

# The Education of **Asylum-Seeker & Refugee Children**

## A Study of LEA and School Values, Policies and Practices

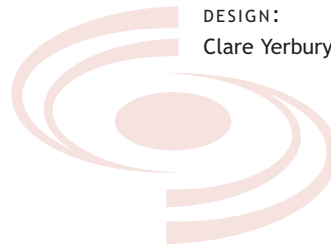
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This report was developed for the Research Consortium  
on the Education of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Children

General Teaching Council for England, National Union of Teachers,  
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## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	2	<b>Part 4: The Survey – Local Education Authority Responses</b>	31
<b>Executive Summary</b>	3	4.1 LEA approaches	32
<b>Part 1: Outline of the Project</b>	9	4.2 Asylum-seeker and refugee education policy	32
1.1 Aims	10	4.3 Data collection strategies and models	34
1.2 The project	10	4.4 The organisation of support services	36
1.3 Research design	10	4.5 Summary	38
<b>Part 2: The National Context – Challenges for Schools</b>	13	<b>Part 5: Educational Models and Values – Exemplification of three LEAs and their Schools</b>	39
2.1 The background to UK Asylum System	14	5.1 Conceptual models	40
2.2 Schooling and the dispersal policy	15	5.2 Holistic models of good practice	41
2.3 The integration of new arrivals	16	5.3 Particular strengths of the LEAs	48
2.4 Devolving responsibility: from central to local government	18	5.4 Characteristics, practices and values underlying a holistic model	50
2.5 Summary	22	5.5 Summary	57
<b>Part 3: Research on the Educational Experiences of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Children</b>	25	<b>Part 6: Commentary</b>	59
3.1 The impact of immigration policy on asylum-seeker and refugee children	26	6.1 Challenges for schools and LEAs	60
3.2 Access to services	27	6.2 Conceptual models	62
3.3 The perspectives of asylum-seeker and refugee children	27	6.3 Policy and Research Agendas	63
3.4 Raising awareness of asylum-seeker and refugee pupil needs	28	<b>Appendix A: Case Study Interviews</b>	65
3.5 Summary	30	<b>References</b>	67

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## Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report is a result of a small-scale research project initiated by the Research Consortium on the Education of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Children. The Research Consortium currently consists of the following participating organisations: The Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, The General Teaching Council for England (GTC), the National Union of Teachers (NUT), and the Refugee Council (RC). The aim of the consortium is to promote effective teaching, learning and integration of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils by undertaking and disseminating research on the needs and experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and on the work of professionals who support them.

This report outlines the national and local context in which schools have attempted to address the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. It investigates how LEAs provide for such pupils, the support offered to schools and the underlying assumptions and approaches associated with LEA and school policies, practices and strategies for the inclusion of this group. It highlights, by exemplification, the good practice that already exists, and offers some ways forward for both policy and research. The basis for this study was a survey of 58 LEAs and a case study investigation of three LEAs.

## The Aims of the Research

The specific aims of the project were to:

- examine the national context in which schools and LEAs are required to address the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children
- elicit and review the different responses of LEAs especially those with large asylum-seeker and refugee populations and those in dispersal areas
- identify different conceptual models that underpin educational responses to the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils

## The Research Project

The research was conducted in three phases.

*The first phase* investigated the national context through government reports, secondary sources and interviews with some government and NGO officials.

*The second phase* of the project collected data from 58 English LEAs through an exploratory telephone survey. A stratified sample of 62 LEAs was drawn from the information about the number of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils provided by a recent Refugee Council survey. This information was cross-referenced with the Home Office dispersal areas. The sample included LEAs in dispersal and non-dispersal areas, with high through to small numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees, including LEAs who, according to the Refugee Council survey, did not collect data. Of the 62 LEAs contacted, only four declined to participate. The sample is indicative of the diversity of provision for asylum-seeker and refugee children.

*The third phase* of research focused on three case study LEAs which were selected on the basis of their expressed commitment to developing a holistic model of good practice. Interviews were conducted with officials, Headteachers, senior members of the teaching staff responsible for provision for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and focus groups with such pupils provided qualitative data on the development of a holistic framework and the values associated with it.

## National Context for Schools and LEAs

Estimations for 2003 have suggested that there were 98,929 asylum-seeker and refugee children in schools in the UK.

Negative images and representation of asylum-seekers and refugees in Britain restrict the possibilities of social inclusion of asylum-seeker and refugee children. Images of asylum-seekers and refugees as the unwelcome 'other', or associations with criminality, racial conflict and economic dependence on the state provide a challenging context for mainstream schools seeking to integrate such children and to offer them their full entitlement to education.

Research on the educational experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee children has identified a number of concerns around access to and awareness of, service and educational entitlements. The perspectives of asylum-seeker and refugee children highlights the complexity of their educational, social and psychological needs and the desirability of addressing such needs through practices such as multi-agency approaches, home-school links and community-school links.

Since 2000, the government has implemented a dispersal policy according to which asylum-seekers are housed outside Greater London, away from cluster areas. Accommodation rather than educational considerations were prioritised in the decisions about where to disperse asylum-seeker families, with consequences for the level of preparation in schools.

LEAs have a legal obligation to provide education for asylum-seeker and refugee children. Guidance for good practice has been issued by the DfES which encourages schools and LEAs to welcome such children, to establish strong links with asylum-seeker and refugee families and communities and to address the potential underachievement of these children.

There is no specific funding arrangement to support the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. LEAs support provision for asylum-seeker and refugee children by drawing funds from the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG) and the Ethnic Minority Grant (EMAG).

Ofsted investigated the effects of asylum-seeker and refugee children on schools and argued for the importance of addressing their needs through mainstream approaches to inclusion and racial equality. LEA support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is included in the inspection framework on social inclusion.

### **Local Authority Strategies**

LEA practices, support services and approaches to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils vary greatly in relation to (a) data monitoring, (b) the development of policy in this area, and (c) the type of support and the ways in which support is offered to schools and directly to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and their families.

Only 10 LEAs (17% of the sample) referred to the DfES guidance for supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, as a source which influenced the development of their policies and support services.

### **Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Education Policy**

LEAs are encouraged to develop local policies and procedures to provide for the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. Lack of policy documentation, however, does not necessarily indicate an underdeveloped support system since some LEAs preferred not to develop explicit policies but focused on provision. Five different types of policy were identified:

- ☐ Specific category within a broader policy (28% of the sample)
- ☐ A comprehensive targeted policy (26% of the sample)
- ☐ Language policy (16% of the sample)
- ☐ School guidance (16% of the sample)
- ☐ General policy in relation to special vulnerable groups (16% of the sample)

LEA respondents most commonly preferred to refer to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils under other educational policies rather than developing a separate policy for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

### **Data Monitoring**

Out of 58 LEA respondents in the survey, 50 (86%) said they were involved in some form of data collection on asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Four data collection strategies can be identified:

- ☐ Monitoring strategy (45% of sample)
- ☐ Partial database (24% of sample)
- ☐ Deductive strategy (17% of sample)
- ☐ Not collecting data (14% of sample)

LEAs face the dilemma of balancing between the desirability of collecting information about asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in order to meet their needs and the dangers of stigmatising them as a problem. Many LEAs in the sample point out the difficulty of maintaining an accurate up-to-date database. Three different types of models of data collection were identified:

- An *Extensive Data Model* with different types of educational and social data (languages, ethnicity, educational data, welfare information, immigration information and community links)
- A *Learning and Language Data Model* focusing on English as Additional Language needs and progress
- A *Minimal Data Model* using basic information about country of origin, languages and ethnicity

There was considerable diversity in the relationship between the data collection strategies and the types of data collected and no necessary association between the choice of strategy and types of data used. Of the LEAs which used the full monitoring approach, 10 used an extensive model of data, 7 used a language and learning model and 9 a minimal model. 14 LEAs only had a partial database with 7 of those adopting a minimal model (see Part 3).

### Support Services

The support services in 58 LEAs appeared to be organised in the following ways:

- Responsibility lies with EMAS officers who are line managed through school improvement structures, and are seen as 'raising the achievement' agenda (22 LEAs – 37%)
- An asylum-seeker and refugee pupil support officer/co-ordinator who is part of the EMAS, EAL, Inclusion or Race Equality team (20 LEAs – 34%)
- Responsibility resides with Race Equality/Diversity or the Multicultural Team (8 LEAs – 14%)
- An asylum-seeker and refugee pupil support team that includes several officers, usually line managed by EMAS (4 LEAs – 7%)
- Responsibility resides with the EAL service or the New Arrivals Team (4 LEAs – 7%)

The organisation of support services depends largely on funding arrangements. The support services can be differentiated in terms of providing 'targeted' services, 'partial' services with some specific responsibilities and services or 'non-specific' services in relation to (a) admission procedures in schools (b) training of LEA and school staff and

(c) ongoing support of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and schools. These categories are not mutually exclusive. The 58 LEAs were found to have the following types of support services:

	Targeted	Partial	Non-Specific
Admission	46.0%	28.0%	26.0%
Training	49.0%	29.0%	22.0%
Ongoing Support	39.5%	52.0%	8.5%

### Educational Models and Concepts of Good Practice

Six different conceptual models were developed by the research team as a way of understanding the strategies of the 58 LEAs. These were not exclusive as some LEAs combined approaches – the most prevalent LEA frameworks are the EAL and the holistic models:

- EAL model (22 LEAs)
- Holistic model (18 LEAs)
- Minority ethnic model (13 LEAs)
- New arrivals model (8 LEAs)
- Race equality model (7 LEAs)
- Vulnerable children model (2 LEAs)

The three case study LEAs which employed a holistic model to address the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children suggested that there are different ways of realising this conceptual approach in practice. They nevertheless shared strong notions of good practice in relation to policy development, the organisation of data collection and support services for the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. Examples of good practice in these authorities included: (a) parental involvement; (b) community links; and (c) a multi-agency approach.

The positive characteristics, practices and values underlying holistic approaches to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils were:

- Existing experience with minority ethnic and EAL pupils
- Promoting positive images of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils



- Establishing clear indicators of successful integration
- An ethos of inclusion and the celebration of diversity
- A holistic approach to provision and support
- A caring ethos and the giving of hope

### **Future Research and Policy Agendas**

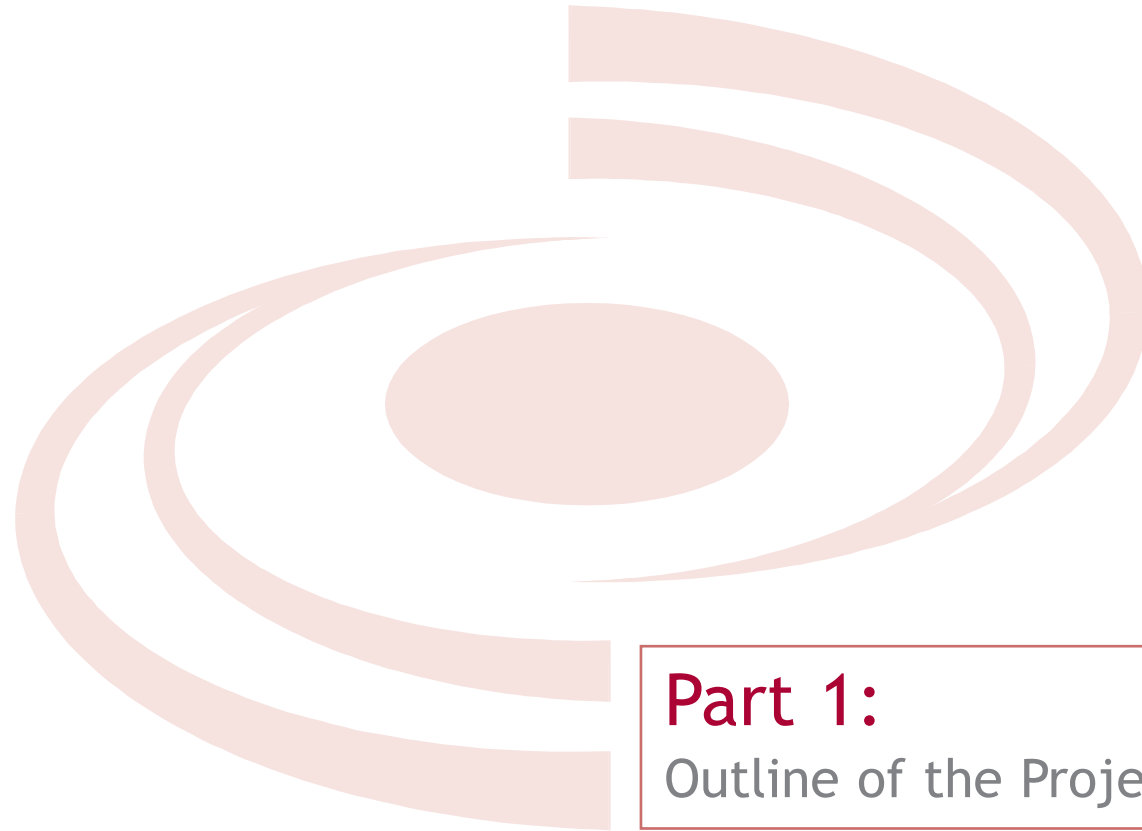
This report identifies some of the gaps in research on the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. It recommends that the different conceptual models employed by LEAs could be a useful tool with which to assess LEA and school practices and teacher approaches and track the different experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

Key issues raised in the report include:

- the extent to which the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils should be explicitly, and visibly, targeted by LEAs, rather than integrated within other LEA strategies and priorities.
- the requirement for both monitoring and consistent data on the progress and treatment of pupils in these two categories; and,
- the need for sufficient funding resources to enable LEAs and schools adequately to meet these pupil's particular needs.







## **Part 1:**

### Outline of the Project

## Part 1: Outline of the Project

This report explores the national and local context in which schools have attempted to address the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. It investigates how LEAs provide for such pupils, the support offered to schools and the underlying assumptions and approaches associated with LEA and school policies, practices and strategies for the inclusion of this group.

### 1.1 Aims

The specific aims of the project were to:

- examine the national context in which schools and LEAs are required to address the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children
- elicit and review the different responses of LEAs especially those with large asylum-seeker and refugee populations and those in dispersal areas
- identify different approaches that underpin educational responses to the needs of asylum-seekers and refugees

### 1.2 The project

This report is a result of a small-scale research project initiated by the Research Consortium on the Education of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Children. The Research Consortium currently consists of the following participating organisations: The Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge; the General Teaching Council for England (GTC); the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Refugee Council. The aim of the consortium is to promote effective teaching, learning and integration of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils by undertaking and disseminating research on the needs and experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and on the work of professionals who support them.

This project represents the first stage of a wider project that will explore the schooling experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee children in the UK. The first stage of the project aims to understand the national and local context in which schools and teachers are asked to provide for the educational needs of asylum-seeker and refugee children. The aim is to identify the different local responses of LEAs and schools to this agenda, the ways in which the various educational needs of such children have been

defined, the range of policy approaches that have been developed to provide for asylum-seeker and refugee children in schools and the relationship between these strategies and existing policy frameworks used to support vulnerable children in the educational system. The first stage of this project also focuses on the conceptualisations of good practice currently found in the educational sector.

The report is divided into six parts. Following this introduction, Part 2 outlines the national context in which LEAs, schools and teachers are expected to frame their response to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. Part 3 describes the findings of research on how this context impinges on the experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee children in the school system. Part 4 describes the local policy context in which teachers are currently working by drawing on the findings of a survey of 58 LEAs. The results of this investigation indicate the diversity of policy frameworks used to interpret and address the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and the forms of provision developed by LEAs to prepare and support schools catering for such children. Schools are asked to participate in a range of initiatives in relation to such children, in some cases in order to mainstream their needs, in others specifically to address their particular needs. Part 5 offers insights into the location of asylum-seeker and refugee children in existing educational agendas and the diverse values which are associated with concepts of good practice in relation to the inclusion of such children. It focuses especially on the experiences of schools in three case study LEAs which adopt a holistic approach to the integration of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in mainstream schools. Evidence from Headteachers, teachers with special responsibility for this area of work, and a small sample of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils indicate the different ways in which a 'holistic approach' has been developed in these three localities. Part 6 presents the project conclusions and recommendations.

### 1.3 Research design

The research was conducted in three phases. It first analysed the national policy context which frames the education of asylum-seeker and refugee

children. Whilst national statistical evidence on the presence of asylum-seeker and refugee children is not available, national responses can be found in a range of different contexts: immigration policy and educational policies which relate to minority ethnic pupils, vulnerable children as well as specifically to asylum-seeker and refugee children. A range of secondary sources was also valuable in providing a discussion of the issues. The second phase of the research investigated local authority approaches to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. A telephone survey of 58 English LEAs conducted in the Spring and Summer of 2004 explored local approaches to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children.

Three policy aspects were identified by the consortium as the themes for the LEA survey:

- policy and guidelines developed by LEAs
- data and information collected by LEAs
- LEA support services for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils for schools

The sample of LEAs contacted was drawn from the data collected by the Refugee Council (RC) survey<sup>1</sup> and the Home Office data on dispersal areas (Home Office, 2002). The LEA respondents in the Refugee Council's survey of data monitoring of asylum-seeker and refugee children were divided into the following categories:

- LEAs which responded to the RC survey and indicated that they have high numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees
- LEAs which responded to the RC survey and indicated that they have small numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees
- LEAs which responded saying they did not collect data
- LEAs which did not respond

These data were cross-referenced with the Home Office dispersal area data and a sample of 62 LEAs that included representation of the above categories was identified and contacted.

Telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from 58 out of 62 LEAs. Four LEAs declined to take part in the study. Each interview focused on the policy responses and strategies of local authorities especially in relation to the responsibilities of schools. They lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. LEAs nominated individuals as responsible for asylum-seeker and refugee children across a range of different roles (e.g. Head of Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Services (EMAS) or EMAS team member, Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, English as Additional Language (EAL) officers, inclusion team members, and Education Co-ordinator).

