

Embargoed 00:01 18.05.12

## Regional inequalities mask claims that EAL pupils are outstripping non-EAL pupils at GCSE

A report published today has found linguistic minorities are actually achieving less well compared with English first language pupils at GCSE (A-C, inc. English & Maths) in all regions except inner London. These findings contrast to recent press coverage celebrating the higher achievement of such pupils.

The report, *Language Diversity and Attainment in English Secondary Schools*, was carried out by researchers at the Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE) at London Metropolitan University, and commissioned by Arvon, the national creative writing charity, supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

A recent article in the [Times Education Supplement](#) (Stewart, 2012) reported that a higher proportion of English as an additional language (EAL) students now achieve five GCSE grades A\*-C, than their native English speaking counterparts. However, this does not include English and Maths, an increasingly used benchmark.

IPSE's research, using figures for 2007 to 2011, including English and Maths, indicate linguistic minority students persistently achieving less well than English first language speakers.

The study has found there are marked regional disparities between pupils. A regional breakdown shows that while inner London is doing very well for EAL students., This is not the case in other regions.

Outside of London, the Yorkshire and Humber region has the largest and most persistent achievement gap, followed by the South West, and East of England.

Despite these gaps, linguistic disparities are not being analysed by the Department for Education (DfE). Local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) teams which might be expected to analyse and monitor such disparities are increasingly experiencing cuts to their funding.

Ayo Mansaray of London Metropolitan University, one of the report authors, summarises: "Britain is becoming more ethnically and linguistically diverse every day, beyond London and urban areas typically associated with multi-ethnic populations.

"But the statistics being collected and the research being done is not keeping up with this diversity. More research is needed into the attainment and educational experiences of ethnic and linguistic groups beyond London, and resources allocated accordingly."

This study points to a number of interesting patterns which warrant further research:

- Many of the widest attainment gaps are present in local authorities with substantial Pakistani ethnic minority groups – for example, Peterborough, Oldham, Bedford, Bury, Derby, Sheffield, and Calderdale – who tend to speak Urdu, Punjabi or Mirpuri and experience socio-economic disadvantage. This association clearly needs further examination.
- There is also a need for further research into new ethnic communities from Eastern Europe, whose educational and language profile and needs tends to be obscured in the White, or White Other ethnic category.
- The diversity of the Black African ethnic group need to be specified in relation to language to gain a fuller picture of their educational attainment: in particular, more recent migratory flows from Central and East Africa (e.g. Congo, Angola, and Zimbabwe).

-Ends-

---

**Notes to editors:**

Report to be published: 18.05.12

Title: *Language Diversity and Attainment in English Secondary Schools: A Scoping Study*  
 Authors: Sumi Hollingworth and Ayo Mansaray at [the Institute for Policy Studies in Education \(IPSE\)](http://www.ipse.ac.uk) London Metropolitan University

A report for Arvon and the Gulbenkian Foundation

[www.arvonfoundation.org/](http://www.arvonfoundation.org/)

<http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk/>

**For further information and to request a copy of the report contact:**

**Sumi Hollingworth, Senior Research Fellow**

The Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE)

London Metropolitan University

Tel: 020 71334170

Mobile: 07909 615876

Email : [s.hollingworth@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:s.hollingworth@londonmet.ac.uk)

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/ipse/staff/sumi-hollingworth.cfm>

**1. The report: The Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE)** was commissioned by Arvon's *(M)other Tongues programme* to identify which linguistic minorities are at a 'disadvantage' in education in England and to identify where they are located – paying particular attention to areas outside of London. Arvon's *(M)other Tongues* project seeks to promote and encourage bilingualism and multilingualism among England's increasingly multicultural and multilingual youth, through writing retreats, where young people are encouraged to write creatively in their 'mother tongue'. This report identifies and maps linguistic minority attainment in the secondary school population in England in 2011. This is the first scoping study of its kind with a national focus, and complements the excellent work of Eversley and colleagues (2010) who have examined, in-depth, the London context. The report draws on a combination of DfE published data on attainment by first language other than English; attainment by ethnicity and available local authority information on specific linguistic communities in select regions. In the report we make specific recommendations to Arvon regarding specific linguistic groups and localities on which to focus their work. <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/ipse/research-projects/current-projects/p111.cfm>

**2. IPSE** is an interdisciplinary research institute committed to researching the social impacts of education policy and practice. With funding from international and national bodies including research councils, major charities and government departments, we have research expertise across all sectors and contexts, from early years to informal adult learning. Using innovative methodologies and interdisciplinary ideas we have found new ways to understand educational and social problems and to have a high impact on user communities and policy makers. We share our ideas widely through our books, articles, reports, conference keynotes and papers, seminar series and postgraduate teaching.

**3. London Metropolitan University** has been providing affordable quality education in London since 1848. The average starting salary of London Met graduates is now well above the UK average (DLHE, 2011). London Met has been ranked among the best universities in the country in terms of giving students the best “added-value” in helping them to secure well-paid jobs. (Parthenon 2011)  
[www.londonmet.ac.uk](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk)

**4. In the 2008 UK Universities Research Assessment Exercise** 50 per cent of the education research at London Metropolitan University has been rated as world leading (4\*) or as internationally excellent (3\*) Over a further third of our work was recognised internationally. This places London Metropolitan University’s educational research in the top 20% of universities in the UK, and third in London.

**5. Other References cited:**

Stewart, W. (2012). Second Language, First Class Results. *Times Education Supplement*, <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6179208> (17th February 2012).  
Eversley, J. M., D.; Sanderson, A.; Tinsley, T.; von Ahn, M.; and Wiggins, R.D. (2010). Language Capital - Mapping the languages of London's schoolchildren London, : CILT.  
Von Ahn, M., Lupton, R., Greenwood, C., & Wiggins, R. (2010). *Languages, Ethnicity, Education in London*. London: Department of Quantitative Social Science, Institute of Education.  
Von Ahn, M., Wiggins, R., Sanderson, A., Mayhew, L., & Eversley, J. (2011). *Using school census language data to understand language distribution and links to ethnicity, socio-economic status and educational attainment: a guide for local authority users*. London: Department of Quantitative Social Science, Institute of Education.

**6. Arvon** is a charity that works to ensure anyone can benefit from the transformative power of writing. Founded in 1968 by the writers [John Fairfax](http://www.arvonfoundation.org) and John Moat, who were close friends of the poet laureate Ted Hughes, Arvon today has a leading position in the world of creative writing. Arvon’s programme centres around its residential creative writing courses for young people and adults, run at four rural centres: The Hurst in Shropshire (previously owned by playwright John Osborne); Moniack Mhor in Inverness-shire; Lumb Bank in Yorkshire (a property that once belonged to Ted Hughes); and Totleigh Barton in Devon.  
[www.arvonfoundation.org](http://www.arvonfoundation.org)

**7. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation** is an international charitable foundation with cultural, educational, social and scientific interests. Based in Lisbon with offices in London and Paris, the Foundation is in a privileged position to support national and transnational work tackling contemporary issues. The purpose of the UK Branch in London is to help enrich and connect the experiences of individuals and secure lasting, beneficial change, with a special interest in supporting those who are most disadvantaged. (M)Other Tongues is supported under our Cultural Understanding theme, which aims to improve understanding *between* cultures and *through* culture.  
[www.gulbenkian.org.uk](http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk)