

# Educational Underachievement of White Working Class Children

NATIONAL CONFERENCE Friday 27th June 2014

Jeffery Hall, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

## 1. CONFERENCE AIMS

The achievement of White Working Class children in schools is increasingly becoming a matter of concern. The Education Select Committee has conducted an inquiry into the underachievement of White Working Class children. Ofsted and research by the London borough of Lambeth have also recently drawn attention to this issue. This conference aims to look at the barriers to learning and school strategies in raising the achievement of White Working Class pupils in schools. Specific objectives are:

- To examine the attainment of White Working Class pupils in schools
- To identify the reasons and factors for White Working Class pupils' underachievement
- To share strategies to raise achievement

The conference is a unique opportunity to share the findings of the research reports and to learn what has been proven to work from classroom practitioners and successful schools. The conference offers practical tips for teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to keep up to date in strategies used by successful schools.

## 2. SPEAKERS

This conference brings together some of the leading experts and practitioners to engage in panel discussions and to share best practice on what works to raise achievement

- **Educational inequality and challenges in narrowing the attainment gap**  
Professor Steve Strand, Department for Education, University of Oxford
- **Raising achievement of White Working Class children: Barriers and school strategies**  
Dr Kirstin Lewis, Goldsmiths (University of London) and Dr Feyisa Demie, Lambeth LA

### HEADTEACHERS PANEL: School strategies to raise the achievement of White Working Class pupils

- Mark Adams, Headteacher, St Nicholas Priory Primary School, Norfolk LA
- Paul Robinson, Headteacher, Woodmansterne Primary School, Lambeth LA
- Elena Mauro, Headteacher, Loughborough Primary School, Lambeth LA
- Kenny Fredrick, former Headteacher, George Green's School, Tower Hamlets LA
- David Boyle, Principal, Dunraven School, Lambeth LA
- Jeremy Rowe, Headteacher, Sir John Leman High School, Suffolk LA

### POLICYMAKERS AND RESEARCHERS PANEL: What works in narrowing the achievement gap?

- **Raising the achievement of White Working Class pupils: Lessons from Ofsted research and inspections**  
Dr Christopher Wood, HMI, Ofsted
- **Effective use of Pupil Premium to close the attainment gap for White Working Class pupils**  
James Richardson, Education Endowment Foundation
- **The Education Select Committee inquiry into the underachievement in education of White Working Class children : Key findings and recommendations**  
Speaker (tbc)

The conference will be opened & chaired by Cathy Twist, Director, Education, Learning and Skills, Lambeth LA

## 3. WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers, Teacher, Governors
- Elected members, Heads of School Improvement, School Improvement Advisers, Local Authority Officers
- National Policymakers and Elected Councillors



