

1830s Covered horse drawn wagons begin to be used by Gypsies in Britain. Many Gypsies live in the more makeshift bender tents, and will continue to do so until the mid-late 20th Century.

1880s Agricultural depression in England. Many Travellers and Gypsies are poverty stricken and move to urban squatters' areas. Hundreds of Irish Travellers leave Ireland for Britain.

1889 Showmen in Britain form the United Kingdom Van Dwellers Association, later called the Showmen's Guild, to fight the Moveable Dwellings Bill, which restricts Travellers' movements.

1908 The Children's Act makes education compulsory for Travelling children in England by The Children's Act, but only for half the year.

1930s-60s Groups of European Roma come to live in Britain.

1934 Django Reinhardt introduces "swing jazz" to the world. A major influence on the development of Jazz.

1939-45 World War II. Nazis compose lists of English Gypsies to be interned. In Britain, the government builds caravan camps for Gypsies serving in the forces or doing vital farm work. These are closed when the war finishes. Roma, Sinti and other Gypsies are stripped of all human rights by the Nazis. As many as 600,000 are murdered in camps and gas chambers. This is Porrajmos (the devouring), the Roma holocaust in Europe.

1945-60 Travellers start to use motordrawn trailers, and some buy their own land to stop on with them.

1960 New private sites are banned from being built in England by The Caravan Sites (Control of Development) Act. Mass evictions and public harassment of Gypsies and Travellers. Irish Government "Commission on Itinerancy" begins a programme to assimilate Irish Travellers.

1968 Lord Avebury helps to pass the new Caravan Sites Act. From 1970, the Government have to provide caravan sites for Travellers.

1970s-1990s People from the settled community start to take to the road and live in caravans. They are known as "New Age Travellers" in the media.

1994 The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act abolishes the Caravan Sites Act. This is disastrous for all Travellers living in Britain, and more than 5,000 families now have no legal home. Local councils became duty bound to identify land for private purchase by Travellers. Not one local council adhered to this.

1997 Slovak Romani refugees arrive in Dover, England. The media reaction is openly hostile.

2000 The amended Race Relations Act recognises Irish Travellers as an ethnic minority. This has not yet happened in Ireland, where they are seen instead as a "social minority". Scottish Travellers are still not recognised as an ethnic minority in Scotland. In England, Gypsy-led protests at the ban of the 600 year old fair at Horsemonden in Kent are successful and the ban is finally lifted in 2006.

2003 Irish Traveller Johnny Delaney, 15, is kicked to death in Cheshire for being "only an f***ing Gypsy", as Eyewitnesses report. The Judge at his murderers' trial rules that it was not a racially motivated attack and sentences the killers to 4½ years.

2003 12 Sussex Bonfire Society members arrested for incitement to racial hatred after burning an effigy of a caravan containing images of Gypsy women and children, and pained with inflammatory slogans.

2004 The labour government makes it a legal duty to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Traveller.

2005 The Sun newspaper launches its "Stamp on the Camps" campaign against Gypsies and Travellers. The Conservatives try to get re-elected by targeting Gypsies supposed flouting of planning laws.

2006 BBC starts Rokker Radio, the first programme for Gypsies and Travellers in its history.

2008 Britain celebrates the first Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. But in Italy, Roma camps are firebombed by neo-nazis.



Bargee families have a nomadic lifestyle similar to that of Fairground or Circus families.



Traditional Gypsy Vardos. Today Vardos are valued as collector's items. They are taken to horse fairs, as a link with old customs and traditions. The amount of decoration, ornaments and carvings on Vardos were indicative of the owner's status.

Case Studies

The following case studies have been compiled to show good practice that is occurring in our schools and educational settings. The case studies show a range of teaching strategies and approaches used to support the GRT children and their families.

Including GRT culture, history and traditions in the curriculum

All schools are responsible for preparing pupils for life in a diverse society. An inclusive curriculum provides opportunities to celebrate and affirm different cultures and lifestyles, including those of GRT communities. It provides opportunities to challenge misinformation and stereotyped views that can lead to prejudice and racist bullying.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Ingram Road Primary School:

We introduced into our curriculum theme weeks, including: Black History Week, Maths Week, Enterprise Week, Writing Week, Anti Bullying Week, One World Week, Arts Week, Gypsy Roma Traveller week. We make sure that everything links together to provide continuity for our children. During these theme weeks we involve the local community and invite role models from the community into school to support with the work. During the Gypsy Roma Traveller theme week we invited Ferdinand Koci in to work with the children drawing portraits. The children loved this as he inspired them greatly. The children really enjoy the theme weeks and learn lots of new information during the week. They also produce some excellent work during this week and learn new skills which will benefit them in their future school career. The key resource for schools is to plan the theme weeks in advance and gather together appropriate resources to match the needs of the children. Great care is also taken to use resources that don't show bias or are stereotypical in nature.



Morley Newlands Primary School:

We decided to include GRT into our curriculum for the Summer Term. Firstly I met with Sally Hall from the GRTAS who looked at our themes for the term and the objectives we were due to cover. Together we decided that KS1 were going to focus on the Circus and Fairground. Years 3 & 4 on the Roma and Years 5 & 6 on Appleby Horse Fair. In our Key Stage teams we then had planning meetings to discuss some of the activities we could teach and how they match the learning objectives for the term. We specifically looked at Geography, History, Design and Technology, PSHCE, Literacy, Music and Science. We then spent some time gathering resources suitable for the activities. We also borrowed resources from the GRTAS. KS1 undertook activities including: learning circus skills, looking at similarities and differences, who works in a Fairground / Circus, looking at their lifestyles, how they travel, making carousels, making clown masks, role play, making Crown Derby. Years 3 & 4 investigated the countries the Roma come from, found out about why and how they came to England, studied their flag and culture, listened to and learnt words in Roma. Years 5 & 6 investigated Appleby Horse Fair. They looked at the location and how to get there, what happens at Appleby, learnt about how important horses are to the GRT. We also made sure there were lots of opportunities for discussion and the children to ask questions. The whole school's awareness about the GRT has been raised. We shared our work and activities in assemblies and invited the parents so we have raised the profile of GRT not only in our school but the wider community too. The children throughout the school were fantastic and empathising with the GRT and a lot of role play was done to encourage this. It was important that we had appropriate resources and knowledge to use and share with the children before teaching the activities. This was done through research and using the GRTAS. The photo packs we borrowed and used brought about a lot of discussion and excitement. We feel that people need to research the subject properly and feel confident in what they are teaching in order to give the children an accurate understanding of the GRT.



