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**Underachieving Pupils in Great Britain**

(bakalářská práce)

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla v ní předepsaným způsobem všechnu použitou literaturu.

V Olomouci dne 23.4. 2012

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Tereza Koudelková

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

As a topic of my bachelor thesis I have chosen Underachieving Pupils of Great Britain. The nature of my paper will be more factual, not based on personal view. The methods I will use are mainly description, analysis and contrasting. Initially, I will open my paper with the fact that the definition of the term "underachievement" does not represent as simple issue as it looks on the first sight. As I went through the literature and materials suited for my thesis, each author had his own way of presenting the problem. As a consequence of this fact, my first pages will consist of the outline of the possible interpretation and comprehension of the term.

The following chapters will be dedicated to a description of the history of underachieving pupils in British school system, ethnic groups among the pupils and reasons for their underachievement. On the first place I will state the standards of British schooling because it helps to see and understand differences with the norm. Essentially, in the first part I will formulate the basis of the British education, including the history of British school system. I will mention solutions provided by schools and government, and what policy do they offer to ensure equal opportunities for everyone.

Underachievement is not only a concern of minority groups. Therefore, I will devote one crucial part to children with special educational needs which form a significant part of school underachievement in Britain. It is not just the UK issue but it stands for a worldwide concern. To get a feeling of familiarity with this often unpleasant subject, I will include a closer general specification of children with special educational needs. Especially, the classification of SEN children will have a place in my thesis. I will describe ways of their education in the UK and the early and modern educational procedures in general. It is worth to mention the development of this field of education because it expresses the fundamental part on which my following chapters will be based on. In the next chapter I will write about the school accessibility of SEN children nowadays in the UK – the technologies used in schools for lessons with SEN pupils. Nursery schools are also involved in educating disabled children, so the following part will be dealing with special educational needs concerning under fives.

The thesis will continue with a concentration on minority ethnic students in British educational system in comparison with white students. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds form an appreciable group of underperforming students. There is an

explanation of how the immigrants are sorted according to their ethnic background and what backgrounds have the best and the worst results. Answering a question what is the reason of their low grade of performance represents a big deal. I looked for analysis which would show which ethnic minority underperforms the most. I will mention links with historical events to bring more complexity and interconnections, such as Stephen Lawrence case or Margaret Thatcher as a minister of education. I will be interested in geographical distribution of minority ethnic students and how it affects their choice of the particular school and the discipline they study. Underachievement of ethnic minority groups in higher education will be put to a separate chapter. There will be the system of higher education in the UK pointed out to get clear overview of later discussed underachievement in this sphere. Universities, Open University, lifelong education and other higher education colleges will be briefly reviewed. Special attention will be paid to participation of minority ethnic groups in higher education, for example, their participation according to a level and mode of undergraduate study.

At the end of my paper I will switch the attention to an issue of whether there is a link between sex and underachievement. Within this chapter I will compare study attainments of boys and girls in the UK. I will compare various differences which might explain underachievement of boys.

British governmental and educational organizations often like to abbreviate their names. Therefore, I will attach a list of abbreviations. These abbreviations will appear in the text of my thesis. It will be added because I do not want the reader to get confused by a number of acronyms.

The main sources of my thesis come from the official web sites of various institutions concerning education in the UK in general and more specific sites to get the newest and current information. I will also supply data from UK National Statistics website. Tables and charts were often taken also from the database of results of Census 2011.

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to give a view of underachieving British students within the educational system of the UK. Crucial groups are pupils with special education needs and minority ethnic students in particular level of education. I will try to focus on underperformance in British schooling according to modern approaches to this issue.

## 2. British School History

The nature of schooling in Britain is complicated and this has its roots in school history. For the second part of the eighteen century we may employ the terms as "elementary" or "primary" and "secondary" but we should bear in mind that these labels were not in contemporary use in this country. During this period the State did not control any of these educational agencies. Many private individuals looked after them and in many cases they were under the control of the Church. In the case of elementary schools we can distinguish several types. First of all there was the "dame school". It was kept by an elderly woman. Her weekly fee for each pupil was a few pence.[1]

The institution which gave some kind of elementary education to older children was called common day school, or private day school. It provided a rudimentary education for the children who were able to pay fees. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge started charity schools (not the same as church schools mentioned later) as early as 1698. These schools were associated with parishes; the catechising of the children was performed by the clergy. The curriculum of the charity schools included learning the catechism by heart (religious instruction) and reading (sometimes writing and arithmetic were added). Apart from religion, the main stress was on industrial occupations – children were taught to develop habits of industry (spinning, sewing, knitting, gardening, ploughing etc.). From 1704 onwards there was held an annual service attended by charity-school children from London and Westminster. It was held in St. Paul's Cathedral. Nevertheless, by the end of the century charity-school methods were criticised as mechanical.[2]

Another type of free education for very poor children was lead by schools of industry. It was caused by the industrial revolution obviously and the rise of factory system. Their expenses of the school were paid by the sale of the products of their labour and the children were also provided with meal.[3] An important contribution to the elementary education of poor children was made by the Sunday schools. These schools were successful. In 1787 they had 250 000 pupils in Great Britain (in 1801 – 156 490 in London alone). Pupils who attended the Sunday school did not disturb their labour in the mill during the week.[4]

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[1] see Barnard, *A Short History,* 2.
[2] see Barnard, *A Short History,* 4 - 7.
[3] see Barnard, *A Short History,* 8.
[4] see Barnard, *A Short History,* 10.

In Wales there were so-called "circulating schools". It was started in 1737. The teachers travelled from place to place, they were staying in each locality, and the lessons were given in any vacant building (a church, chapel, empty house). The schools were also available for adults and were opened in the evening as well as during the day-time. This movement was held by SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge). However, "circulating schools" died out towards the end of the eighteen century and they were replaced by the Sunday schools.[5] The society was founded in 1698 and aims to help people to understand and to grow in the Christian faith. They want to inform others about Christianity and support a rich diversity in Christian tradition.[6] Throughout the eighteen century the Society provided advice and encouragement to local groups to help them set up, finance and run many schools. It was the chief point of reference for all charity schools.[7] However, "circulating schools" died out towards the end of the eighteen century and they were replaced by the Sunday schools.[8]

Let us move on to a brief description of modern schooling in Britain. British education now operates on three levels: schools, higher education and further/adult education. School are divided into state and independent sectors. Northern Ireland, Scotland and England/Wales have different school systems. Further and higher education is the same throughout the UK and is mostly state- funded.

The first attempt to establish a national system of state-funded elementary schools came in 1870 (England and Wales). The crucial position had church schools. These initially prepared boys for the priest hood. But the church then developed a wider educational role and its structures influenced the later state system. However, many people in the fifth or sixth centuries received no schooling and remained illiterate for life. In later centuries local areas developed secular schools. Schools were provided by mostly for working class boys and girls. It represented a minority of children. The majority received no education.

