



Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education



Guidance

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Audience	Local Education authorities, Schools, Children and Young People's Partnerships.
Overview	<p>The document is designed to be a non prescriptive, overarching, guide and should be considered in conjunction with the National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 'Inclusion and Pupil Support' which was published in November 2006. This guidance reflects the particular needs of Gypsy and Traveller learners, which are broadly defined by cultural issues, values and practice, and by the tendency for learning to be interrupted rather than continuous.</p> <p>The guidance is set out in such a way as to be useful, for both LEAs and schools, should they come across an unfamiliar situation concerning Gypsy Traveller children.</p>
Action required	None - for information.
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Additional copies	Further copies may be obtained at the above address.
Related documents	The Learning Country – Vision into Action' (2006) Inclusion and Pupil Support (Circular Number 47/2006)

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Glossary

- PLASC** - Pupil Level Annual Schools Census
- NFER** - National Foundation for Educational Research
- LEA** - Local Education Authority
- CYPP** - Children and Young People's Plan
- WAG** - Welsh Assembly Government
- SEP** - Single Education Plan
- DCSF** - Department for Children, Schools and Families
- DCELLS** - Department for Children, Education, Lifelong learning and Skills
- ANID** - Additional Needs and Inclusion Division
- ETG** - Education of Travellers Grant
- IEP** - Individual Education Plan
- TES** - Traveller Education Service
- SEN** - Special Educational Needs
- ALN** - Additional Learning Needs
- ADEW** - Association of Directors of Education in Wales

Introduction

This circular for Local Education Authorities and all schools revises the guidance previously provided in Welsh Office Circular 52/90: Meeting the Educational Needs of Travellers and Displaced Persons. Although the principles behind that guidance remain relevant, changes in legislation and education policy in the interim now need to be reflected in revised guidance. This document focuses on Gypsies and Travellers, since arrangements for displaced persons are now covered by education services provided for Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

The National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 'Inclusion and Pupil Support' published in November 2006 provides overarching guidance. This paper provides an annex of good practice to the circular, and should be considered in conjunction with it. This guidance reflects the particular needs of Gypsy and Traveller learners, which are broadly defined by cultural issues, values and practice, and by the tendency for learning to be interrupted rather than being continuous.

The profile of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Wales has changed in recent years. Overall, there appears to be less travelling for work as the traditional sources of seasonal work have reduced and, consequently, a higher proportion of Gypsies and Travellers are becoming more settled on local sites, or in social housing. There is also an increase in migration of workers from European accession countries, including some Gypsies and Travellers, and a reported increase in European Roma Gypsy Travellers arriving in the UK, some of whom come to Wales.

This revised guidance is based on the recommendations of three significant reports. The first was the outcome of a comprehensive review by the Equality of Opportunity Committee of service provision in Wales for Gypsies and Travellers in 2003, which made several recommendations in relation to education, including that Circular 52/90 be revised. The Welsh Assembly Government subsequently commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake specific 'Research into the Education of Gypsy Traveller Children in Wales' which was published in February 2007. Estyn also undertook 'A Survey of

Provision made by Schools and Local Authorities to meet the needs of Gypsy Traveller Learners' in 2005. The recommendations of these three reviews are reflected in this revised guidance.

This guidance also reflects the commitment, in the Welsh Assembly Government's education strategy 'The Learning Country - Vision into Action' (2006), to making Wales a learner focused, community-orientated country and also towards an inclusive approach to education and learning to ensure that young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The strategy also commends the collaboration of regional authorities in promoting best practice and sharing ideas. The Welsh Assembly Government strategy 'Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries', published in response to the Beecham report, also informs this guidance which aims to create a citizen-focused education service which can be responsive to individual educational needs, including those of Gypsy Traveller children.

Good practice examples are drawn from current service provision in Wales and also from similar guidance documents produced for England and Scotland.

Finally this guidance takes fully into account the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Children Act 2004.

Section 1 - Background and Context

Capital letters should always be used for the titles Gypsy and Traveller.

1. Legal Framework and Definitions

1.1 Gypsies and Travellers are generally represented by three main groups:

- Gypsy Travellers;
- Occupational Travellers; and
- New Age Travellers

1.2 The term Gypsy Traveller includes Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsies/Travellers, English Gypsies and Romany and Welsh Gypsies.

1.3 New Age Travellers are described as a UK group which emerged in the 1960s. Some have dropped the use of 'Age', whilst others prefer to be known simply as Travellers.

1.4 Occupational Travellers include those who belong to the traditional Show and Fairground communities, the Circus communities, and Bargees and other waterway family businesses.

1.5 Romany Gypsies have been recognised in law since 1988 and Irish Travellers have had legal recognition as an ethnic group since 2000. Both groups are covered and protected by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000.

1.6 For ease of reference, the generic term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is used throughout this guidance when referring to all of the groups described above. However, the distinctive identity and ethnic status of each community is fully recognised and acknowledged.

1.7 Local Education Authorities are obliged, by statute, to ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive education that is appropriate to their age, abilities and any special educational needs; to promote high standards in the provision of education and to promote the welfare of children. These obligations apply to all children whether or not they are permanent residents in an area.

Gypsies and Travellers of all recognised groups are represented in Wales and every local education authority will at times need to provide education for Gypsy and Traveller children. All schools may need to admit Gypsy and Traveller children at some time. Therefore, good practice for Local Authorities and schools is to regard all Gypsies and Travellers as having the same rights under Race Relations legislation as is enjoyed by Irish and Romany Gypsies and Travellers.

2. Culture

2.1 Gypsy and Traveller groups have specific cultural and life-style characteristics which may not be generally understood and which can contribute to the prejudice that they may experience from the non-Traveller population. Their long-held culture is not static, however, and a feature of Gypsy and Traveller communities is their ability to adapt to changing economic and social circumstances whilst retaining their cultural identity.

