinctive groups, each with their own distinctive histories, cultural traditions and values (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003). Padfield (2005) reports that Travellers' decisions to be open about their Traveller identity are dependent on the quality of their relationship with the 'settled' community. This in turn affects decisions about whether to opt for school-based education for their children, or to seek alternatives to schooling. Fear of discrimination and racism may account for passing of identity by parents (Padfield, 2005) and teachers should be sensitive to these feelings (Kiddle 1999; Ofsted, 2003). The reluctance by some parents to disclose their ethnicity on official documentation hinders robust ethnic monitoring (Padfield, 2005; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008), and has led to Government guidance for schools to encourage wider practice in self ascription (DCSF, 2008a).

Parental fears that their children will encounter racist bullying in school is a central feature of much of the literature. This was the most commonly voiced reservation by parents in the Derrington and Kendall (2004) study. Protective behaviours may also prevent GRT children from mixing freely with non-Traveller peers outside of school (Derrington, 2006).

Parents generally preferred their children to be with other Gypsy Traveller pupils in schools although worried about scapegoating, '… they all get looked on as bad news' (Traveller parent, cited in Derrington and Kendall, 2004, p93). Most of the pupils in this study transferred to secondary schools with few other Traveller pupils and were reported to be 'culturally isolated' (p93).

Bowers (2004) suggests that although Traveller parents recognise the value of education, some may see school as a source of 'Gorgification' (p13), a process that erodes Traveller identity and values. This perceived threat is also noted by Bhopal (2006), Reynolds et al. (2003), Hately-Broad (2004), Power (2004) and by Cemlyn and Clark (in Preston, 2005). Levinson and Sparkes (2006) found that Gypsy parents could become estranged by their community if they allowed their children to stay on at secondary school as this was seen as a manifestation of group disloyalty (p93). Conversely, some progressive convictions of Gypsy Traveller women, reported by Levinson and Sparkes (2006) and Derrington (2006), include the belief that education should not be seen as a threat to the Traveller way of life, rather it is essential in order to keep Traveller culture alive.

4.   Teacher expectations and attitudes

4.1   Introduction

The impact of teacher expectations and attitudes is emphasised repeatedly throughout the literature. Reports of underachievement of GRT pupils and low teacher expectations communicated by Ofsted (1996, 1999) and Kiddle (1999) led to further research interest. Some of the most influential studies in this respect have been conducted in Scotland by researchers from the Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP).

- One of the earliest studies of this kind was conducted by Lloyd et al (1999) who gathered perceptions in relation to GRT pupil behaviour and culture from teaching staff in 12 Scottish schools. This research suggested that schools and their staff may reflect the prejudice and stereotyping of their communities towards Travellers.

- In a follow-up to this study, Lloyd and Stead (2001) interviewed 31 staff members in Scottish schools and 15 Traveller education support teachers. This study concluded that name-calling and harassment was inadequately acknowledged by staff and also highlighted a number of issues in relation to the way that schools responded to cultural diversity.

- In England, Derrington and Kendall (2004) conducted more than 200 interviews with teachers and headteachers between 2000 and 2003 as part of their longitudinal study. These researchers explored whether an assumption that GRT pupils are inherently disadvantaged because of their cultural background was responsible for low expectations of GRT pupils.

- Teacher perceptions of pupil behaviour were later analysed by Derrington (2005a) who concluded that the quality of relationships between GRT pupils (and their parents) and secondary school teachers was a crucial factor in terms of retention.

- A national survey of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers conducted by Derrington (2005b) to ascertain whether trainees received specific training in the area of GRT education achieved a response rate of 58 per cent, with a total of 52 universities and 29 School-Centred ITT providers (SCITTS) participating. This research found that trainees in over half the training institutions had no opportunity to have their awareness of Traveller culture raised.

4.2   Expectations

A report for the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) based on six case studies (of four primary and two secondary schools) highlighted the need for higher expectations of Traveller pupils (Bhopal et al., 2000). In 2003, the DfES published 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic pupils' (DfES, 2003a), which offered further advice and guidance in improving the attendance and achievement of Traveller pupils and in the same year produced a specific set of guidance in relation to this group of pupils (DfES, 2003b)

Lloyd et al. (1999) and Derrington and Kendall (2004) found some evidence of teacher expectations which were stereotyped and grounded in the assumption that GRT pupils are inherently disadvantaged because of their cultural background. Stereotyped beliefs can also depress teacher expectations in relation to attainment (Kiddle, 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2007b). Ofsted (1999) noted that teacher expectations in relation to Gypsy Traveller pupils were unreasonably low and that even in schools where teacher under-expectation was recognised as an issue, there were rarely any strategies in place to address this (p17). The report goes on to state that raising the expectations of secondary school teachers was the most urgent priority (p19).

4.3   Cultural awareness

Ryan's (1998) research found teachers' views of Travellers to be generally positive, with more than two-thirds of the sample perceiving them to constitute a distinct and 'valid cultural minority group' (p166). However, the author suggests that younger, inexperienced teachers were more likely than older, more experienced (and perhaps more conservative) staff to hold such positive views (p.166).

An understanding of, and respect for, Traveller culture is vital for the accurate interpretation of what mediates and influences the educational participation of Traveller pupils (Reynolds et al., 2003; Hester, 2004). At the same time, classroom practice needs to demonstrate an awareness of cultural diversity, whilst avoiding stereotyping or 'labelling' minority ethnic groups as different from the norm (Devine and Kelly, 2006). Kiddle (1999) noted that cultural differences could be overlooked or misinterpreted by school staff and, as Derrington and Kendall (2004) point out, the phenomenon of cultural dissonance, can be experienced by teachers as well as Traveller pupils and their parents. For example, staff may interpret low attendance at parents' consultation evenings as a lack of support and/or interest whereas parents attribute it to anxiety factors. In addition, some staff in schools admonished pupils for speaking to one another in Romani, believing this to be a form of swearing or abuse (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

O'Hanlon and Holmes (2004) report on a case study which found that seven of the eight headteachers interviewed admitted that Traveller culture was not reflected in their school and, in a survey of 81 mainstream primary school teachers, almost half the respondents (response rate 28 per cent) said that there were no Traveller-related resources in the school. This is also reflected by Bowers (2004) who found that more than half the young people in the Cambridgeshire study (Bowers, 2004) believed that their culture was insufficiently valued, recognised and defended by schools (p14). This lack of recognition, or denial, of cultural difference can perpetuate 'the continuing ignorance of individual teachers' (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008, p.10).

Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that teachers' awareness about racism was varied. More than half the primary school headteachers in their study spoke of the entrenched attitudes and endemic racism towards Gypsies and Travellers in their local community. Awareness and evidence of race equality training amongst secondary school staff was lower. Lloyd et al. (1999) argue that some schools are failing to make the connection between racism in the wider community and what happens in school and observed that most teachers (with the exception of Traveller support staff) made little connection between name-calling, bullying and racist behaviour, an issue also raised by Power (2004). In their study, Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that where racism was reported to teachers (usually by parents, siblings or TESS staff) this was dealt with swiftly and effectively by senior teachers.

Kiddle (1999) considers positive teacher attitudes to be crucial to the achievement of Traveller children and observes that even the most sympathetic teacher can inadvertently exclude these pupils, for example, through lack of consideration of the relevance of the curriculum. Lloyd et al. (1999) suggest that even where teachers are positive and supportive, they may feel insecure in their dealings with Traveller children. For example, Power (2004) highlights the case of one primary headteacher advising a parent that his son should use a pseudonym in school, in order to avoid the negative attention that it was felt his 'commonly recognised' Irish Traveller surname would attract (p69).

4.4`   Behaviour and attendance

As previously noted, a key qualitative study into teachers' perceptions and constructions about the culture of behaviour of Fairground and Gypsy Traveller pupils was conducted by Lloyd et al. (1999) in 12 Scottish schools. The research began as a response to an awareness that, in spite of attempts to encourage Gypsy Traveller pupils' attendance at school, there was still some evidence of disciplinary exclusion, particularly in the secondary phase. The authors found a difference in the views of school staff on the two groups of Travellers with Gypsy Traveller pupils' (and in particular Gypsy boys') behaviour perceived as more problematic. Teacher observations were often contradictory in nature and pupil behaviour was linked to cultural rather than individual traits. Lloyd et al. (1999) make the point that disciplinary exclusion, 'ostensibly a behavioural issue', is inherently linked to the broader issue of social exclusion and the processes by which certain groups (e.g. Travellers) are devalued and marginalised.

A number of other studies have reported on teachers' perceptions of behaviour. Ofsted (2003) found behaviour to be generally good, particularly at primary level. In Derrington and Kendall's longitudinal study, teachers reported that behaviour was generally good in Y6 and during the first two terms of Y7. However, in the latter part of Y7 and in Y8, behaviour of pupils was perceived to be increasingly challenging, although in most cases this was contextual rather than generic - suggesting clashes with certain teachers. Sometimes, expected styles of communication can be contradictory and thus cause friction. For example, where Gypsy Travellers engage in a more equal type of dialogue with adults in the school, it can be misinterpreted as rudeness or disobedience, an issue also identified earlier by MacNamara (2001) and Lloyd et al. (1999). Teachers need to be aware of different communication styles and the way that they interpret these in order to help avoid unnecessary confrontation (Kiddle, 1999, Derrington, 2005a).

Derrington and Kendall, (2004) observed that around one in three pupils dealt with racist name-calling and bullying by fighting back, often with the encouragement of parents. This gained attention from teachers who were likely to attribute the behaviour to cultural traits rather than emotionally-fuelled responses to bullying. Teachers were also inclined to believe that GRT pupils were the initiators of conflict between peers. Padfield (2005) reports that some teachers in a study of Scottish Travellers thought Gypsy Travellers' accounts of bullying in school were sometimes put forward as an excuse for not participating in formal learning.

Perceived inconsistencies in the way that school rules or sanctions are applied to GRT pupils can reinforce negative teacher attitudes. For example, Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that some schools avoided giving after-school detentions to GRT pupils because the pupils concerned refused to stay behind (with the support of their parents). Actions such as these served only to heighten negative perceptions.

4.5   Training for school staff

According to the findings of the national survey conducted by Derrington (2005b), initial teacher education has a considerable way to go in terms of preparing new teachers for understanding and meeting the needs of Traveller pupils. Despite the fact that the underachievement of GRT pupils is a national priority, more than half the ITT providers offered no specific guidance to trainees, and of those that did, this input was often no more than a passing reference during a generic lecture on inclusion or diversity. At the same time, as Kiddle (1999) points out, professional development needs to include both teaching and non teaching staff.