Drighlington Primary School:

We recognised a need in our Early Years Foundation Stage to reach Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families isolated from our provision and who may not know what we can offer. We needed to develop relationships strong enough to overcome the barriers created by experiences of sustained prejudice and to ensure Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children feel safe and cared for. We started to address these needs with the Foundation Stage (FS) Resource package reflecting Gypsy Traveller lifestyle and culture (that included: toys; books: fact and fiction; CDs; activity packs; jigsaws and pictures for display) loaned to school by the GRTAS. Our FS teacher spent time discussing this with GRTAS teacher and how they could be used in our setting. The Foundation Stage Resource package reflecting Gypsy Traveller lifestyle and culture was also shared with Gypsy Traveller parents. The FS teacher participated in "Every Gypsy Roma Traveller Child A Talker" training and accessed resources from this training for use with Gypsy Roma Traveller children and their families. Gypsy Traveller parents took "Every Gypsy Roma Traveller Child A Talker" resources home and then away with them whilst travelling. On their return the photos and Talking Photo Album became a focus for discussion and sharing of information. The impact of this work was a visible increase in self-esteem among both children and adults from the Gypsy Traveller community, an increased attendance leading to higher literacy levels plus higher levels of achievement in Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED). The children also had an increased interest in reading, particularly sharing books reflecting Traveller heritages and cultures while the parents developed a greater willingness to speak with teachers. The culmination of the positive links and renewed relationships was a week long, whole school focus on Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle and culture, when a family brought their old wagon / vardo and horse to the school playground for all to see confirming the high status given to this project, and to the community. Practitioners were effective when they were seen to: respect and value every child's family and home background, their cultures and communities and the important events in their lives; work closely with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents and families, developing mutual understanding of how children learn through play and the importance of building on children's interests; know or find out about the community and local dynamics; involve Gypsy, Roma and Traveller fathers and mothers; take time to listen to people from different backgrounds and to be open about differences of language and approach; make time to listen to parents and their feelings and concerns; ensure parents have regular opportunities to add to children's records; ask, and respond to the views of Gypsy Roma and Traveller parents on the care and education they provide.



To raise the attendance of the Gypsy Traveller children

Strategies to promote good attendance are central to raising the achievement of GRT pupils. It is essential that schools have a consistent approach as well as respecting the families' right to a nomadic lifestyle. Schools need to have high expectations about attendance which are communicated to the pupils, parents/carers and the school response must be the same as for other pupils.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Holy Family Catholic Primary School:

Our school has a large number of Gypsy Traveller children, many of whom come from Cottingley Springs Site. This is a permanent site for Gypsy Travellers in Leeds. Analysis of attendance figures showed that our Gypsy Traveller pupils have a high rate of persistent absence and this correlated to their attainment levels in all subjects. We introduced new procedures in school to deal with attendance levels for all our pupils. We have introduced a policy where we expect a phone call from the parents / carers on the first day of a pupil's absence to explain where the pupil is. This is to ensure the safe-guarding of our pupils. For every child who is absent the class teacher fill in a pink slip with the child's name and any known reason for the absence or left blank if none is known. At 9.30am every day our Learning Mentor checks the schools registers and looks at the pink slips. She then phones the parents / carers of any children where an absence is not known. If a reason is given it is written on the pink slip. If no-one answers then a voicemail message is left and a text message also sent asking for the parent / carer to get in touch with school. The pink slips then go back in the register to the class teacher who files them in the pupil's individual attendance files. At this stage the absence are not authorised. For the absence to become authorised the parent / carer must put in writing the reason for their child's absence, All our parents know that our Learning Mentor will help them with writing the note. We now have a letter explaining every absence in our school. Our Gypsy Traveller families also send in doctor letters and appointment cards for us as reasons for a child's absence. We reward the children through stickers and certificates in assemblies and have also sent home certificates to the parents as a thank-you for bringing their children to school. Our Year 5 class went one step further and the class teacher introduced teaching life skills through a Romeo and Juliet production. The pupils made up their own script, designed, cut out and sewed their own costumes. There was also 100% attendance from the parents to see their children in the production. The children's attendance was tracked for the term to see if teaching life skills had any impact and the results were outstanding. For the 3 Gypsy Traveller children in the class their attendance increased from: 83.8% to 86.2%, 73.5% to 80% and 89.7% to 93.8%. This life skills project has been so successful that it is going to continue and be extended to other classes.



To raise the attendance of the Roma children

Strategies to promote good attendance are central to raising the achievement of GRT pupils. Schools need to have high expectations about attendance which are communicated to the pupils, parents/carers and the school response must be the same as for other pupils.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Harehills Primary School:

We decided to focus on 2 children from the same family who had the lowest attendance % in their year groups at 62.7%. With such low attendance a large amount of class work was missed, having a negative impact on their learning. Their lack of attendance combined with English being their second language places them both significantly below national averages academically. My interventions with both pupils are primarily based upon attitudinal change towards education. Low attendance means that their scheduled times of contact were often missed meaning that we had to carry out a flexible approach to intervention. Interventions in school were proving mostly ineffective in improving attendance but key in building a strong relationship and we felt that the key to change would be by engaging the family. Having a wrap around approach where both the children and family are gaining support and are aware of procedures which will be employed. Home visits became the crucial factor in improved attendance for both children, carrying out twelve home visits to a number of addresses where the children may have been. On three occasions bringing one of the children back to school, on one occasion bringing the other child back to school. As simple as a home visit may sound, to simply turn up at a house and take a child back to school is invariably much more complex than it sounds. During one home visit there was a tense atmosphere. We tell the Mum that her children have been teaching me Czech, in my best efforts we speak broken Czech to the great delight of the occupants and additionally basic Polish to two very intimidating men, both again taking great delight. Although my grasp of Czech and Polish is rudimentary at best in that situation, my feeling is that it provided the basis for trust which enabled me to take the child from his mothers care back into school. This particular visit proved to be what we believe a very influential factor in the relationship with the family. Through our efforts the children's attendance has increased by 13.2% and 16%. Both children are now much more involved with aspects of school life and are going from strength to strength. It is a pleasure to see them happy and having formed solid relationships with other children and staff. Both children are now also involved in the induction of new Czech children to the school, this has proved invaluable not only in developing their own self confidence but imperative in settling in children who in almost all cases have never been to school before and speak no English. Along with aiding new children they both take great pleasure in attempting to teach us Czech, it enables them to be experts and become the teachers. A child with 62.7% attendance who is disengaged with education, who has parents that have never received an education themselves will not change overnight. There is no quick fix; it takes countless hours and endless failures before you can scratch the surface. School unfortunately does not always come high on the agenda for some of our Roma parents.. Even in cases where the child's attendance may be consistently low we are seeing attitudinal change, parents that would spend as little time in school as possible, rarely providing reasons for absence, are now welcoming us into their homes, making us cups of tea and shaking our hands in the street. We must continue to welcome with open arms, develop wider links in the community and further enhance multi agency practice ensuring the best in inclusive practice.

To ensure access to educational provision for the GRT "roadside" communities

Roadside communities are one of the most vulnerable groups of people in the city so enabling the children to access school is essential. It is important that mobility is not perceived as an excuse for low performance and failure. Schools should have high expectations of these pupils and embrace these pupils into their identity.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

GRTAS and St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School working together:

A group of Gypsy Traveller children and their families had been living on the 'roadside' in unauthorised encampments in and around Leeds at different times over a two year period. Initially the highly mobile lifestyle of the families involved made it impractical for the children to attend school or early years settings; outreach supplied by the Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service (GRTAS) mobile classroom was the only effective and practicable means of sustaining support for these children and their families in all weathers. Links with the families and the trust of the community were established initially by responding to requests from families to meet their health needs. One baby presented severe health concerns and one of the mothers was herself very ill. As a consequence of regular visits the mobile classroom became a reliable point of contact for this marginalised community and provided a safe and stimulating environment for the children. On each occasion it visited the sites it provided the Gypsy and Traveller children there with opportunities to explore play and creative activities as a means of developing their early learning skills and experiences. Picture books were used to help develop comprehension and expressive language skills and a variety of resources and experiences were introduced to extend opportunities for play. Having seen their children access and enjoy several "roadside" bus sessions independently parent's fears and aspirations were allayed and they became confident to trust the advice of GRTAS staff about access to main stream provision. GRTAS staff were then able to organise places in a school and early years setting by liaising with the admissions office to ensure places at all relevant key stages were available, completing application forms (where parents struggled with literacy) and organising and supporting parents and children on an introductory visit to the school. Following this the GRTAS staff monitored the attendance and transport of these children, as well as initially liaising between the families and the school. St Bartholomew's had experience of working with Gypsy Traveller children from unauthorised sites and understood the need for a welcoming and speedy response to the families. Staff made time immediately to invite the families to look around the school and found out what Traveller families expected and hoped for from them for their children. The children were then able to attend the school immediately. The school had developed a working partnership with the GRTAS as part of their involvement with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme (GRTAP). Staff at the school had attended In Service training sessions delivered by the GRTAS to enhance their understanding of Gypsy Roma and Traveller lifestyle and culture. The school had also carried out an audit of their resources to see just how well they represented the lifestyles and experiences of the Traveller communities they served and accessed Foundation Stage resources reflecting Gypsy Traveller lifestyle and culture through the GRTAS FS loans service. Children from a Gypsy and Traveller "roadside" community accessed educational provision and ensured learning development whilst being provided with positive affirmations, reflections and experiences of their culture and identity.

To raise the attainment of GRT pupils in school

GRT pupils need to be viewed by school staff as distinct ethnic groups who are vulnerable to underachievement. Their progress needs tracking to identify any intervention strategies that can be implemented to help close the attainment gap.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Ingram Road Primary School:

At the end of the school year the pupils attainment levels are analysed in Maths, Reading, Writing, Phonics, Speaking and Listening and Science. If a child hasn't made the expected 4 points progress they have an individual "back on track plan" written for them. The area/s of difficulty for the child are identified along with any reasons for them falling behind e.g. illness, attendance issues, travelling. Interventions are then put in place to support the child. The interventions are not always formal interventions e.g. ELS, FLS, Springboard Maths but child led to support the individual needs. Teachers are given weekly time to teach these interventions to the children during assembly times. Support staff also teach the "back on track" plans and school also utilises the reading volunteers with the plans. Assessments are made every half term and recorded on class target trackers. The Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils are tracked as a group so their attainment can be monitored to ensure the children make expected progress. The progress made by the Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils is monitored half termly to ensure that any child not making the expected points progress is identified and interventions are put in place to help them catch up. Having specific timetable slots for teaching the "back on track" plans means the interventions always happen as they are important to the individual children. The interventions are more successful when they are pupil led as they are tailored to the specific needs of the pupil.