The third phase of the research investigated in more depth three LEAs which had participated in the survey and which had been identified as committed to developing an integrated and holistic approach to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. The aim was to explore at school level how the presence of such children in school was understood, the ways in which their needs were addressed and the values which underpinned these school approaches. The three localities selected for the research are described below:

- **LEA A** located within a dispersal area with relatively high numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees who had arrived in the last three to four years
- **LEA B** located in a non-dispersal area which is also a destination for asylum-seekers and refugees
- **LEA C** in a London Borough with high numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils

The three case studies varied in terms of the numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils catered for, LEA experiences of working with this population and the reaction of the local population to the arrival of asylum-seekers and refugees (more details are given in Part 5 of the report). A two-day visit in each LEA was carried out in which key people involved directly in supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils as well as senior management were interviewed. Each LEA was asked to select the officers and the schools that would be visited. The guideline given to LEAs was that this should reflect LEA practice. A selected number of schools were visited in each LEA in which interviews were carried out with Headteachers, support teachers and asylum-seeker and refugee pupils (see Appendix A for detailed list of the data collected in each LEA). The data collected in each LEA throws light on a wide range of practices and interpretations of the issues being addressed by teachers in schools.

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<sup>1</sup> During 2003 the Refugee Council surveyed LEAs in order to establish the number of asylum-seeker and refugee children in each LEA and in which LEAs collected specific information about these children.





## **Part 2:**

The National Context —  
Challenges for Schools

## Part 2: The National Context – Challenges for Schools

In 2003, 60,045 asylum applications, including dependants, were received in the UK.

In 2003 estimations have suggested that there are 98,929 asylum-seeker and refugee children in schools in the UK.

### 2.1 The background to UK asylum system

In recent years there has been a growth in the numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees in Britain. In the last decade, with the exception of 2003, the number of asylum-seekers and refugees arriving in the UK has increased every year (IPPR, 2003). According to the Home Office in 2002, about 103,000 applications for asylum (including dependants) were received in the UK. The recent statistical report produced by the Home Office (2004) shows that, whilst numbers dropped by 42% in 2003, it has been estimated that some 60,045 applications (including 10,640 applications with dependants) were received in Britain that year. This decrease is attributed to stricter immigration controls<sup>2</sup>. In the last decade the main countries of origin of asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK were, in order of significance: Somalia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, FRY (Former Republic of Yugoslavia), Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, China, India and Iran (IPPR, 2003). Although numbers of asylum applications are high, only a minority receive refugee status or exceptional leave to remain. For example, in 2003 only 5% received refugee status and an additional 11% were granted exceptional leave to remain (Home Office, 2004).

The high numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees in general and of asylum-seeker and refugee children in particular have attracted considerable attention in the press and in the public even though when the highest number of asylum applications were received in the UK, it was only ranked

eight in Europe in terms of asylum applications per head, and in 32<sup>nd</sup> place in the world (UNHCR quoted in IPPR, 2003). However, The Times Populus Poll suggested that nine out of ten adults in Britain believe that the number of asylum-seekers and refugees in Britain is a serious problem (quoted in IPPR, 2003: 36).

Among the 60,045 applications in 2003, 3,180 were unaccompanied children under 18 and of the 10,640 applications with dependants, 81% were children under 18. There are no accurate national or local statistical data of the number of asylum-seeker or refugee children in the British educational system. By cross-referencing different resources such as refugee surveys conducted by LEAs and the Refugee Council, PLASC (Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census), the information produced by NASS (National Asylum Support System), and language surveys, Jill Rutter (2004) estimated that there were 98,929 asylum-seeker and refugee children in schools in the UK in 2003, out of which some 65,734 were located in Greater London.

Recent legislation has tightened the control over those entering the UK and receiving refugee status, adding more restrictions to the entitlements of asylum-seekers and refugees and their access to different social services. In the context of popular representations of the growing numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees as a national 'crisis', the main concern of publications such as the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Havens* (Home Office, 2002), and the Home Office immigration reports, is understood to be one of reducing the numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK. For example, a recent Home Office report (Home Office, 2004) stresses the success of the government in reducing the numbers of those seeking asylum in the UK and those receiving asylum. In the summary the report states that, while the numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees in Europe fell by 19% during 2003, in the UK they fell by 42%. A section of the report focuses on the measures taken by the government to ensure numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees are reduced.

<sup>2</sup> For example: new visa requirements which made it more difficult for people to come to the UK; placing more restrictions on asylum seekers accessing support; and, introducing systems such as detention.



Researchers have indicated some of the difficulties faced by asylum-seekers and refugees as a result of current immigration, dispersal and integration policies and the challenges this represents for teachers and schools in trying to help such children access an appropriate form of education and develop their confidence in themselves. Below we identify some of those challenges.

## 2.2 Schooling and the dispersal policy

Schools are differentially affected by the dispersal policy. Voluntary organisations such as Save the Children, UNICEF, and the Children's Society, as well as researchers in the field (e.g. Hardwick and Rutter, 1998; Rutter 2001b; Rutter and Jones 1998) warn that recent immigration legislation has far-reaching effects on asylum-seeker and refugee children. Even though legally all asylum-seeker and refugee children should have access to education, the new restrictions (such as dispersal) and the new support arrangements affect the possibility of these children making full use of their right of access to education.<sup>3</sup>

One of the main arguments voiced by these organisations and researchers is that asylum-seeker and refugee children are treated first and foremost as asylum-seekers and refugees rather than as children. As a result their educational and social needs can become invisible. Of particular concern to schools are the effects of the Home Office dispersal programme which was introduced in the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. This programme has major consequences for the location and nature of asylum-seeker and refugee children's education. The purpose of this programme was to reduce cluster areas mainly in Greater London and to some extent in the South East. Gedalof suggests that certain assumptions are built into this programme – within the logic of dispersal 'there are limits to how much difference the home community should be expected to tolerate' (2004, p.11).

The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act also established the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) whose responsibility is to provide asylum-seekers and refugees who are waiting for a decision (subject to their application being

filed in reasonable time after their arrival to the UK) on accommodation and subsistence payments. These latter payments stand at the rate of 70% of benefits for adults and 100% for children (NASS Policy Bulletin, No. 52, 2004). NASS offers two types of support: (a) only subsistence or (b) accommodation and subsistence where accommodation is provided in dispersal areas (i.e. outside London and the South East, mostly in Northern England, Scotland and the Midlands). Asylum-seekers and refugees who wish to take up their entitlement to accommodation are dispersed and have no choice as to where they are going to be housed<sup>4</sup>. Family or community networks are not recognised as sufficient reason for a person not to be dispersed. As a result, asylum-seekers and refugees are often housed away from their prospective communities in predominantly white English areas where housing is available and which are, in many cases, also socially and economically deprived areas.

Many studies of immigration stress the importance of social capital which can enable immigrants to gain access to societal resources (Coleman, 1988; Pallon *et al.*; 2001, Kao, 2004). Access to social capital (i.e. community and family networks) is particularly important for the long-term integration of those immigrants who might suffer isolation in the wider society, because of language, cultural and other barriers (Kao, 2004, Pallon *et al.*, 2001). Social capital can help immigrant communities to cope with and achieve in schools. It can also help them benefit from schooling without the risk of losing their unique identity and cultural heritage (Zhou, 1997). Kao (2004) suggests that parents who may have difficulties understanding the education system of the new country, communicating with professional staff and accessing education, could use social capital to overcome these barriers. The lack of presence or absence of such social capital may explain the diversity of educational attainment in immigrant communities<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in analysing the UK immigration policy in light of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Candappa (2002) points out that the UK ratified the conventions, but reserved the right to prefer its nationality and immigration legislation (especially in relation to entry to the UK), over the rights of children for humanitarian protection: 'This reservation clearly discriminates against refugee children. It is clear that refugee children can never be entitled to the same rights as other children in the UK until withdrawal of the above reservation' (pp.224–225).

<sup>4</sup> A request to receive housing and not to be dispersed is very unlikely to be authorised. The NASS Policy Bulletin states that: 'An asylum-seeker may request to be allocated accommodation in London or South East because they have relatives there...But in the absence of exceptional circumstances, dispersal will generally be appropriate. For, example, if a person asked to be housed in London because they have an adult son there, then this would not normally be entertained. Asylum-seekers may ask to be accommodated in London or Kent because the area has an ethnic community there, which does not exist in the dispersal area...this would not normally be accepted as sufficient reason to depart from the dispersal policy' (NASS Policy Bulletin No. 31, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Many asylum-seekers, who were to be housed in deprived areas with no social networks and where they may experience hostility, have therefore chosen to opt out of the NASS system preferring to stay close to their communities, even at the cost of losing state subsistence and accommodation.

LEA responses to the survey and interviews suggest that, as a result of the dispersal policy, insufficient notice was given about the arrival of asylum-seekers and refugees. There was a perception therefore that the educational needs of asylum-seeker and refugee children have tended to be marginalised or ignored in the context of dispersal. According to one Ofsted school inspector, 'in reality what happened, the driver was the accommodation and the one aspect that wasn't really looked at is education'.<sup>6</sup> As a result, asylum-seekers and refugees with families could be dispersed to areas where there may not be any school placement for the children, where the schools may not have adequate resources to meet their educational needs (such as schools in predominantly white areas with no funding from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) and where schools may have very little experience with non-white, EAL or new arrival pupils. The DfES or LEAs appear to have very little involvement on dispersal decisions.

Ofsted (2003b) and NCB (Remsbery, 2003) in their respective reports on the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils suggest that many of the asylum-seeker and refugee families have been dispersed to areas where schools and teaching staff are unprepared to cater for them and where the impact on LEAs and schools in dispersal areas has not been carefully thought through:

[dispersal] presented new challenges to areas with little or no history of assisting refugees, and in some cases, little experience of multi-cultural communities (Remsbery, 2003:6).

One of the biggest challenges was for those schools that had no background, experience or expertise, or anybody that could deal with children on Monday morning when they arrive.

They had to learn some of the basic strategies to cope on a day by day basis (Interview with an Ofsted inspector).

This apparent lack of educational planning and consideration of the ability of schools and LEAs to cater for the needs of these children is regarded with concern by some LEA officers. For example:

There is a mismatch between the government dispersal programme and the funding we get, there is no additional

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<sup>6</sup> Since August 2004, there has been one exception: an asylum-seeker family who had a child in their final year in school or college leading to GCSEs or A-Levels, who had been already enrolled at a school for the significant part of the previous academic year, could ask for their dispersal to be postponed.

funding, and therefore we do not have enough staff or resources really to address their needs. Moreover, no-one looks at the impact on the local communities. Local communities are becoming very resentful, and then they have a greater difficulty in integrating these children. Families are being housed not necessarily in suitable areas, for example they are mainly housed in poor white working class areas, not supportive areas where they won't have a problem to be integrated (EMAS Officer, LEA in a dispersal area).

I think the government's response has been cheap skate really. Dispersal was a gut reaction, it was implemented quickly and without due care and attention paid to this idea. It was about getting people out of London because of the housing prices and votes and all sorts of things. The London boroughs have far higher payments per capita per child than we do up here anyway ...Sadly, I think the government is driven by public opinion (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Officer, LEA A).

It is not clear yet what the long term consequences of this policy are for asylum-seeker and refugee children, their self esteem and their educational achievement. However, the challenges faced by schools in relation to the asylum-seeker and refugee child are likely to be considerable. The responsibility for developing appropriate responses to such challenges has been delegated to local educational authorities, both in dispersal and non-dispersal areas.

## 2.3 The integration of new arrivals

...asylum has been an active area of government policy... but one where policy has had the effect of generating social exclusion, rather than preventing or ameliorating it (Burchardt, 2005:210).

In recent years, a range of legislation in the UK has represented the official reaction to the entry of asylum-seekers and refugees. New immigration and asylum legislation was introduced in 1993, 1996 and 1999, and in 2002 the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Havens* was published. It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss in-depth such changes in the UK immigration policy. However, some of the main issues emerging from these changes

which have affected the educational integration of asylum-seeker and refugee children are highlighted.

The recent immigration legislation has the explicit aim of ensuring that control over migration is more effective (Cohen, 2003). As such it is not directed at supporting asylum-seekers and refugees. Britain, as many other European and North American countries (Gallagher, 1999; Nickels, 2002) is caught between its humanitarian obligations of providing asylum for those seeking it, and concern in the media and the public about the impact of immigration on society. As a result of investigating the assumptions underlying the calls to adopt a European asylum system, Nickels (2002) suggests that the commitment to assist asylum-seekers and refugees is not denied but only selected elements are delivered.

The challenge for schools faced with the integration of new arrivals from diverse countries, is to address the negative images which might be associated with them. One danger, identified by Bauman (2004) is that asylum-seekers and refugees come to represent 'the Other'. A distinction can be made between 'us' and 'them', creating an impression, in his words that

There are always too many of *them*. 'Them' are the fellows of whom there should be fewer – or better still none at all. And there are never enough of us. 'Us' are the folks of whom there should be more (p.34).

This language can be found in the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (Home Office, 2002). Gedalof (2004), for example, points out that the title of the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* implies a discourse of 'Otherness' which suggests that first 'we' need to secure 'our' identity, 'our' borders, before we can let 'them' in. Phrases in the report such as: 'those coming into *our* country' (p.4, emphasis added), or 'around 191,000 of *them* came here...' (p.40) are commonly used. Fear of the 'Other' and the need to secure 'our' borders if transmitted in schools could be translated into a fear that uncontrolled immigration could encourage those 'who would seek to stir up hate, intolerance and prejudice' (Home Office, 2002:4).

Schools also can be faced with increasing racial tensions in the wake of new immigration. Bloch (1999) argues that, until the 1980s, immigration control in the UK focused on controlling the immigration of non-whites from the Commonwealth – asylum-seekers and refugees who, at that time, were

predominantly from communist countries, and white, were granted almost free entry. Control of asylum-seekers and refugees only began during the 1970s with the increase of asylum-seekers and refugees from Asia and Africa who were 'more black'. It therefore became more difficult to dissociate the issue of asylum-seekers and refugees from issues of racial conflict and racial prejudice (Bloch, 1999, Cohen, 2003). In this context, schools could find themselves needing to prevent local expressions of racial hostility against asylum-seeker and refugee children and to find new ways of encouraging pupils to recognise and celebrate diversity.

A major challenge for schools and teachers in this field is how to address the effects of such negative representations of asylum-seekers and refugees on community relations and public support. Even though refugees are assumed to 'have a contribution to make to the economy' (Home Office, 2002: 4–5), whilst asylum-seekers seek safety as a result of persecution in their own country (*ibid*), both groups may be seen as competing with the local indigenous population over economic and societal resources. Cohen (2003) refers to this view as economic nationalism. Both these groups are likely to receive restricted levels of social and community support. Asylum-seekers and refugees face new hurdles in accessing different services and resources (such as restriction on housing, cuts in subsistence payments and the banning of the right to work), which are designed to act as a deterrent to 'unlawful' asylum-seekers and 'bogus' refugees arriving in the UK.<sup>7</sup> Critics have argued that the restriction on welfare entitlements for asylum-seekers and refugees, introduced by recent legislation, is likely to be a 'recipe for social exclusion' (Burchardt, 2005).

High levels of poverty and considerable economic disadvantage are experienced by asylum-seeker and refugee families, newly arrived in the UK – a context which is likely to have a major impact on the ability of such families and their children to participate fully in schooling. In order to receive asylum or refugee status, asylum applicants need to convince the

<sup>7</sup> Studies funded by the Home Office show that the main factor in the decision of asylum-seekers to choose Britain as their destination is having family and networks in the UK, while considerations such as their entitlements and the support they might receive as asylum-seekers are only minor factors in their decision-making (Robinson and Segrott, 2002; Koser and Pinkerton, 2002). Moreover, a recent analysis of patterns of asylum-seeking in Europe and the UK suggests that asylum-seekers' departure from their country of origin 'is correlated with the timing of conflicts. The patterns are not consistent with the hypothesis that asylum-seekers are economic migrants by another name' (Burchardt, 2005:221).

Home Office that they are 'genuine' asylum-seekers or refugees. Until they have done so, they are subject to a range of restrictions as to where they stay, their ability to work and the support they receive from the government. In addition, if the Home Office suspects that their application might not be genuine, they might be detained.

The challenge facing schools is deciding how to promote the integration of new arrivals in this complex legal, economic and community environment. According to the recent consultation paper *Integration Matters: A national strategy for refugee integration*, (Home Office, 2004) integration is understood to apply only to those who are defined as genuine asylum-seekers and refugees and, therefore, have been granted refugee status. As stated in the consultation paper:

This integration strategy does not cover asylum-seekers... While the Government does accept that the experience of asylum-seekers before they are recognised as refugees will affect their later integration in a number of ways, it believes that integration in the full sense of the word can take place only when a person has been confirmed as a refugee and can make plans on the basis of a long-term future in the UK (Home Office, 2004:10).

On the other hand, schools and local authorities are inspected on their success in reducing social exclusion and promoting the inclusion of all children in learning.

## 2.4 Devolving responsibility: from central to local government

The official government line is that children of asylum-seekers or refugees are given the same opportunity to benefit from education as any other child in the UK. Under the Children Act 1989, all children, regardless of the status of their parents, are eligible for health care, education and support from social services. According to section 14 of the Education Act 1996, local education authorities have a legal obligation to provide education for all children ages 5–16 including children of asylum-seekers or refugees, with the exception of those who reside in accommodation or detention centres (in which case education would be provided by the centre).

For many children 'the school serves as a second security base outside the home, or perhaps their only security base' (Candappa, 2002, p.229). Black

and Ademi add that asylum-seeker and refugee children in mainstream education 'have the best chance of building a new life here, by developing a sense of belonging to an institution run by the host community' (1998, p.12). LEAs, schools and asylum-seeker and refugee parents have been given the prime responsibility for fulfilling the legal obligation to provide asylum-seeker and refugee children with access to mainstream education. As the guidance given by the DfES to schools on the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children states:

Parents are obliged to ensure that their children receive an education and LEAs must offer school places in accordance with their published admissions arrangements and must ensure that all children resident in that local authority receive fulltime education. The obligation of an LEA to provide a school place is outlined in Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 (DfES, 2002a:17).