The situation for practising teachers is also far from satisfactory. Parker-Jenkins and Hartas (2002) suggest that neither initial teacher training nor in-service training (INSET) has sufficiently taken on board the need to educate teachers about Travellers. In a study of Traveller children in Northern Ireland (Knipe et al., 2005), fewer than half the teachers interviewed reported receiving any information or training on Travellers, while the majority felt that they required further training to raise their awareness of Traveller culture. According to the TESS staff interviewed by Derrington and Kendall (2004), INSET relating to Traveller education was not given a high priority in many schools and, where it was provided, it tended to have a negligible impact on teacher attitudes and fixed perceptions based on limited experience. Robinson and Martin (2008) highlight the need for quality assured training for those working with Gypsies and Travellers, which incorporates input from GRT community members. The authors go on to suggest that there are few attempts in the literature to describe systematically a formal training programme in order that it might be replicated. They identify one exception to this, a programme (in Riches, 2007) which aims to support TESS early years advisory teachers in providing early years professionals with outreach work skills. More often than not, however, TESS staff have to rely on more informal approaches to raising awareness of their mainstream colleagues (Derrington, 2005b; Robinson and Martin, 2008).

5.   Relationships

5.1   Introduction

The nature and quality of relationships between GRT pupils and their peers and teachers and between home and school has been alluded to throughout the literature but is specifically linked to attendance and retention by Lloyd et al (1999) and by Derrington and Kendall (2004). Findings pertaining to these relationship types are explored separately in the following sections.

5.2   Peer relationships

Secure social networks that included non-Traveller peers, as well as friends from their own and other minority ethnic backgrounds, and good interpersonal skills were positively linked with retention in secondary school, whereas those pupils that dropped out of school early displayed limited social contact with non-Traveller peers (Derrington and Kendall 2004). Data from this study also suggested that girls, particularly, felt more secure socially in the company of other GRT peers at school (Derrington and Kendall, 2003) and that some pupils distanced themselves socially as a coping strategy to avoid psycho-social discomfort (Derrington, 2007).

Irregular attendance also impacts on social relationships in school (Lloyd et al., 1999, Derrington and Kendall, 2004). However, this does not apply exclusively to Gypsy Travellers as evidenced by a survey conducted by Malcolm et al. (2003). Their study of pupils with low engagement in schools across seven Local Education Authorities found that those pupils who attended intermittently gradually lost their friends at school leading to further isolation and low attainment.

Scottish guidance on inclusive educational approaches for Gypsies and Travellers notes that, because of cultural beliefs in the 'prime role' of the family in raising children, 'few' Gypsy and Traveller families make use of early years provision (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003, p13). Other factors affecting take-up include a lack of information about what is available, long waiting lists and mobility. The report points out that, although most Gypsy/Traveller lifestyles offer a wide range of opportunities for social interaction and play, many of their children do not have an opportunity to socialise with peers in the settled community. This is reported to lead to disadvantage on entering the school system. This particular guidance recommended that authorities should 'identify and reserve' some short-term places in early years settings, with 'rapid access arrangements for mobile families' (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003, p13).

5.3   Pupil / teacher relationships

Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that primary school teachers accurately predicted some of the tensions and conflict that occurred between secondary school teachers and Gypsy Traveller pupils, particularly in relation to communication styles.

Generally, pupils themselves were positive about their relationships with teachers although, in some cases, individual teachers were singled out as being less than sympathetic or even racist in their dealings with pupils.

Lloyd et al., (1999) came to the conclusion that conflict with teachers often led to non-attendance by Gypsy Traveller pupils. Irregular attendance was also found to affect the quality of pupil/teacher relationships (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

5.4   Relationship between home and school

The fragility of home-school relationships has been recognised in a number of studies (Ofsted, 1999, Jordan, 1999; Bhopal et al., 2000, Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

Relationships between home and primary schools are largely favourable and Traveller parents often feel able to trust and talk informally to the child's headteacher about any worries or concerns they have. However, as Derrington (2005a) points out the nature of the relationship often changes once pupils transfer to secondary school. A greater reliance is placed on TESS to mediate and where direct contact is established, this is often emotionally charged on both sides. For example, home-school relationships often became strained following a behavioural incident or an imposed sanction that was considered unfair by parents (Derrington and Kendall, 2007b).

Many Traveller parents have limited experience of school themselves and some will have unhappy memories (Kiddle, 1999, Derrington and Kendall, 2004), which may adversely affect the development of home-school relationships.

Trust between teachers and Traveller parents is crucial (Kiddle, 1999). It can take years to establish but can be developed by having a named link member of staff and a willingness by TESS staff, schools and education welfare workers to engage in regular outreach work with the community (Kiddle, 1999; Bhopal et al., 2000). Padfield and Jordan (2004), Padfield (2005) and Robinson and Martin (2008) also highlight the role of designated support staff to support Gypsy Traveller pupils in both schools and out-of-school settings

Jordan (1999) emphasises a personal and individual response as being critical in keeping parents engaged with school. She argues that Traveller communities seem to respect people in authority, yet those given the responsibility of engaging directly with them are often those with the least responsibility. Jordan (1999) suggests that the headteacher or deputy headteacher be heavily involved in engaging family support for their child's learning.

The quality of communication between school and parents is obviously an important factor. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that whereas parents had a range of contact with primary teachers, communication with secondary teachers was almost always related to fairly serious issues and problems – usually with the head of year. Schools often rely upon TESS to act as a go-between (Ofsted, 1999, Bhopal, 2000, Derrington and Kendall, 2004) and although this is helpful (especially in connection with sensitive issues such as sex education), direct communication may be more effective (Kiddle, 1999). Concerned, first-day contact with parents by schools in relation to absence was reported to be reassuring for parents (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; ACE, 2007). These issues were also identified by white working class parents in Bermondsey studies reported by Evans (2007).

6.   Levels of engagement

6.1   Introduction

This chapter explores levels of engagement in education by GRT pupils and their parents and presents a review of the literature in relation to:

•   Attendance (of both settled and mobile groups);

•   Inclusion;

•   Extra-curricula involvement;

•   Parental involvement; and

•   Exclusion.

Key sources for this chapter include Derrington and Kendall (2004) and Lloyd and McCluskey (2007) as well as Ivatt's (2006) study of Elective Home Education and research relating to distance learning conducted by Marks (2004, 2006) and Padfield (2005). In addition, quantitative data on exclusion rates are drawn from official reports produced by DfES (2006).

6.2   Attendance

According to the literature, the attendance of GRT pupils continues to be identified as a significant problem, particularly in the secondary phase (Ofsted, 1999, 2001, 2003). In 2001, Save the Children reported an estimated 10,000 Gypsy Traveller pupils in England who were not attending school. Ofsted (2003) noted that although access to education was believed to be improving, still too few Traveller pupils attend or stay on in secondary school. However, reluctance to self-identify has been found to hinder robust monitoring of the numbers of Gypsy Traveller children attending school, as well as those not attending (Padfield, 2005; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008). At the same time, as Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) point out, the very issue of 'counting' Travellers is in itself a sensitive issue for communities with often limited experience of written communication and 'fragile' relations with local authorities (p6).

From January 2003, two additional ethnic categories, Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage were added to the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data. These categories are those covered by the Race Relations Acts and do not include fairground, circus, waterway and New Traveller groups. As Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) point out, TESS data suggest that figures recorded may still be a significant underestimate. Recent guidance for schools (DCSF, 2008a) recognises that those willing to declare their ethnicity may only be a small percentage of the estimated cohort of Traveller children (p12). The guidance document sets out approaches and strategies for schools to use to encourage understanding amongst Traveller communities of the ethnicity ascription process, and how to declare themselves accurately.

Retention of GRT pupils in the secondary phase is of widespread concern and this is not restricted to mobile families. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that less than a third of their sample of 44 sedentary Gypsy Travellers remained in school until the statutory leaving age of sixteen. Boys were twice as likely to drop out as girls and Y8 was found to be the vulnerable period (Derrington and Kendall, 2007a). Declining participating rates at secondary school are borne out by the data (DfES, 2005). Only a third of the number of Gypsy/Roma

pupils are recorded at Key Stage 4 compared to Key Stage 1; and less than a half of Travellers of Irish Heritage are recorded at Key Stage 4 compared to Key Stage 1. Equally, Jordan (2000) reports that many of the pupils in their study of Scottish Travellers had dropped out of school completely by the age of 14.

Derrington and Kendall (2004) suggest that different expectations and patterns of transfer between primary and secondary phases become set and established in different localised communities, depending on the experiences of previous pupils. Where there is a 'culture' of non-transfer in the primary school or immediate community, it is difficult for schools and individual parents to buck the trend. Other variables linked with non-transfer were parental resistance to school from as early as Key Stage 1, parental anxieties about exposure to mainstream youth culture, previous experience of encountering bullying and being out of correct year group in primary school. Marks (2006) notes that parental concerns at this stage about negative cultural influences, bullying and racism contribute to a 'significant cumulative effect' on attendance. It was also observed that pupils with a poor attendance history in primary school dropped out of secondary school before the end of Key Stage 3 (Derrington, 2005a).

The Scottish Executive has highlighted a need for more effort to overcome the reluctance of Gypsy and Traveller families to engage with secondary education, recording a number of features associated with higher levels of engagement:

- designated staff to work with Gypsy and Traveller parents;

- trained guidance staff with a remit to support the pupils;

- supportive peer contacts;

- strongly demonstrated anti-racist and anti-bullying approaches;

- careful references to Gypsy and Traveller cultures in the curriculum;

- negotiated and individualised curriculum;

- home learning opportunities used as a link to the formal curriculum; and

- individual and small group literacy and numeracy support.
                         (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003, p.13)

There is also a growing trend towards Elective Home Education (EHE). According to a recent research study, the number of Gypsy children recorded as registered for EHE increased year-on-year by approximately 40 per cent between 2000 and 2004 (Ivatts, 2006). Ofsted (2003) reported on the uneven nature of the 'adequacy, suitability and quality' of such provision (p.5) and Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that home tuition was not routinely monitored or sustained in any of the seven cases that opted for this provision in their study.

Day-to-day attendance is regarded as problematic throughout the literature and, as Lloyd et al. (1999) and Derrington and Kendall (2004) confirm, this applies to housed or otherwise settled GRT pupils as well as those that maintain a mobile lifestyle. Indeed, Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) note that Gypsy / Traveller families may often be housed in deprived neighbourhoods where other families and their children resist the idea of regular school attendance. 'Settled' pupils that presented with irregular attendance patterns in primary school, continued to attend sporadically in the secondary phase and were more likely to leave the education system early (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Persistent absenteeism leads to incremental discontinuity in terms of academic attainment which in turn leads to further absence and disaffection (Reynolds et al., 2003).