2.2 Their cultural and lifestyle characteristics include the following:

- An emphasis on a strong family unit, larger family sizes and very strong extended families often living on the same site;
- The value placed on children and the importance of education within the family unit;
- Entrepreneurial skills, self-employment and flexibility in seeking employment;
- Strict cultural traditions some of which relate to cleanliness, which differ from those in the settled community;
- A history of bi-lingualism and use of distinct and separate language;
- A sense of pride in their cultural identity; and
- A tradition of mobility in seeking employment and also travelling for family and cultural reasons such as: funerals, weddings, family illness or Gypsy and Traveller fairs.

2.3 Mobility is a feature of all Traveller communities. For Fairground and Circus families the high level of seasonal movement may mean that children remain in one area for only a few days at a time whilst maintaining a fixed winter base and school.

2.4 Although some Gypsy and Traveller groups are covered under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, their ethnic status is not always as well recognised as for other minority ethnic groups. Typically, they are English speaking, so there has not been the issue of language that is usually the initial focus in education support services for other groups. However, distinctive accents, special patterns and words can contribute to language problems, especially for Reception children. Language acquisition may be an issue in the migration of Gypsy and Travellers from non UK countries e.g. Czech Roma, and may involve support from Ethnic Minority Support Services to address language issues.

2.5 Recognition, understanding, and acceptance of these cultural differences are key to effective educational support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

2.6 Gypsies and Travellers report that bullying and racism in schools is common. This includes taunting and name-calling by other pupils, and sometimes families report discriminatory treatment from staff and parents, although this may not result in formal complaints. Research suggests that of all minority ethnic groups, Gypsy Traveller children are the most likely to suffer racial abuse. This guidance focuses on good practice that will promote equality of opportunity for Gypsy and Traveller pupils and should, over time, reduce these negative experiences and so encourage sustained school attendance.

3. Data and Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

3.1 The map at Annex 2 shows the location of the nineteen Local Authority Gypsy Traveller sites in Wales which provide a total of 404 pitches. The nineteen sites are in thirteen Local Authority areas, whilst there are no sites in nine Local Authority areas.

Pembrokeshire has five sites providing 80 pitches; Cardiff has two sites providing 77 pitches and Neath Port Talbot has two sites, providing 56 pitches. The other site-owning authorities have one each.

3.2 It is difficult to be precise about the numbers of Gypsy and Traveller children in Wales at any one time because of their mobility. That aside, PLASC returns currently provide data on Irish Traveller and Gypsy Roma pupils only, and this is dependent on parents nominating their children within these groups. Because of prejudice against Gypsies and Travellers, parents may, in some cases, choose to select an alternative description, such as White Other, for their children. At present, there is no provision to identify children in other Gypsy and Traveller categories through PLASC.

3.3 In their all-Wales study in 2005, NFER undertook a separate exercise involving all LEAs in order to gain a snapshot based on their local knowledge of the total Gypsy and Traveller population in their area. As anticipated, returns in November 2005 indicated a much higher total of Gypsy and Traveller children in Wales (1193), compared with the PLASC return at January 2005 (758). Apart from obvious variations due to mobility, there were other inconsistencies that further highlighted the difficulties in gathering robust data.

3.4 Consideration is being given to extending the PLASC categories for Gypsies and Travellers by adding, in addition to Irish Travellers and Gypsy Roma the following groups:

- Travellers from other countries;
- New Age Travellers; and
- Occupational Travellers.

3.5 Gypsy and Traveller communities are sensitive about categorisation and express significant reservations about the purpose of data collection. LEAs and schools need to be aware of this and take it into account when seeking to collect data and information to improve the available evidence base which underpins service provision.

4. Policy

Local Authorities

4.1 Each Local Authority needs to develop a clear and consistent over-arching policy to support Gypsies and Travellers across all its services. This has been identified in all of the recent reports as crucial to encouraging and maintaining Gypsy and Traveller engagement in education. (See also section 15: Multi-Agency working.)

4.2 Each LEA is currently required to include, within its Single Education Plan (SEP), a strategy for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). This should include children from Gypsy and Traveller communities, and the plan should focus on raising achievement for these pupils through appropriate support. It should also address the monitoring of progress and outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs, including Gypsies and Travellers. It is important to remember that Gypsy Traveller pupils have additional learning needs in the sense that they are vulnerable to underachievement and that this should not be confused with having SEN (see also paragraph 13.3).

4.3 However, from 2008, the Single Education Plan has been replaced by a requirement for each LEA to have a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). Each CYPP will set out how the LEA is to improve the well being of children and young people. The CYPP will be more wide ranging than the previous SEP, as it will cover all services provided by the local authority which impact upon children and young people.

4.4 The Code of Practice on school admissions states that arrangements must be in place for "Gypsy Traveller children to be registered quickly at a school whether residing permanently or temporarily in the area". In order to facilitate this, LEAs should consider developing specific guidance for their schools on the inclusion of temporary and short-term pupils.

4.5 Admission is usually an LEA responsibility, except in cases where it has been delegated to head teachers or in Voluntary Aided or foundation schools in which case the LEA should provide guidance for the former and good practice advice for the latter. Every LEA has school admission forums which should ensure a fair admissions system and promote social equity, taking into account those children who arrive outside the normal admissions round.

4.6 LEAs should view Gypsy Traveller children in the wider context of initiatives for disadvantaged children such as Cymorth and Flying Start and consider how they might benefit this group of children.

Schools

4.7 Strong leadership focused on promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils has been identified as a major factor in reducing barriers to education for Gypsy and Traveller pupils and their families.

