

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

### Isn't this just a new name for special needs?

No! The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 has a distinct new aim and is 'much wider and more encompassing' (Scottish Executive 2004).

It recognises that there are many reasons why children and young people may need additional support with learning at certain times in their school career. These may include what we currently think of as special needs and disabilities but will also include (as examples) help for:

- Children who have suffered a bereavement;
- Children who are ill;
- Children for whom English is a new language;
- Children who have experienced interrupted learning.

### What is it to do with Gypsies and Travellers?

Children and young people from the Gypsy and Traveller communities may need extra support from time to time for a range of reasons such as those above, but may also need extra support when:

- Pupils may have been out of school for some time;
- If they are or have been away travelling;
- There are gaps in learning because children have attended several different schools;
- A pupil is one of the first family members to attend primary or secondary school;
- Dealing with bullying or racist abuse.

### When will the changes come in?

The new Act is expected to come into force in Autumn 2005.

### What rights will parents and families have?

There are new rights for parents. If parents believe that their child would benefit from being assessed, then they have the right to request that the education authority make an assessment and/or examination of needs. This right is the same for parents whether their children attend school or are home educated.

### Where can I get more information?

A Summary Handout of the Additional Support for Learning Act and A Guide for Parents is available from [www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/shasla-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/shasla-00.asp) or contact Michael Courtney at SEED on 0131 244 4914 or email: [ASLAct@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ASLAct@scotland.gsi.gov.uk).

A Code of Practice will be written in the coming months.

## CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

### Supporting Gypsies and Travellers in Education

Thursday 9 September 2004,  
9:30am - 2:00pm

Thomson's Land, Moray House,  
Holyrood Road, The University of  
Edinburgh.

This conference will focus on strategies to support the education of Gypsies and Travellers in Scotland.

### Contributors will include:

**Arthur Ivatts**, former English HMI with a long-standing commitment to education issues relating to Gypsies and Travellers. Arthur will talk about Gypsies and Travellers in the new Europe.

**Maureen Fraser**, Director of the Commission for Racial Equality in Scotland, discussing the Scottish Strategy for Gypsies and Travellers.

**A speaker from the Scottish Executive** on the new legislation on Additional Support for Learning and its relevance for Gypsies and Travellers with interrupted learning.

There will be workshops where participants can discuss practice, a display of educational resources and the opportunity for networking throughout the day.

Organised by the Scottish Traveller Education Programme, funded by SEED.

There is no cost for attending the conference, and coffee, tea and lunch will be provided.

Email [step@education.ed.ac.uk](mailto:step@education.ed.ac.uk) or phone 0131 651 6444 to enquire about booking a place.

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## STEP RESEARCH UPDATE

### Issues in school enrolment, attendance, attainment and support for learning for Gypsy/Travellers and school-aged children and young people based in Scottish local authority sites

This research, funded by the Scottish Executive, carried out by STEP and reported in March 2004, involved making contact with, Gypsy/Traveller parents and pupils, Scottish local authority chief executives, the majority of Scottish education and housing departments, the site managers of Scotland's 37 local authority sites, designated Traveller teachers, and schools (pre-school, primary and secondary) reported to be used by Gypsy/Travellers.

Its main finding was that Scottish local authorities frequently lack knowledge about Gypsy/Travellers, which creates complex challenges for their delivery of flexible and appropriate educational services for Gypsy/Travellers of all ages. The difficulties they face in identifying and locating Gypsy/Traveller children in Scottish education, for example was shown by this research. It found that:

- some known Gypsy/Traveller school-aged learners are being educated in Scotland's schools;
- some pupils are supported by designated teachers, commonly known as Traveller teachers.

Traveller teachers also support Gypsy/Traveller pupils in out-of-school settings.

However,

- some other Gypsy/Traveller pupils being educated in Scotland's schools are not readily known, largely because these pupils do not self-identify as Gypsy/Travellers to the school.

Evidence from different sources suggests that many Gypsy/Traveller school-aged children and young people still experience very limited or no formal schooling at all. This was reflected in non-existent or poorly kept pupil records, which combined with short stays at a school prevented teachers from preparing Gypsy/Traveller pupils for local and national testing, as evidenced by the poor levels of attainment among known Gypsy/Traveller pupils.

