

EDUMIGROM

Working Paper 2

EDUCATION IN THE UK

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**Ethnic Difference in Education and Diverging Prospects
for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe**

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1. Overview of the educational system

This chapter will present an overview of the educational system in England. It will discuss key issues grouped in four broad categories: the various types of school and their structural organisation; the range of different pathways for children through the educational system; issues relating to teaching and pupil admissions; and finally some basic statistical data on schools, such as numbers of pupils in attendance at different institutions and how many remain in education after the compulsory schooling period is over.

1.1 Types of school and their structural organisation

At a national level, the education system in England is governed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, which is responsible for policy on education, children and youth issues up to the age of 19 in England. There are two types of schools in England: publicly-funded schools known as maintained schools; and public schools which are non grant-aided and are often know as independent schools.

At a local level, the responsibility for organising publicly-funded schools lies with local authorities (LAs), which have an obligation to provide quality assurance and to promote high standards of education. All LAs should have developed an Education Development Plan to provide information and guidance on key goals. Education Development Plans are produced in accordance with guidance from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. In terms of the schools they govern, LAs vary in size, ranging from approximately 50 to 500 schools. LAs provide funding for schools according to numbers of student and staff. Those schools which are in danger of falling below the target floor levels for academic achievement are offered Targeted Improvement Grants, and schools in areas of high deprivation are provided with extra funding. **Further, I suppose that there might be rich and poor LAs, whose maximum funding might be very different – even if they all make their best to provide for good education. Who takes care of the emerging regional differences? Does the government help at certain points? etc.).**

LAs allow schools to take responsibility for their own management. Nevertheless, LAs retain a number of core functions which cannot be delivered by schools: support for special educational needs, school transport, school improvement and tackling failure, educating excluded pupils, pupil welfare, and strategic management. Strategic management refers to the capacity to develop policy, allocate resources and draw up plans for delivery of education.

At an institutional level, all schools have a governing body which includes representatives from a range of stakeholders – for example, lobby/interest groups; public and voluntary sectors bodies; commercial suppliers – and which is responsible for decision-making related to each institution. Within the context of LAs and their remits, all schools maintain a high level of autonomy.

The legal framework for primary and secondary schools divides them into community, voluntary and foundation schools. The great majority of schools are community schools, established and funded by LAs. Foundation schools are owned by school governing bodies or charitable foundations, though are also funded by LAs. Voluntary schools were originally funded by voluntary bodies (e.g., churches), which retain some control over their management; however, voluntary schools are now generally funded by LAs.

Independent schools are secondary schools that are funded by private sources, predominantly fees generally paid by the parents of their pupils. Some independent schools, particularly the more traditional institutions, also have charitable status. The Independent Schools Council (ISC) represents 1,289 schools which collectively educate over 80% of the pupils in the UK independent sector. Schools in England that are members of the ISC are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate under a framework agreed between ISC, the DCSF and Ofsted. Independent schools are free to select their pupils, and the few parents who cannot afford the annual fees are offered means-tested bursaries. Independent schools have a better teacher to pupil ratio than mainstream schools (1 to 9 on average) and academic achievement is significantly higher. Quite a number of independent schools have boarding arrangements. **Can pupils move between independent and mainstream schools? Would they be accepted without any difficulties /e.g. differences in the curriculum/? How are these transitions handled? Do LAs have a say in these matters? – In general: if disputes arise, say, between the school and the parents, where can the parties turn?)**

Faith schools are schools which are partly funded by the state and which draw the remainder of their finances from either religious organisations or fees paid by parents of pupils, though some faith schools are now wholly maintained by the state (see chapter two for a more detailed discussion of faith schools). Additionally, there exist a number of **city academies can students change from here to public secondary schools?)** which are all-ability, state-funded independent schools established and managed by sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds, including high performing schools and colleges, universities, individual philanthropists, businesses, the voluntary sector, and the faith communities. City academies cater for all age groups; they follow the National Curriculum programmes of study in the core subjects of English, maths, science and ICT, and carry out Key Stage assessments and offer qualifications within the national framework. Academies are backed by LAs and are assessed by Ofsted. Academies were developed to tackle inner-city poverty, and retain a degree of flexibility to modify their curriculum to meet the needs of underperforming pupils as well as other pupils with specific needs. Academies are located in areas of social disadvantage and admit higher numbers of pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals than mainstream schools. However, since places in academies are oversubscribed, some sponsors have targeted the best pupils in their regions.

There are also special needs schools which cater for pupils with a variety of difficulties that may impact upon their educational performance in mainstream schools. These schools have staff trained to deal with the needs of such pupils and can provide education up to the age of 19 years old. Ratios of pupils in relation to staff at special schools tend to be kept as low 6 to 1. These schools also have specialised equipment suited to the needs of their pupils.

Quality control in schools is the responsibility of a separate, non-ministerial government department called the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Following the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and since 2007, Ofsted's remit has included all state-funded learning outside of higher education, as well as independent schools. Ofsted assigns a category to a school after inspection: poorly performing schools are described as 'special measures' or 'notice to improve'; these categories contribute to the schools reputation (Leech and Campos, 2003). Schools labelled 'special measures' receive support from LAs, additional funding, and reappraisal from Ofsted until the school is no longer deemed to be failing. Additionally, senior managers and teaching staff can be dismissed and the school governors may be replaced by an executive committee. Schools

which are failing but where inspectors consider there is capacity to improve are given a Notice to Improve. All schools are inspected every three years.

NOTE: If possible, a chart or a table would be useful to show the whole structure of the educational system. Even better would be to gain an overall picture with the actual numbers of the different types of schools (so that one gets an impression about the weight of private, charitable, faith etc. schools as opposed to the public sphere).

1.2 Pathways through the education system

There are several different pathways through the education system for children, depending upon the way their LA functions. The ages of transition between schools differs according to the local system. After nursery level, some children attend an infant school, a junior school and then a secondary school, while others attend a first school, then a middle school and finally an upper school. However, the most common pathway after nursery is to attend a primary school and then a secondary school. (Some schools have developed mechanisms for assisting transitions between schools, such as Buddy Clubs which allow ‘at risk’ pupils to meet other pupils from the schools during the summer period before new term.)

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receive a full time education suited to their age and ability. As a result of the Education Reform Act 1988, the National Curriculum was developed and then fully introduced in 1992. Its purpose was to ensure that all pupils received a balanced education by identifying the topics that should be taught and the standards expected to be achieved by pupils at key stages. The National Curriculum defines four Key Stages:

- Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2 (up to age 7)
- Key Stage 2: Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (age 7 to 11)
- Key Stage 3: Years 7, 8 and 9 (age 11 to 14)
- Key Stage 4: Years 10 and 11 (age 14 to 16)

The core subjects are English, Mathematics, and Science, and its foundation subjects are design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages, music, and art and design. The exams in Key Stage 1 are tests of reading, writing, speaking/listening, maths and science, which are assessed by teachers. At Key Stage 2, there are national tests based on English, maths and science and these are marked by an external marker; teachers are also required to provide an assessment based on these subjects. At Key Stage 3, there are national tests based on English, maths and science, including separate levels for reading and writing; these are marked by an external marker. At Key Stage 4, there are national examinations based on the core subjects and a number of subjects selected by the candidate; these are also marked by an external marker. All marking is coordinated by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Children enter primary school education (or similar – see above) at age 5. At this level, all subjects in the National Curriculum are taught, along with other subjects (Religious Education, Physical Education, and Citizenship). Primary school education is divided into Infant (ages 4-7) and Junior (ages 7-11) stages. At the end of the Infant School, pupils sit Key Stage 1 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). These tests are used primarily as a way of assessing the quality of teaching at a school rather than pupils’ ability. Key Stage 2 SATs are taken at the end of Year 6, when pupils are aged 11.

Children move to secondary school education at age 11, but their results do not impact on which schools they can choose to attend (in the case of systems that involve moving from middle- to upper schools, this transition is generally at age 13). In addition to National Curriculum subjects (see above), secondary school children may choose to take vocational subjects such as hairdressing and beauty, construction, woodwork, travel and tourism, business studies and others. Most children between the ages of 14 and 16 take General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations (GCSEs) in at least five subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, Religious Education are compulsory), as well as a number of others they have chosen from an optional pool (it is most common for children to take around 10 GCSEs in total, generally choosing those subjects which will provide a foundation for future academic courses or a career they wish to pursue). Persistent underachievement at this level has been tackled by vocational alternatives to academic subjects; these subjects allow pupils to study towards formal qualifications that are recognised in the workplace as applied credits.

After GCSEs, typically between the ages of 16 and 18, pupils can opt to take Advanced Level (A-Level) examinations either by continuing to study at secondary/upper schools or attending a separate sixth form college (an institution where pupils aged 16-19 typically study for advanced school-level qualifications) or a college of further education. Pupils generally choose 3 or 4 subjects to study for A-Levels, and usually select subjects they wish to go on and study in higher education provided by universities. Alternatively, pupils at this age can choose to study for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) to provide suitable skills for ensuing employment. In most subjects, students are entered into one of two tiers: a lower tier for those expected to achieve grades C-G; and a higher tier for those expected to achieve grades A* -D. Teachers decide which tier pupils are to be assigned to on the basis of mock exams results and independent assessment. Some subjects such as art and design, history, music, PE and religious studies are not tiered.