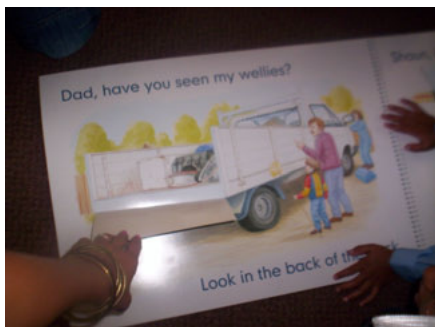
To raise standards in Communication Language and Literacy Development and improve outcomes for GRT children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Trust is a very important aspect of working with GRT families. Because these families are among those least likely to take up their free entitlement to Early Years provision, whether because of high mobility, lack of trust or lack of information, it is likely that their children will have had less time in EYFS provision than most children.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School:

After analysis of data it was clear to see that an area of learning and development that displayed the lowest attainment at the end of Nursery and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was Communication Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) and in particular Language for Communication and Thinking (LCT). Analysis of individual ethnic groups displayed the most vulnerable groups in the setting were the EAL children of Slovakian and Pakistani heritage and GRT children of both Irish and Eastern European heritage. We applied for and attended the Every Child a Talker (ECAT) training. From the training we developed a focus upon LCT development within our setting. Staff were introduced to the programme and resources in unit meetings. Staff worked together as a team and used assessments to develop communication focused planning. Throughout a range of independent, focus and child initiated activities the children made very good progress although their attainment is still low the progress achievement and rate of development was improved. The range of activities made use of the resources that were distributed throughout the ECAT sessions. Communication activities were a key focus and opportunities to develop talk were placed in all areas of provision. Talking postcards and talking books were developed to use in dual languages. Cameras were used to take photographs for the talking books and in activities. Teacher led activities were based planned around talk and vocabulary extension. Talking books were built into the curriculum and into the reading area of provision. Staff worked with the children within the areas of provision with the resources to develop vocabulary and communication. Packs were also made for home school links. Staff met weekly in unit meetings to discuss ECAT progress and next steps. The overall impact has been upon the confidence and development of the children in speaking and listening development in LCT. Evidence can be seen in the EYFS profile observations and individual record cards. The resources played a key role in motivating the staff and children. The team approach and skills of the staff to focus on communication goals also had a key role in making a difference.



Involving GRT in all aspects of school life

Like other members of the school community, GRT pupils need to have a voice and to be given the opportunity to contribute their views about their culture, their identity and their education.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Primrose High School:

Here at Primrose High we have a high number of GRT pupils who were an isolated group in our school. Our aim was to integrate them into school life and make them feel part of our school. Establishing relationships with the pupils and families was paramount to make this successful. We have a Student Progress Manager (SPM) and 4 other Progress Leaders who are there to support our Roma pupils. The Roma pupils know they can go to these adults if they need someone to talk to or give them help. They operate an open door policy for the pupils and have built up trust amongst the pupils. We offer our vulnerable pupils break and lunchtimes clubs so they can attend and feel part of the school at this potentially isolating time of the school day. Various activities are offered to the children at these clubs with the children themselves having a say in what they do. For all our pupils a VIP club is organised. Pupils who have good attendance and behaviour are given a ticket to go. At the VIP club the children can participate in fun activities such as using the Nintendo Wii and computer access. We have also run a half termly parents forum in school to build up relationships with the families. At the parents forum they enjoyed pizzas and drinks. We have adapted the time of this forum as many parents were unable to attend due to work commitments. Through these forum meetings and with the help of the GRTAS we have given the families support with health, housing and benefit issues. To establish relationships in the community our SPM makes regular home visits with the schools Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO). It is also essential to our work that we keep up to date with any changes to the legislation regarding our Roma pupils so we are aware of the best ways we can support them.



To increase the confidence of GRT pupils in school

By valuing the history and culture of GRT pupils in the curriculum it contributes significantly to the pupils' sense of belonging, self-esteem and self-worth.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

South Leeds Academy:

During the last school year the number of GRT pupils we have on roll has greatly increased. These GRT pupils had problems integrating into our school and when we talked to them they were not enjoying school and didn't feel included. There were also high levels of truancy amongst this group of pupils. We decided that small steps needed to be taken to make the GRT pupils feel confident and happy to come to school. We held informal meetings with the pupils to discuss what they needed and how they felt at different times in the school day. It was identified that the times they felt the most vulnerable were at break times, before and after school and moving between lessons. They felt that they needed a safe haven in school that they could go to if needed. We responded to this by setting up a break and lunchtime club. The pupils named it "Czech-ed-in" and you need a pass to attend it. The "Czech-ed-in" club is supervised by a teacher from our school. The club is kept on an informal basis with dancing, music and an opportunity to chat to your friends. The teacher also has the opportunity to discuss school issues such as attendance as well. At the beginning the pupils relied on the club and attended daily but now their confidence has risen some only attend once a week. The club is open to non Czech pupils as well so new friendships have been made. Our school also recognised that the GRT pupils needed extra support so the Senior Leadership Team employed 2 Eastern European speakers who have made a big difference to the pupils. They attend home visits and can explain the school routines to the pupils e.g. exam timetables. Through this communication with the parents we have contacts set up so the families can understand the school and the educational systems. The families now feel happy and trust us so they come into school to ask for any help and support they need. We ring all families on the first day of absence and through all this work we have reduced our truancy levels. One Year 10 boy had a 45% attendance rate before Christmas and now his attendance rate is 65% and he describes school as being "alright". Recently we held an "Our World, Our Way" event in school for pupils, families and invited guests. 2 of our Czech girls felt so confident and secure at school that they practised and performed a Roma dance for everyone. Our next steps include setting up a cooking club for the families with the schools catering firm. The plan is for initially 6 pupils and their parents to join in the cooking lesson and have the meal to take home for their family. We also want to involve the Dads with music sessions in our school. These steps taken already have greatly improved the confidence and trust between the pupils and families and we will continue to build upon them every year.



