

MUSLIM PARENTS ASSOCIATION - HIGH WYCOMBE

Chairman: Rafiq Raja, 34 Perth Road, High Wycombe Bucks, HP13 6XX. Tel: (01494) 450819
Secretary: Mrs Rashida Kazi, 156 Hughenden Avenue, High Wycombe, Bucks. Tel: (01494) 447262
Vice Chairman: Chaudhry Mohammed Shafique, Treasurer: Haji Mohammed Abdullah

Minutes of the meeting held with BCC at BCUC on Thursday 10 May 2007

Present: Rafiq Raja, C.M Shafique, John Bajina, Dr Katy Simmons, Glyn Galbraith, M Asmat, Riaz Ahmed, Yvette Thomas (BCC), Nicola Cook (BCC)

1 Welcome and introductions; the Chairman welcomed all present and extended a warm welcome to Yvette Thomas and Nicola Cook from Bucks County Council.

2 Apologies for Absence
Louise Goll, Zahid Jawed, Rashida Kazi, Mohammed Rafiq & Dr Ghulam Shabbir

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting
The Minutes of the Special meeting with the LEA, held on 18 December 2006, were agreed as a correct record

4 Matters Arising
Katy commented on the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme that appeared at the foot of page 1 in relation to lower achieving groups. She was concerned that funding would cease for this initiative and as High Wycombe schools, including Cressex and Highcrest, had benefited significantly. What would replace it? Yvette Thomas mentioned the Learning Mentors programme and also commented that few schools had looked ahead to beyond the funding period and would find things difficult. Katie suggested that the MPA could flag up concerns regarding the E-i-C funding and the potential impact on achievement. She reported that levels of achievement had gone up at Cressex, which could be mainly attributed to this initiative.

5 & 6 Timetable for closing the gap / raising achievement
Yvette Thomas opened this part of the meeting and shared a copy of the '**Draft Buckinghamshire Black and Minority Ethnic Achievement Strategy**'* document with members. She indicated that although there was further consultation to take place the aim was to start the work early in the Autumn Term. There is also a draft strategy for 16-19's being developed. Yvette took members through the draft strategy with the following points coming out:

- The Joint Area Review (JAR) had identified certain areas of underachievement and BCC have taken this on board
- There is a need to get into early years provision in both the maintained and private sectors
- The focus of the work will be on children of Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Mixed white Black Caribbean heritage
- Contextual information for the report had come from the Overview & Scrutiny Report into Attainment and Achievement which was available on the BCC website
- Challenging targets for BME pupils have been set
- There is a need to "unpick" what is going on at KS1 (Key Stage 1) to better understand what is happening in Early Years
- The transition process from KS2 to KS3 will be examined
- It was acknowledged that small groups can distort the data and impact it's validity significantly so care has to be taken, as some sample groups were small indeed
- Overall the achievement / attainment of children of Pakistani heritage looked at from KS1 to KS4 is better than Black Caribbean children who tend to start well but go down in later stages of education
- Children starting school without English take an average of 7 years to "catch up" i.e. this impacts KS1/2 but then at KS3/4 improvement is seen
- BCC is doing targeted work with schools to address EAL issues as well as using a bilingual strategy in a number of schools

- Children learn best when they learn using English in tandem with their home language. A Pairing Strategy (Talking Partners) is being used in some schools with success
- The strategic priorities for 2007 – 13 shown in the report are based on national targets and local priorities aligned with Every Child Matters. Yvette mentioned that Wycombe REC is working with her on a project around mentoring to influence reductions in fixed term exclusions. The principles behind the strategy are outlined in the report and Yvette would welcome comments
- There is an issue with BME pupils in terms of role models/mentors at school and they don't see themselves represented ethnically/culturally in schools

There then followed some discussion and number of comments were made by members:

- Katy mentioned the recent Joseph Rowntree Trust report linking poverty and underachievement and suggested that it would be useful to support Yvette's work
- A suggestion that data in the report be presented graphically was made and Yvette said that would be done in the final report
- Shafique commented that "language" was important in the context of describing ethnic origin i.e. the use of the word 'Pakistani' without reference to heritage can lead to a perception of poor attainment
- The Chair commented on the general lack of home tuition (parental help to children) in English amongst the Pakistani heritage children
- Katy, John B and Riaz asked whether there was a numerical target for closing the gap by 2013 and that there needed to be if one wasn't set. Yvette responded that this needed to be determined but needed to be realistic. However, she did agree to go back to Louise Goll with the wishes of the MPA in this area
- John B wished to record thanks to Yvette and this was unanimously endorsed by all members

The Chair in closing this item commended the report and the work done by Yvette. He also said that he and the MPA welcomed the inclusion in the report of several points made by the MPA and this was acknowledged by Yvette.

7 Governor Recruitment

Nicola Cook from BCC took members through the work that was being done to recruit new governors from wider ethnic origins. BCC monitors data on governors half termly which includes their ethnic background and some data was shared with members. Currently there are only 2.7% of governors from a BME origin despite there being 20% of the school community from the same origin.

The Governor Recruitment team are developing a flyer to encourage governorship and Nicola said despite this "word f mouth" was found to be the best recruitment technique. The Chair said that the MPA would be happy to include the flyer in the next newsletter and this was felt to be a good suggestion. Nicola mentioned that there is now a duty to promote Social Cohesion enshrined in the latest Education Inspection Act.

The Chair asked whether Nicola would be interested in hosting a meeting brokered by the MPA with the Pakistani community to try and promote governorship and this was positively received. Riaz suggested setting a numerical target for governor recruitment as part of the BCC education strategy and Yvette mentioned that EAL** and SEN*.* were additional areas where work was required. Data shows that BME pupils are overrepresented in SEN and a lot of work was needed to change this. She would like to bring some well respected practitioners in this field – Maurice Irfan Cole - to Bucks to get more profile in this area. The Chair asked if this was an opportunity for the MPA to host this and Yvette felt this was a good suggestion

8 Cressex School Update

Katy updated everyone on the current status of the Cressex school project: it is going wonderfully and BCC is engaged in the process at the "highest" level. On 15 May the three short listed contractors will present their bids. John B asked how many governors were on the project team and Katy replied there were two.

9 Pakistani Boys Can!

This project was still ongoing in South Hertfordshire and Rashida will report at the appropriate time.

10 AOB

1) John B felt that the MPA needed to recruit members and associate members from the KS1 & 2 schools. This should particularly target Heads and Chairs of Governors from any heritage in schools in this sector with high BME content. The Chair said that he would look to expand the invitation list to future meetings with the LEA

2) The question of how to get community involvement in promoting learning of English / languages at home was posed. The Chair suggested looking for any Government Grants, which might be available for this purpose (including the funds on offer to local councils from the secretary of State for communities) and asked for some one to surf the Internet to see what might be available. Yvette commented that the “enrichment experience” gained from Education by parents was important and that socio economic issues are the most important factors which tend to impact all ethnic backgrounds

14 Date of Next Meeting

September 6, 7:00pm at BCUC

The meeting ended at 9.20 p.m. with thanks to BCUC for their kind hospitality.

* Yvette will electronically forward a copy of the document, for MPA members.

** EAL: English as an additional language

_ SEN: Special Educational Needs

NB: Key stages cover the following age groups:

KS1: Year 1 & 2 (ages 5 & 6 years) – Reception is a foundation stage

KS2: Ages 7 – 11

KS3: Years 7,8 & 9 (Ages 12, 13 & 14)

KS4: Years 10 & 11 (Ages 15 and 16)