It is also noted that absences are not always followed up swiftly by schools (Kiddle, 1999, Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Inconsistencies were observed in the way that non-attendance was recorded by different teachers owing to a lack of understanding of the regulations and interpretation of the 'T' code (DfES, 2006c) and the monitoring and follow-up of absence was complicated by a lack of clarity in role expectations. Patterns of 'medical' absences (which in some cases coincided with unreported bullying episodes) were not investigated or analysed by schools (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

Pupil mobility

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 due to social, economic and legal constraints (ODPM, 2004). Kiddle (1999) suggested that in the 1990s, approximately one-third of Gypsy Traveller families had no legal place to stay and this seriously impacted on continuity of education. In 2003, Niner reported that there were around 320 local authority caravan sites together providing about 5,000 pitches. However, Niner went on to estimate that between 2003 and 2008, a further 1,000 to 2,000 additional residential pitches would be needed, as well as a further 2,000 to 2,500 additional pitches on transit sites, or stopping places, to accommodate nomadism (p190). The Housing Act 2004 (England and Wales, Statutes, 2004) required local authorities to include Gypsies and Travellers in the Accommodation Needs Assessment process, and to have a strategy in place which sets out how any identified needs would be met as part of their wider housing strategies. It is this strategy that then informs local planning frameworks.

Marks (2004) estimates that there may be 1,500 families forced into a transient lifestyle and vulnerable to being moved on at short notice. He goes on to argue (Marks, 2006) that the unpredictable travelling patterns resulting from this make connection with the current school system increasingly challenging. In Scotland, a link has been identified between the availability of stopping places and levels of uptake of school places (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003).

The children of Circus and Fairground Showpeople necessarily adhere to seasonal movement patterns which can impact on access to education and attainment (Kiddle 1999; Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003, Marks, 2004). However, as recognised by Ofsted (2002), it is difficult to isolate the effect of pupil mobility on attainment from other variables such as the school's ability to respond flexibly and efficiently, for example, by establishing previous educational attainment through efficient passing of records and through meaningful discussion with pupils and parents. Derrington and Kendall (2004) report how one high-achieving male student was twice placed initially in the lowest ability sets when he changed schools before proving that he was of top-set ability.

Strategies to support schools with issues of mobility, identified by Ofsted (2002, p8) include:

- forging good relationships quickly with parents so that issues of concern can be dealt with immediately;

- information packs and prompt induction for pupils as well as support;

- information on attainment received quickly from previous schools;

- new pupils to be placed in appropriate teaching groups; and

- discussion of schemes of work with pupils to establish familiarity and gaps in knowledge.

Distance learning

For highly mobile pupils, distance learning programmes can help to minimise the effects of this. Yet, as Jordan (2000) points out, these need to be appropriately focused on the needs of Traveller pupils, as such programmes are generally aimed at motivated, literate and independent learners. Kiddle (1999) suggests that, in order to meet needs effectively, certain features should be established:

• winter quarter schools need to accept responsibility for the programme;

• parents accept their responsibilities and commit to working in partnership with schools;

• pupils accept responsibility for their learning;

• pupils equipped with study skills;

• TESS with liaison;

• high quality and differentiated DL materials; and

• efficient systems for assessment and provision of new materials worked out.

Marks (2006) argues that features such as these should be underpinned by learning agreements with Traveller families involving learning targets, guidance on the extent of work to be completed, methods and deadlines for submitting work and arrangements for monitoring, support and feedback (p.45).

Recent ICT projects in Scotland and England have made innovative and effective use of the technology to support pupils experiencing interruptions to their learning (Padfield, 2005). The Scottish experience of TOPILOT (a telematics project sponsored by the European Community and developed as a response to the needs of children and young people from the families of 'occupational travellers', fairground, circus and bargee communities within Europe) was considered to be very positive. Schools identified a member of staff to monitor pupils' electronically submitted work, mark it and provide feedback. The pupils concerned found the project motivating and had no problems mastering the necessary skills. However, some difficulties were identified relating to: inappropriate curriculum content; lack of a sufficient range of subjects; difficulties caused by the mountainous local terrain (which hindered communication with the base school); and the time required of parents to support their child's learning during the travelling season (Jordan, 2000, p260).

The Flexible Learning Environment eXperiment (FLEX) was a European Research and Development (R&D) project designed to develop an interactive e-learning environment to support the education of circus, fairground and bargee children. The e-learning environment combines new multimedia and traditional resource-based learning materials, allowing the tutor to monitor and manage the learning process, provide immediate feedback and to motivate the learner from a distance. It also enables the tutor to develop a more personalised learning path for each learner. The FLEX project involved a multimedia database of learning materials, GSM, satellite communication and the Internet. Constraints identified on moving from the design process to implementation included: pressures of time and geography, and making resources available to counteract unforeseen events (Utsi et al., 2001).

The E-Learning and Mobility Project (E-LAMP) in England was supported by the Nuffield Foundation to overcome the limitations of traditional paper-based work packs and encourage greater use of ICT in distance learning. It involved the use of laptops and a data card to enable children to maintain contact with their base school while they were away travelling. Although just over a third of TESS had been involved in the project, their efforts were frustrated by a lack of resources and the challenge of non-terrestrial communication (e.g. internet access) (Marks, 2004).

In a similar vein, inclusive education guidance from the Scottish Executive cautioned that, although creative use of IT programmes can greatly facilitate distance learning, it is important to recognise that telephone links and power supplies may not be readily accessible to all mobile families. However, such approaches were reported to have resulted in increased motivation and staying-on rates, as well as leading to improved formal qualifications for some Showground pupils (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003).

Padfield (2005), whilst highlighting the capacity of ICT to support learning at a distance, concludes that in order to fully meet the learning needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils, local authorities must ensure that 'adequate and sustainable' technological provision and support is made available for school staff, pupils and their families (p142).

6.3   Inclusion

At one level, as Kiddle (1999) observes, every child needs to feel welcomed in school and resources that reflect Gypsy and Traveller culture in classrooms can help children new to the school to feel at ease, also noted earlier by Ryan (1998). Templeton (2005) observes that TESS, often in collaboration with Gypsy Travellers themselves, have devised curriculum resources that do just this and quotes a series of ten stories for younger children about 'Tess the Traveller' (p7).

Willers (2005) notes that once in school, schools should be proactive and committed to the education of Gypsy and Traveller children in order to encourage them to remain. In the secondary phase, the relevance of the curriculum becomes a crucial consideration for GRT pupils and their parents (Warrington and Peck, 2005). Despite the expansion and implementation of a more vocational curriculum, this may be offered too late for some disaffected pupils in KS3 (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

On a deeper level, Reynolds et al. (2003) suggest that schools need to broaden their approach to inclusion by seeking to ameliorate the conditions of conflict and re-framing perceptions about Traveller children as departing from the 'norm'. Devine and Kelly (2006) reinforce this view by arguing that 'the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are intertwined with concepts of normality and otherness' (p129). Similarly, Derrington (2007) argues that teachers need to develop a greater understanding of the subtle, as well as the overt, effects of cultural hegemony on the educational engagement of Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

Devine and Kelly (2006) suggest that whole-school planning for diversity and inclusion should be relevant to the needs of individual schools, whilst remaining sensitive to national and local policies/guidelines, as well as best practice in the area. Central to that planning should be 'the inclusion of the voices of parents and children from minority as well as majority ethnic groups' (p137).

6.4 Extra-curricular involvement

Ofsted (1999) found that Gypsy Traveller pupils had negligible involvement in extra-curricular activities (such as out-of-school clubs and activities) and that most of the schools visited failed to appreciate the social and educational impact of this (p32). ACE (2007) noted that Gypsy Traveller children often miss out on such opportunities because they are required at home for either 'economic or cultural' reasons (p18).

Derrington and Kendall (2004) discovered a clear link between involvement in extra-curricular activities, attendance and retention, and suggest that this may be an indicator of trust, bi-culturalism and social inclusion. Three-quarters of the retained group regularly participated in extra-curricular activities. This involvement also helped to develop a greater sense of belonging and connection, sometimes referred to as 'social capital'. Conversely, five out of six of the pupils who had dropped out of school had taken no part whatsoever in extra-curricular clubs or events. However, three-quarters of the sample was permitted to take part in school visits that formed part of the curriculum, although, in some cases, mothers withheld this information from their partners.

6.5 Parental involvement

Where parents are invited into schools to share knowledge and skills, this can help to raise confidence and trust as well as awareness. Ofsted (1999) describe an example in which Traveller parents were invited to demonstrate traditional skills such as the construction of bender tents and what a 'boost it had been for their ego' (p25). According to Kiddle (1999) a more open environment which respects GRT cultural values would enhance pupils' self-esteem and allow them to optimise their learning opportunities.

In a study of Traveller pupils in Northern Ireland, Knipe et al. (2005) reported that many of the pupils' parents had little involvement with the school. For those that did have some contact, involvement was generally limited to attendance at parents' evenings, or to meetings to discuss their child's work or behaviour. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that although most Traveller parents were unlikely to attend parent consultation evenings in secondary schools, this was almost always related to anxiety factors rather than lack of interest.

Hately-Broad (2004) states that although parental involvement in their children's education is recognised and encouraged in England, there are few initiatives in existence that focus specifically on Traveller parents. Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) suggest that there will always be Traveller parents who, for a wide range of reasons, choose not to engage with the education system. However, the authors point out that there will be other Traveller parents who might wish to do so, but who often feel 'frustrated' in their efforts to meet their parental responsibilities because of perceived discrimination or lack of understanding, a situation which seems at odds with the current emphasis on inclusion and the celebration of diversity (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008, p9).

6.6 Exclusion

The over-representation of Traveller children in official statistics on exclusion is consistently highlighted in the literature (Ofsted, 1996; Save the Children, 2001; Parker-Jenkins and Hartas, 2002; DfES, 2006b; ACE, 2007; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008). In 2002/03 permanent exclusion rates in England for Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage were approximately four times the rate for all pupils. Figures for 2003/04 replicate these patterns but also show that the permanent exclusion rates for these groups have increased since 2002/03 (DfES, 2006b, p87). Pupil-level data on fixed-period exclusions (collected for the first time in 2003/04) portrayed a similar picture - the highest rates of fixed period exclusions

were for five minority ethnic groups, one of which was Travellers of Irish Heritage (Ibid, p89). Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) report that, in Scotland, statistics for 2004/05 showed Gypsy Traveller pupils to be excluded (permanently or for a fixed-period) at the rate of '120 per 1,000', while the rate of exclusion for 'white UK' pupils was '52 per 1,000 in the same period' (p5).

