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# How can schools contribute to cohesion?

## Case studies of Kingsmead and Berger primary schools, Hackney

2010

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## Key Findings

The two schools identified by the Learning Trust, Hackney for this study, Berger and Kingsmead, do indeed provide inspiring models of schools' contribution to community cohesion. Working in communities that face intense adversity, they take every opportunity to bring people together, to broaden horizons, and to improve children's life chances. They provide clear evidence of the positive role that schools can play to counteract the impact of deprivation and inequality in some of Hackney's poorest communities, and to provide trusted community resources for children and parents.

Cohesion is built through the way in which all the core activities of the school are undertaken. Far from featuring a series of isolated 'special projects' that could distract from the main business of education, this approach integrates celebration of and sensitivity to diversity of culture and faith with many initiatives aimed at ensuring children's maximum inclusion in learning – narrowing the achievement gap. The schools have taken advantage of a whole range of initiatives and funding streams, especially the extended schools provision, to increase opportunities for parents as well as children.

Both schools take a practical approach to community cohesion. Cohesion is understood not as an abstract 'good' but as integral to children's needs and concerns. Diversity is the reality for both schools, as for many London schools, and they have chosen to embrace this and build from it shared values and achievement. For children to grow up with a strong and confident sense of self alongside a respect for others who are different, many strands of support and challenge need to be present:

- listening and acceptance of children's diverse backgrounds to build self esteem and correctly appreciate children's needs
- celebration of cultural diversity to build mutual understanding and respect, and shared enjoyment
- parental engagement
- experiences of team work of many kinds.

Principles of fairness and effective engagement with parents and the local community were reflected throughout the work of the school. Cohesion was not a matter for 'special occasions'. The approach to cohesion of these schools was clearly located within a philosophical approach that was shared across the school communities. Children themselves identified fairness, a matter of keen importance to all children, as the first building block for community cohesion. No amount of special occasions, however wonderful, would balance out any sense

that in a conflict in the playground, children of one background might be favoured against those of another. In the same way, great care was taken in dealing with 'ordinary' school processes such as addressing safeguarding concerns, which was identified as essential to community relations as well as to children' and adults' welfare.

Schools in culturally diverse and economically deprived local communities can provide a vital resource for local communities, but have to work hard to establish trust with parents. Provision like a thriving breakfast club, a wide range of free or affordable after-school activities, and parent volunteering work counters poverty and exclusion both day by day and in the longer term through building both children and their parents' skills and confidence. The welcome at the 'front door' is particularly important where families may feel somewhat defensive, and this is evidenced through parents' reports of a warm personal welcome from staff as well as through a range of displays in foyers and corridors that reflect and deepen understanding of aspects of the school community. Children as well as parents were observed looking carefully at these displays, and children were reported to bring visitors to see, for example, a photo display showing activities undertaken in each month at Berger school.

In writing this report it has been difficult to find anything to leave out – so much of what the schools do contributes to community cohesion. Categorising activities against particular strands of intervention has been challenging as they often address several aims at the same time. To take one example: the international evening and international week, which were identified as particularly important, include features that

- bring local people of different backgrounds together in positive celebration
- teach children information about other cultures
- teach children song, dance and performance skills
- celebrate children's achievements through performances and displays
- expand children's and adults' experience of different types of food
- make direct links with individuals and schools in other countries
- build creative expression for both children and parents
- bring a wide group of parents and other community members on site, reducing barriers
- engage parents actively to contribute, building their sense of self and work experience
- give ex-pupils and 'ex-parents' of the schools a chance to renew links.

### *Teaching, learning and curriculum*

Children's own backgrounds were used as a route to learning. For example, Kingsmead, through the International Primary Curriculum at the time of our visit was completing work on refugees, taught across the curriculum. As discussed above, many efforts are made in both schools to maintain the engagement with the curriculum of the maximum number of children. Both schools make an active effort to bring children of different backgrounds together through mixed-ability grouping and buddying systems.

In both schools, respect for children's own active participation, and a creative approach to education are closely interwoven with processes to build cohesion. Berger is undertaking Unicef's Rights-respecting Schools programme, which is a whole-school process, and children were able to make the links from this agenda (for example about inclusion of disabled children) with issues of cohesion. Offering a wide range of different options for creative activity, including sports, enabled wide participation. Boys and girls particularly valued football, and identified many ways in which this built cohesion, though cooperation, team work, and building friendships across cultural difference. Others mentioned various forms of music, dance, poetry, and performance as well as visual arts including photography.

### *Equity and excellence*

The engagement of parents with children's education is well shown to be critical to children's achievement in education. Parents from disadvantaged communities are more likely to lack confidence in approaching schools. Where families face many challenges in relation to maintaining a decent life for themselves, education has to compete for priority with many other basic needs such as income, housing and health. The presence of family support and inclusion staff in school, and a flexible willingness to help as appropriate with form-filling and signposting, can both directly help families and also build relationships of trust that make space for more child-focused conversations in the future. There are processes in place to offer parents support during potentially stressful times such as secondary transfer.

Children themselves identified family learning initiatives such as Ocean Maths as contributing to cohesion, and clearly felt strongly supported when their parents were welcomed to school in a range of capacities. Parents with limited English and/or perhaps limited education from their own childhood need support to support their own children. They may highly value education but not see clearly

how they can best help their children to progress. Both schools also have a very proactive approach to 'catch up' initiatives that identify children who are falling behind at an early stage and offer extra help – sometimes individually but also in groups and with families.

Communication is obviously key to learning, and many local families speak another language at home. Some have little English. At Kingsmead when children start in the school, part of their welcome includes constructing together a map of the world that shows which countries children are connected to. Another display looks at mother tongues, with different language groups celebrated each month. Children's own account is taken seriously even when teachers wonder if they may be mistaken as to their parents' origins. Thus the multinational intake is acknowledged from the start in a positive way. The provision of a large number of interpreters at parents' evenings at Berger has become an essential matter of routine, though extremely complex to organise.

Difficult behaviour can form a key barrier to learning for some children, and both schools address behaviour management in a positive way. The creative approach to teaching and learning may also successfully engage children who might be alienated by a narrower curriculum. Thus the cycle of disengagement that leads to school exclusion is broken, and children may be diverted from the many negative outcomes linked to challenging behaviour.

Raising aspiration and broadening horizons for children and parents is another key issue which both schools address strongly. People in poverty often suffer a great geographical isolation, rarely travelling beyond their own estate and the nearest shops and services. This is made worse by territorial issues where young people feel they cannot travel across 'postcodes'. For children to aspire to a full life, it is particularly important to help them travel more widely and meet a wider range of people. The schools regularly accept invitations involving travel across London, and take part in sporting and other competitions with other schools from across Hackney and more widely. Teachers in both schools told of children's surprise at meeting children from more privileged backgrounds, for example at a debating competition, or at musical events. Berger had taken parents as well as children to visit Oxford and other universities.

### *Engagement and extended services*

School-based initiatives to improve opportunities for adults to progress through education to employment can support cohesion in communities that face considerable economic deprivation. Berger runs a programme to support parents

to volunteer in the classroom, building skills and confidence in a ‘safe’ environment. The schools also have employed a number of local parents who have progressed to teaching assistant and other professionals roles through these routes, providing help to children and role models to other parents.

Both schools provide or link parents into a range of adult learning opportunities including ESOL classes, and Berger’s new building will make this much easier in future. As well as potentially increasing income in the future, this provision can help parents to model study skills for their children. Extended services wrapped around the school day support parents who are in employment or training, and at the same time provide respite for children in difficult home circumstances ‘away from the stresses of home’.

# 1. Introduction

In February 2010, Coram was commissioned by Hackney Council, in partnership with The Learning Trust to undertake research with two Hackney primary schools, Kingsmead and Berger, as part of the Hackney Cohesion Review. The aim of the study was to provide evidence on how schools in Hackney can contribute to resilience and cohesion in their community by exploring three questions:

- What are the local cohesion issues facing the school and its local community?
- How headteachers, staff, governors, parents and children understand and address cohesion issues?
- How do schools engage with different community members and parents?

The study informs the findings of the wider Hackney Cohesion Review undertaken by the council to identify actions that would improve community cohesion in the borough, which is a priority in the council's vision outlined in the Hackney Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018. The improvement of cohesion has been selected as a target in Hackney Local Area Agreement, guiding the work of the council and its partners in Team Hackney (the local strategic partnership).

The study also supports the work of The Learning Trust on how schools can improve and evidence their contribution to cohesion in their communities, under the recent Statutory Duty on Cohesion placed on schools. The findings will feed into the Trust's practical guidance on cohesion for all Hackney schools.

Berger and Kingsmead primary schools were selected by The Learning Trust for their strong focus on working with their local communities. Although the two schools were not intended to be representative of schools in Hackney as a whole, the selection of two schools serving deprived local communities provides particularly useful insights given the overall focus of the cohesion review on the impact of economic inequality on cohesion and community life in Hackney. This was a very short piece of work, not a systematic evaluation, and aimed to enhance understanding of good practice, not to test effectiveness.

Our methods drew on the good practice by working to the tradition of 'appreciative inquiry', which focuses on the positive experiences within the community, asking "What are our most inspiring experiences?" and "How can we have more of them?" Further information on the methodology is appended (see Appendix 3).

Coram's research focused on direct work with children, parents, staff, governors and councillors. We would like to thank all who contributed to this research, particularly the headteachers, staff, governors, parents and students and ex-students of the Berger and Kingsmead primary schools, who accommodated our work in the schools' busy schedules. The full list of contributors is appended.

This report presents the findings of our research. After a short introduction to the schools' role in building cohesion (**Chapter 2**) and an overview of the two schools (**Chapter 3**), this report follows the structure provided by the DCSF's *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion* (July 2007): **Chapter 4** discusses the evidence on how teaching, learning and curriculum helps to build cohesion in the school. **Chapter 5** looks at how schools provide equality of opportunity and achievement, and how this contributes to cohesion. **Chapter 6** draws on schools' approach to wider engagement of the community and extended services and **Chapter 7** looks at challenges to cohesion.

A more detailed summary of the activities taking place in the two schools can be found in the Appendix 1 (Kingsmead) and Appendix 2 (Berger). The appendices also contain photographs from the schools and data from children – notes of the School Council discussions and examples of 'draw and write' work.

## 2. Cohesion and Schools

Over the past ten years there has been a shift in the government's thinking on community cohesion from what was originally seen as a responsibility of the Home Office to manage tensions to a more inclusive – and locally managed - process of building positive relations between people. Community cohesion is what *"must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together"*.

> By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a **common vision** and **sense of belonging** by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar **life opportunities** are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.
>
> *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion. DCSF, July, 2007.*

Perhaps as a result of this shift, in September 2007, schools were placed under a statutory duty to promote community cohesion, with a focus on different cultures, ethnic, religious (and non-religious) and socio-economic groups. The most important processes for promoting community cohesion in the current understanding are:

- 'common vision': people share and contribute to the view of future together
- 'sense of belonging' is a result of people understanding their rights and responsibilities, and trusting local organisations to act fairly
- similar 'life opportunities' involve tackling inequality, for schools, in particular, in achievement

'Community' does not only relate to the immediate 'school community' of children and staff; schools are also expected to demonstrate their work with the community of the neighbourhood and the city; the UK community and the global community.

The practical ways in which the schools are seen to contribute to community cohesion involve:

- teaching, learning and curriculum – helping children and young people to understand others, to value diversity, promote human rights and develop the skills of participation and responsible action;

- equity and excellence – ensuring equal opportunities for all, removing barriers to participation in learning and wider activities and working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups;
- engagement and extended services – providing opportunities for children and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities and the provision of extended service

The duty emphasises the schools' responsibility to equip children for a successful life in the increasingly diverse UK society. It is linked with the *Every Child Matters* framework for improving outcomes for the whole child and the expectation within The Children's Plan (2007) that every school is *"uncompromising in its ambitions for achievement, sitting at the heart of the community it serves."*

## 3. Kingsmead and Berger Primary Schools

Berger and Kingsmead primary schools are situated at the eastern side of the borough in the Homerton neighbourhood. Both are non-denominational. The schools' catchment areas are formed by a small area of the surrounding social housing estates, serving an ethnically diverse and economically disadvantaged local population. Poverty is compounded by high levels of worklessness and low incomes, further accentuated by isolation due to poor transport links, and problems of overcrowding.

### *Kingsmead Primary School*

Kingsmead Primary School sits within the southeast of the Kings Park Ward, adjacent to Hackney Marshes. The majority of pupils (80%) come from the Kings Park ward, living mainly on the Kingsmead estate opposite to the school. Ward-level data suggests a highly diverse local population, with the lowest number of White British residents of any Hackney ward (35%). The pupils' ethnic breakdown shows an even higher degree of diversity – just 4% of the school's 239 children are White British. 46 languages are spoken in the school with 70% speaking English as an additional language. The largest ethnic group is Black African with 36%[1] of pupils from this background; 15% are of Black Caribbean background. Many children – the exact figure is not available - are refugees or asylum seekers. The school has – in the past - had a fairly high number of pupils from the Irish Traveller community, who were based in Hackney Marshes, but were moved due to the Olympic site development. There are, nevertheless, currently a few students from this background in the school.

The most recent employment figures for the Kings Park ward (Aug 2009) suggest that just above a quarter (26%) of working age residents are economically inactive. It has the seventh highest rate for the claimants of Jobseekers Allowance among Hackney wards (March 2010). The proportion of lone parents out of work is 6% - three times higher than national average. It is the 18$^{th}$ most deprived ward in London (GLA 2008). This is testified by the large proportion of children eligible for free school meals – 50%, compared to the national average of 15%. Hackney has one of the highest eligibility rates for free school meals in London; with 37% of primary and nursery school pupils and 40% of secondary school pupils eligible (2009 Borough Profiles).

[1] Ethnicity and free school meals data for Kingsmead and Berger is based on DCSF provisional School Census statistics (January 2010).

The achievement is above average for areas of comparable deprivation. The most recent Ofsted report (2008) puts the proportion of pupils with special educational needs at 40%

The area next to the school was originally being considered for the site for the building of the borough's new academy, the City Academy, Hackney, which was moved to its present location in Clapton due to poor accessibility to the original site for the construction. This meant that Kingsmead pupils fell outside of the new school's catchment area, which limits their options and means that there are only two secondary schools that boys would be accepted at, which are both Christian faith schools. Last year, children transferred to 9 secondary schools, some of which were outside of the borough in Tower Hamlets, Islington and Waltham Forest.

***Berger Primary School***

Berger Primary School is located within the Chatham Ward, close to the Homerton overground station. The school serves the surrounding social housing, which includes Wyke estate and Banister House. Chatham is also ethnically diverse with 60% of residents from a minority ethnic background, largest groups from Caribbean, African and Turkish backgrounds. The school is attended by 474 pupils, of which 57 (12%) are White British. The largest ethnic group is Black African with 103 pupils from this background; 87 (12%) are of Turkish/Cypriot origin. Again, a high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.

Chatham is the 16$^{th}$ most deprived ward in London (GLA 2008) and the latest figures (Aug 2009) show that 27% of the local residents are economically inactive. The proportion of out-of-work lone parents is three times the national average (6%). It is the second highest ward in claiming Jobseekers Allowance in Hackney. Similar to Kingsmead, 50% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, more than three times the national average.

The Berger School pupils achieve above the average for schools of similar levels of disadvantage. The number of children with special educational needs is high with nearly 100 children on the Special Educational Needs register.

Several large regeneration projects are currently taking place within the Chatham ward; the most relevant construction project for this report is the new building for the Berger Primary School itself. At the time of this research, the school was preparing to move into the completely new, larger, building, which greatly

improves its capacity to work with the local community. Two other schools in the ward – Hackney Free and the Cardinal Pole Secondary Schools - are also in the process of building new campuses. Several large residential developments are going on, expected to bring about a change in local demographics, and the Homerton station is part of the new high frequency overground network. All this is expected to transform the ward in the next few years. There was, however, some concern from one person interviewed that this may change the area into a set of isolated communities with little interaction between different communities if regeneration is not coordinated properly.

Closer to the new City Academy, Hackney, most of the Berger pupils now go on to this secondary school. This has much improved their choice, which prior to that resembled that experienced by Kingsmead pupils.

**Table 1: Pupils' ethnicity at Kingsmead and Berger primary schools (2010)**

| Ethnicity (%) | Berger Primary | Kingsmead Primary | Hackney |
|---|---|---|---|
| English/Scottish/Welsh | 12% | 4% | 15% |
| African | 22% | 36% | 21% |
| Caribbean | 7% | 15% | 13% |
| Bangladeshi | 7% | 5% | 6% |
| Indian | 3% | 3% | 6% |
| Turkish or Kurdish Speaking | 18% | 11% | 10% |
| Mixed heritage | 11% | 8% | 9% |
| All other ethnic groups | 20% | 19% | 20% |

Source: DCSF provisional School Census statistics (January 2010).

Stakeholders stressed the importance that these schools work in very challenging contexts in terms of the deprivation and disadvantage of some of the families living on the estates. It was explained that some parents struggle daily to meet the most basic needs for their families, taking on several jobs and having little time for their children. As a consequence, some children were believed to be given an inappropriate level of freedom and were seen to be 'roaming around the street' with little to do. Others are failing to find employment altogether. We were also told that some families may have unclear immigration or refugee status, which puts families – and children – under serious stress. In addition, some children are believed to come from families that have had experience of the criminal justice system, with alcohol and drug problems.

There are local organisations that work with the community. For example, Kingsmead school is part of the Kingsmead Community Network, which brings together organisations such as the Kingsmead Kabin, the housing association, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team, Hackney Marshes Trust and others.

Nevertheless schools were seen as important, neutral, spaces for the communities to come together. There was a concern about provision for young people, with some stakeholders feeling the situation was getting worse, with youth clubs losing resources. Consequently, anti-social behaviour among young people was seen as an issue. We were told that some families were reluctant to let their children out to play, and 'locked themselves away' from the neighbourhood, although some stakeholders believed that the estates are safe, and anti-social behaviour or crime is actually committed by people who do not live on the estates.

On the other hand, we learnt that the communities, in terms of cohesion, are strong. We were told that – owing to the housing allocations policy in Hackney – communities are very mixed and different ethnicities live side by side. Levels of deprivation also meant that no group is better off than others, giving people a "shared experience of adversity", which prevents any resentment between different groups of people.

## 4. Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

This section looks at how the two schools have embedded community cohesion in the core activities of the school, and the impact that this can have on children's understanding of community cohesion and diversity.

Our research at Kingsmead and Berger primary schools suggested that children and staff in both schools appreciated the very complex cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of their school community. Getting along with children from different backgrounds was not something that children considered an effort – children explained that *"by making friends, you get to know people from different backgrounds, and learn about their culture and religion".* This reflects the findings of the Cohesion Review in that the lack of segregation in Hackney, where people live – and learn – in day-to-day contact with people of other backgrounds in itself underpins the development of good cohesion.

However, we also found that the two schools actively planned for children to value diversity of others and embrace their own background with confidence. Activities that supported the development of good cohesion include:

- using local **diversity as a resource** for learning and celebrating this;
- bringing children of **different backgrounds together** in the school;
- using creativity as a tool for learning and building self-esteem;
- bringing children out of their immediate environment, **developing Hackney-level identity;**
- **broadening children's horizons** through links with children of different backgrounds in the UK and abroad.

***Diversity as a tool for learning***

*"We start from the child's own experience"* – Kingsmead teacher
*"Community cohesion is about getting the children involved, rather than telling them what to do"* – Berger teacher

Our research indicated that the schools' philosophy of *"placing the child at the centre of learning"* develops children's sense of tolerance and respect towards difference. We found that in diverse schools such as Kingsmead and Berger, **children's own backgrounds can be a useful learning resource** for understanding diversity – and both schools embraced this opportunity. Children's backgrounds are celebrated and shared, so that they learn to value their own and others' lives, including those vulnerable to stigmatisation. Some examples of this work include

- International Primary Curriculum at Kingsmead takes the children's own experiences as a starting point for teaching, starting a topic with a 'mind map'. For example, when learning about immigration, refugees and asylum seeking children are able to talk about it from their personal experience, *"Children learn that 'refugee' is not a term of abuse"*
- Focus on Traveller communities in the classroom and displayed in school foyer (see Appendix 2).
- An annual languages survey at Kingsmead, where children discuss and think about their family connections through languages they speak. The results are used for displays of the 'languages board' to introduce languages spoken in the school. At the start of the school year, children place their names on a world map in the foyer, showing their family connections (see Appendix 1).
- Unicef's Rights-respecting schools programme at Berger, which children linked to cohesion, discussing their responsibility *"not to hurt other people's feelings"* and their role in *"caring for each other"* (see Appendix 1 for link).

Both schools have a busy calendar of **opportunities to celebrate diversity** throughout the school year in a way that **reflects the diversity of the school community**. Assemblies and creative projects are used as an opportunity to learn about the history and culture of children's own backgrounds, making sure that every child feels recognised – and no single ethnicity or faith dominates. For example, Christmas is not emphasised at Kingsmead, and all world religions are treated equally. Every year one festival from each world religion is celebrated through a special festival assembly to which all members of the school community are invited.

*"The good thing about Berger is that because there are people from all the different countries, they don't only do Christmas, they also do Ramadan, Eid. They respect each other's thoughts and religions. If some people were fasting, no one took the mickey out of anybody."* – Berger ex-students

Some events are celebrated and prepared for by the whole school – Black History Month and Refugee Week being just two examples. 'Shadow Ball', a tradition from American black history is currently being produced as an opera by Year 5 and 6 at Kingsmead and children found projects like these very important.

### *Bringing children together*

Schools in the diverse context of Hackney can build cohesion through encouraging friendships between children of different backgrounds. Our research found that both schools bring together children in a way that directly supports the development of respect towards different age groups, abilities and backgrounds:

- At Berger, mixed ability pairing not only supports children's achievement, but builds relationships between children of different backgrounds that carry on into the playground. This is used to bring together children with and without a disability "*so they each understand and have side-by-side experiences"*.
- Buddying system at Kingsmead: older children from Year 5 support the reception and Year 1 children in the playground. Children found this important for them to help different groups getting on well together. Similarly, when a new child joins the school a 'special friend' (in the same year group) helps to integrate new children within the school.

Both schools have a very wide range of **after-school activities and lunchtime sessions**, that bring together children across year groups. Our research found that this was an important means for children to make friends with people they would otherwise not necessarily meet. Football was undoubtedly very important for children to make friends: *"We are like one big family"*.

### *Building positive identity through creativity*

The way in which the schools approach many aspects of their work aims to assist the development of strong self esteem in their pupils. In particular the emphasis on creativity means that every child should find some activity in which they can shine. Sports were also important. The range of activities available is vast, with those (like African drumming and dancing at Kingmead) embedded in the daytime curriculum throughout children's school careers complemented by afterschool and a wide range of special projects. School choirs and steel pan groups perform both within the school and in venues across and beyond Hackney. Children described their pride in representing their school. The poet in residence who regularly works with Kingsmead children also formed an important focus for creativity.

**Children's perspectives**

The children we talked to in different groups gave us very interesting perspectives on the myriad efforts to foster cohesion that they had experienced. We met with school council of each school, worked with Kingsmead's Year 5s, and met with two groups of ex-pupils of these schools. The schools councils (full notes in Appendices 1 and 2) identified many elements as important. They emphasised initiatives like playground buddy systems and straightforward fairness in dealing with conflicts as very important, as well as more celebratory occasions. They also mentioned 'catch up' educational initiatives, and showed that they strongly value opportunities for their parents to come into school and work alongside them.

Berger's school council members highlighted the importance of the adults treating them fairly and issues being resolved fairly and quickly. Children also discussed racism within the school, emphasising that nobody in the school was racist and the importance of respecting different cultures and religions through visiting religious institutions.

*'Adults treat us the same.'*

*'No one in school is racist. People are allowed to believe what they believe.'*

There was a strong emphasis on issues of disability and accommodating for disabled children's needs, suggestions included:

*'Have a disability club - children can learn from children with disabilities.'*

'[There] *should be a person in school who helps children with disabilities* (boy could not go to clubs because they were upstairs).'

Berger's new build will greatly improve physical access, and these issues were being discussed within the rights-respecting schools process.

At Kingsmead, children identified bringing people together with music, performances and food as contributing to cohesion.

*'Learning different musical instruments from different cultures –such as piano, guitar, ukulele, steel pans, drumming – African; used to have recorder.'*

The children spoke highly of the International Evening and Kingsmead's Got Talent.

*'International evening – lots of people bring food, everybody shares food from their country'*

Ideas and suggestions for the future involved having weekend clubs, dressing up in national dress, and having parents in classes.

*'Clubs for people not at school – bring in other people, like family and friends.'*

*'Dressing up as your country – some people come as their country during international evening, not everybody.'*

In the 'draw and write' exercise with Kingsmead's Year 5, children explained their reasons for identifying particular activities as building cohesion. Some of their pictures are in Appendix 1. One girl wrote about steel pans:

'(What is in the picture?) *It's an instrument that I started in year 4. The melody is the best pan there (that's what I think). It's called a melody and it is the main pan in steel pans. There are 4 melody and the rest are behind the melodys.*'

'(Why is this important to you?)*This instrument is important because you have to work together as a team. It is important because melody has to do with the music and it's words. Melody is important because it is very truley fun.'*

We asked the class if they knew where steel pans come from, and it was not their origin that they particularly appreciated but the teamwork involved in playing together and the opportunity to perform at external venues.

By far the most common theme that children chose to prioritise for their pictures was football. This may have been influenced by the fact that there was great excitement that day about the final of a girls football tournament that afternoon, but football is of course also pivotal for many children in developing teamwork skills, making friends and so on. Other themes included: the summer fair, the sports day, Easter, and an upcoming 'pyjama party' that the children hoped would include a sleepover at the school.

Children wrote about their reasons why these aspects were important. Girls and boys identified many benefits to participating in team football:

*'Me playing football and me scoring. This is very important to me because it helps me to communicate, be a better player, meet people I don't no and I*

*love football. I think football is important because it brings us together.'*

*'A mix of different coutlures that are friend and call each other sis. Stick together. Score forever. Work together. Team!'*

(What is in the picture?) *'There's a boy who's playing by himself and he wants to play with his friends.'*

(What is in the picture?) *'My friend scoring a goal when I kicked the ball. I think it is important because this is the place I made new friends.'*

*'We are playing a game of football, I win and [name of friend] doesn't mind. I think football is important because it brings teams together.'*

*'Here is the football manager training boys and girls to play football and here is the best goalkeeper and it's verey good because you work in a team and you get to understand other people. Team work is verey important.'*

*'This is me scoring a wicked goal. And football is my dream. And it bring people together. Making new friends.'*

*'Girls football team because it's like one big family and people make you feel happy. Goal! Goal! Goal!!! Goal!!!'*

*'It's important 2 me because I like to learn different techniques in football from different countries.'*

Several children drew pictures where different players on a pitch were labelled as from different backgrounds or countries, showing the ball passing from one to another and into the goal, one example is in Appendix 1. These children of course live next door to the Olympic site, so should in future have exciting opportunities to engage with international sport.

Sports Day was also highlighted, with team work and helping each other, and one brought together sport and the Summer Fair. Another drew a rockit (rocket?) game and a maths game at the Summer Fair: 'everyone gets to play games and eat ice cream'. It is notable that the summer fair was in their minds even though we were working in March. Two children divided their page and included the Summer Fair, Easter, Christmas and Chinese New Year, with ice cream and Easter eggs getting a special mention.

Finally three children drew the ‘sleepover party’, which is planned to happen shortly (the teacher explained that in fact it is a pyjama party without staying the night). One drew many labelled children having a pillow fight; another explained that: ’it is important because lots of people share stories they like and some people dress up with same pyjamas’. Another wrote ‘this picture is about the pyjama party and popcorn and this is to stick together and this is why it is really special. This is sleep over party! And Horror story are there! – everyone in her picture had a bag of popcorn and some had hot drinks too.

In the group discussion children also talked with great pleasure about ‘Kingsmead’s Got Talent’ and particularly about ‘Stars in your Eyes’ when teachers dress up as popstars and put on a performance. This is taken very seriously and performed for children-only audience. The dressing up for World Book Day was also mentioned, as was Take One Picture. This programme exists at both schools, with children visiting an art gallery and looking in depth at one picture, each year.

***Being part of Hackney***

*“Community cohesion is about not having the boundaries too – we break the boundaries down when we are linking with other schools”* – Berger staff

The Hackney Cohesion Review found that young people – particularly teenage boys and younger adult men - may have concerns about safety and mobility, referring to the risk of developing neighbourhood- or estate-based ‘postcode’ identities. Whilst we found no evidence that children of either primary school had experienced violence related to these boundaries staff reported that older siblings are likely to have these experiences. The staff thought that clustering with other schools was an effective way to enable children to develop a **more inclusive sense of belonging**. Through cooperation with other schools children were able to perform, compete, and represent and celebrate Hackney identity, alongside ‘Berger’ and ‘Kingsmead’ identities. For example:

- Both schools participate in Hackney schools’ sports competitions. It was important for children to feel recognised, but, we were told, also supported a sense of “camaraderie” between children of different schools and areas.
- Performances and projects brought together children of many schools, where children could be part of the celebration of the talent of Hackney.

Children told about preparing to perform for an opera at Hackney Empire, where children of 'all schools' participated.

- Being part of 'Gifted and Talented' groups of drummers, and other performances where children represent Hackney. For example, recently the drummers played for the Prime Minister.

All of the work described in these sections – creativity, building friendships between children, representing their own school and clustering with other schools – work towards creating a 'shared identity' for children at different levels – being part of a class, school and Hackney. We found that this work, as explained above, was part of the school's ethos of developing children into confident, respectful adults. Simultaneously it helps to build cohesion. Children's own comments indicated that they did indeed respond to these 'shared identities' – as described above. Also, ex-students told us that going into a new secondary school was easier, as they "were all from Hackney and we already know them" (Berger ex-students).

**Raising aspirations**

*"Getting children out of the area, almost always means experiencing difference."* – Berger staff

Berger and Kingsmead operate in the context of culturally diverse, but economically deprived communities. Staff explained that within this context enabling children to *"experience what children from other areas take for granted"* was important to enable children to feel comfortable with the life outside of the estate. Both schools have a strong focus on enriching learning with visits outside: day-trips to museums, theatres, and performances all work for this purpose.

Schools also actively seek projects where children work in direct contact with children or adults from a different socio-economic background by collaborating with schools and professionals. For example, Kingsmead cooperated with a school in Westminster in a theatre production. Berger visited Portland National Sailing Academy in Dorset, where the Olympic sailing events will be held, linking in with the Olympic theme. Both schools are part of the Creative Partnerships programme, which brings creative professionals into the school to work with children.

***Being part of the global community***

The schools also aim to widen children's horizons beyond the UK, helping children to understand the global context of their lives.

Berger Primary School focuses on enhancing children's inter-cultural understanding through direct links with children from other countries. The school has twinned with a school in France, where children work on projects together and have also visited each other. There are also strong links with China: in Year 6, all children learn Mandarin and a group has visited the country. There are projects linking with a school in China through written exchange. There is a vision in the school to *"teach children other cultural ways of behaving through social exchange and language."*

The International Primary Curriculum at Kingsmead develops the 'international-mindedness' of children throughout the curriculum. All topics link with the local community and globally, helping children understand how their immediate area is linked to other parts of the world.

Both schools regularly fundraise for other countries, helping them to understand the life standards in the rest of the world. Children felt that this helped them to understand *"about luxuries we have living in this country."*

## 5. Equity and excellence

This section looks at the school's role in improving children's educational outcomes through work with children and their parents. The chapter also considers the importance of trust, equality and fairness to children's understanding of cohesion.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental ways in which schools in deprived areas can support community cohesion is by enabling children to achieve better life chances, in particular in areas of high disadvantage. Having a high-achieving **'good school' in the area was seen in itself as a reason for good community cohesion** by parents and community members. There was a sense of fairness that schools were *"for all local children,* [they are] *not picking and choosing".*

Achievement then is a crucial element of cohesion. Several activities described in the earlier section support children's achievement – for example, pairing up children with schools in a different socio-economic context was seen to impact on children's aspirations. Day-trips to universities from Berger are planned precisely to *"help children and their parents understand what higher education means."* Our research found a whole range of focused activities in both schools that contributed to the schools' record of high achievement (see appendix 1 and 2):

- systematic and clearly planned help for **children who need extra support**
- **family learning** and engaging parents' in their children's learning.

We found that a strong sense of trust of schools was not only a result of children's access to good education, but also of a concerted effort by schools to engage parents, in a multitude of ways:

- warm welcome, and a **friendly 'front door'**
- home visits to **introduce parents into the school** *'right from the start'*
- informal **opportunities to make contact** with staff, rather than having to 'make appointments'
- supporting parents through potentially worrying processes, such as secondary transfer
- linking parents with external agency support where necessary

A lack of good local secondary schools can cause a sense of injustice. At Kingsmead, the lack of local secondary schools in the area was seen to support the account that public services favour *"posh kids against poor ones from the estate".* Children from poorer backgrounds were seen to having to compromise

their future prospects by having to go further from home to find non-denominational schools, and having to resort to their second preference, which may have been a lower-performing school (see Challenges section).

### *Helping children who need extra support*

Our research suggested that schools' effort to support children with particular needs was very clear and systematic. In relation to the extremely high numbers of children who speak **English as an additional language** and fairly high levels of special educational needs, both schools had clearly planned routes to extra support:

- dedicated member of staff to help with language needs, speech and language support;
- using visuals with children with English as an additional language(Berger);
- catch-up programme 'Numbers Count' group for children who need extra support with numeracy – with parents involved, where families also receive practical and emotional support.

Schools did not see their role as restricted to children's learning alone: the focus is on general wellbeing, and opportunities are actively sought for children facing disadvantage. For example, both schools tapped into holiday residential programmes for children from very disadvantaged families to *"get away",* acknowledging that for these children holidays can be a difficult time. There is much 'unofficial' overcrowding in local housing, and families do not necessarily feel safe to use local open space.

### *Engaging parents in children's learning*

*"It is a pool of knowledge for all of us"* – Berger parents

It is well established that parents' engagement in their children's learning has a positive impact on their achievement and both schools have dedicated resources to enable parents to support their children's education. Parents who better understand what their children are learning can help them more; also children are better supported when parents feel respected by the school, and feel able to raise issues with teachers where they have concerns for their children. Children are reassured when their parents are welcomed into the school, bringing their own 'two worlds' together. Children themselves acknowledged the value of

working alongside parents and being able to share their experiences with them, as an important element of cohesion. Some examples of this work include

- Ocean Maths for Year 2, 3 and 4 at Kingsmead, where all parents are invited to workshops with their children engaging in learning together. This was cited by one school council as important to cohesion.
- Regular family learning sessions at Berger, covering English, Maths, Science, but also arts and crafts, which helps parents to *"learn what children are learning at school"*
- An International Primary Curriculum evening for parents, where all children presented a topic within the curriculum to their parents (Kingsmead)
- Home school support workers at Kingsmead and Berger, who work particularly with parents of children who are having academic difficulties

***Providing parents with opportunities to participate***

Participation is recognised as an important element of cohesion. However, it has been found that in disadvantaged areas and among certain groups, some traditional routes to participation may not be successful. Our research found that Berger and Kingsmead did not rely on traditional methods of parent engagement, such as a Parent and Teacher Association (PTA). They acknowledged that such mechanisms may not be effective for families they work with, who may be new to the country, or have had negative experiences of education. In addition to active parent representation on the school governors, there was a very strong focus on *"getting parents to the school"* and to *"become a familiar face"* and many diverse ways were offered to parents to communicate with the school and to participate (see also the following section on community events).

There was recognition that parents may not feel comfortable with coming into the school to start with and it can be a *"really big thing"* for parents to have their child start school. Therefore a lot of effort was put into introducing parents into the school through home visits - to answer any questions parents may be worried about, often using translators.

Kingsmead recognised that an important mechanism to get to know parents is 'gate duty': at the start and end of each day two members of the inclusion team are at school gates, where parents can approach them for an informal chat. These conversations would then inform the inclusion team's work plan.

### *Helping parents understand school processes*

*"We work really well with parents and they trust us. It's about hearing what they say and knowing how they're feeling."* – Berger staff

At Berger, the staff explained that supporting parents through potentially stressful decisions about their children's education was an important element of support they provided. Clear communication was very clearly a priority to help parents make appropriate choices. The head teacher held one-to-one meetings with all parents to explain the process of secondary transfer, using a full range of interpreters for parents to be able to fully engage. Although this was extremely complex to organise, the school saw the value of giving the parents the full support to understand their entitlements.

Translators are also used for progress meetings with parents whose children have special educational needs. In both schools, there is a Turkish-speaking member of the inclusion team, who was drawn into important meetings to translate.

### *Helping parents get support*

*"We have a very open door policy – the school is somewhere parents can come and get help."* – Kingsmead staff

It is important to recognise that these schools did not just serve an educational function within their communities. Our research found that for many families, the school was the first place they trusted with any issues they faced. The schools were recognised by community members as fair, neutral and safe places, where the community can turn for impartial advice. Both schools were dealing with issues, such as immigration, anti-social behaviour in the community, support with complying with child protection appointments as well as signposting to ESOL, benefits, employment support. Dealing with legal issues can sometimes put the school in a difficult position (see Challenges section).

### *Fair treatment of children*

Being treated fairly was also an important element of the children's understanding of cohesion and was related to the lack of discrimination within the school. Children explained that adults "treat us the same" and that "people in school respect each other, both children and grown-ups" (Berger). Whilst we

were not told about incidents of bullying or racism, we found that schools had very clear policies and procedures of dealing with any issues of this nature and close monitoring of both incidents. Children clearly valued the transparency in dealing with this.

*"If two people had a fight, they had to sit in the room and work it out: what caused the fight and they had to resolve it in a respectful way."*

*"We had a box* [for incidents] *and you can put notes in the box and there was a woman from NSPCC who got the notes and talked to people privately. If it was something really bad, like bullying, she solved it. She was really good."*

Berger ex-students

Both schools have effective behaviour policies, which rendered all situations, including incidents, predictable and solvable. Some other examples include:

- Positive behaviour policy, Stay on Green: *"It's fundamental to children's sense of fairness. Everybody knows what it is, it's very clear".* Stay on Green is a clear system of rewards for good and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. The rewards include: praise, claps and handshake; name on the board; tick by name; stay on green card and postcard home. The consequences of inappropriate behaviour include: warning (verbal); time out (2 minutes); time out (3 minutes) (blue card); time out in another class (5 minutes) (yellow card) and talk with the headteacher or deputy (red card). At each stage, the child is given an opportunity to improve and 'get back on green'.
- 'Circle time' to talk about and find solutions to any wider issues coming up – children come together and an adult facilitates a discussion on a topic. This may be to do with discrimination or bullying, particularly when there has been an incident at school recently.