4.8 Schools are not expected to have separate policies for Gypsy and Traveller pupils, as this may have the effect of emphasising differences rather than promoting inclusion. However, it is recommended that anti-bullying, anti-racism and equal opportunities policies and strategies take account of the particular needs of these pupils and make specific reference to how these will be met.

4.9 Raising the profile of race equality within the school will lead to more effective practice for all pupils and promote respect for minority ethnic groups, including Gypsy and Travellers.

4.10 Establishing buddy or peer support as part of anti-bullying and anti-racist strategies is likely to offer practical support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils, although it should be borne in mind that Gypsy Traveller pupils may not easily accept non Gypsy Traveller buddies. Circle time in primary schools, school councils, and mentor schemes in secondary provision may be effective in improving pupil confidence and the attendance of all vulnerable pupils, including Gypsies and Travellers.

4.11 It is recognised that it may not be realistic to expect Gypsy Traveller pupils not to stand up for themselves in the face of violence or particularly hurtful name calling as they are brought up to stand up for themselves.

4.12 Schools should develop appropriate mechanisms and support to ensure the involvement and active participation of Gypsy Traveller pupils in school councils.

Section 2 - Good Practice for Inclusion

5. Curriculum - raising the achievement of Gypsy and Traveller children

National Developments

5.1 A statement on 'Including All Learners' precedes all of the subject orders in the National Curriculum, with the aim of eliminating discrimination and harassment and promoting positive attitudes, equal opportunities and participation in all areas of school life.

5.2 The Foundation Phase, a new approach to learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales, provides appropriate developmental opportunities and sets high expectations early on that will enable all children to reach their potential and provide the skills and motivation for them to become lifelong learners.

The Foundation Phase curriculum promotes equality of opportunity and values and celebrates diversity. It aims to support the cultural identity of all children, to celebrate cultural differences and help children recognise and gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures.

5.3 The development of 14-19 Learning Pathways offers a wider range of courses and qualifications that more young people will find relevant, with support from learning coaches and improved careers advice. There will also be access to an enhanced range of Personal Support where needed. This is designed to encourage all young people but will be particularly helpful for those with very poor secondary school attendance.

5.4 The Welsh Assembly Government has a long-standing commitment to the provision of universal access to advocacy services for all children and young people in Wales. There will be a particular focus on supporting vulnerable groups which would include Gypsy Traveller children. The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills made an announcement on the future development of children's advocacy services in

Wales on 4 December 2007. The Minister's announcement can be accessed at www.childrenfirst.wales.gov.uk".

5.5 Although none of these developments are specific to Gypsy and Traveller pupils, they will address a number of aspects relevant to the good practice presented in this guidance.

Gypsy and Traveller Curriculum Issues

5.6 Most Gypsy and Traveller parents recognise the benefits of primary education for their children and are keen for their children to attend school for Key Stages 1 and 2 to gain functional literacy and numeracy skills.

5.7 However, Gypsies and Travellers generally view school as providing only part of their children's education, with the rest provided within the Traveller community. This includes boys working with their fathers from a relatively early age and girls helping significantly with childcare and domestic tasks as preparation for running a home and raising children. Nationally, Gypsy Traveller pupils perform the least well of any ethnic minority group and are at very high risk of underachievement in the education system.

5.8 Often Gypsy and Traveller parents will have had negative experiences of secondary school. Coupled with their cultural and moral concerns about sex education, drugs culture and teenage behaviour, there remains a common reluctance among many Gypsy and Traveller parents to allow their children to remain in school throughout secondary education and many pupils do not transfer to Key Stage 3.

5.9 However, recent studies have identified some changes in parental attitude. Increasingly, parents are recognising that Gypsy and Traveller young people may need to take paid employment as several of the traditional opportunities for self-employment decline, and that, without qualifications, their children may have very limited and low paid employment choices.

5.10 The provision of flexible curriculum opportunities focused on relevance for Gypsy and Traveller communities has been found to be a key factor in engaging more Gypsy and Traveller children with education for longer, particularly in secondary school. Coupled with positive work with parents, some LEAs have been able to significantly increase the retention rates for this group of pupils.

5.11 A culturally relevant and affirming curriculum is important for all pupils. It is particularly important for children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds to see their culture, history, language and values reflected in their school experience. All schools should carefully consider curriculum opportunities, for example in Personal and Social Education, to raise awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller culture and lifestyle, whether or not they have Gypsy and Traveller pupils attending the school.

5.12 Teaching methodology that addresses a range of learning styles, including IT based learning, is likely to improve the motivation of Gypsy and Traveller pupils, who may not engage well with predominantly paper-based learning.

All schools, whether or not Gypsy and Traveller pupils are on roll, should have resources in classrooms and libraries that provide a positive view of Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle and culture. This adds to the quality and accuracy of knowledge for all children. Traveller Education Services, where they exist, will be able to advise on appropriate material.

Pre-school and Early Years

5.13 Very often, Gypsy and Traveller children will start school with little or no experience of pre-school settings. This may place them at a disadvantage and at higher risk of academic underachievement because of the basic skills and socialisation opportunities outside their own communities that have been missed. Travelling may result in baseline assessments being missed.

5.14 Although pre-school Gypsy and Traveller children may have skills that other children do not possess, their lack of access to books and learning through play may result in a lower baseline of literacy related skills when they start school.

A number of Local Authorities in Wales have focused on promoting the access of Gypsy and Traveller children to existing pre-school and nursery provision e.g. by basing staff at a nursery to support parents when children are first admitted and illustrating the value of learning to parents.

One LEA links with a language and play project and provides play activities on site on a bus.

The Priory Project in Pembrokeshire takes a holistic approach to supporting Gypsy and Traveller pupils. It begins with integrated playgroup provision, moving through primary and secondary support, and includes the Priory Learning Centre where vocational subjects are offered. Other LEAs make similar provision, tailored to the needs of the Traveller community in their area.

