



Addressing the Educational Needs of Bilingual, Black and Minority Ethnic Learners:

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Outline

- Terminology
- Historical context
- Changing demographical context
- Achievement of EAL Black and Minority Ethnic Learners
- Factors affecting achievement
- Towards the Culturally learning school

Main Arguments

- The debate concerning bilingualism and the achievement of black and minority ethnic learners in England needs to be understood as part of a wider historical, economic and political context and on the changing nature of racism in England
- In order to tackle problems of underachievement and exclusion, schools and educators need to become more responsive to a rapidly changing demographic context and to the nature of institutionalised racism

Terminology

- Racism – the systematic oppression and exclusion of one group by another based on ‘race’



Biological racism

Cultural racism

- Institutionalised racism – 'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin'. (McPherson Report into the Death of Stephen Lawrence)

Terminology

- **English as an additional language (EAL).** This term is often used in phrases such as ‘EAL learners’ or ‘pupils learning EAL’.
- **Bilingual is the term often used as a shorthand description for pupils learning EAL.** Strictly speaking, it does not take account of the multilingualism mentioned above, but is generally regarded as acceptable. The term does not presume any equivalent level of fluency or literacy in any language. The following definition is provided by the UK government:

Bilingual here is taken to mean all pupils who use or have access to more than one language at home or at school – it does not necessarily imply full fluency in both or all languages.

Some historical landmarks

- 1945 – Arrival of immigrants from the former Commonwealth in the post war period and lasted up until the late 1960s. Minority ethnic underachievement was barely acknowledged. No national data collected.
- 1966 – Section 11 funding introduced under the Local Government Act to provide assistance to local authorities that had substantial numbers of minority ethnic pupils ‘whose language and customs differ from those of the local community’. Can be seen as part of a wider assimilationist thrust.
- 1971 – Coarde, B. How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-normal in British Schools. Seminal book on nature of institutionalised racism from a black perspective