Celebrating GRT through holding a special day in school

Where the presence of GRT pupils is openly acknowledged and where positive and accurate images of different communities are featured within both the resources of the school and the curriculum, then the pupil response is lively and there is a genuine openness to learning.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

West SILC, Milestone School:

Firstly I met with Sally Hall from the GRTAS. We discussed ideas for the day and activities the children could participate in. We also talked about what resources we could use. I was keen for the children to spend most of the day outside so it would reflect the lifestyle of the Gypsy Travellers who still live this way. Sally launched the day with an assembly where she told the pupils about the different GRT groups and their history. We then looked at where the GRT originated from on a map of the world. Finally Sally showed us pictures of famous GRT which really excited the children to see people they recognised. Each class then spent the rest of the day moving round the different activities. These included: circus skills and making props, story telling, paper maché, making paper flowers, canal art and stencils. We also set up an encampment in the school grounds where the pupils were involved in building bender tents and cooking on a campfire to show the pupils the old way of life. In the afternoon a local member of the community brought his piebald horse for us to see and learn about the importance of horses to GRT's. We finished our celebrations with an assembly the next morning to share our experiences and show the art work we did for everyone to see. A display has been made in the hall for everyone to see and to remind us about our fabulous day. The children had a great day. They loved the outside encampment and the experience will remain with them for many years. Through the introduction assembly and the subsequent activities the children learnt about the GRT history / customs and culture. One of our pupils who is a Gypsy Traveller brought in her water churn and talked about it to her class. Good preparation and organisation was the key to making the day successful. Resources for the staff to use were loaned to us from GRTAS and gathered from ourselves and photographs were put onto the computer system for staff to access. A timetable for the day was made in advance so all staff know what was happening during the day. The biggest resource in making the day as successful as it was, was the staff themselves. Having all the staff on board and enthusiastic made the day a great success.



Engaging the children

Where pupils experience a sense of shared belonging and are able to enjoy learning in an open, trusted and secure environment their confidence and achievement will be higher.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School:

Initially all the staff had training from GRTAS on the Roma. This included information on their background, why they have moved to England and knowledge about their culture. We then ran a multi-cultural week in school. On one day we had a focus on the Roma. The children attended workshops in mixed aged groups and learnt about famous Roma people, Roma words and their meanings, plus they listened to traditional music and looked at art work. The Roma children in our school were fully engaged in the workshop. Their eyes lit up with the music and they left the workshop "buzzing" about what they had just experienced. The workshops led to displays in school that reflected the Roma culture. The children after the workshops were proud to be Roma and this led to more children discussions about their culture. The self-esteem of the children was raised and this impacts on all aspects of school life. The crucial thing that makes a difference is to have the knowledge ourselves as staff so we can talk to the children about their Roma culture. Before running workshops you need to research the Roma culture to gain the knowledge first before it is passed on to the children. Having appropriate music and pictures is essential.



Employing positive role models in school

Involving GRT parents and the wider community positively and imaginatively in the life and development of the school is vital to raising aspirations and expectations of the pupils.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School:

Our aim was to reflect our local community so we employed 3 Slovakian and Roma speaking learning support assistants in our school. These LSA's have many roles in school. They take withdrawal groups of children for additional language work and also pre-teach them topics so the children have a better understanding in class. They have built up links with the parents through home visits and meeting them. The LSA's have translated letters that go home for the parents and also translated signs around school for both the children and parents to read. The parents have also been encouraged to attend parents evenings by the LSA's. The LSA's are also actively involved in supporting the Year 6 children with the transition to High school and are involved with our work to encourage children under 7 years old into school. We have built up better relationships with the families and are better equipped to respond to any needs the families have. Since they were employed the attendance at parents evenings has increased from 5% to 70%. We deploy the 3 LSA's according to the greatest need in school, so their work can impact on the most needy children and families. We have benefited greatly from employing Slovakian / Roma speaking LSA's in our school and would encourage any school with a large number of Ethnic Minority children to do the same.

Involving parents in school life

GRT parents / carers need to be seen as part of the local community. Schools must make every effort to include them in their actions and planning, to promote community cohesion.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Ingram Road Primary School:

We decided that we wanted to provide a place for parents where they can come for help/advice in their local area. Especially as the parents in Holbeck have no access to a High School or a supermarket. We set up termly coffee mornings for the parents to come in, meet us and get to know us. We made them informal so the parents didn't feel intimidated. They had lots of opportunities to chat and ask for advice if needed. We also ran the PPICL (Parents as Partners in Children's Learning) Programme. We set up ESOL Classes, Cooking Sessions and Lets talk money sessions for the parents. We employ a Parent Support Advisor who does home visits, helps the parents fill in forms and is available for the parents to drop in and see in school. We now have 100% attendance at parent's evenings. We have a warm, welcoming relaxing atmosphere where parents/carers feel able to drop in at anytime for help / support or just a chat. We made ourselves available to the parents and listened to them while respecting their views. We also adopted flexible practices to meet individual needs of the families. We found that the good relationships didn't happen over night, they were built up through mutual trust for each other over a period of time.



Celebrating GRT History Month

Where the presence of GRT pupils is openly acknowledged and where positive and accurate images of different communities are featured within both the resources of the school and the curriculum, then the pupil response is lively and there is a genuine openness to learning.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Blackgates Primary School:

At Blackgates Primary School we have always celebrated Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) since its introduction in June 2008. It is not one isolated event in our school as we promote the GRT community continually and it is fully embedded into our school life. We celebrate GRTHM because it contributes to promoting community cohesion and race equality. We always have a GRT display in school in a prominent position so it has maximum impact for our pupils, staff and visitors. The displays make a statement that we value the GRT community and images from our displays can also be seen in this guide. During GRTHM we hold assemblies to which the parents are invited to learn about the GRT history, culture and traditions. We enter both the local and national competitions run by GRTAS and NATT+. We have attended the GRT workshop days run by GRTAS at the West Park Centre in June. During these workshops the children have experienced many activities including: storytelling from Jess Smith, Flamenco dancing, circus skills and art workshops from Ferdinand Koci. The children had a great time and increased their knowledge and understanding of the GRT. Our school has also arranged for Ferdinand Koci, a Roma artist to spend a day at our school running art workshops for the children. He brings in a selection of his work to make a mini art gallery in the hall for the pupils, staff and parents to view. During the day he works in classrooms to teach the pupils art skills. He also talks about his life and experiences. At lunchtime he does quick sketches of the children which we copy and send home to create discussion at home about the children's day. We then display the originals to remind us all of a fantastic day. Celebrating GRTHM at our school creates a focus and celebration point for the work that happens all year round.