Primary Education and Transition

5.15 Generally, the admission to primary education of those Gypsy and Traveller pupils who are known to LEAs is relatively successful.

5.16 Locally developed Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, in conjunction with the National Curriculum, offer some opportunities to address any deficits in literacy and numeracy that may result from interrupted learning or limited pre-school experience. Progression in these skills will be further underpinned by the skills framework, associated with the revised National Curriculum, to be implemented in September 2008.

5.17 Support for groups at risk of social exclusion, including Gypsy Travellers, is also provided through the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy to improve basic literacy and numeracy in Wales. Words Talk - Numbers Count (National Assembly for Wales Circular No. 15/2005) is being managed by Basic Skills Cymru.

5.18 Where necessary, schools may undertake diagnostic tests and provide group or individual support to Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

5.19 Care needs to be taken when supporting Gypsy and Traveller children to ensure that they are not simply grouped with other pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN). This may not be appropriate if their lower attainments are not the result of SEN and could be de-motivating for these pupils and their families. However, where special educational needs are identified, schools should use the processes of the SEN Code of Practice to facilitate access to appropriate support and referral for Statutory Assessment where necessary.

5.20 Schools should guard against low expectations for Gypsy and Traveller pupils, and recognise that comparatively lower attainments due to interrupted learning may be balanced by greater knowledge and understanding of other skills related to their culture. It is also important for teachers and support workers to ensure that they are not automatically satisfied with Gypsy Traveller attainment merely because it is not below average; Gypsy Traveller pupils with above average aptitude for particular subjects also need support to achieve their potential. Their success will also encourage the wider Gypsy Traveller community to support their own children's education in schools.

5.21 Schools should seek opportunities to reflect Gypsy and Traveller culture in curriculum materials as part of their strategies to include them.

5.22 Transition from primary to secondary school is a crucial time for all, but especially for Gypsy and Traveller pupils, and strong relationships with parents and the Gypsy and Traveller community, empathy with their concerns, flexibility within the secondary

curriculum and suitable support before and after transition will be important factors in achieving successful transition.

5.23 The Governing Bodies of maintained secondary schools and their feeder primary schools are required to draw up Transition Plans. The initial plans relate to the transition of Year 6 pupils to Key Stage 3 in September 2008. This provides a clear opportunity for schools to address the particular needs of Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

5.24 The importance of focused attention on transition arrangements for Gypsy and Traveller pupils is reflected in the invitation to local authorities to bid for the Specific Grant for the Education of Travellers. The suitability of such projects for grant funding cannot be over emphasised.

5.25 LEAs should consider identifying an officer to lead on co-ordinating Gypsy Traveller pupils' transition to provide encouragement and support and to avoid children falling out of the system unnoticed.

The 'Roots of Torfaen' project involved pupils looking at their family history and roots, and included children recording interviews with older relatives. This revealed a lot of information about the history of local families, with Gypsy and Traveller children able to share their family history with other children. It generated a range of other cultural-historical activities such as family visits to Big Pit (National Coal Museum, Blaenavon) to learn about mining.

One Traveller Education Service developed a project in an infant school in a community where negative attitudes had been shown towards Gypsies and Travellers. This started with the *Wind in the Willows*, because one of the characters lives in a caravan, and developed into a project on Gypsy and Travellers which involved some Year 7 pupils going into school to talk to Year 2 pupils. The project was regarded as very successful.

Some primary schools have adapted their curriculum to make it more relevant for Gypsy and Traveller Children. Lessons might include a study of trailers alongside other types of home, work on caravan painting, work based on the major Gypsy Travellers' fairs, such as Stow, and a particular emphasis on horses and dogs, as part of a wider study of animals, etc.

Secondary Education - Key Stage 3

5.26 Achieving transfer to Key Stage 3 is likely to require considerable flexibility, focused on accessibility and relevance.

5.27 Some Gypsy and Traveller parents do not feel that secondary education is culturally relevant to their lifestyle, and may have concerns about the safety of their children in the secondary school environment. Numbers of applications for Traveller Education Grant in 2007 revealed that Gypsy and Traveller children attending secondary education are estimated to be approximately a quarter of those attending primary education.

5.28 Whilst identifying good practice in some areas, Estyn concluded, in their survey of 2005, that most secondary schools in Wales do little to encourage Gypsy and Traveller learners to stay in schools. They also found low expectations on the part of many mainstream teachers; little evidence that the curriculum had been adapted in any way and very few examples of opportunities identified within the curriculum to promote the positive aspects of Gypsy and Traveller culture.

5.29 Although not an entitlement, it may in some cases be appropriate for schools to allow part time attendance initially for an agreed timetable of subjects regarded by the families as most relevant, in the hope that the concerns of pupils and families will be reduced and may lead to increased attendance. Maintaining some attendance during Key Stage 3 will promote access to the more flexible opportunities being presented within 14-19 Learning Pathways. (See also flexi-schooling, section 6 paragraph 2.8, Inclusion and Pupil Support Circular 47/2006.)

5.30 Some LEAs have addressed parental concerns about secondary schools by making secondary provision at bases attached to primary schools. This has led to improvements in secondary attendance. Views on such an approach vary, as some consider this not to be inclusive. Each LEA needs to balance this consideration against the potential benefits for pupils who would not otherwise engage with secondary education.

City and County of Swansea operates a mixed model of provision for Gypsy and Traveller pupils which includes support for those pupils attending comprehensive schools. Support for those not attending secondary school includes a teaching bus and a teaching classroom base (not attached to a primary school) which has been successful in keeping Traveller pupils engaged in learning and leading to some pupils being subsequently admitted to comprehensive school.