In the nineteenth century, Britain had a chaotic structure of schooling. Much of the available schooling was provided by church schools, the sons of the middle and upper classes were still educated in the ancient high, grammar and public schools for leadership roles in society. In a time of the industrial revolution the population was growing. The state did not provide a school system that would educate the workforce. Fortunately, in 1833

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[5] see Barnard, *A Short History,* 12.
[6] Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, accessed January 30, 2012, http://www.spck.org.uk/.
[7] "Our History." Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, accessed January 30, 2012, http://www.spck.org.uk/about-spck/history/.
[8] see Barnard, *A Short History,* 12-13.

Parliament funded the construction of school buildings. Only in 1870 the state became more actively involved. The Balfour Act (1920) made local government responsible for state education. Schools provided elementary education for children up to the age of thirteen but it was still limited to basic skills. For secondary education people had to pay but these public (private) schools declined in quality. They were reformed by headmasters such as Thomas Arnold from Rugby. After that the private grammar and high schools expanded. On the other hand, state secondary schools in the early twentieth century were for children whose parents could not afford school fees. There were financial grants for poor children, but this help did not enlarged secondary education. „[…] In 1920 only 9,2 per cent of thirteen-year-old children in England and Wales were able to enter secondary school on a non-fee-paying basis."[9] Education in the UK at the beginning of the twentieth century was still inadequate for the society and governments avoided any further involvement until 1944.[10]

In 1944 was passed Education Act (the Forster Act[11] or the Butler Act[12]) which provided the secondary education to all to the age of fifteen. It reorganized state primary and secondary educational system. State schools become free and compulsory up to the age of fifteen. There was a division into three stages: primary schools, secondary schools and further post-school training. Local education authorities (LEAs) were created by a Ministry of Education.[13] Nevertheless, there was a selection of children based not just on their intelligence but also on their cultural background of the home.[14] Two types of state schools resulted from the Act: county and voluntary. Today's situation is that most state non-denominational schools are controlled by LEAs and voluntary (faith) schools are controlled by religious groups. Most state schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were divided into two basic groups – grammar schools and secondary modern schools. Placement in this secondary system depended upon an examination results. By most LEAs was adopted the eleven-plus examination and consisted of linguistic, mathematical and general knowledge tests. It was taken in the last year of primary school at the age of eleven. The purpose was to select between academic and non-academic students based on their abilities. Those who passed went to grammar schools while those who failed went to the secondary modern school. The grammar school was better equipped, although schools

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[9] Oakland, *British Civilization*, 192.
[10] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 190-193.
[11] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 192.
[12] Oakland, *British Civilization*, 193.
[13] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 193.
[14] see Ford, *Modern Britain*, 31.

were supposed to be equal. Secondary modern schools were based on practical educating. Training at local colleges was also introduced for people with jobs who wanted further education after fifteen. Nevertheless, in the 1950's the selective secondary school system became a party-political battlefield. The Labour Party claimed that the eleven-plus examination was not a good way. According to them, it was socially divisive. In 1964 Labour governments abolished the eleven-plus examination and the selection. Two types of secondary schools were replaced by non-selective "comprehensive schools" to which children were automatically sent after finishing a primary school. It means that there was no more division according to ability levels and social backgrounds. LEAs were able to choose the secondary education which was the best for local needs. Some of them refused comprehensive and decided for selection. The Labour government in 1976 wanted to establish comprehensive schools throughout the UK. Before it was implemented, the Conservatives came to power in 1979[15]. Conservative government was strongly against the idea of replacing grammar schools with comprehensives but the fashion of the time was for comprehensives and more of them were created under Margaret Thatcher than any other education minister.[16] This means that secondary schools remained divided between the selective and non-selective. A minority of LEAs in England and Wales do not have comprehensives. Scottish schools have long been comprehensive, Northern Irish schools are divided into selective grammar schools and secondary moderns. This debate about comprehensive and selection schools have not been finished yet and education is still a subject to party-political and ideological problem.[17]

### 2.1 The state school system

Nowadays the state education is compulsory and free for all children between the ages of five to sixteen.[18] Most of them go to state schools. Children normally start primary school at the age of four or five. They normally leave at the age of eleven, moving on to secondary education. Majority of state schools admit both boys and girls but there are also some single-sex. State schools follow the National Curriculum and are inspected by Ofsted

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[15] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 193-194.
[16] "Travel Through History In The UK : Margaret Thatcher," InfoBritain, accessed March 16, 2012, http://www.infobritain.co.uk/margaret_thatcher.htm.
[17] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 193-194.
[18] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 195.

(Office for Standards in Education).[19] To be more specific, I will mention more types of state schools. A **community school** is run by the local authority. They develop strong links with the local community; they also provide services like childcare or adult learning classes. **Foundation schools** have their own governing body. A **trust school** is a type of foundation school. It forms a charity-like relation with an external partner. Their main aim is to raise standards and explores new ways of work.[20] A trust school is defined as a foundation school with a foundation. The purpose of a foundation is to hold land on trust for one or more schools. It may also appoint foundation governors to those schools where the school's instrument of government so provides.[21] **Voluntary-aided schools** are mainly religious or faith schools. **Voluntary-controlled schools** are almost the same as voluntary-aided by they are run by the local authority. **Specialist schools** follow the National Curriculum but they focus on a particular area (sports, technology, visual arts). There are also a number of schools with particular characteristics. In the system of these schools can be included – **academies**. They are set up by sponsors in partnership with the Department of Education (DfE) and the local authority.[22]Another definition comes from a web site of the Department for Education and it describes an academy as "publicly-funded independent schools that provide a first-class education." Sponsors come from a range of backgrounds, e.g. successful schools, universities, charities or faith bodies. The amount of sponsor gifts is the same as if they were maintained schools funded by the local authority. [23] **City technology colleges** are without any fees, for eleven to eighteen pupils of abilities. They are trained towards science, technology and the world of work. **Community and foundation special schools** are designed for children with special educational needs, including physical disabilities and learning difficulties. Other type of school is called a **faith school.** They are usually run the same way as other state schools. There is a religious status reflected in their education curriculum. **Grammar schools** are for children with

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[19] "Types of schools" Directgov, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/ChoosingASchool/DG_4016312.
[20] Types of schools" Directgov, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/ChoosingASchool/DG_4016312.
[21] "A guide to the law for school governors: What is a trust school." Department for Education, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance/guidetothelaw/b0065507/gttl/trust-schools/definition-trust-school.
[22] Types of schools" Directgov, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/ChoosingASchool/DG_4016312.
[23] "About Academies." Department for Education, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies/a0061252/what-are-academies/.

academic abilities. The last type is called **maintained boarding school.**[24] There are 39 state boarding schools in England and one in Wales. Some schools are comprehensive, others are academies and grammar schools. Pupils have the same exams as they were at a local school. National Standards came in April 2002 (The Care Standards Act 2000).[25]

There are at about 2 300 independent schools in England. They are sponsored by parents and incomes from investments. Schools of this type have their own curriculums and policies. Every independent school has to be registered with the DfE. Standards are regularly monitored by Ofsted or an inspectorate approved by the Secretary of State.[26]

State schooling before the age of five is not compulsory in Britain. At present, the Labour government wants to expand state nursery education. Pupils attend primary school in the state sector from the age of five and then they move to the secondary school at the age of eleven and stay there until the ages of sixteen to eighteen. Over 87 per cent secondary school students attend comprehensives. The number of grammar schools and secondary modern schools is only a small (grammar schools - 166). In the case of comprehensive schools there is a doubt about the quality and performance of the system. The Labour government has introduced a sort of setting, according to which children are divided into ability and interest classes. There are some excellent comprehensive school but we can find also some very weak and failing ones. **City Technology Colleges** were established by the Conservative government to encourage the diversity. They specialize in science, technology and mathematics. The Labour government has involved also the private sector in school organizations in 1999 and **City Academies** appeared to replace failing and underperforming schools. Another two types of secondary level are **Specialist Schools** which concentrate on sciences, modern foreign languages and arts, and **Beacon Schools** which are charted as examples of best practise for other schools. The number of voluntary schools controlled by faith also intends to increase (e.g. Church of England, Methodist, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh).[27]

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[24] Types of schools" Directgov, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/ChoosingASchool/DG_4016312.
[25] "What are maintained boarding schools?" Department for Education, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.education.gov.uk/popularquestions/schools/typesofschools/a0064247/unnamed-item.
[26] Types of schools" Directgov, accessed January 23, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/ChoosingASchool/DG_4016312.
[27] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 195-197.

### 2.2 The independent school sector (fee-paying)

In the independent school sector are involved six per cent of all British children, from the ages of four to eighteen. There are 2 400 independent schools with over 563 500 pupils. The financing consists of fees paid by parents of pupils. The amount varies and can reach several thousand pounds a year. The schools are not taxed on their income if it is used only for educational purposes. The most famous of the independent schools are Eton, Harrow and Winchester. They are defined as members of the Headmaster's Conference. They were originally created by monarchs for aristocratic sons. Pupils usually board in during their term time. Although the ability to pay the fees is important, the independent schools are not confined to social class. To enter the school there is an entrance examination. Parents who can afford it often send their child to an independent school because of the quality of the education and because such schooling may give social advantages in later life. The independent sector is criticised for being elitist, socially divisive and based on financial background of each pupil but is firmly established and provides a choice. Otherwise, there would be a state monopoly in Britain. [28]

### 2.3 School organization and examinations

In this section I would like to give a brief description of school organization and examinations. Basically, the school year is divided into three terms – autumn, spring and summer. A reduced birth rate in recent years caused a decrease in the number of school children. It resulted in the closure of schools in rural and urban areas. Most teachers are educated and trained at the universities and colleges. The quality of teaching in state schools has suffered a lot of criticism in recent years. Teachers at present are suffering from low moral due to battles with the government over pay, conditions and educational reforms. Concerning British expenditure on education, it is below many comparable countries according to GDP (gross domestic product). A radical reform was the creation of a National Curriculum in England and Wales, which is not applicable to independent schools. The main examinations are the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Advanced Subsidiary (AS); and the General Certificate of Education at Advanced

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[28] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 198-199.

Level (GCE A-level). The interesting fact is that the results in all exams tend to be better in single-sex girls' schools.[29]

Alternative examinations are General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) which provides a broad preparation for various occupations and higher education; and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). GCSE, AS, A-level and other equal examinations form the basis of school league tables which were instituted by the Conservative government.[30]

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[29] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 200-202.
[30] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 203.

## 3. Pupils with Special Educational Needs

According to a report from Cabinet Office (2005) *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* 770,000 children in the UK are disabled, equivalent to 7% of all children.[31]

In legal terms special educational needs (SEN) have the definition which refers to children who have learning difficulties or it is hard for them to get on the same level as other children of the same age. They have disabilities that do not allow them to obtain the education in a way of children without disabilities. Help is usually provided in their ordinary early education, sometimes external specialists have to become involved. Children with SEN need extra help in many areas- schoolwork, reading, writing, expressing themselves, organizing themselves etc.[32]

There are some basic principles which all employees should take into consideration. Parents of children with SEN should always be taken to account and they should be consulted with all decisions that affect the child.[33] An opinion of parents is vital for their child's education and the wishes of the child should be taken into account. There are number of groups supporting children with SEN. Local authorities (LAs) have a duty to provide parents with enough information. These services all called Parent Partnership Services. There is also an access to Independent Parental Supporters (IPSs) who are volunteers trained to provide support to parents. Parent partnership services for instance access to a confidential telephone helpline, help in filling in forms and writing letters, support in resolving disagreements with your child's school and the LA, links to local parent support groups, training opportunities, etc. This information can also be found through the National Parent Partnership Network (NPPN). Another organization is called Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) which stands for an independent advice centre providing state education in England and Wales for five to 16 year olds.  There are many other institutions for parents in the UK as Contact a family, Parents for Inclusion or

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[31] "Disabled Children," CZONE, accessed January 20, 2012,
https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/supportingchildren/equality/Documents/02-disabled-children-p12-37.pdf.
[32] see "What are special educational needs?" Directgov, accessed January 17, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_400860
0.
[33] see "What are special educational needs?" Directgov, accessed January 17, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_400860
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Network 81 which is a registered charity or Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).[34]

### 3.1 The child with learning disabilities

In this part of my thesis I would like to concern on a brief classification of children with low intelligence and I will mention ways used to deal with them within the educational system.

In Great Britain the educational help for severely retarded was mandated in 1970 (Education Act). They classify their retarded people into two groups: subnormal and severely subnormal. The first group – subnormal – are seen as those requiring special education, training and possibly medical care. The severely subnormal (IQ 50 and below) are unable to function independently and require custodial services.    It is obvious that the right to an education for all is a democratic tradition which is reflected in our laws and educational practise, but that sometimes a commitment to this tradition in the case of children with special educational needs presents a real challenge to the schools. Exceptional children are frequently unable to attain full education from the regular school system. Many children have needs such as very specialized diagnostic and instructional services, an opportunity to view themselves and others in a wholesome manner, and a need to experience community interaction with other people. Many exceptional children need to begin their school experiences at an earlier than most children in our society. Many individuals require services well into adulthood. There is no doubt that special education has grown rapidly. There is still a need, however, to improve our educational services in many areas.[35]

Education is for all, and each individual should be provided the best education according to his capabilities, whether it is in a special classroom or the regular classroom. There is no doubt that providing education like this requires a variety of specialized skills and services, and also that they are costly and often necessitate radical innovation. Very often we must get away from tradition to do what is best for these children. This can be done in the

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[34]see "Support for special educational needs: parent partnership services and other organisations." Directgov, accessed January 18, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_100161 84.

[35] see Love, *Educating Exceptional Child in a changing society*, 11.

regular classroom but generally is not. This is why we now have and probably always will have special classes for exceptional children.[36]

Special educators would agree that children with special needs should be educated in regular classrooms. They further state, that it is often necessary to remove children from regular classrooms for parts or all of their school programs. Some of them also agree that it is necessary to remove some children from their homes and communities for placement in special schools. The very important educational aspect of retarded children is the attitude of their parents. Sometimes they overprotect him and give him a lot of affection but the others go to the opposite extreme – they show their displeasure towards the child.[37]   On the other hand, "separation of a child from the home should be made only after careful study and for compelling reasons."[38]   Some children may go to a resource room for part of their schooling and be integrated daily back into the regular classroom. However, handicapped children are being placed in special education classes because they are rejected by regular teachers in regular classrooms and also because they are troublemakers. Very often this defeats the very purpose for which special education was designed.[39]

Most special educators agree that there is nothing special about special education because what is good for one child should be good for all children. Nevertheless, children who have special needs should be served effectively. People involved in education and all agencies concerned with education should try to help all children to be educated in a proper way and to their maximum potential. We cannot overlook the fact that some children are not of the same intelligence level, some of them have problems with hearing and vision, and many of them are emotionally disturbed.[40]

### 3.2 Children with low intelligence

"The mentally handicapped child is one who is diagnosed as having low intelligence, who is unable to profit sufficiently from the curriculum of the public schools, but who can be educated to become socially adequate and occupationally competent [...]."[41]

Kirk and Johnson state that there are many terms for denoting children with low intelligence, e.g. feebleminded, mentally deficient, amentia, dementia, slow learner,

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[36] see Love, *Educating Exceptional Child in a changing society*, 12.
[37] see Levinson, *Mentally Retarded Child*, 30.
[38] Love, *Educating Exceptional Child in a changing society*, 12.
[39] see Love, *Educating Exceptional Child in a changing society,* 13-14.
[40] see Love, *Educating Exceptional Child in a changing society*, 15.
[41] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 13.

mentally handicapped, idiot, imbecile, moron, oligophrenia, exogenous, endogenous, and many others. As a result the beginning student becomes quite confused with such terms. These children have been of interest to numerous workers – physicians, psychologists, educators, sociologists, geneticists and others. Each has brought his own classification, concepts and terminology.[42]

MacMillan states that the professionals themselves have long debated the problem of defining and grouping those who are mentally retarded. Children's mental condition may be associated with medical difficulties, educational difficulties, or social difficulties, presenting needs that cannot be met until we identify them.[43]

Children with low intelligence differ in degree of mental retardation and one of the most common classifications is based upon the degree of the defect. For this purpose the following subdivisions have been made: an **idiot** is an individual with the greatest degree of defect. This child is so low intellectually that he is not able to learn to talk and to care of his bodily needs. These children require supervision because they do not possess the ability to learn to survive without external support.[44] An **imbecile** stands for the next level in the intelligence scale. These children will probably develop some language skills, he should be able to care for his bodily needs. However he will require supervision and care in his home or in institutions throughout his life. A **moron** is above the imbecile level, he has some degree of educability (reading, writing, and arithmetic, social and occupational competence). In some communities they are admitted into the classes of the regular school, but their educability is quite low compared to that of normal children. According to the conventional intelligence test (Binet) the moron has I.Q. between 50 and 70. He can become partially or totally self-supporting.[45] A **borderline child** stands for the child which is difficult to classify. He is either moronic or normal. Some of them are educated in regular school classes. These children's handicap causes difficulty in school adjustment. The following category is a **dull – normal child**. His abilities are at the lower end of the average range. He is able to compete with most of children in majority school activities except the strictly academic subjects. He is in general retarded a year or two when compared with children of similar ages.

Nevertheless, each child is a unique individual and these classifications caused problem in the division. Between each group are borderline causes and each category merges to

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[42]see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 3.
[43] see MacMillan, *Mental Retardation in School and Society*, 29.
[44] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating*, 3-4.
[45] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating*, 4-5.

another. Workers in the field of mental deficiency were not satisfied with the division according to a degree and brought classification according to cause, clinical types, and for educational purposes.[46]

The scale of MacMillan seems more elaborated (attachment – Table 1). He uses various definitions, e.g.: biological, social, psychometric, alternative – Clausen's psychometric alternative, Mercer's social system alternative, etc.

### 3.3 Education of Mentally Retarded

It is necessary that parents of the defected child have to be in accord about the future of their child. Concerning preschool days many retarded infants demand little. On the other hand, they receive very little of the stimulation and opportunity to gain some experiences that they need for growth. Infants cannot understand orders about how to behave but they are able to understand that something is wrong from the frown and from the tone of voice. The role of parents is crucial at that period. They should learn as early as possible how children learn to listen and talk. Retarded children have a tendency to copy the behaviour of the family members. It means that if you punish the child by slapping, the child will most probably hit the first person that is against his plan of action.[47]

Education of retarded child also means that there must be achieved the maximum growth of the child. This limit is different for all children.[48]

### 3.4 Early Educational Procedures

"It is far cry from the ancient to the modern concept of mental retardation."[49] Throughout the centuries people has had the problem with those among them who were not able to learn and to function in society as well as the majority of normal people. In ancient times the feebleminded were persecuted and neglected. The term "idiot" is derived from a Greek word which means a "peculiar individual". Christians were solidary to these individuals and decided to house, clothe and feed those among them who were feeble-minded. In the seventeenth century society began to organize institutions for them and very little attempt of educating was introduced. The education of mentally defective began about 1800. The

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[46] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 5-7.
[47] see Levinson, *The Mentally Retarded child*, 138 - 140.
[48] see Levinson, *The Mentally Retarded child*, 141.
[49] Levinson, *The Mentally Retarded child*, 44.

educators were practically medical men. For example there were Itard, Seguin, Montessori and Decroly. They all were physicians and their major contributions were in the fields of psychological diagnosis and the education of the mentally defective child.[50]

Going through the early history of treating of mentally retarded the most famous names came from France.

