



Schools celebrate Black History Month in style!

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Hanover Primary School children parade in their Black History Month carnival outfits  
See page 7 to see what other schools got up to

## Success for Turkish pupils

2006 was the year in which Islington's Turkish pupils made a huge step forward in national tests and exams.

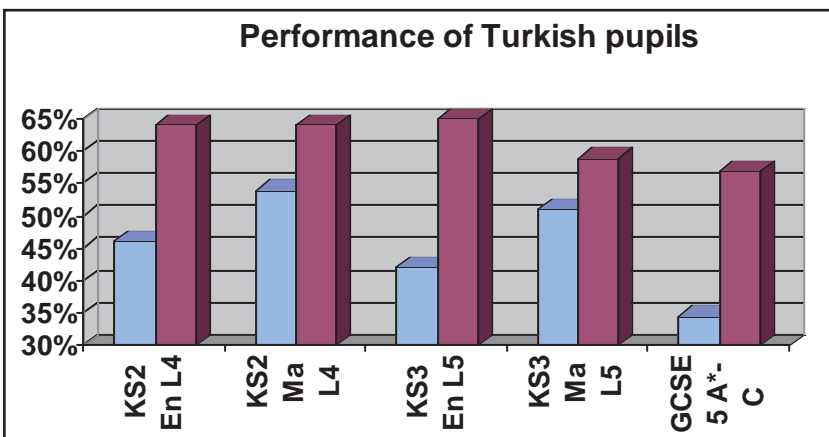
Highlights included:

- a 19 percentage point rise in the proportion of 11 year olds achieving a level 4 in English
- a 23 percentage point rise in the proportion of 14 year olds achieving a level 5 in English
- a 22 percentage point rise in the proportion of 16 year olds achieving 5 good grades at GCSE.

These young people, their families and schools deserve congratulations for these fantastic results.

A very special mention must go to Turkish boys studying GCSE. Across England 52% of all boys managed 5 A\*-C grades, but in Islington an amazing 66% of Turkish boys hit this key benchmark.

Performance of Turkish pupils



## News from the Early Years service

As usual, Black History Month in early years settings in Islington was a very hands on and interactive affair; this year several settings accessed money available from Family Learning to organise projects and activities for children and parents.

Andover EYC enjoyed music and drumming from Juma, visited the Town Hall to take part in a music event and focussed work and displays around both traditional and modern dress and hairstyles with many contributions from parents. New River Green CC invited several inspirational black people from the community to come and speak with the children including a police inspector, hairdresser, female bus driver and chef.

Activities such as clay work, cooking, dressing up, storytelling, art work, jewellery- making, printing and flag making are examples of other work carried out throughout the month in early years settings across the borough.

### Early years resources

We have a few new ones for you;

- ◆ A multi-cultural song and rhyme CD and book (£5)
- ◆ Several stories on CD in English and either Turkish, Arabic or Bengali (£5 each)

Please contact us on 020 7527 5582 to order or for more information.



## Rahma Samater - Raising the Profile of Somali Pupils

Rahma has become such a familiar figure that it is easy to forget that she only joined the EMA service less than 11 months ago, filling Habiba's role at EGA during maternity leave. However, before this Rahma was already working at EGA in the field of child protection and mentoring. She very soon became involved in the school's efforts to improve matters with their year 10 & 11 Somali girls, who had issues with truancy, behaviour and violence towards one another.

Rahma and her colleagues adopted a multi agency approach, bringing together social services and voluntary organisations. They soon realized that they needed to involve parents more, and arranged parents' meetings. Parents wanted to be included, and were keen to help break down stereotyped images of Somali children. In the next stage, girls and parents were brought together, and issues such as identity, building self-esteem, and peer pressure were explored.

"The aim was for the girls to come to us before trouble escalated. I can speak to them in a way they understand," says Rahma.

It was important to find out why the girls were underachieving, and address problems of attendance, truancy and bullying.

"We monitored them twice a week. Lots of praise helped, and we kept trying to pre-empt problems."

The project was very beneficial for developing communication between mothers and daughters, with mothers saying, "Now we can understand our daughters!" The project reaped many benefits. Girls began to achieve better, and their parents communicated much more with the school. Difficult subjects such as drug and alcohol abuse were tackled. A group of Somali parents now meet regularly at the school.