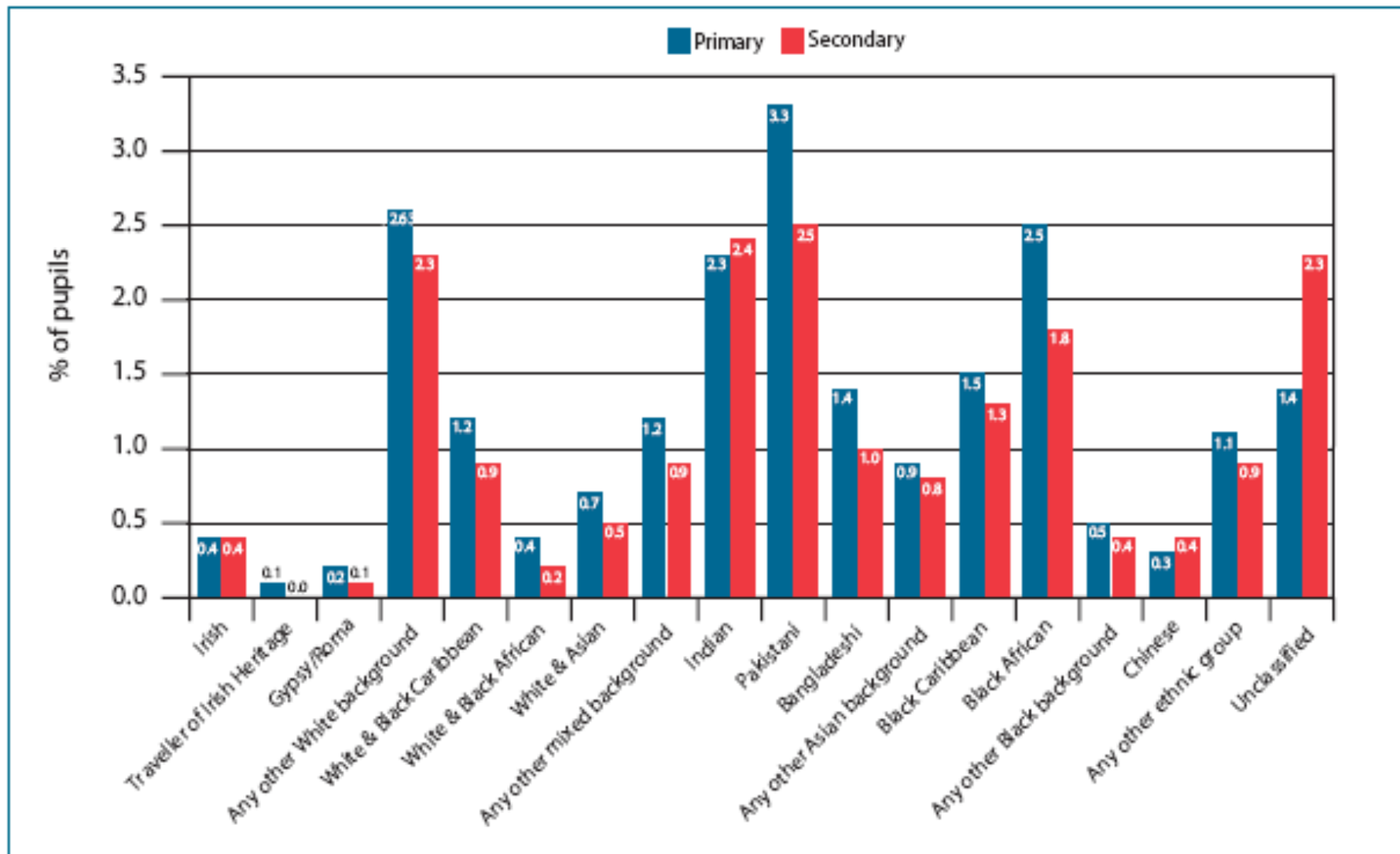
Some historical landmarks

- 1985 – Education for All (The Swann Report) (London: HMSO). Multicultural approach given official sanction. Limited recognition of bilingualism.
- 1988 – national curriculum introduced as part of ERA under Thatcher. Reduction in power and scope of LEAs.
- 1998 – Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant Introduced with dual purpose of EAL support and raising BME achievement. Part of New Labour social exclusion agenda.

Some historical landmarks

- 1999 – McPherson report into the death of the Black teenager Stephen Lawrence published. Official acknowledgement and definition of ‘institutionalised racism’.
- 2000 – Race relations amendment act
- 2004 – ‘Aiming High’. New period of government intervention with emphasis on whole school change.
- 2005 – Increasing concerns about new arrivals in context of immigration from Africa and Eastern Europe.

Figure 1: Percentage of pupils from each minority ethnic group in maintained primary and secondary schools as of January 2006



Changing Demographic Realities

- According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in 2005, 565 000 people came to the UK, of which 145 000 were EU citizens. Overall, an estimated 64 000 more citizens of the EU Accession countries migrated into the UK for at least a year than left in 2005 and this was an increase of over 50% from 2004 to 2005. An estimated 49 000 Polish citizens migrated into the UK in 2005 which is more than from any other European country. One in eight EU residents now live in the UK.
- The total number of pupils in primary and secondary maintained schools learning English as an additional language (EAL) has risen from 653 800 in 2003 (9.6% of the school population) to 789 790 in 2007 (12% of the school population). The largest increases in pupils learning EAL were in the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, the East of England, Inner London and Outer London. Over 50% of pupils in Inner London are learning English as an additional language (EAL).

Figure 33: Proportion of pupils by ethnic group and gender achieving 5+A*-C GCSE (and equivalent) in 2005

