

# Bristol SEND guidance: Supporting children and young people from Black and Minoritised Communities

## Introduction

This guidance aims to support educational settings in Bristol to understand what they need to consider when working with children and young people (CYP) from Black and Minoritised Communities with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This is important as we know that there are significant national differences in how children from Black and Minoritised Communities are identified as having SEND. Data has confirmed this is also the case in Bristol.

We also know that children and young people with SEND are more likely to achieve poorer outcomes than those with no SEND. The same is true of children from some Black and Minoritised Communities. Both groups are also more likely to experience discrimination.

All children with SEND are different, as are their families. However, many families will have similar aspirations for their children and face challenges in achieving these. Families from Black and Minoritised Communities are likely to experience additional challenges as a result of the intersectionality between ethnicity and SEND. Intersectionality is the way in which different types of discrimination are connected to and affect each other. Many argue that the experience of the interaction between these different types of discrimination is more than the sum of its parts. When working with CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities, we need therefore to actively consider not only these aspects of children's identities separately, but also how they interact.

When working with children and families from Black and Minoritised Communities, it is essential that settings understand these challenges and take action to address them. This means settings not only educating themselves about the impact of different approaches on different communities, but also understanding the experiences of individual families and agreeing with them the best approach to meeting their needs.

The guidance is based on discussions with parent carers of CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities in the city. Parent carers have told us about their experiences of the education system in Bristol, including their challenges and what is going well. They have told us about what they would like educational settings to work on to ensure the experiences for other families improve. A number of schools and Early Years settings in the city have also provided feedback to help us decide what to include in this guidance.

We recognise we have a shared responsibility across the local area to understand and improve the experiences of children with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities and that changes are not just needed in educational settings. This guidance is the start of the conversation about how we will achieve this.

The guidance will not answer every question that educational settings have about how to work effectively with CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities and their families. Each setting will need to consider their unique situation when deciding how to move forward. It is

essential that this work is done in collaboration with families. An audit for schools and EY settings is provided in Appendix 1 to support this process.

The guidance is divided into nine sections. Some of these sections are essential reading for everyone working in Bristol schools and EY settings; others will be of particular interest to specific members of staff such as SENDCos or teachers.

Section	Title	Contents	Essential reading for
1	Key messages from this guidance	A summary of this guidance including the experiences of parent carers of CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities	All staff in Bristol schools and EY settings, governors
2	SEND in Black and Minoritised Communities	Statistics about SEND in Black and Minoritised Communities in the city. This section explores current and historical data about under and over-representation of SEND in different communities.	School and EY leaders, SENDCos, governors
3	Experiences of families from Black and Minoritised Communities	An overview of what parent carers told us about their experiences of schools and EY settings in Bristol, including the themes explored in more depth in the guidance. The full report describing parent carer views can be found in Appendix 2.	School and EY leaders, SENDCos
4	Implementing the graduated response	The importance of accurate and early identification and assessment. Possible reasons for under and over representation including cognitive biases. Responsibilities for analysing SEND data.	School and EY leaders, SENDCos, teachers, governors
5	Effective communication with parent carers	The principles of effective communication. Ensuring information is accessible, creating opportunities for discussion, listening to and acting on parent carer views, providing information, having positive regard for families.	All staff working with parent carers of CYP with SEND
6	Inclusive settings which understand and welcome children and families from Black and Minoritised Communities	The importance of representation and cultural competence in educational. Supporting specific groups of CYP including new arrivals,	School and EY leaders, SENDCos, governors

		refugees and asylum-seeking children and those with English as an additional Language.	
7	Support for parent carers	Signposting parent carers of CYP with SEND to support available.	SENDCos, teachers

Links with national and local guidance and statutory responsibilities

#### National

- The [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#) describes what educational settings must and should do to support *all* children with SEND.
- Both race and disability are ‘protected characteristics’ covered by the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- Schools, further education settings and early years settings offering the free entitlement to child care are included in the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
  - Advance equality of opportunity.
  - Foster good relations
- Ofsted’s [Education Inspection Framework](#) describes how inspectors will assess the extent to which education providers comply with statutory duties in the Equality Act and where relevant, the Public Sector Equality Duty.

#### Local

- Bristol’s [Ordinarily Available Provision](#) guidance outlines the provision that the local area expects to be made available for CYP with SEND in all local mainstream schools and settings.
- Bristol’s [Belonging in Education Strategy](#) sets out our vision for CYP and the differences we will see in outcomes when this vision has been achieved. The vision includes ‘For our children and young people to access education that is inclusive and values diversity, where they learn from each other and benefit from an understanding of their different experiences’.

## Section 1: Key messages from this guidance

- Families from Black and Minoritised Communities can experience significant challenges as a result of the interaction between their ethnicity and having a child with SEND. This is known as 'intersectionality'.
- Parent carers have told us that their experiences in education settings in Bristol are sometimes positive, but more often negative. This has an impact on their children's progress, access to education and well-being. Some parent carers' experiences are directly related to their ethnicity.
- CYP from some Black and Minoritised Communities in Bristol are less likely to be identified as having SEND. Others are more likely to be identified as having SEND. We call this under and over-representation or disproportionality.
  - Under-representation means that fewer CYP than predicted (based on the proportion of the population) are identified as having SEND.
  - Over-representation means that more CYP than predicted are identified as having SEND.
- Some ethnic groups have been significantly under and over-represented in SEND over time in Bristol. Children from many Asian communities and white children from other white backgrounds are typically less likely to be identified as having SEND. Conversely children from Black Caribbean communities (including mixed white and Black Caribbean children), children from Gypsy Roma Traveller families and white Irish children are typically more likely to be identified as having SEND.
- Children from some ethnic groups have been less or more likely to be identified as having particular types of SEND. The most significant under-representation is found in:
  - Asian – Indian SpLD
  - White Gypsy/Roma Autism
  - Asian -Chinese MLD (SEND support only)
- The most significant over-representation is found in:
  - Black – Caribbean SEMH
  - White - Gypsy/Roma MLD (SEND support only)
  - White – Irish MLD (EHCPs only)
- We talked to families from Black and Minoritised Communities about their experiences. Some families shared positive experiences of settings that understood and acted on the extra challenges for families with children with SEND. They said these settings make sure every child and family feels welcomed and valued. They work hard to understand families and the communities they come from. They identify children's needs early and put effective support in place. These settings are good at communicating and tell families about the support available in the community and from local services.
- Parent carers made more than twice as many comments about negative experiences. They told us that settings' approaches had a significant impact on their families. Where things were going well, children were making good progress. However, where they were

not, children's access to education and progress suffered. The wellbeing of both children and their parent carers was also affected.

- Based on the feedback from parent carers, the guidance focuses on three key areas:
  - The graduated response
  - Effective communication and
  - Inclusive settings which understand and welcome children from Black and Minoritised Communities
- **The graduated response:** Settings need to identify children's SEND early and ensure their approach to assessment is objective, taking into account possible cognitive biases about different ethnic groups. Standardised assessments should be used carefully considering ethnicity, experience and English language proficiency. Settings need to be aware of the factors which can contribute to disproportionality and analyse their own SEND data and act where there is under or over-representation.
- **Effective communication:** Settings need to ensure that all information and communication is accessible to parent carers, regardless of their English language proficiency or literacy skills. Parent carers need regular communication and to know who to talk to. Settings should provide families with information about their rights, the support available and how their children are getting on. All parent carers should be treated with positive regard and be listened to. Settings need to act on parent carers views wherever possible or explain why this isn't possible or appropriate.
- **Inclusive settings which understand and welcome children from Black and Minoritised Communities:** Settings need to make sure that Black and Minoritised Communities are represented in their staff, curriculum, resources, and displays. Leaders need to ensure that staff receive the training and support they need to recognise how cognitive biases can negatively influence our actions and to become culturally competent. It is important that there is an understanding of how beliefs and attitudes about SEND may differ in Black and Minoritised Communities. Schools and EY settings that we talked to said they did not all feel culturally competent but would welcome training in this area. Settings should have an agreed approach to supporting children who are new to the country including those seeking asylum and refugees and know how to support children with English as an additional language (EAL) effectively. SENDCos also need to understand how to differentiate between EAL and SEND.
- Settings have a role to play in signposting parent carers to support available in the community and from local services. Many settings already signpost parent carers to information available on the Local Offer and to support from SEND and You. However, local community groups can also be a source of considerable support for families and settings should ensure they share information about what is available.
- The guidance will not answer every question that educational settings have about how to work effectively with CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities and their families. Each setting will need to consider their unique situation when deciding how to move forward. It is essential that this work is done in collaboration with families.

