People and Work collaborated with Egino on the recent JRF Viewpoint, Breaking the Links between Ethnicity and Poverty in Wales[1]. People and Work also led the research for the Poverty and Ethnicity in Wales[2] study (for the JRF) and the Project to Identify Capacity Building Approaches to Support the Delivery of English as an Additional Language (EAL) Services (for the Welsh Government)[3]. More broadly, People and Work has led evaluations of RAISE, the School Effectiveness Framework, and the programme of action research to inform reform of the statutory framework for ALN/SEN (all for the Welsh Government). People and Work's action research focuses upon the links between poverty, place and poor educational attainment and includes projects like School Focused Communities, working five Communities First areas in Rhondda Cynon Taf to build links between the community and schools and to support pupils and their families to get the best they can out of their school years. This has included following two cohorts of pupils from one community for six years as they progressed from primary to and through secondary school.

Q1. From 2015-16, the Gypsy Children and Traveller Children Grant and the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant were merged into the new Education Improvement Grant. What impact has this had on the levels of educational support available to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic children, and their educational outcomes?

Not applicable

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[1] https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/breaking-links-between-poverty-and-ethnicity-wales
[2] https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-and-ethnicity-wales
[3] http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/capacity-building-to-support-eal/?lang=en

Q2. How effective are other Welsh Government policies and strategies for supporting the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic children?

As figures 1-4 illustrate, there has been a marked improvement in the educational attainment of many ethnic minority groups at both key stages 2 and 4 and the attainment of many groups is now above that of the White British/Welsh group. However, it is not clear/known what is driving this increase (and it cannot be assumed that it is government policy), so further research is warranted. There is for example, speculation that it reflects the higher aspirations of some ethnic minority families (one of the reasons given for London's educational success) but there is a lack of data to confirm – or refute this.

Figure 1. KS2 the percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level in CSI, 2012-2015.
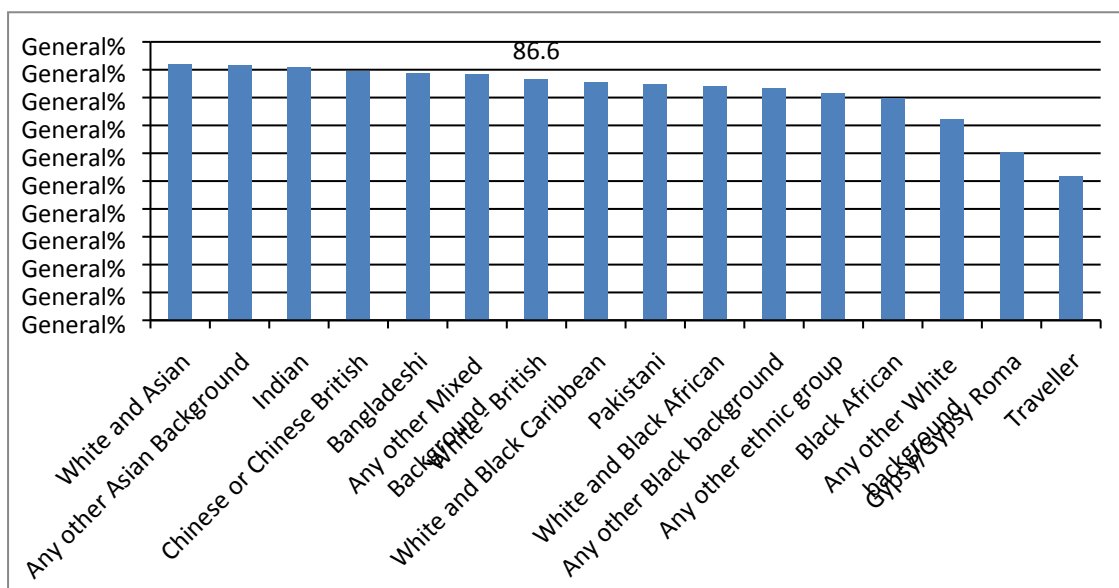