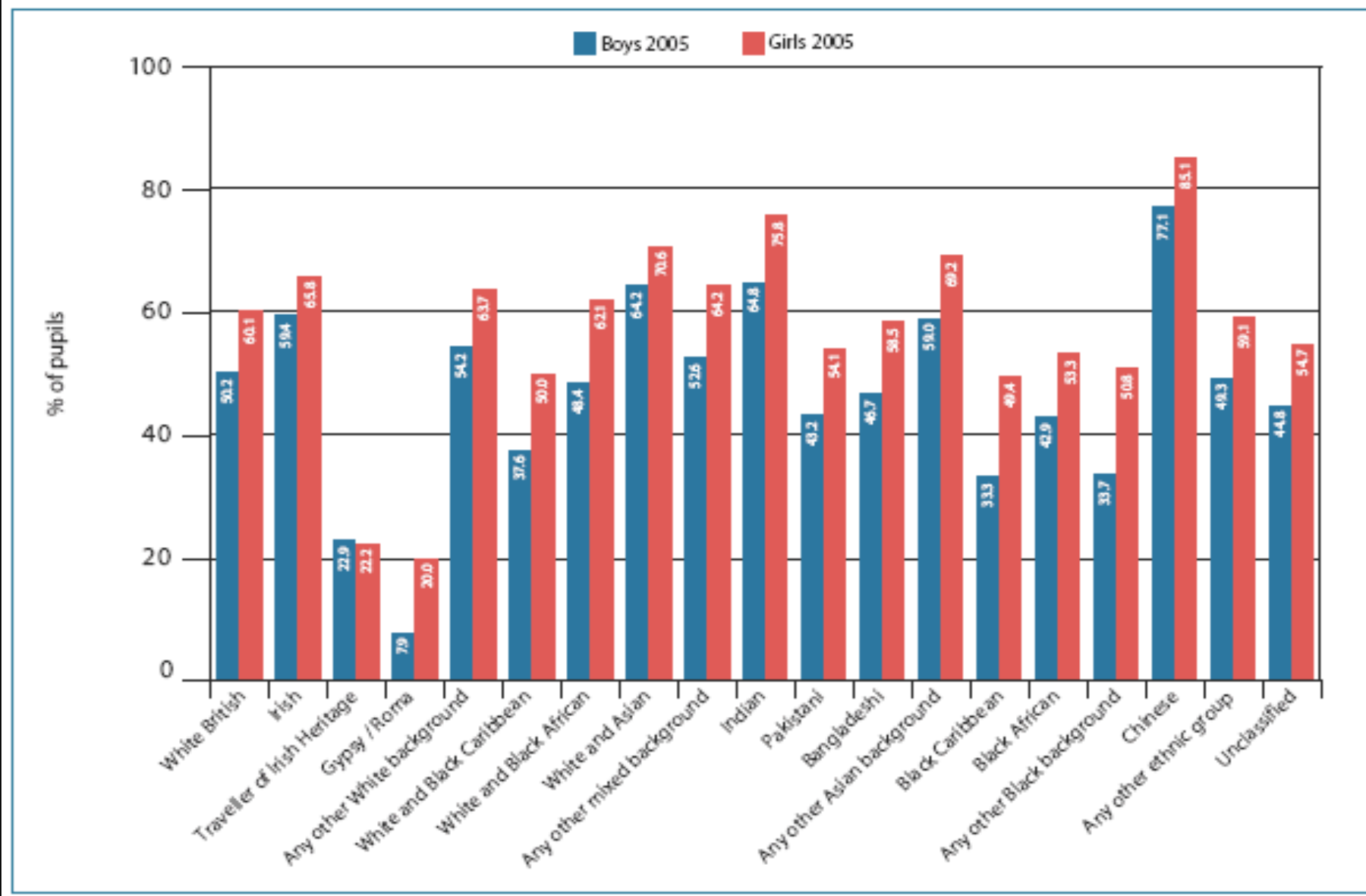
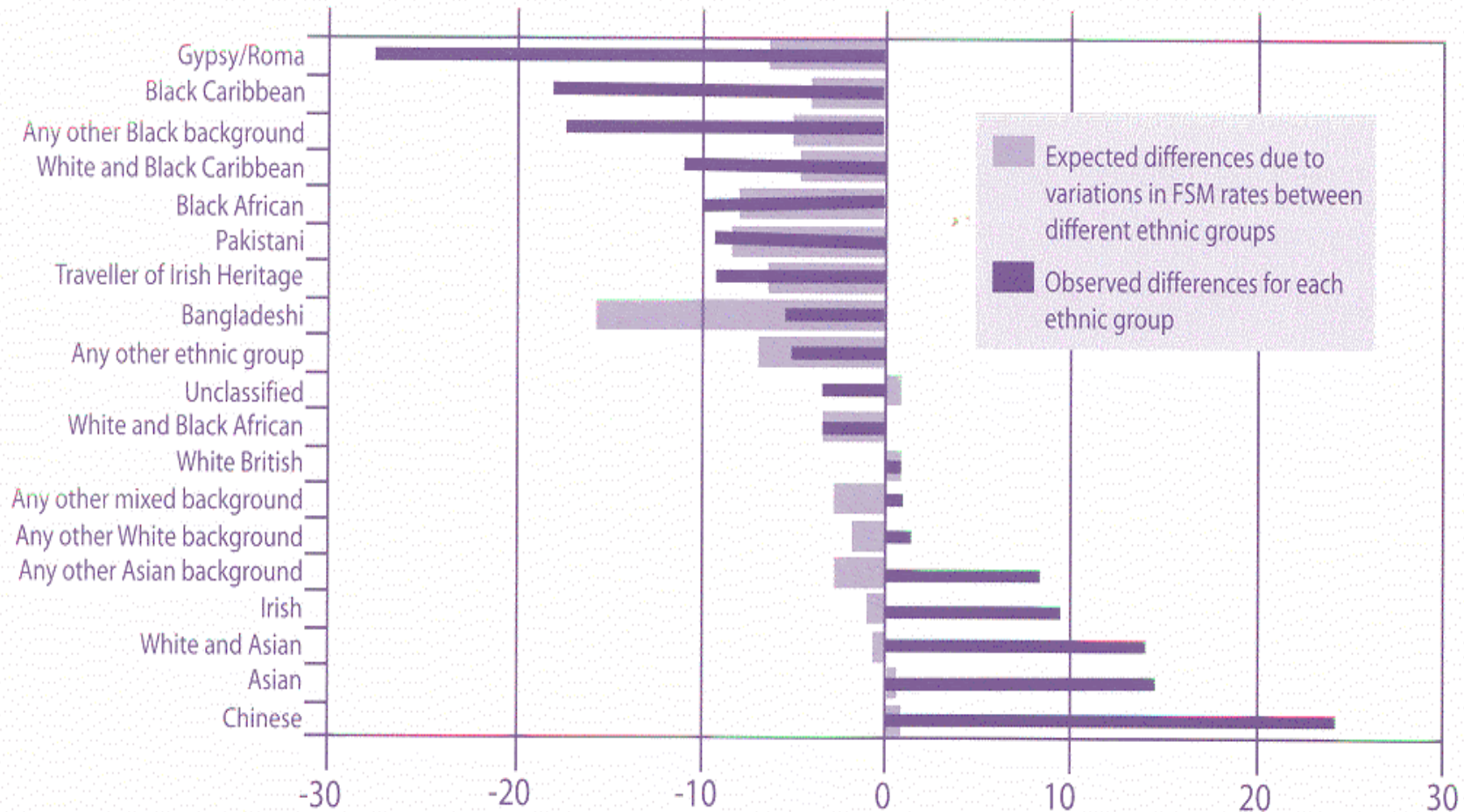