The DfES guidance also states that: 'LEAs should ensure that there are no unreasonable delays in securing the admission of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils to school'(10). Neither the guidance nor the *School Admission Code of Practice* (DfES, 2002c) which describes the entitlement of asylum-seeker and refugee children to receive school placement as quickly as possible, offer any time framework as to how quickly asylum-seeker and refugee children should receive a school placement and what might be considered 'unreasonable delays'. The admission of asylum-seeker and refugee children is left to the discretion of LEAs and schools who are also responsible for the decision about whether (and how) to develop an appropriate policy in relation to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

At present, there are three people in the DfES with responsibility for the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. One is responsible for policy and development, another for children in care and a third for unaccompanied children. Advice to schools and LEAs is contained in the three main relevant DfES publications which are: *Good Practice Guidance on the Education of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children* (2002a), *Aiming High* (2003a) and *Managing Pupils' Mobility* (2003b). Jill Rutter, then Education Advisor for the Refugee Council, was commissioned to write the guidance. Interview data from this project suggests that, despite its being online, many schools are not aware of the guidance. The guidance emphasises the



need to ensure the educational achievement of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Induction into a welcoming environment is important if such students are to 'settle into a new school and become effective learners' (p.17). Schools and LEAs are also directed to the importance of working with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils' families and communities: 'Establishing strong links with parents is an essential part of raising the educational achievement of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils' (p.29). In the DfES guidance on managing pupils' mobility, in which asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are mentioned as one of the most mobile group in the UK, the aim of the guidance is defined as follows: 'we recognize that high levels of mobility can be a major fact in underachievement of pupils, and we set up the Pupil Mobility Project to try and counter that underachievement' (p.3). Central to this advice is the importance of addressing the achievement of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils. This raises issues around monitoring educational achievement and funding, which we discuss below.

### **Educational Achievement**

The lack of information about this group of pupils, nationally and often locally, has direct bearing on the educational achievement of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Statistical data on the presence, dispersal and admission of such pupils in schools can facilitate appropriate educational support and provision and such data can also help to monitor pupils' progress. However, at present, no official figures are published indicating how many asylum-seeker and refugee pupils attend schools in England and Wales. Current figures on asylum-seeker and refugee children are the result of initiatives set up by voluntary organisations, such as the Refugee Council. These data represent an informed guess rather than accurate statistics. The stance adopted by the DfES in relation to collecting information about asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is significant. The DfES has recently made it obligatory for all schools to collect detailed data (PLASC) about the ethnic origin of their students: 'This information will help authorities to identify barriers to achievement, to establish strategies to raise standards to comply with equal opportunities' (DfES, 2002b). However, only relatively fixed categories, such as ethnicity and country of origin, were included in this database. Asylum-seeker and refugee status are not included in the list of categories which schools are asked to collect, reflecting the fact that these are liable to change, the difficulty of

collecting such data and the potential inaccuracy of such information because of the high mobility of these students.

The lack of specific data about the numbers of asylum-seeking and refugee children, however, has considerable implications for schools and LEAs especially in relation to the development of appropriate educational and social service provision. The Children's Legal Centre points out:

Knowing how many refugee and asylum-seeking children are in an area is an important part of determining the services that are likely to be needed by them... (2003:10).

In recent years one of the main challenges in terms of meeting the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee children has been to secure their legal right of access to education. Asylum-seeker and refugee children, in a competitive situation, might be regarded by schools as a potential threat to school standards and record of achievement (McDonald, 1998). However, schools have been given the option of excluding from their examination results, asylum-seeker and refugee pupils (or any pupil with English as an additional language) if they have been less than two years in the country<sup>8</sup>. This policy may have a positive effect if it encourages schools to accept and welcome such students without worrying about how they would affect school performance, as one LEA officer in the study commented:

The other thing I think that's helped is not having to include new arrivals in the league tables because all our schools obviously are very, very worried about their results and their position in the league tables and I think that the fact that we don't have to include the new arrivals means that they are welcomed into schools where perhaps they wouldn't be if it was thought that they would be included (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Officer, LEA C).

However, there are potentially negative implications of such a decision to omit asylum-seeker and refugee pupils from league tables. Schools might take away the message that they have limited responsibility towards these children

<sup>8</sup> It is important to point out that, despite the optional omission from league tables, schools are still obliged to include exam results of newly arrived pupils in their reports to Ofsted.

and that they are not entitled to the same opportunity as other pupils. Such concerns were articulated by LEA officers who took part in this study:

So if we are going to take out those who have been in the school less than two full years, do we ever make a report on how those youngsters have actually performed compared to other similar youngsters elsewhere and I think that's one of the difficulties, that there isn't actually any good government data on performance of refugees and asylum-seekers (Head of Inclusion, LEA C).

Youngsters that arrive before the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 can be excluded statistically from the performance table and statistics. Again that says more about the government's drive for standards and league tables (Head of EMAG, LEA A).

Some associate the decision to exclude asylum-seeker and refugee pupils from league tables with the risk that such pupils may only be perceived as temporary and therefore have less status in the school. Their integration may only be perceived by schools to be relevant once they ceased being asylum-seeking. It is also the case that this policy 'leaves unaddressed the principal issue of resourcing as effectively as possible those schools facing the challenges of providing for these new arrivals' (Mott, 2000, p.7).

### Funding Arrangements

There have been calls for more central government support for schools (Mott, 2000) in order to address inconsistencies in the delivery of support at local level. For example:

The Refugee Council believes that the inconsistencies in the ways in which language support is delivered, plus the lack of debate about how much EAL support a child should receive is caused by a lack of central government policy guidance on the rights of children from ethnic minority communities...the DfEE needs to be the lead agency in formulating such a national language strategy (Rutter, 2001a:44).

There is debate about whether the asylum-seeker and refugee children's educational needs are marginalised or rendered invisible within mainstream

and existing policy frameworks and financial resource lines. There is no dedicated funding line to support schools and LEAs who have admitted asylum-seeker and refugee pupils but they can draw resources from EMAG and the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG). However, neither of these funds is designed specifically to support the complex forms of provision required to address the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. EMAG, as stated in the DfES guidelines, is intended to close the gap between minority ethnic and non-minority ethnic pupils and to raise the achievement of the former. The aim of this grant is also to meet the cost of additional support for bilingual learners. The grant devolved to schools is based on the number of EAL students, the number of ethnic minorities and the number of those receiving free school meals. As EAL pupils, asylum-seekers and refugees might enjoy this grant, but it does not support them directly and does not cater for other emotional, social, health and economic needs<sup>9</sup>.

The Vulnerable Children Grant – Guidance for financial year 2004–2005 describes its purposes:

To support attendance, integration or reintegration into school...and to provide additional educational support to enable vulnerable children to achieve their potential.

In contrast to EMAG, the intention is that this grant will also cover pastoral aspects of support for vulnerable groups of pupils. The VCG therefore allows more flexibility to LEAs and encourages an holistic approach to addressing the needs of different groups of vulnerable children (Kendall et al., 2004). Asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are listed as one of the seven groups who might benefit from this grant. Funding is diverted to LEAs based on number of pupils out of school, the number of students receiving free school meals and the number of traveller/gypsy pupils.

Currently, schools and LEAs have discretion on how to use EMAG funds and to decide whether asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are beneficiaries. They have to choose between supporting the needs of various groups of pupils facing difficulties in the educational system. Remsbery (2003) and Reakes and Powell (2004) found that schools voiced their concern that using EMAG

<sup>9</sup> In the current academic year 2004–2005, more restrictions and cuts have been introduced by the DfES to EMAG and consequently LEAs have generally less money to support EAL pupils.

as the main source of supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils could come at the expense of other groups. The report *Aiming High* (DfES, 2003a) recognised that, where EMAG has increasingly been used to meet the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, this gave 'less flexibility to focus on raising achievement of British-born minority ethnic pupils' (p.38). Some LEAs and schools which participated in this study had similar concerns. For example a Headteacher in one of the schools visited in LEA A (dispersal area) stated:

Obviously support for these children is always an issue. You feel you are pulling the support for one group of children to meet the needs of another group and you know the thinner you spread it, the less impact it has (Headteacher, LEA A).

There are a number of other issues associated with the distribution of funds for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. LEAs, especially in dispersal areas where the local population is predominantly white and therefore their EMAG funding is very small, felt they had inadequate funding to draw upon in supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. There are concerns too, around pupil numbers. EMAG is devolved to schools and LEAs once a year based on the pupil census – which means that, even where data about the ethnicity and EAL needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are being collected, it does not cater for the majority of these pupils who tend to arrive mid-term (Rutter, 2001a). Also, EMAG started as EAL support for pupils originally from the Commonwealth, and it has been progressively reduced over the years. In contrast, the numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils has increased and EMAG arrangements have not increased accordingly. Rutter suggests, and the findings of this project confirm, that:

Their [asylum-seekers' and refugees'] reception is presently a matter of educational debate. In England, the failure of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) to deliver support to refugee children, particularly those outside London, is a key component of this debate (Rutter, 2001a, p.29).

The difficulties associated with a fair distribution of existing resources have therefore been recognised at a number of different levels. The Vulnerable Children Grant has come to be seen as a solution to the problem of catering for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. However there continue to be concerns about its impact:

DfES is arguing now that that has been incorporated into the Vulnerable Children Grant, but you know, how much of it is being recognised within that pot? There is a whole range of groups of pupils including Gypsy pupils, you know ... there is a limit to how far this particular fund will go. So it only gave a marginal relief in that sense to some of the schools (Interview with an Ofsted Inspector).

When the DfES commissioned an evaluation of the implementation of the VCG, the authors, (Kendall et al. 2004) found that, despite the flexibility of this grant, LEAs tend to use it to facilitate and maintain existing strategic approaches, services and support strategies. Therefore, the three main groups that benefit from this grant are 'looked after' children, children with medical needs and Gypsy/Traveller children. However, the evaluation also noted the improved ability of LEAs to provide holistic support across vulnerable groups and reported that some had used the fund to develop work with unaccompanied asylum-seeker and refugee pupils (including work on mental health issues) and to fund college places for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils arriving late in KS4.

Survey data from 58 LEAs in 2000 found that, while the majority of EMAG is devolved to schools, many LEAs feel that the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils would have been better addressed by having a central support system (Mott 2000). Surveys of LEAs suggest that the existing funding arrangements for helping asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are seen as limited, inflexible and inadequate, especially when considering the complex needs of this population (Mott, 2000; Reakes and Powell, 2004).

### **The Impact of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Pupils on Schools**

Ofsted has taken a different more pro-active approach towards the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. It initiated a two-year research project on the impact of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils on schools which was conducted between 2000 and 2002 and followed with a report in 2003 on *The Education of Asylum-seeker Pupils*. The decision to take a pro-active approach appears to have been a response to dispersal. As the Ofsted ex-Inspector we interviewed commented:

...the other aspect that generated the report is that, at that time, the Home Office was implementing a dispersal

programme... We also wanted to look at LEAs that haven't got this long established tradition, who were part of the dispersal areas. We wanted to see how they are coping, how they are getting up to speed....

The focus of this report was to examine the effects of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils on schools, rather than the integration of such children. Asylum-seeker and refugee pupils were related here to inclusion and race equality agendas. Thus:

It is very much part of the inclusion agenda in terms of what we are looking at. So it wasn't a one-off exercise: it was very much part of looking at issues of race equality, issues to do with inclusion, very much current in education, part of the inspection framework, and these two themes seem to focus on two groups which are perhaps at the margins, the periphery. We needed to take a closer look to see how it is going. What do we know? What are the good things that are happening? What are the issues, and what are the areas that still need to be addressed in terms of meeting the needs of these two particular groups? (Ofsted Inspector interview).

Issues around the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils have also been integrated into the Ofsted inspection of LEAs support for ethnic minority groups and approaches to inclusion. The inspection framework (Ofsted, 2003a) defines the following classification framework for examining LEA support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils:

- *Good*: the LEA has a comprehensive policy; the provisions are co-ordinated with other department and agencies; the LEA monitors the use of funding and the level of attainment; the LEA keeps up-to-date data on numbers
- *Satisfactory*: the LEA has a strategy; it monitors the use of funding and attainment and has access to data
- *Poor*: the LEA has no strategy and no access to reliable data

These criteria suggest that Ofsted regards a comprehensive policy with appropriate strategies as important for the successful support of asylum-

seeker and refugee pupils. It is not clear the extent to which such criteria are being used by Ofsted inspectors.

## 2.5 Summary

Schools and LEAs face a considerable number of challenges in relation to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

- A range of different factors affect the dispersal, arrival and admission of such pupils into the school system. Some central support for the development of appropriate responses to the issue is available, but schools and LEAs still face major decisions in terms of financing and organising adequate support and provision.
- There are political and cultural issues associated with immigration and which have repercussions in schools and communities. The ways in which asylum-seeker and refugee children are regarded and treated by society has an effect on the responses of pupils, teachers, parents and communities. In this context, schools have the difficult task of ensuring that asylum-seeker and refugee children are offered a safe environment and promoting their integration even if only temporarily.
- The transient nature of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils' status in the UK, the diversity of their ethnic origins and hostile public images of their communities, make major demands of schools and authorities only some of which were prepared in advance for such a scenario. The dispersal policy does not appear to prioritise educational placement or integration in the location of asylum-seeker children.
- No central database is available to monitor the location and educational achievement of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and their progress in mainstream education. This strategy renders such pupils invisible but may also protect them from adverse responses to their admission in schools.
- Schools and LEAs have the responsibility of ensuring that all children, regardless of their immigration status, receive their full entitlement to education and that they are offered opportunities to develop. However, the resource costs of such entitlements, especially given the diversity of needs of newly arrived groups of pupils, may have to be



met from existing sources since only limited central funds are available. Schools and LEAs are asked to use their discretion to distribute such limited resources to a range of vulnerable groups.

The next section outlines research findings of the impact of this national policy context on the educational experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee children.







### **Part 3:**

Research on the Educational  
Experiences of Asylum-Seeker  
and Refugee Children

## Part 3: Research on the Educational Experiences of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Children

Teachers in schools with asylum-seeker and refugee children are on the front line in relation to national immigration and dispersal policies. The effects of community conflict and aggressive or hostile reactions to the presence of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils can be felt by all in the school. Negative images and media reporting also create difficulties for schools.

### **Schools could get a cash 'bribe' to take asylum children...**

The Government's plan to offer cash incentives to ease the problem emerged weeks after the watchdog Ofsted warned a huge influx of asylum-seeker children was threatening the education of tens of thousands of other pupils. Inspectors found they disrupted lessons because they were often placed in schools with little notice and have a poor grasp of English (Daily Mail, 5/3/03).

### **Struggling schools 'swamped with asylum-seekers'...**

Not surprisingly, pupils at the schools in Hammersmith and Fulham that help educate the would-be refugees are more than three times as likely to fail their GCSEs (Daily Mail, 5/5/02).

Despite the large numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee children in mainstream schooling and the salience of the issue in public debates in recent years, research into asylum-seeker and refugee children in general, and their education in particular is still relatively underdeveloped. The work, for example, of Jill Rutter, previously Education Advisor of the Refugee Council and that of Candappa (2002), Closs, Stead and Arshad (2001), Hyder (1998) and Richman (1998) laid the foundation for schools working with asylum-seeker and refugee children. Research initiated by NGOs (for example, Save the Children, the Children's Society and the National Children's Bureau) comprises another small but important body of work. Research on the educational experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils has mainly focused on four themes:

- ☐ The impact of immigration policy
- ☐ Access to services
- ☐ The perspective of asylum-seeker and refugee children
- ☐ Raising awareness of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils' needs

### **3.1 The impact of immigration policy on asylum-seeker and refugee children**

One of the main concerns of contemporary social and educational research in the field has been the effects of different government policies and services on the integration of asylum-seekers and refugee children in the UK. Concerns, for example, have been expressed about the negative consequences of immigration policy on asylum-seeker and refugee children's education. Rutter and Jones (1998) in their edited collection, *Refugee Education: Mapping the Field*, for example, argue that the restrictions on access of asylum-seekers and refugees to benefits and housing introduced by the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act have had a significant effect on asylum-seeker and refugee children and their integration into mainstream schooling. They warn that, as a result of this legislation, asylum-seeker and refugee children are more likely to be mobile, to live in temporary accommodation and therefore to attend less popular schools, and to have a more disrupted education.

Hardwick and Rutter (1998) present the concerns of the Refugee Council regarding the effect on asylum-seeker and refugee children of the 1998 White Paper *Fairer, Faster, and Firmer* which introduced further restrictions on the access of asylum-seekers and refugees to the welfare system, including the voucher system<sup>10</sup>. Its implementation could mean schools have to deal with increasing stress among asylum-seeker and refugee children and their families. The authors criticise the voucher system for not catering for children's needs, such as toys and books, and hence denying them aspects of a normal childhood. Changes in asylum procedures introduced, for example by the 1996 Act and the implementation of the 1998 White Paper could also mean that asylum-seeker and refugee children will experience more uncertainty in

<sup>10</sup> The voucher system meant that the benefits to which asylum-seekers were previously entitled, were replaced by vouchers that could be exchanged for certain goods, only in specific shops. This system has been abolished.

relation to their future, which in turn might affect their ability to concentrate on their education (Rutter and Jones, 1998; Hardwick and Rutter, 1998). The educational experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and their families are also affected by local authority policies. Closs, Stead and Arshad (2001) and Stead, Closs and Arshad, (2002) researched this issue in Scotland, using surveys of different educational authorities and interviews with asylum-seeker and refugee children and parents. The study drew attention to the lack of educational and school policies in relation to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Many LEAs appeared not to be aware of the numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in their schools, or of their specific needs (*ibid*). The lack of information about asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and the general failure of schools and educational authorities to keep records about these students, contributed to their invisibility.

### 3.2 Access to services

The extent to which asylum-seekers and refugees are aware of existing services and their ability to make full use of them has been the focus of investigation, mainly by NGOs. An example of this type of research is *Refugee Children in the Early Years: issues for policy makers and providers* by Rutter and Hyder (1998) – a publication of the Refugee Council and Save the Children – which examined the extent to which such children enjoy equal access to early years education. The report's findings are drawn from a four-phase study which includes the analysis of Early Years Development Plans, 110 responses to questionnaires about early years provision by a sample of LEAs and other providers of early years provision, visits to 7 LEAs and voluntary sector projects, and focus groups with Somali and Kurdish refugee parents. The study suggests that, despite the need of asylum-seeker and refugee children for early years provision, many of these children do not have access to the range of early years services, nor are their parents aware of them. Access of asylum-seekers and refugees to early years provision could be improved if LEAs were to put more stress on co-ordinating their services and making information more accessible to parents, for example, by consulting more and by providing translated material (Rutter, 1998b).