Parker-Jenkins and Hartas (2002) argue that the use of exclusion as a sanction for the above groups is particularly 'ironic' when their attendance at school is reportedly so poor (p39). Lloyd and Norris (1998) suggest that Gypsy Traveller pupils are particularly vulnerable to the process of exclusion. School is identified as an institution in which differences in culture often result in Gypsy Traveller pupils being seen as 'different' from the norm and their behaviour as 'problematic' (p362).

In Derrington and Kendall's study (2004) more than a quarter of the sample (12 out of 44) had received at least one fixed-period exclusion during Key Stage 3, and half of these pupils had been temporarily excluded from their primary schools. The most common reasons for exclusion were physical aggression towards peers and verbal abuse towards staff. In a survey of termly exclusions, DfES (2006b) found that the most frequent reasons given for permanent exclusions amongst Gypsy/Roma pupils were physical assault against a pupil and physical assault against an adult (0.34 per cent of Gypsy Roma pupils excluded for this reason compared with 0.04 and 0.03 per cent respectively of all pupils). For Travellers of Irish Heritage, the most common reason was persistent disruptive behaviour (0.39 per cent of Travellers of Irish Heritage excluded for this reason compared with 0.07 per cent of all pupils) (p88).

Derrington (2007) concluded that reasons for behaviour resulting in exclusions were not always fully explored by schools and that attributions differed. Pupils tended to attribute the causes to school-based 'push' factors such as racist bullying or lack of teacher support and understanding, whereas teachers were more likely to attribute the cause to cultural or pathological reasons. There was also evidence from parents and TESS staff to suggest that not all schools officially recorded fixed period exclusions. The study found similar patterns of exclusion within families and some parents believed that their children deliberately behaved badly in order to be excluded; a finding also proposed by Lloyd et al. (1999) and ACE (2007).

In one local authority, guidance for schools on preventing the exclusion of Traveller pupils includes the following strategies:

- 'early intervention to prevent Traveller pupils losing time in education, bearing in mind the likelihood that they may already have had interrupted schooling due to their travelling lifestyles;

- liaison with TESS and other support agencies to help prevent exclusions happening in the first place;

- involve parents early in a variety of ways to gain an understanding of their and their children's needs, perceptions and concerns;

- before excluding, examine where behaviours/attitudes resulting in conflict can be attributed to barriers originating from Traveller culture or from the school's systems; and

- send work home even for short-term exclusions to reinforce the message that continuity of schooling is important' (ACE, 2007, p19).

Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) argue that where numbers of Traveller pupils are small, schools may in fact underestimate the effect that exclusion can have on the community (where such news would be 'rapidly shared'), particularly the damage it may cause when relations with formal schooling may already be strained (p11).

A Save the Children (2001) report also highlights 'informal' exclusion in the form of 'self-exclusion, parental exclusion or long-term non-attendance' (p255). The report suggests that some Traveller families may view this form of exclusion positively, as 'an act of resistance in a symbolic way', as well as 'an act of good business sense in an economic way', so that children can take on responsibility for the family business (p256).

7. Pupil attainment

7.1 Introduction

There is recognition throughout the literature of the educational barriers and underachievement experienced by Gypsy Travellers (Jordan, 2000; Morris, 2001; Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Hester, 2004; Power, 2004; Pona, 2007). As far back as 1967, the Plowden Report ('Children and their Primary Schools') outlined the deprivation experienced by Gypsy Traveller children, reporting that their educational needs remained mostly unmet. In 1985, the Swann Report 'Education for All' set the context for future policy related to meeting the needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils (Save the Children, 2001; Power, 2004; Hester, 2004; Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Yet, as Power (2004) and others have pointed out, little seems to have changed in the period since then.

The first Ofsted report to look specifically at the education of Traveller children (Ofsted, 1996) found the achievements of this group to be below average, particularly in literacy skills. Three years later, Ofsted (1999) looked at the attainment of Gypsy Traveller pupils as part of a wider study on the effectiveness of initiatives to raise the achievement of pupils from Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy Traveller backgrounds. Of the four groups, Gypsy Traveller pupils were found to be the lowest attainers and, therefore, 'most at risk in the education system' (p7). Ofsted reported that none of the six primary schools that were visited conducted systematic monitoring of Gypsy Traveller pupil attainment, although there was evidence of under-achievement. In one school, 74 per cent of the Gypsy Traveller pupils were on the SEN register. The strategic deployment of TESS teachers largely within SEN departments was thought to reinforce stereotyped expectations of Gypsy Traveller pupils. (p22).

As noted previously, in 2003, two new ethnicity categories were included in PLASC; Gypsy / Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage. Analysis of the data collected in this way so far signals serious concerns about the relative attainment of these groups (DCSF, 2008a). Individual mentoring and systematic monitoring of secondary age Gypsy and Traveller pupils was found to raise attendance and attainment in one case-study school, and in another, pastoral support for vulnerable Roma pupils led to a perceived increase in confidence (DCSF, 2008a).

Pona (2007) quotes the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2006) position statement 'Positive Pathways for the Future of Provision for the Gypsy Roma and Traveller' which set out the agenda to improve outcomes for this group within the context of Every Child Matters. In spite of this commitment, and the efforts of specialist support services, Pona (2007) argues that statistics show that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils remain 'the only minority group whose educational achievements have not improved' (p18).

As Bowers (2004) points out, success and achievement are culturally determined concepts. Practical skills and economic independence may be rated more highly therefore than academic qualifications by some Traveller families. Indeed, Marks (2006) refers to the 'informal apprenticeship approach' preserved by Traveller communities which is becoming dissipated within a system that 'equates "education" with prescribed "schooling"' (p43).

7.2   Access to the curriculum

A number of barriers to Travellers fully accessing the curriculum have been identified throughout the literature (Lloyd et al., 1999; DfES, 2003b; Reynolds et al., 2003; Bhopal, 2004; Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Padfield and Jordan, 2004; Derrington, 2005b; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008). These include: 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 due to weak literacy skills may have contributed to the premature withdrawal of a quarter of the pupils in Derrington and Kendall's longitudinal study (2004). It could also be a catalyst for disaffection and behavioural problems (Derrington, 2005a). Literacy and numeracy summer schools offered to targeted Y6 pupils prior to transfer were found to be effective and supplementary booster classes for certain individuals with additional learning needs were linked with retention in the secondary school phase (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Parker-Jenkins and Hartas (2002) note that literacy will increasingly become more important for Travellers due to the written element of the driving test. Being able to drive is crucial for them to be able to continue a more mobile lifestyle.

Hately-Broad (2004) reports on the lower than average literacy levels of the post-16 Traveller community and describes a project aimed at providing relevant educational provision targeted specifically at this group. The curriculum areas offered were 'Reading through Driving' classes, a practical Nail Art class and classes aimed at parents and pre-school children based on the ethos of Family Learning (p271). In this way, literacy teaching was embedded within a more vocational approach. Hately-Broad (2004) goes on to note that the family literacy element proved to be the least popular aspect of the project, although remains convinced that this curriculum area deserves further consideration within post-16 education (p275).

Teachers in Knipe et al's (2005) study of Travellers in Northern Ireland stressed the need for a greater emphasis on a more vocationally based curriculum for Traveller pupils. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found, however, that access to vocational programmes for school-aged pupils was sometimes limited to pupils on the cusp of exclusion, which effectively ruled out the option for pupils not in that situation.

Baker (2004) reports on a mobile library service which aimed to increase access to books for children on Traveller sites. Many of the books were mainstream children's resources, but the non-fiction material was tailored towards subjects that, it was felt, would be of more interest, such as animal keeping and Traveller heritage books. The project, which works with five Traveller sites and eight schools, is reported to have led to improved home-school relationships and increased enjoyment of reading amongst the children involved. This, it is believed, is an important step in breaking 'the cycle of poor literacy' (p39).

Hately-Broad (2004) notes the work of the TESS in one London Borough, which identified that many Traveller parents were not accessing pre-school groups and set up a scheme to deliver 'Bookbags' and 'Activity Bags' to local sites to be delivered and collected weekly. The initiative was reported to have been successful, with a number of Traveller parents seeking pre-school provision and some mothers accessing vocational courses themselves. O'Hanlon and Holmes (2004) also describe a local authority scheme that developed early learning boxes containing resources to reflect the early learning goals. These were made available for

families living on geographically isolated sites that were initially reluctant to use mainstream provision (p124). Wild-Smith (in Tyler *ed.* (2005) describes how family learning, outreach, resources and staff training contribute to encouraging take up of pre-school opportunities.

7.3   National tests

An Ofsted survey of 11 local authorities (2003) found that, in national tests, Traveller pupils achieved the lowest results of any minority ethnic group, although there was some evidence of improvements amongst Traveller pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 end of key stage tests and assessments. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found evidence of under-achievement in Key Stages 2 and 3. For example, in national Standardised Attainment Tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stage 2, the average attainment of the sample group in numeracy and literacy was Level 3 and only a quarter of the pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4. In the same year, around 75% of pupils nationally achieved Level 4. At Key Stage 3, only one in five of the sample achieved the nationally expected standard in English (p181). There was also little evidence of value-added in any of the core subjects between the two Key Stages.

The following table, based on data from two DfES reports (2005; 2006b), shows the percentage of Travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy / Roma pupils achieving or exceeding the expected level at each key stage between 2003 and 2005, and exemplifies the scale of GRT underachievement. For example:

- In 2003, at Key Stage 1, 28 per cent of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 42 per cent of Gypsy / Roma pupils achieved Level 2 or above in Reading compared to 84 per cent of all pupils. At Key Stage 4 that year, 42 per cent of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 23 per cent of Gypsy / Roma pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSE / GNVQs compared to 51 per cent of all pupils.

- In 2004, at KS1, 31 per cent of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 45 per cent of Gypsy / Roma pupils achieved Level 2 or above in Reading compared to 85 per cent of all pupils. At Key Stage 4 that year, 30 per cent of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 14 per cent of Gypsy / Roma pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSE / GNVQs compared to 52 per cent of all pupils.