To successfully induct GRT children who are new to our school

All cultural backgrounds should be respected and all new arrivals welcomed as adding to the richness and diversity of a school's ethos and culture. Newly arrived GRT pupils should be recognised and valued for the positive contributions they can make to the school.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Woodlands Primary School:

Over the last 2 years at Woodlands Primary School we have seen an increase from having 1 GRT pupil to now having 92 GRT pupils in our school. This is a big demographic change which the school has responded to. Most of our GRT pupils are Roma and have little or no previous school experience. They and their families are not used to the systems and routines of a school. When a new pupil arrives at our school we give them a tour of the school, show them their new class and teacher and explain about the school uniform and dinners. We have a selection of letters and leaflets now translated into Czech, Slovakian and Roma thanks to Dominika Helferova at GRTAS and some of our existing parents. A start date is then given and we make sure that all staff, including our lunchtime staff are aware of the new pupil so they can keep an eye out for them and offer any support they need. Sometimes just a smile makes the pupil feel happy and safe. In the class the new pupil is allocated a buddy who will show them the class routines and look after them. Each new arrival is also allocated to a member of the senior leadership team who is the contact person for the pupil and family. During the first week of starting the family are greeted in the school entrance by their contact person who takes them to their class. The contact person also checks daily on the new pupil to ensure they are ok and feeling happy during their first week. In week 2 these checks are made every few days until the contact person is confident that the new arrival is secure in their new school environment. Through the safe harbour programme families who are new to Leeds are allocated to a family who are established in Leeds so they can give them a tour of the area and show them where to find essential facilities e.g. doctors, dentist library.

As a whole school we say "1,2,3" in Czech to stand up and move round plus key phrases have also been learnt by the school to make the pupils and families feel welcomed. We also offered a "Welcome to Woodlands" meeting only for our Roma parents. It was run by our headteacher with support from Dominika. They were shown a powerpoint presentation in Czech about the expectations of the school e.g. you arrive on time, if you go home for lunch you must come back to school for the afternoon. We are constantly updating and amending our school information pack to respond to situations that arise. The latest example was a family who had a lost a coat and hadn't realised that by writing the child's name in the coat it could have been returned to them quicker. We feel that these strategies have really benefited our GRT pupils who are new to our school and we are constantly reviewing them to make sure that all pupils who start at Woodlands feel happy, safe and secure.



Reintegrating pupils back into school life after an extended period of time not accessing school

Schools are advised to have a systematic approach in place with one person overseeing the induction process to give consistency. This will help the pupils integrate quickly and ensure that their relevant needs are met.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Mount St Marys Catholic High School:

The new pupil receives a tour of the school and we make sure they know where the important facilities are such as the dining hall and the toilets. Any EAL and vulnerable children such as our GRT are married up with a partner who can support them and speak their home language. This makes the new arrival feel welcomed and also promotes independence and responsibility for their buddy. For the first week or 2 (depending on the individual needs) the pupil will attend for 2 hours a day. This time is gradually increased until the pupil is attending full time. When the pupil first arrives they have an input into their own timetable. They can choose 1 lesson a week that they will attend in school. The practical lessons are the easiest to reintegrate into at first. In this lesson the pupil will receive support from a Teaching Assistant to help them settle down and participate in the lesson. This support is gradually withdrawn as the pupil becomes confident and happy in the lessons. The rest of the time the pupil will be taught in one of our two inclusion rooms. One of these rooms is located next to the dining hall making lunchtimes a less daunting experience. In the inclusion rooms the pupils are taught a whole range of subjects with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy skills. Both rooms are also open at break and lunchtimes for the pupils to access if they don't feel happy to use the communal areas.

We also have a pastoral bulletin which goes out every week to all staff. It is strictly private and confidential. We use this system to pass on important information to all staff as we know it is a method that works for us with having such a large number of staff. We include information such as any new starters and sensitive information that staff need to know about e.g. we have a child who is known by his initials and staff needed to know not to ask him what they stand for as this caused issues at his last school. If something very important or an emergency occurs we send a note round immediately and put up a notice in the staff room. We have successfully admitted several GRT pupils into our school and they are with us fulltime and involved in all aspects of school life. Responding to the individual needs of the pupil is paramount for reintegration to be successful. We go at the pace of the pupil to ensure they feel happy, safe and secure at school. To be successful at reintegrating pupils back into school life you need to have a flexible approach as every child is different and will have had different experiences at school before.



To ensure a smooth and successful transition to High School

Effective transition can help pupils feel more positive towards school and learning. This in turn will raise their motivation and achievement.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Mount St Marys Catholic High School:

Our aim is to ensure a smooth and successful transition for all our pupils including our Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils. This year we are admitting 180 pupils from 37 different Primary Schools. For each of these pupils we gather Personal Social Health Citizenship Education (PSHCE) information and National Curriculum Levels from the Primary Schools. For all children identified as being vulnerable we gather extra information specific to the pupils situation and circumstances that we need to know so we can support them during the transition to High School and in subsequent years. In June we have a taster day for the Year 6 pupils where they get to experience what life will be like at Mount St Marys. The pupils identified as vulnerable for any reasons are offered extra visits in June and July to ensure they feel happy about their new school. We also ran during the May half term holidays 3 days of workshops for the Year 6 pupils so they could get a feel for Mount St Marys. On one day the Year 6 pupils were joined by some of our High School pupils who acted as role models and were also on hand to answer any questions / queries the Year 6 pupils had about moving to High School. In July we held a meeting for the parents as well as the children. At this meeting there was an opportunity to ask any questions that the pupils or parents had. During this meeting the pupils were put into their form groups and met their form tutors and the Head of Year 7. We allocate the children to their new form groups on a completely mixed basis in relation to: gender, ethnicity, behaviour, ability and the Primary School they attended. The Head of Year 7 oversees the transition preparation and induction into the school before handover meetings in June/July when they move to another pastoral leader. We also allocate a specific pastoral and admin team for Year 7. This makes it easy to build up relationships with both the pupils and parents so we can support them to the best of our ability. In September we operate a phased start so our Year 7 pupils spend a day with us before the other year groups arrive. This gives them the opportunity to learn the new rules and routines and become familiar with the school before the other pupils arrive. Our Year 7's also have a different dinnertime and have access to a separate supervised playground as these have previously been identified as possible times when new pupils can feel vulnerable so we have put measures in place to prevent this happening. We feel that all these strategies that we have put in place support all our Year 7 pupils starting at our school with a particular focus on supporting any vulnerable children.