Research on the access of asylum-seeker and refugee children to the range of different services including education was also the focus of small-scale

research projects conducted by the Refugee Council and the Children's Society (2002) and the Children's Legal Centre (2003). Using interviews and focus groups with asylum-seeker and refugee children, both reports concluded that, despite the legal obligation to provide these children with education, many had to wait sometimes for long periods of time before accessing schooling. The Children's Legal Centre (2003) found that difficulties in gaining access to schooling reflected not just a lack of available school placements but also the ability of schools to offer language support, and sometimes their reluctance to admit high numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in case exam results were affected. The report also suggests that asylum-seeker and refugee families often find it difficult to access education without assistance.

Accessible information about education provision, as well as a mechanism for advising and assisting asylum-seeker and refugee families on the process of school admission was also an important factor in determining the extent to which 14 to 19 year old asylum-seekers and refugees enjoyed access to education provision. Based on interviews with 14 to 19 year old refugee children, McDonald (1998) suggests that, 'For many refugee students such patterns of disruption and discontinuity [of their education] are also a major feature of their educational experience after their arrival in the UK' (p. 158). These studies illustrate the importance of a multi-agency approach, home-school links and special admission mechanisms in supporting asylum-seeker and refugee children.

### 3.3 The perspectives of asylum-seeker and refugee children

Given the invisibility often of asylum-seeker and refugee children in the UK, the small, but growing body of research which focuses on their experiences and voices is particularly important. Some of these studies were supported by Save the Children (Save the Children, 2000, 2001). '*I didn't come here for fun*' (Save the Children, 2000) describes the experiences of a small sample of asylum-seeker and refugee children in Scotland. The report suggests that the majority of these children, who suffer trauma, still feel disoriented and unhappy. Many of these children attribute the feeling of disorientation to the fact that they are housed in disadvantaged areas where they have no community links and where they often suffer racial harassment by local youths. They would have preferred to be located next to people

who share their experiences. Within this context the majority of the children who were interviewed for this project attributed great importance to schooling and saw it as an opportunity to meet people and to learn English. Some of them reported that they did not always feel welcome and experienced difficulties in adjusting to a new language and a different education system.

These small-scale studies based on testimonies play an important role in bringing the voice of asylum-seeker and refugee children into the public domain. Another Save the Children project '*Cold and Comfort: The lottery of care for young separated refugees in England*' (Save the Children, 2001) presents the findings of a study of 129 unaccompanied asylum-seeker and refugee children resident in England. It examined the experiences of these children in relation to accommodation, education, health, social services and immigration procedures. The level of support these children received and their experiences were found to vary greatly across local authorities, although many of them felt that they had not received adequate support.

Asylum-seekers' and refugees' experiences can throw light on the ways in which policies are working as Candappa (2000, 2002), Closs, Stead and Arshad (2001) and Stead, Closs and Arshad (2002) have shown. Candappa, for example, explored the extent to which asylum-seeker and refugee children acquired the rights accorded to children in the UN Child Convention (2002). Using in-depth interviews with 35 asylum-seeker and refugee children and a survey of 300 asylum-seeker and refugee and non-refugee children in two London schools, Candappa illustrated the important role schools can play in helping these children adjust to life in the UK. Schools were the main source of support for many of them but this varied greatly from area to area. Starting school was found to be a difficult experience for such children in this project, like those in the Save the Children's project, and many asylum-seeker and refugee children felt isolated. They also saw the learning of English as a high priority.

According to the UN Child Convention, these children have the right to an adequate standard of living – but many asylum-seeker and refugee children reported that they experienced an unsatisfactory standard of living including financial hardship and inadequate accommodation (Candappa, 2002). These experiences of poverty and exclusion could have far reaching effects on their ability to enjoy their right to education.

Another major theme that emerged from the findings of research conducted with 14 asylum-seeker and refugee families in Scotland is that these parents often feared being stigmatised and therefore chose not to disclose their status to the school. Such disclosure only took place when they came to trust the school and the school staff (Closs, Stead and Arshad, 2001). The interviews with children suggest that most experienced bullying and encountered difficulties in creating peer relationships. Drawing upon these experiences, many of the children also tended not to share with other students or with school staff, their experiences of having to fly from their country of origin and of seeking asylum (Stead, Closs and Arshad, 2002). The importance of developing practices (such as home-school liaison) and creating opportunities for asylum-seeker and refugee children within the school and the curriculum to share their life experiences was emphasised in this research. Stead, Closs and Arshad, (2002) concluded that 'we need to provide refugee pupils with the choice and opportunity to be safely visible: only then will their visibility be acceptable' (p.55).

### 3.4 Raising awareness of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils' needs

Refugee students are special because they have typically experienced both displacement and trauma and now face the task of adapting to a new environment, frequently involving the simultaneous acquisition of new language (Anderson et al., 2004:1).

Raising the awareness of teachers and practitioners to the background and the complex needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils has been a major goal of researchers. Many publications that fall into this category attempt to identify good school practice in relation to the complex needs of these children. Richman's *In the Midst of the Whirlwind: A manual for helping refugee children* (1998) provides a manual for teachers and practitioners and a framework for understanding the situation of asylum-seeker and refugee children as well as offering useful ideas on how to assist them. *Supporting Refugee Children in 21st century Britain: A compendium of essential information* (Rutter, 2001b) is another manual to help practitioners. One of the strongest themes in these publications is the importance of understanding the multiple complex needs of asylum-seeker and refugee children.

- Many of these children have experienced war and loss and are suffering from trauma (Richman, 1998; Rutter and Stanton, 2001) which might lead to what can be interpreted as behavioural problems (Candappa, 2000). Some might also harbour guilt feelings about having to escape, leaving family members behind (Richman, 1998).
- On arrival at the country of asylum, these children have to cope with displacement, and have to develop a familiarity with, and attachment to a new place (Anderson, 2004). They have to adjust to a new culture, language (Rutter, 2001b) and to construct a new sense of identity/belonging (Richman, 1998).
- Asylum-seeker and refugee children often have to cope with changes in familial relationships, when their parents become more vulnerable and depend on their children, or more protective and authoritarian (Candappa, 2000; Rutter, 2001b).
- Asylum-seeker and refugee children often have to deal with anxiety as a result of the asylum process and the uncertainty of their future (Richman, 1998).
- Asylum-seeker and refugee children have multiple social needs and often suffer from poverty and poor housing (Richman, 1998; Rutter and Hyder, 1998; Rutter and Stanton, 2001).
- In the UK, as a result of dispersal and of avoiding dispersal many of these children experience high mobility (Rutter and Stanton, 2001).
- Asylum-seeker and refugee children might have special or more frequent health problems (Rutter and Hyder, 1998).
- Finally, many of these children are subject to racial harassment and bullying (Rutter and Hyder, 1998; Rutter and Stanton, 2001).

Raising awareness of these diverse needs is essential as they affect the ability of asylum-seeker and refugee children to enjoy their right to education and to make the most of their school experience. There is also a need to find ways of addressing their specific learning needs. These are described as:

- **Language needs:** The importance of language support both for EAL (English as additional language) and for maintaining their mother tongue (Candappa, 2000; Jones and Rutter, 1998; Rutter, 2001a; Rutter and Stanton, 2001).

- **The need to adjust** to a new education system and a new school culture (Hamilton, 2004; Marland, 1998). This includes the difficulties asylum-seeker and refugee parents experience in familiarising themselves with the culture of the new education system (Rutter and Stanton, 2001).
- Many have experienced **interrupted education** or have very limited educational experience (Rutter and Stanton, 2001).

Marland (1998) when talking about her experiences as a Headteacher working with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils states: 'each of their needs challenges one of our continuing weaknesses, and often challenges it in an acute way' (p.17). Acknowledgment of the complex educational, social and emotional needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is now coupled with an awareness that creative and comprehensive educational solutions are needed, building on teachers' and practitioners' experience in the field.

In the last few years *Multicultural Teaching Journal*<sup>11</sup> (see volumes: 16:1, 17:1, 19:1, 19:2, 19:3, 20:1) has been an important source of sharing information about good practice across Britain. It publishes short articles by practitioners, teachers and researchers about their experiences of working with asylum-seeker and refugee children and reports successful initiatives and projects, highlighting different aspects of good practice. These publications illustrate the importance of, for example, home-school liaison (Beard and Bradely, 2001; Bolloten and Spafford, 1998; Cable, 1997); community links (Iszatt and Price, 1995), maintaining home language (Rutter, 1998b; Hyder, 1998); ensuring access to the school curriculum (Bolloten and Spafford, 1998) and addressing children's emotional needs (Black and Ademi, 1998; Richman, 1998; Rutter, 2001b).

Beard and Bradely (2001) use their experience as asylum-seeker and refugee education support officers in one north London LEA to suggest that a successful way of tackling high mobility among these pupils is to develop strong home-school links and encourage parental involvement. Cable (1997) describes a home-school liaison project in Merton, London where a school assigned three teachers to act as home-school liaison officers who were responsible for telling mainstream teachers about the background and needs

<sup>11</sup> Now called *Race Equality Teaching*



of the children. This initiative recognised that asylum-seeker and refugee children's needs are bound up with the needs of their parents or carers.

Kahin (1998) and Vincent and Warren (1998) separately examined the importance of parent-school relationships through in-depth interviews with asylum-seeker and refugee parents. Vincent and Warren also observed meetings between these parents and school staff. The difficulties asylum-seeker and refugee parents encounter in getting involved in their children's education was found to be related to language and cultural barriers. Successful home-school links could help remove such barriers and get the parents involved.

Similarly, a project which established co-operation between education psychologists and professionals in a refugee community in London was found by Iszatt and Price (1995) to illustrate the benefits of community-school links. The professional experience of the refugee communities and their cultural knowledge helped these practitioners successfully address the emotional needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in schools.

Hamilton (2004) summarises some of these aspects of 'good educational practice':

Schools need to develop specific policies and procedures that focus on ensuring the creation of a mutually adaptive relationship between the refugee child, his or her parents, schools, and surrounding community and helping services (88).

### 3.5 Summary

Research on the educational experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee children in the UK extends professional awareness of the issues involved in working with them. The accounts of the personal experiences of professionals working in the field and a limited amount of research have begun to illustrate the difficulties many asylum-seekers and refugees encounter in accessing different services including education. However, reports such as the NCB's study (Remsbery, 2003), the Ofsted report (2003b) and the two NFER studies (Mott, 2000; Reakes and Powell, 2004) also indicate the positive LEA and school reactions to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. When designing their responses, local authorities and schools have found themselves needing to address some or all of the following pupil needs:

- The need for social and emotional adjustment to the new environment, previous, often traumatic experiences, learning how to cope also with changes in families and uncertainty about the future.
- Multiple social, physical and economic needs in relation to poverty and economic disadvantage, poor housing, high mobility, health problems and isolation in the local community.
- Experiences of racial harassment and feelings of, and being unwelcome in schools. They report suffering racial harassment by local youth and in some cases, the lack of available support from their own community because of their dispersal.
- Language needs and the need for stability in schooling after an interrupted education, possibly limited educational experience, and a likely distance between the culture of the home and school.

The next section explores the values, policies and practices adopted by LEAs and schools.





## **Part 4:**

The Survey – Local Education  
Authority Responses

## Part 4: The Survey – Local Education Authority Responses

School responses to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children are greatly affected by the approach, levels and type of support offered by local authorities. Data from the survey demonstrates the diversity of LEA policy approaches in England and the sorts of school provision they encourage.

### 4.1 LEA approaches

There have been a number of investigations of LEA and school responses to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. These include:

- Ofsted's research report *The Education of Asylum-seeker Pupils* (2003b) which examined the support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in 37 schools in 11 LEAs.
- The report produced by the National Children's Bureau (Remsbery, 2003) *The Education of Refugee Children: Policy and Practice in the Education of Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Children in England* which identified good practice in relation to the support offered by several LEAs, particularly those in dispersal areas.
- The NFER studies: Mott (2000) surveyed 58 LEAs to investigate the extent to which they had specific policies and practices to address the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. *The Education of Asylum-Seekers in Wales* (Reakes and Powell, 2004) presented the findings of a case study research in 3 Welsh LEAs.

One of the aims of this study was to identify different conceptual approaches to the educational and social needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. The 58 LEAs which participated in the survey conducted for this project included London authorities which were highly experienced in policy development in relation to minority ethnic groups and which already had high numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, and LEAs which were located in a dispersal area and which for the first time found themselves having to deal with high numbers of EAL or minority ethnic pupils. The LEAs in our sample included LEAs which provide education for less than 100

asylum-seeker and refugee pupils as well as LEAs which provide for more than 5,000 asylum-seekers and refugees.

In line with other studies (e.g. Remsbery, 2003), one of the main findings of this study is the great variation in the types and level of support offered to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and the diversity of policy approaches employed by local authorities. Considerable differences were found in the organisation of the support services, data collection, policy development, and the ways in which admission and induction are managed. Underlying this diversity are the different ways in which LEAs conceptualise asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and their needs.

This section explores the assumptions by investigating the variation in practices and approaches employed by LEAs across England in relation to three areas and sets of questions:

- **Policy:** Has the LEA developed policy/guidance?
- **Data collection:** Does the LEA collect data and if so, what sort of data?
- **Support:** How is support organised? What sort of support is offered by the LEA to schools and directly to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils?

### 4.2 Asylum-seeker and refugee education policy

The DfES recommends but does not require LEAs or schools to develop a specific and appropriate policy indicating how they will support asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. It recommends that the LEA could include reference to the education of this group either under its Education Development Plan (EDP) or other policies:

To ensure that the education needs of these children are properly taken into account, LEAs are encouraged to develop local policies and procedures... (DfES, 2002a:10).

LEA respondents suggested a variety of responses to this recommendation: the following types of LEA policy approaches were identified:

#### Specific category within a broader policy

Specific references to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are made in other policies such as: EMA, EAL, new arrivals, race equality, vulnerable children and EDP. 16 LEAs (28%) fell into this category.

### **Comprehensive targeted policy**

A separate comprehensive, well-developed policy with an emphasis on social inclusion and challenging popular stereotypes. This policy approach usually includes information about the educational, emotional and social needs of asylum-seeker and refugee children, legislation, services, criteria for good practice and inclusion of these pupils into mainstream education. 15 LEAs (25.5%) fell into this category.

### **Language policy**

Separate policy which focuses on particular aspects such as EAL. 9 LEAs (15.5%) fell into this category.

### **School guidance**

The provision of short guidance for schools that gives basic information and criteria for good practice. 9 LEAs (15.5%) fell into this category.

### **General policy in relation to vulnerable groups**

No specific reference is made to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and they are seen as no different than minority ethnic EAL, new arrivals, or vulnerable children. 9 LEAs (15.5%) fell into this category

Some LEAs which had developed a comprehensive targeted policy, language policy or school guidance policy used the services of outside consultants to put together the policy, whilst others relied on publications such as NGOs' publications (mostly those of the Refugee Council and Save the Children). Other LEAs, especially those in dispersal areas, reported that they used policies or guidance developed in more experienced LEAs, especially London, to write their own documents. We did not ask LEAs specifically whether they were aware of the DfES guidance for supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils (DfES, 2002b). However, when asked about the sources from which they drew in developing their services and policies, only ten LEAs (17% of the sample) made any reference to the guidance. Nine LEAs mentioned it as a source which they drew upon when developing their services or policies, and one LEA reported finding this guidance confusing and vague about the kind of support LEAs and schools should provide for such children.

Usually, asylum-seeker and refugee pupils were referred to in other policies (such as that for race, vulnerable children or equality). When references were made to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in other policies, it was usually under one of the following:

- ☐ Education development plans
- ☐ Ethnic minority achievement policies, in which case the emphasis was on raising achievement
- ☐ Policies related to race equality or inclusion
- ☐ New arrivals and mid-term admission policies where the emphasis was setting a policy for admission and induction
- ☐ In some cases, references were also made in the vulnerable children policy, in which case the emphasis was on collaborating with social services

In a survey of 58 LEAs in England and Wales, Mott (2000) argued that only a few LEAs at that time had developed policies or made specific references to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in existing policies. In that respect, our study suggests that there have been significant developments in that area.

The following explanations were articulated by LEAs as reasons why a separate policy for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils was not required:

#### **A focus on 'doing'**

One LEA, for instance, in a dispersal area, with a highly developed support system, explained that 'We are good at issues of support but not on the paper side of it, we deal with support not with creating policies'.

#### **A lack of resources**

A few LEAs referred to the problem of resources and funding as the reason why they had no policy. An LEA in a dispersal area explained that they were in the process of putting together a policy, but since they did not have a designated officer, and the responsibility for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils resided with the EMAS officer, they lacked the time and resources to make progress.

#### **Too many policies**

One LEA in a dispersal area, with a relatively developed support system, felt that schools were overwhelmed with

policies – so preferred to integrate the issue into already existing compulsory policies such as EMA or race equality.

These reasons for not developing specific policies in relation to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils suggested that the lack of such a policy did not necessarily mean lack of awareness and underdeveloped services.

### 4.3 Data collection strategies and models

Four different strategies of LEA data collection were found and are described below:

#### **Monitoring strategy (45% of sample)**

The number of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is monitored by establishing a specific category on the local authority database or a separate database is set up. The LEA either relies on one source of data, such as NASS, or creates a network of information that usually includes NASS, housing providers, social services, schools and voluntary organisations. This network ensures that these pupils are not missed out. The database is updated regularly.

#### **Partial database (24% of sample)**

This strategy refers to LEAs where data are collected by schools mainly upon admission. As a result, children who were not offered a school place can be missed out. Partial databases also refer to LEAs that collect data once a year which does not record movement and mid-term admission.

#### **Deductive strategy (17% of sample)**

There is no specific category for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils but numbers are deduced from other databases mainly EAL, new arrivals and PLASC. Sometimes the LEA cross-references two or more databases. The main reason for not collecting data directly is a desire not to single out asylum-seeker and refugee children. Alternative ways of monitoring are found.

#### **No collection of data (14% of sample)**

LEAs do not collect specific information about asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Three main reasons were found:

- ☐ Very low numbers
- ☐ Not a relevant category in terms of the services provided
- ☐ Too sensitive to ask directly for their status
- ☐ Too transient a population

Among the 50 LEAs that collected data of some sort, 26 (45%) maintained a separate database (monitoring strategy); 14 (24%) LEAs collected partial data and 10 (17%) LEAs used a deductive model. The eight LEAs which did not collect any specific data on asylum-seeker and refugee pupils stated that they did not see any relevance in monitoring and maintaining a separate database on asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Officials in an LEA in a dispersal area with high numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils explained that, although they collected extensive data about minority ethnic pupils and new arrivals, they did not have a separate category for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils since:

It is not relevant for the school practice to know whether someone is an asylum-seeker. From the school's point of view it does not serve any purpose to ask about asylum status, it doesn't attract additional funding.