- In 2005, at KS1, 32 per cent of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 42 per cent of Gypsy / Roma pupils achieved Level 2 or above in Reading compared to 85 per cent of all pupils. At Key Stage 4 that year, 23 per cent of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 15 per cent of Gypsy / Roma pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSE / GNVQs compared to 55 per cent of all pupils

Percentage of Travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma pupils achieving (or exceeding) the expected level at each Key Stage (2003 and 2004)

		KS1 % Expected level			KS2 % Expected level			KS3 % Expected level			KS4 % Expected level
		Reading	Writing	Maths	English	Maths	Science	English	Maths	Science	5+A*-C
2 0 0 3	Traveller of Irish Heritage	28	28	52	23	19	36	49	49	45	42
	Gypsy/Roma	42	38	60	30	27	48	33	35	35	23
	All pupils	84	81	90	75	72	86	69	71	68	51
2 0 0 4	Traveller of Irish Heritage	31	29	50	23	23	38	26	24	23	30
	Gypsy/Roma	45	43	64	30	25	45	19	23	17	14
	All pupils	85	82	90	77	73	86	71	73	66	52
2 0 0 5	Traveller of Irish Heritage	32	30	52	26	26	39	23	22	18	23
	Gypsy / Roma	42	40	62	37	33	53	29	27	23	15
	All pupils	85	82	91	79	75	86	74	74	70	55

(Source: DfES, 2005; 2006b)

It should be noted that, in 2005, the 'denominator' used to calculate GCSE performance changed from 'number of 15 year-olds' to 'number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4' - it is suggested that a small amount of change between 2004 and 2005 may be attributable to this (DfES, 2006, p41).

In six secondary schools visited by Ofsted in 1999 as part of the sample for their research on the attainment of minority ethnic pupils[4], no Traveller child had ever taken a GCSE examination (Ofsted, 1999). In 2006, nine per cent of Gypsy pupils achieved five A*-C grades at GCSE compared to the national average of 56.9 per cent. Gypsy pupils were also found to have lower value-added scores in both primary and secondary sectors, and made less progress than pupils with similar prior attainment (DfES, 2006a).

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[4] A sample of 48 schools was selected on account of the percentage of pupils from each of four groups: Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy Traveller. For each group, 12 schools were selected - six primary and six secondary (Ofsted, 1999, p5).

8.   Pupil well-being

8.1   Introduction

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994, which repealed the duty on local authorities to provide and maintain authorised sites and removed the central government funding available for this purpose, afforded both local authorities and the police greater powers to evict Travellers from authorised sites (Save the Children, 2001; Hester, 2004; Power, 2004; Willers, 2005; Warrington and Peck, 2005; Pona, 2007). Lloyd et al. (1999) found that many families in their study (both housed and nomadic) were living in areas of economic disadvantage and multiple deprivation. The overall lack of suitable accommodation, insufficient or poorly maintained sites and the threat of eviction have been identified as impacting on the physical well-being of Gypsy Traveller children and young people (Hester, 2004; Lawrence, 2005). Pona (2007) argues that the best interests of the child are rarely considered when evictions take place, for example, just before the end of a school term or year.

The Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda promotes the safety of all children from accidental injury, maltreatment and neglect (HM Government, 2004), yet, as Lawrence (2005) notes, most local Traveller sites do not have safe play areas for children or the most basic fire-fighting equipment. Traveller children are reported to have a higher than average accident rate. The continuity of the extended family is identified as being crucial to the health and well-being of Travellers. Power (2004) argues that accommodation that does not support this, or seeks to undermine it, 'also undermines Travellers' mental and physical well-being' (p. 47).

Significantly, the ECM national framework sets out a co-ordinated response aimed at protecting children's well-being and enhancing their potential to succeed (HM Government, 2004). However, scant reference is made to the specific needs of this most vulnerable group of children, despite conflicting policies on sites and accommodation which fail to acknowledge the impact this has on a child's legal right to full access to the National Curriculum (Derrington and Kendall, 2007).

Warrington (2006) highlighted how racism impacted upon children's well-being and confidence. At the same time, medical absences from school can signal emotional difficulties or psycho-social stress, although this may not always be recognised by schools (Derrington, 2007).

Effective pastoral support for individual pupils (especially in the secondary phase) is important and can impact positively on attendance and achievement (Bhopal et al., 2000). Ofsted (1999) came across examples of effective practice in secondary schools in conjunction with TESS, where a sensitive and flexible approach was adopted in relation to particular needs (p27). Kiddle (1999) suggested the development of support groups for Traveller pupils. In Scottish secondary schools, peer support and mentoring within anti-racist practices are seen as tangible and effective responses. For example, mentoring by carefully selected staff, older pupils or further/higher education students and local employers have been found to contribute to 'increased pupil confidence, and improved attendance and staying on rates' (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003, p.12). This approach was also found to be effective for two girls on the cusp of exclusion in the longitudinal study (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). The importance of having identified staff with designated responsibility for supporting the learning and well-being of Traveller pupils is also emphasised (Kiddle, 1999; Padfield and Jordan, 2004; Derrington and Kendall 2004; Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003; Padfield, 2005; Robinson and Martin, 2008).

8.2   Coping responses

Warrington (2006) described how children employed a range of strategies for dealing with racism including avoidance, retaliation, hiding their identity, dismissal and reporting.

In her analysis of pupil behaviour in secondary schools, Derrington (2007) identifies three main types of maladaptive coping response that Traveller pupils exhibit when faced with social exclusion (including racism) and cultural dissonance in school. These are described as 'fight, flight and playing white'. The 'fight' response describes a range of conscious (learned) as well as spontaneous responses including combative resistance, as well as overt challenging of authority and verbal or physical attack. Almost half the pupils in the longitudinal study adopted the fight response and the majority of these left school early. The 'flight' response refers to conscious self-withdrawal, avoidance and evasion, all linked with poor attendance at school. Finally, 'playing white' (the strategy least commonly adopted but observed in ten cases) implies concealment or masking of identity in order to gain acceptance from the majority group. On the other hand, social support, engagement in extra-curricular activities and cognitive re-framing were adaptive coping responses associated with pupils who successfully completed their statutory education.

9.   Effective practice

9.1 Introduction

This chapter considers effective practice in improving educational outcomes for GRT pupils. However, caution needs to be exercised in that it is inherently difficult to judge what constitutes effective practice. For example, what might be seen as effective by Gypsy Traveller parents is not necessarily what educationalists would see as effective, and vice versa.

Effective practice relies on effective collaboration between government departments, local authorities, schools and GRT communities. Beckett (in Tyler (Ed), 2005) emphasises the key role of Traveller Education Support Services in building the capacity of schools and local authorities to respond to the complex and multi-dimensional issues involved in improving outcomes for GRT pupils. TESS have a broad range of responsibilities including outreach to families, supporting access to schools, supporting inclusion, supporting attendance and achievement, maintaining continuity and distance learning. They work in partnership with families, schools and local authorities, as well as other statutory and voluntary agencies (Tyler (Ed), 2005).

The National Strategies Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement programme published case studies (DCSF, 2008b) focusing on the strategies used and outcomes gained in three different primary school settings (urban, small rural and large rural). A range of strategies were implemented by school SMTs in collaboration with TESS and Local Authority Strategy Managers, including valuing diversity and prior learning, pupil tracking, targeted interventions, building partnerships with parents, and cross-phase collaboration. The outcomes achieved included improved pupil engagement, improved attendance, greater parental understanding and participation and higher levels of ascription. Interventions used included National Strategy Wave 2 and 3 interventions, and Traveller-focused interventions devised in collaboration with the TESS. Family learning was used by one school to encourage parental engagement.

9.2 Policy development

Recent national policy and guidance designed to support the education and inclusion of Gypsy Traveller pupils has contributed to increased visibility for this group (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008). Two documents produced in 2003 by the DfES ('Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils' and 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils: A Guide to Good Practice') demonstrate the department's commitment to improving outcomes for Gypsy Travellers. The latter is part of a range of guidance material incorporating the principles set out in Every Child Matters (HM Treasury, 2003). Further guidance 'The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People' (DCSF, 2008) provided good practice examples and suggestions to support local authorities and schools in encouraging self-ascription.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 imposed a duty on local authorities to promote race relations and equal opportunities, and to eliminate racial discrimination. This has been accompanied by widespread staff development to promote understanding (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008). Yet, as the authors argue, many staff in local authorities may still not be aware that this also applies to Gypsy Travellers (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008, p9). Specific duties for schools within the Act include:

- preparing a written statement of their policies for promoting race equality, and to act upon it;

- assessing the impact of their policies on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, particularly the impact on attainment levels of these pupils;

- monitoring the operation of all the school's policies, in particular their impact on the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups; and

- taking reasonable steps to make available the results of its monitoring.

Bhopal et al. (2000) suggests that any school policies to promote race equality and equal opportunities should specifically refer to Gypsy Traveller pupils and their educational needs. At the same time, there should be a whole-school commitment to the development and application of such policies.

Padfield and Jordan (2004) note that very few schools in their study reported having seen or used recent Scottish guidance on inclusive approaches for Gypsy/Travellers within the context of interrupted learning, despite the fact that all schools in Scotland were sent a copy of the document. They recommend that those responsible for developing policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers should make direct contact with 'a range of local representatives of Gypsy and Traveller families, for example, by visiting Gypsy/Traveller sites and Showgrounds' (Padfield and Jordan, 2004, p12).

Policy developments suggested by Kiddle (1999) suggest a focus on ensuring:

- clear understanding of race equality duties;

- an effective anti-bullying policy;

- flexible policies which take account of special circumstances that some pupils experience (e.g. transport, uniform etc.);

- transparency and consistency in applying attendance regulations;

- a curriculum that is relevant to needs of pupils; and

- better understanding / appreciation of the underlying reasons for behaviour of GRT pupils and their parents.

9.3 Ethos

Bhopal et al. (2000) notes that a supportive and inclusive ethos, determined by the headteacher, senior management team and governing body's commitment to meeting the needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils was crucial. The experience of successful schools has been that informed leadership and an ethos of respect, which creates a school culture in which the needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils are effectively addressed, have been particularly important in challenging unintentional racism and changing attitudes. (DfES, 2003b). Templeton (2005) argues that this commitment needs to be focused on an ethos of 'respect, and validation of all ethnic groups, including Travellers' (p7). Padfield (2005) suggests that a school's ethos, together with its ability to respond 'flexibly' to the mobility of a few Gypsy Traveller pupils (in terms of their frequent, unexpected arrivals and departures), is demonstrated in the type of welcome and the level of support made available to them by school staff (p138). A number of studies suggest that secondary schools need to identify a key member of staff for pastoral issues (Derrington and Kendall 2004; Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003).

The primary school ethos, often associated with holistic care and value for the individual, fits more closely with GRT parents' demands than the ethos found in many large secondary schools where the emphasis is on conformity, academic excellence and preparation for further study. Derrington and Kendall, (2004) found that pupils who attended large, higher than average performing schools were amongst those who dropped out early.

