

The Disproportionate Number of Ethnic Minority Pupils Being Excluded from the Education System

A scrutiny review carried out by the Equalities and Social Inclusion overview and scrutiny Panel in Conjunction with the Education and Lifelong Learning overview and scrutiny Panel



**Foreword by Councillor Pauline Abrams,
Chair (of former) Equalities and Social Inclusion overview and scrutiny panel**



Dear Reader,

This review reflects the concerns of the overview and scrutiny councillors who took part in the review as well as the corporate priorities of the LB Merton. 'Equalities Merton' has been a key theme of the Authority - this principle and that of social inclusion underpins the work of the whole Council.

The councillors who took part in the review recognised how important it was that school exclusions should be minimised because of the damage it has on children's attainment. That there appeared to be a disproportionate number of ethnic minority pupils being excluded naturally raised further concerns about how our principle of equalities might be working in practice and the effect of young people identifying themselves as being socially excluded at such a young age.

The issues raised in this report reflect a national area of concern and one that the Government has been keen to tackle through their Social Inclusion Unit and other government bodies. Permanent exclusions in England increased 4% from 9,135 in 2000-01 to 9,540 in 2001-02, according to the Department for Education and Skills. Black Caribbean pupils had the highest permanent exclusion rate by ethnic group, at 41 in every 10,000, compared with two in 10,000 Chinese pupils. The disproportionate number of ethnic minority pupils being excluded from schools is clearly a national problem.

Like other local authorities, LB Merton has recognised that the issue needs to be addressed and has been working very hard to tackle for a number of years. A great deal of work has already been done locally and the councillors that took part in the review were keen to build on this existing work. We felt that although Merton LEA is more successful than neighbouring authorities in tackling the issue that we could make a difference in this area by carrying out a review.

The panel members are very grateful to all those that took part or gave evidence to the review, without whom this report would not have been possible. We are grateful especially to those people set out in Appendix B.

Councillor Pauline Abrams
September 2003

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet endorses the findings of this report and continues to keep this issue under review until substantial progress is made in achieving the objectives outlined in these recommendations.

Sharing good practice

2. Promote examples of aspects of good practice within the Borough.
3. Further promote and develop behaviour management and prevention strategies to reduce exclusions
4. Education Department to further develop with schools the links between attainment levels and exclusions, highlighting best practice.

Cross-departmental and partnership working

5. Further promote partnership-working initiatives, in particular for schools and officers in the LEA to work together to take proactive measures to reduce the level of exclusions.
6. Explore with the voluntary sector the development of partnerships extending best practice to further reduce exclusions through mentor programmes and counselling and for closer links between Merton LEA and social services.

Training

7. Ensure Governor training covers exclusion from school issues and that the take up of training by governors is improved.
8. Ensure training standards and targets of the Race Equality Scheme and Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report are achieved within schools.
9. Through Continuous Professional Development ensure appropriate training programmes are made available to all staff to promote cultural awareness and positive approaches to diversity and inclusion.
10. Review with voluntary organisations the training and counselling skills for mentors in any Mentoring or training programme.

Monitoring

11. Education Department to ensure that it fulfils rigorously its statutory responsibilities with schools with regard to the monitoring of exclusion.
12. Recommend to Life Chances Overview and Scrutiny Panel that a long-term project concerning study of the correlation between ethnic minority achievement and exclusion is built into its work programme.
13. That a progress report be submitted to the Life Chances overview and scrutiny panel in March/ April 2004 showing outcomes against the strategic objectives.

Funding

14. That resources are adequate to deliver the strategy including resourcing for central learning and behaviour support team
15. Develop Protocols/Compacts between Schools and the voluntary sector organisations applying for funding
16. Review the curriculum of SMART Centres and improve resourcing as appropriate.

Support and guidance

17. Establish support groups and/ or contact points for parents and children to obtain information about the exclusion and appeal process

18. The LEA to establish a single named person for student excluded from school and attending the SMART centres.
19. Offer guidance to schools on exclusion from schools and reintegrating back into schools.