Key Stage 4 and beyond: 14-19 Learning Pathways

5.31 Transition to Key Stage 4 is another critical stage in the education of Gypsy and Traveller pupils, since Gypsy and Traveller culture expects boys to work in the traditional family businesses and girls to take responsibility for the home and family once they reach the age of 13 or 14. It is commonly expected within Gypsy and Traveller families that sufficient literacy and numeracy skills will have been developed by then to meet the needs of a Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle. Other aspects of the curriculum may not be regarded as necessary or desirable.

5.32 The reduction in some traditional seasonal work opportunities for Gypsy and Travellers, such as farming, means that some families are now recognising the need for their children to undertake vocational qualifications and gain work outside the family whilst still living on site.

5.33 The increased range of vocational options available in schools under 14-19 pathways, and some alternative curriculum arrangements made by LEAs are likely to provide greater

opportunities for older Gypsy and Traveller children to remain engaged with education.

5.34 Care should be taken not to have low expectations of Gypsy and Traveller pupils and to assume that the only options open to them are vocational. Although uncommon, there are examples of Gypsy and Traveller pupils who have remained in school to take 'A' levels and have gained admission to university.

A project supported by EQUAL funding in Swansea enabled a group of Traveller boys and their fathers to attend a course together on block paving, continuing the 'apprenticeship model' of learning used by the community in which young Gypsies and Travellers learn alongside the adult members of the community and involving parents in more formal methods of learning.

In North East Wales, alternative curriculum subjects and after school activities are being offered to older Gypsy and Traveller pupils in conjunction with other local agencies such as Youth Access. This includes an after school car mechanic's workshop, a homework club and a girls' group.

6. Homework

6.1 Homework may represent a particular challenge for Gypsy and Traveller pupils. There may not be suitable space at home to do homework, and parents may not be able to offer help because of their own limited educational experience.

6.2 Schools should consider how best to provide support in such situations, which are not unique to Gypsy and Traveller pupils. After school homework clubs are not likely to provide a suitable option for Gypsy and Traveller pupils, particularly where they are transported to school, but lunchtime options and/or opportunities for mentor support may be more accessible, although care should be taken to ensure that such opportunities do not compound feelings of isolation.

In some LEAs, homework clubs are provided on Gypsy and Traveller sites by Traveller Education Services and one LEA has a bus that visits sites to provide homework support.

7. Access and Attendance

7.1 Good induction practice by schools will take account of new pupils' social as well as academic needs. This will be particularly beneficial for Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

7.2 As previously highlighted, engaging with parents at the pre-school stage encourages attendance at nursery; improves early learning experiences and increases the likelihood of positive admission to primary education. The more positive the early learning experience is, the more likely it is that Gypsy Traveller children and young people will remain in education.

7.3 As for all parents, it is important that Gypsy and Traveller parents feel that they and their children are welcome at school. They may have experienced hostility within the community that may increase their anxieties in this regard.

7.4 Schools can adopt some simple measures to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller families feel welcome.

Ideally each school should identify a suitable member of senior staff who will be the named liaison person for Gypsy and Traveller families. This should not be an additional task impacting on workload, since issues are to be referred on to the relevant staff member only as needed, but will aid the understanding of potentially confusing school staff structures by Gypsy and Traveller families when making initial contact with the school with any queries or concerns they might have.

Administrative staff should be welcoming to parents and pupils and sensitive in offering help to complete forms and so on where needed.

The headteacher or senior member of staff should meet with parents and pupil(s), to explain school policies (see policy section) and agree how the school and family will communicate with each other.

Ideally Training/awareness raising will have been provided for all staff on key issues related to the culture of Gypsies and Travellers and the possible impact on their schooling.

Traveller Education Services in Pembrokeshire aim to make sure that Gypsy Traveller parents feel that they and their children are welcome at the school. Their adult education programme, and programmes for older children who do not transfer well to Secondary schooling, reflect this commitment.

7.5 Once Gypsy and Traveller children are admitted to school, levels of attendance may be lower than for other groups of children. Apart from the obvious gaps in attendance resulting from travelling for work, the differences in culture and attitudes towards education may mean that Gypsy and Traveller children are absent more frequently than their peers. This may include travelling for family commitments and events such as weddings, funerals and annual horse fairs.

7.6 The legal position is that absence for travelling for work purposes and for significant cultural or family events notified to schools may be regarded as authorised absence. Gypsy and Traveller parents will not be prosecuted for poor attendance where a pupil has attended for 200 sessions in the preceding year and absence has been authorised for work or cultural events.

LEAs should tread a fine line between maximising school attendance and the risk of alienating the families with whom they are wishing to work in partnership.

7.7 Mobile families may be reluctant to give details of their movements, either because of their need for privacy or because of uncertainty around their arrangements. Good parent - school relationships are likely to result in greater openness about travelling plans, which leads to greater clarity around authorising absence.

LEAs may wish to provide a standard letter for schools to issue to parents of Gypsy Traveller children that only requires the child's name and proposed dates of travelling to be completed.

7.8 200 sessions per year should not be regarded as a target for attendance for Gypsy and Traveller pupils as this level of attendance will inevitably have a negative impact on educational attainment. Some LEAs have had considerable success in raising levels of attendance for this group of pupils.

7.9 The most mobile families (e.g. roadside Travellers) may be frequently moved on and there can be a reluctance to admit such children to school as their stay may be very brief. The logistical difficulties for schools and LEAs are recognised, but it is good practice to ensure that such pupils are admitted as swiftly as possible and welcomed for the duration of their stay in the area.

It is recommended that schools that regularly admit Gypsy and Traveller children work with their LEAs (particularly Education Welfare Services and Traveller Education Services, where these are available) to identify support that will potentially improve attendance and to set individual school targets to improve the overall access, attendance and attainments of this group of pupils.

First day follow-up of non-attendance promotes a message from schools that the pupil's attendance is valued although it is recognised that there may be administrative strain on schools, along with practical difficulties which can impede contact, such as changes of 'phone numbers.