Derrington and Kendall (2004) use the metaphor of 'oaks' and 'willows' to describe the ethos and inclusive practices of secondary schools in their longitudinal study. 'Oak' schools were rigid and unyielding in their application of policies whereas 'willow' schools accepted the need to respond more flexibly to individual needs. The authors also concluded that schools led by headteachers with a strong commitment to inclusive education and a reluctance to exclude any pupil, were more likely to succeed with GRT pupils. If pupils and parents are reluctant to disclose identity then it is a signal to the school that racism and bullying needs to be addressed at a whole school level (Kiddle 1999). Blaney (in Tyler (Ed), 2005), who was the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) of a school where Traveller pupils do well, concludes 'Flexibility is the key approach' with respect to attendance, timetables, the curriculum and in administration and policy.

An Ofsted report on provision and support for Traveller pupils noted that schools with a more active and positive ethos tended to have the following characteristics:

- positive leadership from the headteacher in building up good relationships with Traveller families;

- effective use of data to monitor progress and achievement of Traveller pupils;

- teachers that make use of the curriculum to celebrate the diversity and culture of all pupils, including Travellers;

- active partnership working with, as opposed to dependency on, the TES; and

- acceptance of the responsibility to meet the needs of all pupils, in spite of the challenges presented by, and the hostility displayed towards, Travellers.

(Ofsted, 2003, p. 20)

9.4 Transition arrangements

Green and Stokoe (in Tyler (Ed), 2005) review the factors inhibiting successful transition and achievement in the secondary phase. They identify economic and cultural barriers within the 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 the school, including unrealistic expectations and inflexibility. They describe how a self-review tool has been used to support schools in becoming more inclusive and flexible.

Bhopal et al. (2000) suggest that the quality of the initial induction process can determine the future attendance and achievement of the pupils. Kiddle (1999) noted that allowing pupils to spend some time in the same classroom as older siblings helped them to settle more easily into the new school environment. Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that where TESS support spanned phases it could help with continuity.

Derrington and Kendall (2004) reported that most of the pupils in their study transferred to their nearest link school and that careful preparation for secondary transfer was vital. Initial meetings between parents and secondary school teachers held in the primary school were considered to be less intimidating and the majority of pupils whose parents attended new parents evenings or visited the secondary school prior to transfer were still in school at the end of KS3.

In one local authority area, 'shadowing' arrangements have been developed for Traveller pupils, whereby primary pupils are partnered with a secondary pupil to help them become familiarised with the secondary school environment. Once in secondary school, 'buddying' and 'escort' systems, where older children accompany younger ones, have been found to be successful. Another strategy highlighted involves teacher exchanges between local primary and secondary schools (Save the Children, 2001, p265).

In addition, Padfield and Jordan (2004) recommend that local authorities and schools support transition from primary to secondary school by seeking ways in which to demonstrate the relevance of the secondary curriculum for future life chances.

9.5 Curriculum development

Ofsted (1999) observed 'considerable hesitancy' in schools with regard to recognising and celebrating Traveller culture through the curriculum (p12). In a later study, it was found that attempts to incorporate Traveller culture and lifestyles into the curriculum were too often 'incidental' and that Traveller pupils remained an 'unseen minority ethnic group' (Ofsted, 2003 p.6).

As Kiddle (1999) and others point out, resources reflecting Traveller culture and perspectives should not be restricted to schools with Traveller pupils on roll, this needs to be addressed by all schools. Guidance on inclusive educational practice in Scotland noted that it is essential that positive images of Gypsies and Travellers are presented within 'generic' approaches to 'exploring themes and understanding issues, rather than on the supposed characteristics of the group' (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003, p.11). Equally, it was deemed important that schools regularly review and update such resources to ensure that they remain factually correct.

Evidence of schools making serious attempts to reflect and embed Traveller culture in the curriculum (albeit with the help and encouragement of TESS) was largely restricted to the primary phase in the schools visited by Derrington and Kendall (2004).

In contrast, Pugh (2007) reports on a youth club in the North West for Travellers and local children between the ages of nine and 13. It was developed as part of a programme to 'build bridges' between both communities, with the aim of encouraging more Traveller pupils to attend secondary school (p14). The club alternates venues between the local high school and an internet café. The school's first Romany Gypsy pupil to ever gain GCSEs has just left school and is now helping out at the youth club. Teachers from the school regularly hold sessions at the club and the school is incorporating Traveller culture into the curriculum (part of its bid for specialist status). The Save the Children report (2001) argues for effective input into curriculum development by Gypsies and Travellers of all ages. This too often does not take place because of the 'rigid and inflexible structures of the education system' rather than cultural factors attributed to Gypsy Travellers themselves (Save the Children, 2001, p247).

From a different perspective, effective practice might represent Elective Home Education (EHE). The Travellers' School Charity is a voluntary organisation which has developed resources incorporating Traveller culture for (mainly New Traveller) families educating their children at home (Save the Children, 2001). Many Traveller culture-friendly resources have also been developed for distance learning, some of which (for example, FLEX, TOPILOT and E-Lamp) have been discussed earlier in this review.

10. Inter-agency working

10.1 Introduction

Two-thirds of Irish Travellers, and half of Gypsy/Roma pupils in primary schools were eligible for free school meals compared with 18 per cent of all pupils, a greater proportion than all other minority ethnic groups. Fewer Irish Travellers and Gypsy Roma pupils (55 per cent and 50 per cent respectively are eligible in the secondary phase, compared to 14 per cent of all pupils (DfES, 2006b). Poverty is clearly an issue for many families and can be the root of a range of difficulties relating to health, safety, accommodation and employment, all of which can have an impact on educational opportunities.

Inter-agency working is a key strategy in ensuring every child can reach their full potential (HM Government, 2004). This type of collaboration between services and professionals working with Gypsies, Travellers and other mobile communities has been reported to be successful in supporting children's access to education, as well as proving to be more cost effective than relying on the work of individual services, which may be targeting various pupils all with similar needs (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003). In some authorities in Scotland, support staff with a particular remit for Gypsies and Travellers work collaboratively with other professionals, including site managers, community police and voluntary organisations. By working directly with Traveller communities to create positive relationships between families and schools, thus building up trust, it is argued that reluctant families can be encouraged to let their children participate more fully in school and education (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003). Effective inter-agency work plays a key role in enabling 'a responsive approach' to meeting Travellers' needs which should not be underestimated (Save the Children, 2001, p270).

Bhopal et al. (2000) emphasise the importance of effective working arrangements with education welfare officers in order to secure access and good levels of school attendance. Voluntary organisations also have a key role to play in conducting outreach work with Traveller communities, as well as undertaking an important and culturally sensitive intermediary role between Travellers and statutory services (Cemlyn, 2000; Power, 2004).

This chapter looks in particular at how the following services respond to the needs of Gypsy Travellers:

- TESS;

- Health; and

- Social Services.

10.2 Traveller Education Support Services (TESS)

A number of studies have examined the work of Traveller Education Support Services (TESS). Ofsted (1999) concluded that the attitude of school staff towards TESS colleagues reflected their attitude towards Gypsy Traveller pupils as a group. Where the latter was positive, then teachers in schools were more likely to appreciate and value the work of TESS (p20).

In the same year, Danaher (cited in Danaher et al., 2007) conducted semi-structured interviews with 26 TESS co-ordinators as part of a broader project and concluded that the strength and quality of the interconnected relationships that co-ordinators developed and maintained with pupils, families, schools and other professionals was key to the success of their work. Danaher et al. (2007) point out that this early commitment by TESS to a multi-agency approach was pioneering, as were other innovative aspects of practice such as the development of distance learning provision.

In 2003, Ofsted highlighted the important contribution made by TESS, particularly at primary level, in relation to increasing access to education. Bhopal et al. (2000) noted the importance of their supportive advocacy and practical help for parents and in supporting the learning of Traveller pupils but suggested that the role of TESS as in-service training providers was under-utilised (p6).

Templeton (2005) reports that the work of TESS requires a varied range of skills, not least that of negotiating between Traveller families and statutory services in often stressful circumstances. At the same time, TESS can sometimes be 'marginalised' by other services when they advocate effectively on behalf of Travellers (Templeton, 2005, p13). Derrington and Kendall (2004) report that communication between schools and TESS may not always be effective, for example, attendance problems are not always brought to the attention of TESS. A number of studies have concluded that schools have a tendency to over-rely upon TESS rather than communicating with parents directly (Bhopal et al., 2000; Ofsted, 1999, 2001, 2003; Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

Marks (2004, p1) identifies the work of Traveller Education Support services (TESS) as being concerned with:

- combating prejudice;

- raising awareness in schools;

- influencing schools in the direction of proactive sensitivity; and

- supporting and encouraging Traveller families to engage with schooling.

Derrington and Kendall (2004) described TESS as 'cultural mediators'. Templeton (2005, p13) describes their core activities in terms of services for schools (e.g. classroom support, provision of learning materials, support for curriculum development, INSET for staff, liaison between school and families) and services for Travellers (e.g. support with admission to school, transport to school, changing schools, secondary transfer, liaison with schools, inter-agency links).

A report evaluating developments to promote higher achievement amongst minority ethnic groups found that the quality of teaching and learning was improved when there were well-established opportunities for 'joint planning, teaching and evaluation' with TESS staff (Ofsted, 2001, p35).

In Derrington and Kendall's (2004) longitudinal study, some services had specialist key workers for attendance issues and TESS support and involvement in transfer arrangements was considered very important. They were seen as a vital source of information and support for parents.

10.3   Health

The Every Child Matters 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, there is evidence that GRT young people experience disadvantage in access to health services and, as a result, poorer health (Pona, 2007).

Parry et al. (2004) found that:

- Health problems amongst Gypsy Travellers are between two and five times more common than the settled community;

- Gypsy Travellers are more likely to be anxious, have breathing problems (including asthma and bronchitis) and chest pain. They are also more likely to suffer from miscarriages, still births, the death of young babies and older children; and

- Gypsy Traveller women are twice as likely to be anxious than Gypsy Traveller men.

Lack of suitable living conditions and basic amenities impacts on the health of Traveller families and in Northern Ireland there are high levels of ill-health (Reynolds et al., 2003; Power, 2004). Gypsies and Travellers in England are reported to experience significantly poorer health than the settled population (Power, 2004). Adult Gypsy Travellers nationally are also reported to experience higher levels of stress and have a far lower life expectancy than the settled population (Lawrence, 2005; Power, 2004).