Figure 2. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 threshold, 2012-2015, at KS 4 by ethnic background
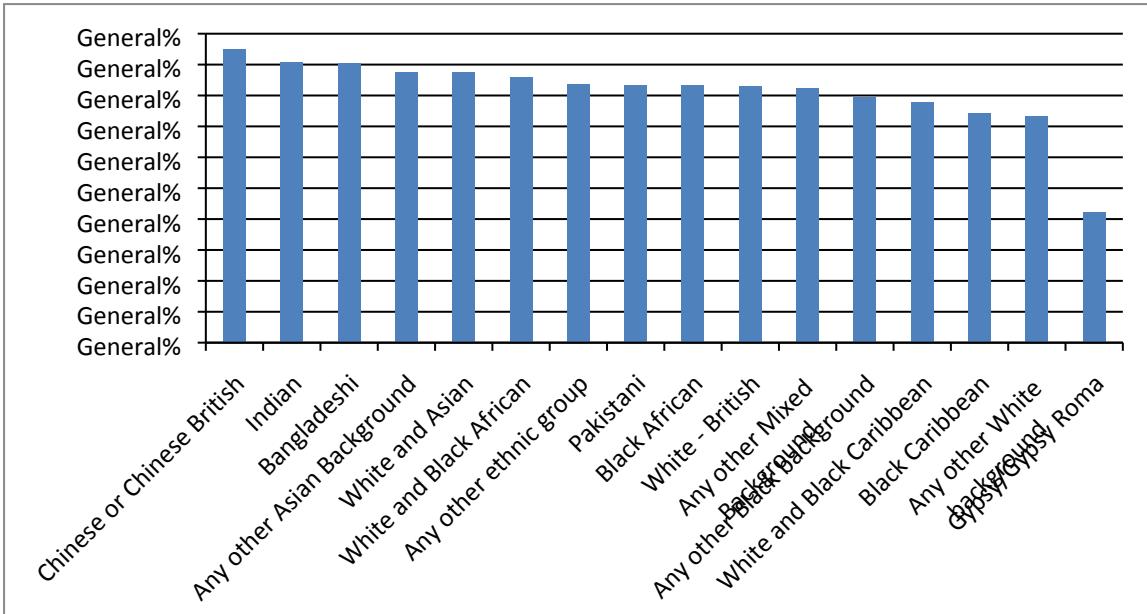
The y-axis labels read (top to bottom): General%, General%, General%, General%, General%, General%, General%, General%, General%, General%, General%

The x-axis categories (left to right): Chinese or Chinese British, Indian, Bangladeshi, Any other Asian Background, White and Asian, White and Black African, Any other ethnic group, Pakistani, Black African, White - British, Any other Mixed Background, Any other Black background, White and Black Caribbean, Black Caribbean, Any other White background, Gypsy/Gypsy Roma

Figure 3 KS2, CSI Increase (in percentage points) 2007/09- 2013/15 selected groups
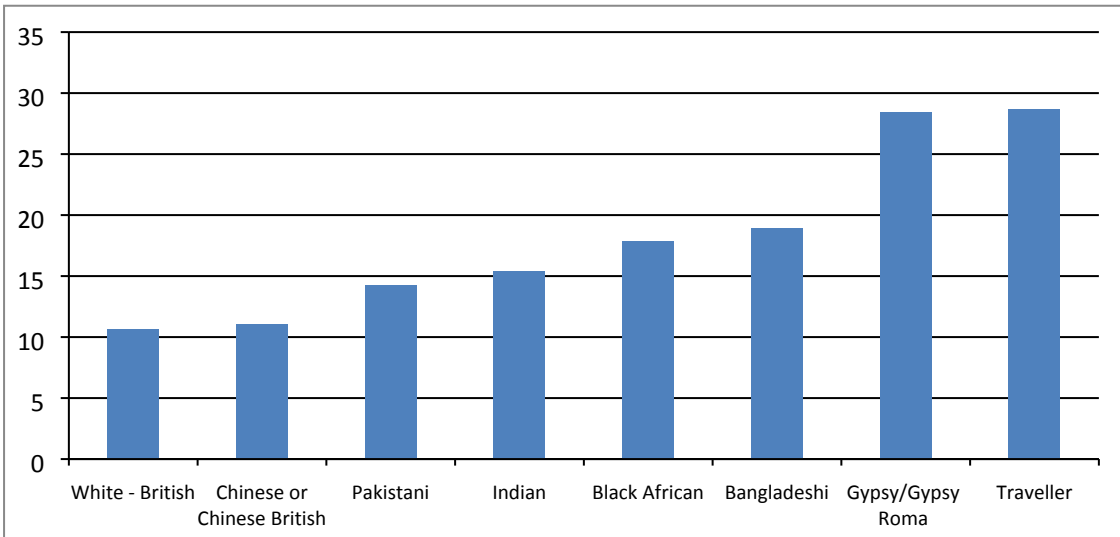
Figure 4. KS4 increase (percentage points) L2 threshold 2010-12 to 2013-15