Positive contact from schools (i.e. to recognise success rather than being limited to problems) promotes better attendance.

Targeted and sensitive support and mentoring that fosters a rapid sense of achievement will promote a positive attitude to school for pupils and parents.

8. Interrupted learning - promoting continuity

8.1 Mobility, culture and lifestyle all contribute to the well recognised pattern of interrupted learning regularly experienced by Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

8.2 Where travelling follows a regular pattern, children may be admitted to, and registered at, a number of schools as they travel through their annual route that can have its own continuity. Such pupils may be dual registered i.e. at the base school to which they habitually return and also at the school(s) attended whilst travelling.

8.3 A system which provides a child or parent -held record is likely to be useful in sharing information between schools, reducing the disruption to pupils of frequent changes of school and assisting schools in admitting pupils perhaps for short periods. This may include an Individual Education Plan (IEP) where the child has special or additional learning needs.

8.4 In other cases, families may not have precise plans, but may be able to advise the 'home' school on the likely length of their travelling period and when they are likely to return. This is

particularly the case where families are sited and can only retain their pitch for a certain period. In such cases, the provision of work packs and agreed arrangements for the return of work where travelling is extended can help to maintain some educational progress during this period when pupils may not be attending school.

Where resource/work packs are provided for periods of travelling it is helpful if telephone contact with a suitable teacher can be offered. Although most mobile families currently have limited access to the internet whilst travelling, this could provide an opportunity to maintain contact, exchange work and provide advice/assistance etc.

9. Home Education

9.1 Circular 47/2006 'Inclusion and Pupil Support' includes sections on the provision of education outside the school setting (section 5) and on elective home education (section 6).

9.2 As for all parents, Gypsy and Traveller parents have the right to opt to provide home education for their children. Although sometimes this option is exercised for younger children, more often Gypsy and Traveller parents take this option at transition to secondary school or during secondary education in preference to continuing with formal school education.

9.3 The obligation on parents opting for home education is to provide efficient full time education suitable to age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs that the child may have. There is a duty on LEAs to intervene for home-educated children if the parents fail to prove that the child is receiving education and to serve a School Attendance Order if the LEA considers that the child should attend school.

9.4 Some LEAs offer limited home tuition and support for home education for some Gypsy and Traveller children. Such decisions will depend on local and individual circumstances. LEAs need to

balance their decisions about providing alternatives to school based education against the possibility that this may encourage Gypsy and Traveller parents to opt for home education in the belief that this will provide a resourced alternative to school attendance. Attendance at school, even on a flexible basis, should be the goal wherever possible, as this will always provide the greatest range of opportunities for Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

Section 3 - Resources to support Gypsy and Traveller Education

10. LEA Support Services

10.1 Four LEAs with established Gypsy and Traveller populations currently have dedicated Traveller Education Services (TES). These are Cardiff, Flintshire, Swansea and Wrexham. These provide a range of support services, to schools and families, to promote access to education and then to raise attainment once children are admitted to school. They may also maintain contact with families whilst they are travelling and support re-inclusion into school on their return.

10.2 Peripatetic staff within dedicated Traveller Education Services are likely to play a significant role in supporting access to education for Gypsy and Traveller children and in liaising regularly with families in their homes to build trust and change their negative perceptions of education, whilst respecting the particular culture of Gypsies and Travellers.

In one LEA, the TES has reading books in Welsh and English and displays that reflect the culture of Gypsy Travellers. The LEA loans specially-produced early reading books to schools attended by Gypsy and Traveller pupils. The TES has an extensive variety of culturally relevant materials that are effectively used in an exhibition called "Celebrating Success".

10.3 Other LEAs have arrangements within their support services (education welfare, school improvement, learning support and so on) to respond to a more occasional need to support Gypsy and Traveller pupils. It is recommended that these LEAs develop similar supportive relationships with Gypsy Traveller families to those LEAs with Traveller Education Services.

10.4 Since all LEAs will, at some time, admit Gypsy and Traveller pupils to their schools, it is important that arrangements are in place to allow for the prompt admission of these pupils into school and for the provision of support for newly admitted pupils.

11. Youth Support Services

11.1 The Welsh Assembly Government policy document Extending Entitlement sets out the ten universal entitlements for all young people in Wales aged 11-25. The Children Act guidance Stronger Partnerships for Better Outcomes reinforces the importance of implementing the ten entitlements, in order to ensure that all young people in Wales are able to participate effectively in learning, take advantage of opportunities for employment and participate effectively and responsibly in their communities. Clearly this includes those young people from the Gypsy Traveller communities. There exists, in Wales, a number of specific projects/ initiatives located within local authority youth services that include the following:

- Wrexham who offer recreational and leisure opportunities for traveller young people and also involve them in local Youth Forums;
- Ceredigion who work with traveller young people to inform them of the range of services available to them;
- Caer Castell Youth Centre in Rumney, Cardiff.

12. Staff training

12.1 The new Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Standards aim to deal with the standards that newly qualified teachers should meet in respect of pupils from all cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds (i.e. including Gypsy and Traveller pupils). These include identifying and addressing diverse learning needs, valuing diversity and taking positive steps to promote inclusion and to challenge bullying and harassment.

12.2 Continuous Professional Development for individual teachers should respond to their individual needs, as identified through performance management arrangements or school development planning. It will be for each school to determine whole staff and individual staff training needs in relation to general issues of ethnic diversity and more specific issues relating to Gypsy and Traveller pupils, within an overall context of promoting inclusion and raising

achievement across the board. All LEAs should consider the need for further training for all teachers within their schools. Save the Children have developed a customised teacher training programme specifically focusing on Gypsy Traveller pupils.