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (DfES and DoH, 2004) underlines the value of ante-natal services for children's development. However, Lawrence (2005) notes that, according to recent studies, ante-natal support is not reaching all Gypsy Traveller women, citing evidence that, in 2004, stillbirths amongst the Traveller population were identified as 17 times higher than the national average, while infant mortality was reported to be 12 times higher. Gypsy Travellers also suffer more miscarriages and still births than other minority ethnic groups. Reasons put forward for this include lack of uptake of ante-natal care due to fear of certain services and reluctance to discuss health issues with strangers and difficulties in accessing care. Also highlighted are stressful environmental factors such as lack of access to good facilities (most Traveller sites in England are located some distance from local services, while many unauthorised sites lack even basic facilities such as toilets or refuse collection) and the threat of eviction (Lawrence, 2005).

Mobility and poor attendance at school can result in Traveller pupils missing regular health checks in school, particularly those concerned with hearing and vision (Jordan, 1999, p13). This can be exacerbated by difficulties in accessing GPs and other health services, all of which can lead to Travellers not receiving the required medical treatment.

Power (2004) reports that the 'criminalisation' of Travellers' nomadic lifestyle, coupled with bureaucratic structures and systems, can lead to 'cursory treatment' of their medical symptoms, which may result in a lack of necessary treatment or continuity of care (p.36). Equally, many Travellers have little or no knowledge of relevant healthcare services or how to access them (Power, 2004). Young Travellers in the Cambridgeshire study, on the other hand, were reported to be well-informed about health issues and the vast majority felt that they received a good service from the health services in their area (Bowers, 2004). Power (2004) and Warrington and Peck (2005) highlight the role of a specialist health worker in addressing the health of Gypsy Travellers, by advocating on their behalf and mediating between health professionals and other services.

10.4 Social Services

A study by Cemlyn (2000) reports low levels of engagement nationally between Gypsy Travellers and social services departments, while Power (2004) cites recent research by Cowan and Lomax (2003) which identified social services departments as the least likely statutory support agency to visit Traveller sites.

Pressures on both sides are likely to militate against effective working relationships (Cemlyn, 2000). For example, geographical boundaries and a reluctance to work with groups that do not fit specified criteria (either residential or behavioural), combined with a lack of awareness about Traveller culture, adversely affects the ability of social services departments to provide effective services to Travellers and may exacerbate existing problems (Power, 2004). At the same time, Travellers are often deeply suspicious of social services departments, particularly, as Cemlyn (2000) and Power (2004) note, in relation to a perceived threat to take their children away from them, or to criticise their approach to childcare.

Cemlyn (2000) identifies early years provision as a particular area for development in relation to social services' work with Travellers, in terms of children's subsequent access to education and to overcome the lack of play and recreational facilities available to them. In addition, she calls for the department's work to be underpinned by a commitment to establishing and improving relationships with Traveller communities, together with improvements to departmental processes and procedures in order to better meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers (Cemlyn, 2000).

11. The European perspective

11.1 Introduction

The European sources identified for this chapter by the Steering Group provide a useful policy context. Little empirical evidence directly related to education practice in the UK was found. However, a consideration of the European context is important for this review for three main reasons:

- Roma are one of the largest minorities in Europe and the European Union (EU). As a result, the EU, national Governments and major international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are engaged in addressing major issues of social, economic and educational disadvantage.

- 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. A key concern highlighted by the European literature is the concentration of Roma in special schools, in ghetto schools and in separate classes within mainstream schools.

- An increasing number of Roma have arrived in the UK since the mid- 1990s, initially as asylum seekers, but more recently as EU citizens seeking to escape economic disadvantage and prejudice. The outcomes for pupils from these communities may have an impact on improving their educational outcomes in the UK.

11.2 The economic situation of Roma in Europe

Roma are considered to be the largest and fastest growing minority in Central and Eastern Europe. Although precise figures are unavailable, there are thought to be between seven and ten million Roma spread across the continent (OSI and World Bank, 2007). The World Bank website indicates that in Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Macedonia, the proportion of the total population is between eight and 12 per cent: (www.worldbank.org). Further, the age profile is such that almost half of Roma are under 18, so, in these countries, Roma may constitute 20 per cent of the school population (Hawke et al., 2008).

In March 2000, the European Council meeting in Lisbon concluded that a radical transformation of the European economy would require the modernisation of education systems, mainstreaming the promotion of social inclusion in Member States' education and training and developing priority actions addressed to specific target groups, e.g. minority groups (EUMC, 2006). In a subsequent report, the European Council (Education) and the Commission (2002) observed:

> … while education and training systems need to change in view of the challenges of the knowledge society and globalisation, they pursue broader goals and have broader responsibilities to society. They play an important role in building up social cohesion, in preventing discrimination, exclusion, racism and xenophobia and hence in promoting tolerance and the respect for human rights (p7).

These two documents have underpinned the development of a pan-European approach towards Roma inclusion, particularly in education.

Roma tend to be more concentrated in the poorer countries of Eastern Europe (Save the Children, 2001). Roma are ten times poorer than the majority population. A recent survey showed that nearly 80 per cent of Roma in Bulgaria and Romania were living on less than $4 a day (cited in Unicef, 2007a). On average, Roma live 10 to 15 years less than others, have a relatively high birth rate and higher rates of infant mortality (EUMAP/OSI, 2007). Hawke et al. (2008) found the poverty gap between Roma and other Romanians increased between 2003 and 2006. Access to education and the educational attainment of Roma and Travellers is influenced by their overall conditions of life, which are invariably characterised by high unemployment, sub-standard housing and poor access to health services, creating a vicious circle of poverty, exclusion and marginalisation that affects their ability to participate in, and benefit from, education (EUMC, 2006).

Most Roma in Eastern Europe are not nomadic, but, under communism, tended to be concentrated in lower-skilled employment and are now, under free market conditions, suffering high levels of unemployment (Save the Children, 2001). The World Bank notes that Roma were often the first to be laid-off from jobs in the early 1990s, and have been amongst those most persistently blocked from re-entering the labour force (http://worldbank.org).

11.2 The educational context

Monitoring educational achievement by ethnic group is not yet common in most EU member states. However, it is recognised that achievement amongst Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities is currently very low across all the states of the EU, due in large part to the segregation of Romani from the majority population and the failure to provide adequately for nomadic children. Institutional racism has resulted in many Roma being educated in special schools or in ghetto schools with lower standards of teaching and facilities. Even in integrated schools, they may be educated separately (European Commission, 2004). Ringold et al. (2005) note that where Roma children are included within mainstream schools, these are often poorly provided for, or the schools themselves become segregated as majority community members opt to educate their children elsewhere.

Available data shows Roma significantly under represented at secondary and higher education, attending poorly and underachieving (Ringold et al., 2005). The European Monitoring Centre (EUMC) (2006) found that available evidence indicates that transition to secondary education is low and that drop-out rates increase with age, either as a result of efforts to find gainful employment or because of low performance, but possibly a combination of both. Roma frequently lack pre-school education, which is crucial for early assimilation of school norms and expected behavioural patterns, but also for developing proficiency in language. UNICEF (2007b) found that the main barriers to Roma children starting school and the causes of early drop-out were: difficult economic circumstances at home and the need of children to contribute to the family budget; cultural differences (including language); and the quality of schooling provided.

EUMC (2006) found institutional factors discriminated against Roma inclusion. These included the absence of Roma- and Traveller-related material and information in curricula (particularly history and social science curricula), as well as lack of resources relating to pupils' experiences and the lack of training to equip teachers to deal with ethnically mixed classes and racial harassment. Roma parents frequently have low educational levels, as a result of their own experiences of discrimination and prejudice, which limits their ability to support their children's learning and lowers their aspirations. Hawke et al. (2008) refute suggestions that Roma disadvantage has cultural causation. They report that in Romania, the majority of Roma people have identity documents, have been sedentary for many generations, do not marry off their daughters at 13, share the same language, religious beliefs, core values and traditions as other Romanian citizens and consider themselves Romanians.

11.3   Responses to the situation of Roma in Europe

In 2003, a conference entitled 'Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future' was held in Budapest, organised by the World Bank, the Open Society Institute and the European Commission, and hosted by the Prime Minister of Hungary. The objectives of the conference were to:

- raise awareness and exchange experience about policies and strategies for addressing poverty and other human development outcomes for Roma living in Central and Eastern Europe;

- garner the long term commitment of governments, NGOs and international institutions to improve opportunities for Roma; and

- agree on initiatives for concrete follow up actions

(http://go.worldbank.org/4E096A5V60).

The conference attracted 500 participants from 30 countries (including 125 Roma), Ministers from 12 countries (including five Prime Ministers and two Deputy Prime Ministers). The government leaders, following a proposal by the Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy, committed themselves to launch the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005.

As its website states, the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 represents 'an unprecedented political commitment by governments in Central and South-eastern Europe to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma within a regional framework' (http://www.romadecade.org). The Decade is:

> *… an international initiative that brings together governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as Romani civil society, to accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma and to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way*
>
> *(http://www.romadecade.org).*

The Decade focuses on the priority areas of education, employment, health, and housing, and commits governments to take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming[5]. A strong theme of the decade is Roma participation and the slogan 'Nothing about us, without us' has been adopted (http://www.romadecade.org).

The nine countries taking part in the Decade are Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. All of these countries have significant Roma minorities, and the Roma minority has been disadvantaged, both economically and socially. Each of these countries has developed a national Decade Action Plan that specifies the goals and indicators in the priority areas. A tenth country, Slovenia, has observer status and three other countries are planning to join.

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[5] 'Gender Mainstreaming' is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality, by ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities (policy development, research, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects). (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm)

Under the terms of reference of the Decade, participant governments committed to devise national action plans and to make funds available to implement them. The World Bank has established a Roma Education Fund to which participating states can apply for additional financial assistance.

Decade Watch is an initiative of a group of Roma activists and researchers to assess progress under the Decade of Roma Inclusion since its launch in February 2005. Its first report (Open Society Institute (OSI) and World Bank, 2007) covers the first two years (2005 and 2006) of the Decade and assesses government action, not the changed situation for Roma on the ground. Systematic outcome monitoring is currently impossible because of significant data gaps and is also probably premature, because the decade was less than two years old at the time of writing. The report uses the following list to assess progress towards meeting the Decade Action Plan targets in the priority area of Education:

- monitoring and evaluation: availability of regularly collected, nationally representative data on outcomes, collected within the last five years;

- promotion of access of Roma children to pre-schooling and early child care services (e.g. daycare programmes and kindergartens, parent support work, out-of-school activities etc.);

- promotion of access of Roma children to primary and secondary education (e.g. teacher assistant / mediators, special after-class tutorials for Roma children, examination support, financial support, transportation, school meals, scholarship programmes, etc);

- promotion of access of Roma to higher education (e.g. scholarships programmes, vocational guidance, etc.); and

- de-segregation (including segregation into Roma schools, special schools and majority Roma schools (due to withdrawal of other children), and within schools.

