

Jamaica Talks: An induction pack and video for new pupils from the Caribbean

The Learning Trust (Hackney)

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This new pack from the Hackney Learning Trust developed out of an action research project set up to address the underachievement of Caribbean heritage pupils. In 2004, 10 Hackney teachers travelled to Jamaica to work in several primary schools.

Although there is a large and well-established Caribbean heritage population in Hackney, children and young people from Jamaica are still arriving in schools. Some children are joining parents who left for England several years ahead of them; others have left Jamaica to escape political violence and to claim asylum in the UK.

It is often assumed that newly arriving pupils from Jamaica will settle easily into their new schools. The experience of the Hackney project is that children are coping with loss and displacement, family separation, as well as managing the transition into English school environments where the teaching and learning culture is quite different from their experience in Jamaica. Jamaican children may not be completely familiar with and confident in using Standard English – the Jamaican Creole language is widely used in Jamaican schools and is used alongside Standard English.

For teachers welcoming new arrivals from Jamaica, Jamaica Talks will be an invaluable resource. Its aim is to make links between schooling in the Caribbean and the UK, and provide a range of resources and teaching materials that can support children in managing the transition. The resources have a particular focus on supporting the achievement of Caribbean heritage

boys, and will also provide many opportunities for parental and community involvement.

The pack includes:

- 32 A4 colour photos of schooling in Jamaica to promote discussion, reflection and comparison with schooling in the UK.
- A 28 page handbook for teachers containing guidance, background information, literacy and numeracy activities, recipes, proverbs and poetry. There is detailed advice on meeting the language needs of pupils, with strategies for valuing and including children's linguistic heritage.
- A CD Rom with a wide range of literacy resources that are particularly aimed at engaging boys. The resources can also be used with an interactive whiteboard.
- A DVD Video that shows school life in Jamaican schools. A further section that shows Jamaican teachers talking about schooling in Jamaica and the education of boys.

As well as being an excellent resource for supporting new arrivals, Jamaica Talks will also be of great value to teachers working to raise achievement and make the curriculum more inclusive for all Caribbean heritage pupils.

Available from: The Primary Team, The Learning Trust, 1 Reading Lane, London E8 1GQ. Tel: 020 8820 7329