25

20

15

10

5

0

Black Caribbean   Chinese or Chinese British   Pakistani   Indian   White - British   Bangladeshi   Black African   Gypsy/Gypsy Roma

-5

-10
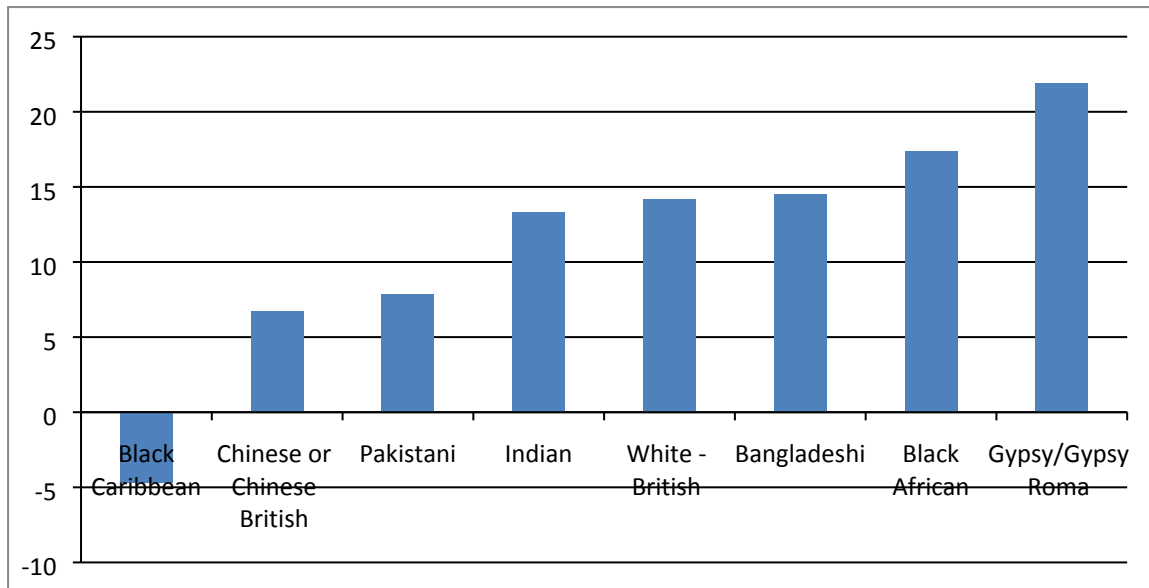
As figures 1-2 illustrate, despite the progress attainment of some groups, such as Gypsy Roma Travellers continues to lag far behind that of other groups.[4] . Research also suggests that some groups, such as Caribbean pupils, have been held back by low teacher expectations of academic ability because of perceived behaviour issues, leading to disproportionate and early placing of these pupils into lower ability groups (Gillborn, 2008; Strand, 2010).

Following compulsory education, young people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to attend further education colleges rather than school sixth forms compared with those from advantaged and white backgrounds (Connor, *et al*., 2004). This impacts on access to university as well as degree attainment and performance in the labour market.

Although young people from some ethnic minorities are now more likely to participate in higher education than their White British/Welsh counterparts, some minority groups remain under-represented (WISERD, 2015)[5] and overall, ethnic minority students have tended to be under-represented in prestigious universities (Modood, 2004). For many minorities from less advantaged backgrounds, wanting to take up higher education the financial costs involved is a major consideration.