12.3 Traveller Education Services staff have the practical knowledge and experience to deliver in-service training and awareness raising for school staff. This might include general background, advice on particular cultural issues, effective methodologies and preferred learning styles and so on. Potentially such staff could offer such training outside of their region, by arrangement, as it would be beneficial for regions to collaborate and share their ideas and best practice in order to be more responsive to the distinctive needs of some Gypsy Traveller communities.

12.4 Where good relationships have been fostered with local Gypsy and Traveller communities, members of the communities may be willing to visit schools to raise awareness of staff and pupils. Where this can be achieved, prejudice and stereotyping can be overcome, and the self esteem of the Gypsy and Traveller communities enhanced.

13. Additional Learning Needs

13.1 Gypsy and Traveller pupils are more frequently identified as having special or additional learning needs than other pupil groups.

13.2 Mobility and other factors already identified mean that Gypsy and Traveller pupils, in common with other pupils whose school attendance is less than average, may have lower levels of attainment than average for their peer group.

13.3 It is important that schools and LEAs do not assume that lower attainments automatically mean that Gypsy and Traveller pupils have lower ability and/or SEN. It is de-motivating for pupils of average, or better, ability and may exacerbate problems of attendance, behaviour and adjustment to school.

13.4 Where necessary, sensitive assessments of Gypsy and Traveller pupils should be undertaken to identify whether reduced attainment is due to a learning delay as a result of reduced access to education or due to learning difficulty. This will help in identifying the most appropriate form of support.

13.5 As a general rule, Gypsy and Traveller pupils should not be placed in discrete SEN teaching groups unless assessment has shown this to be appropriate.

13.6 Schools should not automatically assume on admission that Gypsy and Traveller pupils will require additional support. Existing good practice in schools which recognises and addresses the needs of all pupils will, in many instances, apply to Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

14. Working with Families

14.1 Best practice in raising the attainments of Gypsy and Traveller pupils has been closely linked with the development of positive relationships between schools, Gypsy and Traveller parents and the wider Gypsy and Traveller community.

14.2 Families who feel valued by their local schools develop more positive attitudes towards education, and are encouraged to allow their children to attend school for longer.

14.3 The aim in Wales is for schools to be at the heart of the communities they serve by providing a wide range of activities to meet the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community. Schools are well placed to act as a community resource not just in school hours but in evenings, at weekends and during holidays. It has been shown that schools which become community focussed can be successful in encouraging adults back into learning and can change the culture of a community by raising the profile of learning.

14.4 The European funding programme 'EQUAL' offered funding for projects to improve opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers.

This included activities to encourage home/school liaison and outreach. EQUAL can be seen as best practice.

14.5 Particularly where families are settled or housed, opportunities to involve Gypsy and Traveller parents directly in the life of the school have very positive benefits for all concerned. Such opportunities include encouraging parents to stand for election as Parent Governors; involving parents in volunteering and sporting activities; mentoring; school trips; Parent Teacher Associations and so on. Appointing Gypsy and Travellers as teaching assistants where opportunities arise also creates positive role models.

With EQUAL funding, Swansea LEA employed a young Gypsy Traveller girl in a clerical capacity, giving her an opportunity to experience the world of employment.

14.6 There are a range of opportunities for family learning across Wales which may offer significant benefits to Gypsy and Traveller families. These include the following:

- The all - age National Basic Skills strategy, *"Words Talk, Numbers Count"* which includes extensive programmes for families with school age children;
 - Through Bookstart, book-bags are presented to all families with young children at 9 months and at 18 months. The aim is to get this resource to all families, including Gypsy Traveller families.
 - All schools(primary and secondary) hold, or are working towards achieving, the Basic Skills Quality Mark. This is based on schools producing a framework to identify and support those who are falling behind or have fallen behind in their basic literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Training grants have been provided and a 'Continuing Professional Development in Basic Skills Training (Schools)' programme has been developed to better enable teachers to support pupils with poor basic skills.

- The Strategic Intervention Grants programme is primarily targeted at pupils who have poor basic skills and LEAs use this funding to provide catch-up literacy and numeracy support in primary schools, in most cases, although a number of such programmes have been developed in Key Stage 3 also.
- The National Support Projects for Young People and for Basic Skills through Financial Literacy are targeted at 14-19 year olds - especially those at risk or in danger of exclusion. These projects are aimed at providing materials and training for teachers in contexts such as money management, recreation and leisure, and the environment. In addition resources such as the substantial "Basic Skills Through Sport" pack has been developed which supports teaching and learning amongst this age group. The National Support Project for Young People works with youth services to promote the learning within the contexts noted.
- The Learning and Play co-ordinators established in LEAs in Wales via the Basic Skills Strategy are able to target groups such as Gypsies and Travellers and to offer support such as the programme 'Keeping Up with the Children' which seeks to bring parents up to date with what their children are learning.
- Strategic Intervention Grants (SIGs), through the Basic Skills Strategy, are focused at harder to reach groups, of which Gypsies and Travellers are identified as being at risk of social exclusion. SIG co-ordinators have been asked to identify opportunities to increase the support available.
- Schools across Wales offer Family Literacy and Numeracy programmes which give parents the opportunity to improve their own skills as well as those of their children.

15. Multi-agency working

15.1 The Children Act 2004 specifies that Local Authorities, key agencies and other bodies should co-operate in order to improve the well being of children in the area. This is especially important if LEAs are to meet the particular needs of Gypsy and Traveller families.

15.2 The Children and Young People Partnerships will support the development of improved children's services across Wales by encouraging joint working and co-operation, while the Children and Young People's Plans will define the priorities for all children and young people's services in an area.

15.3 It is recommended that all Local Authorities set up a cross-departmental group that is able to coordinate Local Authority services in the first instance. Such groups can then form the core of multi-agency planning groups including health, the police, and voluntary and representative agencies. The value of sharing best practice should not be overlooked.