Jean Marc Itard was a French philosopher and physician working for the deaf. He was inspired by the philosophy of sensationalism and the post-revolutionary belief that man had unlimited possibilities, and that education and environment were the determining factors in mental development of people. He was concerned with the problem of a boy which was called "The Wild Boy of Aveyron". This boy age twelve was deaf and was found in the forest of Aveyron and behaved more like an animal than a child. Itard wished to socialize him by giving an instruction based on patterns of the boy at that time (beginning of the 19th century). He also wanted to activate the nervous system of a boy, create human wants and desires in him, teach him to speak and the last objective of training was to develop the intelligence. The boy developed some control of the emotions through the training, had learned to read a few words. Itard hoped that with the onset of puberty the boy (Victor) will react more intelligently. Nevertheless, the opposite occurred and Victor became unmanageable. Taking everything into consideration we can assume that his contribution to present-day education of the mentally handicapped is that even idiots can be improved to some degree.[51]

Edward Seguin was first teacher, and later a student under Itard and his contribution to the education of mental defectives is called the "psychological method". His theory of education is based on a neurophysiological hypothesis. He differentiated between two types of feeble-mindedness – the superficial and the profound.[52]

Another person interested in mental defectives was called Deteressa Maria Montessori. She studied work of Seguin and concluded that the problem of mental deficiency was primarily pedagogical rather than problem of medicine. [53]

There were many other early contributors to the study of the mentally impaired child, for instance O. Decroly and Alfred Binet.[54]

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[50] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 69-70.
[51] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 70- 74.
[52] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 75.
[53] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 78.
[54] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 81.

After education had become compulsory, administrators began to realise how many children were handicapped. In 1893 an Elementary Education Act formed a duty for schools to provide education for blind and deaf children, between the ages of seven and sixteen. In 1892 schools for mental defectives were opened in Leicester and London. [55]

### 3.5 Modern educational procedures

In this chapter we will speak about some of philosophies and educational procedures developed since the First World War. During the 1920's and the 1930's the method of teaching was developing in general. The Dewey philosophy was a movement or experience method. Educators believed that children "learn by doing". Many school subjects as reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, civics were correlated in one activity in which the children take part.[56] The next method is called Subject Matter Curricula for the Mentally Handicapped. The main presenter of this theory is Annie D. Inskeep. In her book *Teaching Dull and Retarded Children* she described and modified traditional curriculum for the education of mentally handicapped and slow-learning children. John Duncan in his book *The Education of ordinary child* formulated a program for the education of mentally impaired in England which is different. He criticizes contemporary methods and agreed with Professor Spearman of the University of London that intelligence consisted of a "g" factor of general intelligence and an "s" factor meaning specific intelligence.[57]

### 3.6 School accessibility for disabled in the UK

Schools in the UK have different opportunities of accessibility for children with special educational needs. They have to make plans in which they state improvements that must be achieved. It means they have to improve the physical environment, make improvements in the provision of information, and increase access to the curriculum. Schools have to guarantee disabled the accessibility to their classes. Lessons should be on the ground floor if the pupil uses a wheelchair and there is no lift in the school building. They should also offer special help concerning assessments or exams. Physical environment should be improved as well. The school can ensure lighting and colourful schemes to help visually

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[55] see Barnard, *A Short History,* 261.
[56] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 93.
[57] see Johnson and Kirk, *Educating,* 95.

disabled children in classes, they can install lifts and ramps to help physically impaired children, or provide acoustic tiling of classrooms to help hearing impaired pupils. They are also able to improve the way information is delivered to disabled pupils, e.g. in Braile, in large print, on audiotape or through using symbol system. Impaired children should be provided also with technology suited to their needs. This can help them to the access to the curriculum. Examples include touch-screen computers and joysticks, easy-to-use keyboards, interactive whiteboards, text-to-speech software or software that connects words with pictures or symbols. If the child is not able to go to school for medical reasons, local authority is responsible to continue his education. [58]

In the Year 9 (13 to 14 year olds, final year of Key Stage 3, pupils take SATs in English, Maths and Science[59]) disabled children obtain a letter from a head teacher of the school which invites him or her to attend a review meeting where the transition plan is made. The transition plan is focused on young disabled people. It represents their way of what they want to achieve in teenage years. It is a document that highlights what support he or she will need to live as independently as possible. It depicts every aspects of their life, including education, employment, health, transport and leisure activities. In the plan several people should be involved – the head teacher of the school, parents, someone from social services, local doctor or community nurse, educational psychologist, someone from the Connexions. A copy of the transition plan will be sent to the head teacher and social services.[60]

In Britain a financial support for disabled students is provided. It is called Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). It can help pay for special equipment which is necessary for studying like computer software, non-medical helpers (reader, note-taker), extra travel costs. The received amount depends on specific needs not on the income of student's household. The amount also differs by course intensity of the student (attachment - table). A student can apply for the allowance if his condition affects the ability to study, if he is an undergraduate or postgraduate (including Open University and distance learning students), and if the student's course lasts at least one year. A disabled student cannot get DSAs if he or she is an EU student or he is getting equivalent support from another funding source. If

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[58] "School accessibility," Directgov, accessed January 17, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/Schools/DG_10013035.
[59] "Yeargroups," SchoolHistory.co.uk, accessed March 10, 2012,
http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/yeargroups.htm.
[60] "Your Transition Plan - preparing for the future," Directgov, accessed January 17, 2012,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Youngdisabledpeople/DG_10039608.

the application of the student is turned down he or she can ask for an explanation and a review of his or her case. The institution for financing students in the UK is called Student Finance England.[61]

### 3.7 Special Educational Needs in under fives

This section describes issues connected with disabled child of nursery school. It is important to discover child's SEN as early as possible. If the child have a difficulty with communication, understanding and learning, sensory and physical development, behaviour or relating to other people, it is important to act because the child may have a SEN that has not been identified. Parents in the UK should talk to SEN coordinator (SENCO). The child's nursery or reception class should be able to help the child to overcome the difficulties. If the child is not attending a nursery school, the local council can advise on local provision.[62]

All publicly funded nursery schools must take into account "Special Educational Needs Code of Practise." This is a special guidance how to cope with SEN children. If the child is not attending a nursery school, parent can contact a Sure Start Children's Centre. There is a way of helping children called "Early Years Action." The main purpose of this way means that there will be a different way of teaching certain things. Statements of this help may be written down in a document called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). IEP represents a tool for teachers and for parents. It should set out what special help is being given, who will provide a help and how often, and what help can be given to the child at home. If the child does not make progress through Early Years Action, more help can be given by a specialist teacher or a speech therapist - Early Years Action Plus.[63]

The parents also can get help from IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Education Advice). This organization is an independent charity which offers free advice to parents of SEN children in England and Wales. Especially, they offer an advice on inaction by local authorities or schools which discriminates against children with disabilities.[64]

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[61] "Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)." Directgov, accessed January 18, 2012, http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_10034898.

[62] "Identifying special educational needs in under fives." Directgov, accessed January 18, 2012, http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Preschooldevelopmentandlearning/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_100170 5.

[63] "Getting help for special educational needs in under fives." Directgov, accessed January 20, 2012, http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Preschooldevelopmentandlearning/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_400069 1.

[64] "About us." IPSEA, accessed January 20, 2012, http://www.ipsea.org.uk/About-Us.