(OSI and World Bank, 2007, p50-51)

The report found that Decade Action Plans and relevant institutions were in place and that activities have been initiated, to various degrees, in all countries. The Decade has become the framework for discussing Roma inclusion both for the governments and for Roma civil society in all participating countries (ibid, 2007). However, Decade Action Plans have largely not been understood by governments as policy implementation tools. Most countries have been consistently represented at the Decade's International Steering Committee meetings and, with the exception of Montenegro and Serbia, all countries have contributed to the Decade Trust Fund. In terms of its progress toward promoting inclusion, Roma report that they are being heard more than before the launch of the Decade

The Roma activists found that most governments view Roma inclusion in terms of projects and 'sporadic' measures, rather than in terms of programmes or integrated policies (ibid, 2007, p18). In a number of countries, the institutional home of Decade coordination is not sufficiently integrated with policy directorates in line ministries and lacks the power and capacity to set agendas and implement policies. Lastly, governments increasingly mention the Decade in the context of their action on Roma inclusion but, due to lack of effective data collection, fail to systematically report on progress.

The Decade Watch assessment found that education was the priority area in which the Decade action plans were 'most developed and convincing' (ibid, p25), and the sector where governments were most likely to move beyond sporadic measures towards some form of coherent programme. The Roma Education Fund (established by the World Bank) is reported to have played a key role in advancing the development of policies and programmes, by financing or co-financing activities in many countries. Some form of preschool programme has been set up in every country, mainly in the form of free-of-charge provision or one year of preschool, and sometimes associated with measures that 'specifically promote access of Roma to kindergarten and/or early childhood programs' (ibid, p26). In a similar vein, in their study of the inclusion of young Roma children (aged 5-7) in Latvian schools, Krastina et al (2005) found that workshops run by parent support centres promoted understanding and co-operation between teachers and parents as co-educators. Other aspects of effective practice were the inclusion of cultural resources, the valuing of Roma languages and having a Roma teaching assistant in the classroom.

All of the countries involved in Decade Watch, although to varying degrees, are reported to be adopting measures to promote access to primary and secondary education, including teaching assistants. Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia are also engaged in financing, or co-financing, scholarship programmes for Roma students in higher education.

However, the Roma activists point out that both 'explicit and implicit' barriers to access for Roma remain in many countries (OSI and World Bank, 2007, p26). Furthermore, it is reported to be likely that these will only be overcome if governments act to integrate and to better coordinate measures, as well as to involve Roma to a greater and more systematic extent in policy design and service delivery. The Decade Watch assessment points to wide differences in the degree to which governments have acknowledged segregation between Roma and non-Roma children in schools, and the extent to which they have developed measures or policies to deal with this problem. Hungary's progress in education (which Decade Watch rated 3.8 out of 4) is held up as an example to show the other Decade countries 'how to move beyond externally financed or co-financed pilot projects towards the strategic development of government policies on desegregation' (ibid, p26).

A second Decade Watch report (OSI and the World Bank, 2008) reports on progress made under the Decade of Roma Inclusion during 2007, again assessing government action rather than the changed situation for Roma on the ground. This report found increased evidence of greater and more systematic focus on Roma inclusion across most participating countries. However, it notes that 'integrated inclusion policies with a focus on achieving and demonstrating results remain a distant goal' (p17).

The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), established in 2005, provides 'a unified voice and democratic platform of co-operation' (Council of Europe, 2007, p3) for all Roma, Sinti, Kále, Travellers and other related groups in Europe. This report advises of the need to protect the Romani language as a European language in its own right. An expert group (involving Roma education experts, representatives of the ERTF and the Council of Europe, together with linguistics experts) was set up to investigate the possibility of developing a Curriculum Framework for Romani (CFR). The CFR's purpose is to provide a common ground for developing syllabi and curriculum guidelines along with appropriate learning materials and tools. The ERTF advises that Roma and Travellers should have the opportunity to choose bilingual education, learning in both the national and their own language.

11.4 Implications for the UK

The social exclusion of Roma and its consequences is a cause of grave concern to national Governments across Europe and the European Union. The approach is cross-sectoral, recognising the inter-related nature of exclusion and disadvantage. 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, specifically in relation to the following:

- proportions identified with special education needs (SEN) and in special schools;

- school abandonment / drop-out;

- proportions in higher education;

- experiences of racism and bullying; and

- the interaction of generational social and economic disadvantage.

Although absolute poverty may be less marked in the UK than in Europe (Unicef, 2007a), poverty is an issue that has been insufficiently explored in the literature. The UK has better developed inter-cultural good practice, and policies for promoting race equality, but there is evidence that there is still a long way to go before the curriculum affirms the identity, history and culture of all GRT pupils, and they can feel safe from racist bullying and abuse (Ivatts, 2003 cited in Templeton (2005)).

The NGO sector in Europe is larger and better developed than in the UK, reflecting international concern about Roma issues by the EU and the World Bank. Roma are employed at all levels within these organisations, and also within Government to the level of Secretary of State (in Hungary and Romania). Many countries employ Roma inspectors to oversee the education of Roma and Roma are employed as teachers, mediators, mentors and bilingual teaching assistants. The role of TESS in the UK often replicates the role of NGOs.

The European literature emphasises the importance of funding, although highlights the importance of moving from projects to programmes. 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 described above are achieving their desired results. This is particularly the case where de-centralisation is a significant part of the post-Soviet education agenda (Save the Children, 2001).

12.   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 Traveller input to ensure their cultural appropriateness.

- the encouragement of greater involvement of Gypsy 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 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.

Appendix 1: Search strategy

To identify published literature for this review, NFER librarians searched a range of education, social care and sociological databases, focusing chiefly on literature concerning the United Kingdom but including relevant international studies. A date limit was applied to retrieve only items published since 1997. The documents reviewed also included literature known to the research team through members' previous work in the field, as well as a number of European sources identified by the Steering Group for the research.

Other key inclusion criteria for the review included:

- empirically-based research;

- policy documents;

- evidence exploring academic and social issues;

- evidence on improving educational experiences and outcomes;

- good practice examples; and

- implications for future policy and practice.

Search strategies were developed for all databases by using the controlled vocabulary pertinent to each database, with the aim of maximising consistency across the range of databases. Where no thesauri were available, or the controlled vocabulary included no appropriate keywords, free-text searching was undertaken. In two cases, larger numbers of search results on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers were filtered further by the application of a set of search terms addressing the outcomes experienced by GRT pupils. The keywords used in the searches, together with a brief description of each of the databases searched, are outlined below ("ft" denotes free-text terms, and "$" that terms were truncated to include variations such as singular and plural forms).

Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts (ASSIA)

ASSIA is an index of articles from over 600 international English language social science journals. The database contains approximately 168,000 records and provides unique coverage of special educational and developmental aspects of children.

#1   Gypsies
#2   Travellers
#3   #1 OR #2

British Education Index (BEI)

BEI provides bibliographic references to 350 British and selected European English-language periodicals in the field of education and training, plus developing coverage of national report and conference literature.

GRT set
#1   Travellers-itinerants
#2   Gypsies
#3   Roma (ft)
#4   showpeople OR show people (ft)

#5   showmen OR show men (ft)
#6   showchildren OR show children (ft)
#7   circus$ (ft)
#8   fairground$ (ft)
#9   showground$ (ft)
#10   bargee$ (ft)
#11   nomads
#12   transient children
#13   pupil mobility
#14   #1 OR #2 OR #3 … #13

Outcomes set
#15   outcome$ (ft)
#16   school$ AND outcome$ (ft)
#17   outcomes of education
#18   educational attainment
#19   every child matters (ft)
#20   ECM (ft)
#21   be$ healthy (ft)
#22   stay$ safe (ft)
#23   enjoy and achieve (ft)
#24   positive contribution (ft)
#25   achieve$ economic wellbeing (ft)
#26   five outcomes (ft)
#27   good practice (ft)
#28   best practice (ft)
#29   #15 OR #16 OR #17 … #28

#30   #14 AND #29

British Educational Internet Resource Catalogue (BEIRC)

BEIRC is an internet based database of information about professionally evaluated and described internet sites which support educational research, policy and practice.

#1   Travellers-itinerants
#2   Gypsies
#3   pupil mobility
#4   #1 OR #2 OR #3

Current Educational and Children's Services Research in the UK (CERUK plus)

CERUK plus, which has superceded CERUK, is a database of current and recently completed research in education and children's services. It contains commissioned research, PhD level work and practitioner research, covering all aspects of education and children's services. CERUK plus is sponsored by NFER, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), and supported by the Eppi-Centre. Work is undertaken in partnership with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

#1   Travellers
#2   Traveller education services
#3   Roma
#4   Gypsies
#5   mobility

#6   transient children
#7   show people OR showpeople (ft)
#8   show men OR showmen (ft)
#9   show children OR showchildren (ft)
#10   bargee$ (ft)
#11   fairground$ (ft)
#12   circus$ (ft)
#13   #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #12

ChildData

ChildData is produced by the National Children's Bureau. It encompasses four information databases: bibliographic information on books, reports and journal articles (including some full text access); directory information on more than 3,000 UK and international organisations concerned with children; Children in the News, an index to press coverage of children's issues since early 1996; and an indexed guide to conferences and events.

#1   Travellers
#2   Roma
#3   pupil mobility
#4   #1 OR #2 OR #3

Social Policy & Practice

This database covers public and social policy, public health, social care, community development, mental and community health, homelessness, housing, crime, law and order, families, children and older people. Content is from the UK with some material from the USA and Europe. A significant number of the references are to grey literature and UK government publications.

GRT set
#1   Travellers
#2   Roma
#3   Gypsies
#4   bargee$ (ft)
#5   fairground
#6   circus
#7   showchildren (ft) OR show children (ft)
#8   showmen (ft) OR show men (ft)
#9   showpeople OR show people (ft)
#10   transient children (ft)
#11   pupil mobility
#12   #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #11

Outcomes set
#13   outcome OR outcomes
#14   achievement
#15   attainment
#16   ECM
#17   every child matters
#18   be$ healthy (ft)
#19   stay$ safe (ft)
#20   enjoy and achieve (ft)
#21   economic wellbeing
#22   positive contribution (ft)

#23   good practice
#24   best practice
#25   #13 OR #14 OR #15 ... #24

#26   #12 AND #25

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