

Raising Achievement of Somali Pupils in Lambeth Schools

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1. Introduction

The Background to Somali Communities in Britain

In recent years considerable attention has been devoted to the issue of underachievement of Black pupils in British schools. The first official recognition of the problem was The Rampton Report (Rampton 1981), the interim report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children of Ethnic Minority Groups. This report, and further research carried out in the 1980s and 1990s, focused specifically on the relative underachievement of Black Caribbean and African pupils (Mortimore et al, 1988; Nuttall et al, 1989; Kendall, 1998; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Demie, 2001; Demie, 2005).

In contrast to the above situation, research into the educational attainment of Somali children in British schools remains scant. It has also been noted by several commentators that little is known about the actual size of the Somali population resident in Britain, with the 2001 census figure for Somali-born London inhabitants alone being less than half the figure estimated by some recent studies (Harris, 2004). The 2001 census records 43,532 people born in Somalia being resident in the UK. But this is only a percentage of the full Somali population, as it does not take account of UK-born children of Somali parentage. A survey in 2004 also suggests there was a low level of participation by the Somali community in the 2001 census (survey results were reported orally at a Somali Community Meeting held at the House of Commons, 29th March 2004)¹. Estimates vary considerably as to the actual number of Somalis in the UK, with one estimate put at 250,000 in 2002 (Ioan Lewis, Liberation Meeting, London, 26th November 2002).

Abdul Diriye, in his 2006 article entitled 'The Ticking Bomb: The Educational Underachievement of Somali Children in British Schools', believes:

'They (Somalis) remain largely ignored and their needs neglected by the local and national policy-makers, largely because of the failure to recognise Somali as a distinct ethnic group'

This apparent lack of recognition seems paradoxical considering Somalis have been present in British society since the late 19th century, and were one of the first Black communities to settle in the UK. One reason for this put forward by other commentators and researchers is the 'social invisibility' of Somali people. Hermione Harris explains this in her 2004 study entitled *'The Somali Community in the UK: What we know and how we know it'* by comparing Somalis to the African-Caribbean community in Britain:

'Both groups suffer racism, but African-Caribbeans are perceived to be part of British society...It is not the volume of research on African-Caribbeans (although this is considerable) that gives them a public presence, but their high visibility in a wider society' (Harris 2004, pg.13)

She goes on to explain:

'Somalis too are rendered visible by their dress. But the social distance between Somalis and...British culture increases their isolation. There is therefore a dissonance between the amount of

¹ The source for this survey comment is Hermione Harris' 2004 paper *'The Somali Community in the UK: What we know and how we know it'*

information which actually exists, and what is believed to be known'
(Harris 2004, pg.13)

As a partial counter to the earlier statement by Diriye, Harris claims there is already a wealth of information available on the Somali community:

'ICAR (The Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK) has identified 139 substantial items on Somalis in the UK published since 1990...Many locally-produced reports are never widely circulated, and new material is emerging all the time' (Harris 2004, pg.10)

But she also qualifies this later on in her report by commenting that it was the civil war in the 1980s, and the resultant diaspora of the indigenous Somalian population, that caused the Somali community in Britain to become a focus of concern. It was this wave of migration that set the current pattern of Somali settlement in the UK. It is important to note that the large increase in refugees who entered the UK in the 1980s and 1990s was mostly made up of women and children, some coming to join their husbands but the majority being single-parent families. This changed the makeup of Somali communities from being single male workers (who were present from the previous waves of immigration) to refugee communities with large numbers of children and young adults.

In recent years' the nature of Somali immigration to the UK has changed from being composed of refugees leaving Somalia itself, to those leaving other host countries (such as Sweden, Norway and Holland) for the UK. A major motivation for this is to join family members and settled Somalian communities in Britain. As Harris states:

'The UK hosts the largest Somali community outside Somalia, and the UK is described by Somalis as a 'meeting point', a 'more intercultural society' than many of the (European) states Somalis leave behind'
(Harris 2004, pg.24)

The Educational Context

Somali culture places an emphasis upon a high level of self-reliance and resourcefulness when faced with difficulties or obstacles, which some researchers have made pains to note. For example, Ali and Jones (2000) in their report *'Meeting the educational needs of Somali pupils in Camden schools'* offset underachievement with some positive comments made by teachers in regard to their Somali pupils. As a general comment towards all refugee pupils, they state:

'...most teachers who have refugee pupils in their class do not see them as problem pupils. Individual refugee pupils...may have various learning and other educational difficulties and needs, but they also bring into the classroom a range of opportunities and perspectives that can enrich the learning and understandings of all who are working there' (Ali and Jones 2000, pg.6)

But taking these positive viewpoints into account, Somali pupils still face a range of obstacles to learning that they can find very difficult to surmount – hence the general trend of underachievement. As a background factor to be considered in this debate, Diriye (*The Ticking Bomb*, 2006) makes the point that when a child comes to the UK from Somalia they are placed in classes based on their age group – and are immediately at a disadvantage to their peers in terms of their learning experience. It can also be the case that new arrivals to the UK have no experience of writing in any language whatsoever, as Somali home-based literacy tends to be largely oral and not written.