*"The school is very strong in establishing what the issue is and dealing with it. It has very clear policies and they follow it - they do what's to be done. And parents have direct awareness of it."* - community member about Kingsmead

## 6. Engagement and extended services

This section looks at the evidence of how schools can contribute to the cohesion of the wider community surrounding the school.

We asked parents, governors, staff and community members for the most inspiring examples of the schools' work to build community cohesion and found that it was the community-facing work that inspired them most. They explained how the annual international evening or week, and special projects such as Kingsmead Eyes brought *"whole communities"* together, benefiting a much wider group than the children attending the school and their parents. Our research suggests that these events – in addition to being enjoyable occasions that brought people together – also helped residents living in the area to **develop a more positive and confident identity for the local area**. An example was given of how a child who is 'looked after' and perhaps feeling rather lost, might benefit from the warmth and positive atmosphere of the international evening. We were told, for example, that Kingsmead estate has been at times viewed as 'notorious' by people who did not live there, and that the school actively worked to change this perception. Indeed, the housing association has seen the housing stock values changed in recent years, and attributed this largely to having the school in the area. It should be noted here that both schools are over-subscribed and have to turn away applications from better off families in the areas surrounding the school because of this.

Other ways in which schools contributed to cohesive communities were by:

- enabling parents and other members of the community to **use school facilities for community projects;**
- being open to, and initiating **partnership projects** – with other schools, community organisations, housing associations;
- using school **resources for the benefit of the local community**, by offering volunteering opportunities, IT access, adult learning;
- **extended schools activity and breakfast clubs**, enabling parents to enter and stay in employment.

Both schools run high quality breakfast clubs. The breakfast club at Kingsmead is a free service and funded by the support of businesses. It is attended by a large number (50%) of children. As well as supporting parents in employment and training, this ensures that children start the day with good nutrition, assisting with concentration and positive behaviour throughout the day.

## Building positive local identity

Much of the schools' work described in other sections of this report builds children's confidence and positive sense of identity, at least partly to counteract the negative image that is often imposed on residents of these estates. This approach is also reflected in schools' work in the community. The International Evening and the International Week build positive identity for the area, celebrating the diversity, bringing people together and showcasing the talent of children and their parents. The high number of participants shows that it is involving the community in a way it wants to – and feels able to – participate. Other events, such as the Summer Fair at Kingsmead, also attract a large number of local residents.

**International Week at Berger and International Evening at Kingsmead** are highly popular events among the local community. At Berger, events take place over a week, where each day is dedicated to a different country, reflecting the children's backgrounds, with last year including 'Beats of Africa', 'Turkish Delight', 'Echos of India' and 'Caribbean Rhythms'. Children are involved in music and dance, performed either by themselves or visitors, such as a Chinese Opera group. Direct telephone or video camera links to different countries take place, to as far as China and Jamaica. The International Evening on the Friday is the culmination of the international celebration and is attended by *"the whole community"*. At Kingsmead the International Evening is an equally popular event; last year it was attended by over 500 people for a school with 240 pupils: *"you couldn't fit more people in the building"*. Parents are very involved in both schools *"completely running with the idea"*, cooking traditional food and running performance sessions. Parents' recipes from the International Week were included in the schools 'Recipe book' (see Appendix 2). Last year's theme at Kingsmead was 'Songs from the home countries', where children learnt songs from their parents and performed these at the evening in their mother tongues.

**Kingsmead Eyes** is a recent collaboration between photographer Gideon Mendel and pupils from Kingsmead, where the children were taught to use a camera and documented their world over six months, photographing their friends, families, community and school. The project was exhibited in V&A Museum of Childhood and covered widely by the local and national media. It was found highly inspirational by the whole community: *"It made children feel able to celebrate their lives, and it was very moving to see parents celebrate their children and their school."* One element is a montage of photos of the

faces of all the children and adults in the school. Another is a series of short sequences by individual children, showing aspects of life at Kingsmead from their point of view. Commentary and music performed by the children also feature on the website. This sequence has been running on a DVD player at Kingsmead's foyer, and children were observed watching it with interest.

**Hub of the community**

Berger and Kingsmead schools were frequently described as the *"hub of the local community"* by parents and members of the community. Parents and family members felt welcome in the school and were invited and frequently participated in the trips and visits organised for their children. The schools' special events bring parents together in the school – for example, at the time of our research, Kingsmead had organised an event for parents to taste the new school dinners, which was being actively used by staff to build links with parents for different purposes. Occasions such as these, along with meeting other parents through family learning and at school gates, enable parents to create social networks and build relationships, which are vital ingredients for a cohesive community. For example, during our research we met with a group of Turkish mothers who had met during school events at Kingsmead and, as a result, had developed friendships between families.

The schools also retain close links with ex-students, who continue participating in much-loved activities, such as poetry sessions at Kingsmead, and drumming at Berger.

At Berger, parents also emphasised that they felt very welcome to initiate new activities and were able to see these through without *"any bureaucracy"*. The parents, for example, ran a gardening club and gave dancing lessons to children as part of the extended schools activities. This was different from their own experience of schooling, where *"schools were scary places"* and staff were not accessible. We were told that the staff were *"humble"* and approachable, and parents were impressed how accessible the management of the school was. In both schools staff and stakeholders told us that management was indeed the key 'ingredient' of the success – the stability of management and clear philosophy and priorities, were mentioned as important for cohesion or success more widely.

In both schools, parents were offered volunteering and employment opportunities, with many of the support staff being local parents. Berger school also offers a parent volunteering project, where parents work in the classroom,

enabling them to gain skills and make progress towards employment or education. School facilities, where possible, are used by the community. For example, the IT suite at Kingsmead was open to parents - important in this area, where internet access is limited.

Local councillors interviewed, however, had not all visited the schools. They and other respondents suggested that greater community use of school buildings would be helpful, particularly looking ahead in the future of diminishing resources for the community. It was said that schools in general need to be opened up for the communities. Berger's new building should make this more feasible for them – it is not clear whether the schools in fact have any 'free' capacity for extra events.

**Building partnerships**

*"The school is always enthusiastic about projects"* – community partner

The vast number of projects and activities described throughout this report show the readiness of both schools to grasp opportunities and work collaboratively with other organisations and individuals. There were a number of local organisations in Hackney that schools worked with. Kingsmead is a member of the Kingsmead Community Network that brings together all community groups and statutory organisations in the area, including the Safer Neighbourhoods Team, the Hackney Marsh Partnership (with Concorde youth centre and adult training facility Kabin), GP, SCRAP, adventure playground and local nursery. Sanctuary Housing Association works with both Berger and Kingsmead, often sponsoring their activities. Berger school has also worked with local developers, organising access to the local community for consultation on planning.

This 'can-do' attitude opens up opportunities for children and their community. Some stakeholders explained that they were offering projects to these schools precisely because they knew the schools would be open to the opportunities. There were numerous examples of these partnership projects:

- collaboration with Groundwork London to design signage on Daubeney Fields (Kingsmead);
- a professional film crew filming a short film at school, where children were 'extras' (Berger);
- working with the Royal Shakespeare Company developing a production of Hamlet (Berger);
- producing a billboard advert for Children's Society at Chelsea flower garden (Berger);

- Sculpture making project in partnership with Hackney Marshes User Group (Kingsmead).
- Hackney Music Development Trust – Shadowball opera to be performed at the Mermaid theatre in June 2010 by Kingsmead school and professional musicians.

The schools actively work in partnerships with key stakeholders in the community, such as the council's social workers, health visitors, Traveller Team at Kingsmead and the community police team.

## 7. Challenges to Cohesion

Our methodology emphasised the positive in our discussions with adults and children, but we did ask questions about the challenges to community cohesion for the two schools. The level of adversity faced by the communities they serve, and the sharp inequalities within the surrounding economy and culture, clearly generate forces that can create social divisions. Some residents on these estates feel afraid to go out after dark and might not allow their children to play in local parks. 'Post code' territorialism was described as an issue for older young people. Children mentioned the existence of racism and linked attitudes *"someone might be called a terrorist"*" and the risk that 'English' people might worry more that newcomers could 'take their jobs' in times of recession.

Beyond this, respondents highlighted the following themes:

- **Secondary transfer**: parents and staff, especially at Kingsmead, identified the difficulty for children to find places at suitable secondary schools nearby as a key challenge to community cohesion. At an earlier stage of planning, the new Hackney City Academy school would have been built very close to the Kingsmead estate, but this did not happen, and Kingsmead children are outside of the catchment area. Children progress to numerous schools, of which the nearest is a Catholic school that some parents would not find suitable. Some parents feel that their children's future prospects are compromised by a lack of suitable provision at secondary level, and there are resentful feelings over this.
  Children we interviewed in their first year of secondary school reported different experiences by school – those in faith schools noted the loss of an approach that celebrates diversity; those at the Academy felt pressure to achieve, and both groups felt the loss of the particularly supportive staff group and ethos of their primary schools. Respondents included one who was the only child to move to her particular school – Kingsmead children in particular scatter to many different secondaries.
- **Schools' role in relation to legal issues:** a dilemma for schools in terms of where they stand in promoting community cohesion was identified in relation to their duties where they are aware of families whose immigration status is in question. Schools also have to take special care in relation to safeguarding issues where different cultural norms may be a factor to be taken into account. These were issues schools deal with as part of their routine work.
- It is important to recognise that efforts to improve cohesion **do not detract from educational outcomes**. In the drive to increase attainment, work that builds pride and sense of self-worth; increases parental engagement;

takes a creative approach to the curriculum and celebrates children's own histories and cultures, makes a clear and important contribution to initiating and maintaining children's commitment to learning.

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# Appendices

**Appendix 1**: Kingsmead Primary School:

- Summary of activities that contribute to community cohesion
- Photo and electronic version of annual cycle exercise
- Notes of discussion with School Council
- Examples of 'Draw and Write' exercise by Year 5 children

**Appendix 2**: Berger Primary School

- Summary of activities that contribute to community cohesion
- Notes of discussion with School Council

**Appendix 3**: Methodology & List of Contributors

# Appendix 1: Kingsmead Primary School Case Study: How can primary schools contribute to community cohesion?

Coram carried out research with Kingsmead Primary school as part of the Hackney Cohesion Review to look at how primary schools can contribute to community cohesion. This appendix summarises our findings.

Kingsmead is a non-denominational school in the Kings Park ward in the Homerton neighbourhood. The majority of its pupils live in the Kingsmead estate. The school works with a very diverse local population: only 4% of the school's 239 children are White English (see below). Currently 46 languages are spoken in the school with 70% speaking English as an additional language.

**Ethnicity of pupils at Kingsmead Primary School**

| Ethnicity | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| English | 9 | 3.8% |
| Irish | 3 | 1.3% |
| Traveller of Irish Heritage | 7 | 2.9% |
| White Eastern European | 8 | 3.3% |
| White Other | 2 | 0.8% |
| Bangladeshi | 12 | 5.0% |
| Indian | 8 | 3.3% |
| Pakistani | 1 | 0.4% |
| Angolan | 2 | 0.8% |
| Congolese | 16 | 6.7% |
| Ghanaian | 9 | 3.8% |
| Nigerian | 20 | 8.4% |
| Sierra Leonian | 3 | 1.3% |
| Somali | 9 | 3.8% |
| Other Black African | 26 | 10.9% |
| Caribbean | 36 | 15.1% |
| Any Other Black Background | 12 | 5.0% |
| White and Black African | 2 | 0.8% |
| White and Black Caribbean | 6 | 2.5% |
| Any Other Mixed Background | 11 | 4.6% |
| Afghan | 1 | 0.4% |
| Chinese | 2 | 0.8% |
| Kurdish | 5 | 2.1% |
| Latin/South/Central American | 3 | 1.3% |
| Turkish Cypriot | 6 | 2.5% |
| Turkish | 14 | 5.9% |
| Vietnamese | 2 | 0.8% |
| Information Not Obtained | 2 | 0.8% |
| Any Other Ethnic Group | 2 | 0.8% |
| **Total** | **239** | **100.0%** |

Kingsmead is a high achieving school with attainment significantly higher than the average for schools working in comparable contexts.

***Teaching, Learning and Curriculum***

Kingsmead teaches the **International Primary Curriculum** (IPC), with subjects taught through cross curricular themes. This takes the children's own experiences as a starting point for teaching, starting each topic with a 'mind map'. At the time of this research the Year 5 children were learning about immigration, refugees and asylum seeking, and were able to discuss their own experience. In addition to taking a child-centred approach, the IPC develops the 'international-mindedness' of children throughout the curriculum. All topics link with the local community and globally, helping children understand how their home neighbourhood is linked to other parts of the world.
Examples of children's work at Kingsmead:
Year 2: http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/childrens_2.html
Year 3 http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/childrens_3.html
Year 4: http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/childrens_4.html
More information on IPC: http://www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com/

Another example of child-centred approach is a **languages survey**, that takes place at the start of every school year and helps children think about their family connections through languages they speak. Questions include "What language do you dream in?", "What language are you angry in?" The results are used for displays of the 'languages board' to introduce languages spoken in the school.

**Languages board at Kingsmead Primary School:**

Similarly, at the start of the school year, children place their background on the world map, called ‘Our world connections’. The map is displayed in the reception area showing where all pupils have mapped their family connections.

**‘Our world connections’ map of Kingsmead Primary School**

Each child’s name appears under the country they say they are from:

Kingsmead has a calendar of **religious celebrations** taking place throughout the school that **reflects the diversity of the school community**. Assemblies are used as an opportunity to learn about the religions of children’s own

backgrounds, making sure that every child feels recognised – and no single ethnicity or faith dominates. For example, Christmas is not emphasised at Kingsmead, recognising that a large number of children who are from Jehovah's Witnesses' families would not be able to join in. Religious festivals are celebrated through class-led assemblies.

**Religious Festival Assemblies at Kingsmead**

| Festival/ Celebrations | Faith | Class | Nearest Thursday @ 2pm |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ramadan/Eid ul Fitr | Islamic | Year 6 | 8th October 2009 |
| Diwali | Hindu | Foundation Stage | 15th October 2009 |
| Birthday of Guru Nanak dev Ji | Sikh | Year 2 | 12th November 2009 |
| Christmas | Christian | Year 1 | 17th December 2009 |
| Chinese New Year | Buddhist | Year 3 | 11th February 2010 |
| St. Patrick's Day | Christian | EMA – Traveller Team | 18th March 2010 |
| End of Passover | Jewish | Year 5 | 22nd April 2010 |
| Carnival | | Year 4 | 8th July 2010 |

Some events are celebrated and prepared for by the whole school through creative approaches – plays, music, dance. **Black History Month and Refugee Week** are just two examples. At the time of our research Year 5 and 6 were preparing a 'Shadow Ball', a tradition from American black history, as an opera production with Hackney Music Services.

Pictures of the Shadow Ball at Kingsmead Primary School website: http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/ShadowBall.html

More information about the Shadow Ball opera project: http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/documents/newsletter090909.pdf

Kingsmead has a busy schedule of **after-school activities and lunchtime sessions**, that bring together children across year groups. Our research found that this was an important means for children to make friends with people they would not necessarily meet otherwise. We asked children from Year 5 to draw and write about "something that has helped to learn about people different from you." Football was undoubtedly very important for children to make friends: *"We are like one big family"* (see pictures at the end of this appendix).

The emphasis on creativity means that every child finds some activity in which they can shine. The activities include African drumming, in which all children participate throughout the years; steel pans group and dancing that are embedded in the daytime curriculum and are complemented by afterschool projects. The poet-in-residence, Joelle Taylor, regularly works with Kingsmead children, and has also worked with parents to create poetry, rap and beatbox, which are performed during the assemblies and elsewhere.

A steel pan group performs both within the school and in venues across and beyond Hackney. Children described their pride in representing their school. Kingsmead is part of the 'Gifted and Talented' drummers, who recently played for the Prime Minister. A group of children working with the poet performed beatbox poetry at a performance in Royal Albert Hall.

The school actively seeks projects where children work in direct contact with children or adults from a different socio-economic background by collaborating with schools and professionals. Currently the school works with Soho Theatre and a school in Westminster to create plays. The school participated in Linklaters' Hackney-wide Debating Challenge (more info http://www.learningtrust.co.uk/campaigns/words_unite/young_people/debating_challenge.aspx).

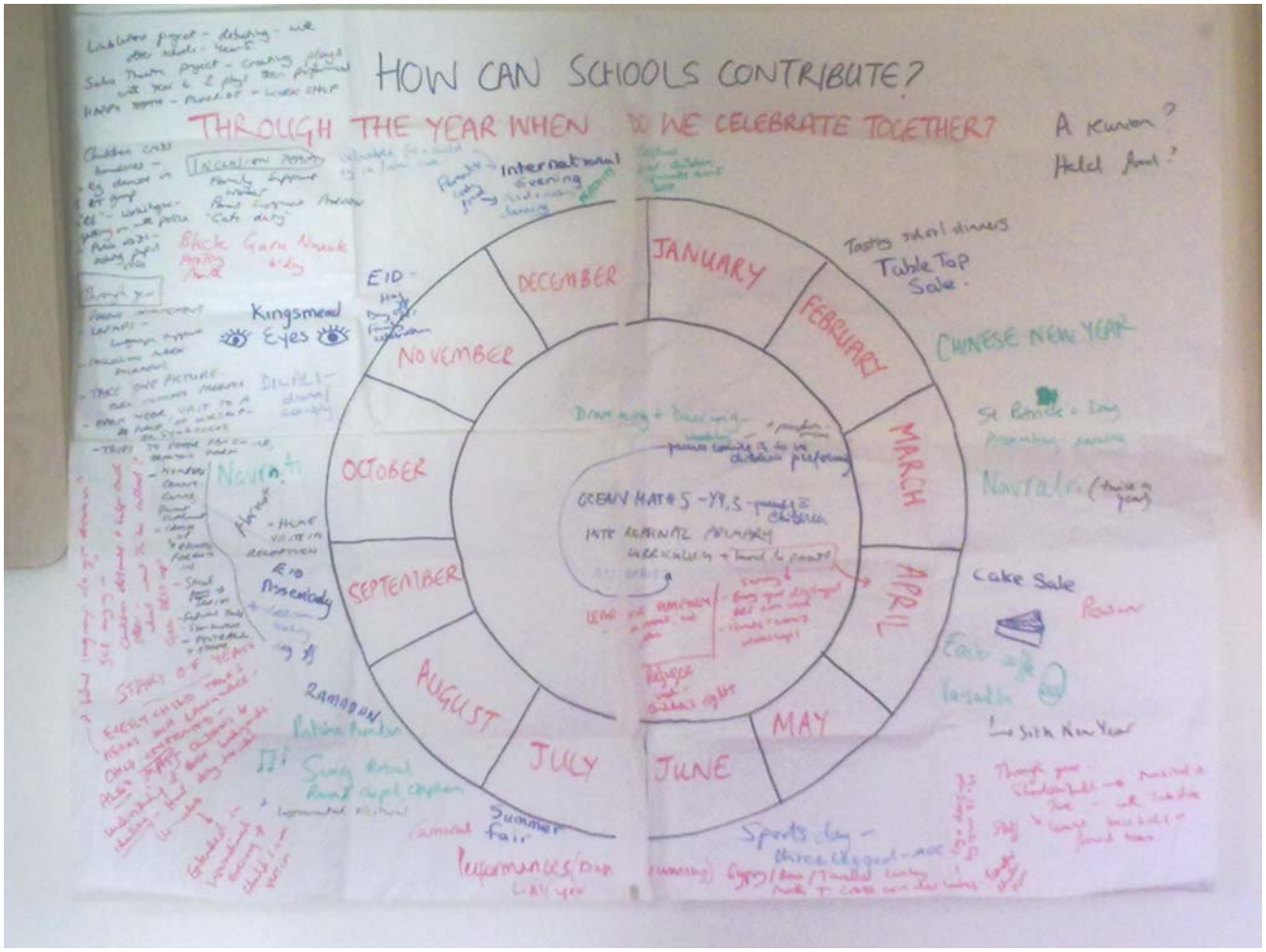
Kingsmead has a strong focus on enriching learning with visits outside: day-trips to museums, theatres, and performances all work to give children an opportunity for children to venture outside of their immediate area.

Kingsmead is also part of the Creative Partnerships programme, which brings creative professionals into the school to work with children (more info: http://www.creative-partnerships.com/).

We collected information about opportunities to celebrate diversity through an **annual cycle exercise**: we asked parents, staff, children and governors to tell us

what the opportunities are throughout the year to celebrate together. The results are below.

**Annual cycle: staff's, children's and parents' ideas on how Kingsmead celebrates together**




**The electronic version of the annual cycle (below)**

# How Can Schools Contribute

## THROUGH THE YEAR WHEN DO WE CELEBRATE TOGETHER?

Kingsmead Eyes

- Drumming Dancing Weekly + performance
- Ocean Maths –Y4 -3 Parents & Children
- **International Primary Curriculum**
- Every year displayed their own work
- Parents care workshop

Assembly - Parents coming to see children perform

**December**

International Evening

**Christmas Dinner**

**January**

World Book Day – dressing up

Tasting School Dinner

**February**

Table Top Sale

**March**

**St Patrick's Day – Assembly dancing**

**April**

Chinese New Year

**May**

**Cake Sales**

**Easter Raffle**

**Vaisakhi** (Sikh new year)

Launch for parents

**June**

**Sports Day –** Three legged race

**July**

Summer Fair

Carnival, discos. Take own picture

**August**

***Instrument Festival***

**Ramadan**

***Song Festival Round Chapel ,Clapham***

Languages Survey, Our World Connections Map

**September**

**Eid Assembly**

**Football match: Play with other schools work as a team/everyone like a family**

**October**

**Stars in your eyes popstars – teachers dress up as popstars**

**Black history month**

**Navratri - Hindu**

**November**

**Diwali**

Drama assembly

**Eid –Hajj Day off Family celebration**

Guru Nanak Birthday

**Inclusion Team**

-Family support worker

-Parent Support worker

Coram: How can primary schools contribute to community cohesion?

***Equity and Excellence***

Enabling all children achieve is at the heart of Kingsmead's approach. The school has clear pathways for further support for children that need it. Children with **English as an Additional Language** receive support from a dedicated member of staff who helps with speech and language. The home school support worker works particularly with parents of children who are having academic difficulties. Catch-up programmes are there for children who need it. **'Numbers Count'** is for children who need extra support with numeracy and involves also parents and families, giving them practical and emotional support. More information about the Numbers Count Programme (nationally) is here: http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/everychildcounts/general/NumbersCount.htm.

**Ocean Maths** for Year 3 at Kingsmead was important for both children and their parents as an opportunity to come together. Ocean Maths engages all families of Year 3 children. Parents and children have workshops together, where parents also learn skills to support their children. More information about Ocean Maths programme (nationally) can be found here: http://www.ocean-maths.org.uk/

Parents are encouraged to take part in their children's learning also through various special events. An International Primary Curriculum evening for parents was one example, where each year group presented a topic within the curriculum to their parents. Pictures of the event can be found at Kingsmead website: http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/ipc.html

There is a very strong focus at Kingsmead to engage parents, and this takes place through a range of different mechanisms to give all parents an opportunity to participate and contribute. A lot of effort is put into introducing parents into the school through home visits and coffee mornings - to answer any questions parents may be worried about, using translators, where parents may need them.

Another important mechanism for parent engagement is 'gate duty': at the start and end of each day two members of the inclusion team are at school gates, where parents can approach them for an informal chat. These conversations then inform the inclusion team's work plan.

Our research found that for many families Kingsmead was the first place they trusted with any issues they faced. The school's family support worker was there to help with any issues and often provided advice or signposting on immigration, anti-social behaviour, supported families with form-filling, accompanied them to medical appointments, and so on.

Staff explained that some parents feel concerned about safety in the area and would not allow their children to play outside during school holidays. Some families are also said to experience over-crowding, sometimes as a result of sub-letting rooms, which leads to holidays being a difficult time being for some children. Through a local health visitor, the school links with the Honeypot holiday residential programme to offer respite for children who may not otherwise be able to *"get away"* during school holidays. Over 20 families are involved in the programme at Kingsmead. More information about Honeypot can be found here: http://www.honeypot.co.uk/

Fairness is firmly built into school procedures and was important for children's sense of cohesion. Positive behaviour policy, Stay on Green is further explained at the school's website: http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/ourschool.html

Children found that the buddying system, where older children from Year 5 support the reception and Year 1 children in the playground, also helps different groups of children get on well. Similarly, a 'special friend', when a new child joins the school helps to integrate new children within the school.

***Engagement and extended services***

Kingsmead is proudly seen as the "hub of the community" by parents. Our research suggests that the school helps residents living in the area to develop a more positive and confident identity for the local area. We were told, for example, that Kingsmead estate has been at times viewed as 'notorious' by people who did not live there, and that the school actively worked to change this perception. Indeed, the housing association explained that their stock is now more valued as a result of the school being in the area.

The largest community event at Kingsmead is the **International Evening**. It was explained that this brought *"whole communities"* together, benefiting a much wider group than the children attending the school and their parents. Last year's event was attended by over 500 people. Parents are very involved with the event, bringing in their traditional food and running performance sessions. Last year's theme, for example, was 'Songs from the home countries', where children learnt songs from their parents and performed these at the evening in their mother tongues. Pictures from a previous evening can be found at the school's website: http://www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk/InternationalEvenin1_000.htm

Other events, such as the **Summer Fair** also attract a large number of local residents and were important for children, who clearly enjoyed the opportunities for families to come to the school.

The school takes part in special projects, the most recent major community project being **Kingsmead Eyes**, a collaboration between photographer Gideon Mendel and pupils, where the children were taught to use a camera and documented their world over six months, photographing their friends, families, community and school. The project was exhibited in the V&A Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green and covered widely by the local and national media. One element is a montage of photos of the faces of all the children and adults in the school.

**Kingsmead Eyes: portraits of all Kingsmead children**

Another is a series of short sequences made by individual children, showing aspects of life at Kingsmead from their point of view (see http://www.kingsmeadeyes.org/). This sequence has been running on a DVD player at Kingsmead's foyer, and children were observed watching it with interest.

Parents and family members were invited and frequently participated in the trips and visits organised for their children. The schools' special events bring parents together in the school – for example, at the time of our research, Kingsmead had organised an event for parents to taste the new school dinners, which was being actively used by staff to build links with parents for different purposes. Occasions

such as these, along with meeting other parents through family learning and at school gates, enable parents to create social networks and build relationships, which are vital ingredients for a cohesive community.

The school has worked with a large number of **local organisations** and was seen by partner organisations to be "always open" to new opportunities. Just a few examples of this include collaboration with Groundwork London to design signage on Daubeney Fields; a sculpture making project in partnership with Hackney Marshes User Group, and an Immediate Theatre drama project with the Kingsmead Kabin. Sanctuary Housing, the housing association for the Kingsmead estate, also works closely with the school and often sponsors events (such as Kingsmead Eyes).

Kingsmead has a breakfast club, which is a free service and funded through the support of businesses. It is attended by a large number of children as was recently written up in the Times Educational Supplement (http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6033975).

**Challenges**

Parents and staff identified the difficulty for children to find places at suitable secondary schools nearby as a key challenge to community cohesion. At an earlier stage of planning, the new academy, City Academy, Hackney would have been built very close to the Kingsmead estate, but this did not happen, and Kingsmead children are outside of the catchment area. This means that the children scatter to numerous schools, of which the nearest is a Catholic school that some parents would not find suitable. Some parents and community partners feel that their children's future prospects are compromised by this lack of provision at secondary level, and there are resentful feelings over this.

**Our work with children**

We worked directly with Kingsmead children when carrying out this research. We joined the meeting of the School Council, who had consulted with their classes in preparation of our meeting to ask how they thought the school helps children from different backgrounds get on well together. The minutes of our meeting are below.

We also worked with the Year 5 children: we asked them to draw something that helped them to learn about people who are different from them. We then asked them to write what was on the picture and why it was important for them. Some pictures are at the end of this appendix. We would like to thank all of the children who so enthusiastically participated in our research.

**Kingsmead School Council**
**Minutes of meeting on 11th March 2010**
**Present: 10 School Councillors, Filiz and Emma (Kingsmead School), Sophie & Kairika (Coram)**

**Cohesion ideas**
Ideas from years 2 to 6 about how the school helps people from different backgrounds get on well together in the local area.

The councillors had already made a list of things that they could think of from our last meeting when we talked about this topic – these were:

- Friendship groups
- Summer Fair & International Evening
- School Journey
- Steel pans playing at Tescos
- Kingsmead Eyes project & all the publicity
- Assemblies on different religions
- Learning dances from different countries in Dance
- Fire Brigade visit
- Whole school trip to Lee Valley
- Yr 6's visit to museum about safety on public transport.

The school councillors came to the meeting with more ideas from their classes:

**Year 2**
- Saying hello to your new teacher a the end of the summer term
- Getting new friends
- Playground buddies
- Special friend for new pupils

**Year 3**
- Kingsmead's Got Talent - it's when people perform – raps, songs, beatboxing, and African drumming. It's mostly what they specialise in, what they feel they're best at doing. Sometimes learn to rap, also Joelle's poetry thing. She did lots of work. Often there are groups of children want to do rapping and beatboxing. Every year it happens. It started last year.
- Language classes - learning different languages like Spanish.

**Year 4**
- Ocean Maths (parent/pupils workshop in Year 3 & 4) - teaches us maths in the morning, families come and do it all together in the big room in Year 3. Everybody in one year does it, parents come along and do the maths with you and learn about what you're doing in the school.
- Kingsmead's got talent (as above)
- Reception display of Languages of different cultures on walls
- School Dinners tasting session for parents
- World Book Day – dressing up

- Sports day
- ‘Go Go Green’ sustainable travel theatre workshop & publicity in local Newspaper - two people came to talk to year 3 and 4 about the planet and how you should save it, part of school travel plan they came with a theatre production. They told us about the world. One dressed up in a world costume and showed how it was getting hotter and hotter. Children really liked it, very interactive. Taught us about walking into school and cycling.

**Year 6**

- Learning different musical instruments from different cultures - learn different instruments here such as piano, guitar, ukulele, steel pans, drumming – African, used to have recorder.
- Games from different cultures - in the hall when there was Black History month and they had a complicated game - Manghala game.

**Group discussion:**

- International evening – lots of people bring food, everybody shares food from their country. People make new friends here
- Buddy system with older children – they go to the playground and look after the younger children. Sometimes little children don’t play. They stop them fighting. The buddies give ideas of things to do – games to play. When children are lonely, we play with them. Often it’s in the playground where things can really be difficult, when teachers aren’t there.
- They play music in the playground – helps people to get on. Ippes is our football coach, he plays music. Every lunchtime he’s out there. People dance to the music.
- Special friend for new people - when new people come to our school – teacher says can you be a special friend for this new person and for a little while you help them until they know where things are.

**What are the most important things?**

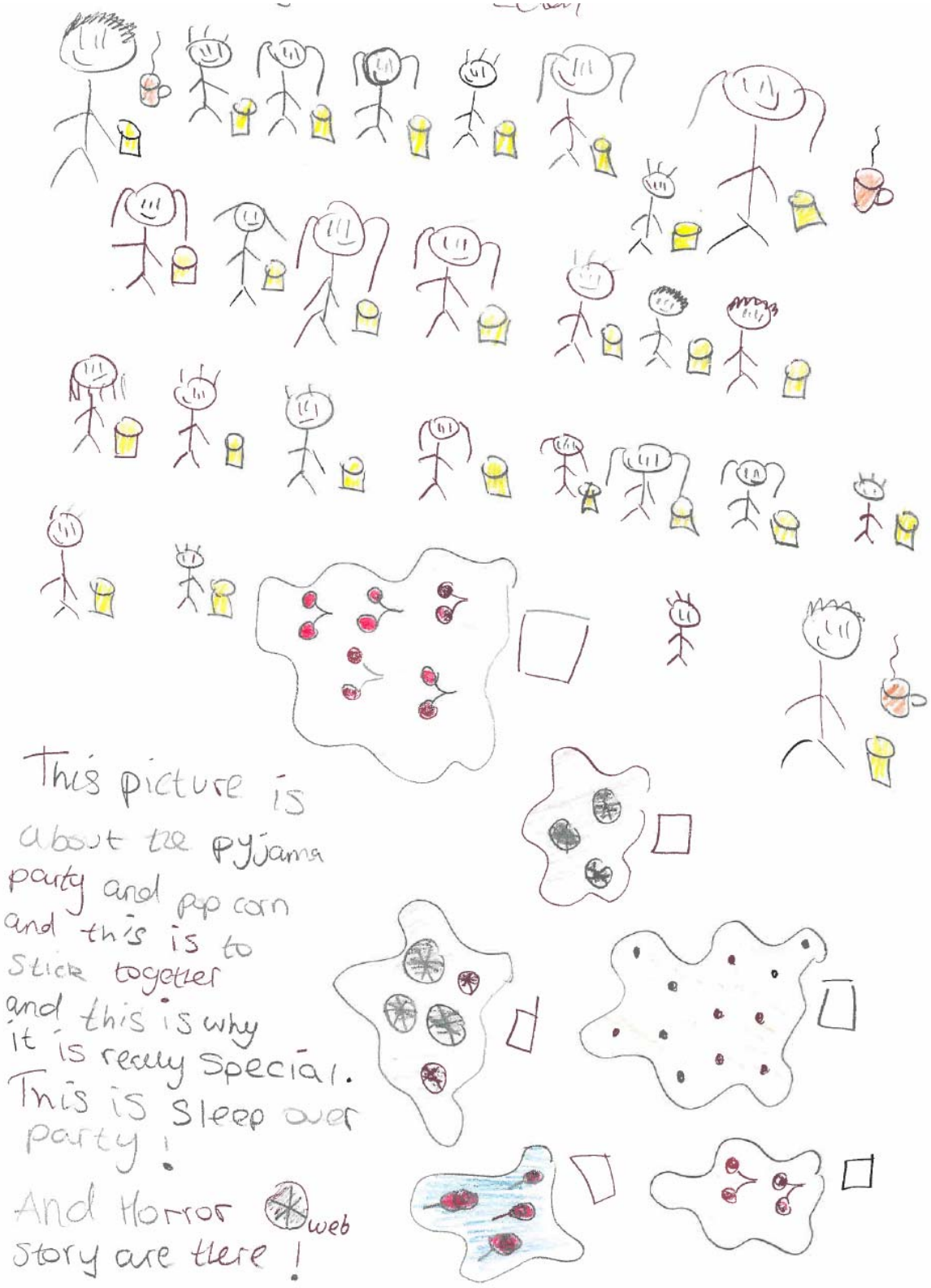
- New people – show how to behave in school
- Friends and families to come to the school and get to know each other
- Perform a lot – and then people know you, you can help them, they’re respectful to you. Inspiring to them. Everyone gets lots of chances to perform people know who you are, not just in the little classes.
- School council comes and cheers you up when older. When lonely, Filiz comes to cheer you up; some adults come and talk to you, to make it better.
- How people are expected to behave – all classes know about it, learn about it when you come to school. Kingsmead rules – they’re about people knowing the right and wrong way of behaving with each other, what’s expected of them.

**Ideas/suggestions for new things:**

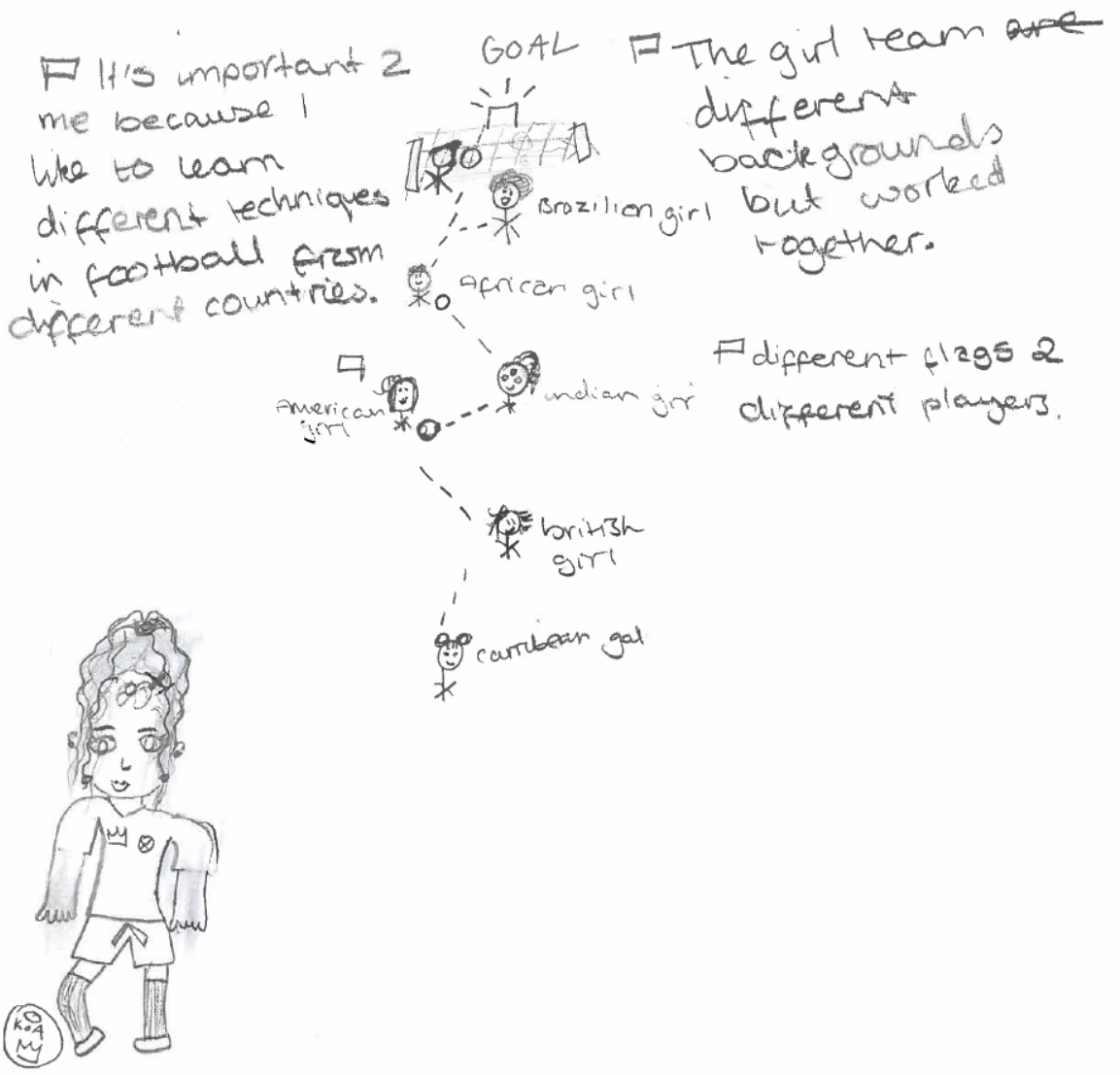
- Clubs for people not at school - bring in other people, like family, friends
- Food swapping club - would be a nice thing to do to bring people together.
- Discussion club
- Weekend clubs
- Gadgets and Toys from other countries
- Dance club for adults & their children
- Talks/discussions by people from different countries/cultures - outside school time mixing up from different schools and grown ups and children
- Dinner parties – where parents come to school to eat
- Parent/children circle time - when something bad happens, give you a chance to discuss what you're going to do. How to be nice with others, and about bullying, how to not hurt other people's feelings. Fun stuff also in circle times – when younger in Y2. Also play games, like Chinese whispers – taking turns and how you listen. Talk about it's good to be me; it's good to be someone else.
- Sleeping over at school and camping – to talk to their friends.
- Dressing up as your country – some people come as their country during international evening, not everybody.
- Parents in classes
- School/parent picnic on the marshes – class award you can choose, in Y3 – adventure playground, everyone in the class and parents and families could come along too.
- Cooking classes from different countries - two clubs one for younger one for older.
- Parent/child sports day – Parents feel proud of their children. They come to see. There's a teachers' race. Whole school goes there.
- School trips - happens for everyone, every year. Nearly everybody goes. Everybody gets time to spend quite a few nights together. I've been to one during the holidays – there's more than two. There's one called Kenchill – that's not a really regular thing, residential holiday stay for some children.

Thanks to Emma for her notes – we have added details from our notes to those she writes for the School Council itself.

**Year 5's Draw and Writes: some examples. Please also see discussion in Section 4.**



this is a picture of 3 people from deffrent back rounds playing as a tem
british
indian
together 4 ever?
love as a team
win as a team
stick like a team
muslim
This is important to me because it bring us together like a family if I or some one drops out than its not complete like a puzzel because if I gose missing


It's important 2 me because I like to learn different techniques in football from different countries.
GOAL
The girl team are different backgrounds but worked together.
Brazilian girl
African girl
American girl
indian girl
different flags 2 different players.
british girl
carribean gal

In the Summer
Fair. and It's fun.
We get
ice-cream

Kingsmead
gate

Easte


When It's Easta
The techer hides
Little easta Eiggs

When It christmas
We get christmas
dinner and crackers.

Chinese New year

It's When Chinese
Peple celerbrate.

It is important because melody has to do with the music and it's words.

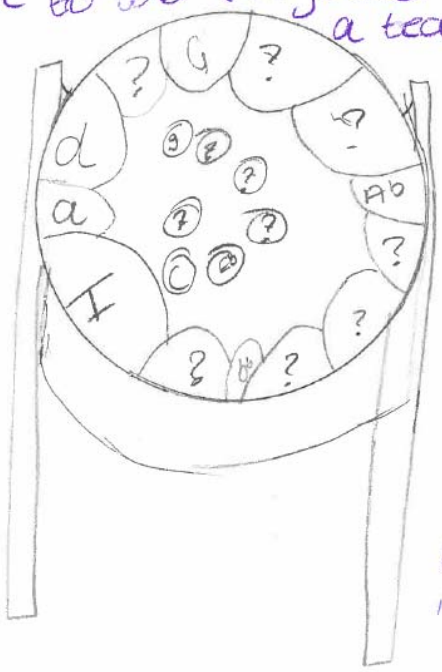
# Steel Pans

The melody is the best Pan there, (that's what I think)

This instrument is important because you have to work together as a team.

It's called a melody and it is the main Pan in Steel Pans.

It's an instrument that I started in year 4.



Melody is important because it is very truley fun.

* There are 4 melody and the rest are behind the melodys.

# Appendix 2: Berger Primary School Case Study: How can primary schools contribute to community cohesion?

Coram carried out research with Berger Primary school as part of the Hackney Cohesion Review to look at how primary schools can contribute to community cohesion. This appendix summarises our findings.

Berger is a non-denominational primary in the Chatham Ward in the Homerton neighbourhood. The school's catchment area is made up of the surrounding social housing. The school is attended by 475 pupils, of which 55 (12%) are White English. A high proportion speaks English as an additional language.

**Ethnicity of pupils at Berger Primary School**

| Ethnicity | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| English | 55 | 11.6% |
| Irish | 2 | 0.4% |
| Any Other White British | 2 | 0.4% |
| Albanian | 1 | 0.2% |
| Greek/Greek Cypriot | 1 | 0.2% |
| White Eastern European | 9 | 1.9% |
| White Western European | 6 | 1.3% |
| White Other | 6 | 1.3% |
| Bangladeshi | 34 | 7.2% |
| Indian | 13 | 2.7% |
| Pakistani | 3 | 0.6% |
| Any Other Asian Background | 6 | 1.3% |
| Angolan | 5 | 1.1% |
| Congolese | 7 | 1.5% |
| Ghanaian | 17 | 3.6% |
| Nigerian | 30 | 6.3% |
| Sierra Leonian | 6 | 1.3% |
| Somali | 12 | 2.5% |
| Other Black African | 26 | 5.5% |
| Caribbean | 35 | 7.4% |
| Any Other Black Background | 26 | 5.5% |
| White and Black African | 5 | 1.1% |
| White and Black Caribbean | 22 | 4.6% |
| Any Other Mixed Background | 24 | 5.1% |
| Chinese | 6 | 1.3% |
| Kurdish | 4 | 0.8% |
| Latin/South/Central American | 8 | 1.7% |
| Vietnamese | 12 | 2.5% |
| Turkish Cypriot | 2 | 0.4% |
| Turkish | 81 | 17.1% |
| Any Other Ethnic Group | 6 | 1.3% |
| Missing | 3 | 0.6% |
| **Total** | **475** | **100.0%** |

A high proportion of children are eligible for free school meals - 43%, nearly three times the national average (15%) and higher than Hackney primary schools' average (37%). Berger School pupils achieve above the average for schools of similar levels of disadvantage.

At the time of our research the school was preparing to move into a completely new building, which was seen to greatly improve its capacity to work with the local community. Several large residential developments, as well as new campuses for the two secondary schools in the ward and the overground network improvement are expected to transform the ward in the next few years.

**Teaching, Learning and Curriculum**

Berger is a school with a strong international focus and has been awarded International School Status. The school focuses on enhancing children's inter-cultural understanding through **direct links with children and adults from other countries**. The school is twinned with a school in France, where children work on projects together, getting to know each other. The groups have also visited each other, with Berger pupils spending a week in Paris. Strong links are formed with China: in Year 6, all children learn Mandarin and a group has visited the country. There are projects linking with a school in China through written exchange, looking, for example, at buildings in both countries. Direct links are made with different countries each year during the International Week, including countries of children's origin.

**Chinese Dragon at Berger canteen: Year 6, 2009 (now ex-pupils) made this**

The school also regularly **fundraises for other countries**, and have recently raised money for the Haiti earthquake and WaterAid to support children in African countries. Children proudly explained how they had organised cake sales and had collected small change to help children in Africa and had raised £10,000 for WaterAid through different initiatives.

At the time of our research, the school was carrying out **Unicef's Rights-Respecting Schools** programme. Children strongly linked this to cohesion, discussing their responsibility *"not to hurt other people's feelings"* and their role in *"caring for each other"* (see School Council minutes at the end of this appendix). More information on the Rights-Respecting Schools programme can be found here: http://www.unicef.org.uk/tz/teacher_support/rrs_award.asp

During classes children are regularly encouraged to work together through team work and projects. For example, staff explained how **mixed ability pairing** not only supports children's achievement, but builds relationships between children of different backgrounds that carry on into the playground. This is used to bring together, for example children with and without a disability.

There is a busy calendar of **opportunities to celebrate diversity** throughout the school year. The calendar of year's events is up in the school foyer with children's pictures of participating in all sorts of activities and trips. It was explained that children often referred to this, when visitors came to the school.

**Activities calendar in Berger foyer showing 2009 events**

Some events are celebrated and prepared for by the whole school: **Black History Month and Refugee Week** are just two examples, where children work together to prepare performances and project work. Such events are used as

opportunities for children to learn about the history and culture of other pupils. At the time of our research, a display was up from the Refugee Week, introducing the history of immigration and famous refugees to the country.

Photos of the Black History Month are at the school's website: http://www.berger.hackney.sch.uk/photo_gallery/BlackHistoryMonth.asp

**Refugee Week display at Berger foyer**

The school offers a very wide range of **after-school activities and lunchtime sessions**, that bring together children across year groups. This includes a cooking club, karate, African drumming, ballet, film club and photography (see full schedule: http://www.berger.hackney.sch.uk/photo_gallery/Clubs.asp). Speed stacking is an activity that engaged children of all ages to work together (more info: http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/apr/10/speed-stacking-schools-sport). The school has a choir that performs both within the school and in venues across and beyond Hackney. During Christmas time, the choir goes out to sing in many places, including Tesco's and old people's homes, which ex-students remembered with excitement.

The staff found that clustering with other schools was an effective way to enable children to develop a **more inclusive sense of belonging**, helping to avoid the development of post-code identities, which was seen as an issue for some older young people in the area. Children enjoyed working with other schools and described their pride in representing their school. The school also participates in Hackney schools' sports competitions. It was important for children to feel

recognised, but, we were told, this also supported a sense of “camaraderie” between children of different schools and areas.

Performances and projects brought together children of many schools, where children could be part of the celebration of the talent of Hackney. Children told about preparing to perform for an opera at Hackney Empire, where children of ‘all schools’ participated.

Raising aspirations and broadening horizons is a key issue, which Berger addresses through day-trips to museums, theatres, and performances and partnership projects with various organisations. Giving children “what other children take for granted” was seen as very important in the context of poverty and geographical isolation. One example of this is children’s recent visit to Portland National Sailing Academy in Dorset, where the Olympic sailing events will be held, linking in with the Olympic theme. The school regularly brings other professionals and performers into the school, including for example, a Chinese opera group and a pantomime performer. The school is part of the Creative Partnerships programme, which brings creative professionals into the school to work with children.

**Pantomime performance at Berger**

Children explained how residential trips helped them to learn about other parts of England and ex-students remembered with great excitement a residential trip to

Wales. Year 6 has a residential trip yearly, and visited Kench Hill last year. (http://www.kenchhill.co.uk/)

**Equity and excellence**

**Being treated equally** with other children was very important for children's sense of fairness and ex-students told us how teachers at Berger were "like friends" and always treated children with respect and fairness. Fairness also came up as an important topic in the School Council (see minutes attached). Children explained that any problems happening at school or in playground would be dealt with fairly and promptly. If children had an argument, they would be helped to discuss this with each other, and there was an 'incidents box' where children could leave a note about worries they had, and weekly a consultant from NSPCC would come to talk to children about any problems.

Berger also has a strong focus on helping all children achieve. There is a dedicated member of staff to help with speech and language needs, and teachers use visuals and aids with children who speak English as an additional language. There are **catch-up programmes** for children who need it. Berger is part of the 'Numbers Count' programme for children who need extra support with numeracy. Parents are also involved, learning skills to help their children learn and are offered practical and emotional support. More information about the Numbers Count Programme (nationally) can be found here: http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/everychildcounts/general/NumbersCount.htm.

There is a home school support worker, who particularly works with parents of children who are having academic difficulties. Children with behavioural difficulties are linked with learning mentors through Chance UK. More info on this can be found here: http://www.chanceuk.com/

Raising aspirations is very important for the school. In summer children - and parents of younger pupils - visit universities and have been to Oxford, Cambridge, London College of Fashion, Hertfordshire and other universities. Staff explained that this gives children and their parents a "clearer idea of higher education means". The trips have been covered in the national media: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/jun/11/highereducation.accesstouniversity

Creativity is part of the school's effort of narrowing the achievement gap. The school is also part of the Power of Reading programme, where children go to the local library to choose books that are then read by the whole class. Music and art are introduced into the reading experience, which helps children get engaged.

Staff has found that the programme helps to engage children with English as an Additional Language and helps when children have little experience of having books at home – each child gets their own copy. More info on the Power of Reading is here: http://www.clpe.co.uk/courses/powerofreading.html

There is a strong focus on **family learning** with a programme of activities that bring families into school to learn alongside their children. This was important for parents to feel comfortable with subjects, such as English, Maths, Science, but also arts and crafts, which helps parents to *"learn what children are learning at school"*. Parents explained that this also helped them to get to know each other. Photos from Berger family learning sessions are at the Berger school website: http://www.berger.hackney.sch.uk/photo_gallery/Familylearning.asp

**Display of Family learning is up at Berger foyer**

Staff stressed the importance of getting to know parents and helping them through potentially stressful times, such as the secondary transfer and **start of the school**. All parents were visited when their child started the school, often with interpreters to help parents understand and ask any questions they had. Reception class parents have special family learning sessions that help them build relationships with each other and share ideas. Staff explained that this helped to build parents' confidence both with school and supporting their children's learning.

There were plans for a dedicated space for family engagement in the new school building that would bring parents in for informal group work, and offer training and employment support.

Every year, Berger supports all parents to **make decisions about secondary transfer**. This is organised with a clear focus on helping all parents understand the process. The head teacher meets all parents individually, and a full range of interpreters are brought into these meetings. Translators are also used at progress meetings with parents whose children have special educational needs. The provision of a large number of interpreters at parents' evenings at Berger has become an essential matter of routine, though extremely complex to organise.

Staff explained that parents' evenings is just one way for parents to communicate with the school and "they don't have to wait until a parents' evening to talk to us." Parents can drop in and speak to family support staff, and frequently do so to seek support on issues such as immigration, ESOL, benefits, employment support. The school has also dealt with issues such as domestic violence and works with partner organisations to support parents with these significant problems. For example, the school has organised a workshop with Nia project, a group that helps women suffering domestic violence. More information about Nia can be found here: http://www.niaproject.info/

Children are also supported to *"get away"* during school holidays, which is important in an area where few can afford holidays and over-crowding is a serious issue. Berger partners with CHICKS to offer children residential holidays – see more info on CHICKS here: http://www.chicks.org.uk/

**Engagement and extended services**

Parents described Berger Primary to us as a "hub of the local community". The event that the parents found the most impressive was the International Week. There is a member of staff responsible for putting together a programme – with parents – for a full week every year. Events take place every day, where each day is dedicated to a different country, reflecting the children's backgrounds, with last year including 'Beats of Africa', 'Turkish Delight', 'Echos of India' and 'Caribbean Rhythms'.

Children and parents are involved in music and dance, performed either by themselves or visitors, such as performers of Chinese Opera. Direct telephone or video camera links to different countries take place, to as far as China and Jamaica. The International Evening on the Friday is the culmination of the international celebration and is attended by *"the whole community"*. Parents bring in food from their countries and dress in traditional costumes.

**Berger parent preparing food during the International Week**

Photos of the International Week can be found at Berger website: http://www.berger.hackney.sch.uk/photo_gallery/InternationalWeek.asp

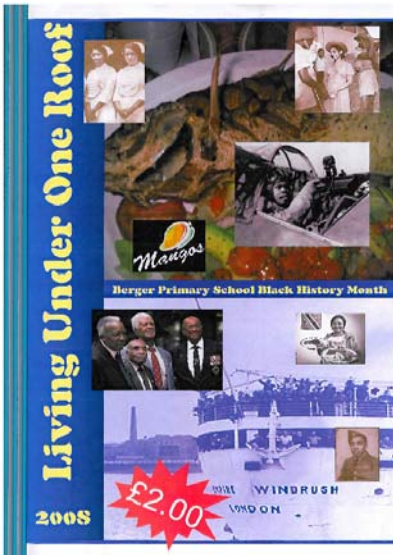
**International Week at Berger: timetable of activities**

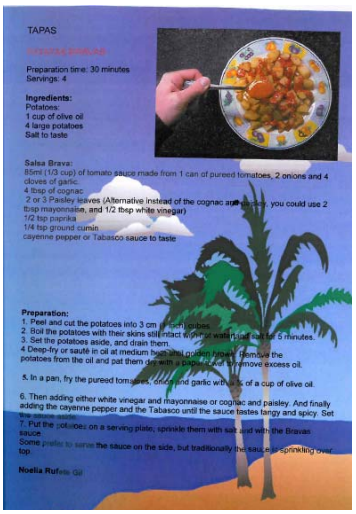
| Berger International week 2009<br><br>**10.30am Infant assembly prompt start** | **Turkish Delight**<br> <br>Turkish/Kurdish/Cypriot Day | **Beats of Africa**<br> <br>Africa Day | **Maori Magic**<br> <br>New Zealand and Maori day | **Echos of India**<br> <br>Asia Day | **Caribbean Rhythms**<br> <br>Caribbean day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **10.30 am** | Karen to introduce International week 2009 (Salena to Google earth ) | Salena to announce country we are visiting (via Google earth ) | Maori workshop for year two class. 11 am- 12.10 | Salena to announce country we are visiting via Google earth | Salena to announce country we are visiting via Google earth |
| **10.35 am** | Nefise to introduce Turkish **cultural PowerPoint's** | Valerie to introduce: **Berger African Drumming** | 2pm – 2. 20pm 2 pm prompt infant assembly start Year two class to perform Maori culture to infants | Anne Louise to introduce **John l'Anson** Question and Answers to guest | Salena to introduce the **Phase 5 Steel pans group** |
| **1045 -11.15am**<br><br>**Special performance** | **Berger children to perform Traditional dance to modern music. Parents invited to dance.** | Nzinga to perform | 2.40- 3pm sharp. Year six to perform to junior assembly. | Bollywood dancer. | Dancing time! |

**Infants** – Playtime affected **(40 minutes earlier)**
**10.00am-10.20 am** Playtime
10.30am Infant Assembly prompt start
11.15 am Return to class
**PPA arrangements to be considered.**

International Evening Friday 10 July 6- 8 .30pm

Parents' recipes are included in the schools 'Recipe book':




Berger parents also emphasised that they felt very welcome to initiate new activities and were able to see these through without *"any bureaucracy"*. The parents, for example, ran a gardening club and gave dancing lessons to children as part of the extended schools activities. This was different from their own experience of schooling, where *"schools were scary places"* and staff were not accessible.

Berger also runs a programme of parent volunteering, where parents work in the classroom as assistant, enabling them to gain skills and make progress towards employment or education. Many parents are also employed as support staff.

Berger's 'can-do' attitude when it comes to working with partners opens up opportunities for children and their community. Some stakeholders explained that they were offering projects to Berger precisely because they knew the school would be open to the opportunities. Only a few examples include working with a professional film crew filming a short film at school, where children were 'extras'; a current collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company developing a production of Hamlet and producing a billboard advert for Children's Society at Chelsea flower garden, published in national media.

**Our work with children**

We worked directly with Berger children when carrying out this research. We met with the School Council to talk about what community cohesion means for them. The notes from this meeting are below.

**Berger School Council**

Minutes of meeting on 2nd March 2010

Present: 6 children (school council), Sophie, Kairika and Jaspreet (Coram's Policy and Research team)

**What has this school done that has helped people from different backgrounds to get on well?**

- Adults treat us the same.
- People in school respect each other, both children and grown-ups.
- No one in school is racist. People are allowed to believe what they believe.
- The more we get to know other people, the more we get to know their religion!
- In assembly learnt about rights (UN) – disability, clean water and what responsibilities we have.
- Stories in assembly i.e. girl living in Afghanistan
- Rights to learn (some children in other countries cannot write letters)
- We learn to care for each other
- In PSHE we learn to empathise (if someone is hurt we say sorry, to express our feelings)
- We have a box in the classroom – put things in a box – (if you're upset), the teacher deals with what happened. Teacher deals with it quickly
- If someone's name sounds different or funny, teachers deal with it quickly. Call mum and talk to children.
- Teachers care for us: if there is an argument, they give you a slip to write on and you sort it out. You find a way how to make it better.
- You can tell teachers care for us – as they sort out any problems we have
- It's our responsibility (children) not to hurt other people's feelings
- We must respect 'both black and white' people - people from all cultures
- Learn about all religions in RE – Buddhists, Muslims
- Visited a mosque when learning about Islam – good to see how other religions work.
- Assembly - learning about rights and responsibilities
- RE – we get to see and try how people pray – found it "peaceful"
- A lot of people in classes do not have religions – one girl made her own
- We understand more about the luxuries we have living in this country.

**What makes it difficult?**

- Education (other countries do not have rights)
- Religion (a lot of people believe in different things and then they do not get on)
- We should all get along and respect what others believe in;

- Recession – losing jobs because they do not have money.

**What can the schools do better?**

- Difference between “posh” and “poor”
- lifts/ramps for people with wheelchairs
- should be a person in school who helps children with disabilities (boy who could not go to clubs because it was upstairs)
- Racism – should respect each other and respect what other people believe
- Teachers should act good, if they act bad then children will follow it.
- Adults and children should respect each other

**Suggestions:**

- talk to disabled children to learn what they would like
- have a disability club so that children can learn what it is like to be disabled

# Appendix 3: Methodology and Contributors

### *Approach*

Our approach to this project focused on direct work in schools, engaging as wide a range of stakeholders as possible in the short time available, emphasising an open approach that is responsive to all parts of the community. Using participatory techniques and multiple methods we aimed to create a focus on discussion of cohesion across the school community. We drew on the tradition of 'appreciative inquiry', which approaches difficult subjects by focusing on the positive, asking "What are our most inspiring experiences?" and "How can we have more of them?"

Given the tight timescale, we made the most of existing group meetings and community events that occurred during the fieldwork period. It should be noted that Berger was very shortly going to move to a new building, and we are particularly grateful for the time that they devoted to this project despite this constraint.

Our research included

a) Brief knowledge review (desk research) to understand key points from the broader work on cohesion within which this project is located; the situation of the selected schools; and the context of Hackney's education service and its community more generally. Review of examples of good practice in this field nationally.

b) Meetings and detailed interviews with head teachers and lead people for cohesion were undertaken.

### *Staff, parents and other adults*

Please see list of contributors for more details of adult respondents.

*c) Kingsmead:* On one day, we worked in sequence with parents, staff and the governors. We brought a large 'annual cycle' image on flipchart paper and invited first parents attending a session to taste the new school meals menu, and then staff at a staff meeting, to take part in writing on this notes of events or initiatives that the school had undertaken to build cohesion. Finally we took the results to the governors meeting and asked for their views on priorities amongst the wealth of examples provided - which of these initiatives were most important to them.

Two staff undertook individual interviews with us, as did two community governors.

Three representatives of local community organisations were interviewed.
One local Councillor for Kingsmead's ward was interviewed on the telephone.

d) *Berger Primary School:* A Governors meeting was visited to introduce the project.
Parent volunteers – five parents who act as volunteers were engaged using the annual cycle exercise, and informal discussion with them.
Parent governors – two parent governors interviewed together
Six staff members were interviewed in pairs.
Two local Councillors for Berger's ward were interviewed on the telephone.

***Students***

e) *Kingsmead Primary School*:
School council – group discussion, with children feeding in results from their consultation with their own classes.

Year 5 children undertook work in the classroom on community cohesion.

- First a brainstorm using our annual cycle diagram as a prompt.
- Then individually: Draw and write: Children were asked to draw 'something that has helped people to get on well together with those from different backgrounds' and then write about their picture; then 'why this helps us all live together'. Discussion that arose was recorded.

The intention had been to work with Year 6s, but they were too busy with SATS preparation.

Three ex-students were interviewed at Kingsmead after school one day.

f) *Berger*: School council group discussion.
Ex-students of Berger, now at Hackney City Academy – interview with three Year 7 young people at their current school.

**List of Contributors**

Many people have made essential contributions to this report. Coram thanks the following people for their contribution.

**Kingsmead Primary School**
Louise Nichols, Head teacher
Graham Voller, Assistant head teacher, Year 5 Teacher, Extended Schools
Emma DeSausmarez, Family Support Worker
School governors
Alison Laverick, school governor, Sanctuary Housing
Morris Bennett, school governor, S.C.R.A.P project
Parents attending the school meals taster session

The school council
Year 5 class
Ex-students

Mary Cannon, Hackney Marsh Partnership
Meghan Zinkewich-Peotti, Partnership Manager, Sanctuary Housing

*Local Authority:*
Councillor Nkafu
Councillor Nicholson

**Berger Primary School**
Karen Coulthard, Head teacher
Tania Pope, Family learning – Reception class teacher
Paulene Caveney, Inclusion Manager - SENCO
Laura Swan, MFL and reading recovery teacher
Ozden Demir, EAL teacher (Turkish translator)
Salena Gray, Lead of International Week, Numbers Count teacher/netball teacher
Liz Cosier, Creative coordinator and Class teacher

Parent volunteers
Parent governors

School council
Ex-students

*Local Authority:*
Councillor Akehurst