## Section 2: SEND in Black and Minoritised Communities in Bristol

### Bristol communities

Bristol has a higher proportion of CYP from Black and Minoritised Communities in state-funded nurseries, schools and pupil referral units than the national average (41.7% in Bristol compared with 37.4% nationally). The 3 largest ethnic groups in Bristol are White British (58.3%), Any Other White Background (8.0%) and Black African (7.7%)

21.2% of CYP in Bristol are known or believed to have a language other than English as their first language compared with 20.2% nationally ([School Census data 2022/23](#))

### Under and over-representation of Black and Minoritised Communities in SEND

CYP from some Black and Minoritised Communities in Bristol are less likely to be identified as having SEND. Others are more likely to be identified as having SEND. We call this under and over-representation.

- Under-representation means that fewer CYP than predicted (based on the proportion of the population) are identified as having SEND.
- Over-representation means that more CYP than predicted are identified as having SEND.

The question of whether under and over-representation of SEND in different communities is something we would wish to see reduce is important. Some settings may argue that over-representation reflects a proactive approach to ensuring the needs of minority ethnic children are met. Similarly, under representation could be argued to reflect a desire to be respectful of parent carers' wishes about whether their child is 'labelled' as having SEND, given community attitudes and beliefs. The most important step is for settings to understand patterns of under and over representation in their school, EY setting or MAT and explore with staff and the wider community the reasons for and impact of these differences. Assumptions about over and under representation arising solely from 'good intentions' should be avoided, and the possible unintended consequences of current approaches explored.

Table 1 below shows the number and percentage of CYP in Bristol and England with EHCPs and SEND support by ethnic group in 2022-2023. The [data](#) is based on CYP attending state-funded nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, non-maintained special schools and state-funded alternative provision schools. It does not include independent schools. The table gives an indication of ethnic groups that are currently under and over-represented for SEND. Ethnic groups that are under-represented in Bristol by at least 25% based on population size are highlighted in green. Ethnic groups that are over-represented in groups by at least 25% are highlighted in red.

Information about statistically significant under and over-representation over time is given in Table 2.

Table 1: SEND support and EHCPs in Bristol by ethnicity (2022-23)

		% of CYP in Bristol	% of CYP with SEND support in Bristol	% of CYP with an EHCP in Bristol
Asian - Bangladeshi	524	0.8	0.7	1.0
Asian - Chinese	493	0.8	0.3	0.5
Asian - Indian	1,494	2.3	1.1	1.1
Asian - Pakistani	2016	3.2	2.9	2.8
Asian - Any other Asian background	1,326	2.1	1.1	1.7
Black - Any other Black background	1,001	1.6	1.5	2.1
Black - Black African	4,914	7.7	7.1	8.4
Black - Black Caribbean	883	1.4	2.3	2.2
Mixed - Any other Mixed background	1,914	3.0	3.0	3.2
Mixed - White and Asian	1,315	2.1	1.5	1.2
Mixed - White and Black African	854	1.3	1.4	1.4
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	2,065	3.2	4.4	5.1
White - Gypsy/Roma	120	0.2	0.3	0.1
White - Irish	165	0.3	0.2	0.3
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	51	0.1	0.1	0.0
White - White British	37,272	58.3	63.3	60.0
White - Any other White background	5,098	8.0	5.6	5.0
Any other ethnic group	1109	1.7	1.3	1.6
Unclassified	1,361	2.1	1.9	2.4

Comparative information showing SEND support and EHCPs by ethnicity in England is given in Appendix 3.

Some ethnic groups have been consistently under and over-represented in SEND over time in Bristol. Some of these differences are statistically significant.

Table 2: Statistically significant under and over-representation in Bristol (2017/18 - 2022/23)

	SEND support only	EHCP only	SEND support <i>and</i> EHCP
Under-representation	Asian - Bangladeshi Asian - Chinese Asian – Any other Asian	White - Gypsy/Roma	Asian – Indian Mixed -White and Asian White - Any other White background
Over-representation	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean White - Irish Traveller White - Gypsy/Roma	Any other Black background White Irish	Black - Caribbean

Ethnic groups that have been significantly under or over- represented over time are more or less likely to be identified as having a particular type of SEND. Some of these differences are statistically significant.



Statistically significant under and over-representation by need (2017/18 - 2022/23)

		Autism	MLD	SEMH	SpLD	SLCN
Under-represented	SEND support and EHCP	White - Gypsy/Roma  Mixed – White and Asian	White - Any other White background	Asian – Indian  White - Any other White background  Mixed -White and Asian	Asian – Indian  White - Any other White background	
	SEND support only	Asian – Indian  Asian – Chinese  Asian - any other Asian	Asian – Chinese  Asian - any other Asian	Asian – Bangladeshi  Asian – Chinese  Asian - any other Asian	Asian - any other Asian  Asian – Bangladeshi  Asian – Chinese  Mixed -White and Asian	Asian – Chinese  Asian - Indian
	EHCP only		Any other Black background  Mixed -White and Asian  White – Gypsy/Roma			White - Gypsy/Roma
Over-represented	SEND support and EHCP		Black - Caribbean	Black - Caribbean		
	SEND support only		White - Gypsy/Roma  Mixed - White and Black Caribbean  White - Irish Traveller	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean  White - Irish Traveller	Black - Caribbean	Black - Caribbean
	EHCP only	Any other Black background	White - Irish	White - Irish	Any other Black background	

The size of the effect of ethnicity on whether a CYP is identified as having SEND varies between different groups and types of need, however all of the significant differences identified in Bristol are large.

The largest effect sizes (starting with the largest) for under-representation are:

- Asian – Indian SpLD (SEND support *and* EHCPs)
- White Gypsy/Roma Autism (SEND support *and* EHCPs)
- Asian – Chinese MLD (SEND support)
- Asian – Indian SEMH (SEND support *and* EHCPs)
- Asian – Indian Autism (SEND support)
- Asian – Bangladeshi SpLD (SEND support)

The largest effect sizes (starting with the largest) for over-representation are:

- Black – Caribbean SEMH (SEND support *and* EHCPs)
- White - Gypsy/Roma MLD (SEND support)
- White – Irish MLD (EHCPs)
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean SEMH (SEND support)
- Any other Black background Autism (EHCP)
- Black – Caribbean MLD (SEND support *and* EHCPs)

### Section 3: Experiences of local families

Parent carers who talked to us were keen to share their experiences. They wanted those with the ability to change things to hear their stories. Appendix 2 is a report describing our discussions with parent carers. This report should be read alongside this guidance to understand how parent carers view the strengths and weaknesses of our current approach to working with families from Black and Minoritised Communities with children with SEND. The report also describes the impact of our approach on their children and as parent carers themselves.

Although the report is based on the views and experiences of a small number of parent carers in comparison to the overall number of Bristol families from Black and Minoritised Communities who have children with SEND, clear themes emerged from what they told us. Settings should engage with their own community of parent carers to understand their experiences.

#### Parent carers' experiences

Many families shared positive experiences of settings that understood and acted on the additional challenges for families from Black and Minoritised Communities with CYP with SEND. They described these schools as making sure that every child and family feels welcomed and valued. They said that

these settings work hard to understand families and the communities they come from. They identify children's needs early and put effective support in place. Parent carers told us that these settings are good at communicating and tell families about the support available in the community and from local services.

Parent carers made more than twice as many comments about negative experiences. They told us about their struggle to feel heard in settings and about opportunities missed to act quickly when their children were struggling. Some of their children had been labelled as difficult rather than as having an underlying SEND which might help explain their behaviour. Parent carers shared their experiences of discrimination, sometimes because of settings' lack of understanding of the needs of individual communities and families, but sometimes as a result of bias and prejudice.

Parent carers told us that settings' approaches had a significant impact on their families. Sometimes this was positive, but more often it was negative. Where things were going well, children were making good progress. However, where they were not, children's access to education and progress suffered. The wellbeing of both children and their parent carers was also affected.

These themes are explored below. The guidance is based on the views of parent carers, the views of local schools and Early Years settings and advice from national and local information focused on effective work with families from Black and Minoritised Communities.

## Section 4: Implementation of the graduated response

### *Early identification and assessment*

Accurate early identification and assessment of SEND is key to ensuring that effective provision is put in place which will help children to make progress. Bristol's guide to [Ordinarily Available Provision](#) and the [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#) set out the expectations of schools and Early Years settings in relation to identification and assessment as part of the graduated response, (also known as the assess, plan, do, review cycle). Feedback from parent carers from Black and Minoritised Communities in Bristol indicates that sometimes the opportunity to identify needs early on is missed and that children are more likely to be more or less likely to be identified as having a particular type of SEND. Our analysis of Bristol data from the last 6 years looking at patterns of identification of SEND confirms this is the case.

There are many reasons why settings may not identify that a child has SEND in a timely way. Early identification is dependent on those teaching the child having the skills and understanding to recognise that their development and progress is not what would be expected for a child of their age. In the case of pupils with English as an additional language, it's also dependent on practitioners' understanding of language development in bi/multi-lingual children.