Diriye then goes on to explain four possible *'roots of underachievement'*:

1. Trauma – the civil war after-effects. Many of the children in British schools may not have experienced the actual war, but they still grew up in a long process of unsettlement which finally brought them to the UK.
2. Overcrowding. Many Somali families live in deprived neighbourhoods with overcrowded accommodation. The result is children have little or no space to organise their learning material, and excessive noise levels are not conducive to learning either.
3. Racism. Despite claims about diversity and racial equality in the media and among educational professionals, teachers are a part of a wider community which, as every community, has cultural prejudices and racist attitudes.
4. Language and literacy. The idea of bilingualism is new to Somalis. Where parents are unable to speak English themselves (which is the majority) this limits their ability to assist their children with their studies. This might also diminish Somali parents will to visit the school and speak to members of staff about their children.

By addressing some of the points above, local authorities have come up with a range of resources and initiatives to assist with the issue of Somali underachievement. For example, in the case of Lambeth, schools already have access to support for Somali pupils as part of EMAG (Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant) funding, which is used to assist underperforming ethnic groups and pupils with low levels of English fluency. In addition to this, the following support is also available:

- A primary EAL programme in 14 schools, including those with significant numbers of Somali pupils
- Additional allocation of Bilingual Teaching Assistant support from EMAT (the Ethnic Minority Achievement Team) for newly arrived Somali pupils, to help with induction and home to school liaison
- Free interpreting and translation service to help communication between parents and schools
- Training courses for primary teachers on issues relating to Somali pupils
- The imminent appointment (at the time of writing this report) of a Somali Education Officer to be part of EMAT. The post will include working with Lambeth's Somali communities, as well as supporting pupils and schools

In another London borough, Hounslow started the Somali enrichment project in 2003, which aims to provide positive role models from the local Somali community for 11-16 year old Somalis, as well as raising the motivation and self-esteem of this group of pupils.²

In their report to Camden LEA, Ali and Jones (2000)³ cite a range of strategies Camden schools have adopted in order to raise Somali attainment. These include:

- The employment of specialised staff e.g. Somali link workers
- Support for and encouragement of Somali language classes
- A clear and owned school policy for refugee and asylum seeking children
- A pastoral system that is responsive to the particular needs of Somali pupils
- Good home/school/community links, especially getting Somali parents involved with the school as much as possible
- Focused INSET for mainstream teachers, particularly newly qualified teachers, on how to best support their bilingual learners
- Maintaining an INSET programme that keeps all staff up to date with the issues involved with increasing Somali achievement

They go on to make the following important statement:

'Academic achievement is monitored with the usual range of measures, exams, SATs and GCSE results. But educational achievement is more than the measurable academic. Social skills and behaviour are also monitored through observation outside, in lessons, in the canteen and through communication with the pastoral team and families. This was seen as important for Somali pupils who, with other refugee pupils, have a range of adjustment issues to cope with in their new environment' (Ali and Jones 2000, pg.10)

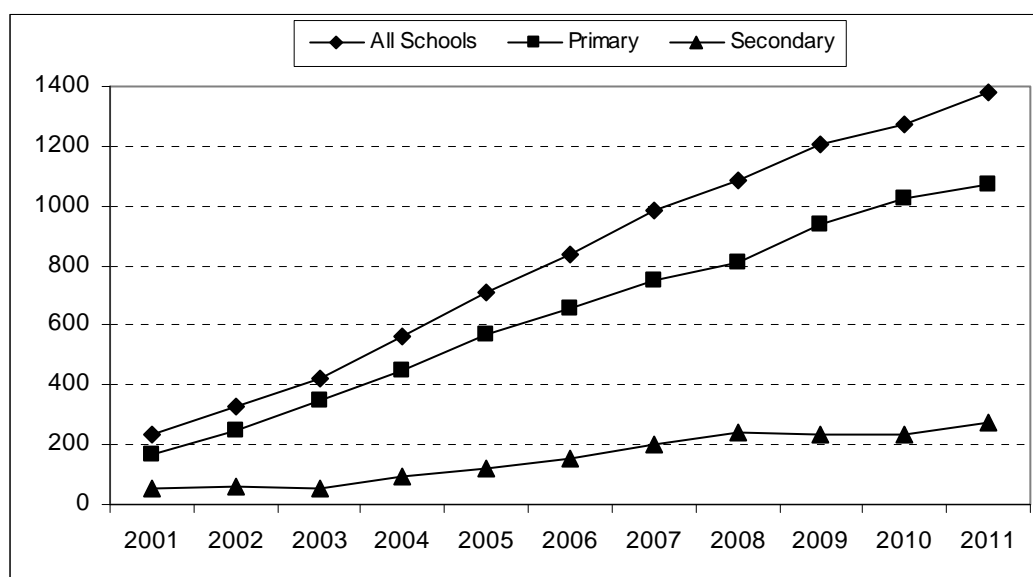
To summarise, Somali pupils face many difficulties and challenges to learning, but together with the Somali community, schools and local authorities have been endeavouring to address these issues in order to provide Somali pupils with the education they deserve in order for them all to reach their full potential.

² Source: *'Tackling Underachievement'*, October 2003, DfES

³ Ali, E and Jones, C, (2000) *Meeting the Educational Needs of Somali Pupils in Camden Schools*, Institute of Education, London University.