1.3 Teaching and pupil admissions

Classes for 5- to 7 year-olds are limited to 30 pupils taught by one teacher, with an average at Key Stage 1 of 25.6, and of 27.2 at Key Stage 2. In secondary schools the average class size taught by one teacher is approximately 21.5 (based on data for 2006/7 from the Department of Children, Schools and Families). The organization of teaching groups is a matter for the school to decide. Pupils in primary schools are most commonly taught in mixed ability classes, though many teachers use some form of grouping according to ability. Pupils in secondary schools are generally grouped according to ability in some subjects, while mixed-ability grouping is common in other subjects. **Teachers** are expected to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils of all abilities. **(Who controls them in this regard, and what happens if they do not meet the expectation?)** In primary school education, pupils are generally taught by generalist teachers, while in secondary school education, specialist teachers usually teach pupils according to the subjects in which they are qualified.

Admissions to publicly-funded primary and secondary schools do not incur any charges. Parents may apply to any school for a place for their child. LAs are required to operate mandatory admissions schemes to simplify the process, with the aim that each child will receive an offer of a place at one school on the same day as all other children. From September 2008 onwards, admissions procedures must comply with the newly revised Schools Admissions Code, which includes the following content. All publicly-funded schools with enough places must unconditionally offer every child who has applied a place. The LA or school governing body (depending on the legal category of the school – see above) must

develop an admissions policy to explain how places will be allocated if there are more applications than places at the school¹. In the event of oversubscription, priority must be given to children in public care, to children whose siblings are already at the school, and to those children in need of social or medical care. Additionally, distance between the child's home and the school must be factored into place allocation. Faith schools are permitted to give priority to those children who practice the same faith. Schools providing special needs education must give priority to those children with relevant needs. It is not permitted for school representatives to interview children and their families, and children must be selected without consideration of academic ability. In the event of any dispute over selection, parents can apply to an appeals panel monitored by the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice.

Individual schools and their governing bodies are responsible for recruiting and retaining their staff, and hold most of the budgets to enable this. However, LAs provide support with any staffing difficulties – e.g., staff shortage – in the form of advice given by Recruitment Strategy Managers who work with the government body Training and Development Agency for Schools. Teachers generally train by taking a three- or four-year Bachelor of Education degree course, or a bachelors degree followed by a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Both routes are common for primary level teachers, while the latter is more common for secondary level teachers. Additionally, all teaching staff in maintained and non-maintained schools should have achieved Quality Training Status (through successful completion of literacy, numeracy and ICT skill tests) and be registered with the General Teaching Council for England. A Quality Mark has been recently introduced to ensure that agencies recruit supply teachers who meet a minimum standard of ability.

1.4 Basic statistics on schools

Official statistics from the Department of Children, Families and Schools (www.dcsf.gov.uk) indicate that in 2007, there were 8.1 million children in 25,000 maintained and independent schools in England. 91 percent of children were taught in maintained primary and secondary schools, while the majority of the remaining 9 percent were taught in independent schools.

Data indicates that in the year 2005/6, there were 4,043,000 children in maintained nursery and primary schools; this figure was expected to remain stable in 2007/8. In secondary schools (excluding sixth form colleges), there were 3,309,000 children in education in 2005/6; this figure was expected to remain stable in 2007/8. The ratio of male and female children in maintained schools, both primary and secondary, is approximately 50/50.

In independent schools, there were 630,270 pupils in education in 2007, with slightly more male children than female children (approximately 320,000 compared with 310,000). Additionally in 2007, there were 89,410 children in special needs schools; the great majority of these pupils (63,000) were male. (Numbers of pupils attending Faith Schools is presented in chapter two.)

In 2006, 89.7 percent of 16 year-old pupils were participating in education or training; at 17 year-old, this figure was 81.5 percent, and at 18 year-old, it was 61.1 percent. 30.4 percent of 16-18 year-old pupils remained in maintained schools, while 40.7 percent attended colleges of

¹ There has been some controversy recently involving appeals against unfavourable decisions about which school certain pupils will attend. A 'postcode lottery' has angered many parents who believe they have a right to request which school their child/ren should attend. For instance, admission to secondary schools in Brighton has determined by the location in which a family lives, ruling out parents sending their child/ren to desired schools in different locations.

further education. 45.8 percent chose to study for A-Levels; 4.6 percent were taking GCSEs; 26.3 percent were taking NVQ certificates or equivalent, and a further 1.2 percent were on other courses.

Drop-out rates of **post-16 pupils** has been notoriously high in the UK. (If available, it would be useful to see data on non-attendance and drop-out rates also for pre-16 pupils. /Later you mention the high proportion of non-attending youth among the GRT population, indicating that they leave schooling at the age of 11.49 on the average, which means that they do not meet the compulsory age limit of age 16./ This raises a further issue: the report should briefly introduce policies /if exist: legal and other means/ to reach compliance with compulsory education. Whose responsibility is to make sure that all children under the age of 16 are attending a school? Is it LAs, parents, schools? These aspects of regulation also should be briefly addressed somewhere – most suitably either here, or in Chapter 2.2) There is a clear disparity between social groups, with pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds more likely to leave school earlier. Financial measures such as the government's Education Maintenance Allowance allow pupils from low earning families to draw a small income as an incentive to stay on at school; students must apply for this allowance and are eligible if they are studying for specific courses and their parents have a low income. Research shows that staying-on rates improved by 5.9% as a consequence of this scheme (www.dcsf.gov.uk). Other schemes designed to improve staying-on rates are services that offer advice to pupils (for example, Connexions), learning mentors who address barriers to learning (bullying, truancy, etc), Education Welfare Officers, and teaching assistants who work with individual pupils.

Exclusion rates were down 7% in 2008 from the previous year, with 8,900 pupils permanently excluded from school. Fixed rate exclusions, however, went up 4% to 363,000, with the great majority being for five days or more. The most common reason for exclusion was persistent disruptive behaviour, while boys were more likely than girls to be excluded permanently and on a fixed rate basis (temporary suspensions from school attendance) by four and three times respectively. There are a number of alternative educational routes for permanently excluded pupils; these include reintegration in other schools and Pupil Referral Units which function as schools and are inspected by Ofsted.

2. Schooling of minority ethnic youth

This chapter will present an overview of how ethnicity plays a role in education. It will discuss key issues grouped in four broad categories: the numbers of minority ethnic pupils in schools; law and regulations on schooling of minority ethnic youth; inter-ethnic relations in education; and ethnicity in public education.

2.1 Attendance of minority ethnic youth in schools

In maintained primary schools the number of pupils (of compulsory school age) who were classified as minority ethnic origin increased from 20.6 per cent in 2006 to 21.9 percent in 2007 – an increase of over one percentage point. A similar increase was apparent in secondary schools with 16.8 percent of pupils classified by minority ethnic groups in 2006 increasing to 17.7 per cent in 2007. These increases are largely born of demographic changes and increasing population sizes of minority ethnic groups in the UK.

The following table provides the numbers of pupils in maintained primary, secondary and all special schools according to different ethnic groups in 2007.

- a) What is the content of the category “all special schools”?
- b) I guess, the numbers are in 1000s.

A kind request to the authors: This table with the absolute numbers should go into the Appendix. Instead, here it would be most useful to present a table that shows the proportion of enrolled students as a percentage of the respective age-cohorts in each ethnic group + also in the country as a whole. Additionally, a brief verbal analysis of the main lessons of the table would be very welcome.

<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>Primary school</i>	<i>Secondary school</i>	<i>All special schools</i>
White	2,666,330	2,724,100	69,980
White British	2,545,340	2,626,650	67,540
Irish	11,760	12,060	310
Traveller of Irish heritage	2,840	1,040	100
Gypsy/Roma	5,370	2,610	160
Any other White background	101,000	81,740	1,870
Mixed	122,450	89,880	2,780
White and Black Caribbean	40,770	31,960	1,060
White and Black African	13,330	8,650	260
White and Asian	25,500	18,360	510
Any other Mixed background	42,860	30,920	950
Asian	276,540	227,270	5,720
Indian	78,720	78,600	1,300
Pakistani	114,780	85,150	2,990
Bangladeshi	48,170	33,370	700
Any other Asian background	34,870	30,150	730
Black	151,990	119,210	3,760

Black Caribbean	47,230	41,400	1,270
Black African	88,210	64,050	1,930
Any other Black background	16,550	13,760	560
Chinese	11,040	13,110	240
Any other ethnic group	40,110	31,250	690
Classified	3,268,470	3,204,820	83,160
Unclassified	35,910	63,330	1,520
Minority ethnic pupils	723,130	578,170	15,620
All pupils	3,304,370	3,268,160	84,680

Source: Schools' Census; data published by the Department of Children, Schools and Families, 2007.

Data for numbers of minority ethnic groups in independent schools have never been provided, though analysis of student composition in higher education evidence suggests that Chinese and Indian groups are more likely to attend them (Tomlinson, 2005).

The present study will include school pupils from Gypsy/Roma and Traveller, Black Caribbean, and Bangladeshi minority ethnic groups. As the foregoing table shows, there are over 12,500 Gypsy/Roma and Traveller pupils, over 162,000 Black Caribbean pupils (including White and Black Caribbean pupils), and approximately 82,000 Bangladeshi pupils in mainstream schools. In the rest of this report, we shall refer to these groups when appropriate. Details of the academic performance of these groups will be explored in detail in the next chapter, but (A few indicators about their school career /compared to majority students or, at least to the overall trends/ would be needed here. In what proportions do they study above the compulsory age or above A-level? What proportions of them take NVQ; what percentage attends further colleges? What proportions go on to university?)