Collaborative working between Gypsy/Travellers and various combinations of local authority staff, teachers, site managers, Community Education staff and schools, had however, given rise to a number of innovative alternative projects. Funded from different budgets, such projects were well used. Gypsy/Traveller secondary aged pupils, for example reported that the projects had engendered feelings of educational worth in them as well providing a welcome opportunity to learn in places that they and their parents felt were safe.

The key research recommendations to local authorities and the Scottish Executive were that they should,

- Support formal development of existing successful informal interagency working with Gypsy/Travellers, for example, between Traveller teachers, site managers and schools.
- Help schools focus upon finding ways of understanding and ameliorating the negative effects of processes of interrupted learning rather than focusing upon levels of attendance.
- Make more concerted efforts towards using the potential of computers and the Internet to support learning at a distance and for transference of pupil records.

Finally, the success of existing 'good practice' should be further developed to include access to relevant qualifications through dialogue and in partnership with Gypsy/Travellers.

For more information contact Dr Pauline Padfield, [pauline.padfield@ed.ac.uk](mailto:pauline.padfield@ed.ac.uk)

## WHAT DOES STEP DO?

STEP aims to improve educational opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers in Scotland. We listen to and represent the views of Gypsy and Traveller children, young people and parents about education, and encourage respect for their cultural traditions and current circumstances. We work with teachers and other professionals to promote the development of practices which support diversity and address racism, harassment and bullying. We encourage inter-agency working which acknowledges the links between education, housing, health and other key social services.

To read more about STEP's remit, visit our web site at [www.scottishtravellered.net/about.html](http://www.scottishtravellered.net/about.html)

## A TEACHER'S STORY

Dorothy George has worked as a teacher of Gypsy and Traveller young people for more than 25 years. She retired at the end of June, and her colleagues collected photos and memories about her teaching career. Here they share some of what they found.

### "IT ALL BEGAN WITH...

Mrs. Aimee Chalmers in her car...". This is what a Traveller grandmother told us when we asked her for memories of Dorothy George's involvement in the education of her children and grandchildren.

She went on to tell us all about the mobile classroom which had been funded jointly by the Save the Children Fund and Central Region. This was in the late 70s, when Traveller children lived in approximately seventy unofficial sites in Central Region. Having realised how many children there were, the policy was to bring education to the children, to fit in with their lifestyle.

Dorothy was one of the first teachers in the van. It catered for primary and secondary aged children and quickly became so popular that children would run to greet the bus and chap on the door to get in. Occasionally there were so many children that they had to come in at two sittings!

A local mother, a former pupil of the mobile classroom, says that there were more children educated in that van than there are in schools now. She is very proud that she learned to read and write in the van.

**Dedicated to Dorothy.**

Jane, Linda and Alison of the Bilingual and Traveller Pupil Support Service, Falkirk Council.

## IN THE PIPELINE: INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CD FOR PARENTS

STEP receives many requests for information about educational rights and issues. Because of the many changes and developments in education in Scotland in recent times, we felt it would be useful to produce some up-to-date material for Gypsy/Traveller families.

This information will be made available in two formats to ensure accessibility for the widest possible number of people: a printed leaflet and a DVD. Renowned Scottish story teller (and now novelist) Jess Smith has agreed to be involved in presenting the material on the DVD, and her enthusiasm has helped this project get off to a great start.

The booklet/DVD will include information on such areas as:

- attendance and absence regulations;
- advice about changes in support for learning (Additional Support for Learning);
- information about how to deal with bullying and harassment;
- parents' rights in the event of exclusion from school;
- advice to parents who are housed, but also choose to travel, on their rights to a place in local schools for their children;
- options for distance learning;
- advice about curriculum flexibility;
- home education.

We plan to launch the leaflet and DVD in Autumn 2004. We also hope to produce a similar information booklet specifically for Show and Fairground families.

**Please contact the STEP office if you would like any more information.**

## TRAVELLER HISTORY PROJECT

I was bullied in my last school because I was a Traveller, they called me names. So Ms M asked me if I would like to do a project with her about Travellers. To show people that I was proud to be a Traveller. When we started to do the project we got a red piece of paper and stuck four pieces of white paper on it in the shape of square. Then we started to doing Celtic design at the top. When I came back the next time there was a teacher there, and she gave me some book to copy pictures out of. I did a picture of a horse, pick-up and a caravan. Then we started to write my story and then we got chalk and made nice design on it. The teacher gave me a tape recorder and I went home and tape recorded my mum with it, she gave me lots of things that she did when she was a little girl. Like when she made tarzan swings and when she was small she picked the whelks as well. I found out that people called her names in school too. But she told me not to worry because she just ignored them and that I should do the same. And me and my best friend got a booklet and we wrote what we did when we went Travelling in it, and we drew lots of pictures too.