2. Lambeth Somali Pupil Population

Figure 1. Number of Somali Pupils in Lambeth Schools (2001-2011)



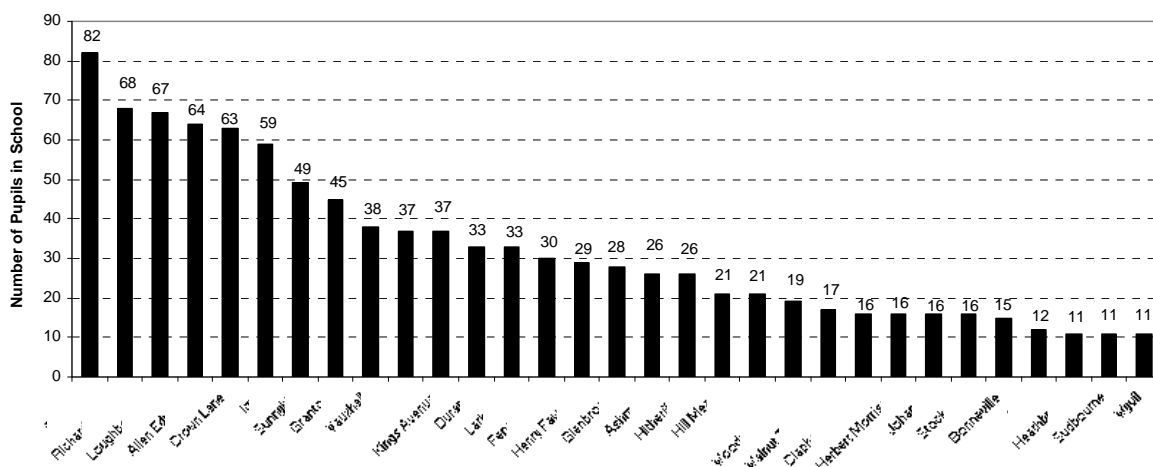
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
All Schools	236	327	423	561	707	835	982	1,085	1,203	1,271	1,382
Primary	169	249	346	448	569	659	749	811	938	1,026	1,074
Secondary	54	57	55	91	119	151	202	241	237	232	275

The 'All Schools' figures include pupils in special and nursery schools, and pupil referral units.

Source: Research & Statistics Unit Pupil Survey 2001-2008, DfE Schools Census 2009 onwards.

- Figure 1 above clearly illustrates that the Somali population in all Lambeth schools has increased consistently, by approximately 100 pupils each year, to the current total of 1,382 pupils in 2011.
- This trend is due to changes in the composition of the primary school Somali population rather than any significant increase in the number of Somalis attending secondary schools. The addition of two Muslim primary schools into LA maintained status has contributed to the greater than average primary increase seen between 2008 and 2009.
- Figure 2 overleaf shows the primary schools where at least 10 or more Somali pupils were on roll as at January 2011. Of the top ten schools, four were in Brixton town centre area (Brixton Hill, Tulse Hill and Coldharbour wards), two in Clapham & Stockwell town centre (Stockwell and Clapham Common wards), two in Streatham town centre (Streatham South and Streatham Wells wards) and one apiece in the Norwood and North Lambeth town centre areas. These demographics are slightly different to the trend seen over the last five years, where the highest concentrations used to be in schools in just two town centres (Brixton and Clapham & Stockwell).

Figure 2. Number of Somali Pupils by Primary School, 2010



Only schools with more than 10 Somali pupils on roll are shown above.

Table 1. Ethnic Background of the Lambeth School Population, 2001-2011 (% of total)

Ethnic Group	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
African*	22.1	22.8	22.6	23.2	23.6	24.1	23.3	24.3	23.1	23.7	23.9
Somali	0.8	1.2	1.5	1.9	2.4	2.9	3.3	3.6	3.9	3.8	4.2
Caribbean	22.8	23.0	21.6	21.1	20.3	19.6	19.1	18.9	18.4	18.2	17.3
Portuguese	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.9	5.1	5.7	5.6	5.1	5.9	5.2	5.8
White British	23.6	22.4	20.2	19.3	18.7	18.6	17.2	16.7	15.6	15.7	15.5

*Includes Somali pupil statistics

- Table 1 shows the four main ethnic groups (with Somali as a sub-set of African) who have previously been identified as underperforming in Lambeth schools. The African cohort has been increasing in size since 2001 and has constituted the single largest group since 2003 – this corresponds with a decline in the proportion of Caribbean pupils from 2003 onwards. White British pupils have also shown a steady decline over the 11 year period and have now levelled off. The Portuguese and Somali cohorts are relatively small in comparison, although the latter is five times the size it was in 2001.
- Lambeth schools already have access to support for Somali pupils as part of EMAG (Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant) funding, which is used to assist underperforming ethnic groups and EAL pupils at stages 1 to 3 to raise their educational achievement. And in addition to this, schools can also use funding from their main school budgets to assist these groups.

3. The Achievement of Somali Pupils

3.1 Attainment at Key Stage 1

Table 2. Average Key Stage 1 Attainment by Ethnic Group (2007-2011)

Ethnic Group	Cohort Number 2011	Key Stage 1 Average (% Level 2B+)					
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
African*	694	63%	61%	64%	70%	69%	+6%
Somali	135	56%	51%	58%	68%	67%	+11%
Caribbean	479	57%	55%	56%	59%	59%	+2%
Portuguese	153	46%	46%	50%	54%	53%	+7%
White British	407	70%	72%	75%	73%	78%	+8%
Lambeth	2,819	62%	62%	64%	67%	68%	+6%
National	-	68%	68%	69%	68%	70%	+2%

*Includes Somali pupil statistics.

- Table 2 shows that Somali pupils have improved at a much faster rate than their peers, and in 2010 they were above the Lambeth average although the situation is reversed this year. They remain only two percentage points adrift of the African cohort as a whole, compared to an eight point difference five years ago. Portuguese pupils remain the lowest achieving group.
- The cohort size of Somalis has fallen for the first time from 149 in 2010 to 135 in 2011 (appendix 1 shows cohort sizes for the last five years).
- Appendix 2 shows the proportion of Somali pupils at each stage of fluency in English. At KS1 the majority of pupils have been at the early stages of English acquisition (stages 1 and 2) in years prior to 2011, with 49% of pupils still falling into this category in 2011. This could go some way to explaining their relatively low levels of attainment.
- Table 3 shows the subject level teacher assessment results for Somali pupils compared to all pupils across the Lambeth. Reading and maths tend to be their strongest subjects, outperforming the overall Lambeth cohort in both subjects for the last two years. They have experienced the greatest increase in reading, up by 15 percentage points over the five-year period, and three times the improvement seen across Lambeth.

Table 3. Key Stage 1 Attainment by Subject (2007-2011)

Year	Somali Cohort No.	Key Stage 1 - % at Level 2B+					
		Reading		Writing		Maths	
		Somali	All	Somali	All	Somali	All
2007	99	56%	65%	43%	54%	69%	66%
2008	107	54%	65%	43%	54%	56%	67%
2009	129	63%	67%	50%	57%	61%	68%
2010	149	72%	69%	60%	61%	72%	70%
2011	135	71%	70%	57%	61%	74%	72%
07-11 Change	+36	+15%	+5%	+14%	+7%	+5%	+6%

3.2 Attainment at Key Stage 2

Table 4. Average Key Stage 2 Test Attainment by Ethnic Group (2007-2011)

Ethnic Group	Cohort Number 2011	Key Stage 2 Average (% Level 4+)					
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
African*	600	77%	78%	76%	82%	84%	+7%
Somali	111	54%	66%	74%	74%	84%	+30%
Caribbean	473	65%	72%	72%	78%	78%	+13%
Portuguese	171	63%	65%	71%	75%	76%	+13%
White British	371	80%	81%	87%	84%	89%	+9%
Lambeth	2,483	74%	77%	79%	82%	84%	+10%
National	-	85%	85%	86%	85%	85%	0%

*Includes Somali pupil statistics

In 2010 the KS2 tests were boycotted by about 25% of Lambeth schools. All 2010 data is based only on 47 schools - there were 92 Somali pupils in the KS2 cohort, but only 68 of those sat the tests.

- Historically, Somali pupils have performed below both the LA expectations and the outcomes seen by the African cohort overall. However, a significant improvement of 10 percentage points over their 2010 average result means they are now equal (at 84%).
- Of the KS2 Somali cohort, 28% had low levels of English fluency (stages 1 and 2) in 2007, this has fallen to 19% in 2011. The total 'non-fluent' cohort (stages 1 to 3) is now 67% compared to 72% five years ago.
- Maths was their strongest subject in 2011, with results improving by 34 percentage points over five years (almost three times the Lambeth improvement rate). English results are up by 27 percentage points, more than four times the borough increase. Science results are no longer available as the KS2 science tests were discontinued in 2010.

Table 5. Key Stage 2 Test Attainment by Subject (2007-2011)

Year	Key Stage 2 Tests (% at Level 4+)				
	Somali Cohort No.	English		Maths	
		Somali	All	Somali	All
2007	66	55%	78%	52%	71%
2008	62	66%	80%	65%	74%
2009	86	71%	79%	77%	78%
2010	68	74%	82%	74%	81%
2011	111	82%	84%	86%	84%
06-10 Change	+45	+27%	+6%	+34%	+13%

3.3 Attainment at Key Stage 3

Table 6. Average Key Stage 3 Attainment by Ethnic Group (2007-2011)

Ethnic Group	Cohort Number 2011	Key Stage 3 Average (% Level 5+)					
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
African*	431	73%	74%	78%	79%	82%	+9%
<i>Somali</i>	55	30%	55%	64%	65%	71%	+41%
Caribbean	422	60%	61%	75%	73%	73%	+13%
Portuguese	115	56%	57%	68%	69%	68%	+12%
White British	271	73%	68%	81%	79%	83%	+10%
Lambeth	1,983	68%	68%	76%	79%	79%	+11%
National	-	74%	74%	78%	80%	%	%

**Includes Somali pupil statistics*

From 2009 there were no statutory tests at KS3, and so the results of the teacher assessments are reported here.

- Somali average pupil attainment has increased from 30% in 2007 to 71% in 2011, narrowing the gap to the Lambeth result from 38 percentage points to eight points. The gap to the African cohort has narrowed even further, from 43 percentage points in 2007 to only 11 points in 2011.
- English results have improved the most since 2007, up by 43 percentage points, with the gap to Lambeth being nine points in 2011 compared to 39 points in 2007. The Somali maths and science results have also seen strong improvements well above the Lambeth rates, thus continuing to narrow the gap.
- The good improvement in Somali results is probably due in part to a much smaller cohort of non-fluent EAL stage 1 and 2 pupils. Only 13% of pupils this year were classified as such compared to 35% in 2007. Furthermore, this off-set is reflected in a four-fold increase in the fully fluent stage 4 cohort rather than a greater proportion of stage 3 (non-fluent) pupils.

Table 7. Key Stage 3 Attainment by Subject (2007-2011)

Year	Somali Cohort No.	Key Stage 3 Results (% at Level 5+)					
		English		Maths		Science	
		Somali	All	Somali	All	Somali	All
2007	27	30%	69%	37%	72%	37%	63%
2008	40	53%	71%	60%	71%	54%	59%
2009	50	59%	80%	76%	79%	58%	74%
2010	53	72%	81%	62%	79%	60%	76%
2011	55	73%	82%	71%	78%	69%	78%
07-11 Change	+28	+43%	+13%	+34%	+6%	+32%	+15%

3.4 Attainment at GCSE (Key Stage 4)

Table 8. GCSE Attainment by Ethnic Group in the 5+ A*-C Indicator (2007-2011)

Ethnic Group	Cohort Number 2011	GCSE Results (% 5+ A*-C)					
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
African*	411	65%	65%	81%	84%	86%	+21%
<i>Somali</i>	56	30%	37%	65%	79%	82%	+52%
Caribbean	326	44%	53%	64%	70%	73%	+29%
Portuguese	93	47%	63%	65%	76%	74%	+27%
White British	254	50%	61%	68%	68%	76%	+26%
Lambeth	1,598	56%	62%	73%	74%	80%	+24%
National	-	62%	65%	70%	75%	79%	+17%

**Includes Somali pupil statistics*

- The Somali cohort has experienced a significant improvement in their attainment at GCSE, and are above the Lambeth 5+ A*-C result for the second consecutive year. They have also narrowed the gap to the African cohort, of which they are a sub-set, from 35 percentage points in 2007 to only four points in 2011.
- Table 9 shows attainment in the 5+ A*-C including English and maths indicator. Prior to 2009 results for Somali pupils were very low, with only 11% reaching the threshold in 2007, but they have made a strong improvement and are now on a par with the Lambeth figure.
- Results for Somalis in other key GCSE indicators are shown in table 10 overleaf.

Table 9. GCSE Attainment by Ethnic Group in the 5+ A*-C including English and Maths Indicator (2007-2011)

Ethnic Group	GCSE Results (% 5+ A*-C grades inc. English and maths)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change 10-11
African	49%	51%	65%	66%	71%	+22%
<i>Somali</i>	11%	20%	48%	50%	61%	+50%
Caribbean	32%	40%	43%	45%	49%	+17%
Portuguese	26%	37%	39%	42%	52%	+26%
White British	37%	45%	45%	46%	57%	+20%
Lambeth	41%	47%	53%	53%	61%	+20%
National	46%	48%	50%	53%	58%	+12%

Table 10. GCSE Attainment in three Key Indicators (2007-2011)

Year	GCSE - Key Indicators						
	Somali Cohort No.	5+ A*-C		5+ A*-G		1+ A*-G	
		Somali	All	Somali	All	Somali	All
2007	20	30%	56%	60%	89%	90%	95%
2008	41	37%	62%	88%	91%	98%	99%
2009	23	65%	73%	48%	94%	100%	99%
2010	28	79%	74%	93%	93%	96%	99%
2011	56	82%	80%	95%	95%	100%	98%
07-11 Change	+10	+52%	+24%	+35%	+6%	+10%	+3%

4. Factors Affecting Achievement of Somali Pupils

4.1 Social characteristics of Somali Pupils

The four factors shown in table 11 are helpful in understanding achievement patterns of Somali pupils in Lambeth schools. The data confirms that Somali pupils are a disadvantaged group. For example, 75% of KS2 pupils were eligible for FSM, and 86% of GCSE pupils. The national figures for FSM eligibility are considerably lower at each key stage.

Table 11. Social Characteristics of Somali pupils in Lambeth schools by Key Stage Cohorts 2011

Key Stages	Total Cohort	Gender		FSM (%)	EAL		Mobility rate
		Boys (%)	Girls (%)		Stage 1-3 Not fluent in English	Stage 4 Fully fluent in English	
Key Stage 1	135	49%	51%	73%	84%	11%	5%
Key Stage 2	111	50%	50%	75%	67%	31%	28%
Key Stage 3	55	53%	47%	78%	33%	87%	18%
Key Stage 4	56	46%	54%	86%	25%	75%	0%

4.2 Gender Differences and Achievement

In general terms nationally, girls tend to outperform boys. In Lambeth this is also true for African and Caribbean pupils at all key stages, however in recent years White British boys at GCSE performed above the level of girls (Demie et al 2006). For the Somali cohort in Lambeth, table 12 shows girls consistently outperform the boys cohort, with the greatest difference being in the proportion gaining 5+ A*-C grades (17 percentage points gap in 2011).