Early identification is also dependent on settings having an effective approach to differentiating their approach for all children and monitoring the impact of this for individual children over time, as described in curriculum and assessment policies. Conversations with parent carers are critical at this stage to gain a better understanding of the child's presentation at home and in the community and possible reasons for the differences that might be seen in the setting. All parental concerns need to be taken seriously. Where their observations and thoughts are different to what is seen in the setting, discussion with the SENDCo will be helpful.

The definition of SEND in the Code of Practice states that

*A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.*

*A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:*

- *has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
- *has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions*

This means that where children are not making sufficient progress despite quality first teaching and appropriate differentiation, settings should consider whether they may have SEND.

Central to the decision about whether a child is making sufficient progress is the assessment of their achievement and progress in relation to expectations set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and National Curriculum. When making this decision, it is important to consider the child's attendance. If a child has missed a significant amount of their education (through regular short periods of absence, prolonged absence or a delayed start to their schooling), this is likely to have an impact on their achievement. Where this is the case, it is important to look at their rate of progress when regular attendance is established before concluding that they have SEND.

*Identification and assessment of SEND in children from Black and Minoritised Communities*

#### Teacher assessments

Research suggests that teacher assessments for children from Black and Minoritised Communities can be influenced by cognitive biases about different ethnic groups. It is essential therefore that education settings are mindful of steps that can be taken to ensure that teacher assessments are objective. [Ofqual](#) recommends that settings:

- Make sure each judgement is based purely upon evidence of how a student has performed, putting other factors to one side (for example attitude or behaviour);
- Increase awareness of the different kinds of unconscious cognitive biases that can compromise judgements, and think about strategies for minimising them;
- Shed light on the factors that are influencing assessments, by discussing each judgement in detail with colleagues, including SENCos or external professionals;
- Consider any evidence that indicates the presence or absence of bias in judgements.

Ofqual's [information for centres about making objective judgements](#) contains a useful discussion on the types of biases which can affect teacher assessment.

#### Standardised assessments

Settings also need to be aware of the limitations of using published standardised assessments when working with children from Black and Minoritised Communities. Settings are advised to:

- Ensure that standardised test results are used as only one source of information about children's performance and avoid making assumptions about potential based on scores.
- Use confidence bands when reporting any standardised scores.
- Consider the child's English language proficiency and cultural experiences when considering whether any test is 'fair'.
- Look at the standardisation sample and limitations of the test in the instruction manual to check whether a test should be used with a particular child.
- Consider the child's attitude toward and previous experience of standardised testing.

### Exam access arrangements

When considering whether a request for exam access arrangements is needed for CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised communities, schools should consider the range of arrangements that can be made for pupils with SEND alongside those that are available for CYP with English as an Additional Language. The [Joint Council for Qualifications](#) updates this guidance and the application process on an annual basis. For children with English as an Additional Language, additional arrangements are available for those who have been in the UK for less than three years at the time of their exams with no prior knowledge of English.

### Identifying types of SEND

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) lists four broad areas of SEND: communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social emotional and mental health difficulties and sensory and/or physical needs.

Paragraph 6.27 reminds settings that,

*The purpose of identification is to work out what actions the [school] needs to take, not fit a pupil into a category. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time...A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual's needs is identified, not simply the primary need.*

When identifying the primary need, particularly social emotional and mental health difficulties or cognition and learning, settings need to consider carefully whether the child's most obvious difficulties are in fact a symptom rather than a cause of the child's SEND. As an example, a child who is disruptive in class may be struggling to understand the language used by the teacher. In this case the primary need would be communication and interaction. In another example, a child's academic progress may be slow as a result of heightened anxiety. In this case the primary need would be social emotional and mental health difficulties.

### Identifying types of SEND in children from Black and Minoritised Communities

Children from some ethnic groups are historically more or less likely to be identified as having particular types of SEND in Bristol. Parent carers told us that this makes a difference to the support their child receives and can affect their progress and life chances.

Children from many Asian communities (including mixed white and Asian children) and white children from other white backgrounds are typically less likely to be identified as having SEND. Conversely children from Black Caribbean communities (including mixed white and Black Caribbean children), children from Gypsy Roma Traveller families and white Irish children are typically more likely to be identified as having SEND.

#### Factors contributing to disproportionality

Some of the factors identified in research which may contribute to over and under representation of different ethnic groups include:

- Socio-economic status (including the correlation with attendance)
- Interpretation of and responses to ethnic and cultural differences including discrimination (based on unconscious or conscious cognitive biases), low expectations and a failure of settings to provide quality instruction or effective classroom management for different groups of students.
- How CYP's behaviour is interpreted in terms of expected patterns or norms.
- Prior attainment and development.
- Differences between individual schools (particularly for SEMH in secondary schools).

#### Using data to identify disproportionality

Settings and MATs need to ensure that they know whether they are more or less likely to identify children from Black and Minoritised Communities as having SEND and where the former is the case, whether particular needs are over-represented. Where data indicates that there is disproportionality, settings should seek to understand this further (to include discussion with parent carers and pupils) and take any actions needed to address these differences. As an example, where data indicates that Black and/or mixed white and Black Caribbean children are over-represented for SEMH, settings could start by considering whether:

- Cognitive biases are impacting on how staff interpret behaviour (see information about adultification in this guidance)
- Staff have strong relationships with *all* children in the setting and
- Staff have the skills and confidence to create a positive learning environment for *all* children regardless of their learning style.

Changes in senior leadership (including SENDCos) and limited capacity in settings may make this work more challenging and less likely to be prioritised. However it is important that every setting and MAT in Bristol analyses their data and understands and addresses the reasons for any differences in line with the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#). School governors and trustees can support this work by asking for information about under and over representation in their settings and monitoring the impact of actions taken to address any differences identified.

The section of this guidance focused on 'Inclusive settings which understand and welcome children and families from Black and Minoritised Communities' explores some of these themes in more detail.

#### Section 5: Effective communication

## *Principles of effective communication*

Murmuration Community Therapy has carried out extensive research with Bristol parent carers and community groups to understand how professionals and parents can build strong relationships through communication. Their research highlighted six principles that parent carers would like professionals to observe:

- Believe the parent;
- Empower the parent to act;
- Acknowledge the parent's feelings;
- Show that you value the child;
- Stay in touch;
- Be upfront about service limitations.

Murmuration's research led to the production of a [short film](#) which is essential viewing for settings. The film concludes by saying that,

*These principles are like signposts on the path, they can point the way in interactions with parents. Professionals are there as the journey unfolds, and with these small acts of empathy we have the opportunity to transform a lonely and disorientating path into one in which parents feel empowered, cared for and trusted, and where their children's value is affirmed and celebrated.*

Our conversations with parent carers from Black and Minoritised Communities highlighted many of the Murmuration principles, but also additional challenges which need to be considered by settings.

*Ensure that all information and communication is **accessible** to parents*

### **Language**

Schools and EY settings should always ensure that written and spoken information is accessible to parent carers whose first language is not English. Often, this will require support from a service that provides translation and/or interpretation. Whenever possible settings should use a translation and interpretation service such as [Bristol City Council's translation and interpreting service](#) that has a clearly stated Code of Practice, ensuring confidentiality, impartiality and accuracy. The service's website provides good practice guidelines for working with interpreters and translating documents and a [link](#) to book any support required. Guidance is also available as part of Bristol City Council's toolkit: [Supporting Asylum Seeking and Refugee Pupils in Schools](#)

Sometimes families will request that a particular member of their community or family interprets during meetings. Wherever possible the advantages and disadvantages of this approach should be discussed with the parent carer before agreeing a way forward. Settings should be mindful that family or community members may find it difficult to be neutral during the interpretation, particularly where there are strong beliefs about the child being discussed and/or SEND more generally.

Settings should ensure that their SEND policy and SEND information report (where appropriate) is interpreted into the languages spoken by the communities they serve. Ideally settings should consider translation when renewing or reviewing their websites to ensure information is accessible to all parents.

Child-specific documents such as individual education plans should also be translated as well as any information about processes and services which are relevant to the family.

Settings should be aware when interpreting and translating common SEND terms from English, that some words may be difficult to translate because of cultural or linguistic differences and may need more explanation. As an example there is [no word for 'autism' in Somali](#).

### Literacy

Literacy may be a challenge for any parent carer, but particularly for communities who face poor access to education impacting on educational attainment such as Gypsy, Roma Travellers. Wherever possible, face to face meetings should be held to read through and explain written information. Including a 'read aloud' function on setting websites will improve access to written materials to all families, not just those from Black and Minoritised Communities.

### Processing information

When sharing information with parent carers of children with SEND, it is essential to be mindful of the impact of emotions on understanding and recall. The challenge of raising a child with SEND cannot be underestimated and parent carers often report feelings of exhaustion, anger and distress. Where possible, information should be provided in person initially to gauge understanding and then in writing for future reference. Settings should expect to need to repeat information already provided in some cases and be prepared to answer any questions parent carers have about what they are told.