2.2 Laws and regulations on schooling of minority ethnic youth

When New Labour came to power in 1997, the party pledged to commit to social justice and education as a means to create a just society. One of the first policies to attempt to pursue this goal was the 2000 Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA – an extension of the original act implemented in 1976). This act requires LAs to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities, as well as develop race equality policies in a proactive rather than a reactive way, as had previously been the case (Tomlinson, 2005). Schools and teachers have responsibilities as part of the RRAA including having an agreed written statement of policy for promoting race equality and monitoring by reference to ethnic group, the admission and progress of pupils. Data from the annual Level School Census now enable schools and LAs to monitor achievement and to target support where it is most needed. Promoting race equality is a key part of the policies and practices of all schools and other educational institutions, not only those with black and minority ethnic pupils. Ofsted must ensure that inspection teams look at the progress schools and local education authorities are making in terms of equality issues. The aim is to make such good practices fit effectively into the routine work of the school.

Among the strategies generated as a consequence of the RRAA was a Social Exclusion Unit, created partly to enquire into the high figures for the exclusion of Black pupils. Ofsted was also charged with a new framework for assessment that including issues relating to racial

equality. The *Excellence in Cities* programme (2004) identifies action zones with the intention of combating urban disadvantage in these areas; the programme attempted to bring together local schools, communities and businesses, and offered support to gifted and disruptive children, who were given learning mentors (Tomlinson, 2005). Another important intervention has been *Sure Start* for children under 4 and their parents in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the UK, many of which are areas with high proportions of minority ethnic groups. Financial support for high quality provision of child care support and significant local control has been very beneficial in some areas, improving collective self-esteem and children's future chances at school. A department called the Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit was also set up to provide money for LAs with a significant number of minority ethnic pupils. (Do LAs have to apply? Who decides in matters of entitlement? How is the scheme monitored? How is it made sure that LAs use the money for the very purpose of improving education and child care provisions of minority ethnic youth in their area? – Similar schemes often cause controversies in other countries. In the UK, do they work without conflicts?) The government additionally provides an Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant of £155 million annually. The funding and encouragement of separate faith schools is also encouraged (see above).

Despite these attempts to tackle problems involved in the education of minority ethnic groups, however, commentators have highlighted a number of difficulties relating to other issues which have impacted upon schooling, especially the marketisation of education. (This issue hasn't been discussed above. Please, insert a paragraph describing what 'marketisation of education' means in practice.) According to Gallagher (2004), educational policies with commitment to social justice were largely driven by economic policies, and since education has become increasingly marketised (that is, the process of school allocation is now competitive, involving schools engaged in marketing strategies to attract pupils), parents are forced to compete with one another for school places, a process which does not ensure integration, justice and equity (Parekh, 2000; Tomlinson, 2005). Additionally, a mixture of public and private sector approaches to social justice (What is the difference between them?) have been weaker without centrally driven commitment. (Gallagher, 2004). Market policies in education continued to exacerbate the hierarchy of more and less desirable schools, with the most desirable the least likely to be attended by minority ethnic groups. League tables are made available to enable parents to compare the performance levels of different schools. This system where failing schools are placed on special measures has introduced a 'naming and shaming' policy for schools who may often have a large proportion of minority ethnic groups, which leads to further scapegoating and stigmatisation (Parekh, 2000). Additionally, the failure to develop a curriculum which would educate people for a multicultural society does not mitigate ignorance and xenophobia (Tomlinson, 2005).

Another problem relates to the choice mechanisms that were inaugurated by New Labour and which have been shown to disadvantage minority ethnic groups and to increase segregation (Gallagher, 2004). Choice mechanisms involve parents possessing the right to select the school at which they wish their children to study (see chapter one). Evidence suggests that school diversity has led to a White 'flight' from schools with large numbers of minority ethnic pupils (Tomlinson, 2005). Similarly, attempts to improve standards in school have been at their height during New Labour's term of office, and this involves practices of selection which places minority ethnic students in lower ranking groups (Gillborn, 2006). (There are no policies for positive discrimination among schools? Or, are they ineffective to counterveil this process? – Please, give a short discussion here.)

2.3 *Inter-ethnic relations in schools*

The Race Relations Act of 1976 made it unlawful to discriminate against someone on racial grounds, and asserted that segregation of a person is to be regarded as treating him or her less favourably. Segregation according to ethnicity in schools is of interest for several reasons. If children's performance at schools depends on peers, then higher levels of segregation will result in greater educational inequality in academic achievement and may even threaten social cohesion. Much research has shown that segregation in schools increased in England between 1994 and 2004 (Allen and Vignoles, 2007; Goldstein and Noden, 2003). (A few indicators to highlight the magnitude of the problem would be very useful here.) Nevertheless, other research has suggested that apart from in certain parts of Northern England and for certain minority ethnic groups, segregation is not increasing and has even decreased in some places. Exceptions are in LAs which have a large South Asian or Black population – these groups tend to be more segregated than others (Weekes-Bernard, 2007)². (Since out groups are among the, here a few details /indicators/ would be very useful.)

More recently, however, some commentators have voiced concern that New Labour's focus on parental choice with regard to their children's place of education has led to social and ethnic segregation. As Tomlinson (2008) suggests, choice policies can result in young people from different ethnic backgrounds being kept apart. Nevertheless, the role of parental choice is not regarded as the only or even a major reason for what segregation does exist, since many parents actually support moves towards more social cohesion (Weekes-Bernard, 2007). Jenkins, et al. (2006) drew on data from 2003 and demonstrate that in England, segregation in schools is driven by the uneven spread of children from different social backgrounds. To this can be added the roles of increasing divisions of income and wealth, housing policies, patterns of immigration, levels of poverty and experiences of racism (Weekes-Bernard, 2007). (These factors often interplay with ethnicity. Further, how about the impact of residential segregation?) This can be seen as a major problem in terms of education, since evidence suggests that under New Labour the division of wealth is larger than it has ever been, with the potential for social mobility significantly reduced.

Nevertheless, organisational structures and practices in schools creates patterns of social relations which can be viewed as contributing to ethnic divisions. Tracking tends to lead to ethnic pupils being placed in lower sets which have a reputation for behavioural problems. Additionally, it can be argued that there is a White bias in terms of the curriculum with exam questions often reflecting a White cultural perspective (Singh, 1987).

Some schools have recognised the multi cultural nature of its catchment and responded to it. For example, the variety of languages spoken in school resulted in the creation of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Forum (EMA). Some schools give pupils the possibility to translate their knowledge of another language into take GCSE qualifications so some schools offer the choice to learn community languages such as Urdu to (Edwards, 2001). There are English as an Additional Language (EAL) Reading Programmes. School may forge close links with study support and mentoring groups which aspired to combat poor achievement. For example, in Sheffield this would include Somali Education Breakthrough, Reach High Two run by the Kashmiri Education Trust, Roshni, and the Yemeni led BSSSP group. (What does this abbreviation stand for?) This is a positive step since evaluation of the impact of

² Some of the confusion regarding the degree of segregation that exists may be linked to different ways of categorising pupils; some studies use free school meals as an indicator of poverty, and others use socio-economic information from such sources as the National Census 2001; no single method is wholly accurate.

participation in after school study support on the academic attainment, attitudes and attendance of secondary school pupils has been shown to be effective with children speaking of feeling more comfortable and secure in their own community groups (Macbeath, 2001).

While served with the best intentions, the cumulative effect of these activities highlight the fact that race is ‘a signifier of relational identity politics’ (Luke and Carrington, 2000: 5) which does shape school experiences. While such activities could be seen to thwart the ethnocentrism of the school curriculum through circumventing bounded ‘islands’ of racial and cultural distinctiveness, the boundedness of the school’s organisation of cultural diversity contradicts the open nature of multi culturalism. Although these activities carried a firm conviction of racial identities, they work by differentiating pupils in terms of racial identities, a mechanism that always has the consequence of creating ‘outsiders’. The critical point becomes the racial/ cultural boundary that defines the group, not the cultural nexus that it encloses (Barth, 1969). While acknowledgement that different cultures have different values and different ways of life is important, there does lie the danger that we carry on the tradition of exocising them. McLeod and Yates (2000) would view some schools’ practices as the omnipresence of Whites being positioned at the centre, ‘around which a carnival like array of multicultural difference is displayed for their enjoyment and sampling’.

Cultural issues stemming from racial identities may impinge on school practices. For example, arrangements like prayer rooms may be made for Muslim pupils during Ramadan. Pupils who are fasting during this period may be feeling drowsy or headaches due to dehydration, so schools may plan less strenuous activities during PE. Alternatively pupils could have short levels of concentration which would mean avoiding setting exams in this period. Lupton's (2004) research unpicks some of these issues in detail. She notes tensions in value systems between home and school, ‘parental restrictions and enforcing these with punishment were viewed by staff as uncomfortably authoritarian accustomed to a more liberal culture.’

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 imposes upon schools, education institutions and LAs a duty to promote good relations between pupils of different racial groups. Bullying and harassment in schools is well-documented, and these problems are frequently exacerbated when pupils belong to different minority ethnic groups (for example, the experience of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller groups – Children’s Society, 2007). A new scheme announced by the government in 2007 was the *Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools*, which sought to provide guidance to schools for tackling bullying.

However, in multi-racial schools many teachers are still unprepared to deal with the antagonisms they encounter among pupils of different groups, with White teachers particularly finding it difficult to get involved in issues of race (Pearce, 2005). Mac an Ghail’s (1993) ethnographic study looked at the interaction of White teachers and two groups of anti-school male students- the Asian Warriors and the Afro-Caribbean Rasta Heads- at an inner city secondary school in an English city. He found that teachers tended to stereotype on the basis of pupils’ ethnic group,

There was a tendency for Asian students to be seen by teachers as technically of high ability and socially as conformist. In contrast Afro-Caribbean students tended to be seen as of low ability and potential discipline problems.