Responding to tensions in school between different ethnic groups

An acknowledgement and exploration, through discussion, of the multiple and identities held by pupils may help to break the cycle of cultural stereotyping that can have such a negative impact on relationships, expectations and, ultimately attainment. Where pupils experience a sense of shared belonging and are able to enjoy learning in an open, trusted and secure environment their achievement will be higher.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

South Leeds Academy:

In response to tension in school between different ethnic groups we brought in the parents of the 2 main aggressors to sit down with them and their children to discuss what has been going on and why. It was felt that the different ethnic groups in school needed to get to know each other and to understand each other better. We then decided to set up a Racial Harmony Group. 20 students are members of the group from different ethnic groups, including: Asian, White British, English Gypsy and Roma. The group meet every 3 weeks to discuss issues in school and ways they can be solved. The focus of the group is to break down barriers between the different groups. We play games, look at conflict resolution and undertake team building activities. The Racial Harmony Group was also instrumental in welcoming our recent visitors from Romania. The success of the Racial Harmony Group culminated in a trip to the slavery museum in Liverpool. The pupils involved in the Racial Harmony Group have now developed friendships between each other and the tension within school has been reduced. We are going to continue with the success of the Racial Harmony Group and roll it out to more pupils.



Celebrating St Nicholas Day within the Roma Community

If schools are to fully understand their children, they need to have some understanding and knowledge of the communities from which they come. Understanding the local context is vital if schools are to respond to the needs of their GRT pupils.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

The Roma Centre:

In Leeds the Roma Centre decided to host an event so the Roma families could celebrate St Nicholas Day. Several planning meetings were held and a venue chosen and booked that was accessible to many of the Roma families. A grant was received from the Inner East Cluster which enabled the event to take place. A band was employed to provide music at the event. The Roma Centre also found people to dress up and play the parts of St Nicholas, the devil and the angel. Posters were made to advertise the event but mostly people were invited by word of mouth. There was a big uptake from the families and many attended on the night. The children and families enjoyed the night with refreshments and the music. The children all received a present from St Nicholas. It was also an opportunity for the Roma families in the Harehills area to meet each other and make new friendships and support networks within their community. Celebrating St Nicholas Day was a great success and the Roma Centre hopes in the future to hold similar events again.

To increase the number of GRT pupils going on trips and attending residential

Building relationships with parents of GRT children can be developed beyond basic information giving. It is an on-going process that takes time and trust on both sides.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

Blackgates Primary School:

Several years ago our GRT pupils didn't go on our school trips. We know that school visits have a great educational value and are an important experience in school life so as a school we decided to address this. As a staff we make sure we are informed about GRT culture and traditions so we can understand the families views on this issue. We make sure that this training is regularly updated so we keep it fresh in our minds and new staff are aware of the GRT communities. In order for the pupils to attend a school trip we needed to build up good positive relationships with the families. This started with a smile and "hello" in the playground. We made genuine, continuous small steps to develop a relationship with the families. We showed the GRT families that we valued and respected them and made them feel comfortable in our school. We have a permanent GRT display in school to help do this. All our GRT parents now attend parents evening. In September we start the discussion with the GRT families about school trips so they know a while in advance when they are. We find out from the families what their concerns are e.g. coaches, going near water, time of year of the trip as it gets dark early in winter. We then explain how the procedures for the trip that will address these concerns e.g. all the coaches have seat belts, the number of staff going, who can hold hands with the children. We make sure the trip is accessible for all our pupils. This has resulted in our GRT pupils attending on school trips. Our next steps are to continue to develop our relationships with the families so we can take a GRT pupil on a school residential with us.

Increasing the number of GRT pupils attending out of school clubs

Developing a flexible and culturally sensitive approach, in partnership with other agencies, to ensure access to a personalised and appropriate educational package shows that schools value all their pupils.

Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School:

We run lots of out of school clubs including: cooking, percussion, choir, dodge ball, boys football, girls football, boys cricket, girls cricket, gymnastics and games. Our clubs are run by sports coaches, learning mentors or teachers. We noticed that the attendance at these clubs by our GRT children was low so we decided to address this. 2 barriers were identified which we quickly addressed. Firstly we used our Slovakian / Roma speaking LSA's to promote the clubs and to translate the letters for the parents. Secondly we moved some of the after school clubs to a lunchtime so the children who are taxied to our school could access the clubs as well. We have increased the number of GRT pupils who are attending out of school clubs. Investigating the barriers as to why attendance was so low at the clubs resulted in changes been made to develop better access for all our pupils. The need to be flexible in the timing of the clubs was crucial in order to increase attendance figures.



Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month - June

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) is an exciting month of events to celebrate and raise the awareness of the unique history and culture of the GRT community. The first GRTHM took place in June 2008 and its success has been repeated yearly since. The aims of GRTHM are to:

- Raise awareness of the history and culture of Travelling communities often missing the curriculum.
- Challenge myths and remove barriers.
- To celebrate the richness that these communities have brought to our lives.

Events take place across the country every June organised by a variety of communities, Traveller Education Services and other public bodies.

In school GRTHM provides an opportunity for schools and settings to run GRT workshops and assemblies and take part in the annual local and national competitions as well as inviting community members to run dance, music, art and storytelling sessions. The pupils who benefit the greatest are the ones who attend schools that have embraced GRTHM and have embedded it into the curriculum to study and celebrate on a yearly basis.

Through GRTHM the profile of Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities has been raised in a positive way.