*Create regular **opportunities** for communication and make sure parent carers know who they can talk to*

Parent carers should be able to expect regular communication about their children from settings.

More time may be needed for this communication to be effective with families from Black and Minoritised Communities. Regular face to face meetings provide the opportunity to build a relationship with parent carers based on trust and shared goals. Some parent carers may have had negative experiences in the past, so may benefit from meetings being held within the community or in their homes. Likewise, inviting parent carers into settings to observe children learning or for social events can build positive relationships.

It is important for parent carers to know who they can talk to about their child. This might be the class teacher or SENDCo. Settings should be responsive to requests from parent carers for meetings and communication outside of the normal approach wherever possible. This will help the family to trust the setting and feel their child is important to staff.

*Listen to and act on parent carers' views*

The parent carers we spoke to talked about not feeling heard in settings. Parent carers have essential information to share which can help settings to better understand children's needs and plan future support. Parent carers can provide information about how their child presents at home and in the community. This can help the setting to understand the child's holistic needs and identify what they need to learn or develop to make progress.



For some children, differences between how they present at home and school or EY setting may be due to them working hard to 'cope' or 'fit in' within the educational environment. Understanding of this behaviour in children with autism ('masking') has grown in recent years, however a number of parent carers of children with SEND remain concerned that this is not always recognised in education settings.

Other children may present differently at home in response to expectations, routines and the physical and emotional environment. If settings are concerned that a family is struggling to provide a home environment in which the child can thrive, this should be discussed with the parent carer, with the aim of identifying any support needed.

Sometimes parent carers raise concerns that their child may have a particular type of need or condition. It is important that settings listen carefully to these concerns and explore with parent carers why they believe this to be the case. Families know their children well and the additional information they can provide about their development can help settings better understand children's needs. The persistent under and over-representation of children from Black and Minoritised Communities for different types of SEND means that settings should always consider information from parent carers carefully and review their current thinking about children's needs. It is good practice to undertake this review with a colleague or external professional, so that any previously held conclusions about the child (which may be in part influenced by cognitive biases about particular communities) can be challenged. This discussion will also allow alternative hypotheses for a child's behaviour, progress and/or achievement to be considered, increasing the likelihood that needs are accurately identified and well understood from the start.

If following this review, settings believe they have fully considered the parent carer's view and accurately identified and assessed the child's needs, this should be explained to the family. This step is essential for parent carers to feel that they have been listened to and taken seriously. Working with the parent carer to identify any support needed and providing information about their rights as parents at this stage, (for example seeking a medical view or applying for an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment), will also ensure that they are more likely to feel empowered and their concerns heard.

*Provide parent carers with **information** about their rights, how children are getting on and the support available*

Regular communication with parent carers about their child is an essential part of building strong relationships with families. This should include what is going well in addition to areas where they may be struggling. Often regular communication with families is well established when children are young, however this can reduce as they get older, impacting on relationships at a time when the child may be facing additional challenges managing in school.

Many settings use electronic communication such as apps and email to share information with families. This approach may work well for some families, (particularly those who are able to use online tools to translate content into their first language). However, settings should also consider whether this approach limits communication with other families from Black and Minoritised Communities. Telephone calls and informal face to face meetings provide the opportunity to share information, check understanding and listen to parent carers' perspectives whilst building stronger

relationships. Ideally, settings should talk to parent carers to understand what form of communication will work best for them.

The [SEND Local Offer](#) contains information about parent carers' rights and what they can expect from education settings. Settings should ensure they are familiar with the content of the Local Offer when advising parent carers about their rights and signpost them to information available. It is important that settings are proactive about advising families about their rights and actions they can take for their child, rather than relying on parent carers to find this information out for themselves. Parent carers should always be told about services such as [FLORA](#) and [SEND and You](#) who can help families navigate the information available and provide additional support where needed.

Information about support available to families is discussed in Section 7 of this guidance, with further resources provided in Appendix 4.

### *Have positive regard for parent carers*

Empathy for parent carers from Black and Minoritised Communities is essential to building strong relationships in which settings and families work together effectively. Accepting and acknowledging parent carers' feelings is a big part of this and is helped by using active listening techniques. However, for families from Black and Minoritised Communities, it is also about recognising the intersectionality of race and SEND and the additional challenges that families experience. Some parent carers told us about teachers and education leaders who had children of their own with SEND or from Black and Minority Communities and the empathy they felt from these practitioners. Given that the majority of people working in our educational settings in Bristol will not have these experiences, it is essential that we are all actively mindful of the challenges families may be experiencing, even if they do not reflect our own.

Conveying genuine warmth and value for children is also critical to families who want only to work with settings to get the best for their child. Ensuring that every conversation includes something positive that a child has done recently or sharing something about the child that made a teacher smile will show that they are cared for and valued, and that ultimately settings want the best for them too.

## [Section 6: Inclusive settings which understand and welcome children and families from Black and Minoritised Communities](#)

Some parent carers who talked to us about their experiences were positive about settings that were taking active steps to include children from Black and Minoritised Communities. Others were concerned that some educational settings lack awareness of the needs and cultures of different ethnic groups. Some of these families had also experienced discrimination in education settings in the city as a result of their ethnicity.

When thinking about meeting the needs of CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities, educational settings need to reflect on how they foster a sense of belonging for *all* children from ethnic minority groups. Creating opportunities to listen to the views of children and parents is central to understanding what is working well and what needs to improve.

Educational settings and MATs should also know how if and how academic progress, attainment, attendance, exclusions and suspensions and measures of well-being differ between children from different ethnic groups. Where this analysis indicates that children from Black and Minority

Communities are achieving poorer outcomes or experiencing disadvantage, plans should be in place which describe how the setting or MAT is addressing these to close the gap.

### *Representation*

Settings will need to consider the extent to which children and families from all Black and Minoritised Communities are represented. Representation includes consideration of:

- The ethnic diversity of staff (including support staff, teachers, senior leaders and governors), visitors to the setting and other adults met by children when they attend activities off-site (such as school trips);
- How ethnic and linguistic diversity is represented in displays including information about British Values;
- How people from Black and Minority Communities are represented in books, on websites accessed by pupils and in other learning resources used in settings;
- The content of the taught and informal curriculum including PSHE above and beyond focused activities in Black History Month etc.

### *Social cohesion*

Settings will also need to consider how they engage with CYP and provide safe spaces to talk and learn about race and ethnicity (including cultural differences). These opportunities provide the foundation for fostering social cohesion within educational settings and society more widely. Settings also need to have a clear policy for responding to racism from children, staff and parents which is well understood by all. The effectiveness of this policy should be reviewed regularly including hearing from children and their families about their experiences.

### *Cultural competence*

In order to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for children and families from Black and Minoritised Communities, all staff working in educational settings in Bristol need to be culturally competent.

Although there are a number of definitions of cultural competence, the [University of Exeter](#) describes cultural competence as ‘the ability to communicate and interact effectively with people regardless of difference.’ This means ‘having the knowledge and skills to be aware of one’s own cultural values and the implications of these for making respectful, reflective and reasoned choices.’

Cultural competence cannot be gained simply through equalities and diversity training where the focus is often on compliance with statutory duties such as the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty. Cultural competence requires deeper reflection on our individual cognitive biases which may inadvertently prevent us from consistently behaving in a way which welcomes and includes all children, especially those from Black and Minoritised Communities. Discussions with EY settings and schools in Bristol has indicated that some settings have received equalities and diversity training in recent years. However, only a very small minority have received cultural competence training which includes the opportunity to reflect on personal experiences, thoughts and beliefs which can impact on behaviours and attitudes towards children from Black and Minoritised Communities. Despite very

low take up of this type of training to date, the vast majority of educational settings believe that it would support their work with children and families.

As one parent carer told us,

*‘All schools should be required to carry out an audit and regular reviews so that staff can be truly reflective practitioners and can challenge their own subconscious prejudices and biases by considering their responses to specially developed tasks and questions that would help to highlight when a prejudice or bias might exist subconsciously.’*

When reviewing the effectiveness of their work with families of CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities, schools and EY settings need to understand the cultural competence of their staff and to ensure that plans are in place to address any learning needs identified at all levels of the organisation.

Further reading, resources and links to training providers are listed at the end of this guidance. As an example, the Gypsy Roma Traveller Education Team offer free and bespoke cultural awareness training to schools in addition to a welcome pack to help settings become more accessible and culturally sensitive places for Gypsy Roma Traveller families.

#### *Meeting the needs of children with SEND*

The guidance above is relevant when reviewing how the needs of children with SEND from Black and Minority Communities are met in educational settings, however there are additional considerations.

In addition to ensuring children and adults from Black and Minoritised Communities children are effectively represented, settings need to consider how people with disabilities are represented, and to be proactive about ensuring these representations of disabled people reflect the ethnic diversity of the city. Likewise reviews of the curriculum and approaches to fostering positive relationships between children need to actively consider both disability and the intersectionality with race and ethnicity.

Settings will also need to consider how the following aspects of cultural competency impact on their work with children and families:

- Understanding different cultural beliefs and attitudes to SEND;
- Awareness of cognitive biases which may impact on the identification and assessment of SEND.

#### *Cultural beliefs about and attitudes to SEND*

Cultural beliefs about and attitudes to SEND vary widely between and within different ethnic groups, dependent on factors such as education, awareness of different cultures, religious beliefs and personal values. For this reason, settings should avoid making assumptions about how a particular family or community will respond to a child who struggling in their education setting. Settings should however be aware that attitudes and beliefs may differ from their own and from prevailing beliefs within Western white cultures and may at times cause tensions with the approach to SEND set out in statutory legislation in the UK.

Open and honest dialogue with individual families is crucial to working in partnership. Additionally, awareness of how beliefs about and experiences of SEND may differ across and within different cultures can be helpful. Differences focus on the causes of SEND, the type of help sought for the

child, the role of families and the wider communities, attitudes towards CYP with SEND and knowledge about support systems in the UK.

- Beliefs about the causes of SEND vary across cultures. However, it is important to remember that an individual family will not necessarily reflect the dominant or traditional beliefs of their cultural heritage. Approaches in the UK tend to focus on medical or environmental causes of SEND. In other cultures, SEND may also be attributed to religious, spiritual or supernatural causes. These may include divine punishment for wrongdoings (including in past lives), curses, malevolent forces or the influence of ancestral spirits. In some cultures, SEND are seen to be divine tests or spiritual lessons. Beliefs about the causes of SEND may influence the approach families take to seeking support for their child.
- Although many families may look to Western practices including medical intervention to support their child, some may also, or solely seek the involvement of religious and spiritual leaders. Families may also involve traditional healers and/or use alternative therapies and medicines.
- In many cultures, families (including extended families) and local communities will have a significant role in providing care and support for children with SEND based on a sense of shared responsibility or familial duty. However, challenges and stigma can also exist.
- Shame and stigma can lead to barriers to participation in society, relationships and employment. Negative attitudes, misconceptions, and social exclusion can pose challenges to the equal treatment of children with SEND and their families. Despite these barriers, in many cultures there is a growing awareness and recognition of the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities supported by advocacy groups and legislation to promote accessibility and combat discrimination.
- If a family has recently moved to the UK, it will be important to try to understand their experiences of access to healthcare, educational opportunities, and specialist services in their country of origin. In some societies infrastructure and support may be lacking, whereas in others greater support may be available. Working with families to explain the differences can be helpful to support families to access what is available to them and reduce any anxiety they may have.

#### *Cognitive biases and their impact on supporting children with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities*

Cognitive biases are unconscious thoughts designed to make decision-making quicker and more efficient. They are linked to a number of factors including previous experience and the social and historical context. Cognitive biases can lead to mistakes in thinking and decision making and make certain behaviours more likely. One of the aims of cultural competence training is to help staff working in educational settings become more aware of their cognitive biases towards CYP and families from Black and Minoritised Communities and how these biases may be impacting on their behaviour.

Having a deep understanding of potential and personal cognitive biases is particularly important when working with children with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities. The table below describes some of the key biases in this area.

Bias	Definition	Potential impact
Affinity bias	Our tendency to get along with or prefer people with whom we	In educational settings this can result in staff giving preferential treatment to students they perceive as more like themselves, including for

	share similar characteristics, backgrounds or interests and to evaluate them more positively than those who are different.	example those who are from the same ethnic group and/or share the same cultural background. This is particularly important when considering the ethnic diversity of staff in educational settings. <a href="#">DfE statistics</a> show that white British teachers are over-represented in state funded schools in England (85.1% compared to 70.8% of the working age population), increasing to 92.5% for head teachers.
Confirmation bias	Our tendency to look for, prefer and use information that confirms what we already believe. Includes our tendency to ignore new information which challenges our pre-existing ideas.	Pre-existing ideas about children from different ethnic groups can be strongly affected by our personal experiences, but also by external influences such as the media and long-standing cultural stereotypes in our society. Sometimes pre-existing ideas may be influenced by the attribution bias. This bias can lead to errors in the reasons we give for others' behaviours.
Adultification	Our tendency to see black children as more "grown up" than white children leading to an unfair and biased response from people, including teachers.	Research has identified that where teachers have an adultification bias they think black children are more responsible for their actions, leading to harsher sanctions for challenging behaviour such as exclusions. This may be one reason why more CYP from Black Caribbean and mixed white and Black Caribbean families are over-represented for SEMH.

As well as impacting on the treatment children receive in education settings, cognitive biases can also result in children internalising negative stereotypes about themselves. This can lead to children feeling less motivated to work hard at subjects they find difficult (impacting on progress) or to follow rules and expectations (increasing the likelihood that they will be identified as having SEMH).

#### *Supporting children who are new arrivals to the country*

CYP from Black and Minoritised Communities who are new to the country will require additional planning and support depending on their needs. These children are likely to come from very diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some, but not all may have had experienced conflict or other trauma and may be arriving without family members.

All educational settings should have a plan in place for how they will welcome new arrivals. The Bell Foundation recommends [the PAWS approach](#):

#### **Prepare (prior to admission)**

- Gather information from the learner and parents (including any previous assessments) to create a pupil profile
- Arrange a tour for the new pupil and parent carers with first language support where possible
- Provide information for the parents e.g. homework
- Agree a start date and organise an initial timetable

### Alert (before the pupil starts)

- Send the pupil profile to all relevant staff
- Organise a buddy system for class and break times
- Prepare resources for the learner's first few days
- Plan support for each part of the day
- Make essential arrangements, e.g. PE kit, free school meals eligibility and transport to the setting

### Welcome (the first days)

- Greet new arrivals and take them to class
- Introduce them to their buddy
- Check they have food, drink and activities organised for lunch time

### Support (the first weeks)

- Put language support in place, e.g. a scheme of work for learners who are new to English
- Put pastoral support in place
- Complete an [EAL assessment](#) and set language targets. It is suggested that full assessment of a pupil's English language proficiency takes place only after the first two to three weeks of a learner at the setting.
- Monitor progress and adjust support where necessary
- Keep in touch with parents

New arrivals with English as an additional language and/or children who are asylum seekers or refugees may have additional needs.

*SEND in children who are asylum seekers or refugees*

Bristol has been a 'City of Sanctuary' since 2011 with a number of local education settings being awarded [School/College of Sanctuary](#) status for their commitment to being safe and welcoming for children whose lives were in danger in their home countries. These settings help their pupils and wider community understand what it means to be seeking sanctuary and to extend a welcome to everyone as equal, valued members of the school community.

The [Schools of Sanctuary Resource Pack](#) offers a framework for thinking about how to meet the needs of asylum seeking children and refugees based on a 'Learn Embed Share' model:

- **Learn** about what it means to be seeking sanctuary, issues surrounding people who are seeking sanctuary and how to support those who are seeking sanctuary within the school.
- **Embed** concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion into the fabric of the school, and share and celebrate achievements
- **Share** values and activities across the entire school community, with students' families and in local communities

The pack also includes resources for teaching, learning and policy development focusing on

- Anti-racism
- English as an additional language



- Home learning
- Inclusive practice
- Pastoral care and mental health
- Post 16 support
- Safeguarding and
- Teaching about sanctuary

Bristol City Council has also developed a [Supporting Asylum Seeking and Refugee Pupils in Schools toolkit](#). Access to the toolkit should be requested from [Helen.Starr@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Starr@bristol.gov.uk).

Children who are new arrivals to settings as refugees or asylum seekers may have experienced adverse childhood experiences which have a significant impact on their ongoing well-being and development. For example, children may be slower to acquire English as an additional language and will need considerable time, patience and support before any progress is visible.

Settings will need to adopt a trauma informed approach when working with these children using the skills set out in Bristol's '[Trauma-Informed System Knowledge and Skills Framework](#)'. Some children may require specialist help to support them to cope. The Community Children's Health Partnership offers an [Asylum and Refugee Clinic](#) and can provide a pre-referral consultation to assess whether a young person is suitable for the service. [Primary Mental Health Specialists](#) may also be able to offer advice and signposting to appropriate support.

Settings should not wait to identify that a child is likely to have SEND before adopting trauma informed approaches. If a child is displaying ongoing or significant signs of trauma, specialist support and/or advice should be sought.

Some asylum-seeking children or refugees may have pre-existing and/or complex SEND. Where information is available about children's needs before they arrive at the setting, provision should be arranged in advance to ensure they receive the support they need from the first day. Where this information is not available in advance and it is evident that a child has complex needs on arrival, settings should consider whether to make an application for [top up funding](#) and/or contact the Bristol SEND team for advice on whether an application for an [Education Health and Care needs assessment](#) would be appropriate.