Promotion

20. Identify and promote all services currently available, establishing cross-departmental working to eliminate duplication and inconsistency.
21. Identify and promote achievements of pupils across all cultural groups, with reference to the "you can do it" initiative.
22. Ensure that the report and action plan have a strong promotional strategy which allows Merton to capitalise on the achievements made and where possible publicise our success.

Background

Early in 2002, the Equalities & Social Inclusion overview and scrutiny panel agreed to review the disproportionate number of ethnic minority pupils being excluded from Merton's schools. This decision reflected the Council's corporate priority of equal opportunities and social inclusion and the concern of scrutiny members.

The panel agreed to undertake the policy review with the Education and Lifelong Learning overview and scrutiny panel, as the issues within the review were relevant to both panels. The terms of reference of the review are set out in Appendix A of this report; which set out the main areas examined by panel members during a series of task group meetings, visits to schools and other educational organisations, discussions with parents, pupils, council officers, and partners.

The recommendations set out in this report identify the need for establishing a consistent approach to the issue of exclusions within Merton schools in-keeping with equal opportunities.

- 1.1 The review was Chaired by Councillor Pauline Abrams, (Chair of the Equalities and Social Inclusion overview and scrutiny Panel) and benefited from the full and enthusiastic participation of all members from both panels, officers and participants from all the organisations visited as well as pupils and their parents. Membership of the two panels are set out in Appendix C.
- 1.2 The Panel acknowledged that the Schools Reorganisation Project– a shift from a three to a two-tier system of education - would impact on the data collection and analysis. The Panel was mindful of the pressure this process might have placed on schools.
- 1.3 The Panel agreed to review the current provision in particular to highlight certain key areas of service. This included specific schools to gain a cross-section of practice regarding exclusion from schools. The panel identified a number of support groups to assist them in the review. These organisations along with background information used during the review are set out in Appendix B.

The Panel was anxious to ensure that pupils and the parents of pupils facing or dealing with exclusion were also contacted to gain a better understanding of the quality of service delivery from the perspective of the service users.

- 1.4 The work of the review on the disproportionate number of ethnic minority exclusions is divided into four main stages.
 - (i) To assess the current situation, including the types or patterns of exclusions as well as investigating any correlation with age, ethnicity, class, gender and the curriculum and attainment levels at key stages 3 and 4 (pages 7 – 10 within this report).
 - (ii) Assess the current policies being provided by the LEA and schools to reduce the level of exclusions (pages 11 - 13).

- (iii) Review proactive support and training options available to address any failings or shortcomings to the services being provided as well as assessing any recommendations the service users or support providers may have about improvements to the service (page 14).
- (iv) Collate the information gathered and draft recommendations with possible action plans to implement these recommendations using local performance indicators or statutory requirements where possible to encourage all schools to proactively address the issue of exclusions and positively learn from good practice examples to find solutions for this issue (pages 3-4 and pages15-16).

2. STAGE ONE – The Current Situation

The Local Education Authority (LEA) collects and collates data on exclusions of children over the age of five years from all community, voluntary controlled and voluntary-aided schools in Merton. Secondary schools receive summaries of their own exclusions compared to the Borough average on a termly basis; all schools receive an annual report regarding exclusions across the Borough for the previous academic year. This information was used during the review to establish the current situation in Merton on school exclusions.

It is worth bearing in mind that the review took place during a period of change for local schools. A reorganisation of the Borough schools from a three tier to a two-tier system needed to be taken into account when looking at numbers of exclusions in primary and secondary schools. The impact of the Schools Reorganisation Project means that Year 7 pupils are now placed in the first year of secondary schools as opposed to the last year of primary school. (For the year 2002/03, there has been an increase in the number of exclusions in Year 7 compared with previous. It is however too early to comment on the changed rate of exclusions in Year 7).

Permanent exclusions

Permanent exclusions occur almost exclusively in the secondary school. For 2001 – 2002 permanent exclusions dropped (from 33 in 2000 – 2001) to 27¹.

Table 1 shows the total number of permanent exclusions in Merton for the academic years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002.