These LEAs raised concerns about the sensitivity of the issue and the dilemma of catering for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils' needs without stigmatising them as 'problems'. The difficulty they faced was creating a safe form of visibility. For example, a London Borough argued that they 'did not see the status of asylum as relevant and fear that the term 'asylum-seeker' is now part of 'scare terminology'. The authority therefore decided to down play the issue, highlighting instead aspects related to minority ethnic and EAL provision. Similar concerns were raised in a study of Welsh LEAs (Reakes and Powell, 2004). These concerns were also the reason why some LEAs, for example, chose a 'deductive' model of data gathering. For example a London Borough that used a deductive model claimed that it would be a 'bad practice' to ask someone for their citizenship status. Case study LEA C used a mainly deductive model for the same reason.

In contrast, those LEAs which had developed strong data collection strategies, (like LEA B), suggested that the purpose of data collection was that asylum-seeker and refugee pupils

...may have particular needs that are not being addressed simply because you want to treat them the same as everyone else. So you can understand that as an instinct but it's not necessarily the best professional response because you really need to know a fair bit about any child to see how you respond to them. There may be certain behaviours that can be misinterpreted if you don't know what has happened to the family or you don't know the circumstances the family are living in (Advisory Support Teacher, LEA B).

There are some schools now where there's almost a sense of we don't want to identify these pupils as asylum-seekers because it identifies them as a slightly different group, different to others and I think there's some confusion in their minds between the agenda for inclusion and the need to be aware of the differences (Senior Advisory Support Teacher, LEA B).

Of the LEAs which set up a separate database and monitoring strategy, the decision to use and cross-reference different sources of information was often derived from the experience, especially in dispersal areas, that data provided by NASS was not sufficient. Remarks such as 'NASS does not inform us quickly enough' or 'NASS information is inaccurate' were repeated in the LEA survey. For example, the LEA officer in LEA A who was responsible for data collection explained:

When I get the papers from NASS with the ages etc., ...it gives me the language which isn't always correct and the country which isn't always correct either (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Officer, LEA A).

Similar comments were offered by Ofsted (2003b) in its report *The Education of Asylum-seeker Pupils*. The problem of acquiring accurate data clearly poses a considerable challenge for many LEAs. Indeed quite a few LEA officials interviewed for this project felt that the task of maintaining an accurate database was extremely difficult, as one commented: 'it is hard to maintain and very frustrating'. Because of the mobile nature of this population, the data were either inaccurate and/or out of date. Thus:

We have about 40 known asylum-seekers. But we don't know about all of them. Because it is not a dispersal area, there

are no records of movement of asylum-seekers within the UK, particularly if they opted out of the NASS system (Head of EMAS, LEA B).

Three different models of data collection could be identified in LEA responses. The particular clusters of variables produced a different range of information about asylum-seeker and refugee communities and pupils. The models and types of variables were:

#### **An Extensive Data Model**

The database includes different types of information such as:

- ☐ Languages, country of origin, ethnicity
- ☐ EAL needs, prior education, attainment and attendance
- ☐ Welfare information: social services support, emotional support, school meal grants etc
- ☐ Immigration information: e.g. NASS numbers and status
- ☐ Information about community links

#### **Learning and Language Data Model**

The database focuses mainly on issues of EAL, attainment and learning. It includes:

- ☐ Information about country of origin, ethnicity etc
- ☐ Extensive information about EAL needs, prior education, attainment and attendance
- ☐ Update on progress

#### **Minimal Data Model**

The database includes only very basic information such as country of origin, languages and ethnicity

There were not obvious connections between the ways in which data were collected and the models of data collection (extensive, EAL focus and minimal models). There were various combinations of data collection strategies and data models among the 50 LEAs which were engaged in the task of data collection, as the following table illustrates:



**Table 1: Data collection strategies and models**

	Monitoring strategy	Partial database strategy	Deductive strategy
Extensive data model	10 LEAs (20%)	3 LEAs (6%)	1 LEA (2%)
Learning and language data model	7 LEAs (14%)	4 LEAs (8%)	6 LEAs (12%)
Minimal data model	9 LEAs (18%)	7 LEAs (14%)	3 LEAs (6%)

N=50

LEA officers described three main uses of data:

- ☐ Monitoring admission
- ☐ Better planning of support including decisions such as giving extra support and funding to schools that admitted large numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils
- ☐ Collecting information at the initial assessment of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and using the database to monitor attainment

LEAs who used an Extensive Model for the database, such as two of the case studies in this project (LEA A and LEA B) also stated that they maintained and used the database to examine how they could cater better for the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and foster their integration. The following extracts illustrate this approach:

I think the hardest part for us as a staff is the background of these children and what they come with and try and, because if you know what's gone on in the past, you have more of an understanding of how to help in the future. So that's the difficult part (Headteacher, primary Catholic school, LEA A).

...we didn't have any data about asylum-seekers and refugees in schools and that's sort of become apparent that you need to know about these pupils in order to identify their needs or pinpoint what schools need to do to offer more help (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Officer, LEA B).

I check with the accommodation provider, look up the address, check who the accommodation provider is. I check that they are Angolan, Russian or whatever. I try to find out whether they are Catholic, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, whatever. Check the language they speak...and then all of those factors are taken into account before I look for a school place (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Officer, LEA A).

## 4.4 The organisation of support services

Rutter (2001a) identified three different forms of LEA support services. These were: (a) a Refugee Support Team, (b) a specialist support teacher and (c) support given by EAL officer/teacher. Mott (2000) suggested that the majority of LEAs tend to designate an officer or a team as asylum-seeker and refugee officer/team. The findings from our research suggest that LEAs tend to organise their services in an even greater variety of different ways:

- ☐ Responsibility resides with EMAS officers, usually line-managed through school improvement and therefore often focused on the 'raising achievement' agenda. (22 LEAs – 37%)
- ☐ An Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer/Co-ordinator who is part of the EMAS, EAL, Inclusion or Race Equality team. (20 LEAs – 34%)
- ☐ Responsibility resides with the Race Equality/Diversity/Multicultural team. (8 LEAs – 14%)
- ☐ An Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support team: a team which includes several officers, usually line-managed by EMAS. (4 LEAs – 7%)
- ☐ Responsibility resides with the EAL service or the New Arrivals team. (4 LEAs – 7%)

To a large extent, LEA approaches to organising their services were informed by the extent of available funding. The most frequent arrangement used by the sample of LEAs was that of designating one of the EMAS officers to support the asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, whether in the capacity of a specific Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Support Officer, or as an EMAS officer.

Those LEAs which were able to afford an asylum-seeker and refugee pupil support team or an officer were usually the ones which were able to keep a significant part of the EMAG money centrally, rather than devolve it to

schools. Others managed to secure additional support from the LEA or successfully bid for external funding. Some LEAs in the survey decided to dedicate the VCG primarily to meet the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

LEAs who were unable to secure this funding reported a struggle to keep up an adequate level of service and to address the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. If the government did not take into account the fact that some LEAs were in a dispersal area, it was unlikely to divert more resources to allow the LEA to meet the needs of these pupils. Another LEA in a dispersal area (which originally had only 2% of minority ethnic pupils and hence had a very small EMAG) with high numbers of travellers who also needed to benefit from the VCG, talked about the difficulty of having very limited resources to draw upon in supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

In our survey we also distinguished between 'targeted services' (which offered extensive focused support), 'partial services' (with some specific responsibilities and support) and 'non-specific services' in three categories of provision:

- ☐ Admission procedures and responsibilities
- ☐ The training of teaching and support staff
- ☐ Ongoing pupil support for their learning and pastoral needs

The level of support LEAs developed to meet the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils under each of these headings varied greatly.

**Table 2: Different LEA Approaches to Admission, Training and Pupil Support**

	Targeted Services	Partial Services	Non-specific services
Admission procedures	<p>Very well rehearsed admission procedure which is facilitated by the support services and not the LEA's admission service. Admission procedures might include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• home visits by home-school liaison officer or meeting with parents</li> <li>• interpreting services</li> <li>• accompanying the child and the family to their first day at school</li> <li>• conducting special assessment that is designed to overcome language barriers and assisting the school in writing an action plan</li> <li>• producing special welcome kit for the child, the school and information pack for parents</li> </ul>	<p>The team/officer who has the responsibility for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils can be involved in some aspects of admission, for example home-school liaison, accompanying the child to his/her first day at school or producing materials for parents or schools.</p>	<p>There is no involvement in the admission procedure and there is no special admission procedure for asylum-seeker and refugee children in place.</p>
Training	<p>The LEA provides a wide range of central training and INSET training that covers, for example, raising awareness, supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in classrooms, emotional needs, and so on.</p>	<p>Mainly INSET training or specific reference to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in other training such as race equality or EAL training.</p>	<p>No specific training.</p>

Table 2 continued

	Targeted Services	Partial Services	Non-specific services
Ongoing pupil and school support	Support covers a range of issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EAL support</li><li>• After-school activities</li><li>• Access into mainstream curriculum</li><li>• Special provisions for post 16, or early years</li><li>• Supporting refugee communities through supplementary schools</li><li>• Psychological support</li><li>• Pastoral support</li><li>• Raising awareness through citizenship education.</li><li>• Liaison with other agencies</li><li>• Home-school liaison</li></ul>	The support is focused on one or two areas, usually EAL.	No specific provisions for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils exist. They receive support under EMAS or EAL based on their EAL needs.

The distribution of these types of support services in the 58 LEAs who participated in the survey, was as follows:

Table 3: LEA Support Services

	Targeted Services	Partial Services	Non-specific Services
Admission	27 LEAs 46.0%	16 LEAs 28.0%	15 LEAs 26.0%
Training	28 LEAs 49.0%	17 LEAs 29.0%	13 LEAs 22.0%
Ongoing support	23 LEAs 39.5%	30 LEAs 52.0%	5 LEAs 8.5%

There was not necessarily any coherence found between the three components of LEA support services. In other words, having highly developed admission

procedures and delineated responsibilities did not necessarily imply that the LEA also offered extensive training to teachers and support staff, or that it had a targeted and ongoing support system for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils’ learning and pastoral needs. For example, out of the 58 LEAs only ten indicated they had targeted and comprehensive services in all three categories of admission, training and ongoing support for schools; only three LEAs demonstrated non-specific service provision in all three categories.

The survey data revealed that, while developed policy and sophisticated systems of data collection and analysis usually suggested that the LEA also had a well defined and targeted support system, the lack of policy or simple models of data collection did not necessarily indicate low level or non-specific support systems. There were examples of LEAs which had no formal policy but had highly developed admission procedures, offered extensive training for teachers and covered a range of issues under its ongoing support system.

4.5 Summary

In line with other studies (Mott, 2000; Ofsted 2003b; Rutter, 2001b), the analysis of the survey data suggests that the ways in which English LEAs support asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and the schools they attend vary greatly. Differences were found between LEAs in relation to strategies of collecting data, the type of data collected, policy, and the nature of school, family and pupil support services and the extent to which teachers and schools and other support staff are offered ongoing help.

Implicit in these provisions are conceptual differences in the ways in which LEAs address the education of asylum-seeker and refugees. Such is the complexity and range of these needs that LEAs have had to consider the sorts of approach they wish to take. In the next section we explore the ways in which LEAs conceptualised asylum-seeker and refugee children and how their needs might be addressed.





## **Part 5:**

Educational Models and Values —  
Exemplification of three  
LEAs and their Schools

## Part 5: Educational Models and Values – Exemplification of three LEAs and their Schools

The aims of Part 5 are twofold:

- to identify the different conceptual models underpinning the different strategies and practices employed by LEAs
- to outline the values underlying one of these approaches – the holistic model exemplified in three LEAs and their schools

### 5.1 Conceptual models

As we have seen, LEAs differ in terms of data collection strategies, policy development and support services offered to schools with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Underlying these differences of policy and provision are different conceptual models which define asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in particular ways. Below we identify six conceptual models:

#### **Holistic model**

LEAs that employ a holistic conceptual model perceive asylum-seeker and refugee pupils as pupils with multiple, complex needs (learning, social and emotional). This understanding informs their support system, not only in terms of the different aspects of support they cover, but also in terms of the ways in which they construct the purpose of the support put in place. The prime aim of the policy, data collection and the support system is to contribute to the social inclusion, the well being and the development of these pupils. LEAs which adopt this model see EAL provision not as an aim in itself but as a means to promote the pupils' ability to fulfil themselves as learners, to access the curriculum and to be socially included.

#### **New arrivals model**

Asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are defined as new arrivals. LEAs which employ such an approach focus on

particular characteristics of these pupils such as being EAL pupils, as well as the needs which emerge from having experienced interrupted education, being new to the British education system and being admitted to school mid-term. Policy and support systems are designed to tackle these issues and usually focus on school admission and the induction of these pupils.

#### **EAL model**

Asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are seen primarily as EAL pupils. Therefore the main data which are collected focus on their languages, their competence in English and English acquisition. The support offered to these pupils is aimed at and focused on improving their English.

#### **Minority ethnic model**

Asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are understood to be first and foremost minority ethnic pupils. As such they are at risk of underachieving. LEAs which adopt this approach offer support for these pupils as part of the 'raising achievement' agenda and their school improvement strategy.

#### **Race equality model**

Asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are seen as a possible target for racial harassment and as a subject for race equality policies or multicultural education. The main focus is raising the awareness of their cultural differences and their vulnerability in that respect.

#### **Vulnerable children model**

These approaches represent asylum-seeker and refugee pupils as vulnerable children, as another group which might be at risk of dropping out of mainstream education, or who might experience difficulties in gaining access to education and making full use of their right to schooling. Support is organised to ensure their access to education and that information about their rights and the services they are entitled to are made available to them.

These conceptual models are not exclusive and the language employed by LEAs and the support offered suggests that these are 'ideal'. In practice many LEAs employ more than one conceptual model and move between them. The prevalence of the LEA different conceptual models was as follows:

**Table 4: The Distribution of Conceptual Models**

EAL pupil model	Holistic model	Minority ethnic model	New arrivals model	Race equality model	Vulnerable children model
22 LEAs	18 LEAs	13 LEAs	8 LEAs	7 LEAs	2 LEAs

The importance and usefulness of these conceptual models is that they suggest the logic that lies behind different practices and the support offered by an LEA or a school. For example, employing a 'minority ethnic approach' can explain why some LEAs focus on collecting data about attainment. Alternatively, a highly developed admission procedures and induction programme can suggest that the LEA has adopted a new arrivals model. Each conceptual model offers opportunities for good practice. In our study the two most popular models appear to be that of EAL language provision and the holistic model. Despite the involvement of EMAS funds and support officers, only a few LEAs appear to locate the issue of asylum-seeker and refugee education within the context of race equality policies – rather more LEAs employed the minority ethnic policy approaches which was not surprising given EMAS funds. Only two LEAs provided their services within the context of the vulnerable children agenda.

The model which recognises the complexity of the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is that which is described as 'holistic'. This conceptual model is now associated with the development of multi-agency structures and works in line with current thinking behind the Children Act 2004. The next section focuses on the types of good practice associated with the holistic model on the basis that here was an expressed commitment to providing a comprehensive and targeted approach to the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

## 5.2 Holistic models of good practice

The three LEA case studies that were chosen for this study differ in relation to their local context, background and experience in terms of working with

asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Yet they all offer a holistic model of addressing the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. They share a number of features. For example, they all appear to have taken account of the complex needs of these pupils (learning, social and emotional needs), they foster home-school links and community links, they employ a multi-agency approach, and they all take a child-centred approach towards the education of these pupils. The aim of this section is to illustrate how this model works in different contexts and the factors which encouraged the development of practice.

Below we describe each of the local contexts:

**LEA A** is an urban Northern LEA in a dispersal area which serves a relatively diverse population with large minority ethnic communities, especially those with an Asian heritage.

Significant numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees first arrived in 2000–2001 in the town. In 1998–1999, a small group of Kosovan refugees also arrived. Currently there are around 850 asylum-seekers and refugees in the county (high numbers in comparison to other towns in the area) from which 280 are children at school age. They come from 67 different countries, the main ones being: Somalia, Czech Republic, Iran and Afghanistan. The schools we visited had between 10 to 30 asylum-seekers and refugees at any one point.

The reaction of the local population and the local media tended to be positive with a very supportive local council.

We probably avoided the problem and hopefully in the future the issues that have affected other northern towns...our county is bigger and perhaps a little bit more cosmopolitan than these towns where there have been problems...partly by the nature of the [local] population...partly by strategy and policy and I think that comes from the council and the chief executive (Head of EMAG, LEA A).

**LEA B** is a small shire in the Midlands which, despite the fact that it is not part of the dispersal plan, has relatively high numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees mainly settling in towns in the county. Since it is not a dispersal area, those who arrive make their own way to the county rather than being directed by NASS. It is also the host of one of the asylum-seeker and refugee removal centres. 16% of the local population are minority ethnic pupils from diverse communities.

Asylum-seekers and refugees first arrived at the end of the 1990s in small numbers. A sudden increase in numbers occurred in 2000. There are about 300 known asylum-seekers and refugees, but since it is not a dispersal area, the numbers may be much higher than reported. Main countries of origin are Croatia, Zimbabwe, Lithuania, Kosovo and Somalia. The school visited over the years had between 20 to 30 asylum-seeker and refugee pupils at any one point.

The LEA and the support services have to deal with working within a context of a local community and media which are often very hostile towards asylum-seekers and refugees. However, the LEA and the EMAS service in recent years have enjoyed support at a county council level.

**LEA C** is a London Borough with a very diverse local population. Schools in the Borough often have 70% or more minority ethnic pupils, with a few dozen languages spoken by the pupil population. They also experience very high levels of mobility. Therefore the LEA has wide experience of working both with minority ethnic pupils and new arrivals. LEA C is also signed up to the 'raising achievement' agenda after inspections in recent years described it as 'a failing authority, it's one where we have got very low results' (Head of Inclusion, LEA C).

LEA C has at least a decade of experience with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Some 16.9% of its school population are asylum-seekers and refugees, LEA C has one of the highest numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees in London and in the country. The three schools visited in LEA C have between 8% to 30% of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

The local population in the borough is not only diverse, but are also very used to the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees. As one of the LEA officers stated: 'If you look at the history of [the Borough] it's always been continual coming and going of people so it would be very strange if councillors were to do anything but welcome people'.