Families may also require support to refer to relevant health services. Bristol's [SEND local offer](#) has information about the support available and how to refer a child to different teams.

### *SEND and EAL*

Determining whether a child with EAL has SEND can feel complex. Settings need to adopt a methodical approach to assessment to avoid either over or under identifying SEND in this cohort and have a good understanding of the stages of language acquisition in an additional language.

The Bell Foundation provide a useful [introduction to the factors which settings will need to consider when thinking about whether a child with EAL has SEND](#). These include:

- Age of arrival in the UK
- Previous experience of education
- Differences between the first language and English (for example the writing system)
- Proficiency in the first language



To support understanding of children's language needs as part of this approach, the Foundation has made their [EAL assessment framework](#) and accompanying resources free to access. The framework supports schools to assess children's English language proficiency, track progress, set targets and identify appropriate strategies at each stage of their development.

A useful guide to the [step by step process](#) required to make the decision about whether a child with EAL also has SEND is available from Birmingham Advisory and Support Service. Although this guide was written in 2003 and as such some of the terminology and processes have changed following the 2014 SEND reforms, the document remains a highly practical and robust guide to making this decision.

The Bell Foundation and iCAN have also produced a useful introductory [webinar](#) which will help settings to understand whether any difficulties are as a result of EAL, a language disorder or both. This will be particularly useful where Speech Language and Communication Needs are suspected.

## Section 7: Supporting parent carers

Raising a child with SEND can bring enormous rewards to families, but is unlikely to be without its challenges. At various points on the journey parent carers are likely to need advice, guidance and information as their child's needs change and they grow up. There will be times when parents also need emotional and practical support and to meet and talk with other parent carers going through similar things. Parent carers from Black and Minoritised Communities may also benefit from the opportunity to meet with other families with a shared cultural heritage.

Parent carers we spoke to were clear that they would like schools and EY settings to be proactive about signposting them to sources of information and support.

Appendix 4 contains a list of sources of advice and support available to all families of children with SEND as well as groups and organisations offering support to families from Black and Minoritised Communities.

## Section 8: Further reading and information

Disproportionality in SEND

[Ethnic disproportionality in SEND 2018 \(University of Oxford\)](#)

[Ethnic disproportionality in SEND in Bristol 2016 \(University of Oxford\)](#)

[Permanent exclusions by ethnicity \(gov.uk\)](#)

[Suspensions by ethnicity \(gov.uk\)](#)

Graduated response

[Britain's racist 1970s education policies still resonate today \(Guardian article\)](#)

[Subnormal: A British scandal \(BBC documentary\)](#)

[Race and SEND survey including recommendations for settings \(Special Needs Jungle\)](#)

[Small Axe: Education \(BBC series\)](#)

[How the West Indian Child is made educationally sub-normal in the British School System \(50th anniversary edition of book by Bernard Coard\)](#)

Effective communication with parent carers

[Children with SEND and the emotional impact on parents \(Special Needs Jungle article\)](#)

Inclusive settings which understand and welcome children and families from Black and Minoritised Communities

[Project Zazi podcast discussing the impact of cognitive biases in schools \(from 28 to 35 minutes into the recording\)](#)

[Gypsy, Roma and Travellers information for professionals \(BCC\)](#)

[Whole school anti-racism audit \(The Key Leaders\)](#)

[Anti-racism: how to review and re-frame your curriculum \(The Key Leaders\)](#)

[Inclusion not exclusion: Supporting all young people to succeed in school \(Commission on Young Lives\)](#)

[Bristol EY standard \(includes a dimension on equality, diversity and inclusion\)](#)

[Anti-racist practice forum \(Bristol Early Years\)](#)

Social cohesion

[Social integration in schools and colleges research report \(DfE\)](#)

[Promoting ethnic and religious integration in schools: A review of evidence \(NIESR\)](#)

Refugees and asylum seekers

[Seeking refuge video clips \(BBC2\)](#)

[Schools of sanctuary](#)

[Refugees and asylum seekers \(The Bell Foundation\)](#)

[Asylum and refugee clinic \(Community Children's Health Partnership\)](#)

[Refugees and asylum seekers: Guides and downloads \(UEL\)](#)

[Supporting asylum seeking and refugee pupils in schools toolkit \(access available from helen.starr@bristol.gov.uk\)](mailto:helen.starr@bristol.gov.uk)

[Support services for refugees and asylum seekers in Bristol \(Voscur\)](#)

[Supporting refugees and asylum-seeking children in the EY \(Bristol Early Years\)](#)

## Representation

[School teacher workforce: Ethnicity facts and figures \(gov.uk\)](#)

[Lack of diversity in teaching in England means minority ethnic pupils miss out \(Guardian article\)](#)

[Auditing your setting library to support diversity and inclusion](#)

[Books about diversity for CYP](#)

## EAL

[The assessment of learning difficulties in literacy among children learning English as an additional language: A literature review \(DfEE\)](#)

[ESOL for parents and carers at a primary school \(article by Katy Isaac, Venturers Trust EAL lead\)](#)

N.B To read this article use the link to register for free access to Ingenta Connect and then search for the journal 'Language Issues', volume 28, number 2.

## Cultural competence training

[Nilaari cultural confidence and competence training](#)

[Witnessing Whiteness Workshop](#)

[Cultural competence self-assessment Checklist \(NASP\)](#)

## Appendix 1: Supporting CYP with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities: Setting audit

### Self-evaluation

For each descriptor, consider your practice in the setting with regard to children with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities

Red: Not in place

Amber: In place but little/inconsistent evidence of impact

Green: In place with strong evidence of impact (including parent carer and CYP feedback)

Date of completion:	Completed by:
---------------------	---------------

	RAG rating	Evidence of impact	Actions required
<b>Graduated response</b>			
<b>Assessment</b>			
We work closely with parent carers when we have concerns to ensure we consider all the available information and perspectives, ensuring we identify and assess SEND accurately.			
We proactively identify CYP's SEND early and put in place support which helps them make progress.			
We are aware of possible cognitive biases which may influence our assessment of CYP's attainment and progress and take action to ensure we are objective.			
We are aware of possible cognitive biases which may influence our identification and assessment of			

CYP's SEND and take action to ensure we are objective.			
We use standardised assessments with care, paying attention to possible disadvantage to CYP from Black and Minoritised Communities and those with English as an additional language.			
<b>Data analysis</b>			
We understand the ethnic minority groups who are most affected by disproportionality in Bristol and have prioritised scrutiny of our data and practice for these children in our setting.			
We analyse all of our SEND assessment and identification data regularly and take action where there is disproportionality.			
Our governors and trustees scrutinise our SEND data annually and challenge and support us where there is disproportionality.			
<b>Support</b>			
We understand the exam access arrangements available to CYP with SEND and to CYP who have EAL and ensure pupils receive the support to which they are entitled.			
<b>Communication</b>			
We know the Murmuration Community Therapy communication principles and apply these in our work with parent carers.			
<b>Accessibility</b>			
We ensure that written and spoken communication about children with SEND is translated or interpreted for parent carers with English as an additional language.			

We are aware of good practice guidance in relation to interpreting and apply these to our work with families with English as an additional language.			
We are aware that there are some SEND terms that are difficult to translate and take additional time to explain these to parent carers.			
We recognise that sometimes we need to repeat information, explain it in a different way and/or provide it in writing so that parents can understand and process it.			
We allow time for parents to ask questions and answer these whenever we can.			
<b>Opportunity</b>			
We provide regular opportunities for communication with parent carers and ensure they know who they can talk to about their child.			
We ask parent carers how they would like us to communicate with them and act on their preference.			
<b>Listening to parent carers</b>			
We listen with an open mind to parent carers' views and act on these wherever possible. Where this is not possible, we explain why this is the case.			
We talk to parent carers about how their child is at home and in the community and where there are differences with how they are in the setting we explore why this may be the case. We take this information into account in our assessment of children's SEND.			

