



The Traveller Movement

Resource for London

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Improving the education outcomes for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma pupils

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About The Traveller Movement

The Traveller Movement (TM) is a leading national charity, working in partnership with the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, service providers and policy makers developing forward-looking strategies to challenge discrimination and promote increased race equality, social inclusion and community cohesion.

Key issues and recommendations

Poor attainment

In 2011, just 25% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved national expectations in English and Mathematics at the end of their primary education, compared with 74% of all pupils. At the end of secondary education, just 12% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved five or more good GCSEs, including English and Mathematics, compared with 58.2% of all pupils.¹ **Specific emphasis needs to be placed on community and family learning initiatives (through schools, colleges etc) that ensure formal education and skills training is shaped, understood and appreciated by both parents and children. A community mentor scheme should also be developed to support, guide and encourage young GRT. As highlighted in the 2010 DfE report *Improving the outcomes for Gypsy Roma and Traveller Pupils*.²**

¹MWG on inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers 2012, p. 7

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf

² DfE, 2010, *Improving the outcomes for Gypsy Roma and Traveller pupil*, p. 87

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181669/DFE-RR043.pdf

High dropout rate and homeschooling

The dropout rate for GRT pupils remains unacceptably high, specifically in key stages 3 and 4 and the quality of education provided to pupils who are home schooled is also an area of concern. **Conduct research and produce recommendations to improve our understanding and monitoring of GRT pupils who dropout and the standards of education delivered to those pupils who are homeschooled.**

Racist bullying

Racist bullying is a major issue for GRT pupils and is often cited as the reason for them dropping out and/or being excluded. A recent report found that nearly 9 out of every 10 children and young people from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background have suffered racial abuse and nearly two thirds have also been bullied or physically attacked.³ **There is need for a strong statement from DfE and Ofsted to all schools that racist bullying of GRT pupils will not be tolerated and that all schools should have stricter policies and procedures.**

Exclusions

GRT pupils experience the highest rate of exclusions of any group and are approximately 2-4 times more likely to receive permanent or fixed term exclusions (DfE pupils census 2014). In 2012 the Children's Commissioner found that 100% of GRT exclusions it reviewed were overturned on appeal.⁴ **DfE and the Children's Commissioner for England need to review how and why schools are excluding GRT pupils at such high levels and bring forward measures to counteract this.**

Local Authority cuts to Traveller Education Services (TES)

Approximately a half to two-thirds of TESs have been deleted or significantly cut in recent years, especially in areas such as London.⁵ TES provide vital support to pupils, parents and schools increasing the likelihood of GRT pupils receiving a better education and saving money in the long-term through improving GRT employment prospects. **Government needs to ensure local authorities support, not cut, TESs or other educational support services who work with GRT.**

Placements when travelling

Mobile GRT families are reporting a shortage of places in schools when they are travelling and that schools are often very slow to register their children. **We need a fast track system to place GRT children (and other groups) in school, ideally within a couple of days.**

Culture, language and the curriculum

Too often schools have little to no knowledge of GRT history, culture and language and in some cases schools themselves are acting in an insensitive and/or discriminatory way when engaging these communities. **GRT History Month needs greater support from the DfE, and GRT culture, language and history need greater recognition within schools and in the curriculum**

³ National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, 2014, *Gypsy, Traveller, Roma: Experts by Experience*
http://ww2.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/news/roma_report.Maincontent.0007.file.tmp/Experts%20by%20Experience.pdf

⁴ Children's Commissioner 2012, *They never give up on you*, p. 71
http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_561

⁵ <http://irishtraveller.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ITMB-report-on-London-Traveller-education-support-service-staffing-levels.pdf>