Rahma has also been involved in the Somali role Model project with Sara McLaughlin, and the photograph below shows the launch on November 24th of this very successful pack. It comprises a DVD, called "Young Somali Voices", and shows girls interviewing well-known Somali people. Rahma comments, "The main theme is identity - how to have your own identity and also participate in British society". Do contact EMAS for a copy!

Last but certainly not least; Rahma is now coordinator for EMAS, KS2 Somali Project Maths, English & PHSE. The aim for this project is to raise the achievements for Somali pupils end of KS2. This involves an amazing 74 Somali pupils from 6 (soon to be 8) schools across the borough. Pupils from Montem, Duncombe, Pooles Park, Newington Green, New North and Ambler (Moreland and Grafton to join later) come to Islington Arts and Media School on a Tuesday after school, where they take part in one of three classes. Somali mentors and TAs work alongside English, PHSE and Maths teachers, and the feedback is exceptionally good. Parents come to observe, and many have asked for similar projects for younger pupils. Well done to Rahma, Kathie Walsh and all the organisers and teachers.

# Generating Genius - it's a family affair!

10<sup>th</sup> July 2006



The only universal disappointment amongst delegates was the fact they only got to choose one. This was communicated through the evaluation forms, alongside a parents questionnaire, that gave parents the chance to tell the EMAS department how the council might consider better supporting parents in educating their children.

The conference title, "Generating genius - It's a family Affair!", came from its twin themes of promoting science and family literacy. This was reflected in the two main keynote speakers. Both were British African-Caribbean men who grew up in single parent homes, who now hold senior lecturer positions at two different London universities.

First on was Dr Mark Richards PhD, a scientist at Imperial College. He is the academic co-ordinator of the international 'Generating Genius(GG)' project, a national project to get more Black boys into science. He began by speaking about his personal journey in becoming a scientist (and the key role his mother played in raising his self esteem). This was smoothly linked into his work at Imperial college as a researcher, alongside his involvement in the GG science exchange programme between Year 8 secondary school boys in the UK and Jamaica.

The second keynote speaker was Errol Mcglashan, a Family Learning Tutor, based in the LLU+ division of London's South Bank university. The former secondary school drop-out had the audience enraptured with his eccentric charm and anecdotal humour about growing up in West London with a semi-literate mother. Parents were enthralled whilst practising one of his specialisms - Brain gym exercises - which he opened his talk with. He went on to highlight to parents the importance of using a variety of learning styles when trying to engage your children in learning.

To the gentle strains of Sly and the Family Stone's 1970's hit song, 'It's A Family Affair', Islington's newly appointed director of Education Eleanor schooling opened, EMAS's 4th conference for parents of pupils of African Caribbean heritage. Many parents commented afterwards how warm and candid her welcome speech had been, where she revealed how her own experience of school had not being enjoyable. Many said they could relate to her sense of not feeling like she fitted in. Yet despite these experiences these parents are still able to recognise the value of a good education for their children, which is what motivated them to attend the conference.

Once again the event proved to be as popular as ever, with it being sold out a week before the scheduled date. Delegates arrived early to collect their literacy toolkits. These were goodie bags filled with a treasure trove of delightful literacy aids: a writing set (pens, pencils and rulers), book tokens (for the Quick Reads series), book markers, handy leaflets with bite-size information on a variety of literacy

boosting tips and techniques and a free copy of the Basic Skills Agency parent handbook, "200 Ways To Say Well Done".

Also for the first time, workshops were booked on the day which also led to early attendance by delegates keen to book their place on a selection of five very popular themes. They included:

- ♦ Practical steps to enable children to achieve within the British Educational system (Angie Brooks-Kana Foundation school/Kana Education Consultancy);
- ♦ 10 minutes Every Day - Promoting Family Literacy at home (Emma Joseph and Anastasia Edwards);
- ♦ Techniques for non-academic parents to raise their children's self-esteem (Paul Lawrence - Mentoring Solutions)
- ♦ How to assist your child with the Primary to Secondary school transfer (Itricia Byer -Creative Visualisation Consultant)
- ♦ Learning about Learning styles (Errol McGlashan)

Continued on page 4...

## Generating Genius - it's a family affair

cont'd from page 4

Errol also encouraged all parents to think about brushing-up on their own education, through joining a family literacy programme, as he had done in adulthood, following the birth of his two daughters.