Table 12: Somali Pupils KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE Performance in Lambeth by Gender - 2011

Key Stage		All Somali pupils	Boys	Girls	Gap Girls-Boys
KS1 - Level 2B+	Reading	71%	65%	77%	+12%
	Writing	57%	55%	59%	+4%
	Maths	74%	74%	74%	0%
	Average	67%	65%	70%	+5%
KS2 - Level 4+	English	82%	80%	84%	+4%
	Maths	86%	85%	88%	+3%
	Average	84%	83%	86%	+3%
	Science TA	84%	82%	86%	+4%
KS3 - Level 5+	English	73%	69%	77%	+8%
	Maths	71%	69%	73%	+4%
	Science	69%	69%	69%	0%
	Average	71%	69%	73%	+4%
GCSE	5+ A*-C	82%	73%	90%	+17%
	5+ A*-C inc E&M	61%	54%	67%	+13%
	5+ A*-G	95%	92%	97%	+5%

4.3 Social Background and Achievement

The free school meals indicator is often used as a proxy measure of social deprivation in pupils' backgrounds, and has been linked to underachievement in a number of studies (Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Demie, 2001). School level data demonstrates a clear relationship between the concentration of poverty levels in schools and tests and examination results. The proportion of Somali pupils taking KS2 in 2011 who were eligible for free school meals was 75%, and for the GCSE cohort it was 86% (see table 11 on page 11).

Table 13 indicates there is a marked difference in performance between the free and paid meal cohorts. The general pattern is Somali free school meal pupils perform below their paid meal peers, with this being the case in both 2010 and 2011 at KS2.

Table 13. Performance of Somali pupils by Free School Meal status (2010 & 2011)

Key Stage		2010			2011		
		Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap	Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap
KS1 - Level 2B+	Reading	73%	67%	+6%	68%	81%	-13%
	Writing	61%	53%	+8%	54%	67%	-13%
	Maths	73%	67%	+6%	71%	83%	-12%
	Average	69%	62%	+7%	64%	77%	-13%
KS2 - Level 4+	English	72%	82%	-10%	80%	89%	-9%
	Maths	70%	91%	-21%	86%	89%	-3%
	Average	71%	86%	-15%	83%	89%	-6%
	Science TA	74%	81%	-7%	82%	89%	-7%
KS3 - Level 5+	English	68%	89%	-21%	72%	75%	-3%
	Maths	61%	67%	-6%	74%	58%	+16%
	Science	59%	67%	-8%	72%	58%	+14%
	Average	63%	74%	-11%	73%	64%	+9%
GCSE	5+ A*-C	75%	88%	-13%	81%	88%	-7%
	5+ A*-C inc E&M	45%	63%	-18%	63%	50%	+7%
	5+ A*-G	95%	88%	+7%	94%	100%	-6%

There are also some notable differences within the main ethnic groups when the data is analysed by eligibility for free school meals. Table 14 shows that at GCSE, 84% of African pupils eligible for free school meals achieved 5+A*-C, compared with 88% of the paid meal cohort, a gap of four percentage points. For Somalis, who form a subset of the African cohort, the difference is greater at seven percentage points. An important point to note is the majority of Somalis are eligible for FSM at both KS2 and GCSE, whereas the opposite is true for the African group overall. The gap was greatest for White British pupils at both KS2 and GCSE, differences of 25 and 30 percentage points respectively.

These findings underline the importance of treating any measure of school or LA performance which does not include the influence of background factors, such as social class and deprivation, with scepticism.

Table 14. Performance by Key Stage, FSM and Ethnic Background in Lambeth, 2011

	Key Stage 2 (average L4+)			GCSE		
	% of cohort FSM eligible	Free Meal % at L4+	Paid Meal % at L4+	% of cohort FSM eligible	Free Meal % at 5+ A*-C	Paid Meal % at 5+ A*-C
African	48%	79%	90%	35%	84%	88%
Somali	75%	83%	89%	86%	81%	88%
Caribbean	44%	75%	81%	33%	64%	77%
Portuguese	18%	69%	78%	26%	67%	77%
White British	23%	70%	95%	20%	52%	82%
Lambeth	36%	77%	87%	31%	74%	82%

4.4 English Language Acquisition and Achievement

Another important factor relating to ethnic background and Somali achievement is English fluency. For students to have access to the curriculum it is clear that they need to be fluent in the language of instruction. Some students of Somali heritage are fluent in English while others may not be.

A number of studies have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand (2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate. The results indicated that pupils who spoke English as an additional language scored significantly lower than those who spoke English as first language or were fluent in English.

Table 15 gives the average KS1 and KS2 performance by level of fluency in English. Similar to expectation, Somali pupils' performance at KS1 and KS2 increases as the stage of proficiency in English increases. The stage 3 (non-fluent) and stage 4 (fully fluent) pupils have performed above the LA average for the last four years, thus it is the non-fluent stage 1 and 2 pupils who contributed towards any under-performance for the cohort overall.

Table 15. Average Key Stage 1 & 2 Attainment of Somali Pupils by Stage of English Fluency (2007 - 2011)

Fluency Stage	Key Stage 1 Average (% Level 2B+)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
Beginner Stage 1	14%	22%	31%	20%	42%	+28%
Stage 2	50%	46%	55%	63%	54%	+4%
Stage 3	85%	62%	77%	79%	83%	-2%
Fully Fluent Stage 4	61%	88%	77%	94%	89%	+28%
All Somali pupils	56%	51%	58%	68%	67%	+11%
Fluency Stage	Key Stage 2 Average (% Level 4+)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
Beginner Stage 1	17%	17%	50%	50%	0%	-17%
Stage 2	30%	47%	55%	41%	55%	+15%
Stage 3	43%	74%	74%	75%	90%	+47%
Fully Fluent Stage 4	92%	81%	93%	87%	96%	+4%
All Somali pupils	54%	66%	74%	74%	84%	+30%

Analysis of KS3 and GCSE results also shows that fluency in English continues to have an influence on the performance of pupils with EAL (see table 16). However, as the cohort sizes are smaller in secondary schools, meaningful conclusions can only be drawn from the stage 3 and 4 (fully fluent) outcomes. The differences are stark, for example a 41 percentage points gap between the stage 3 and 4 pupils at KS3, and 33 points at GCSE.