<b>Providing information</b>			
We provide information to parent carers about how their children are getting on including their strengths and areas where they are struggling.			
We provide parent carers with information about their rights and the support available to them as a family.			
<b>Positive regard for parent carers</b>			
We recognise the intersectionality between SEND and ethnicity and show empathy when working with CYP and their families.			
We convey warmth and value for children in discussion with their parent carers.			
<b>Inclusive settings which understand and welcome children and families</b>			
<b>Understanding the effectiveness of current practice</b>			
We talk to our children and families about their experiences in the setting and take action to improve things when needed.			
We know how academic progress, attainment, attendance, exclusions and suspensions and measures of well-being differ between children from different ethnic groups and have a plan in place to address any issues identified from our analysis.			
We regularly analyse how Black and Minoritised Communities and people with SEND are represented in our staffing, displays, resources, curriculum and visitors to the settings and take action to increase representation where needed.			
<b>Social cohesion</b>			
We have an agreed and effective approach to promoting social cohesion between our pupils			

including providing opportunities for them to talk and learn about race and SEND.			
We have a clear and understood anti-racism policy which acknowledges and addresses the additional challenges faced by children with SEND.			
<b>Cultural competence</b>			
We ensure staff receive ongoing CPD and constructive feedback and take active steps to address any cognitive biases in their work with children and their families to become culturally competent.			
We understand how beliefs about and attitudes to SEND may differ between families and ethnic groups and act on this understanding when supporting parent carers.			
We understand how cognitive biases can impact on our identification and assessment of and support for CYP with SEND. We take steps to avoid and address these biases at an individual and strategic level.			
<b>CYP new to the country and EAL</b>			
We have a clear and understood approach to supporting children who are new to the country including children seeking asylum and refugees.			
We have an effective approach to supporting children with EAL and are able to differentiate between SEND and EAL and adapt our approach to working with children based on our assessment.			
<b>Supporting parent carers</b>			



We ensure parent carers know about the information available on the Local Offer and the support available from FLORA and SAY.			
We know about local community support available for parent carers of CYP with SEND and share this information with families as needed.			

## Appendix 2: Parent carers' experiences

### How we engaged with parent carers

We worked with leaders from Black and Minoritised Community groups to agree a set of questions to understand parent carers' experiences of having a child with SEND in Bristol. These questions were designed to encourage parent carers to tell their story, without leading them to respond in a particular way:

1. What would you like to tell us about your experiences of when your child was first identified as struggling in school?
2. What, if anything, worked well for you as a family at this time?
3. What, if anything, would you have liked the school to do differently at this time?
4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences?
5. Did you receive any information about support groups that could be helpful at this time?

We also asked parent carers how they would describe their child's ethnicity and the type of school their child attended. All parent carers were asked whether they gave their permission to be quoted in this report.

Parent carers could choose to:

- Complete an anonymised online survey (open from December 2022 to January 2023) or
- Discuss their experiences in person, in a virtual meeting or on the telephone

We also invited a number of community groups to tell us about their experiences.

23 parent carers from Black and Minoritised Communities responded to the survey, two parent carers participated in telephone discussions and we held a focus group with a parent support group in a community venue, attended by 5 parent carers.

The 30 parent carers we spoke to described their ethnicity as:

Black African	6
Black Caribbean	6
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	4
Asian Pakistani	3
Mixed Other	3
Mixed White and Black African	2
Other ethnic group	2
Gypsy Roma Traveller	1
Asian Bangladeshi	1
Asian Indian	1
Mixed White and Asian	1

14 of the parent carers who completed the survey told us that their children attended a mainstream infant, junior or primary school, 4 attended a mainstream secondary and 5 attended a special school.

An additional 9 parent carers from White British families answered the survey. These responses have not been included in the findings. Comments made about services other than schools by any parent carer have also not been included. Where permission was given, these comments have been passed on to the services mentioned or to the Council's SEND engagement officer.

## What parent carers told us

### Communication with parents

Effective communication was very important to parent carers. More positive and negative comments were made about communication than anything else. Effective communication was dependent on schools:

- Creating regular **opportunities** for communication and making sure parent carers know who they can talk to:

*'When I asked for meetings I was ignored, told teachers had no time and was put off constantly even though they were needed.'*

*'I knew who to go to for support in primary. In primary school I could have spoken to the Head Teacher who would have helped.'*

- **Listening** to and acting on parent carers' views:

*'I actually told the school about my suspicions. Her teacher had identified that she was distracted and daydreaming but thought it was on purpose. Her teacher thought ADHD related to hyperactive kids.'*

*'Schools not always believing when child is different in home and school.'*

- Providing parent carers with **information** about their rights, how children are getting on and the support available:

*'The SENDCo explains when things aren't working and when the plan needs to be changed.'*

*'Families are left to find out their own information about different SEND (autism).'*

In some cases, parent carers described having to rely on their own previous experiences,

*'I have worked in schools for over 22 years and knew what I needed to do so started the process myself!!'*

- Ensuring that all information and communication is **accessible** to parents:

Parent carers explained that they wanted schools to understand their needs and to adapt their approach to make sure that communication was effective. Some of these challenges were specific to being from a Black and Minoritised Community and some were related to being a parent carer of a child with SEND more generally.

*'School doesn't always communicate as [they] can't provide information in native language.'*

*'Would like the school to be more one to one with parents and have conversations directly. Lots of Gypsy Roma Traveller parents can't read and write and can't access on the internet or read information.'*

*'Parents are so fragile: when it comes to their child, they need everything explained to them slowly and clearly.'*

Positively, where schools were thinking about a family's individual needs, parent carers spoke about the support provided,

*'I got lots of help with filling in forms.'*

*'We also had all the support from the school when we were struggling with our living situation and other things.'*

- Having **positive regard** for parent carers:

*'At the secondary school the head of SEND has two children of her own with SEND so she is empathic to parents.'*

*'It was almost as if they attacked us with words. They shouldn't have attacked us verbally.'*

For some parent carers, fear of a negative response put them off providing feedback,

*'Parents fear saying something they are concerned about in school because their child may be punished as a result.'*

The approach taken by schools to identifying and assessing children's needs and the support they put in place (graduated response)

Schools have a responsibility to make sure they identify children with SEND as early as possible. When a school identifies that a child is having difficulties, they should work with parent carers to understand their needs. The school should then put support in place and review this over time, making changes if needed. This is sometimes called the 'graduated response' or 'assess-plan-do review'.

Parent carers told us that the way schools did this work was very important. This was the second largest theme identified.

#### *Identification and assessment*

Parent carers told us about schools missing the opportunity to identify and assess children's needs at an early stage. This often led to situations getting worse.

*'I kept being told he's doing fine in school up until Year 3. Even though I had identified he was struggling a year before. At the end of year parents evening the teacher uttered 'well he's not done any English this year and refuses to listen so I just left him'. I questioned why she could tell me every tiny bad things he's done but, not once mention about his English for the entire year.'*

*'I had reported to school when my son was in reception that he shows signs of Autism and ADHD. They didn't support me until he had become so withdrawn, anxiety filled and angry but, angry because he knew he needed help and it wasn't given to him until late Year 3/4 when I actually managed to find him a new school.'*

Some parent carers raised concerns about schools being too quick to label children as having challenging behaviour, rather than considering other reasons for their difficulties.

*'She was labelled as naughty and the SENDCo would not listen when we felt she was autistic.'*

*'Be curious about behaviour as communication, not make assumptions.'*

### *Providing support*

Parent carers talked lack of support, even when children had been identified as having SEND.

*'We have been promised multiple times that there will be social interventions put in place to address social emotional needs as well as academic support but nothing has ever been put in place.'*

*'He wasn't allowed movement breaks as they didn't think he needed them. Which resulted in each time he felt things were too much or needed a sensory break he would be running around school, hiding or would try to leave and come home.'*

Some parent carers felt that identification and support depended on the actions they took as families,

*'It was down to us as parents to really push to get the school to realise the extent of the problem and continues to be down to us to push for additional support.'*

*'My son was not identified, I had to chase the school up constantly.'*

Parent carers also shared the impact of the approach taken by schools,

*'He has learnt a lot in the last few months, in terms of phonics, word building, reading, social interaction, being polite, waiting for turn and has shown good progress.'*

*'He hasn't really 'survived' academically and certainly hasn't thrived. He has cried and not wanted to go to school in the morning during his time in Year 6, due to the maths, in particular being too difficult for him.'*

Other parent carers made positive comments about support in place, providing examples of strategies that had helped their children,

*'School councillor as a result of struggling with behaviour post covid and bereavement.'*

*'Some schools make reasonable adjustments and try their best.'*

### *Inclusive schools which welcome children and families from Black and Minoritised Communities*

Finally, parent carers talked about how welcome they felt as families from Black and Minoritised Communities.

Parent carers were positive about a small number of schools that were taking active steps to include children from Black and Minoritised Communities.

*'That school is proactive in being diverse and open minded.'*

*'The school is supportive in celebrations like Chinese New Year.'*

However more often parent carers talked about schools lacking awareness of the needs and cultures of different ethnic groups.

*'As a Gypsy Roma Traveller there are not many places that understand the community. He is the only traveller child in the year. Not many children attend secondary school.'*

This lack of awareness meant that some parent carers felt their children were overlooked. Comments focused on schools' lack of understanding of the difference between ethnic groups and confusion between ethnicity, culture and religion. Some parents felt schools had limited understanding of the additional impact of SEND on families from Black and Minoritised Communities and wanted change,

*'The decision and policymakers need to do better and not continue to fail brown and minority groups who are already significantly disadvantaged.'*

Some parent carers told us about the discrimination they had experienced as a result of their ethnicity.