Further details can be found on the website at: www.grthm.co.uk or by downloading the booklet "Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month, Synopsis, information, and ideas for schools and other educational settings" from the NATT+ website at: www.natt.org.uk.



Early Years Resources



The Education Leeds Early Years' Lending Service, is an initiative from the Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service funded by Leeds City Council Early Years' Department and Education Leeds. The aim of the service is to provide items for loan that are culturally relevant to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to help promote a sense of belonging

Our catalogue shows the range of resources that we can provide. They include books, learning packs, a magnificent hobby caravan play area, posters and toys and puzzles. **To see what is on offer and get in touch via the form on the back page of the catalogue or by calling**

Sue Gold: 0113 274 8050 or e-mailing on sue.gold@leeds.gov.uk

All the items in our catalogue are available for you to borrow and/or view at any time, subject to availability. Contact us to arrange a time for us to visit, discuss and loan resources to you. For convenience the catalogue also states where you can purchase the items in the catalogue if you want to add the resources permanently to your classroom setting.

Children learn best when they feel safe, secure and supported as well as excited and motivated. GRT children need to see their culture reflected in their school environment. The resources in this catalogue help make this happen. Seeing themselves and things that are familiar to them will make them feel happy and confident.



It is not only the children who will feel more welcomed. The Lending Service will also reassure parents that their child belongs and their culture is recognised in a positive way. Creating an environment where parents are happy to talk to staff, discussing concerns and sharing in their child's successes will support the child's learning journey and break down any mistrust.

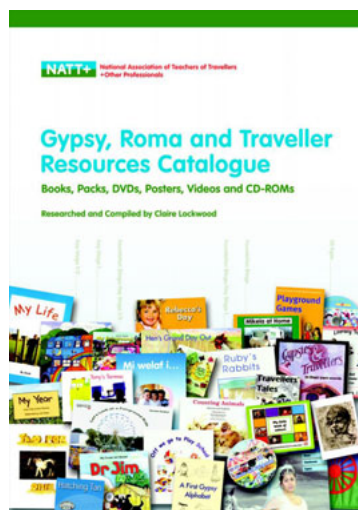
"Settings that reflect GRT culture challenge many of the myths that surround these communities and serve to promote community cohesion".

Richmond Hill Primary School

School Resources

Studies have shown that children learn best when they feel, safe, secure and supported. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children need to see themselves and their culture represented in the school environment. Relevant cultural resources not only make a child feel accepted in an education setting they have the additional benefit of reassuring parents that their child is welcomed. Some parents may not have had a positive experience of education themselves. A welcoming, positive environment is important for every parent nervous child and teacher.

Traveller and educationalist Malcolm Wilson said, "We must not allow another generation of Traveller children to pass through education feeling undervalued. All little children entering school for their first day have to feel welcomed. All cultures have to be respected, all types of homes have to be represented, everyone's history and way of life has to be included in the day to day life of the school." Sadly, many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children experience bullying from the settled community and, with a lack of resources and visual materials in the classroom, find it difficult to feel a sense of belonging or welcome in schools. Numerous resources that help break down the barriers have been produced by Traveller Education Services and similar organisations around the country. The National Association of Teachers of Travellers and Other Professionals (NATT+) have compiled all these resources into a printed catalogue and an online shop at www.natt.org.uk/eshop



Poster sets

NATT+ have also created a high quality poster set depicting famous Gypsies, Roma and Travellers for use and display in the classroom (These can be seen on Page 30 of this guide). Few resources feature "real-life" role models for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to look up to, or for settled children to appreciate and respect. This set of six posters feature successful, professional Gypsies, Roma and Travellers who are well-known within the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities but may be less well-known elsewhere. Each poster gives information on an individual and relates their pride in their cultural heritage and background.

Useful contact details

Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service

Please feel free to contact us for any information / support or to make a referral about a pupil or family.

Claire Lockwood, Manager, claire.lockwood@leeds.gov.uk

Sally Hall, Teacher, sally.hall@leeds.gov.uk

Sue Gold, Teacher, sue.gold@leeds.gov.uk

Sue Itzinger, Teacher, sue.itzinger@leeds.gov.uk

West Park Centre

Spenn Lane

Leeds

LS16 5BE

0113 2748050

www.grtleeds.co.uk

Leeds GATE (Gypsy and Traveller Exchange)

Ground Floor, Crown Point House

169 Cross Green Lane

Leeds LS9 0BD

0113 2402444

info@leedsgate.co.uk

The Roma Centre

33 Beckett Street

Leeds LS9 7LP

www.romacentre.co.uk

romacentre@yahoo.co.uk

National Association of Teachers of Travellers and Other Professionals (NATT+)

info@natt.org.uk

www.natt.org.uk

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month

www.grthm.co.uk

Traveller Times

www.travellertimes.org.uk

Credits and thanks

Firstly I would like to thank the following schools and settings for allowing me to visit and talk to them about the good practice they have developed to improve the outcomes for Gypsy Roma Travellers:

- Blackgates Primary School
- Drighlington Primary School
- Harehills Primary School
- Holy Family Catholic Primary School
- Ingram Road Primary School
- Morley Newlands Primary School
- Mount St Marys Catholic High School
- Primrose High School
- South Leeds Academy
- St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School
- Swallow Hill Community College
- The Roma Centre
- West SILC, Milestone School
- Woodlands Primary School

Secondly I would like to thank Blackgates Primary School, Beeston Primary School, LCC Mobile Library Bus, Richmond Hill Primary School, and the West SILC (Milestone School) for supplying me with the photographs used in this guide. They represent the wonderful displays and work occurring in our schools and settings to promote the GRT traditions, culture and history.

Finally a big thank-you to you for reading this good practice guide and hopefully implementing some of the approaches and strategies used to support the GRT pupils and their families in your school and settings.

References

- NATT+ (2010), *Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month, Synopsis, information, and ideas for schools and other educational settings*, For supplying the information and images used on pages 4,5,6,7,8,30 and 32.
- DCSF (2009), *Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy Roma and Traveller achievement*