I haven't been in trouble in school for 4 months and I am better off. So if people call me names now I just ignore them as it's them with the problem. I am not a tink, I am a Traveller.

**Gypsy Traveller boy, age 9 and 3 quarters**

### **"Stop Bullying Now! A guide for Gypsy and Traveller children"**

is a colourful, child-friendly, pocket-sized guide that suggests ways for Gypsy and Traveller pupils and their families to respond to incidents of bullying. It was produced by teachers of Gypsy and Traveller children and STEP. Contact STEP to request free copies of the leaflet.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### FOR NEW READERS

#### Toby's New Shoes (2002)

A5 book of 15 pages illustrated with colour photographs on each page. This is an engaging book about the work of a farrier (the horse is called Toby!) which will appeal to any new reader, child or young adult. The subject matter will be familiar to some Travellers and the language is very accessible throughout.

**Toby's New Shoes Activities and Puzzles** is a booklet accompanying Toby's New Shoes. It includes basic language and number work as well as some general knowledge questions about horses.

### FOR INDEPENDENT READERS

#### Funfair Operative - A way to earn a living (2002)

A5 booklet of 10 pages illustrated with black and white and some colour photographs.

This book shows and describes the process of setting up the fairground rides ready for the fair to open and then the excitement of the fair itself. Suitable for reading alone or in groups, this looks a useful little book.

All are available from Traveller Education (Bolton)  
Castle Hill Centre, Castleton Street, Bolton BL2 2JW  
Tel: 01204 388150  
Email: [travellers.education@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:travellers.education@bolton.gov.uk)

**NB They also supply a CD with Traveller Clip Art at £3.00 to include p+p.** Contact details as above.

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

"Inclusive Educational Approaches for Gypsies and Travellers within the context of interrupted learning: Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools" is a crucial reference for anyone providing education for Gypsies and Travellers. It raises three key questions: What is meant by interrupted learning?; Why is there a need for action?; and How can practice be improved?. The Guidance is free to download in PDF format from the STEP site ([www.scottishtravellered.net](http://www.scottishtravellered.net)). Printed copies of the 22-page book are available from Learning and Teaching Scotland at a cost of 2.50 per copy\*. Contact LTS at: Telephone: 01382 443600, Fax: 01382 443645. If posting an order, the address is Customer Services, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Gardyne Road, Dundee, DD5 1NY.

\*Postage charges: One copy - no postage. Between two and six copies - £2.94 postage. Seven or more copies - £6.46 postage.

## UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

### Consultation on Guidelines on Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsies/Travellers

STEP were invited to give feedback on a recent Scottish Executive consultation regarding the management of unauthorised camping by Gypsy/Travellers. This consultation closed on 24 May 2004.

There are only a limited number of official sites in Scotland. 'Unauthorised camping' is when Travellers are unable or don't wish to stay on an official site. Sometimes they stay in places that have traditionally been used by Gypsies and Travellers, or temporarily by the roadside. STEP's comments focussed particularly on the implications for schooling and education for Gypsies/Travellers of unauthorised camping.

A full copy of the Guidelines is available at:  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/housing/gmuc-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/housing/gmuc-00.asp)  
and STEP's response can be read at:  
[www.scottishtravellered.net/unauth.html](http://www.scottishtravellered.net/unauth.html)

## CONFERENCE UPDATE

On March 19th 2004, STEP held its most recent conference, '**Including Gypsies and Travellers in Education**' at Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. Around 80 delegates from across Scotland and beyond met to discuss a broad range of issues of current concern. The conference was a lively mix of teachers, Traveller support workers, site managers and police. The professional view was greatly informed by the presence of some Gypsy Traveller parents and teachers. With a wide range of speakers from a number of different backgrounds and perspectives, the day provided an excellent opportunity to exchange views and ideas and to discuss possible ways forward. It also offered Gypsies and Travellers and those who work with them the chance to see a preview of STEP's new website and to explore a collection of our resources. Participants were very positive about the range of speakers, the thought provoking presentations and discussion, and the general atmosphere of the day.

STEP's next conference will be held on 9 September 2004 – see the notice on the front page for more information.