Table 16. Average Key Stage 3 and GCSE 5+ A*-C Attainment of Somali pupils by Stage of English Fluency (2007 - 2011)

Fluency Stage	Key Stage 3 Average (% Level 5+)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
Beginner Stage 1	0%	n/a	0%	0%	0%	+0%
Stage 2	5%	0%	33%	8%	0%	-5%
Stage 3	42%	37%	54%	60%	48%	+6%
Fully Fluent Stage 4	57%	58%	77%	78%	89%	+32%
All Somali pupils	30%	55%	64%	65%	71%	+41%

Fluency Stage	GCSE (% 5+ A*-C)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 07-11
Beginner Stage 1	n/a	0%	n/a	0%	n/a	n/a
Stage 2	0%	0%	0%	8%	n/a	n/a
Stage 3	0%	27%	0%	60%	57%	+57%
Fully Fluent Stage 4	55%	67%	85%	70%	90%	+35%
All Somali pupils	30%	37%	65%	79%	82%	+52%

There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the KS2 and GCSE data is further analysed by levels of fluency in English. Tables 17 and 18 show that performance for all main ethnic groups increases when combined with improved English acquisition amongst the bilingual cohort. These outcomes support a number of studies that have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand (2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate.

Table 17. KS2 Average Attainment by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2011

Fluency Stage	African		Caribbean		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	L4+	Cohort	L4+	Cohort	L4+	Cohort	L4+	Cohort	L4+
Beginner Stage 1	6	17%	0	n/a	2	0%	5	30%	0	n/a
Stage 2	55	44%	1	100%	19	55%	30	43%	2	100%
Stage 3	193	80%	2	50%	53	90%	78	75%	0	n/a
Fully Fluent	258	95%	5	70%	34	96%	53	99%	13	100%
English	63	90%	432	78%	0	n/a	1	100%	353	89%
All Pupils	598	84%	470	79%	111	84%	171	76%	370	89%

Table 18. GCSE 5+ A*-C Attainment by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2011

Fluency Stage	African		Caribbean		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	5+A*-C	Cohort	5+A*-C	Cohort	5+A*-C	Cohort	5+A*-C	Cohort	5+A*-C
Beginner Stage 1	2	0%	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
Stage 2	2	50%	0	n/a	0	n/a	2	50%	0	n/a
Stage 3	41	68%	0	n/a	14	57%	18	39%	1	0%
Fully Fluent	281	90%	5	100%	42	90%	72	83%	8	100%
English	85	87%	321	72%	0	n/a	1	100%	245	76%
All Pupils	411	86%	326	73%	56	82%	93	74%	254	76%

These findings offer much encouragement for policy makers and school improvement practitioners. They demonstrate that once the language barrier is overcome, it is possible to attain good levels of achievement for all key stages.

4.5 Pupil Mobility and Achievement

It is now widely recognised that mobility can have an adverse affect on educational achievement. Mobile pupils in this context are defined as those who joined school at a point other than the start of the respective key stage. For example, at KS2 a pupil who joins in year 3 is deemed 'non-mobile', whereas a year 5 entrant is classed as 'mobile'. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector reported that high pupil mobility was one of the greatest problems, if not the greatest problem that any school can face.

Table 19. Attainment of Somali Pupils by Mobility (2010 & 2011)

Key Stage		2010			2011		
		Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap	Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap
KS2 - Level 4+	English	78%	38%	-40%	88%	68%	-20%
	Maths	77%	50%	-27%	90%	77%	-13%
	Average	78%	44%	-34%	89%	73%	-16%
	Science TA	80%	50%	-30%	88%	74%	-14%
KS3 - Level 5+	English	75%	40%	-35%	76%	40%	-36%
	Maths	67%	20%	-47%	71%	50%	-21%
	Science	63%	40%	-23%	68%	50%	-18%
	Average	68%	33%	-35%	72%	47%	-25%
GCSE % achieving	5+ A*-C	81%	50%	-31%	82%	n/a	n/a
	5+ A*-C inc E&M	54%	0%	-54%	61%	n/a	n/a
	5+ A*-G	92%	100%	+8%	95%	n/a	n/a

Non-mobile Somali pupils were, in most cases, more likely than their mobile peers to gain the expected threshold at each key stage. Tables 19 and 20 illustrate this point and show significant differences in some cases, for example a 20 percentage point gap in English at KS2 and 36 points at KS3. Some of the small mobile cohorts involved should be borne in mind here (see table 20 overleaf).