# 4. Ethnic minority students and underachievement

Indeed, we should set the actual meaning of the word "underachievement." As we have already mentioned in the very first part of the thesis, it is the term widely used in may contexts by politicians, journalists and academics to describe relatively poor academic performance. However, there are many unresolved issues with regard to a definition and determination of the problem. Smith points out one definition which figured heavily in literature. It was that of "school performance, usually measured by grades, that is substantially below what would be predicted on the basis of the student's mental ability, typically measured by intelligence and standardized academic tests." Nevertheless, many researches expressed the difficulties and lack of consensus concerning the definition.

The fundamental role in defining the underachievement is the statistical analysis. The most widely used method identifying underachiever is called the "regression method." It uses the regression techniques to state the deviation of a student's score. Finally, the usage of different definitions caused that the agreement on its definition is impossible. Understanding the way in which underachievement manifests itself can be also problematic and therefore, the accurate data and facts is hard to gain.[65]

Nearly one in eight students in school in England and Wales comes from an ethnic minority community, at about forty per cent of them attend school in London. From January 2002 the schools were required to provide information on individual pupil characteristics for the PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) and this means that for the first time we can map student characteristics such an ethnicity on English language level.[66]

It is a media issue that pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds experience inequalities in British education system the most. In 1985 the Conservative government commissioned a report (Swann report) exploring the response of the education system to ethnic diversity in schools. It was revealed that Indian children are underachieving and the government also stated that it should be solved not only within the education system but it should be a concern of the whole community. However, reforms of 1980's and early 1990's became clear examples of the lack of LEA data on the performance of these groups of students.

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[65] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 105-107.
[66] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 70.

In May 1997 there was an election of Labour government and the publication of education white paper "Excellence in schools" with emphasis on rising attainments of ethnic minority students which indicated that things are going to change. The white paper also showed that the underperforming gap was growing. Nevertheless, the Labour government failed to standardize methods differentiating between ethnic groups and they gave only a little indicate that lower socioeconomic and minority people would be better served. In 2003 the government published a document called "Aiming High" which concerned on raising the achievement of ethnic minority pupils. The last two initiative of the government was included in following document: "School Achieving Success" and "14-19: Extending opportunities, raising standards." It put a strong emphasis on leadership and effective teaching and learning and clearer strategies for addressing racism and poor behaviour. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant was created and the Excellence in Cities programme provided a crucial support. For instance, it was discovered that while Chinese and Indian students achieve above average GCSE scores, the performance of black and Pakistani pupils is deep under the average GCSE passes.[67]

According to the chart number 1, we can get a comparison of all English students to ethnic minority students. Students within the black category perform below the national average. Very similar profiles have Bangladeshi and Pakistani students. On the other hand, Chinese and Indian pupils tend to perform above the national average.

Another study that should be mentioned in this context is called Youth Cohort Study (YCS). It monitors and collects data from a nationally representative sample of young people during the two following years after finishing their compulsory schooling. The data from 2002 shows that all groups tend to improve their performance but students from Pakistani, black and Bangladeshi communities achieve below the levels of white and Indian groups. There are trends in performance of ethnic minorities in secondary education: pupils form advantage backgrounds achieve the highest grades, African-Caribbean pupils (particularly boys) have not achieved the same amount of progress in GCSEs although the widespread improvements have been achieved. A remarkable fact is that Asian pupils make better progress than white pupils from similar socioeconomic background and studies outside of London proved that white pupils leave school with the highest average qualifications. [68]

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[67] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 68 - 69.
[68] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 71 - 72.

**Chart 1** [69] - **Percentage of students achieving Key Stage 3 Level 5 of above in the core subjects according to ethnicity in 2002**

| Ethnic Group | English % | Mathematics % | Science % |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| White | 70 | 72 | 70 |
| Mixed | 69 | 62 | 60 |
|   White/Black Carribean | 62 | 62 | 60 |
|   White/Black African | 69 | 68 | 68 |
|   White/Asian | 66 | 66 | 59 |
|   Other Mixed Background | 71 | 71 | 68 |
| Asian | 66 | 66 | 59 |
|   Indian | 77 | 79 | 72 |
|   Pakistani | 57 | 55 | 47 |
|   Bangladeshi | 58 | 57 | 48 |
|   Other Asian Background | 70 | 75 | 69 |
| Black | 56 | 54 | 51 |
|   Black Caribbean | 56 | 53 | 51 |
|   Black African | 56 | 55 | 50 |
|   Other Black Background | 58 | 55 | 54 |
| Chinese | 80 | 90 | 82 |
| Other Ethnic Background | 59 | 64 | 58 |
| Unclassified | 63 | 67 | 65 |
| All pupils | 69 | 71 | 68 |

Compared with all other ethnic groups, Black pupils have the worst attainments. Even newcomers such as Bangladeshis are better. According to the research (2003 – the second conference of underachievement of black pupils in London schools) black parents were confused by the fact that it is too problematic to get an appointment with the teacher and therefore the parents did not receive information on pupil progress. Another surprising fact is that if a black teacher was employed, he was like unqualified teacher on lower pay. The mayor of London (2003 – Kev Livingstone) pointed out that one third of the pupils in London are black and live in the very poor parts of the capital. He admitted that London schools had a problem with an institutional racism. [70]

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[69] Smith, Emma. *Analyzing underachievement in schools.* King's Lynn: Biddles Ltd, 2005, accessed February 4, 2012, http://books.google.cz/books?id=bBSqBnVUqw4C&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

[70] Saleh Mamon, "Crisis of black underachievement in London schools," *IRR News*, May 28, 2003, accessed February 18, 2012, http://www.irr.org.uk/2003/may/ak000015.html.

As Smith describes in *Analyzing underachievement in schools*, Black Caribbean backgrounds are much more likely to be excluded from school than their white companions.[71] Research provided by the Social Exclusion Unit showed that African-Caribbean children were six times more likely to be excluded from school. It also showed that 16 per cent of excluded children were from an ethnic minority background (half of them – African-Caribbean). These children often came from divorced families, living with just one parent.[72]

In 2010 there was a research suggesting that white British children have worse results in comparison to their ethnic minority companions. It showed that ethnic minority pupils progressed faster throughout compulsory schooling as they gradually improved the language. The conclusions from Warwick University found out that the influence of poverty is more prominent on white students than on ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities in general are more likely closer to be below the threshold of good grades. Therefore teachers pay bigger attention to them than to white students. Ethnic minority pupils, with the exception of black Caribbean pupils, have almost comparable results throughout primary and compulsory schooling. It is also suggested that the main contributor to development of overall results is the improvement in English language as we have already mentioned several lines above.[73]

According to the International Adult Literacy Survey (2000), 22 per cent of British people were not able to read the newspaper.[74]

## 4.1 Explanation for ethnic minority underachievement

This concern lasts form 1960's. Attention received particularly students of Caribbean and Pakistani origin. They were also more likely to be excluded from the mainstream education. Their underperformance was explained by home background factors, language, cultural problems and low expectation of teachers. This problem has lasted to the present.[75]

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[71] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 10.
[72] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 72.
[73] Graeme Paton, "White British pupils 'make less progress' than ethnic minorities," *The Telegraph*, September 15, 2010, accessed February 24, 2012, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/8002214/White-British-pupils-make-less-progress-than-ethnic-minorities.html.
[74] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 11.
[75] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 74.

A racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in April 1993[76] caused a creation of four specific recommendations for education: the National Curriculum should include themes of diversity and prevention of racism, schools and LEAs should think of strategies to cope with racism in schools, these strategies have to be reviewed by Ofsted, and the last recommendation was that community and local initiatives should promote cultural diversity and prevent racism. It was investigated that many policies of schools and LEAs are not as effective as they should be in coping with the underachievement of minority ethnic pupils. Some schools were tagged as "institutionally racist" by commentators. Ethnic minorities are disadvantaged by "A-C economy" of schools which is based on a belief that in order to preserve good results in GCSEs and a high-league table position, school use selection to increase the number of pupils who pass all important GCSE thresholds. This results in a fact that not every school provide all pupils with equal access to the Curriculum because in some cases the students are encouraged to attend only a few GCSE exams. In 1980's there was a study of multi-ethnic-inner-city schools which pointed out the racism which was still common throughout the white staff. From 2002 all newly trained teachers have had to show that their techniques have high expectations for all students.[77]

Race Relation (Amendment) Act 2000 prohibits discrimination of race, colour, nationality and origin not just in education but also in employment and provision of goods and services (in England, Scotland and Wales). It makes it unlawful to discriminate in admission, treatment as a pupil or a student, and exclusion. According to this act educational institutions are obliged to promote equality of opportunities between persons of different racial groups and to promote good relations between them. Further and higher educational institutions have a number of duties. For example, they must prepare a written policy for promoting race equality or to monitor a progress of students and the recruitment of staff. Northern Ireland has its separate Race Relation Order and a separate Equality Commission.[78]

In 2010 the Equality Act was passed.[79] It replaced previous legislation such as Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The equality act presents a

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[76] "Stephen Lawrence case," *The Guardian*, November 8, 2007, accessed February 26, 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/nov/08/lawrence.ukcrime.

[77] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 74-75.

[78] "Race Relation (Amendment) Act 2000," *Teacher Support Network,* accessed March 3, 2012, http://tsn.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/103/~/race-relations-(amendment)-act-2000.

[79] "Equality Act 2010," Legislation.gov.uk., accessed March 3, 2012, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/85.

mixture of rights and responsibilities that have stayed the same (for example when someone is treated worse than other because of a protected characteristic – this is still considered as discrimination), some rules have changed (employees are able to complain of harassment even of it is not directed to them, if they can show that is causes an offensive environment for them), some rights have been extended, some have been introduced for a first time (a concept of discrimination arising from disability).[80]

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[80] "The Equality Act 2010," ACAS, accessed March 3, 2012,
http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3017.

## 5. British higher education and minority ethnic students

As Anthea Lipsett noted in *The Guardian* article on January 22, 2008 students from ethnic minorities still get lower degree than expected classifications and universities and colleges need to do more to prevent it.[81] In the past only a small number of pupils in Britain proceeded to higher education but in recent years the increasing amount of students showed that 33 per cent in England obtain higher education.[82] We can differentiate following ethnic groups in the UK: white (of which English 83.6%, Scottish 8.6%, Welsh 4.9%, Northern Irish 2.9%) 92.1%, black 2%, Indian 1.8%, Pakistani 1.3%, mixed 1.2%, other 1.6% (2001 census).[83] According to Katherine Shellgren (BBC News) ethnic minorities are better represented in the UK universities than in the general population. The best performing Russel Group Universities for the recruitment of ethnic minority students were London universities, including the London School of Economics (LSE), King's College London, Imperial College and University College of London. Outside London the representative number of ethnic minority students was found in the universities of Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham and Warwick. One in ten students was from ethnic minority background in Oxford and Cambridge.[84] It was also found out, that UK population is to become even more diverse (University of Leeds study). It is predicted that the proportion of black, Asian and other ethnic minorities will rise from 8 % of population (Census 2001) to 20 % by 2051.[85]

### 5.1 The universities

Universities are independent institutions created by royal charter but in practise they are dependent upon government money. The amount of finance is dependent upon the number of students recruited.[86] In 1960 there were 23 universities in the UK. Now there are 87 universities and 64 institutions of higher education. The number increased after a period of

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[81] see Anthea Lipsett, "Ethnic minority students 'still underachieving," *The Guardian,* January 22, 2008, accessed February 3, 2012,
http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/jan/22/highereducation.uk3?INTCMP=SRCH.
[82] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 204.
[83] see "Europe: The United Kingdom," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed March 5, 2012,
https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uk.html.
[84] see Katherine Shellgren, "Rise in Ethnic Minority Students at UK Universities," *BBC News,* February 3, 2010, accessed March 5, 2012, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/8493894.stm.
[85] "UK's ethnic minority numbers 'to rise to 20% by 2051'," *BBC News,* February 3, 2010, accessed March 5, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10607480.
[86] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 206.

expansion in the 1960's and reforms in 1992 when some institutions as polytechnics obtained university status. The Open University and the University of Buckingham are additional university-level institutions. We can divide British universities into four basic types. The ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge are dated from the twelfth century. However, until the nineteenth century they were the only English universities and there were no women. Other universities were founded in Scotland: St Andrews (1411), Glasgow (1450), Aberdeen (1494) and Edinburgh (1583). Between 1850 and 1930 were created "redbrick" or civic universities such as Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. The third group universities were founded after the Second World War and in the 1960's. They are associated rather with towns than with big cities – Sussex, York and East Anglia. The last group consists of so called "new universities" and were created in 1992 when polytechnics and some other colleges became universities. Some 17 per cent of students now leave higher education because of work or financial problems.[87]

The bachelor's degree (Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, BA or BSc) a student usually obtains in final examination at the end of the third year of study (in Scotland there is a four- year MA degree).[88]


### 5.2 Other higher education colleges


In 1970's many colleges or instituted of higher education were created and now they offer a wide range of degree, diploma and certificate curses in science and the arts. They used to be under the control of their LEAs, but the Conservative government gave them independence and some of them have become universities. There are other institutions which offer higher education as the Royal College of Art, the Cranfield institute of Technology and various business schools. There have university status but others, such as agricultural, drama and art colleges, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) and the Royal College of Music offer comparable courses.