This suggests an educational self-fulfilling prophesy whereby a mutually accepted stratification system arises from the social interactions between pupil and teacher which impacts on expectations of performance. Mac an Ghaill (1993: 152) found that the Rasta Heads perceived the school language as a major instrument of their own deculturation and in response, they asserted themselves by speaking Creole within the classroom, using language as a 'mechanism of white exclusion'. This is an important and visible symbol of defiance of what pupils perceive to be the dominant white culture of the school. Focusing on how the Rasta Heads' perceived school, Mac an Ghaill came to see their disaffection as a legitimate mechanism opposed to the school's institutional racist practices.

Awareness of racial difference has become perhaps more profound throughout the world following 9-11. This has filtered into school as Lemos's (2005) research shows how Muslim, Asian, Afghan and Iraqi pupils were considered to be potential terrorists by their classmates.

Nevertheless, some minority ethnic groups have developed their own strategies to promote inter-ethnic relations. A project based in Slough involved Sikh, Hindu and Muslim communities and trained teenagers to deal with conflict; later the project was expanded to the Polish community in the town (Salman, 2006).

One issue in which segregation has become a central concern is New Labour's focus on encouraging the role of Faith Schools in education. Faith schools seek to provide an alternative to the state education system by the creation of communities which provide instruction in one religious faith. Of the 20,704 schools in England in 2007, the majority were of no religious character (13,861 schools). However, there were over half as many Christian faith schools, including 6,642 Church of England schools, 2,038 Roman Catholic schools, 26 Methodist schools, and a further 88 other Christian faith schools. Non-Christian faith schools are represented by 37 Jewish schools, 7 Muslim schools, and 2 Sikh schools. (There are also approximately 700 Madrassas in Britain unregulated by the state, and attended by approximately 100,000 Muslim children.) (How can they go on in the formal educational system? Quite a large number...Is there a special state policy to assist their school career?)

The great majority of Faith Schools are partly funded by the state and draw the remainder of their finances from either religious organisations or fees paid by parents of pupils, though some faith schools are now wholly maintained by the state. Most of the Christian Faith Schools are primary schools, though of the 37 Jewish schools, 28 are primary and 9 are secondary schools; of the 7 Muslim schools, 4 are primary and 3 secondary schools; and the 2 Sikh schools includes both a primary and a secondary school. Faith Schools follow the same national curriculum as state schools.

The issue of Faith Schools has led to some controversy. The New Labour government which granted maintained status to a number of minority ethnic Faith Schools (on the basis that since Christian faith schools exist, it would be hypocritical to do otherwise) claimed that schools with a strong individual identity were a sound basis for improvement in standards. Others have claimed that schools which treat all pupils exactly the same, regardless of religious faith, may lead to serious misunderstanding and anger on behalf of Muslim pupils and their parents. However, other commentators – for example, Sir Herman Ouseley, Former Head of the Commission for Racial Equality – argue that Faith Schools can lead to the separation of communities, and significantly some Muslim leaders have criticised faith schools for the same reason. Recent attempts to forge legislation which makes it legal for Faith Schools to provide

a multicultural agenda in their curriculum has failed to be implemented, and there is no guarantee that Faith Schools will teach universal human rights values as distinct from particular group values (Tomlinson, 2008).

2.4 Ethnicity in public education

More recently, a number of policies have been implemented by the government to improve the education of all young people. These include the DCSF's *Aiming High* scheme, a national strategy for young people and their development; the DCSF's *14-19 Programme*, a scheme that offers young people more opportunities in their educational pathway; **On what level /LAs? schools? independent?/ do they work?** and monitoring guidelines for schools to assess the profile of their pupil population in terms of educational standards, needs and targets; **teachers are also monitored, (by whom?, how?)** particularly in relation to meeting the needs of pupils. A school census is also completed three times a year for all pupils and covers issues such as personal characteristics, achievement records, attendance, exclusions, and special needs. There is additionally a focus on citizenship, conducted via compulsory modules (see chapter four for a full discussion on citizenship).

LAs and schools under their remit have responded to this legislation in a variety of ways, a selection of which is detailed below. The Aiming High scheme has a component dedicated directly to the schooling of minority ethnic groups which advocates strong leadership, high expectations, effective teaching and learning, and parental involvement in education. There has also been a drive towards recruiting teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds, as well as programmes designed to assist White teachers to effectively teach minority ethnic pupils, particularly with regard to difficulties born of different languages.

Within this policy context, several LAs have developed their own systems for teaching minority ethnic groups within their schools. One London LA uses a group-based mentoring programme aimed at reducing the exclusion of Black Caribbean students. Group-work was aimed at encouraging young people to direct their attention towards what they could get out of school (Warren, 2005). This was also directed at developing a different approach to being Black through a critical exploration of Black history. Warren (2005) argues that this provided the minority ethnic youth with a language to construct a cultural politics of race which takes them beyond individual resistance. Some schools in their attempt to overcome prejudice and discrimination take time to talk to both students and parents and are prepared to consider and debate values and strategies to overcome inequity (Gilbert, 2004).

With Asylum Seekers, one school devised its own Welcome Packs aimed at helping new families to settle by using pictures of local amenities and school activities, accompanied by key words in English (Whiteman, 2005). Bilingual teachers or teaching assistants to help with language barrier have been employed in Birmingham and Bradford; aspects of the curriculum are taught by bilingual teachers who give a priority to the origin of some ethnic minorities (Gokulsing, 2006). Asylum seeker pupils are sometimes paired off with another child of the same language. Pupils are encouraged to learn and use their first language as well as English. Other schools also use anti-bullying workshops as a way of communicating about issues surrounding race and ethnicity (Whiteman, 2005), and others make use of the resources provided by the *Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service*, which provides support for both schools and pupils in the form of guidance and funding (ibid.). Some schools used a 'Red Card to Racism' scheme as a way of promoting tolerance (ibid.).

Nevertheless, in terms of broad critiques of the system, many commentators point to several unaddressed problems in LA and school strategies to combat racism. More concerted effort towards conducting ethnicity monitoring in schools is also needed (Parekh, 2000). There is a severe lack of minority ethnic teachers (Tomlinson, 2005; Wilkins, 2001), while a change in institutional ethos is required with a teacher education curriculum based on a critically transformative notion of education (Wilkins, 2001): teachers need to see themselves as agents of social change (ibid.). Citizenship needs to be tackled as a contested notion that confronts issues of social inequality head on, and there needs to be a structured educational framework which discusses racism and other forms of oppression, rather than passing reference made in the curriculum (Singh, 2001). Cultural diversity should be valued and reflected in the curriculum (Gokulsing, 2006); Gundara (2000) proposes a 'curriculum of recognition'.

3. Inequalities in the educational system

This chapter will present an overview of the structures and mechanisms that maintain or reinforce inequalities in education. It will discuss major dimensions of social differences in education and will situate the role of ethnicity among them. It will also discuss differences in school performance according to membership of minority ethnic groups.

3.1 Differences in school careers

Research conducted on the school careers of pupils of different backgrounds has focused predominantly on three broad issues: gender, socio-economic factors/social class, and ethnicity.

It is a well-documented (if rather oversimplified) observation that girls outperform boys in schools. For instance, At GCSE, girls continue to progress more than boys. The difference between boys and girls attainment (5+ A*-C) in GCSE English is as much as 14 percentage points. It has been suggested that the reasons for this difference in educational achievement include an 'anti-achievement culture' among some boys, male peers disrupting schoolwork, the low expectations of boys, teaching styles that prioritise girls, a loss of motivation in boys engendered by a decline of traditional masculine jobs, and the way that pupils are grouped in lessons.

Research on the effects of social class predictably reveal that those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have a lower level of academic ability when starting primary school and make less progress than the national average while there (with particularly poor numeracy and literacy skills); this pattern is likely to be repeated in secondary school, with the result that they are generally ill-prepared for adult employment (see below for examples of performance indicators reflecting differences of social class). This failure to achieve what their socially advantaged peers manage has been ascribed variously to low expectations, poor parenting, involvement in crime, poor provision in schools for children with special educational needs, and poor school attendance records.

This problem is compounded when such socially disadvantaged pupils also belong to ethnic groups with similarly poor educational achievement records, particularly those who are not fluent speakers of English and have problems with engaging in everyday school life. Indeed, members of the poorest ethnic groups – such as Black-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils – unsurprisingly have low educational achievement records (see below).

The interplay of these three broad pupil characteristics in terms of how they impact upon school careers is complex. Recent research conducted by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) suggests that social class is the biggest factor affecting attainment in education. It is argued that understanding its relationship with gender and ethnicity is central to reducing the gap between success and failure in schools.

As mentioned above, girls on the whole perform better than boys in education. However, research factoring in social class and ethnicity reveals a more nuanced picture. For example, the analysis of England's 2006 Key Stage 2 results (for 11 year olds) reveals that while girls are significantly outperforming boys in English, disadvantaged girls trail behind their wealthier male peers. While ethnicity and gender remain major factors in the achievement gap, social class appears to be the biggest factor determining success, a conclusion endorsed

by Gillborn and Mirza (2000) who show that social class is the largest determinant of variations in educational achievement, followed by ethnicity and then by gender.