A joint presentation followed these speeches by two Islington parents on the ways some parents could get more involved in their children's education through (1) setting up (Black) parents groups and/or ;(2) becoming a governor. Both speakers - Jacqui Forrester and Sheryl Hendrickson - are members of IBME-Islington Black Minority Governors forum and were key in setting up a parents group (The Achievers) in St. John's Upper Holloway.

The theme underpinning all four of these EMAS conferences has always been celebrating success. It was fitting that the day ended with a presentation by Cassius Francis on a report he had compiled looking at the Success Factors of a group of key stage 4 Islington African-Caribbean students. All have successfully completed their studies (GCSE/GNVQ's) in July 2005. These young adults were articulate and eloquent when discussing with the audience what were the key factors in their high educational achievement. This contributed to the day ending on an inspirational note.

## TA course for Black and Ethnic Minority Men

Working in partnership with Hackney we are currently training 100 BME men as Teaching Assistants. We have become an OCR centre and the current trainees are working towards the Level 2 Teaching Assistant Certificate. The course is taught over ten weeks.

The trainees attend formal teaching sessions two mornings a week and work in schools for two full days, learning on the job and putting into practice what they have learned. The trainees are kept busy with the heavy workload, which includes producing a TA's induction pack for their placement schools, two pupil case studies and planning, delivering and assessing three units of work focusing on literacy, numeracy and ICT. Despite this, the trainees are still very positive and enthusiastic and we hope they all make through. We desperately need more black and minority ethnic men working in our schools.

EMAS wish to recruit Black men from a Caribbean or Black African heritage to be trained as Teaching Assistants in secondary schools. **If you, or anyone you know, is interested, please contact Karen Weir for further information, on ext. 5899.**

## A National Conference: Raising Somali Achievement



To be held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007, at the Barnsbury Centre, Offord Road N1 1QF

9.30am - 3.45pm

**Keynote speakers:**

Mohamed Kahin,  
author of "Educating Somali Children in Britain"

with

Rageh Omaar

former BBC correspondent

Contact Joan Clarke on 020 7527 5899

# Carila language classes

## Spanish Mother-Tongue Classes at Carila

Carila, Latin American Welfare Group is well known for its work in supporting Spanish and Portuguese speakers resident in Islington and neighbouring areas. It serves people by providing advice, information, interpreting, translation and advocacy services. Last year Carila widened its range of community support by introducing Spanish mother-tongue classes for primary aged children attending Islington schools. The borough has a growing Latin American community, mainly from Colombia and Ecuador. A number of parents in the community, whilst happy with their children's education in our schools, are concerned that their sons and daughters are at risk of not developing or even losing their mother-tongue skills and traditional culture.

Thanks to the financial backing and support of the Islington Adult and Community team, the Cripplegate Foundation and the encouragement of EMAS, CARILA has been able to organise and run Spanish mother-tongue lessons for up to sixteen students every Saturday for two hours at the Manor Gardens Centre, just off the Holloway Road. The classes are popular and very well attended. The lessons are led by a qualified teacher from Peru who is supported by two volunteer assistants. The teaching team uses a range of learning activities to keep lessons lively and interesting. All agree that the children's attitude to learning (even on a Saturday!) and their progress in developing their literacy skills are excellent.

The parents are delighted that the children are learning and enjoying their classes and many of them stay in the centre while the children are being taught, to make use of the Internet and to improve their own communication skills. Like all good things, there is demand for more. There is now a waiting list for places in the class and the possibility of expansion must now be a consideration.

Well done Carila!

*David Davies, EMAS*





## Dance for freedom

Boys at St.Aloysius' College had no ordinary assembly for Black History Month in October as they re-lived the Notting Hill Carnival, tracing its roots back to Trinidad in 1833, when it was linked to the abolition of slavery. The boys told the story of how the carnival came to Notting Hill and explained how Black Caribbean people took to the streets in song and dance as a way of finding a 'voice' and to express their cultural identity in the 1950's, at a time when it was not 'illegal to be racist' in Britain.

"Art is the genesis of freedom", was the message on the first carnival brochure, and this inspired the boys to research other dances of African origin. The boys first performed the 'carporeira' dance, which was created by slaves over 500 years ago and they managed to trick their captors into thinking they were dancing but in fact they were developing fighting techniques.

An exciting moment was when the boys did the 'limbo' dance and re-created life on a slave ship, by performing part of the "Limbo" poem by Kamau Braithwaite, a West Indian poet. There was plenty of audience participation as the poem was sung in rhythmic tones.