Employing the same criteria as those used for analysis of the survey data, i.e. organisation of the support service, data collection, policy and ongoing support, the profiles of good practice in the three LEAs are described below:

**Table 5: LEA A's Holistic Model**

<b>Policy Development</b>	LEA A does not have a policy as such. It provides guidance for schools for the support of asylum-seekers and refugees and their families (written by the consortium), guidance provided by EMAS on late arrival pupils (which are mostly focused on asylum-seekers and refugee pupils) and information packs for schools about asylum-seekers and refugees. The emphasis in the guidance and information packs is very clearly focused on the social inclusion of this group, facilitating their integration into schools and enabling them to rebuild their lives. The perspective fostered by LEA A is that services such as EAL are there as a means of inclusion for asylum-seekers and refugees rather than as an end in itself. Asylum-seeker and refugee pupils also come under EMA policies such as Strategy for Supporting EAL Needs and Ethnic Minority Pupils.
<b>Organisation of the service</b>	The LEA support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils comes under EMAS. EMAS has designated one of its Deputy Heads as Asylum-seeker and Refugee Officer. The Deputy Head who has been assigned this responsibility is also leading the multi-agency forum entitled The '[county] Asylum-Seekers Inclusion Consortium'. The support services offered to asylum-seeker pupils and schools are funded mainly by EMAG but also by the Vulnerable Children Grant and external funding obtained through the consortium's bids. The services are centralised which means the LEA support asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and schools directly. Many schools buy back services from the LEA which means the LEA employs and trains support teachers and teaching assistants.
<b>Data collection</b>	The LEA has collected data since 1999, but a comprehensive database was only put in place in 2004. The main emphasis in the data being collected are the social/welfare elements such as accommodation provider, status and so on, although information about languages and country of origin is collected as well. There is a good system in place for sharing information between housing providers, social services and the LEA and information sharing is done on a weekly basis. One of the main reasons for the emphasis given to sharing information across services is the experience of the Asylum-seeker and Refugee Officer of the inaccuracy of the information received by NASS. LEA A uses the monitoring strategy of data collection with an extensive model of data collection.

<b>Support services</b>	<p>LEA A operates a targeted system of support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and schools that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training: the LEA runs training and 'raising awareness' sessions for schools, governors, teachers, non-teaching staff, PGCE students and other county services</li> <li>• A special arrangement for post-16 asylum-seekers and refugees with the local FE college</li> <li>• A special 'life skill programme' for late arrivals in year 11</li> <li>• Welfare/pastoral support is one of the emphases of the support system in LEA A. This includes, for example, assisting asylum-seeker and refugee parents with obtaining free school meals and free uniforms, using a special grant to provide bus passes for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, and providing each new arrival with a starter kit that includes a school bag, notebooks and other essentials</li> <li>• Managing the admission process and considering the different needs of the asylum-seeker and refugee families, such as the need for social network, in the process of finding a school placement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We try to find them the culturally appropriate place, religious-wise or shared culture within the school (Asylum Seeker and Refugee Officer).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Induction: an extensive induction package that includes an in-class teaching assistant for 6 weeks; classroom resources for EAL students in mainstream classroom and other dual languages resources</li> <li>• On-going support: EMAS staff and bilingual support teachers, schools can use their EMAG money to buy back those services from the LEA</li> <li>• Developing programmes for a citizenship education and refugee week which focuses on raising awareness of the school population to issues of asylum seeking</li> <li>• Support in schools focuses on meeting the needs of asylum-seekers and refugees to make sure they have access to the mainstream curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We're here first and foremost to make sure that all pupils access the curriculum and that their lack of proficiency only becomes a barrier if they haven't got the cognitive ability to access the curriculum (EMAS teacher, secondary school).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Many schools also provide after-school activities such as homework clubs</li> </ul>
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**Table 6: LEA B's Holistic Model**

<b>Policy Development</b>	Using the work of the multi-agency strategy group, LEA B has developed a separate policy for the education of asylum-seekers and refugees which was published in 2002. The aim of the policy as stated in its preface is to set out 'the LEA's policy for the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. It is intended to raise awareness within the LEA of the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers...provide information and guidance to schools and promote social inclusion'. The policy document gives information about asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK, the LEAs' and schools' responsibility towards them and the support system which exists in the county. The policy defines the responsibility towards asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in terms of providing school placements as well as ensuring their needs are met and they are socially included.
<b>Organisation of the service</b>	<p>The LEA's support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils comes under EMAS which is line managed by school improvement. EMAS has recently moved from client services to school improvement – a change that has been criticised by the EMAS officers:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We've moved from education and client services...into school improvement. We now find ourselves within a group who do not necessarily have a real understanding of how we work, what we do, what our objectives are (EMAS senior advisory support teacher).</p> <p>EMAS includes the head of service, senior advisory support teacher, primary and secondary advisory support teachers, Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer and cultural mediators (many of which are refugees themselves). The role of the Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Officer is to maintain the database, to liaise with other county services, to keep the service updated with changes in legislation and to manage the admission of these pupils. LEA B is also part of a multi-agency strategy group which was established by EMAS. The advisory support teachers' main focus is advising schools on supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. The Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Officer and the cultural mediators work directly with these children and their families.</p>

<b>Data collection</b>	Being a non-dispersal area in which asylum-seekers and refugees arrived voluntarily and mostly went unreported, LEA B has had a rather difficult time in maintaining an accurate database – it nevertheless puts a lot of effort into maintaining as comprehensive a database as possible. It has collected data since 2001. The database is maintained by the Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils' Officer who shares information regularly with other services such as housing, social service and voluntary service. The database includes information about languages, nationality, school placement, pastoral support and status. LEA B employs a monitoring strategy and an extensive model of data collection.
<b>Support services</b>	<p>LEA B operates a targeted system of support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and schools, that includes for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training: INSET and central training for teachers which focuses on raising awareness, meeting the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and making the curriculum accessible for them</li> <li>• Facilitating admission</li> <li>• Making school uniform grants and free school meals available to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils who are not supported by NASS</li> <li>• Addressing the issues of trauma and emotional needs: music therapy project, emotional literacy workshops and more</li> <li>• Providing schools with translated school letters in different languages</li> <li>• Advisory support teachers for primary and secondary schools work with mainstream teacher on how to integrate asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and how to make the curriculum accessible to them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'[I] work alongside a teacher in a classroom for a number of weeks or a number of lessons to look at planning together and make suggestions as to things that might be tried out in the classroom' (Advisory Support teacher – primary).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cultural mediators: their role is to provide asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and parents with the opportunity to</li> </ul>

	<p>share their concerns with someone with whom they share the same language and culture. The cultural mediators facilitate the communication between the schools and the families, provide advocacy for the family and also provide in-class support and first language support for the children</p> <p><b>Support in school:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools run induction programmes, assessment, maintain progress profiles, and provide EAL support and in-class support</li> <li>• Pastoral support which in the case of the school visited also included the tutoring system</li> <li>• Lunch time and after school clubs in the EMAS centre act as a safe space for the children</li> <li>• Courses in community languages</li> <li>• Raising awareness of refugee issues through the citizenship and religious curricula</li> <li>• Information sharing about the child's progress across departments in the school to ensure adequate support</li> </ul>
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**Table 7: LEA C's Holistic Model**

<b>Policy Development</b>	Building upon almost a decade of extensive experience of working with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, the Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support team of LEA C has recently completed the work on an all-embracing of LEA's guidelines for working with these pupils. The guidance covers different aspects in the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, from admission, through induction to supporting their learning and other needs in mainstream education. The guidance will be made available for schools in this school year.
<b>Organisation of the service</b>	LEA support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils comes under EMAS. It is line managed by the Inclusion Strategy manager which is part of school improvement. LEA C has a team comprised of two Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Officers, one for primary schools and one for secondary. The decision to appoint a refugee team was taken as a result of research conducted in the mid 1990s that identified the need in LEA C for such a team. Initially the team should have included 4 primary and 4 secondary officers, but budget restrictions meant the LEA could only afford a team of two officers. In the LEA, there is also an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who specialises in asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and works alongside the asylum team and is also involved in the admission process. Since the numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in LEA C are very high, it employs a decentralised approach and the asylum team focuses primarily on advising and supporting schools in their work through training and developing courses. Most schools use the EMAG money to employ an EMAS officer or a team of officers that holds the responsibility for these pupils. The LEA asylum team takes part in the Borough multi-agency forum that includes social services, housing and education.
<b>Data collection</b>	Schools collect their own data upon admission, and there are schools that keep a refugee register. The asylum team also keeps a central database. However, since the LEA consider pupils' status to be a sensitive issue, pupils are not asked to state whether they are asylum-seekers or refugees and the database is mostly deductive, using Rutter's framework of cross-referencing information about languages, country of origin and EAL needs. The focus of the database revolves around EAL

	needs and languages. More pastoral oriented information is kept by the EWO. LEA C employs a deductive strategy for data collection and collects data using a language and learning model.
<b>Support services</b>	<p>LEA C has a targeted system of support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and schools, that includes for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training: one of the major parts of the LEA support system. They offer both central and INSET training for teaching staff that covers areas such as initial assessment, meeting the needs of these pupils, working with interpreters, training for administrative staff about how to approach and welcome asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, training for teachers in community supplementary schools. They also hold training on how to encourage parental involvement of asylum-seeker and refugee parents</li> <li>• Resources and dissemination of information: the asylum team maintain an active website which includes examples of good practice in the Borough, information from the DfES, NASS and examples of letters supporting families who are facing deportation. Also EMAS publishes a bulletin twice a year which provides information about asylum-seekers and refugees and their communities</li> <li>• Partnership with the local FE college for providing ESAL courses</li> <li>• A tuition centre has been set up for late arrivals until a placement is found</li> </ul> <p>Most of LEA C's support focuses on involving asylum-seeker and refugee parents in, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly surgery to assist asylum-seeker and refugee parents with the process of admission</li> <li>• Multi-lingual information booklets for parents, including information about the education system and the LEA are available in schools. This information is also available in audio-visual forms (i.e. cassettes and DVD)</li> <li>• Parent Aid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'we've developed a directory of services called Parent Aid. We surveyed a number of schools... and logged every single concern that parents brought to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>the school and when we actually examined them it covered a huge range of issues you know, from how do I register with a GP to can you help me with the housing department or I need an immigration lawyer, I need to get in touch with NASS and so we built the directory around those concerns that we've got, ten sections...they're all local contacts' (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Officer)</p> <p>Examples of support offered by schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Induction: effort is being made to involve parents in the process</li><li>• Assessment and progress: Some of the schools visited maintain both a refugee register and a progress profile for each pupil that includes both elements of EAL and academic progress as well as social inclusion and integration factors</li><li>• Running lunchtime and after school clubs and summer schools – creating a safe space for the children within the EMAS department</li><li>• Emotional therapy sessions</li></ul>
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## 5.3 Particular strengths of the LEAs

The case study LEAs had particular strengths in relation to:

- ☐ Parental Involvement
- ☐ Community Links
- ☐ Working with other Agencies

We discuss each of these in turn below.

### Parental Involvement

Kuhin (1998) and Vincent and Warren (1998) in two different studies demonstrate the importance of school-parent relationship for the successful integration of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, especially to counter the difficulties that some parents might have in understanding the ways in which the British education system works. School-parent relationships are also mentioned as an important factor in raising the achievement of these pupils in the DfES (2002a) *Good Practice Guidance*.

LEA C attributes great importance to school-parent relationships and seems to have particularly highly developed practices in this respect. LEA C puts a lot of emphasis on school-parent relationship as an important part of integrating children. 'If the parents are included, the children are [included] too' (Head of EMAS, secondary school, LEA C). An example of this LEA's practice is the partnership established between the LEA and the local FE college which provides ESOL courses for refugee parents in schools where: 'parents can get accreditation for their own learning as well as helping their children' (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA C). Schools in LEA C are encouraged to invest in these relationships as part of LEA policy. At the time of the research, 17 schools in the Borough were involved in a special school-parent partnership project and many schools employed a home-school link teacher:

We're very good in some ways at involving parents because we've actually got a home school links teacher (Deputy Headteacher, secondary school, LEA C).

The following extracts from interviews with the Heads of EMAS in primary and secondary schools give examples of the support which schools in this LEA offer to asylum-seeker and refugee parents and the partnership they establish with them:

We run a share group here so we can do work with parents and bring them in and do parent workshops to empower the parents to help their children as well and to understand how the curriculum and the school system works here...but also to develop their own skills. Like we have an ESL class, we have computer classes, you know we try, sometimes, well not sometimes, we have coffee mornings where the parents are invited to those sessions and we invite somebody in, like the education welfare officer, education psychologist, the school nurse. We run a share group where we were working with just fathers one term which was quite challenging. We work with the parents on an area of literacy or numeracy work to help them to understand the curriculum that their children are doing because, for many of our parents, culturally the system is very different (Head of EMAS, primary school, LEA C).

The parents' thing, that's one of our big things. We started off a few years ago just running a parents' drop in where the mums could drop in for a drink and a chat with the parental involvement teacher and that's developed into quite a solid little club where we now have other activities going on. So there is English language teaching for parents, there is basic adult literacy...that is organised around the needs of the school so that the parents learn how to write a note in the child's school journal if they are away from school, so that parents learn how to fill in the forms that they need to for parents' evening. It does two things – it helps the parents understand and participate in the education that their child is receiving, but it also helps the parents develop some very early literacy in English which they can then use in situations that they come across. It helps the parents get to know each other (Head of EMAS, secondary school, LEA C).

LEA C and its schools focus on school-parent relationships to inform parents about the British education system. They also see the role of this relationship as empowering asylum-seeker and refugee parents to help them help themselves and their children. This approach is based on the understanding that the integration of the child is also dependant on the integration of the whole family,

and a holistic approach to asylum-seeker and refugee children that works with a notion of the whole child rather than focuses merely on his/her learning needs. LEA C and its schools appear to emphasise the importance of social capital for the successful integration of these children into mainstream schooling. This was evident in the response of the Head of EMAS in the secondary school, who suggested that one of the aims of the parents' club is that they will have a chance to meet with other parents and find a network of support.

### Community Links

LEA A and its schools stress in particular the importance of community links. Out of the three LEAs studied, it has the most developed relationships with local minority ethnic communities in general and refugee communities in particular. The County's Consortium for the Inclusion of Asylum-seeker and Refugees, which is led by the LEA's Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, includes representatives of some refugee communities in the area. Other forms of consultation with refugee communities exist both at county and school level. Council members as well as the LEA senior management have made it customary to visit minority ethnic communities and refugee community organisations to allow them to voice their concerns and give their input into life in the county. Otherwise, schools and colleges have reported that they often seek the assistance of these communities especially when admitting a new family to the school. For example:

The Somali community is one in particular where we've worked very closely with representatives from the Somali community, particularly to identify other issues that are affecting those students. It's working like a focus group to some extent. We're getting feedback from them, we're trying to change the provision that we offer, the pastoral support that we offer (Deputy Head, FE College).

Some of the schools in LEA A reported having made an effort to link new asylum-seeking and refugee families to existing communities in the county. Considerable benefit for these families can be gained from such links:

...you may have asylum-seekers who are coming in who don't have a community to support them in the same way and therefore the role of the school is perhaps important. But we always try and liaise, and do liaise with any community. Because I know the Somali, there's a sort of community group

and organisation and we liaise with them (Headteacher secondary school).

If such links are not found, the school sees its role as giving the asylum-seeker and refugee pupils an alternative community.

By acknowledging the importance of community links and the social capital they might entail for asylum-seekers and refugees, LEA A also tries to support community activities. It understands that developed community links, and social networks can only contribute in the long term to the integration of the community in the wider society in the county:

When we see (community activities) beginning to develop we say do you need any help? Perhaps you'd like to join in our grant application and maybe put a bit of funding their way or offer them opportunities for photocopying. However mundane, sometimes this can make an enormous difference. (We ask) would you like to use one of our rooms to meet in? You know, it's just making things available but you've got to let it develop how they see it, it's their community. Hopefully they become part of the wide community [in the country] as well (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Officer).

### Working with other Agencies

On the education side, probably it is the LEAs really, the better LEAs are certainly co-ordinating the work of these agencies and working with some of the regional planning groups that NASS has in place to look at all aspects of health education and so on (Ofsted Inspector).

All three LEAs acknowledged the importance of working with other agencies to meet the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Especially prominent in that respect was LEA B in which the support service leads the multi-agency group. With the arrival of significant numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees to the county, four years ago, the Head of EMAS initiated the establishment of a strategy group for the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. It is a multi-agency group that meets once a term and is comprised of an educational psychologist, representatives from the social services, health and housing department in the LEA, and other departments such as music therapy, as well as Headteachers of schools with high numbers of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

It is called a strategy group, but it is practitioners who would actually be leading on the appropriate strategies for dealing with

particular pupils. So it is a sharing of information, building on people's specialist knowledge and the use of this knowledge collaboratively to be most effective (Head of EMAS, LEA B).

The multi-agency strategy group was also the drive behind the LEA's policy for the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils as well as behind changes in the reception of asylum-seekers and refugees at county level:

The county council I think is very supportive [at the moment] for wanting to make provision for asylum-seekers and refugees but not pro-active in addressing issues. There was good planning and multi-agency work particularly between us and social services which the [Head of EMAG] would have initiated and driven. So I suppose the county council and parts of the hierarchy benefit from the fact that [the Head of EMAG] and her colleagues were pro-active (Head of Inclusion, LEA B).