Figure 6 Effect of Ethnicity and Deprivation on GCSE Results



Factors Affecting Achievement

- **Teacher expectations:** studies (e.g. CRE, 1992; Sukhnandan and Lee, 1998) have shown that low teachers' expectations deter some minority ethnic pupils from doing well, particularly Black Caribbean boys
- **Length of settlement and period of schooling in the UK** can affect performance, though this is not universally the case. Many African-Asian and Chinese communities developed after the Pakistani community, yet their young people have significantly better results

Factors Affecting Achievement

- **Parental education and aspirations:** Where parents have high levels of education and/or high aspirations for their children, this can be a strong factor in promoting high levels of achievement among pupils, both from minority ethnic backgrounds and across the wider population (Modood, 2003)
- **Fluency in English** affects some minority ethnic pupils' attainment: studies have shown for example that Bangladeshi pupils who achieved poorer results were more likely to be relatively new to English compared with more fluent higher performing Indian or African-Asian students. However, Cameron (2003) has upheld previous evidence that bilingual pupils continue to need support for academic writing even when orally fluent in English
- **Institutional racism:** The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry identified institutional racism as a major factor disadvantaging some minority ethnic groups.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

General duty:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote racial equality
- Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups

Specific duty:

- Race Equality Policy, Action Plan and review process in place

The implications for schools:

To be proactive in promoting race equality and cultural diversity in:

- Identifying underachievement
- Raising standards and promoting equality of opportunity for pupils who are underachieving
- Curriculum content and delivery
- Pupil admissions, assessments and discipline (including exclusions)
- All assessment, monitoring, reviewing and evaluation systems

The institutionally racist school	The culturally learning school
Weak leadership on race equality	Strong, distributed leadership including head, SMT, governors, pupils
Failure to recognise race equality issues	Race equality central to school policy
School climate not conducive to race equality and managing diversity	Ethos of respect, listening and caring
Lack of awareness and responsiveness to changing patterns of diversity	Constantly scanning environment, updating staff
Failure to effectively monitor data performance and exclusion data	Regular, consistent and comprehensive data monitoring at school department and classroom level
Failure to set appropriate targets	Data monitoring feeds into target setting at school, department and classroom level
Low teacher expectations	High expectations of all learners; zero tolerance of underachievement and exclusion
Inconsistent behaviour management	Clear policy consistently and comprehensively applied and monitored

Institutionally racist school	Culturally learning school
Failure to deal with racist bullying	Clear, consistent bullying policy incorporating racist bullying, effectively monitored
Failure to reflect diversity in the mainstream curriculum	Diversity reflected in mainstream curriculum in a way that avoids stereotyping and tokenism
Failure to engage with parents	Multidimensional links with parents/ community
Race equality does not feature in staff development/ INSET	Race equality an integral part of professional learning communities
Failure to address over-representation of black children in exclusions	Clear strategies to address exclusions issues effectively monitored
Failure to address over-representation of BME pupil in lower sets/ exam tiers	Clear strategies based on potential as well as prior attainment, effectively monitored
Failure to close achievement gap	Clear strategies in place to close achievement gap effectively monitored