



Established 1972

27 April 2005

Dear _____,

Re: The Education Needs of Mixed Race Children

People in Harmony, an organization that has served the mixed race community for over 30 years, would like to draw your attention to a recent piece of research commissioned by DfES 'UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF MIXED HERITAGE PUPILS' (2004, RR549) by L.Tikly, C.Caballero, J.Haynes and J.Hill of Bristol University in association with Birmingham Local Education Authority.

The research had identified the following key findings amongst what is the largest growing ethnic minority group in England (2.5% of the national school age population are mixed race and 7.3% of children London schools are mixed race.)

- The attainment of mixed race pupils is below average in primary and secondary schools and they are over-represented in school exclusions. In 2002/03 the permanent exclusion rates were Mixed Race (White/Black Caribbean) pupils, 2.9 per 1000 pupils, White pupils, 1.2 and for all pupils, 1.3.
- Low attainment is affected by deprivation, low teacher expectations and behavioural issues related to peer group pressures.
- Low teacher expectations are linked to stereotypical views of fragmented families and identity confusion of mixed race pupils.
- The needs of mixed race pupils are largely ignored at LEA and school policy levels. Mixed race pupils are largely invisible in terms of identification and monitoring or support strategies to raise their achievement.

In light of this research, our organization would very much like to see a shift in educational policy and practice. The experiences Mixed Race pupils should be acknowledged and made more visible within educational policy, curriculum and the day-to-day practice of schools.

We consider this long neglected matter to have long-term implications for a large and growing section of school populations. Recent Home Office funded research (Calverley et al, 2004, Feilzer & Hood 2004), also highlights the impact of poor educational experience on mixed race people with regard to encountering probation and youth justice services.

It is therefore becoming very clear that Mixed Race pupils are disproportionately represented amongst the markers of social exclusion in a range of areas (school exclusions, entry to the public care system, encounters with the criminal justice system).

We enclose a number of questions, which need to be considered at Government, LEA and school level. Of importance also is the involvement of mixed race pupils and families in determining appropriate ways of addressing the under-performance. We hope that you will be addressing this important question with the sympathy and understanding it demands within your sphere of influence.

People in Harmony urges you to take action on this matter and our members will be pleased to hear from you when the matter has been considered within your constituency.

We will also be conducting a national debate on our website: www.pih.org.uk so that all may contribute their views. Our annual conference this year will also be debating the issues of mixed race children and education services.

Yours sincerely,

For and on behalf of People in Harmony

- ◆ A note on terminology. There are various terms used to identify mixed race people and families. Caballero et al, for example, use the term 'mixed heritage' instead of 'mixed race' to ensure consistency of terminology in DfES literature although the majority of pupils and parent interviewed used 'mixed race'
People in Harmony uses the term mixed race

A Positive, Friendly, Interracial, Anti-racist Organisation

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