This emphasis on information sharing with other services and agencies, and the thinking behind establishing a multi-agency system, is embedded in the three LEAs' understanding that asylum-seeker and refugee children have complex needs which stretch beyond education and must be addressed, therefore, in collaboration with other agencies. Examples of some of the other practices adopted by these LEAs to support asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are presented diagrammatically below:

<p><b>More examples of good practice</b></p>	<p><b>Psychological aid:</b> We have a unit... called 'the cottage' and they do various therapies, they do behavioural therapy, anger management... drama therapies, music therapies. (LEA C)</p>	<p><b>Bilingualism:</b> We like to hear groups of students chatting in different languages... students are asked to use their first language... and they are also asked to write in their first language. (LEA C)</p>	<p><b>Welfare support:</b> We have a small fund that we provide Bus passes... it lasts 7 days and not just 5 so they can use it to go shopping with their mum... it gives them access to wider society... it is more about integration (LEA A)</p>
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## 5.4 Characteristics, practices and values underlying a holistic model

Some common values and experiences can be found, especially with respect to the approaches and thinking that underpin the development of these three LEA support systems for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Interviews in schools and the authorities suggest these common characteristics, practices and values have contributed to the development of a positive holistic approach and the conception of good practice:

- ☐ Existing experience with minority ethnic and EAL pupils
- ☐ Promoting positive images of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils
- ☐ Establishing clear indicators of successful integration
- ☐ An ethos of inclusion and the celebration of diversity
- ☐ A holistic approach to provision and support
- ☐ A caring ethos and the giving of hope

### Existing Experience with Minority Ethnic and EAL Pupils

The Ofsted Report (2003b) *The Education of Asylum-seeker Pupils* argues that LEAs in dispersal areas, which have had little experience with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in particular and EAL pupils in general, struggled at the beginning to address their needs adequately. Reakes and Powell (2004) investigating school provision in three Welsh LEAs also confirmed that having a multicultural school population appeared to help schools integrate asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Previous experience either in working directly with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils or with minority ethnic pupils was suggested by all three LEAs as a valuable resource which the LEA and schools could draw upon. A positive approach to such pupils is created by previous contact with diversity as the following quotes indicate:

.... having had a very positive experience with the Kosovars (because we took sort of half a plane load here) ...when we took the Kosovars we tested the emergency plan...There was a strong learning curve ...but again it was a rich experience for the schools and for the children and for the staff so I think quite a lot of preparation was done at different stages before we even had the Kosovars (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA A).



I think in a school like ours where it's not a one off thing that happens, our intake is made up of children who have English as an additional language or children who have recently arrived. It's not something that's an uncommon thing; it's embedded really in the culture of the school (Head of EMAG, primary school, LEA C).

I think that one of the issues is that we are a school which has been multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual for such a long time that it's just part of what we are... and therefore, in a way we're not the sort of school who says, oh, we're getting a refugee next week, we've got to do something special for them because, you know, we welcome all from whatever background. I think there are some schools for whom it is a real problem (although it is) not necessarily a problem – you are getting something special (Headteacher and Head of EMAG, secondary school, LEA B).

Schools and LEAs noted that previous experience of an ethnically diverse school population made them more prepared professionally to cater for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Their integration into the school community was faster and smoother:

I have to say part of the reason why the asylum-seekers that have come to this school have fitted in so quickly is because they tend to follow the same religion as the majority of the pupils here, Muslims (Head of EMAG, secondary school, LEA A).

I think at this school we've got children, we've often got a lot of movement, children coming and going. It's very multi-cultural so they fit in straight away really. There's not an issue, the children accept there is somebody new (Teacher, primary school, LEA A).

Previous experience of a high percentage of minority ethnic pupils also contributed to the schools' ability to meet the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils because of knowing how to divert resources from already existing funding for such purposes:

Well we are quite fortunate in the school because we have a high proportion of minority ethnic pupils anyway. 70% of our

pupils are Asian heritage. Because of that we have a team that is funded through the EMAG grant and therefore the school has staff who are used to working with pupils and their families for whom English isn't their first language...Certainly in the initial stages it has helped to divert resources into supporting these pupils (Headteacher, secondary school, LEA A).

### **Promoting Positive Images of Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils**

One of the major common values associated with the holistic approach of all three LEAs and the schools visited was their exceptionally positive attitude towards asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, especially in light of negative media images and concern over exam results:

Generally, they've [schools] been excellent. Most of them regard it as a positive, enriching experience, an educational experience for the other children, both linguistically and culturally. And they celebrate more festivals now in schools than they ever did before (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA A).

The LEAs and schools in general do not perceive these pupils as a 'problem':

We don't have 'pains in the arse' or 'little buggers' opposed to learning. We've got barriers to learning and we systematically find out what those barriers are and find out ways to overcome them (Headteacher, secondary school, LEA B).

I know that some schools think that those students are problematic but we tend to find that the advantages of having those children outweigh any disadvantages (Head of EMAS, secondary school, LEA C).

Linked to this attitude is the positive image of asylum-seeker and refugees that these LEAs and schools hold. Expressions such as 'dedicated learners' and 'committed students' were repeatedly used, as these quotes illustrate:

A lot of my children have been fast learners so, after a while of settling in, they just kind of pick up with the rest of the work you are doing (Teacher, primary school, LEA A).

That was a group of people that had very high expectations about the education they were going to get. Their expectations push our standards up (Deputy Director, LEA A).

Demonstrably they do very well, we can point out examples of extraordinary achievement from pupils who have come here with very little education and experience (EMAS teachers, secondary school, LEA C).

I don't think schools feel anything but joy in seeing new pupils coming because they need pupils. Also they recognise that these pupils quite often are more focussed in their achievement to try and get on (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA C).

The Headteachers and teachers in these case studies talked about asylum-seeker and refugee pupils as a welcomed addition to their schools and even as a factor that contributes to a better learning environment for all:

What I would say is that the children that we have got in have brought many qualities to school and to a large extent set an example to our own children because many of them are desperate to learn, keen to make something of themselves and keen to please, eager to please and want to work hard and learn (Headteacher, Catholic primary school, LEA A).

Those interviewed for the study in LEAs and schools were able to recognise the possible contribution of these pupils to the school and its community and made an effort to highlight their value.

...they bring an added dimension to the school population and, in terms of our language profile, it increases that and makes the school a richer environment (Head of EAMS, secondary school, LEA C).

Ultimately their courage in the face of almost unimaginable hardship and trauma is an inspiration to us all, and without exception, they bring us far more than we ever give to them (from the Headteacher speech for the new intake of parents, secondary school, LEA B).

Another example can be found in a booklet published by the secondary school visited in LEA A entitled *Valuing Cultural Diversity*. The booklet presents the support system available in the school for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and introduces the asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in the school listing their achievements under the title 'The success of inclusive partnership'. For example, 'Rim arrived in England Summer 2001, Prefect, June 2002'; 'Alex arrived in England 2001, Star basketball player and expert dancer'. These findings also resonate with the images used by schools and LEAs to describe asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in Wales (Reakes and Powell, 2004).

### Establishing Clear Indicators of Successful Integration

This school ethos and the agendas of inclusivity and celebrating diversity is linked to the LEA's and schools' conceptualisation of the indicators of integration. In the national context, successful integration of refugee children with respect to education is their ability to achieve in school. Integration is represented at national level as applicable only to those who already received refugee status. The three case study LEAs and schools articulated different understandings of the indicators for the integration of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Some of the officials and teachers were critical of the goals that were set by the government in terms of the integration of refugees, as the following extracts suggest:

The Home Office has got indicators for integration, and for education. I think it is appalling. I told them so myself, because it is basically down to SATS results, GCSEs results, numbers of student going on to higher education, and that is fine, but this is not integration. You can achieve academically, and not necessarily be integrated as a person. So it is things like not just the quantitative but the qualitative indicators, which are often ignored – things like whether actually the parents feel safe to come to the school and question and talk to the teachers, find out more, that they are empowered (Head of EMAG, LEA B).

It's not just about doing well in school, they can be successful in other ways, you know. I mean if they are doing well it's a bonus, but if you aren't happy, you're never going



to be successful (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA A).

You know I could pore over their results and what they've got in school, but that's not necessarily going to tell me a lot. I think, especially in their first two years, the social element is the big indicator. The most important to me ... are they participating in clubs, getting involved in choirs, in music and other extra curricular things? (EMAS teacher secondary school, LEA C).

All three LEAs and schools that were visited described successful integration using very different criteria to those used by central government. The main emphasis was on (a) the social aspects of integration (b) whether the children feel safe and secure in school and (c) whether their needs were being met so that they could fulfil their potential. We describe these below.

#### ☐ ***Social integration***

Well I think if they can join in school activities, parents will turn up on parents' evening because that's another important issue isn't it...it's just taking part in normal everyday life I think, that's what they need to provide the opportunities for (Deputy director, LEA A).

They need to be settled well within a group of friends, they need to be achieving at their potential or at least working towards it. They need to be involved in as many extra-curricular activities as they want to be (Head of EMAS secondary school, LEA B).

If by the end of 6 weeks the child has settled and made friends ...If they are attending clubs which are not our clubs that is a success marker. If they are taking part in school life... So if I see them taking part in other aspects of school life, they are gaining recognition for that, I see that as successful (Head of EMAS, secondary school, LEA C).

#### ☐ ***Being happy and feeling safe and secure***

I went into [a school] last week and there's ... 15 kids all at the same time. One of the girls that started at that time...came waltzing down the corridor with a girl on either arm, and I

actually didn't notice her at all, she was just breezing along, laughing and joking with the other girls and as she walked by me, like that, she stopped and turned round and said, hello miss, what are you doing here? That's integration, when she's just one of the other kids, you know, she's happy, she's got friends, she's joining in the after school activities (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Support Officer, LEA A).

Well if I see a happy child who feels safe, is able to interact with people, his peers and with adults and he's settled in school and able to communicate his feelings and his thoughts and ideas then I think we've done a good job...You know we have to be careful that integration doesn't always mean about the other person changing because that isn't integration (Head of EMAS, primary school, LEA C).

#### ☐ ***Meeting their needs and fulfilling their potential***

They may have particular needs and those needs are being met but they don't feel that they are different in any way. It's almost as if they don't feel like asylum (Headteacher, secondary school, LEA A).

Criteria such as attainment were referred to as a means of integrating children rather than as a tool for measuring their integration:

When they come into school we make the best assessment possible of where they are actually at, what their educational level is and then as quickly as possible integrate them into mainstream classes so that they are learning alongside other children (Headteacher, secondary school, LEA A).

Finally, the following extract from an interview with the senior advisory support teacher in LEA B, sums up the common values used in the these LEAs to frame a concept of integration:

I would see a family who was comfortable with connecting with the school first of all and have an understanding of what the school was seeking to achieve. And I would see a pupil who was comfortable with their own identity, had a sense of value about their own experiential background... was well

socially, and emotionally well integrated, had a good sense of self-esteem both in the school and outside in the community and was able to access the curriculum and develop their own skills, whether they are academic, social or linguistic to the highest possible level, who felt safe and secure obviously not just within the school but within the community (Senior Advisory Support Teacher, LEA B).

### **An Ethos of Inclusion and the Celebration of Diversity**

Another characteristic value held in common by the three case study LEAs and schools was an ethos of inclusion and valuing diversity. This ethos contributed to the positive attitudes of these LEAs and schools to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and the perception that they are adding value to the schools. LEA A, in particular could draw on a strong tradition across the county of celebrating diversity.

Over many decades, the citizens of [the county] have welcomed people from all around the world...Each new influx of immigrants has brought to [the county] the diversity of culture that we enjoy today. All have contributed to the economy of our town in different ways. It is important that we know something about the cultures of our newer communities and the geography of the countries from which they have originated (From the county's sixth form college booklet – foreword by a County MP).

The council has, as part of its policy, valued diversity and that principle of valuing diversity permeates through everything. I think people are genuinely signed up to it. So when you get asylum-seekers and refugees, there is a genuine and not a patronising view that they have a contribution to make to this. This is a new benefit to you as a community, rather than it being seen as a challenge and difficult. I think this notion of valuing diversity makes a difference, so instead of accommodating the difference I think we promote the differences (Deputy Director, LEA A).

A strong commitment to inclusion was also found in the other two LEAs.

The school policy is to include all children regardless of their background and their previous experiences and that all children come with their own experiences and to value that, to value their culture and their language (EMAS teacher, secondary school, LEA C).

A speech delivered by the Headteacher of the secondary school visited in LEA B to the new intake of parents emphasised that being an all-inclusive school and welcoming asylum-seekers and refugees was part of what the school stood for:

We are a genuine multi-class, multi-cultural comprehensive school. Every child here has equal value, and one way we make that absolutely clear is by opening our doors to refugees and asylum-seekers. We have more than any other school in the county – in fact we almost have more here than all the other schools in the county put together. Many schools don't want them – we welcome them and have created a special induction programme to help them to settle into the school as quickly as they can. We are a global village school. But if you don't want your child to be sitting beside such students in class, befriending them, accepting them, making them welcome, but above all learning from them, then perhaps it is definitely not a good idea to come to [our school] (Headteacher's speech, LEA B).

The Head of Inclusion in LEA B saw the ethos of inclusion as making the difference between a school that welcomes and caters for these pupils and a school that struggles to do so.

I think actually the biggest challenge is for schools that don't have an inclusive ethos. If you have an inclusive ethos then basically you've got a routine for meeting the needs of any child whether they are asylum-seeker or refugee or not (Head of Inclusion, LEA B).

### **A Holistic Approach to Provision and Support**

We were very aware that this was not just an educational issue and that we need to look at this pupil group in a very holistic way (Senior Advisory Support Officer, LEA B).

As we have seen, the research highlights the fact that asylum-seeker and refugee pupils have multi-faceted and complex needs and cannot be seen merely as EAL pupils or newly arrived pupils (Rutter and Stanton, 2001; Rutter, 2001b). The case study LEAs and schools appeared to have fully embraced this holistic view of the child:

It wasn't the fact that there was a sudden increase in groups of children coming from more disparate ethnic backgrounds or language backgrounds. It was an awareness that some of these children actually brought with them some very distinct needs which we were not necessarily addressing within our normal support mechanisms (Advisory Support Officer, LEA B).

Some of our families have all sorts of issues that affect the children's ability to settle, access the curriculum, that are wider than just learning issues, you know (Head of EMAS, primary school, LEA C).

Some of those schools have actually assigned a support person of their own to work purely just with asylum-seekers so they have recognised that there is an additional need other than just EAL, that there is a support need (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA A).

The Head of EMAS in LEA B explained the need to develop a multi-agency group and to work with other agencies as part of the understanding that it is not sufficient in the case of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils to address only their learning needs:

If we just concentrate on education we would actually be on a hiding for nothing, in so far as, yes we can provide teachers and schools and instructors. But if for example they have a theoretically absentee parent...the child does not have support that they should have. Still our central focus is the child and their education, but in order for the child to feel secure or safe, and valued, they've actually got to have that parent in some way or shape or form so you have to work alongside health, social services (Head of EMAS, LEA B).

Similarly Head of Inclusion in LEA C explains the need to work with other agencies as embedded in the need to address the complex needs of these pupils:

So you know, through those actual links that you develop with social services housing, all of those things that have an impact on education — they actually work in a much wider way than some aspects of school improvement services (Head of Inclusion, LEA C).

Adopting a holistic approach also informs practices such as home-school links:

We do home visits as well so we get to meet the parents in their own space and also find out what the parents' needs are because again, some of our families have all sorts of issues that affect the children's ability to settle, access the curriculum, that are wider than just learning issues. So you know, you get a wider picture (Head of EMAS, primary school, LEA C).

The holistic framework employed by this LEA and schools encouraged a maximal approach, stretching their responsibility towards asylum-seeker and refugee pupils beyond the legal obligation to provide such pupils with education and even beyond the duty to welcome them and give them additional teaching and classroom support.

It's about a lot more than educational support, it's the whole support of starting something new, and in their case...It's the new house, the new food, the new clothes, the new sometimes very impoverished lifestyle to what they've left behind. It's the new reduced family if they've lost a parent on the way...so the induction to the course is about being a carer, a mentor, a teacher, a supporter, it's all those things rolled up into one (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA C).

Schools and LEAs adopting such a maximal approach see schooling as an important factor in creating for those children a 'safe base' and helping them to rebuild their lives. The case study schools and the LEAs took it upon themselves to assist asylum-seeker and refugee pupils in various ways. For example the Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupils Support Officer in LEA B described how the LEA assisted asylum-seeker and refugee families with liaison with other services:

I try to liaise with other agencies to try and sort out other needs as well. So it's really complex in a sense that you try

to sort out that they would go to a GP or find a GP because if something worries them, the education of their children won't necessarily be the highest thing on their agenda (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Support Officer, LEA B).

Or the Head of EMAS in a secondary school in LEA C who described the aid the school provided asylum-seeker and refugee families in their dealings with the Home Office and especially with deportation:

For example we've got a Pakistani boy at the moment whose family are in the process of being deported and the school has intervened and helped the family write letters, help them canvass MPs and so on. That's something we would normally do with asylum-seekers (Head of EMAS, secondary school, LEA C).

These LEA officers also saw the role of the LEA and more specifically of the support services to raise the awareness to asylum issues in the local population and the county council and to counter the negative media stereotypes:

We also have a role of informing a wider audience. So, for example, during refugee week we put displays up within the council area, and within the senior officers' area, because there is a lack of awareness of the issues in this particular field (Head of EMAS, LEA B).

The press are guilty of quite a lot of imbalance there and we do try to have positive press releases from time to time, we have a marquee on the town hall square for refugee week for one day and we have an awareness raising exhibition (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA A).

### **A Caring Ethos and the Giving of Hope**

The image of asylum-seekers and refugees as potential criminals as a threat to the social cohesion of British society can be counter-posed by humanitarian discourses that treat asylum-seekers and refugees with compassion (Bauman, 2004). As the data have demonstrated, the three LEAs emphasise an ethos of care and compassion. What the case study LEAs put in place to support asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, the ways in which they

define the indicators of their integration and above all the maximal way in which they understand their role and responsibility towards them, suggest a different ethos. Expressions such as: 'welcoming', 'creating a secure environment' and 'caring' were some of the most frequently used phrases LEA officers and teachers have used when discussing the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Below are some examples:

It is all about welcoming them, caring about them and making them feel secure...

It seems to me from my position as a senior manager, it seems to be a position of welcoming and then caring and then we obviously run programmes that help them to develop (Head of Inclusion, LEA B)

Just welcome them to the school really, just know that people care for them (Governor, primary school, LEA A)

I like to think, by and large, the asylum-seekers and refugees are made to feel welcome in the school and they feel supported. That's probably the most important thing.... Good practice is about welcoming in young people to the school (Headteacher, secondary school, LEA A)

We try to ensure that they're welcomed into the school and they feel safe and secure (Headteacher, primary school, LEA A)

...you work here because you care about them and you want something positive to happen [to them] (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA B)

[a good practice is when] asylum-seeker and refugee pupils or families are actually welcomed into the school and then supported (Senior Advisory Support Teacher, LEA B)

The school just wrapped its arms around him [an asylum-seeker pupil], welcomed him into the school family, and we all got on with it. He is simply one of us (Headteacher, secondary school, LEA B)

The case study LEAs and schools see their role as catering for the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee children in the best way they can – by giving them a better future:

Schools can play a pivotal role in providing refugees with not only a new beginning, but also a very real sense of the future. Inadequate or inappropriate provision runs the risk of compromising the future life chances of asylum-seeker pupils who fought so hard to hold on to those chances (EMAS bulletin, LEA B, 2004).

