

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Meeting: | Schools Forum |
| Date: | 15 November 2020 |
| Subject: | Item 6: Raising the Achievement of Black Caribbean Boys in Harrow Schools |
| Responsible Officer: | Patrick O'Dwyer, Divisional Director Education Services |

Section 1 - Summary

- 1.1 This paper sets out a rationale to seek agreement from the Schools Forum to allocate funding to raise the Achievement of boys of Black Caribbean heritage (BBCH) in Harrow schools and to reduce the risk of permanent exclusion for this group. Black Caribbean boys' attainment in Harrow has been below that of other pupils at EYFS, Key Stage 1, 2 and 4. Boys of Black Caribbean backgrounds also feature disproportionately in permanent exclusions.
- 1.2 Schools Forum is asked to agree in principle the funding to develop a strategy and actions over a period of two years to improve outcomes and reduce exclusions for Black Caribbean boys and through this example to strengthen best practice for all pupils. It is expected that a significant amount of this fund will be retained in schools and clusters for their use towards the objectives of the project. This project will seek to identify what early indications there may be of underachievement for this group, or which increase their risk of exclusion, across all year groups, and to ensure that best practice is identified and put in place to provide early intervention and support. Similar projects in other London authorities point to some success.

- 1.3 Indicators show that school leaders and teachers in Harrow have a high level of commitment to the success for all pupils. Harrow schools have been very successful in helping children to achieve well. There has been a marked improvement in many indicators since 2012, both in attainment in all key stages and in rates of exclusion overall. Inspections show that our schools are well led and are particularly effective in aspects related to the well-being of pupils. Schools have also contributed significantly to successful local inspections in relation to safeguarding (2017) and SEND (2019). Harrow has significant strengths to build on and the expertise to do so.
- 1.4 A working group will be established consisting of school, education services, performance team and social care colleagues to develop a detailed strategy to take forward the objectives of this project. These are to:
- a) Improve outcomes for Black Caribbean boys at each key stage
 - b) Reduce the number and ratio of permanent exclusions of Black Caribbean boys
 - c) To provide a best practice report that will support the wider inclusive work of schools and Local Authority services
- 1.5 The Schools Forum is requested to agree in principle the following funding for two academic years to deliver a programme to raise the attainment and reduce the number and rate of permanent exclusion of Black Caribbean boys.
- 2020-2021: £80,000
 - 2021-2022: £150,000
- 1.6 No funding will be allocated beyond initial research costs until a full programme is identified by a working party and a delivery method through existing partnerships and presented at Schools Forum. The funding requested is typical of the costs associated with improvement activities in key centres of learning.
- 1.7 The Schools Forum will receive regular reports on the progress in the use and deployment of the allocated fund, and the resulting impact on securing improvement for this group of pupils.

Section 2 – Report

Background

2.1 In Harrow, every indicator shows that Black Caribbean boys perform consistently below that of the Harrow average at the end of EYFS, Key Stage 1, 2 and 4 over the past three years. The only exceptions being progress in reading in 2017 and 2018 by the end of KS2. Whilst there have been some fluctuation there are indicators of improved performance for BBCH between 2017 and 2019, notably in the percentage attaining a Good Level of Development in the Early Years, in Phonics in Year 1 and reaching the expected standard in maths at the end of KS1. By the end of Key Stage 2 there has also been an improvement in the rate of BBCH attaining the expected standard in RWM; 51.2% in 2017 and 68.4% in 2019.

2.2 The Attainment 8 score of all Black Caribbean pupils is the lowest of all ethnic groups (37.6) and has been consistently so over the 4 years to 2019. In 2019 the Harrow average was 50.9. The Attainment 8 score for BBCH in 2019 was 28.4 which showed a decline since 2017 (34.3). Progress 8 for Black Caribbean pupils at – 0.40 is well below the average (0.39) and has declined since 2016 (0.03). For comparison the Progress 8 score in 2019 of Black African was 0.26, exceeding that for White British (0.11). The Progress 8 score for BBCH in 2019 was – 1.03.

2.3 By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2019 there was an improvement in the numbers of Black Caribbean pupils reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. 66.7% achieved this standard compared to 38.2% in 2016. The comparable figures for the White British group, for example only, are 76.1% (2019) and 60.2% (2016). The Harrow averages were 73.8 (2019) and 61.7 (2016).

2.4 The progress made by Black Caribbean pupils in mathematics from Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 is the lowest of all groups at – 0.5 compared to the Harrow average of 1.9. In reading it is – 0.1 which is amongst the lowest of all groups in Harrow but above that made regionally and nationally for this group.

2.5 In Harrow there were 480 Black Caribbean boys in 2019 across all schools (1.3% of the school population). The rate of permanent exclusion (PEX) is

1.25% compared to a Harrow average rate of 0.09%. Although numbers are small, boys of Black Caribbean heritage (BBCH) are significantly more likely to be permanently excluded. Harrow's rate of PEX for BBCH is above that of regional and national rates. The rate of Fixed Term Exclusion (FTE) for BBCH has declined very slightly over the last three years to 2019 but in 2019 was 12.5% of all FTE. Harrow's FTE rate is very low overall compared to other areas.

2.6 The factors that can lead to underachievement for boys of Black Caribbean heritage are not different from what affects many other groups' performance. These are typically identified as:

- Effective parental engagement.
- Raising aspiration and ambition for BC pupils at all levels.
- High quality teaching, learning and assessment, and early intervention and support for pupils who are underachieving, or are at risk of underachievement.
- Relevant and motivational curriculum where group achievement is embedded in and integral to the curriculum offered.
- Pupil voice, and pupil engagement and contribution to their own success.
- Tackling stereotyping.

2.7 However, as with children from low income backgrounds, boys of Black Caribbean heritage appear less resilient where these indicators of best practice are not consistently present.

2.8 This is not only a matter for the school community as many young people who are excluded, for example, also have contact with other services. Local Authority services too will be part of this project in order to learn how the Local Authority's services can be more effective in improving these outcomes. Many BBCH who are excluded have been known to social care at one point or another in their life histories.

3. Activities that may be supported by the Fund

3.1 A strategy will be developed by a joint working party which will set out detailed actions to be taken deliver on the objectives to raise the achievement of Black Caribbean boys and reduce exclusion across key stages. The activities are likely to include:

- a) Activities that support parents' engagement with schools and involvement in their children's learning
- b) School or Cluster and LA Champions for BBCH and related training / coaching
- c) Subsidised training for educational settings' staff, LA staff and school governors
- d) The detailed analysis of performance in relation to these aspects across the LA and by participating schools
- e) The substantially school-based leadership and management costs of the project

4. Financial Implications

It is requested that this fund would be allocated from the Schools brought forward DSG contingency.

5. Legal Implications

The Local Authority has a statutory duty for quality of education in its area. The Local Authority's powers of intervention in schools are, however, restricted to schools maintained by the Local Authority. Where there are concerns about an academy's performance, the Local Authority is expected to raise them directly with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).

6. Equalities Implications

The Equality Act 2010 sets out that those subject to the general equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This proposal directly addresses the need to advance the equality of opportunity for Black Caribbean boys.

The Director of Children's Services is supportive of this proposal as it will benefit a group of Harrow pupils who have underachieved in Harrow Schools compared to other groups.

Section 7 – contact details

Contact:

Patrick O'Dwyer
Divisional Director Education Services
patrick.odwyer@harrow.gov.uk