15.4 Opportunities should be explored for statutory and voluntary sectors to work to tackle the marginalisation and social exclusion that young Gypsies and Travellers face. Organisations such as Friends, Families and Travellers can act as a conduit between the Gypsy Travellers and the statutory authorities and are concerned not just with educational outcomes alone but seek to tackle the range of challenges faced by travelling communities.

Following a project initiative, one Local Authority's Museum Service purchased a traditional Romany bow-top wagon, which has become part of a travelling Gypsy exhibition touring schools and Gypsy sites in the county. Museum funding for innovative projects and social inclusion enabled learners to take part in a "Wagon Trip". Learners experienced life in a horse-drawn wagon, including cooking, sleeping, travelling and entertainment around the campfire.

16. All-Wales working

16.1 As the overall number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in Wales is relatively small, LEAs should work together to share good practice, identify common issues and propose consistent approaches to the Delivering Beyond Boundaries agenda. Joint working will allow services to be responsive to the needs of individuals and communities, while sharing expertise and knowledge.

16.2 Joint working will enable LEAs to reach out to vulnerable and excluded groups at the regional level, LEAs with larger Gypsy and Traveller populations and dedicated Traveller Education Services could offer support to those LEAs with small numbers or occasional Gypsy and Traveller pupils, in line with Welsh Assembly Government policy for regional collaboration.

16.3 The Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) has a well- established Inclusion sub-group that meets regularly. It is expected that this group will take an overview of Gypsy and Traveller education issues as part of their overarching Inclusion remit.

16.4 An All-Wales Co-ordinators' group for Gypsy and Traveller education has been re-established by the Welsh Assembly Government. This will help to foster mutual support and provide a forum for discussion of all the issues related to Gypsy and Traveller education.

Index of documents

Review of Service Provision for Gypsies and Travellers:

- Equality of Opportunity Committee, National Assembly for Wales 2003;
- Response of Welsh Assembly Government to the Equality of Opportunity Committee Report, 2004.

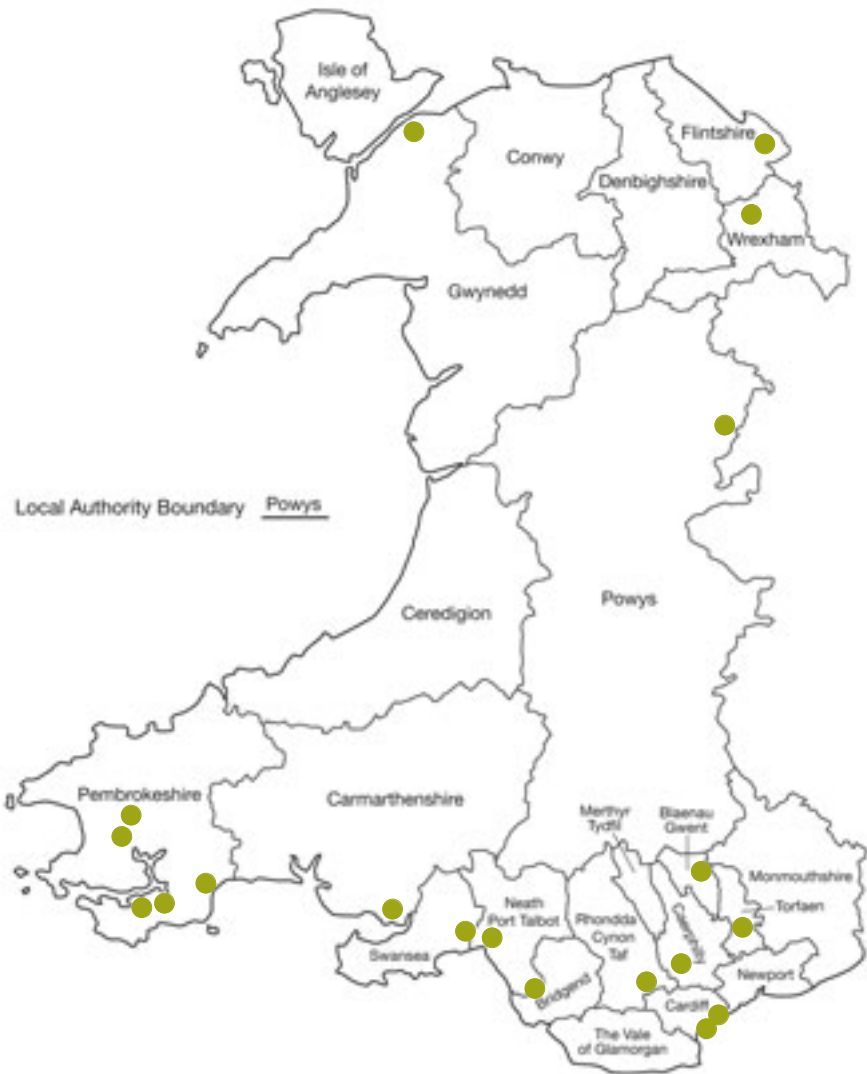
Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils:

- A Guide to Good Practice, DfES, July 2003;
- Inclusive Educational Approaches for Gypsies and Travellers within the context of Interrupted Learning: Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools, Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2003.

The Education of Gypsy Traveller Learners:

- A survey of provision made by schools and local authorities in Wales to meet the needs of Gypsy Traveller learners, Estyn, 2005;
- Research into the Education of Gypsy Traveller Children in Wales, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), February 2006;
- Accommodation Needs of Gypsy-Travellers in Wales, Pat Niner, University of Birmingham, April 2006;
- Inclusion and Pupil Support: Welsh Assembly Government Circular 47/2006, November 2006.

Location of Local Authority Gypsy-Traveller Sites in Wales



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Cartographics - ML/90/07.08/general

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