From my perspective, well I think from the LEA's perspective I think very much that they have a right to education, no matter how long they are going to be here for, they have a right. We can't assume that they aren't going to be here very long so let's not bother. From my point of view is to let them access that right, to integrate them to school, to society at large as quickly as possible. If they get permission to stay, you're aiding that transition into becoming UK citizens. If they don't and they are deported...we have to think about the positive things that we gave to that child and the family while they were here. If they end up speaking English, it's a gift that they can use forever. You've given them an insight that all of humankind isn't like that, that there is a way to a better life and if they go on to be the citizen that goes on to create that better life in their state or their country then all to the good, you know, but to give them the possibility to move on to better things (Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil Support Officer, LEA A).

## 5.5 Summary

This part of the research explored the value assumptions which lay behind LEA policy, support strategies and provision, funding and data collection arrangements. The aim was to uncover the ways in which the educational needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are conceptualised by practitioners. The LEA survey revealed that the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and strategies to address those needs were mainly located within existing educational frameworks. Most LEAs were found to conceptualise the needs of such pupils as that of learning English – 22 out of the 58 LEAs in the sample located their support structure within the framework of EAL provision.

The concerns of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils described in section 3.3 suggest that there is a need to ensure that experiences of racial hostility are addressed both in school and the local community. Only 7 LEAs in the study saw a race equality framework as central to its strategy of supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, another 13 LEAs located such pupils within the concerns of minority ethnic achievement and school improvement. It is not clear, however, the extent to which those LEAs that adopted one of the other conceptual frameworks addressed issues of racial harassment and prejudice specifically and pro-actively.

The other main LEA approach was a holistic model which incorporates possibly all the other approaches since the emphasis here is not on just on educational needs but on the child's emotional, social and medical needs (described in Part 2). The assumption is that the values of both social inclusion and educational achievement should apply to both asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and that EAL provision, induction and admission strategies, and strategies to promote cultural diversity would all be subsumed under this broad agenda.

The investigation of holistic approaches in three very different LEAs reveals some common understandings about how to provide for the broad range of pupil needs (see Part 3). The policy approaches of the three case study LEAs, (both in dispersal and non-dispersal areas) were found to place a strong emphasis on developing social capital through school-parent relationships and community-support. Successful help for asylum-seeker and refugee children appears to be dependent on actively supporting their parents' involvement in their education and their community. These strategies are facilitated by close working relationships between schools and other agencies (e.g. health, social services, housing, psychological services). There is evidence here of the development of multi-agency approaches which addresses the needs of the 'whole child'.

The values which underlie such holistic models reveal positive understandings of what asylum-seeker and refugee children can contribute to the school and community. Interviews with teachers and officials imply compassion and caring about the children and the need to ensure that others in the school community see the advantage of having the children attend the school. The criteria for success refers to both educational and social integration.





## Part 6:

### Commentary



## Part 6: Commentary

This project was based on interviews and telephone survey data, together with an overview of the relevant literature. The data collected by these methods enables us to offer some suggestions for consideration.

### 6.1 Challenges for schools and LEAs

Under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) asylum-seeker and refugee children are entitled to receive sufficient support to be able to flourish as individuals, and to develop their abilities and potential even if only a temporary resident. In England, the responsibility for delivering this entitlement and support has been devolved to teachers, schools and LEAs. Although they have discretion on how to handle that responsibility, they can also be inspected on the quality of their provision in relation to the goals of social inclusion, integration and the celebration of diversity. This project, along with others, has identified a range of challenges which LEAs and schools face in addressing the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

For example, although some support for the development of appropriate responses is available, schools and LEAs are left to decide how to best respond to the presence of asylum-seeker and refugee children in the community and their admission into mainstream education. These decisions are set in a highly charged environment in which immigration policy creates, together with the media, negative images of the character, motivations and intentions of asylum-seekers and refugees. The stranger is often represented as something 'other', hence alien, as potentially criminal, disruptive or dependent. Their presence can be associated with an increase in racial tensions and they can experience a hostile reception in local communities. Schools need to negotiate these tensions and offer such children their entitlement to education. At the same time they need to address the personal and social needs of such children. Although legally the temporary nature of asylum-seekers' and refugees' stay in the UK is emphasised, schools are expected to address the suffering the children have often faced in their own country, the trauma of displacement and loss of country and often family, and the difficulties of settling in a new home, community and school.

In policy terms, LEAs and schools need to come to a view on a number of different issues. These are:

- ☐ Developing a targeted policy
- ☐ The form of data monitoring
- ☐ How to monitor educational achievement
- ☐ Funding priorities

#### Targeted policy or separate provision?

One of the major tensions found at all levels of the educational system that is associated with this particular group of vulnerable pupils is whether to make the presence and needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils visible or whether to treat all pupils as equal without any special targeted policy or provision. Stead, Closs and Arshad (2002) suggest that invisibility can be damaging:

Invisibility can be expressed as not being understood, not being acknowledged, not being valued, and of having feelings of non-existence, with these experiences of difference and negative identity gaining analytic strength when placed alongside questions of social and structural marginalisation and isolation (p 49).

LEAs commonly located asylum-seeker and refugee pupils under existing educational policies. However, when compared with the results of earlier studies of LEA provision (Mott, 2000), the findings of this study suggests that there has been an increase in the number of LEAs developing a comprehensive and targeted policy to meet the needs of these students. Still only a minority of LEAs in this survey (26% of the sample) appear in this category, with 28% of LEA respondents specifically referring to this group of pupils within their broader policy approaches.

- 28% of LEAs employed a specific category within a broader policy
- 26% of LEAs developed a comprehensive targeted policy
- 16% of LEAs used language policy

16% of LEAs used school guidance

16% of LEAs used the general policy in relation to vulnerable groups

The structures employed to support asylum-seeker and refugee pupils were largely located within the frameworks of EMAS, EAL, Inclusion or Race Equality Teams.

37% of the LEA sample located responsibility with EMAS officers, who were line managed through school improvement structures which emphasised educational achievement

34% of the sample employed an Asylum-seeker and Refugee Pupil support officer or co-ordinator who was part of the EMAS, EAL, Inclusion or Race Equality team and had responsibility for this group

14% of LEAs in the study placed responsibility for the group within race equality/diversity or multicultural teams

7% of the LEA sample had set up a support team, usually managed by EMAS, or solely within EAL or New Arrivals

The organisation of support services and structures depends largely on funding arrangements. These can be differentiated in terms of whether they are *targeted*, *partial* or *non-specific*.

Targeted policies were associated with admission in 46% of the LEA sample, with training in 49% of the LEAs, and with targeted ongoing support for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and for teachers working with them in 39.5% of the LEA sample.

However, as the survey found, lack of an identifiable asylum-seeker and refugee educational policy may not indicate an underdeveloped support system, since there are both advantages and disadvantages of developing an explicit policy in a potentially hostile climate.

### Data Monitoring

The identification of the various needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is also difficult without national data bases. LEAs have to decide whether and at what level to collect their own information on asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. LEA data monitoring procedures and practices are diverse

and suggest that there is no systematic national framework for the monitoring of such pupils.

Of the 58 LEA respondents, 86% reported some form of data collection on asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. Three strategies for data collection were identified:

- ☐ Monitoring strategy (45% of the sample)
- ☐ Partial database (24% of the sample)
- ☐ Deductive strategy (17% of the sample)

One of the main reasons given for not collecting data, by 14% of the LEA sample, was the difficulty of wanting to collect adequate information about the needs of such pupils but not incurring any hostility to special provision, or of negative labelling of such pupils as 'problems'.

Local authorities use a range of data collection models.

- ☐ The *Extensive Data Model* draws on different types of educational and social data (languages, ethnicity, educational data, welfare information, immigration information and community links)
- ☐ A *Language and Learning Data Model* which focuses on EAL needs and student progress. This information is particularly useful for EAL provision
- ☐ A *Minimal Data Model* which uses basic information about country of origin, language and ethnicity

There was no necessary connection between the data collection strategy and the data model employed. Only 14 out of 58 LEAs in the sample used the *extensive model*; 17 used the *language and learning model* and 19 LEAs used the *minimal model*. The *extensive model* fits well with a holistic approach and practices such as multi-agency approach. In these cases, schools are likely to be well informed about the conditions under which asylum-seeker and refugee pupils have joined the school community and the wider social conditions necessary for their successful integration, whether temporary or long term. However only 10 out of the 26 LEAs which employed the full monitoring strategy collected this wide range of data.

### Monitoring Educational Achievement

The educational achievement of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is understood by central government to be a major indicator for successful integration of, and support of these students (DfES, 2002a), and that concerns with the

achievement of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils have been integrated into mainstream policies (DfES, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a). However, as indicated above, no official data are collected to monitor the achievement of these pupils.

Schools and LEAs have to decide whether to enter the achievement of such pupils into the school and LEA performance results. This creates a further dilemma. The absence of data on the presence and achievements of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils can have the beneficial effect of reducing uncertainty and even hostility towards accepting such students into schools. On the other hand, without such data, the educational achievements and progress of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils cannot be assessed and monitored.

### Funding Priorities

This study, in line with other studies, suggest that one major challenge that LEAs and schools face when supporting asylum-seeker and refugee pupils is the lack of adequate funding. Funding arrangements are not themselves targeted at addressing the complexity of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils needs. There are two main sources of funding which LEAs and schools draw upon to support these children: the Vulnerable Children Grant and EMAG. While asylum-seeker and refugee pupils are listed as one of seven groups to benefit from the Vulnerable Children Grant, there is no specific mention of this group under EMAG. There is little public information about the financial requirements for ensuring the support of these children and whether the lack of specific funds has held back the development of LEA and school responses.

The costs of targeted support strategies to cope for example, with complex admission, induction, mid term entry, mobility of such pupils, training programmes for professionals working with these communities and ongoing support for schools compete with the costs of targeted programmes for other 'vulnerable' groups of pupils.

## 6.2 Conceptual models

In meeting the various challenges discussed above, LEAs have adopted a variety of conceptualisations of the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. The different conceptual models, which although not mutually exclusive, have implications for the types of educational response to such pupils' education. The policy models used by 58 LEAs were found to be the following:

- ☐ EAL pupil approach (22 LEAs)
- ☐ Holistic approach (18 LEAs)
- ☐ Minority ethnic Approach (13 LEAs)
- ☐ New arrivals approach (8 LEAs)
- ☐ Vulnerable children approach (2 LEAs)

The most prevalent LEA frameworks were that of EAL and what we called the 'holistic' approach. In our project we focused on the different ways in which the holistic approach was understood since this model exemplified the most explicit emphasis on the specific educational and social needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.

### Holistic Approaches

The case study LEAs and schools which had adopted a holistic approach to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils appear to have developed their own criteria for integration. These include notions of social inclusion, safety and the happiness of the child. In order to support these broad ranging ideals, they have tended to establish strong parent-school and community relationships, and to develop a multi-agency approach. The schools and officials in the three LEAs appeared to want to offer such pupils the prospect of a 'better future', and in some cases used these practices to offer them a form of social capital.

The importance of achieving the well being of asylum-seeker and refugee communities is given a high priority in a range of social and educational initiatives. The multi-agency approaches appeared to be on their way to achieving some of the goals of the Children's Act 2004 and *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2004b) in ensuring all round support for some of the most vulnerable children. The proposals for Children's Trusts may well provide better opportunities for such a multi-agency approach, establishing new services (and reviewing existing provision) for asylum-seeker and refugee communities, families and children. By bringing together the knowledge of the various practitioners who engage with vulnerable asylum-seeker and refugee children, there is an opportunity to address their complex emotional, psychological, medical as well as educational needs.

Central to the development of these holistic approaches were a number of characteristics, values and practices associated with good practice. These were identified as:

- ☐ Existing experience of ethnic minority and EAL pupils
- ☐ Promoting of positive images of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils
- ☐ Establishing clear indicators of successful integration
- ☐ An ethos of inclusion and the celebration of diversity
- ☐ A holistic approach to provision and support
- ☐ A caring ethos and the giving of hope

### 6.3 Policy and Research Agendas

We believe this research raises a number of issues which require further investigation and policy development

#### Policy Evaluation

Assessing the effectiveness of LEA strategies is difficult not least because of the lack of appropriate data bases and insufficient research. One possible route for further research would be to use the different conceptual models employed by LEAs, which this project identified, in order to assess the effectiveness of LEAs strategies. What are the longer-term educational and social consequences of the approaches taken by schools and LEAs on the educational experiences and achievements of asylum-seeker and refugee children?

The lessons learnt from the LEAs and schools which have developed asylum-seeker and refugee educational policy and practices need to be shared. It is not clear from this project the extent to which such intercommunication between schools and local authorities takes place, whether there is sufficient sharing of suitable strategies and approaches in relation to different groups of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils and in the context of different types of community responses.

This study focused on values and ethos that underpin 'holistic approach' to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils. There is a need also to explore the assumptions and values that underlie other conceptual models. To what extent are LEAs aware of the consequences of preferring one framework over the others and what is the relationship between each conceptual model and the different support services developed by LEAs? To what extent do LEAs' conceptual models inform school policy and practices?

#### The experiences of teachers and schools

More information is needed to assess the ways in which different conceptual frameworks shape different images of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils (e.g. as language learners, as minority ethnic) and the extent to which these images affect teachers' perceptions and practice.

How do teachers, in different local contexts (i.e. LEAs in dispersal, non-dispersal areas, LEAs that employ different conceptual frameworks), understand and address the needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, and how do they describe their experience with these pupils? What do they understand as the main issues and challenges? How do such images shape teachers' perception of the indicators of successful integration in the classroom and in relation to learning?

#### The experiences of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils

Whilst there is now a reasonable body of evidence concerning the development of LEA education policy in relation to asylum-seeker and refugee pupils, there is far less research on the experiences of these pupils in school and the impact of different support system on their lives. There is even less research-based evidence on the most appropriate forms of teaching, learning and evaluation of the work of pupils who enter the school system from very different educational backgrounds, with different cultural expectations, levels of prior learning and pastoral and learning needs. Judging the effectiveness of the different strategies, frameworks and concepts of good practice is now urgent, especially in light of the provisions of the Children Act 2004 and Every Child Matters, (DfES 2004b).

#### The participation of asylum-seeker and refugee communities

Asylum-seeker and refugee young people and their families need to participate actively in processes involved in, for example, multi-agency structures. This project does not establish the extent to which these vulnerable groups are helping shape and adapt existing policy developments, the choice of support services and the development of 'good practice'. The problem for asylum-seeker and refugee communities is that they are not necessarily aware of their entitlements and gaining full access to services. This suggests that considerable effort will be needed to ensure their active development in, for example, Children's Trusts and its procedures.

## Cultural diversity and social integration

The reported experiences and perspectives of asylum-seeker and refugee children suggests that more needs to be done to address what they describe as their experiences of displacement and hostility (Candappa, 2000; Save the Children, 2000, 2001). Their experiences of racial harassment and prejudice in local communities are indicators that the strategies designed to ensure that such children acquire their entitlement to education will need to address more than the specific educational needs of such pupils. There is a need for more research to investigate the ways in which schools and LEAs can counter racial hostility in the school and in the broader community. To what extent do the different conceptual frameworks counter experiences of hostility and displacement?

Schools and LEAs who have experience of dealing with the issues associated with race equality and minority ethnic achievement, and especially those who have developed a commitment to celebrating cultural diversity, understand the need to address the whole range of issues concurrently. They recognise that change in the situation will involve not just asylum-seeker and refugee pupils but the whole school community. The celebration of cultural diversity in a diverse globalised world and the moral values of caring and inclusivity are values which are at the heart of education. A positive approach towards strangers, in this case asylum-seeker and refugee children, should be a central element in all children's learning. In this context the asylum-seeker and refugee child is a litmus test of the ethos of schools. In other words, school and LEA policy towards asylum-seeker and refugee pupils could be used to assess the broader issue of school and LEA approaches to cultural diversity.

Interviews with teachers and officials in the three case studies imply a depth of compassion and caring about these children based partly upon the rights of the child. The criteria for success offered by those schools and LEAs developing a holistic approach to the education of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils combine the goals of educational and social integration and educational achievement. The 'giving of hope' and the creation of a safe and welcoming environment for asylum-seeker and refugee children indicates the level of compassion which schools can offer all children. More work is required to develop the concept of social integration that is relevant to such newly arrived and often transitory pupils and to the school community as a whole.



## Appendix A:

### Case Study Interviews



## Appendix A: Case Study Interviews

	LEA A (Dispersal area)	LEA B (Non-dispersal area)	LEA C (London Borough)
LEA Senior officer	The LEA Deputy Director	Head of Inclusion	Head of Inclusion
LEA support officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of EMAS</li> <li>• Deputy Head of EMAS acting as Asylum-seeker and Refugees Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of EMAS</li> <li>• Deputy Head of EMAS</li> <li>• Asylum-seeker and Refugee Officer</li> <li>• Advisory support teacher – primary</li> <li>• Advisory support teacher – secondary</li> <li>• Cultural mediator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asylum-seekers and Refugee Officer – primary</li> <li>• Asylum-seekers and refugees officer – secondary</li> <li>• Education and Welfare officer for asylum-seeker and refugee pupils.</li> </ul>
Schools	<p>School 1 – Secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher</li> <li>• Head of EMAS</li> <li>• Focus group with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils</li> </ul> <p>School 2 – Primary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher</li> <li>• Mainstream teacher</li> <li>• Focus group with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils</li> </ul> <p>School 3 – Primary:</p> <p>Catholic school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher</li> <li>• Governor</li> </ul> <p>Sixth Form College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Headteacher</li> </ul>	<p>School 1 – Secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher</li> <li>• Deputy Headteacher</li> <li>• Head of EMAS</li> <li>• Deputy Head of EMAS</li> <li>• Focus group with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils</li> </ul>	<p>School 1 – Secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Headteacher</li> <li>• EMAS teacher</li> <li>• Focus group with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils</li> </ul> <p>School 2 – Secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of EMAG</li> </ul> <p>School 3 – Primary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher</li> <li>• Head of EMAG</li> <li>• Focus group with asylum-seeker and refugee pupils</li> </ul>





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