	Number of permanent exclusions
2000-2001	33
2001-2002	27

Table 1: Permanent exclusions –2000-2002

Exclusions of Black Caribbean pupils remain proportionately high. For the last year for which we have figures (2001 – 2002), 26% of permanent exclusions (i.e. seven pupils) were from this group, this group represents only 6% of the school population².

Fixed Term Exclusions

Overall, fixed term exclusions decreased in number and average length for the year 2001 – 2002 (see table 2).

	Total Number of exclusions	Total number of days
2000-2001	1301	5924
2001-2002	1027	4287

Table 2: Fixed term exclusions 2001-02

¹ Standards Report 2002, LB Merton (2002) p20

² Ibid p20

The number and length of exclusions has dropped in the last year. A drop from 5924 days lost to 4287 days lost represents a drop of 28%. This is a considerable decrease and coupled with the reduction in average length represents a significant change.

Fixed term exclusions by ethnic group

The proportion of Black Caribbean pupils being excluded in 2001-02 (in relation to their population) was almost three times higher than for White UK pupils. Ethnic differences are less pronounced than for permanent exclusions as fixed term are based on a larger number set. These figures also include a small number of primary age pupils³.

A District Audit report in 1999/00 noted however that, although exclusions of minority ethnic pupils was high in Merton, the level of exclusion was not as disproportionate as our comparator and neighbouring boroughs.

Fixed term exclusions by ethnic group had been stable for a number of years. *Table 3* shows figures for the previous two academic years.

Ethnicity	% of Fixed Term Exclusions	% of Fixed Term Exclusions
	2000/2001	2001/2002
Bangladeshi	1	0
Black African	9	11
Black Caribbean	16	15
Black Other	7	7
Chinese	0	0
Indian	1	0
Other	5	5
Pakistani	0	1
Unknown	4	6
White European	2	2
White UK	55	52

Table 3: Fixed term exclusions by ethnic group

Table 3 shows that over the two years exclusion rates by ethnic group has been relatively stable. However the percentage of exclusions by White UK groups dropped from 55% to 52%.

By Year Group

Table 4 shows the percentage of exclusions across year groups, a percentage increase in years 9 and 10 can be seen in the year 2001-2, so whilst overall numbers are down a change in the pattern of exclusions can be seen particularly in year 9.

Numbers of Exclusions by National Curriculum Year Group														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
2000/2001	3	3	0	7	17	23	63	180	210	260	168	1	0	935
2001/2002	0	0	1	1	6	12	46	115	195	204	100	1	3	684
Percentage of Exclusions by National Curriculum Year Group														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
2000/2001	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	7%	19%	22%	28%	18%	0%	0%	935
2001/2002	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	7%	17%	29%	30%	15%	0%	0%	684

Table 4: Number of exclusions per year group⁴

³ Ibid p20

⁴ Exclusions report for 2001/2, Education Department, LB Merton

These exclusion figures need to be read alongside performance figures for ethnic minority groups, which showed a steady decline in achievement by some ethnic groups from Key Stage 1 onwards.

Attainment of ethnic groups⁵

At Key Stage 2, there is a marked variation in the performance of ethnic groups in both English and mathematics. In English, pupils of Black Caribbean heritage performed 13% below the Merton average, and all Asian heritage groups, although small in number, achieved above the Merton and national averages. In maths, these variations are even more marked, with all Black heritage groups performing below the Merton average. The Black Caribbean heritage group was the only ethnic group to make significantly less progress than the Merton average.

Table 5 below shows that the attainment of all ethnic groups at Key Stage 4 (except Chinese pupils) did not reach the targets for 2002. It also shows that the results for the Black Caribbean and African Heritage groups are significantly below the average for all pupils in Merton.

	Number of Pupils	2002 Target	2002 Result	Difference ±
Key Stage 4 –Average points score per pupil				
White – UK Heritage	1004	37.7	32.9	-4.8
White – European	35	36.6	33.5	-2.1
White – Other	12	42.8	32.5	-10.3
Black- Caribbean Heritage	104	31.5	25.8	-5.7
Black – African Heritage	119	35.6	26.8	-8.8
Black – Other	55	35.6	31.2	-4.4
Indian	57	48.2	41.3	-6.9
Pakistani	51	44.3	41.3	-2.0
Bangladeshi	15	46.4	36.1	-10.3
Chinese	14	45.3	52.0	+6.7
Any other ethnic groups	116	41.5	36.3	-5.2
All pupils	1636	38.0	34.4	-3.6

Table 5: Attainment by ethnic group at key stage 4

Exclusions were also disproportionately high for black girls as well as boys, but girls and boys of different ethnic groups were likely to be excluded for different behaviours (see Table 6).

⁵ Information under this sub-heading comes from Merton's Education Development Plan, Spring 2003 pp2-3

Table 6: Exclusions by reason, gender and ethnicity

	Vandalism	Violence Towards Staff	Violence Towards Pupils	Sexual Misconduct	Racial Harassment	General Disruption	Criminal Offences	Verbal Abuse	Violent Threatening Behaviour	Failure to Obey the School Rules	Incident involving Fires	In Possession of an Offensive Weapon	Dealing with Illicit Drugs on the School Premises	Possession of Illicit Drugs on the School Premises	Misbehaviour Relating to Illicit Drugs	Misbehaviour Relating to Alcohol and Tobacco	Smoking	Other Reason	Unknown	Number of Exclusions	
Boys and Girls																					
Black African	1%	1%	24%	5%		21%	7%	7%	7%	5%		1%							20%		75
Black Caribbean		7%	26%	1%	1%	11%	8%	12%	9%	5%		2%		1%	1%				17%		114
Black Other		2%	21%			23%	4%	19%	11%	2%				2%					15%		47
Combined Black		4%	25%	2%		17%	7%	12%	8%	5%		1%		1%					17%		236
White Uk	1%	4%	20%	1%	1%	17%		23%	3%	9%	1%	1%				1%	1%		16%		345
Boys																					
Black African		2%	23%	9%		21%	9%	6%	4%	4%									21%		47
Black Caribbean		8%	18%	2%	2%	11%	12%	9%	11%	3%			2%	2%					22%		65
Black Other		4%	15%			30%	7%	11%	7%	4%									22%		27
Combined Black		5%	19%	4%	1%	18%	10%	9%	8%	4%			1%	1%					22%		139
White Uk	1%	4%	19%	2%		19%		19%	3%	9%	2%	1%							19%		229
Girls																					
Black African	4%		25%			21%	4%	7%	11%	7%		4%							18%		49
Black Caribbean		6%	37%			10%	2%	16%	6%	8%		4%							10%		20
Black Other			30%			15%		30%	15%					5%					5%		97
Combined Black	1%	3%	32%			14%	2%	16%	9%	6%		3%		1%					11%		116
White Uk		3%	22%		2%	12%		32%	3%	9%	1%					3%	3%		11%		
Average	1%	4%	20%	1%	1%	17%	3%	18%	6%	7%	1%	1%		1%		1%	1%		18%		684

Exclusions and free school meals

Table 7 shows that although just under 18% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (FSMs), such pupils are far more likely to be excluded than those not eligible.

	2000/2001		2001/2002	
	Number	%	Number	%
Permanent exclusions				
Pupil Numbers	33		27	
Non FSM	n/a	n/a	13	48.1%
FSM	n/a	n/a	14	51.9%
Fixed Term exclusions				
Pupil numbers	1301		1027	
Non FSM	909	69.9%	674	65.6%
FSM	392	30.1%	353	34.4%
School Level FSM	3667	17.7%	3600	17.7%

Table 7: Exclusions by pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

3. STAGE TWO – Current Policies

3.1 At the beginning of the review officers within the Access, Opportunity and Inclusion Division of the Education, Leisure and Libraries Department were asked to provide the Panel with an indication of what action was being taken at the time to improve the situation.

3.2 The strategic action highlighted by the Officers (in September 2002), at the beginning of the review included the following policies and strategies:

- Policies – the (then recently formed) **Officer Headteacher Strategic Working Group for Children with Additional Needs** was developing a social inclusion policy, through a consultation process.
- **Race Equality Policies** – In 2001 two training sessions were provided for schools on their statutory duty to promote race equality (the take up of these training courses were considered). It also required schools to develop, implement and monitor the impact of their race equality policy had on all aspects of school practice. As part of the schools' self-evaluation process Joint Annual Review (JAR), the Panel was advised that an *aide memoire* was available to help schools monitor their practice in promoting race equality. As part of this process schools would review the effectiveness of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.
- **Exclusions data reports** - were to be sent on a term-by-term basis to schools. This information would also be available to assigned inspectors through the phrase group process. Officers advised the Panel that this would allow a more informed dialogue on areas of need. This would also build on the excellent data report that is sent out to all schools on attendance and was complimented on by the DfES as an example of good practice. The aim was to help all schools and governors evaluate changes in patterns of exclusions.
- **Training** – for the year 2002 – 2003 central training sessions were provided to raise awareness and knowledge of teachers and governors in the areas of race equality, education achievement levels and ethnic minority achievement. There was very little take up of these opportunities from secondary schools.
- **The Children's Strategic Partnership** had resolved to pilot area panels to provide co-ordinated support across agencies to keep pupils in schools. The first of these commenced in 2002 in Pollards Hill.
- Support for Young People and Parents - the Education Welfare Service (EWS), as part of the Social Inclusion Team appointed a **Re-integration Education Welfare Officer (REWO)** to support the re-integration of excluded young people back into school.
- **Social Inclusion Team** – this team provides a range of services to schools and excluded young people to prevent exclusions and support inclusion. Some of these services are provided to schools through a Service Level Agreement (SLA), which schools can buy into, other services would be free to schools. For the purpose of the Review the Panel relied very heavily on the work of the various aspects of the Social Inclusion Team.

In addition to the strategic policies the officers also provided the Panel with information on funding:

- **Pupil Retention Grant** – Officers confirmed that the Standards Fund grant was payable to all secondary schools. In 2001 all secondary schools senior management teams held a strategic meeting regarding exclusions and attendance with the Social Inclusion Manager. These meetings allowed schools to discuss how they were going to move forward to target their resources effectively to reduce exclusions. These meetings discussed a common data report. A majority of secondary schools now meet monthly at the schools placement panel, which looks at permanent exclusions. In Autumn 2003, there will be a key stage 3 audit meeting involving secondary schools on pupil behaviour and attendance.
- **Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant** – This is a Standard's Fund Grant, which is devolved proportionately to support the achievement of pupils with English as an Additional Language and pupils from ethnic minority communities. Merton LEA, in accordance with DFE Circular 13/98, devolved buy back service to schools up until 2001-2002. Most schools choose to appoint their own staff. From 2003 it was proposed that due to the decline in the take up of levels of buy back the central service would be disbanded.
- **Pupil Referral Unit** – Officers advised the Panel that the Merton Tuition Service had been registered with the DfES as a PRU, allowing Merton to meet its obligations towards full time education of all permanently excluded young people. It included a Key Stage 3 respite group, where peoples can be referred for an agreed period of time to avoid permanent exclusion.
- **A Behaviour Support Network** – set up to share good practice between secondary schools. The SEN General Team provide training, advice and support to reduce exclusion for schools choosing to buy back into the service. The team provides support and training in both schools and centrally.
- **Alternative Education** as an alternative to exclusion – Schools had taken over this role from the LEA of brokering alternative education placements at Further Education or training providers in years 10 and 11. The LEA still has a role with a small number of hard to place young people. Officers confirmed that LEA had secured a 'My Futures Bid' from the Learning Skills Council and the European Social Fund of £500,000 over two years to increase the use of alternative education placements. Officers also advised the Panel that LEA were to continue to run the BASE, another highly successful year 11 alternative to exclusion also part funded by a European Social fund bid.
- **Out of School Panel** – a multi-agency panel effective from September 2002 to monitor all young people out of school, replacing the former Pupil Placement Panel.
- **Schools Placement Panel** - Members were advised that is was a new initiative for 2002-2003 being discussed with head teachers to provide direct advice and peer support to schools requesting to admit pupils with challenging behaviour.
- **Connexions** – Targeted Connexions Personal Advisors working in schools and in the community to support children, many of who may be at risk of exclusion.

- **Jigsaw and Fame** – two voluntary sector projects that have been running for three years to target children at risk of exclusion and are linked to LEA Services. Since providing this information to the Panel, the funding for this prevention of exclusion project has come to an end. So the LEA will be rolling out KS3 strategy strand on proving attendance and behaviour for September 2003. It will focus first on our highest excluding schools.

3.3 Appendix B sets out the key background information used to assist in the investigation of this policy review and the analysis leading to the final report

3.4 There are of course a number of initiatives that the LEA is already taking that are set out in the Education Development Plan (Spring 2003). They include:

- ✓ Consult with schools to agree an improved basis for allocating funds to schools to support English as an Additional Language, Special Educational Needs and ethnic minority pupils (April – December 2003)⁶
- ✓ Work with Connexions and its wider partnership in its strategic review to ensure greater cross agency working focused in school clusters to target standards for children at risk of social exclusion (April – September 2003)
- ✓ Develop SMART centres (PRUs) in line with the School Development Plan

Details on these and other measures are available at www.merton.gov.uk

⁶ Part of Priority 4a Narrowing the attainment gap/ tackling under-achievement (Lead Officer Charlotte Franton)
EDP Spring 2003

4. STAGE THREE – Proactive Support and Training Options Available

- 4.1 The Panel wanted to look at a cross section of provision within the borough relating to how exclusions are dealt with. Therefore some schools with high levels of exclusions were visited and other schools with low levels of exclusions were visited to assess what had been done to achieve these improvements. Support groups that were achieving successful support and reintegration of pupils were also visited and witness statements taken. Pupils and parents were also contacted and their comments were taken into consideration
- 4.2 The panel would like to express their appreciation to parents and pupils involved in the process.

Members of the panel identified training for all people and organisations as a major priority and should include training for School Governors. This was one of the key recommendations that came out of the visit by Cllrs Abrams and Lewis-Lavender to the Endeavor Smart (Pupil Referral Unit) Centre.

During this visit it was noted that staff turnover in some organisations and areas of work was high, requiring continued training to support excluded children. The level and type of counselling and mentoring differed from school to school and organisation to organisation, which it was found could have an adverse impact on the pupils ability to cope with exclusion. During this visit one child told a task group member, "I was asked too many direct questions about my home life in my counselling session and therefore did not want to answer".

- 4.3 The need for consistency within schools and across the Borough when tackling exclusions was highlighted. The need for information sharing and training courses was suggested as an appropriate way to ensure there is such coherence. There is a need for an understanding approach to exclusions by pupils and their families, particularly from ethnic minorities and that all were aware of the support groups available to provide assistance.
- 4.4 The need to tie in training and proactive work to comply with targets and standards was seen as a key to success. There are specific duties on schools to comply with the Race Relations Amendment Act. There is now a statutory requirement to produce and implement a Race Equality Scheme. It was found that most, though not all, schools had an agreed scheme and action plan in place at the time of the review but that early finalising of this by all schools in this review would send a positive message about inclusion.
- 4.5 The review has not only indicated the significance for reducing the level of ethnic minority exclusions through training and proactive work but it has also stressed the need for organisations providing educational services to be more accountable for their actions and performance. Another major factor that has become evident from this Policy Review was the need to further develop the dimension of cultural diversity within schools' inclusive curriculum. This has been identified within the final recommendation.

5. Stage 4 – The Final Stage – Collating the Information and producing recommendations

5.1 The Members have illustrated great commitment through a very proactive approach in collating the information for this policy review by undertaking many visits to sites as part of the review. This has also included interviews with witnesses, pupils and parents of pupils at risk or currently undergoing exclusions from schools.

This has also included a day of comprehensive witness statements from a number of service providers. The Members of the task group have had to assimilate a great deal of information over a very short period of time. However, the urgent need to ensure the issue of ethnic minority exclusions does not escalate to that of our neighbouring Boroughs by making positive efforts to reduce the levels through proactive work and training has remained as an urgent factor for the Panel.

