How will the changing demographic of our school change the way we teach?

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Seymour Park Community Primary School

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How it began

Seymour Park Community Primary School is a large primary school situated in Old Trafford, serving a multi-cultural community. Traditionally families within Seymour Park Community are faced with high levels of unemployment, low paid/unskilled work, over-crowding, high crime rates and health issues. However, over recent years, there has been an increase in more affluent families moving into the area and therefore choosing Seymour Park Community Primary School for their children's education.

Our research has centred on whether the demographic of our school is changing and, if so, should this change the way we teach or our curriculum?

Who was involved?

Caroline Friar – Assistant Head for Lower KS2 and Pupil Progress Leader

Asa Kilgarriff - Year 5 teacher and MFL leader
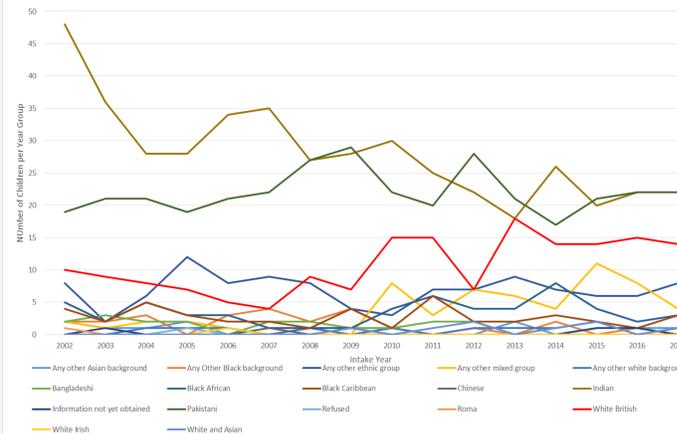
Sharon Freeman – EAL leader

The Enquiry Process

❑ We started the enquiry process by gathering data that we already had available to us in school (from the annual census) looking at home language and ethnicity, whilst being aware that this data is only as reliable as the person giving the responses. Free school meal (FSM) data was also analysed across the whole school and in individual year groups.

❑ We looked at deprivation figures for the area from Trafford Innovation Lab and increases in house prices.

❑ Class Teddy diaries in Nursery, two Year 1 classes, two Year 3 classes, the Rainbow Room and a Year 4 class.

❑ Parent questionnaire sent to every children in the school and 220 parents responded (33% of the total number of children in school. The questionnaire was then analysed focusing on the occupations of the parents (annual income), ethnicity as reported by parents, activities that the families do at the weekends and how the parents support their child's learning at home using quantitative and qualitative (thematic analysis) methods.

Questionnaire Response Rate
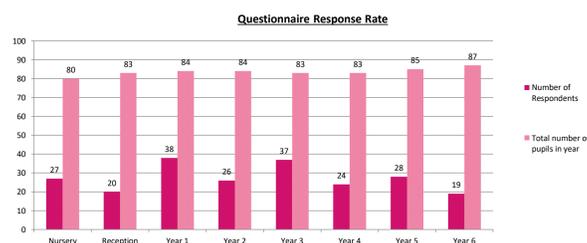
Data Collection & Findings

Ethnicity Change from 2002-2017

(Data source: Seymour Park CPS new admissions form as recorded on SIMS.)

❑In October 2017 there were 111 (17%) white British children in the school, compared to 78 (12%) in October 2012 – an increase of 5% across 5 years.

❑However 28% of the children currently are Indian and 25% are Pakistani.

❑ 196 children have English as their home language in 2017 compared to 129 in 2012 (29% of the school). The next most spoken language is Gujarati at 24%.

❑Deprivation in Clifford Ward has decreased since 2010, the most positive change being in the Ayres Road and Henrietta Street area of our catchment

❑In 2010 there was a significant increase in houses being sold in Clifford Ward which positively correlated with 23 more children attending our nursery and 15 more children enrolling across the rest of the school. These figures have been maintained then with a current figure of 669 pupils on roll

❑Average house prices in the catchment area have also increased over a twenty year period – a terraced house increasing from £25, 000 to £100,000

❑19% of the parents who responded to the questionnaire in EYFS (Nursery and Reception) earn £50,000 or above annually, compared to 12% in KS1, 4% in Lower KS2 and 15% in Upper KS2.

❑The majority of children from higher income families are in the lower end of the school – 38% in nursery, 34% in reception and 33% in Year 1 – compared to 14% in Year 5 and 19% in Year 6.

Social Classifications 2017 - 2018
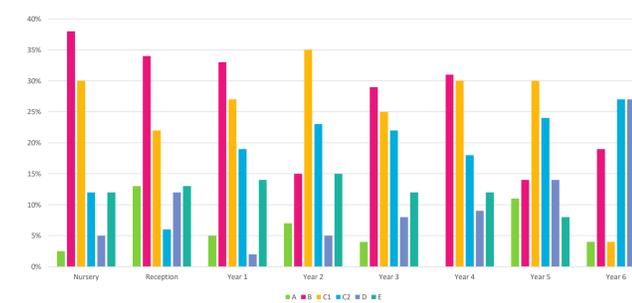
❑These figures correlated with FSM figures across the school : 7-8 children on FSM in nursery through to Year 2 compared with 12-14 in Years 3 – 6.

❑Analysing Class Teddy Diaries showed that a wide range of weekend activities were done with the children in nursery and Year 1 such as ballet, skiing, visits to family in other locations, theatre, yoga, museums etc. In contrast, in Year 3 and 4, the children played on their tablets, went to the park or went shopping.

❑These findings could be explained by the fact that parents may invest more time in their children when they are younger or that the more affluent, middle class parents in our school are in the lower years.

❑ However, quantitative analysis of questionnaire responses into what sorts of activities pupils did with their families outside of school revealed a similar pupil experience across key stages in school (supermarket and shopping centre visits featuring prominently).

Early Analysis

❑ It would appear that the demographic of our school is changing to some extent with an increase in white British pupils (5% over 5 years). However, there are still large numbers of Indian and Pakistani pupils, and a broad range of other ethnicities represented at our school.

❑ Our research indicates that we do have more pupils from higher income families in EYFS.

❑ This suggests that the demographic of Seymour Park is becoming more diversified with pupils' home lives and experiences outside of school becoming more varied.

❑ More middle class children in school suggests that we should consider child centred pedagogy relating to how individuals are shaped by their environment and the variables with which they surround themselves (VanderStel 2014), drawing on wider experiences outside of school in our teaching.

❑ We also need to consider how we support our working class children. Research by Hempel-Jorgensen (2015) suggests that this group of children perceive themselves to not do as well as middle class children.

Next Steps

❑Disseminate the findings of the project with the rest of the staff and deliver training on child centred pedagogy in relation to the child's family's economic status.

❑Consider the mind-set of teachers towards low income children and how they learn, as this has been shown to have a significant impact on how teachers support children's learning. (Milner, 2013).

❑To carry out focus groups with the children to determine their self perception within the classroom – where do they see themselves academically compared to their friends and why? (Beckett and Wrigley, 2014)

❑Repeat the parent questionnaire at the same time of year and make a comparison with the responses from the previous year.

❑Look at attainment scores across the school from KS1 and KS2 end of year SATS results (2018) making connections with Pupil Premium and income of families.