



# Every child matters:

*Promoting access to high quality education for Roma children*

Roma Education Support Trust/Lucie Fremlova



# Background

- 2011: Report "From segregation to inclusion: Roma pupils in the UK" found that
- 85 percent of all Roma respondents had been sent to special school/Roma only school in home countries
- The attainment of Roma pupils (ages 9-15) in numeracy, literacy, and science average or just below average.

# Background

- 89 percent spoke fluent or almost fluent English.
- 2 to 4 percent of Roma pupils regarded as having special education needs (SEN) due to learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- February 2012: a group of ten education practitioners from the UK went on a tour of 9 cities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia to present the issue of inclusive education and to give them the opportunity to share their practice.

# Background



## One of the participating schools: Babington Community College, Leicester

- Outstanding school (March 2013), teaching pupils 11-16 years of age
- Babington has pupils from 63 different countries
- 79 Roma students on roll (from Slovakia, Czech Republic and Romania)
- 54.2 percent of all of Babington's students (363) do not speak English as their first language
- Some SEN pupils on roll

- 2012: successful partnership established between Babington and Primary school Trmice
- "Every child matters: High quality education for all" project launched with funding from FCO
- Trmice school is a Czech mainstream school teaching pupils 7-15 years of age
- Trmice has 30 percent of Roma students on roll and some SEN pupils
- Trmice is located in a socially excluded and economically deprived location (Trmice)

Purpose: to share information and practice so that both schools can

- deliver better education to their Roma pupils
- become centres of knowledge and best practice in inclusive education strategies
- help other schools improve their knowledge in these areas

in line with the 2007 judgement by the European Court of Human Right in the matter of D.H. and others v. Czech Republic (relevance the 2010 ECHR decision to Orsus and others v Croatia)

Between 2012 and March 2013, Trmice school management and staff have been trained and upskilled to deliver a fully inclusive curriculum

October 2012 - February 2013

Four teachers from Babington and a Roma TA, led by the vice principal, visited the Czech primary school

- observed 10 lessons
- presented workshops on inclusive education practice, the use of ICT and active learning strategies.
- learned a lot about the education system that Roma pupils experience before coming to the UK and about Roma culture.
- visited a special school.

October 2012 - February 2013



March 2013

Seven staff members, including the head teacher, junior/senior school teachers and a Roma TA, spent 2 days at Babington

- observed 15 lessons
- participated in a presentation on baseline assessment (Cognitive Abilities Test [www.gi-assessment.co.uk/assessment-solutions/reasoning](http://www.gi-assessment.co.uk/assessment-solutions/reasoning)) and ongoing assessment, including ethnic data monitoring and tracking (SISRA [www.sisraonline.com/features/student.aspx](http://www.sisraonline.com/features/student.aspx))

## March 2013

- participated in a presentation on the history of SEN in Britain
- participated in a presentation on attendance and behaviour
- Much work done with the Czech teachers around attitudes to Roma, equality, anti-racism and equality of opportunity and outcome
- Babington staff were keen to learn more about the background of their Roma students

March 2013



## Outcomes

### Trmice Primary school

- fully endorses inclusive education
- is in a position to offer advice and training on inclusive education to other schools in the Czech Republic
- has familiarised itself with Babington's parental involvement project Success on a plate and will adopt a similar strategy

## Outcomes

- Teachers are familiar with inclusive strategies
- Teachers can describe examples of what inclusive education looks like in action
- Teachers have a much wider range of strategies inside and outside the classroom, implementing inclusive education

## Outcomes for Babington Community College

- Teachers have a fuller understanding of the prior education experience of their Roma pupils and are therefore able to meet their needs more fully
- Roma pupils see that Babington teachers have made a greater effort to understand why they have come to Babington.
- Now 96% ascribe as Roma (previously 80%).
- This year, some Roma children will leave with 5 A\*- C with English and Maths (Gold Standard) at GCSEs.

## Outcomes for Babington Community College

- According to the latest OFSTED report, previous lower attainment by Roma pupils was down to a low entry point.
- They made as much progress once Babington started teaching them as other pupils.
- This means they are not less able than other groups, they just have lower prior learning which comes from their initial education in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

## What have we learnt?

- The whole concept of special schools and special education needs is understood differently in the Czech Republic than in most developed countries.
- Many Roma pupils attend special schools in the Czech Republic who would be deemed to have no special education needs in many other countries.

## What have we learnt?

- The curriculum delivered in special schools is built on the belief that pupils with SEN cannot make much progress rather than being designed to help the pupils overcome any barrier to learning.
- This means many pupils fail to fulfil their education potential.

## What have we learnt?

- The assessments used to determine who attends primary school or special school are outdated, culturally and linguistically biased and inappropriate.
- The assessments are how ethnically-based segregation happens in the Czech primary schools.
- Special school teachers have more pay, smaller classes and a reduced curriculum to deliver.
- This has created a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

## What have we learnt?

- Czech teacher training focuses on subject knowledge and does not include sufficient work on generic teaching skills.
- Many Czech education professionals believe that inclusive education cannot be made to work rather than acknowledge that they do not have the skills required to deliver it.
- There are some Czech education professionals who oppose the system and would like better training.

## Next steps

- Individuals or pairs of teachers will spend longer in the other institution, teaching, offering advice and delivering training.
- If funding can be secured, the data tracking software SISRA will be purchased and piloted at a Czech school.
- The project will be rolled out to other schools in other areas in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, potentially other countries, involving Trmice Primary school and Babington as mentors (bottom up, grassroots, inexpensive approach).

## Next steps

- enhance our cooperation with representatives of eight pedagogical faculties in the Czech Republic, who are responsible for teacher training at Czech universities.
- develop our cooperation with the Network of Inclusive Schools.



# Thank you for your attention

Roma Education Support Trust

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