5.2 The lack of consistency between how schools exclude or support pupils has become very apparent throughout this Review. This was echoed by children who spoke to Cllrs Abrams and Lewis-Lavender on the visit to the Endeavor Smart (Pupil Referral Unit) Centre. Pupils told councillors that they felt teachers are not fair and do not deal with pupils in a consistent manner. For instance, other pupils may commit some offence but are allowed to get away with it – such as wearing jewellery. The councillors concluded from this visit that there was a need for steps to be taken to ensure that all school policies are implemented fairly and consistently. One head teacher told the Chair of the panel, “Consistency of treatment by our teachers is a constant issue that improves with time and knowledge of the pupils and school rules”.

The need for greater accountability has also been very clear. The Panel has also noted that it is through setting clear and measurable targets that the issue of exclusions of ethnic minority pupils will be tackled in the most appropriate way.

School A may intervene with a multi-agency PSP, find internal support, use a Learning Support Unit, buy in SEN general support – all prior to an exclusion. School B may have meetings with the parent, put a child on report and then exclude. For the year 2002/03 it should be noticed that the three highest excluding schools did not buy in learning behaviour services (SEN general). These schools have not yet taken advantage of the wide use of outside agencies through developed pastoral support.

5.3 The investigations within the review have also emphasised the need to have lead officers or key workers for all pupils at risk of, or, facing exclusions as there have been instances of confusion regarding which organisation or service is providing support for the pupil. Panel members found that pupils and parents need to be clear who is providing support, what organisation if relevant and for how long. Pupils also need to be informed well in advance when support workers change as they often withdraw when personnel change is handled insensitively.

Members have been concerned about limited resources within organisations being duplicated, as there is no set process or key worker to monitor the

services provided or whether they meet the needs of the individual pupil. Families facing exclusions criticised the confusion of too many agencies being involved and this has been echoed by some of the support groups interviewed. This report has indicated a need to tie these services together to make the provision of care to ethnic minority pupils facing or dealing with exclusions far more consistent

5.4 Officers from the Access, Opportunity and Exclusions Division of the Education Department in Merton have assisted the Panel in preparing the final recommendations and report and the Panel is grateful for all the background information supplied.

5.5 The most important aspect of the recommendations was to ensure the recommendations from the Panel are carried forward to Cabinet through to a workable and achievable action plan. This will enable on-going improvement to address the issue of exclusions of ethnic minority pupils from the education system. It also allows for the LEA officers, schools and support groups to budget for these on going improvements and set up the networks necessary to enable resources to be pooled to improve services and avoid duplication.

5.6 The recommendations of the report highlight the need for increased investment in specific areas such as training and in particular improving resources to SMART Centres.

5.7 The Panel has focused on the impact of exclusion of ethnic minority pupils but in adopting the recommendations, the overall improvement to the education quality would be reflected in every aspect of educational achievement. The need to promote respect of pupils and possible training of teachers and governors to listen and become more culturally aware will not only benefit ethnic minority pupils facing exclusion but it will have a positive impact on all the pupils within the education system.

Terms of Reference

To review what positive efforts are being made by the Council to reduce the disproportionate number of ethnic minority pupils being excluded from the education system and improve their attainment levels. The Panel will:

1. Identify types and patterns of exclusions by schools to include LEA, faith and private schools
2. Investigate any correlation of age, ethnicity, class, gender and the curriculum that might exist in pupils excluded or who are in danger of exclusion.
3. To review the attainment levels at key stages 3 and 4 of pupils excluded compared to their attainment level at key stages 1 and 2 by ethnicity, gender and class
4. Seek progress on implementation of the key initiatives in Merton's Education Development Plan that promote social inclusion as a means of raising standards
5. Assess the effectiveness of local initiatives and of regional and national initiatives in other boroughs seeking to reduce exclusions with the view to recommending promotion and adoption of local and other best practice models.
6. Review the information and support provided to excluded pupils, pupils at risk of exclusion, to parents and carers to prevent and deal with exclusion and the return to school
7. Identify the support, alternative sanctions and training given to teachers by schools and Merton Council to prevent exclusions and to allow an excluded pupil to re-engage in learning
8. Identify any gaps or weaknesses in plans and to consider services available from external organisations where the Council lacks expertise.
9. Where appropriate, to request and receive submissions and information from officers, parents and pupils, teachers, councillors, external organisations and individuals, inviting their attendance at meetings and visiting organisations where necessary.
10. To consider whether it would be appropriate to co-opt member from outside organisations onto the Panel in line with the guidelines drawn up.
11. To make periodic recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission on the Panel's progress and findings.