Drawing on analyses of the percentage of children who achieve **Level 4** (a footnote describing the system of grading would be needed here) or above in English, the EOC research reveals that:

- Social class is twice as important as gender in English, with an achievement gap of 22 percentage points in children receiving free school meals compared to those not doing so. Boys' achievement levels are particularly affected by social disadvantage: those who receive free school meals trail 24 percentage points behind their wealthier male peers.
- Girls outperform boys across the board in English by 10 percentage points. In mathematics and science, however, there is no a gender gap, with boys and girls performing similarly.
- Taking into account social class and ethnic background (among broad ethnic groups), White boys receiving free school meals had the lowest level of performance compared to boys from other ethnic groups. Similarly, White girls receiving free school meals had a worse level of performance than girls from other ethnic groups. Researchers ascribe this to a correlation between eligibility for free school meals and socio-economic deprivation.
- Social class can reverse the gender gap, however: girls receiving free school meals are falling behind boys of the same ethnicity who do not receive them.
- Overall, the group with the lowest percentage in achievement of Level 4 English were White boys receiving free school meals. Researchers ascribe this to socio-economic deprivation and 'anti-achievement' culture among White boys.
- There is also a large difference in performance across black and minority ethnic groups, with a 16 percentage points' gap between the highest and lowest achieving ethnic groups in English results (see below).

In order to tackle these complex gaps in gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity, the EOC report recommends a school-wide approach to achievement involving strong leadership from the head teacher, high expectations for all pupils, and effective partnerships with parents and in the community (Skelton, Francis and Valkanova, 2007). To some degree, moves towards this end have already begun. When analysing all three dimensions simultaneously, Gillborn and Mirza (2000) show that between the years of 1988 and 1995, all groups improved exponentially in terms of achievement at GCSE level, and that this largely due to improvements in strategies of providing education. However, some groups continue to struggle, and White boys from a low socio-economic background are currently a major concern for policymakers. In the case of minority ethnic groups, further analysis of the role of social class and gender is complicated by differences between groups, and we shall turn to this issue now.

3.2 Differences in pupil performance of minority ethnic groups

Pupil performance in schools is assessed in several ways: by academic progress made between the four Key Stages, by class banding in terms of ability, by achievement at GCSEs and A-level, as well as by attendance and exclusion rates. Another indicator of achievement is entry to higher or further education.

Recent research on the performance of minority ethnic groups has revealed a complex picture in terms of educational achievement. These are summarised below (a discussion of these issues can be found below):

- Caribbean, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi groups have lower average levels of attainment than whites. Indians, African Asians, Chinese and Africans are more likely to have higher qualifications. These trends can be found in both lower and higher education (Modood, 2005, Parekh, 2000, Gallagher, 2004).
- Some ethnic groups such as Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are very internally polarized, with both highly qualified and unqualified individuals. In 40% of LAs, Pakistanis are more likely than White people to attain 5 grade A-C GCSEs (Modood, 2005). Bangladeshi pupils made considerable advances in the 1990s and in some areas outperform White pupils (DES, 2006).
- Research with Black Caribbean pupils tends to show that the relative performance of high, starts to decline in Key Stage 2, tails off badly in Key Stage 3 and is below that of most other ethnic groups at Key Stage 4. While Black Caribbean children begin school as the same standard as the national average, by the age of 16, the number of students who have five GCSE passes is less than half the national average (DES, 2006)
- Black Caribbean women were much more likely than their male counterparts to have higher qualifications (Modood, 2005)
- In second and third generations, most ethnic groups have made significant academic progress, as have their White peers. The exception is young Black Caribbean males who do no better than their elders (Modood, 2005)
- All ethnic groups, with the possible exception of Black Caribbeans, have increased their share of higher education admissions since 1990 (Modood, 2005)
- All minorities, with the exception of Black Caribbean males, are escalating in terms of their representation in further education and some groups now exceed the government's target of 50% participation (Modood, 2005).
- Around 70% of Black Caribbean and 60% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi students pursue their degrees in new universities which were formerly polytechnics. Only 35% of White pupils do so (Modood, 2005).
- Black Caribbean pupils are considerably more likely to face disciplinary action and exclusion from school; there has also been a recent increase in exclusions of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Somali pupils (DES, 2006).
- Permanent exclusion rates are higher than average for Travellers of Irish Heritage, Gypsy/Roma, Black Caribbean, Black Other and White/Black Caribbean pupils (DES, 2006). Black Caribbean pupils are more likely to be excluded for physical assault than for persistent disruptive behaviour (DES, 2006).
- Black Caribbean pupils are one and a half times more likely than White pupils to be identified as having behavioural, emotional and social needs (DES, 2006).
- Gypsy/Roma and Traveller pupils experience the most severe educational exclusion of any minority ethnic group in the UK with levels of attainment being roughly a quarter of the national average: 13-15% of GRT pupils obtaining five A*-C GCSE passes compared to a 60% national average. In addition, patterns of attainment at this level are declining, which is markedly different from other minority ethnic groups where there is evidence of some improvement (Children's Society, 2007).
- Asylum seekers are making new demands on LAs and schools. Asylum-seeking children suffer significant racial harassment born of a 'rabid discourse' which

construes them as proto-terrorists and ‘benefits-scroungers’ (Gillborn, 2006). Refugee children suffer three times the national average for psychological disturbance (Whiteman, 2005), and LAs do not provide sufficient information for schools with regard to these children (ibid.).

The government has highlighted the improvements that have been made and ascribes these to the success of policies designed to promote the educational needs of minority ethnic groups (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). However, as we can see above, certain minority groups are still failing in school, despite existing schemes intended to help them. Indeed, research conducted on the reasons why other minority ethnic groups are succeeding points towards other factors than school initiatives.

Explanations for these trends have tended to focus on Black Caribbean males. It has been shown that Black Caribbean males have the most confrontational relations with teachers, and that teachers feel threatened by them. This leads to low expectations, as well as teachers interpreting certain behaviour more negatively than in the case of similar behaviour exhibited by White or Asian pupils (Connolly, 1995). Additionally, it has been claimed that Black Caribbean males bring to school an anti-school attitude born of street culture, which allows them to resist racism but which also results in underachievement (ibid.). Another factor may be that Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and refugee pupils are disproportionately educated in schools with lower levels of resources, which are less able to attract the best quality staff. Additionally, the implication of looking at levels of attainment is that racial categories are seen as relatively uniform and stable although the concept of race as a collective phenomenon does not adequately capture the range of identities within racial groups. Blakey, Pearce and Chesters’ (2006) sought to capture the voices of ‘minorities within minorities’. They found cultural and social tensions in Bradford's South Asian community, reflecting caste, gender and generational hierarchies deriving from place of origin. These hierarchies were often severely limiting in terms of social mobility since judgements on the basis of caste were still being made by some young people born in the UK.

These explanations are undoubtedly important reasons why certain minority ethnic groups underachieve in education, but they are not without their shortcomings. For instance, if racism leads to victims being turned off school, why do Asian males and females have high staying on rates? Modood (2003) suggests that too much research has focused on why Black Caribbean males underachieve, and not enough on why Asian groups do make progress.

One explanation for progress in education is that some minority ethnic groups manifest a strong drive for qualifications. Modood (2005) points to the *self-concept* of a minority ethnic group which involves striving to achieve higher status and prosperity, aware of the fact that the ‘dice are stacked against them’. This issue is exemplified when issues of gender and social class are considered in relation to minority ethnic groups. Research suggests that cultures which are portrayed as opposed to educating women seem to be producing growing cohorts of highly motivated young women (Ahmad et al, 2003), while Pakistani and Bangladeshi families – generally among the poorest minority ethnic groups, with large households, more dependents and less money – are nonetheless making significant progress in terms of academic performance.

It has been argued that parental social class is a major factor in determining university entrants. Modood (2003) provides evidence showing that offspring of parents with non-manual jobs exceed those with manual jobs by a large margin. This is certainly the case with

Black Caribbean ethnic groups, but in the case of Indian and Chinese groups, university entrants are as likely to come from manual working parental backgrounds as non-manual. However, Modood (2003) suggests that in the case of Indian and Chinese migrants, employment may not reflect their social class and capital; members of these groups may have suffered downward mobility upon migration, and may actually value education more than White workmates. They may also foster high expectations, give encouragement, maintain discipline, etc. Therefore, it can be claimed that certain ethnicities compound class disadvantage, while others counteract it when it comes to academic achievement.

Indeed, racial discrimination has meant that minority ethnic groups have been particularly dependent on qualifications for jobs and educational progression. Surveys of employers show that they would much rather recruit from the older universities (Parekh, 2000). There is strong evidence that, when applying to old universities, minority candidates face an ethnic penalty (Modood, 2003). Qualifications can therefore be argued to have more value to certain minority ethnic groups in that they serve as a way of progressing economically. In short, the government's claims that many minority ethnic groups have more recently made significant improvements in terms of academic achievement can be seen to mask a situation complicated by which ethnic minority group is being referred to, as well as gender, socio-economic status, and structural problems relating to entrenched racism in society (Tomlinson, 2008).

4. Education of minority ethnic youth in the light of public debates and policy-making

This chapter will present an overview of how education of minority ethnic youth is framed in the public discourse, how contested issues are put on the agenda of policy-making, and what kinds of policies are applied to respond to the claims. Particular emphasis will be put on initiatives, policies and measures to combat ‘minoritisation’ in schools.

4.1 Public discourse and representation

More recently, in the wake of New Labour’s attempts to tackle racism via the education of children, there have been a number of issues debated in the public arena. At the heart of these issues is the notion of what it means to be British. Although these debates have been prevalent in British public debate in previous generations, more recently many no longer regarded Britain as a cohesive society, rather a fragmented one in which the problems engendered by multi-culturalism were perceived to be something that needed to be immediately addressed (Tomlinson, 2008); this fracture was ostensibly a consequence of the presence of minority ethnic groups and the arrival of more migrants and refugees.

