

## St Edmund's Nursery School, Bradford

### 34% of the children at St Edmund's are Roma from Eastern and Central Europe.

The school feels that the key to their success in integrating Roma children is their effort in making the parents feel welcome and valued.

*"This is the main thing I think, because we have very good relationships with the families. I did a home visit with a parent whose kid goes to a primary school. So, the staff from that school came to visit and were asking why didn't the kid come to school? "Aa she wasn't well". As soon as they left and I asked what is the reason really, because I could see the child was well. So, then the parent said that my child didn't have a clean uniform so rather than sending her in the dirty uniform and having social care get involved I rather keep her home."* - Roma teacher

In order to build trust with the parents, the school will do several home visits if needed, always accompanied by someone who speaks Romani. The school also offers to sit down with new parents while their children are in class, to explain the processes and the benefits of getting an education. They provide parents with advice and help in filling in forms and interacting with different public sector actors.

The school employs Roma staff members and provides internships for young Roma, who then act as role models and an important cultural link between the school and the families.

The staff have visited the Czech Republic twice in order to learn about the circumstances some of their Roma families come from. This has increased the staff's awareness of the racism that Roma face in their countries of origin.

*"I think if you just have that open positive relationship, really trusting relationship. And trust can only be built slowly. It's not enough that we tell that we in England don't treat Roma like that. We need to show it every day to develop that trust."* - Roma teacher

The school celebrates yearly 'Our Community Week', where they learn about all the cultures the children come from. They also organise several family events a year to celebrate different cultures. They prefer celebrating all cultures together and feel that **GRTHM** would only further segregate the Roma children.

**Bullying** is less of an issue at St Edmund's as the children are very young. However, the staff believe that the way schools communicate with the parent's plays a major part in successfully tackling bullying.



## Crays Hill Primary School, Essex

### 96% of the students at Crays Hill Primary School are Irish Travellers.

The school organises its days slightly differently to accommodate those children whose families still travel. This is done by teaching lessons in attainment groups, and not in age groups. It has proven to be less stressful for the teachers and for the pupils.

*“When children come to us after period of travelling, no matter how long it is, we very quickly assess them and put them in to the group that suits their reading ability. Nobody comes to any lessons struggling or feeling that they’ve missed out big chunks of learning.”*

Besides grouping children based on their attainment, the school staff are constantly in communication with the parents, updating and informing them on upcoming events, and being open and honest about what is allowed and what is not.

*“I’ve done some attendance meetings recently, because our families are permitted to travel for business, but they are not permitted to have days off to visit your Nan or whatever. So sometimes that happens, so just have to have honest conversations with the parents and say that we can’t authorise that for you.”*

Right from the beginning the children are taught to draw a line between school life and home life. They are taught that even if something is acceptable at home, it might not be in school.

*“So sometimes I’ve had girls complaining that they had to sit next to a boy in assembly, and I’m like that’s ok, school is a safe place. We are here, we are adults, we can see you. Sometimes having those conversations, we appreciate that it’s not what they do at home but school is a little bit different.” – Head teacher*

The school celebrates **GRTHM** by focusing on art and talking about people’s similarities and differences. For example, in the past children have talked about what it is like to live in a trailer, a chalet or a house.

The school staff have been trained in and use restorative justice to tackle **bullying**. They get all the children who have been involved in an incident together to talk about it and to decide what consequences there should be.

To engage with families, the school organises numerous different events during the year. To get more parents to attend, they organise informal and formal open classroom days during school hours.

They also organise reading/writing workshops where parents are taught how to help their children to read. If parents struggle with literacy, they are encouraged to get older siblings involved or to find other ways to support reading at home.



## Mount Church of England Primary School, Newark

### 36% of the students at the Mount are English Romany Gypsies or Irish Travellers.

The school has a good and trusting relationship with their local Gypsy and Traveller community, which has been developed over four decades. The staff is knowledgeable about the cultures and about some topics that Traveller parents might need an extra phone call to discuss about.

*“Find out about the culture because in order to establish a really positive relationship with families it’s respectful ... And there’s certain subjects you wouldn’t talk about with Traveller children that we know not to. However, in other schools they might not know that.”*

The school does academic and/or emotional interventions with each child every day to make sure their potential is met. These are done by either TA’s, teachers or in small groups.

The school makes an extra effort to get new Traveller families familiarised to school life. They offer new families the opportunity to visit the school and to call during school hours as it might be the first time some parents leave their children, even if they are in year 5.

The school engages with Traveller parents with the help of a TA who visits the caravan sites once a week to give parents feedback on their children’s progress, or help with paperwork, if required. They make contact with new families and start building relationships with parents of future students.

The staff makes sure that parents will get verbal reminders of every event and piece of information. The school has ‘learning without limits’ sessions where parents work alongside their children. Parents get to see what children are being taught and even learn themselves.

The school celebrates **GRT history and culture throughout the whole year**. For example, they arrange walks to local caravan sites where all children can visit chalets and caravans and hear about the history and culture. However, they feel that schools that don’t have a large Traveller population should celebrate GRTHM.

**Bullying** because of someone’s ethnicity rarely occurs at the Mount and is treated as racism. All incidents are dealt with a proactive educational purpose by talking with the children, and by informing the parents.

The Mount does transition work with secondary schools, trying to teach them to be more aware of the Traveller community and culture.



## Ash Manor, Comprehensive community secondary school, Surrey

### Approximately 10% of the students at the Ash Manor are English Romany Gypsies or Irish Travellers.

*“My policy is very much that Traveller children are as good as any other child so therefore I expect them to perform as well as anyone in terms of exams etc. We had it a little bit tough at first in some ways but it’s been really good since.” – Head teacher*



The school recognises that Traveller parents can be suspicious around education partly because not all parents have completed their education. Therefore, in the past the school employed a Traveller woman who acted as a link between the school and the parents. Recently this employee resigned stating there is no need for her anymore.

If the staff suspect a parent has low literacy skills, they make a point to communicate verbally with them. The staff also helps parents to fill in forms e.g. to apply for free school meals.

The school makes an effort to make children feel welcome and wanted, and they have even helped parents to appeal against decisions in order to get children a place at Ash Manor. This work is known within the local Traveller community that helps in building trust.

With Traveller students whose families travel for work, the teachers make sure that they have laptops and take homework with them. They make sure all these children are up to date with schoolwork.

The school discourages Traveller parents from home educating and won’t help them to write EHE letters.

*“I had an incident recently where a parent asked us to write the letter. We asked them to think about it, and the kid himself wanted to stay in school, and eventually dad let him stay in school. They didn’t agree with how I was disciplining them although he was getting what everyone else was getting. After, I made a point going to see them and telling them how glad I am he stayed.”*

Rather than celebrating **GRTHM**, or Black History Month for that matter, the children have a culture day where they have different foods, music and national costumes.

The school deals name calling incidents with restorative justice and physical bullying incidents according to their bullying policy. Traveller children are not bullied any more than other children at Ash Manor.

*“Be open be honest, be fair. Give everybody a fair hearing. If the child has done something wrong that doesn’t comply with the school’s rules then explain why. Believe in the kids, be aspirational for those children.”*  
– Head teacher