Details of organisations contacted and background information that helped to form the policy.

Background Information Used

- Merton LEA Statistics Reports Exclusions Report 2001/2002 (please note that the data provided was of a confidential nature)
- DfEE Circular No 11/99 Social Inclusion: the LEA role in Pupil Support
- DfEE Circular No 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support
- Social Inclusion Manager – Keith Shipman – written update provided in response to the Chairs agreed set of questions relating to the policy review 2 October 2002
- Social Inclusion Manager – Keith Shipman – verbal update regarding tasks of different sections within team and breakdown of current provision within Education Department 11 November 2002
- Truancy and School Exclusion Report by the Social Exclusion Unit – dated 21 February 2003
- Task group meeting document of 25 February 2003 – breakdown of ethnicity by school/fixed term exclusions by school and ethnicity/exclusions rate per thousand by ethnicity – An overview of the results for 2000 –01 results with respect to the attainment of ethnic minority pupils – Learning for all standards for racial equality in schools- what is recognised as necessary to raising achievement.
- Booklets and information provided by Connexions 6 May 2003
- Booklets and information provided by KMEBP 7 May 2003
- Rutlish, Ricards and Bishopsford schools

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- Social Inclusion Manager – Keith Shipman
- Richards Lodge Secondary School – Sheila Oviatt-Ham
- Christine Daniel (Acting Head of SMART Centres)
- Exclusions Officer, Governor Support – Allan Elliot
- Inspector for Access and Diversity – Charlotte Franson and Research and Statistics Manager – Michael Sutherland
- Wimbledon College – Father Holman Head Teacher
- Parents of the excluded children who provided information to Councillor Gilli Lewis Lavender
- Rutlish Boys School - Rob Doyle (Headmaster) and Progress Centre Manager Bev Morgan
- Bishopsford – Paul Harwood (Headmaster)
- Mitcham Vale - Paulette Braithwaite (Headteacher until April 2003)
- Key Stage 4 SMART Centre

- Medical Smart Centre– Merton College – Moira Griffin (Group Manager)
- Ursuline High School – Dr Calvert (Headmaster) and Sr Anne Marie Gardner (Inclusion Officer)
- Connexions – Marie Wright (Manager)
- Jigsaw – Anne Davies (Chief Executive)
- Kingston & Merton Education Business Partnership (KMEBP) – Gillian Morris (Chief Executive)
- Michael Sutherland, Research & Statistics Manager (LBM)
- Charlotte Franson, General Inspector (Access and Diversity) (LBM)
- Sarah Joslin, Early Years Information Officer (LBM)

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- Janet Yerbury – Head of Access, Opportunities and Inclusion
- Sue Evans – Director of Education, Leisure and Libraries
- Keith Shipman – Social Inclusion Manager
- Councillor Geraldine Stanford, cabinet member
- Allan Elliott – Exclusions Officer
- Merton Racial Equality Partnership
- Joint Consultation Committee for Ethnic Minority organisations

Appendix C

Membership of the scrutiny panels involved in the review.

Equalities & Social Inclusion Panel 2002-3

Councillors:

Pauline Abrams (Chair)
Nick Draper
Gillian Lewis-Lavender
Leslie Mutch
Judy Saunders
Deborah Shears

Education & Lifelong Learning Panel 2002-3

Councillors:

David Chung (Chair)
Jillian Ashton
Matt Bird
Samantha George
Oonagh Moulton
Amanda Ramsay
George Reynolds
Mike Tilcock