Table 20. Somali Pupil Average Attainment by Length of Time Spent in School, 2010 & 2011

Key stage	Mobility by Length of Time Spent in School	Number		Performance	
		2010	2011	2010	2011
KS2 - Level 4+	Joined in Year 3 or before	60	80	78%	89%
	Joined in Year 4&5	8	27	44%	83%
	Joined in Year 6	0	4	n/a	0%
KS3 - Level 5+	Joined in Year 7	48	38	68%	72%
	Joined in Year 8	4	6	17%	50%
	Joined in Year 9	1	4	100%	42%
GCSE - 5+ A*-C	Joined in Year 7	18	47	83%	81%
	Joined in Year 8&9	8	9	75%	89%
	Joined in Year 10	2	0	50%	n/a
	Joined in Year 11	0	0	n/a	n/a

5. Conclusions

- It is clear to see that Somali pupils have formed an underperforming group in Lambeth at each stage of the National Curriculum, and at GCSE level. However, they continue to narrow the achievement gap to their peers and in a few instances have exceeded the Lambeth outcomes in 2011, notably in KS1 Reading and maths and the GCSE 5+ A*-C indicator.
- One reason for historical Somali pupil underachievement is the language barrier. At KS1 and KS2 the majority of Somalis are non-fluent in English, and has been the case over the last five years. Whereas at KS3 and GCSE the opposite is true, with the stage 4 fully fluent pupils increasing each year (to 75% of the cohort in 2011).
- Somali pupils also face other challenges, such as the very high proportion who are eligible for free school meals (which is seen as a proxy for social deprivation). But despite these challenges Somali pupils continue to narrow the gap to their peers.
- The total Somali population present in Lambeth schools has increased considerably, from 236 in 2001 to 1,382 in 2011, with the majority of this change reflected in primary schools. The achievement of Somali pupils will continue to assume greater importance if this rate of increase is maintained, and the good news is the issues surrounding them have been recognised and are being addressed within the borough's schools.

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Appendix 1

Key Stage 1 Cohort Sizes per Main Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Key Stage 1 Cohort Sizes				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
African	589	619	599	679	694
<i>Somali</i>	99	107	129	149	135
Caribbean	479	478	481	516	479
Portuguese	158	134	164	134	153
White British	456	432	363	451	407
Lambeth	2,602	2,607	2,606	2,748	2,819

Key Stage 2 Cohort Sizes per Main Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Key Stage 2 Cohort Sizes				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
African	552	560	552	486	600
<i>Somali</i>	66	62	86	68	111
Caribbean	485	538	485	339	473
Portuguese	138	112	152	166	171
White British	389	382	371	248	371
Lambeth	2,374	2,416	2,410	1,860	2,483

25% of Lambeth schools boycotted the tests in 2010, hence the lower figures.

Key Stage 3 Cohort Sizes per Main Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Key Stage 3 Cohort Sizes				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
African	386	404	417	435	431
<i>Somali</i>	27	40	50	53	55
Caribbean	322	344	332	371	422
Portuguese	94	73	82	91	115
White British	306	288	273	302	271
Lambeth	1,708	1,708	1,667	1,835	1,983

GCSE Cohort Sizes per Main Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	GCSE Cohort Sizes				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
African	323	385	396	376	411
<i>Somali</i>	20	41	23	28	56
Caribbean	299	297	276	343	326
Portuguese	72	78	82	72	93
White British	246	271	268	259	254
Lambeth	1,429	1,465	1,560	1,618	1,598

Appendix 2

Stage of English Fluency – Key Stage 1 Somali Cohort

		English Fluency Stage				
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total EAL
2007	Cohort	12	53	28	6	99
	% of total	12%	54%	28%	6%	-
2008	Cohort	15	46	37	8	106
	% of total	14%	43%	35%	8%	-
2009	Cohort	24	58	35	10	127
	% of total	19%	46%	28%	8%	-
2010	Cohort	15	66	52	16	149
	% of total	10%	44%	35%	11%	-
2011	Cohort	19	47	48	15	135
	% of total	14%	35%	36%	11%	-

In 2009 EAL status was not known for two pupils, and for six pupils in 2011.

Stage of English Fluency – Key Stage 2 Somali Cohort

		English Fluency Stage				
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total EAL
2007	Cohort	3	15	29	19	66
	% of total	5%	23%	44%	29%	-
2008	Cohort	10	17	27	16	62
	% of total	16%	27%	44%	26%	-
2009	Cohort	2	20	23	27	86
	% of total	2%	23%	43%	31%	-
2010	Cohort	1	11	30	26	68
	% of total	2%	23%	43%	31%	-
2011	Cohort	2	19	53	34	111
	% of total	2%	17%	48%	31%	-

In 2011 EAL status was not known for three pupils.

Stage of English Fluency – Key Stage 3 Somali Cohort

		English Fluency Stage				
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total EAL
2007	Cohort	2	8	12	7	29
	% of total	7%	28%	41%	24%	-
2008	Cohort	0	3	14	23	40
	% of total	-	8%	35%	58%	-
2009	Cohort	1	4	16	29	50
	% of total	2%	8%	32%	58%	-
2010	Cohort	2	4	15	32	53
	% of total	4%	8%	28%	60%	-
2011	Cohort	5	2	11	30	55
	% of total	9%	4%	20%	55%	-

In 2011 EAL status was not known for seven pupils.

Appendix 2 continued

Stage of English Fluency – GCSE Somali Cohort

		English Fluency Stage				
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total EAL
2007	Cohort	0	5	5	11	21
	% of total	-	24%	24%	52%	-
2008	Cohort	3	9	11	18	41
	% of total	7%	22%	27%	44%	-
2009	Cohort	0	2	8	12	22
	% of total	-	9%	36%	55%	-
2010	Cohort	0	1	10	17	28
	% of total	-	4%	36%	61%	-
2011	Cohort	0	0	14	42	56
	% of total	-	-	25%	75%	-

In 2009 EAL status was not known for one pupil.