



# GRT Case Studies

E.D.I.T

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team



# Holistic Impact in a Rural Primary School

## Context

This is a one form entry primary school. 10.1% of the children are from Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities. The aim was to identify existing good practice and support the school to build on this.

*“The two most important objectives were to increase the children’s achievement and to raise awareness of this ethnic minority group with the whole staff (teachers/teaching assistants, administration, midday supervisors) and school. Prior to the project the Traveller children very much kept their culture to themselves or within their cultural group of friends.”*

## Inclusion Lead

## Actions

The GRT Virtual School delivered whole staff training to teachers, TAs, Midday Supervisors, office staff and Governors covering GRT history and culture, effective teaching strategies, barriers to Inclusion and how to overcome these. Positive discussions about

various aspects of the Traveller culture resulted in better understanding. An audit of the school’s and pupils’ needs was carried out with the school’s SLT, resulting in a detailed action plan.

The School has a significantly larger percentage of GRT pupils than average in Kent. A baseline assessment of GRT children was completed to identify focus pupils and families. The targeted pupils received individually tailored interventions from the Virtual School team, including one-to-one and group sessions to support different aspects of the curriculum; mentoring to improve behaviour and self-esteem, advice on Transition as well as whole family support.

Capacity was built when the School’s Families & Community Manager accompanied a Virtual School representative (who had established good relationships with families) to the local Traveller site.

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This strengthened existing good school/parent links. Further individual visits to the site helped to increase the confidence of the Traveller parents who become more engaged in school life, resulting in improved attendance for most of the focus group.

*“Throughout the project the Virtual School for GRT pupils’ team have helped to build bridges by liaising with families whom school have found hard to reach (phones not being answered/families not on site/no letter boxes on site). One example of this is re-establishing contact with a family whose children were missing education; the team engaged with the mother to get the children put back on the school roll again.”*

## **Inclusion Lead**

Teachers wanted to incorporate GRT culture into the curriculum in order to engage their Traveller children in lessons and make the school curriculum more inclusive.

various aspects of the Traveller culture resulted in better understanding. An audit of the school’s and pupils’ needs was carried out with the school’s SLT, resulting in a detailed action plan.

The VirtualSchool suggested and modelled lessons using GRT resources (e.g. the impact of the Holocaust on Gypsies during WW II in Year 5, Homes topic Yr1 to include trailers).

Throughout the duration of the project regular progress meetings with the school’s Inclusion Manager were held to assess agreed actions, their impact on targeted pupils and the school and amend the action plan to cater for the ever changing needs.

In June the school celebrated the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month by hosting a successful assembly led by the Traveller children with support from the Virtual School and joined by the Traveller parents.

# Holistic impact in a Rural Primary School

*"...this culminated in a whole school assembly during GRT month (June 2013), led by five Key Stage 2 children and the GRT Virtual School for GRT pupils team about the Traveller way of life. The children's willingness to share their PowerPoint presentations and show their art work was evidence of their pride in their heritage. The children made invitations for their families, who attended and joined in answering questions posed by the rest of the school."*

## **Inclusion Lead**

### **Impact**

Tracking shows accelerated progress of GRT children, which the school believes is mainly thanks to the whole school approach demonstrated by everyone, starting with the Senior Leadership Team, who recognised the importance of the initiative from the very beginning and saw it as an opportunity to improve their practice with GRT children and

families by developing their understanding of this community and visibly incorporating elements of the culture into the daily school routine. A special mention should be made of the commitment and dedication of the school's Inclusion Lead to closing the gap between the targeted pupils and others.

*"I would like to say that the GRT project has been a tremendous success! Our Inclusion Lead has led this extremely well in school and I believe that this has been vital in establishing a high profile amongst staff. The support from the GRT team has also been excellent and the close collaborative working has enabled nearly all initiatives to secure positive outcomes for the children."* **Headteacher**