*'There is an assumption made that parents don't know their rights as they are from a Black and Minoritised Community. There is an assumption of stupidity.'*

*'I do believe that unconscious biases and prejudices do play a crucial role in the under-identification of SEND for black children, boys especially as there are all kinds of stereotypes that come in to play, whereby rather than seeing behaviour as always being a form of communication, instead the expectations are lower from a baseline perspective and there is an expectation of brown boys to not excel academically, to misbehave etc.'*

Some parent carers experienced challenges in raising these experiences with schools,

*'Teachers can take something personally if race or ethnicity is raised.'*

*'Parents worried about responding to Ofsted surveys/parental feedback truthfully for fear of reprisals/identification.'*

Some parent carers went on to talk about the changes they wanted to see and how this could be achieved,

*'All schools should be required to carry out an audit and regular reviews so that staff can be truly reflective practitioners and can challenge their own subconscious prejudices and biases by considering their responses to specially developed tasks and questions that would help to highlight when a prejudice or bias might exist subconsciously.'*

#### Information about support groups

38% of parent carers said they had received information about support groups that could provide help and 62% said they had not received this information.

Parent carers wanted to see this information provided consistently,

*'Signposting to the Local Offer and other organisations would have been the very least that should have happened.'*

However, some were also clear about the benefits of support from other parent carers,

*'I've learnt about SEND from other parents going through the same thing.'*

## The impact on parent carers and their children

A number of parent carers talked about how the approach to SEND in their children's schools had affected their families.

Some parents talked about their children attending school part time or being excluded on a regular basis, (including informal exclusions where children are sent home without the legal process being followed). Others talked about taking the decision to move schools or educate their children at home.

Where things were going well in schools, this was noticeable in children's progress,

*'He's come along leaps and bounds from where he was the end of July.'*

However, most of the comments made by parent carers talked about how challenging their experiences had been for them and their children,

*'Once they saw what I saw they were very helpful. Before that I doubted myself and wondered if I had an issue with my child as they didn't see what I saw! It's very easy to feel very isolated as a single parent when you have no one to talk through ideas such as this.'*

*'It has been really emotionally challenging and upsetting to have been ignored, disempowered and for my son to have been left to struggle.'*

## Conclusion

Parent carers who talked to us were keen to share their experiences. They wanted those with the ability to change things to hear their stories.

Many families shared positive experiences of schools that understood and acted on the extra challenges for families from Black and Minoritised Communities with children with SEND. They described these schools as making sure that every child and family feels welcomed and valued. They said that these schools work hard to understand families and the communities they come from. They identify children's needs early and put effective support in place. Parent carers told us that these settings are good at communicating and tell families about the support available beyond the school.

Parent carers made more than twice as many comments about negative experiences. They told us about their struggle to feel heard in schools and about opportunities missed to act quickly when their children were struggling. Some of their children had been labelled as difficult rather than as having SEND. Parent carers shared their experiences of discrimination, sometimes because of schools' lack of understanding of the needs of individual communities and families, but sometimes arising from bias and prejudice.

Parent carers told us that schools' approaches had a significant impact on their families. Sometimes this was positive, but more often it was negative. Where things were going well, children were making good progress. However, where they were not, children's access to education and progress suffered. The wellbeing of both children and their parent carers was also affected.

An interview with one family, shared below in full below with kind permission, demonstrates many of the things parent carers told us. The guidance we have written is based on these themes. We will

work together with schools to make sure that they understand this guidance and make any changes needed in the future.

**How would you describe your ethnicity?**

*'African Caribbean'*

**What type of school does your child attend?**

*'Two of my children have SEND. One is at mainstream secondary currently and one who was at the same secondary school some years ago.'*

**What would you like to tell me about your experiences of when your child was first identified as struggling in school?**

*'The way schools view people from ethnic minorities is what makes the difference.'*

*My youngest son was a premature birth, it was fairly obvious from the start, to us and the school, that he had SEND. The good headmistress was helpful. She was a mother of mixed-race child. She made a difference to the culture in the school by making sure that every child was seen as important, whether or not they were wearing a hijab.*

*I spoke to school about my concerns with the oldest, the school played lip service to his needs, I found it hard to get them to engage with me. He didn't have any tutoring to help him when he was excluded.*

*After the pandemic, I was unsure about the quality of the provision in my son's primary school. I decided to keep him at home to electively home educate as I was concerned that he would go the same way as my oldest boy. I was nervous about sending him to his secondary school as it didn't have a good reputation for SEND. The headmistress has changed things.*

*I had to fight for my oldest boy's needs. He went from school to school. He was excluded. I couldn't get a statement, even though the evidence was there and he had been to CAMHS.'*

**What, if anything, worked well for you as a family at this time?**

*'At the secondary school the head of SEND has two children of her own with SEND so she is empathic to parents. We are now getting in the process of getting an Education Health and Care Plan. They have said that they will sort out the process and get me an Educational Psychology assessment. I trust that they will do what they say even though previously I was thinking of doing this independently.'*

**What, if anything, would you have liked the school to do differently at this time?**

*'Nothing now. I am waiting for something to go wrong, but I am pleasantly surprised by how things are going.'*

*Things were different with my older boy. It is too easy to wash your hands of a boy who is dark skinned and is 6 foot and muscly, why is a child who looks that seen to be a problem? People think that they need to go in hard and tough, they are less tolerant. My son was annoyed at life and was behaving badly, but it wasn't like three strikes and you're out, it was two strikes. He just needed a level playing field. He ended up in prison and the same thing is happening there. He isn't receiving any education. The law states it must be offered but isn't compulsory. It's been a long and arduous journey.*



*I feel more able now to not take it from school. Emotionally these boys are little kittens, even though they are tough. There aren't problems with young black men in some countries, so we need to look into why this is. Teachers feel intimidated and scared and they don't need to.'*

***Did you receive any information about support groups that could be helpful at this time?***

*'Yes but I have little or no faith in them. I don't know really know what they can do. We need a change in the schools with these teachers. There aren't enough black teachers. No it's not that, there are enough, they are just not being employed. Guidelines won't make a difference, we are still going to have this problem. Schools need to **want** to do things differently, not just have to do things. There needs to be a change from the top. While we have a government who has a policy of shipping asylum seekers to Rwanda and people are being told that immigrant are stealing their jobs, it's okay to be racist, only subtlety.'*

***Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences?***

*'My youngest child is really bright, but this is not being recognised by the school. He's not getting any additional support as an exceptional child. It happens at both ends.'*

### Appendix 3: SEND support and EHCPs by ethnicity in England (2022-23)

	Number of CYP in England	% of CYP in England	% of CYP with SEND support in England	% of CYP with an EHCP in England
Asian - Bangladeshi	151,644	1.8	1.4	1.9
Asian - Chinese	58,731	0.7	0.3	0.3
Asian - Indian	311,012	3.7	1.8	2.1
Asian - Pakistani	383,457	4.5	3.9	4.2
Asian - Any other Asian background	179,066	2.1	1.3	1.9
Black - Any other Black background	65,855	0.8	0.8	1
Black - Black African	362,477	4.3	3.4	4.6
Black - Black Caribbean	80,353	0.9	1.2	1.3
Mixed - Any other Mixed background	225,855	2.7	2.4	2.7
Mixed - White and Asian	139,682	1.6	1.3	1.3
Mixed - White and Black African	78,375	0.9	0.9	1
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	134,456	1.6	2.1	2
White - Gypsy/Roma	28,340	0.3	0.6	0.4
White - Irish	21,124	0.2	0.3	0.3
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	6,891	0.1	0.2	0.1
White - White British	5,309,428	62.6	69.7	66.4
White - Any other White background	608,170	7.2	5.3	4.9
Any other ethnic group	195,998	2.3	1.8	1.9
Unclassified	140,373	1.7	1.5	1.8

In 2022-23 disproportionality data shows a similar pattern in Bristol to the national picture. However, Bristol has more ethnic groups affected by disproportionality and the size of this disproportionality is typically larger than in England.

## Appendix 4: Support and advice for families with children with SEND

For all families

[Bristol SEND Local Offer](#)

[SEND and You](#)

[FLORA](#)

[Bristol Parent Carers](#)

[Parenting courses in Bristol](#)

[Family Hubs in Bristol](#)

[Advice and support for parents and carers \(Bristol SEND Local Offer\)](#)

[Activities for CYP with SEND \(Bristol SEND Local Offer\)](#)

[Mothers for Mothers](#)

[Rainbow Across Bristol](#)

[Bristol Autism Project](#)

Support for families from Black and Minoritised Communities

[Project Zazi](#)

[Autism Independence](#)

[KHAAS](#)

[Aspiration Creation Elevation](#)

[List of culturally specific services \(Bristol Mind\)](#)

[Let's Talk @Docklands](#)