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[4] http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-pupil-chracteristics/?lang=en
[5] http://wiserd.ac.uk/files/4014/4257/0990/WISERD_-_Access_to_Higher_Education_F1.pdf

However, the lack of transparency around the allocation of bursaries tends to be problematic for many from ethnic minority backgrounds. The lack of fluency with career paths, qualification frameworks, certification, accreditation and gaining career advice is a well known barrier (Hudson et al., 2013; Furlong and Cartmel, 2005).

Q3. 3. What more could be done to support the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic children:

1. in schools;
2. by Local Authorities;
3. by regional consortia; and
4. by the Welsh Government.

There is ample evidence that people of all ethnicities experience poverty, but the risk is higher for some groups. There is also evidence that although there is no necessary link between ethnicity and poverty (Barnard, 2014)[6], action is needed by schools, LAs, regional consortia and the Welsh Government to break the links (Nicoll, et al, 2016)[7].

Areas for action were discussed in a series of roundtables focused upon the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Viewpoint "Breaking the Links between Poverty and Ethnicity in Wales". Representatives of ethnic minority groups, local authorities, churches and business groups, academics, and staff from Welsh Government departments discussed the Viewpoint's findings. In the case of education and schools, both experts and activists agreed that the Welsh Government could usefully address the following problem areas:

1. The paucity of ethnic minority role models in Welsh schools, even in those with a high proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities:
   ➢ *Implement an action plan to encourage people from ethnic minorities to become teachers, with appointment targets for schools*.

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[6] https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/breaking-links-between-poverty-and-ethnicity-wales

[7] https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/tackling-poverty-across-all-ethnicities-uk

2. Relationships between schools and ethnic minority families:
- ➢ *Support all schools, not just those in our most ethnic minority intense areas, to improve engagement with parents from ethnic minority groups.*
3.   The quality of careers advice:
- ➢ *Bring forward measures to ensure that all students have access to high-quality tailored careers advice, targeting in particular those from groups most likely to be concentrated in low-paid sectors and jobs.*

People and Work's commissioned research and evaluation and our own action research also highlights the importance of:

- Improving the use of the existing data schools, consortia and the Welsh Government hold on the characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, FSM eligibility, EAL status), attainment and progression of children and young people from ethnic minority groups for:
  - research (e.g. exploring what's driving observed trends in the attainment of ethnic minority pupils);
  - development (e.g. for target setting, evaluating the effectiveness of different interventions and identifying the take up of different service, such as the Early Years 'offer', by different ethnic minority groups); and
  - accountability (e.g. evaluating progress in achieving aspirations such as creating a more equal Wales).

- Creating/gathering new data, by for example, requiring differences associated with children and young people's ethnicity to be considered as part of evaluations or research commissioned by the Welsh Government;

- Protecting and extending ESOL services for the parents of school age children and young people, given the importance of the home learning environment, in influencing education attainment[8];

- Mainstreaming thinking about the needs of different ethnic groups across policy and practice. For example:
  - ➢ ensuring that support services for children and young people with additional educational needs meet the needs of children, young people and families of all ethnicities; and

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[8] Desforges, C. and Abouchaar, A. (2003) The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A Literature Review, London: DfES.

- Ensuring that an understanding of different ethnic groups is integrated into ITT and professional learning, to help raise expectations, ensure respect and keep learners motivated.

Q4.. If you could recommend to the Welsh Government one thing it could do to improve the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic children, what would it be?

Improve education. Some children and young people from ethnic minority groups will have specific needs linked, for example, to English or Welsh language skills (EAL/WAL pupils) or their culture (e.g. some Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils). It is important that there are specialist services to address these needs. However, the needs of many children and young people from ethnic minority groups are the same as those of the white British/Welsh majority – effective teaching and learning, leadership, intervention and support, improvement and accountability (including intelligent use of data), professional development and partnership working (e.g. home-school links). The challenge is that whilst the characteristics of an effective school are well-understood, the ways in which schools can be supported and challenged to be more effective are less clear and more contested.