In 2004, the editor of *Prospect* magazine sparked a debate by attacking progressive liberals for supporting diversity. He suggested that ethnic groups must adopt the ‘history of their new country’ (Goodhart, 2004 – cited in Tomlinson, 2008) in order to avoid diverse groups leading to tensions. This view was supported by the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Philips, and then endorsed by MPs, journalists and other leading spokespeople. Indeed, these concerns were escalated after the suicidal bombings in London in 2005: the men responsible had been born and educated in Britain, and consequently some schools came to be regarded as potential training houses for terrorists. Riots among minority ethnic groups in major cities occurred in 2005, together with a continuing trend of racially motivated stabbings and killings. Other commentators have claimed that maintaining diversity can lead to ethnic integration. In the context of education, research has discovered that White children in all-White classes had no appreciation of the difficulties ethnic minority children can face. They were also less likely to make friends across ethnic divides (Weller, 2008).

As a consequence of all this unrest, New Labour claimed that terrorism and immigration were the public’s main concern, and MPs targeted the Muslim community’s unwillingness to respond to pleas for integration. A nationwide discourse of ‘Islamophobia’ quickly developed. An emphasis was placed on extremist members of minority ethnic groups, particularly Muslims, and a plea was made to moderate member of such groups to defend British values. Tony Blair, the Prime Minister at the time, claimed that ‘the right to be in a multi-cultural society was always implicitly balanced by the duty to integrate and accept British values’ (Blair, 2006 – cited in Tomlinson, 2008). Other commentators, however, have claimed that multi-culturalism remains a workable concept. A representative of the Runnymede Trust claimed, “we need also to ensure people are treated fairly and their identities are not denigrated or subsumed into some sort of non-identity because that gets rid of all the benefits of diversity.”

One case related to education that was debated keenly in the public arena concerned the hijab – a traditional headscarf worn by many Muslim women. In 2005, Muslim women protested in London against the proposed law banning the wearing of religious symbols in French schools. However, in Britain the school teacher Shabina Begum successfully overturned a court ruling, allowing her to wear the hijab in school. This debate was set within the wider context of the

tensions between liberal and multicultural political visions (Ward, 2006). This case was representative of broader tensions regarding minority ethnic relations with British *mores*.

The New Labour government responded to these tensions by commissioning a review related to diversity and citizenship. The *Ajegbo Report* (2007) made a number of recommendations with the aim of promoting community cohesion among different groups, including several aimed at schools: school twinning, extended school activities to include parents from different communities, 'buddy' schemes to help second language speakers, citizenship education, a review of the religious education curriculum, and involving local employers and voluntary groups in the 14-19 curriculum (Ajegbo, 2007).

Nevertheless, despite a rhetoric of concern, tensions remained. One example was in 2006 when a university lecturer argued on the basis of IQ tests that Black people were intellectually inferior to Whites, and this view was endorsed by a paper published by another academic that claimed that poverty and ill-health in Africa could be ascribed to lower intelligence. Researchers from voluntary organisations and university student unions have protested against these conclusions, claiming that low IQ levels are born of a lack of education and that this kind of thinking could retrigger debates about eugenics. Soon after, another attempted bombing was made in Glasgow airport by educated (medical and technical) minority ethnic men who had originally entered Britain as refugees; these acts were associated with whole Muslim communities, and the public fear remained that schools and universities in which segregation was manifest could be 'breeding ground' for terrorists. The role of education was again at the heart of publicly debated concerns with regard to multi-culturalism. Muslims are particularly targeted as potentially dangerous ('Islamophobia'), though this discourse maps on to existing patterns of racism with many other minority ethnic groups suspected of anti-Western rhetoric.

Inequality and poverty were overlooked in the debates (arguably the most plausible source of unrest – see above), as was genuine academic progress on the part of many minority ethnic youth (see above); Tony Blair angered community activists by claiming that violence involving minority ethnic groups (including killings) were caused by Black culture which involved absent fathers and a lack of positive role models – certainly a problematic conclusion that does not reflect existing data on minority ethnic achievement in schools (see above). With regard to the persistent academic failure of Black Caribbean youth, activists located the problem within government indifference and institutional racism, while the government continued to suggest that the problem was in fact born of a lack of community cohesion. The onus has been repeatedly shifted on to Black communities, individuals, parents and schools to deal with what are almost certainly structural issues relating to house, educational and employment (Tomlinson, 2008).

4.2 Policy making

As mentioned above, when New Labour came to power in 1997, the party set out to tackle the challenges presented by an increasingly multi-ethnic society by focusing on education as a way of inculcating anti-racist attitudes among a new generation of children. However, we have also seen that New Labour's strategies are regarded by many commentators as problematic.

At the heart of New Labour's policies concerning the education of children with regard to issues of race is the notion of citizenship. Citizenship education as advocated by *The Crick Report* (1998) covers social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political

literacy; citizenship studies were made compulsory to all children in 2002. Some interpret the introduction of citizenship studies in schools as the government's (deeply inadequate) response to the *McPherson Report* (1999), which, following the failure of the police to charge anyone for the death of a Black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, said all public institutions must deal with their 'institutional racism' (Gillborn, 2006). The report's inadequacy is seen to be an attempt to promote universal values but without an understanding of difference; it is also seen to contribute to a trend in educational policy of 'deracialisation' – that is, of reducing racism to individual ignorance and prejudice. Other problems with this approach include an absence from *The Crick Report* of any direct mention of racism, either personal, institutional or structural. The targets set for citizenship education do not include ethnic equality, international and global issues, conflict resolution and anti-racism. When *The Crick Report* does talk about ethnicity and diversity it makes no mention of inequality or power imbalances, nor of anti-racism; it also regards ethnic minorities as a homogenous mass. The report states that minorities must 'learn and respect the codes and conventions as much as the majority', implying that minority communities are outside current conventions in a way that white people are not; this also reflects the move by the former Home Secretary to create a 'citizenship test' for all those acquiring British nationality. Finally, when racism is mentioned in citizenship educational literature, it reduces it to a matter of personal prejudice.

Some of the applications in schools of other New Labour policies have led to further problems. The Education Act 2005 obligated local authorities to set targets for schools to meet with regard to promoting 'community cohesion'. This resulted in additional pressure on schools, which were regarded as accountable and blameworthy if their application of these measures failed. Community cohesion is also promoted by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, a government strategy for facilitating conflict resolution, though owing to New Labour's focus on education as the principle way of addressing multi-cultural tensions, schools still bear a great responsibility for this. Additionally, schools were given more powers to exclude pupils and make their parents responsible for them; this latter measure impacted particularly on Black parents (Tomlinson, 2008).

New Labour's focus on parental choice with regard to the schools that children attend served only to exacerbate these difficulties. Headmasters became reluctant to promote race issues in case the school became branded as 'radical' and puts off potential pupils (Tomlinson, 2008). White parents attempted to segregate their children from schools in which there were a large number of minority ethnic children. As detailed above, Faith Schools were not obligated either to accept a considerable group of children not raised in that faith or to teach human rights common to all groups as opposed to faith-based values; this remained a problem despite Ofsted inspection (Tomlinson, 2008). **The issue of segregation is clearly an important one in terms of combating racism**(a bit should be written about this also in Chapter 2.3): a study carried out by the University of Lancaster revealed that segregated White pupils held more stereotypical attitudes about minority ethnic groups than those who attend mixed schools (Tomlinson, 2008).

In short, it can be claimed that schools are expected to compensate for deeper, structural problems in society (Tomlinson, 2008). At the heart of New Labour education policies there is an assumption that the problems engendered by multi-culturalism are the central concern and that schools are the place where these can be best addressed. However, many commentators suggest that it is actually wealth and social class issues which are more important in terms of explaining the differences in academic achievement among children (see above), and that ethnic status merely exacerbates this problem in some cases: for

example, the poorest households are often Muslim and Indian (Tomlinson, 2008). Additionally, New Labour's move away from institutional racism – that is, a collective failure on the part of social organizations to tackle racism – and towards racism as a personal failing of individual people is regarded as a refusal to affect the changes needed at a local, national and international level (Arora, 2005).

This problem is in fact encapsulated in schools. A study by Warren (2005) draws on post-colonial theory to look at racism in schools, arguing that it is less a case of institutional racism than deeply embedded cultural assumptions that have emerged out of an historical context of empire and colonialism (Warren, 2005: 244). The 'normal' pedagogical processes or circuits of power in schooling are self-consciously colour-blind and produce consistently racist effects. He and others conceptualise these as instituting practices of racial formations and particular racial imaginaries. In this sense, schools represent institutional forms of struggle attempting to construct a racial settlement in a post-colonial context.

5. The state of the art in research on minority ethnic youth in education

This chapter aims to provide a summary of the most significant research findings concerning the role of ethnicity in education with regard to the schooling of the three minority groups selected to participate in the present study. It will give an insight into the issues investigated and discussed by the scholarly community more recently. It will also present research on recent educational policies and initiatives designed to improve the education achievement of the selected minority ethnic groups.

5.1 The schooling of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller pupils

As detailed above, Gypsy/Roma and Traveller groups experience the most severe educational exclusion of any minority ethnic group in the UK with levels of attainment being roughly a quarter of the national average. Additionally, patterns of attainment at this level are declining, which is markedly different from other minority ethnic groups where there is evidence of some improvement. The consequences of missing out on an education include an inability to find employment and exclusion from society at large (Bhopal, 2004). This particularly a problem for Gypsy/Roma and Traveller girls (Children's Society, 2007).

