

NUT Press Release
Tuesday 7th September 2004

African Caribbean boys underperform in London

Commenting on the London Development Agency's Education Commission report on the achievement of African Caribbean boys in London, Steve Sinnott, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said:

"Of course, all the issues raised in this report are important. High expectations, role models and an appropriate curriculum all contribute to the success of pupils. These are all areas on which the NUT has campaigned for a long time.

"However, it is grossly unfair to blame teachers alone for a phenomena which is more complex than the report appears to make out. Even academics in this field do not agree on any one reason for the continuing underachievement of Afro-Caribbean boys. Socio-economic status, peer pressure, street culture, and an inappropriate curriculum, all play a part.

"Teachers and their unions want to work with the African Caribbean community - pupils, teachers and parents - in tackling an issue which is long overdue. But this has to be done in a spirit of partnership, not blame.

"Despite Government rhetoric on race equality and the need to address ethnic diversity, no real effort has been made to give these issues a high priority.

"Teacher training, continuing professional development and the National Curriculum all need to be revisited to ensure that issues which particularly affect African Caribbean boys are effectively tackled."

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PR55/04

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