Finally, "No Limits", a semi-professional dance group in Year 11 performed the most amazing medley of hip hop styles and techniques to rousing cheers from the pupils. Pupils were surprised to learn that Pope John Paul had been a fan of hip hop himself!

The EMA team co-ordinator, Mary Brent, said, "As well as making a statement to the whole school about the importance of black history, the boys had the opportunity to work in mixed age groups and demonstrate a wide range of performing skills."

# Maths Summer Week for Bilingual Parents and Children

...run by Dani Gutfreund with support from Silvia, Reba, Najuuma & Valbona from the Bilingual Community Officers' Team

The Maths Summer Week workshop ran for a week starting on 24th July, from 9.30 to 12.30. There were always at least two BCOs supporting the activities. Silvia and I facilitated those activities that needed direct input, such as the competitions, discussions on the carpet, quizzes and games.

The day would always start with everyone sitting on the carpet and discussing a theme, such as problems, fractions, percentage, mental calculation, or metrics. Strategies of resolution would also be presented and discussed here, using different materials and the Flip chart as a visual support. Both children and parents would show the group how they had come to a conclusion and discuss the different approaches to the questions proposed. We also played relevant games. The carpet time was repeated either before or after the break and at the end of the day, so that we could make sure that knowledge was shared. These were the moments when all group worked together.

After these activities, parents and children could choose among the "corner" activities: bank and market (by far the most popular ones), problem solving involving the 4 operations (very popular among the parents), fractions, percentage, mental calculation and Kakuro (a Japanese puzzle involving addition and probability that they really enjoyed!), measurements, sequence and secrets, counting and computer based activities (from games available in the web to quoting a trip to somewhere). All the material was available in the Maths Resource room apart from some of the problems taken from the BBC website and the Kakuro puzzles, and some cakes and fruits that we brought to work fractions and percentage.

Our aim was for them to learn while having fun and realising the great knowledge they have from daily activities and I think we achieved it. We had many delightful learning moments shared either in a group level or individually. A good example of this was when one of the mothers (who came every day and enjoyed the activities so much, and being so keen to learn and to teach, that might support us in other projects as a facilitator), observing the children "banking" joined the group and taught them how to keep the books, control the cash flow, and organise transactions in order to keep control of the money. She also had some input in the Market so that they would think about controlling the sales, giving discounts, receipts etc.

Although the corner activities worked considerably well, they did not work as planned, using their full or almost full potential. For the next project we need to make sure that each corner has an informed adult or child that can explore and assist the pupils to explore the different concepts involved in the activities. It is also important that all the facilitators are available all the time in order to be able to recognise when there is need for intervention and support, change activities and support. Also, if we are to have a wide range of ages and skills, we need more specific activities to reach all the levels and the competitions shall take into account the different levels.

We had BCOs available for translation but overall the only language requiring translation was Spanish. A fuller report is available from Kathie Walsh. Altogether, we felt that this was a very successful initiative, especially considering it was the first time it took place.

## Training news

Our training focus has changed over the last year from centrally held courses to more in-school training. Many of our courses are now packaged specifically for use in schools and the uptake has been very encouraging both in Islington and across London and beyond.

This term we are piloting a new 10 week EAL course, half of which addresses issues relating to beginners in mainstream classes, while the second half looks at the development of academic language skills across the curriculum.

The accredited EMA course has been running since Easter in the DfES building. It is attended by

teachers from schools across London and is due to finish in February. As a spin off from this we are about to launch an on-line accredited course in January 2007, so watch this space!

The Fast track Literacy training has been taken up by a number of secondary schools after being launched at the London Challenge EAL conference in the summer. It is a half-day training course on developing reading skills for secondary school pupils new to English and new to literacy and includes some resources for use in schools.

ESL in the Mainstream has proved a

very popular course in Islington and a number of other London boroughs. We have even travelled as far as Edward Field's primary school, Oxford, too! It is currently running in Vittoria primary school, Islington, and in Bishop Thomas Grant secondary school in Streatham. We are scheduled to deliver it in Northumberland Park secondary school, Haringey, from December 06 and a number of Islington primary and secondary schools are already booked in for the Spring and Summer term. EMAS is hosting an ESL in the Mainstream tutor training/upgrade course at the end of January 07.

## GOOD PRACTICE FOR ETHNIC MINORITY CHILDREN IS GOOD PRACTICE FOR ALL CHILDREN



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