Research conducted to discover the basis of underachievement in Gypsy/Roma and Traveller groups has shown that their regular mobility is only one factor which contributes to difficulties in attending school. Other factors may be the perception of school as being unsupportive of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers' lifestyles; parents being fearful of what their children will experience at school, despite otherwise valuing education; a less than positive first experience in schools which leads to a cycle of non-attendance (Kendall and Derrington, 2003).

Much government policy fails to take sufficient account of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers' educational needs (Bhopal, 2004), and as a result there has been a decline in attendance of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller pupils at secondary schools, with only one third of such children now in mainstream education and an average drop-out age at 11.49 years (Children's Society, 2007). Nevertheless, traditional hostility to schooling among Gypsy/Roma and Traveller parents has shifted more recently, and with new distance learning programmes and the use of technology, many pupils can combine a nomadic lifestyle with effective education (Bhopal, 2004).

With regard to the Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children who do attend schools, there remains the problem of bullying and being alienated (Children's Society, 2007). Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children have no problem in identifying themselves as such, but do object to disparaging and offensive ways in which other label them (ibid.). A major issue is the degree to which it is possible for such children to achieve integration in mainstream schools while also preserving their cultural identity. Okley (1997) claims that **entry into mainstream** education can lead only to assimilation and that participation should be resisted by Gypsy/Roma and Traveller communities. **(What else is proposed instead?)** Indeed, this may be one of the main reasons why Gypsy/Roma and Traveller parents are reluctant to send their children to school. Research has also shown that parents worry additionally about racism, the moral welfare of teenage girls, sex education, drugs, and potential damage to the family network (Save The Children, 2001). Indeed, family is regarded as important among Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children and any policies directed at helping them enter mainstream education must take into account familial networks involved in these communities (Children's Society, 2007).

Education among Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children has recently generated a good deal of public attention, with major reports published by the Commission For Racial Equality (*Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*, 2006) and The Department for Schools, Children and Families (*The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People*, 2007). Nevertheless, much work needs to be done in order to reverse some of the declining trends among Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children, both in terms of their attendance at mainstream schools and their educational achievement record. (What kinds of research would you recommend?)

5.2 The schooling of Bangladeshi pupils

As shown above, although Bangladeshi pupils show on average a lower educational achievement rate than the national average, there is in fact an internal polarization within the Bangladeshi community, with both highly qualified and unqualified individuals. Recent research has focused on this central issue, along with the growing cohort of highly motivated Bangladeshi young females in education.

Abbas (2007) conducted an empirical study with Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani pupils from independent and secondary schools; he focused on issues of social class, ethnicity and culture. Qualitative interviews with pupils and parents revealed that certain working class South Asian parents possess strong middle class attitudes towards education and that this is unrelated to their ability to facilitate them in terms of financial or social capital. Many middle class parents were also motivated to focus on education as a crucial part of their children's development, yet they did possess the relevant financial and social capital. In conclusion, Abbas claims that social class was the most important factor in pupils gaining entry to their selective schools.

Nevertheless, Crozier and Davis (2006) warn against an individualized approach which focuses only on pupils' parents. They claim that the division between highly motivated parents and those who are ostensibly indifferent is more subtle than it initially appears. They argue that in South Asian communities, it is also important to take into account the extended family's attitudes towards education. Parents who are ostensibly indifferent to their children's education may be compensated to some degree by a broader family focus on the importance of schooling.

In another paper, Crozier and Davis (2007) argue that South Asian parents who claim not to care about their children's education are regarded by teachers as 'hard to reach'. Although research (with Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities) shows that some South Asian parents know little about the education system and do not get involved their children's schooling, it is not the case that these parents are 'difficult' or 'indifferent' – terms that, the authors argue, the phrase 'hard to reach' implies. This research suggests that schools often inhibit accessibility for certain parents, and that their inference about these parents being 'hard to reach' merely pathologizes them.

Another significant phenomenon emerging from South Asian communities in the growing cohort of highly motivated young women. Shain (2000) studied and theorized the experiences and strategies of young women of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian descent and identified the following issues:

- With many of the young women she interviewed, there was the perception that they were unequally treated by White staff.
- Pupils were responded to particularly negatively when they deviated from their race/gender stereotype (of the timid and passive Asian female).
- When pupils disassociated themselves from solely Asian groups and adopted western attitudes and modes of dress, this was met with a positive response from both White students and teachers.
- Many pupils appeared to have internalised racist ideologies, which became apparent when talking about other Asian pupils.
- Religion was identified as an important mediating factor in their experience of racism. It often provided a vehicle for resistance against teachers.
- It is not simply that colonial relations are reproduced, but that its ideologies are being reworked in the shifting relations of late modernity.
- Rather than being passive recipients of oppressed cultural practices, Asian women were actively involved in interpreting these practices, choosing which ones to reject and which ones to accept. Young Asian women are involved in creating new identities and meanings that involve conscious strategies of survival.

A study by Dale et al (2002) shows that young Pakistani and Bangladeshi woman face an even more complex situation than South Asian young men with regard to education. Although their parents may have the same aspirations with regard to their children's schooling, there is additionally a risk of young Asian woman jeopardising the family's honour by their academic achievements. Nevertheless, Dale (2002) shows that these young Asian woman see academic qualifications as a way of gaining paid work, and that paid work results in independence and self-esteem. The growing numbers of South Asian young women in full-time undergraduate education reveals a desire to combine employment with family life.

5.3 The schooling of Black Caribbean pupils

As revealed above, Black Caribbean pupils are less likely to achieve acceptable standards in education, and this is particularly true for Black Caribbean boys. Much academic research has been carried out on this community with regard to schooling, and what follows are the central issues.

Haynes et al (2006) indicate that the common sense explanation for why Black Caribbean pupils fail in education is to do with identity problems, low self-esteem, impoverished socio-economic backgrounds and low teacher expectations. These reasons map on to the fact (discussed above) that social class tends to be the most powerful predictor of academic success, particularly among minority ethnic groups. However, there is no conclusive reason why underachievement should persist in Black Caribbeans while it has improved in other minority ethnic groups.

It is argued by many anti-racist commentators that schools display differential treatment in the case of Black Caribbean pupils, while apolitical commentators argue that such pupils only receive such treatment because they are more likely to misbehave (Pilkington, 1999). Research by Warren (2005) found that Black Caribbean young men engage in performances of opposition but do not in fact resist what school offers: they do not reject school but rather the inequality of respect they experience. Teachers have strong preconceptions about pupils, and teaching practices are problematically racialized. In her research on Black Caribbean pupils, Youdell (2003) looked at the discursive constitution of identity within schools, and particularly how identity traps are produced. The moment when Black Caribbean students

constitute themselves in terms of student subculture may be the same moment the school constitutes them as a challenge to authority: the very success of their street cultural identities entrap them.

There are clearly subtle factors at work with regard to the schooling of Black Caribbean pupils. However, the central issue is whether schools should readdress their institutional policies with regard to Black Caribbean pupils or whether this is not necessary because the problems exist elsewhere. Nevertheless, the debate remains contentious and is unconcluded.

One possible route out of this impasse is to look at how some schools are succeeding in improving the educational performance of Black Caribbean pupils. Demie (2005) reports on good practice at 13 schools in Lambeth. Findings from the study show that Black Caribbean pupils have improved achievement records in Key Stage 2 and GCSE results. Among the features that contribute to this success are strong leadership which aims at improving standards for all pupils; the use of performance data for school self-evaluation and tracking pupils' performance; a commitment to creating a culture which allows teachers to use creative intuition to maximise their pupils' learning; a highly inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of Black Caribbean pupils; a strong link to the community and the involvement of parents in school issues; well-coordinated support for Black Caribbean pupils via learning mentors and role models; a commitment to equal opportunities and a strong focus on racism. In the case of schools discussed in this research, academic achievement among Black Caribbean pupils was far superior to the national averages.

It would therefore appear that under-achievement among Black Caribbean pupils has a number of complex causes, but that sensitive and appropriate practices at schools can be effective in terms of improving their performance in education.

5.4 Recent policies and initiatives relating to the selected minority groups

More recently, the government has developed a number of policies and initiatives in order to support schools in their tuition of minority ethnic groups. *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils* (2003) is a key scheme designed to help young learners (particularly those who do not have English as their first language) get the best from their education. Other schemes include courses for teachers to achieve accredited training in English as an additional language, while the *Making the Grade: Key Stage 4 Project* aims to help teachers understand the needs of bi-lingual pupils. There has also been a drive towards recruiting more teachers who belong to minority ethnic groups.

Three initiatives designed specifically to help children belonging to each of the minority ethnic groups selected for the present study are as follows:

- The *Aiming High* programme seeks to provide good quality materials about Gypsy/Roma and Traveller history and heritage, to employ regional advisors at both primary and secondary school levels, and to provide a website about bullying with a dedicated section for Gypsy/Roma and Travellers.
- Part of the *Aiming High* programme is an Minority Ethnic Achievement Project (2004) designed to support pupils of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali and Turkish heritage at Key Stage 3. The project was developed in consultation with Muslim organisations and is concerned with improvements in teaching and learning.
- In 2003, the *African-Caribbean Achievement Project* was launched in both primary and secondary schools. The aim has been to emphasise in schools strong leadership,

high expectation of success, mutual respect and intolerance of racism, recognition of cultural diversity, active participation of parents and the wider community. The *Black Pupils Achievement Programme* has been especially effective in tackling issues relating to Black Caribbean pupils, helping teachers understand their needs and promoting race equality issues, as well as providing support for such children and their parents.

On the listed initiatives: roughly: how many schools/teachers/pupils are actually reached by them? Do these programmes work all over the country or only in certain LAs?

Nevertheless, despite policies and initiatives designed to improve the educational achievement of all minority ethnic groups, it is admitted by the government that much work needs to be done to achieve parity and progress among all groups. The children of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers, Bangladeshi pupils from poorer backgrounds, and Black Caribbean children (particularly boys) are among those most in need of help (DES, 2006).

In this section on the state of the art in research, it would be welcome to see 1-2 paragraphs on issues that you regard under-investigated (see the Guide). For example, one has the impression that the issues of segregation and non-attendance are rather underrepresented in academic work on the education of minority ethnic youth. Further: are there studies on teachers' prejudices against (certain) minorities? Does 'minoritisation' in education come up in research? Etc.— All in all, here you can 'propose' any kinds of research that you consider important, especially ones that would inform policy-making.

6. Considerations driving the selections for empirical research: groups, schools, sites

This chapter will present the considerations that have led to the selection of the minority ethnic groups. It will introduce the arguments in support of concentrating on given types of schools and on certain age-groups. It will provide arguments for the selection of the proposed sites and give a brief general description of them. It will indicate the ethnic composition of the sites and introduce the major educational institutions that will be approached. Additionally, foreseeable methodological and practical difficulties with potential impact on the empirical research also will be outlined.

6.1 Selected minority ethnic groups

The pupils who will be selected to participate in the present study will be mainstream secondary school pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 years of age. The reason for the choice of this age group can be ascribed to the fact that it is a period in a child's life when education can be argued to be most important: as we saw in chapter one, pupils at this age are studying towards examinations for GCSEs, a key step towards further development. It is also the age at which children are likely to be engaging more purposefully with society at large – making choices about their future education/employment, and forming friendship and social networks among other children. It is, in short, a critical period in the school life of pupils, and one which encapsulates many of the issues this paper has already discussed.

As indicated in chapter five, the three minority ethnic groups that have been selected for the present study are Gypsy/Roma and Traveller, Bangladeshi, and Black Caribbean. The reasons for the choice of these groups are several. As shown earlier in this paper, Gypsy/Roma and Traveller pupils attract the kind of discourse which characterises them as being outside mainstream society, as being 'other'; indeed, their irregular attendance at schools and subsequent poor educational achievement are significant factors in terms of highlighting the problems inherent in the present educational system. Bangladeshi pupils may be subject to Islamophobia that has preoccupied much public discourse more recently (nearly 90% of Bangladeshis are Muslims); coupled with an internal polarisation in terms of educational achievement, this group may also reflect current debates about schooling in the UK (for example, the degree to which the variation in achievement can be ascribed to policy failure or personal factors such as pupils' familial circumstances, etc). Finally, Black Caribbean pupils are the one minority group that appears to be struggling in all aspects of education – formal qualifications; exclusion rates; behavioural, emotional and social needs; and entry to further and higher education – and therefore seem particularly appropriate for inclusion in the present study, as well as potentially illuminating.

Our focus will be on the inner city area of Leeds, in particular the following wards, Chapel Allerton, Gipton and Harehills, Hyde Park and City and Holbeck. These areas contain approximately over 65% of Black Caribbeans and over 85% of Bangladeshis of the respective inhabitants in Leeds, and GCSE attainment is on average about 33%, and are mostly to the north and east of the city centre. The majority (85%) of Roma/Travellers in Leeds live south of the city centre. We will be focusing on **two secondary schools** in south Leeds and **two secondary schools** in north/east Leeds for this study, **(Do you think that the overall number of 14-15 year old pupils in these four schools will produce the expected minimum sample size of 400 pupils?)** the final choice will depend on negotiation and consultation with those schools and with the umbrella organisation, Education Leeds. The age range we will be targetting is 14-15 for the first two groups, avoiding the last year of compulsory schooling and

related GCSE exams, but we will broaden both the age range to 14-16 for Roma/Travellers to ensure a large a sample as possible. The school survey will cover Key Stage 4.

What follows is further information about these three groups in the context of the study's proposed site, the city of Leeds, West Yorkshire, UK. (After this, we will present a section providing detail about Leeds and its minority ethnic composition and overall system of schooling.)

The Gypsy/Roma and Traveller population in the UK includes a variety of groups including Roma, Irish Travellers and English Gypsies (the GRT population). This group experiences the most severe educational exclusion of any minority ethnic group in the UK with levels of attainment being roughly a quarter of the national average (13-15% of GRT pupils obtaining five A*-C GCSE passes compared to a 60% national average (DCSF, 2008; Children's Society, 2007). In addition, patterns of attainment at this level are declining, which is markedly different from other minority ethnic groups where there is evidence of some improvement. The *Leeds Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Achievement Service* identified 574 Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children aged 5-16 in their census in 2004, and it has worked with over 1000 children from these groups recently. This service has a well-established reputation for identifying and facilitating educational inclusion for children from these groups and provides both an interesting case study in itself as well as an accessible research context. It may be possible therefore to identify up to 100 GRT children aged 14-16 for the purposes of the Student Survey, although this data collection may have to be implemented through community networks rather than in class. It is also be feasible to access the required group of respondents for the Community Study.

The Black Caribbean population of the UK has for many decades had significantly lower levels of educational attainment than the national average, and despite some indication of improving levels of attainment this educational inequality persists. Black Caribbean boys are particularly struggling to perform well in schools, and the abnormally high level of school exclusions for this group also persists. This national pattern is replicated in Leeds. The Black Caribbean population in Leeds consists of 6,718 people, plus 4,603 of mixed Black Caribbean and White ethnic origin (2001 Census).

The Bangladeshi population of the UK is experiencing improving levels of educational attainment much closer to the national average than the other two groups considered here, and comprises 2,537 people in Leeds (2001 Census). There is an internal polarisation among Bangladeshi pupils in terms of educational performance, with some pupils from higher socio-economic backgrounds outperforming White pupils. Nevertheless, a large number of Bangladeshi households are among the poorest in the country, and their children continue to struggle in schools as a consequence. This group is characterised by significantly high levels of poverty and unemployment, particularly in relation to other South Asian groups such as Pakistanis and Indians. Students aged 14-15 from these two groups will be surveyed and there are well established communities for intensive local study, together with a track record of related research evidence.

All these groups have been targeted for educational interventions to improve access and outcomes both nationally and in Leeds, and comparison of the experiences of these three ethnic groups in one context may yield valuable knowledge and evidence applicable elsewhere.

6.2 Site, schools and communities

Leeds will be the site chosen for both the Student Survey, involving self-reporting questionnaires, and for the Community Study of the school and community environment of everyday inter-ethnic relations of urban youth, involving discussions with students, teachers, parents and local agencies. In this area three minority ethnic groups will be focussed upon: Gypsy/Roma and Travellers, Bangladeshis, and Black Caribbeans.

Leeds is the second largest metropolitan area in England and has both considerable ethnic diversity, which is similar to the national average, and multiple disadvantage, which characterises a large area of inner city Leeds. The main urban area of Leeds has a population of approximately 500,000, and there are around 78,000 people belonging to minority ethnic groups. About a third of all minority ethnic groups reside in three electoral wards (Gipton and Harehills; Chapel Allerton; and Hyde Park and Woodhouse), and in each ward the minority ethnic population constitutes over a third of the residents.

With regard to the present study, 85% of the city's Bangladeshi community is concentrated in three electoral wards (Gipton and Harehills; City and Hunslet; and Chapel Allerton), as is 65% of the Black Caribbean community (Gipton and Harehills; Chapel Allerton; and Hyde Park and Woodhouse). All of these areas are among the most deprived in the city. The Bangladeshi community in Leeds has some of the lowest levels of economic activity in the city's population, has the highest proportion of people who have never worked, and is among the least educated in terms of formal qualifications. The Black Caribbean community in Leeds has the third highest unemployment rate of any minority ethnic in the city's population (and among the lowest in terms of male economic activity).

Approximately 11% of all school pupils in the Leeds area are of minority ethnic origin. Leeds maintains 230 primary schools, 41 secondary schools, six specialist inclusive learning centres and four pupil referral units (schools designed to cater for pupils who, for a variety of reasons, cannot attend mainstream schools). Standards of educational attainment are in line with both national and statistical neighbour's averages – for example, Sheffield and Bristol. Patterns of minority ethnic educational attainment diverge particularly from the local average for children aged 11-16. Leeds has both a strong and active minority ethnic voluntary sector, with over 140 minority ethnic organisations and a history of intervention by local agencies to improve opportunities and outcomes for minority ethnic group's education. Additionally, there has been a long tradition of joint working between researchers at the University of Leeds and minority ethnic groups in the region and educational service providers.

Gaining access to suitable pupils and their parents from the three selected minority ethnic groups will present some challenges to the team, though it is believed that these can be overcome. Securing schools' permission to approach their pupils for the purposes of the study will require close liaison with Headmasters and/or senior members of staff. The school will need to be visited by the researcher and provision made for appropriate research conditions (for example, a room in which interviews can be tape-recorded in order to guarantee privacy). There are obvious ethical sensitivities to adhere to, including the anonymity and security of data. Another difficulty might involve ensuring that both children and their parents commit to the project's endurance. There might also be difficulties if any of the participants' first language is not English – provisions will have to be in place for translation.

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For a good review of the issues involved for South Asians (including Bangladeshis) in British education, see:

Abbas, T. (2007) British South Asians and pathways into selective schooling: social class, culture and ethnicity. *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 33 (1), 75-90.

Ahmad, F., Modood, T. and Lissenburg, S. (2003) *South Asian Women and Employment in Britain: The Interaction of Gender and Ethnicity*. London: Policy Studies Institute.