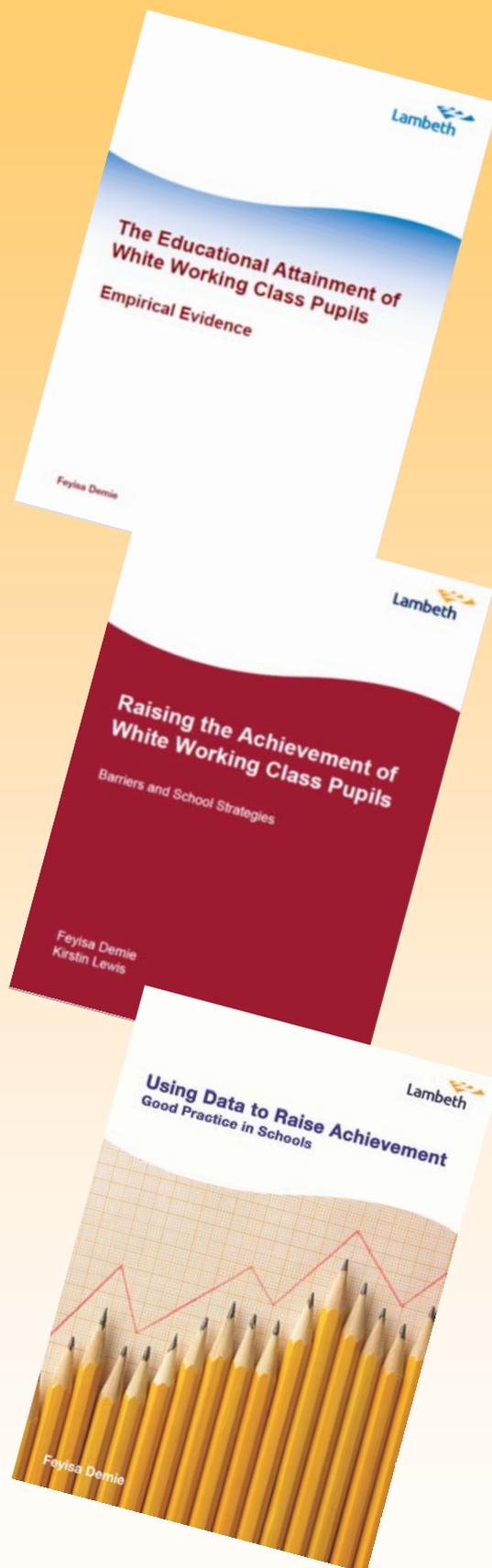
# GOOD PRACTICE RESEARCH REPORTS

Three research reports into raising achievement in schools will be launched and shared at the conference.

The first research report is an empirical study of *'The Educational Attainment of White Working Class Pupils'*. Drawing on detailed school census data for pupils who completed KS2 and KS4, this research examines the differences in performance between the main ethnic groups. The study confirms that one of the biggest groups of underachievers is the White Working Class. The data shows that at GCSE, 31% of White British pupils eligible for free school meals achieved 5+A\*-C, compared with 63% of pupils who were not eligible. There is a gap of 32 percentage points for White British compared to smaller gaps for Indian, African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese pupils. The KS2 data shows a similar pattern. The data suggests that White British pupils are the ethnic group most polarised by the impact of socio-economic disadvantage. While poverty makes little difference to the achievements at school of some ethnic groups, it makes a huge difference to White British children on free school meals. In conclusion, the study argues that the worryingly low achievement of many White Working Class pupils has been masked by the success of middle class white children in the English school system, because Government statistics have failed to distinguish the White British ethnic group by social background. Effectively treating White British as a single group is extremely misleading.

The second research report *'Raising the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils'* highlights barriers and strategies to raise achievement in schools. The first part is a study of *'Barriers to Learning'* and draws evidence from parents, community focus groups and case studies based on visits to 16 Lambeth schools to explore the views of headteachers, staff, governors, White British parents and pupils. Empirical data confirms that one of the groups of underachievers is the White Working Class. The main reasons for pupil underachievement, identified from the case study schools and focus groups, are teachers' low expectations, stereotyping, economic deprivation, curriculum barriers, feeling of marginalization, low literacy levels, parental low aspiration of their child's education and lack of targeted support to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage. This is followed by the second part of the study that identifies good practice in successful schools. Schools have adopted a number of strategies to overcome some of the barriers to achievement which face White Working Class children in schools, such as strong and visionary leadership, inclusive curriculum, parental engagement, rigorous monitoring and effective use of data, supporting school transitions and targeted interventions to challenge poverty and underachievement through extensive use of teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors.

The third report *'Using Data to Raise Achievement: Good Practice in Schools'* explores what works in effective use of data. The main findings of the research show that one of the core elements of the schools' success in raising achievement is a robust focus on tracking and monitoring of an individual student's progress and forensic use of assessment data for progress tracking, target setting and support for students slipping behind with targeted interventions. Data is used effectively by senior managers, teachers, teaching assistants and governors to pose and answer questions about current standards, trends over time, progress made by individual pupils, to track pupils' progress and to set high expectations in case study schools.



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# RAISING ACHIEVEMENT CONFERENCE

### Delegate Details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headteacher/Principal           | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Headteacher/Principal    | <input type="checkbox"/> EMA/EAL Coordinator        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Headteacher/Principal | <input type="checkbox"/> Head of School Improvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Governor                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Adviser          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): _____          |   |

School or LA Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Invoice Details and Address

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Requisition/Purchase Order No (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form by post, fax or e-mail to:**

**Andrew Hau**

**Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit**

**Education, Learning and Skills**

**6th Floor International House, Canterbury Crescent, Brixton SW9 7QE**

**Fax: 0207 926 9595**

**E-mail: [ahau@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:ahau@lambeth.gov.uk)**

#### Price information:

1. **All delegates** - the charge is £175 per delegate.
2. Payment terms are 30 days and payment must be received before the conference date. We will issue an invoice upon receipt of your booking.
3. Payment can be made by BACS or cheque. Payment details and advice will be included with the invoice.

#### Substitution, cancellations and refund policy

- Substitutions welcome at any time.
- Written cancellations made four weeks before the conference date will be subject to a full refund
- Cancellations made less than 4 weeks before the conference date cannot be refunded.
- The organiser reserves the right to cancel the conference due to unforeseen circumstances. with a full refund and change the programme.