

Moving with the Times

July 2002

Norfolk Traveller Education Service

Include me OUT!

Mae West's old (but still famous) quote speaks about choosing **not** to be included –thank you very much! However I've chosen it as my heading because it often sums up the way Traveller children feel about school. They actually don't have any choice about being in school, but when there they can feel '**included out**'.

Travellers are often overlooked as a discrete ethnic group

'Inclusion in education involves restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students..'(Taken from the Index for Inclusion 2000)

One of the ways a school can restructure its culture is by providing images and resources which respond to this diversity. Library books, curriculum texts, pictures, artefacts, toys, and games should all reflect different minority cultures and traditions.

Travellers (and therefore Traveller children in school) are often overlooked as a discrete ethnic group. In most cases they are white and speak the same language as their settled companions; sometimes their families have 'settled' in houses and no longer travel. Yet the ethnicity of Gypsy Travellers **is** recognised in law (1988 Court of Appeal ruling) by virtue of their ...'long shared history'....and 'a cultural tradition of their own.'

In the light of this it is hardly surprising that resources which reflect Traveller lifestyle and culture are thin on the ground! Yet all the research shows that when children from whatever culture or background feel valued and accepted they perform better and have a happier experience of school.

Our Service recognised several years ago that there were not enough resources reflecting Traveller culture and set out to remedy this. We produced books, and videos, posters and information packs for schools. We commissioned toys and small 'play trailers' for use by Early Years children. These resources are meant to be used and enjoyed by every child in schools/settings, from whatever background.

Earlier this year Yr 7 pupils from Earlham High School in Norwich were involved in a Design Technology project to make puzzles in a box. Working together Andrew Sivitter, Head KS3 and Caroline Henderson, one of our Advisory Support Teachers, chose as their subject 'Travellers and their way of life'. Photographs depicting Traveller images were chosen and scanned and glued to wood, then cut out precisely to make attractive jigsaws. The finished products were much admired and the students learned many things from their project. They were also able to discuss the different way of life of a minority ethnic group and to explore the thorny subjects of prejudice and racism.



The students were so proud of their puzzles that they took them home, but we do hope in the future to work with schools on projects where young people make resources—including those which reflect Traveller and other cultures – for use with all pupils.

If there is a school 'out there' which would like to be involved, please contact us at the address on the bottom of the next page. Remember you do not have to have Travellers on roll to be involved with Traveller Education!

Data What's it all for?

From time to time we contact schools/settings requesting specific information. We are very grateful for the courteous response we get from staff, and always explain why the information is needed, but I thought it would be a good idea to ask Lorna Daymond our Head of Service to explain a little more fully.

Why does the Traveller Education Service need to have attendance records?

The DfES requires us to collect and submit data on Travellers eligible for additional support. This includes attendance data.

Why do you collect reading ages/Baseline/Sats/GCSEs etc?

We also need to know within the LEA how Traveller pupils are achieving, in order to plan support strategies.

Why do you need to know about exclusions?

It has been acknowledged that Travellers are a vulnerable group where exclusions are concerned. We need to know the extent of the problem and why this is happening

You often ask for data for children who have been settled for a long time - why is that?

Until recently there has been no systematic collection of data of Travellers who have been settled for 2 years or more. We have found that some Travellers continue to under-achieve long after they become settled, and this raises questions about culture, language and also the level of inclusiveness and appropriateness of the curriculum.

What do you do with the data?

Several things. Pass it to the DfES if they ask for it. Inform ourselves in order to plan support for schools and pupils. And for 2 years now we have been involved in regional benchmarking with other Traveller

Education services across East Anglia, to look at data, share good practice and communicate our findings to the DfES and Ofsted. We also share good practice.

What next is in store?

Two changes are in the offing. The DfES is planning to fund Traveller Education Services according to a needs-led formula, from April 2003. Arthur Ivatts, recently retired as an HMI is visiting Norfolk in July on a fact finding visit to help inform the DfES in this.

Secondly as part of the national Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLAC), from January 2003 all schools will be required to return pupil ethnicity data. Some, but not all, Travellers have minority ethnic status. Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage have now been added to the ethnicity categories. This will enable us to identify Travellers in these categories from a school's data and to monitor pupils' achievement according to discreet minority ethnic groups.

Thank you Lorna



Arrival.....

We are pleased to welcome Julie Page to our team. Julie is a Learning Support Assistant who joined us on the 8th April from a first school in the King's Lynn area. She will be working mainly from the Norwich base.

and

Departures.....

Two of our learning Support Assistants, Emma Wigley and Hilary Warner have now left to pursue new careers; Emma as an LSA in a newly formed unit at Fakenham High school and Hilary also as an LSA, working with the Psychological Service in Bawdeswell and King's Lynn. Although both of them were with us for quite a short time, their work was invaluable and we will miss them both as friends and as colleagues. We wish them both well for the future.



And.....

After 13 years with Traveller Education we are



*saying goodbye to **Pat Chell** one of our Advisory Support Teachers. Many colleagues in schools and settings will know Pat personally. We calculated that since 1987 she has worked in 115 school throughout Norfolk! Children and staff have benefited from her help and support and she is now teaching the children of pupils she supported when she first joined the Service!*

Her work with the Traveller community has been immense and many families (probably in the region of 200) will have good reason to regret her leaving. Over the years she has built up relationships based on trust and respect within the Traveller community. Many regard her as a friend.

Pat is leaving to go and live in the South of France (doesn't it make you sick?) to be nearer her son and her two beautiful, intelligent (her words) grandchildren. She will be making a new life altogether; there are bound to be challenges ahead but also many opportunities for Pat to develop her skills and resources.

*Her knowledge, enthusiasm and resourcefulness will be missed by everyone at the TES. BUT we know where we're going on holiday next year! **Good Luck Pat.***