In case of student's finance, in the past British students who get a place at an institution of higher education were given a grant from their LEAs. The Labour government changed this rule and in 1998 abolished the grant. Today students cover their expenses usually

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[87] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 204-205.
[88] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 206.

through loans from the Student Loan Company. They start to pay back when they reach proper salary level.[89]

## 5.3 The Open University

The Labour government introduced the idea of the Open University in the 1960's. It opened in 1969 and its first courses started in 1971. It was meant to give opportunities ("a second chance") to adults who did not take higher education. It was also intended to give opportunities to employed students who left school and wanted to broaden their horizons. These students often follow their lessons and lectures at home. Part-time tutors in local areas visit their students regularly to discuss their progress. There are also intensive weekend courses throughout the year to enable students to take part in intensive study. There are many television programmes and books associated with the Open University. Today at about 7000 students receive a degree from the Open University each year (including students from the European Union, Gibraltar, Slovenia and Switzerland). This type of university serves as a model to other countries.[90]

## 5.4 Further, adult and lifelong education

The present organizations of this type originated from the need for wider knowledge of working-class people in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Nowadays there is a broad range of educational opportunities provided by state-funded self-governing colleges of further education and other institutions, WEA (Worker's Educational Association); evening institutes local societies and clubs. Courses can be either vocational (for employment) or recreational (for pleasure). Some students may study in the evenings or on day-release from their job. Such kinds of programmes are closely connected to and related to student's work and include government training and have ties with local commerce and industry. In Britain there is at about four million of students of various ages taking further education in one form or another. In the past there were a low percentage of people in further and higher education compared to Japan, USA and Germany. The Labour Government wants to prioritize further and lifelong education, to encourage people to develop their skills and knowledge. Nevertheless, the reality looks different – the further

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[89] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 207.
[90] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 208.

education suffers from a lack of resources and funding. A third of further education colleges are inadequate.[91]

## 5.5 Attitudes to education

There have been debates about the achievement and aims of the UK education since the 1970's. Critics expressed an opinion that the main method of state comprehensive schools called child-centred teaching is not sufficient to produce the kind of people needed for today's society. Pupils lack the basic skills (literacy, numeracy) and are unprepared to the outside world. The previous Conservative government was based on costumer-choice policies and attempted to reform the teaching process, emphasize science and modern language studies. The Labour government continued the process. They wanted poorer and more working-class students to enter higher education sphere. [92]

These days the Conservatives (won in 2010) declare in their programme that they want to radically improve the quality of teaching, restore discipline, and especially remove the gap between the poorest and the richest pupils.[93]

## 5.6 Participation of minority ethnic groups in higher education

There has been concern over the underachievement of students from ethnic minority groups since 1960's. In the following years, the attention focused on the performance of Caribbean and Pakistani origin (they were more likely to be excluded from mainstream education). This concern has lasted to the present day because there has been an increased divergence between the attainment of ethnic minority groups both at the level of secondary and higher education.[94]In this part we will rely on data provided by HESA and UCAS. HESA stands for Higher Educational Statistics Agency and is the official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about higher education. It was set up in 1993 by the agreement between the government departments, the higher educational funding councils and the universities and colleges following the 1992 Higher and Further Education Act which established an integrated higher education system

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[91] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 208-9.
[92] see Oakland, *British Civilization*, 209.
[93] "Schools," Conservatives, accessed February 10, 2012,
http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/Schools.aspx.
[94] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 74.

throughout the UK.[95] UCAS stands for Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and it is an organization responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK.[96]

In 2000/01 a total of almost 167 000 students were from minority ethnic groups (15, 6 % of the total). According to the Chart 1 included below we can see that the largest individual group is Indian (four per cent), the smallest groups are Chinese, Black Other and Bangladeshi (each representing one per cent of the total undergraduate population in England), the four largest groups - Indian, Black African, Pakistani and Black Caribbean, account for almost two thirds of the total minority ethnic students in England. Minority ethnic groups tend to have a younger age profile than White people in England. Here minorities are over- represented in all undergraduate- level study. However, while particular groups still show over-representation (Black African, Indian, Asian Other and Other), the Pakistani, Black Other, but especially Bangladeshi, appear to be under-represented when compared to their position in the young population.[97]

**Chart 2**[98]

Participation of minority ethnic groups in Higher Education in England, and comparative estimates of the population

| Ethnic group | Total estimated no. of undergraduate students in HEIs, OU and FECs (00/01) | Percentage of total undergraduate students (00/01) | Working-age population (2000) | 16-24 year old population (2000) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White | 1,015,683 | 84.8 | 91.8 | 88.0 |
| All minority ethnic | 181,815 | 15.2 | 8.2 | 12.1 |
| Black Caribbean | 17,479 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| Black African | 28,049 | 2.3 | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| Black Other | 9,021 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.9 |
| Indian | 46,836 | 3.9 | 2.1 | 2.7 |
| Pakistani | 24,024 | 2.0 | 1.2 | 2.3 |
| Bangladeshi | 7,081 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 1.0 |
| Chinese | 11,064 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 0.7 |
| Asian Other | 15,655 | 1.3 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Other | 22,606 | 1.9 | 0.9 | 1.3 |
| *Total (known ethnicity)* | *1,197,498* | *100.0* | *31,748,384* | *5,325,303* |

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[95] "Overwiev," HESA, accessed February 3, 2012, http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/4/54/.

[96] "About us," UCAS, accessed February 3, 2012, http://www.ucas.com/about_us/whoweare/.

[97] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 9-10.

[98] Helen Connor, Claire Tyers, Sara Davis, Nii Djan Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students in Higher Education: Interim Report* (Nottingham: The Institute for Employment Studies, 2003), accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.ligali.org/pdf/minority_ethnic_students_in_higher_education_rr448.pdf.

However, while particular groups still show over-representation (Black African, Indian, Asian Other and Other), the Pakistani, Black Other, but especially Bangladeshi, appear to be under-represented when compared to their position in the young population.[99]

At about one in nine of all HE students are enrolled in FE colleges. Most of them are in part-time study on sub-degree programmes. It is likely that the share of minority ethnic students in the undergraduate population has been growing over the last decade. As the chart 2 shows, almost 70 % of minority ethnic undergraduate students in HEIs in England (without OU students) are on full-time first degree programmes at obviously this proportion is higher than the 65 % for all undergraduate students. It should be mentioned that the factor usually related to part-time study (particularly in OU) is the age. Part-time sub-degree is made up of various courses and programmes, e.g. HNCs (Higher National Certificates). There are included even non-prescribe courses funded by HEFCE.[100]


**Chart 3** [101]

Undergraduates at HEIs by level and mode, England

| Level/mode | All minority ethnic students | % | All students | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full-time first degree | 113,210 | 69.8 | 632,277 | 65.2 |
| Part-time first degree | 12,623 | 7.8 | 71,193 | 7.3 |
| Full-time sub-degree | 17,823 | 11.0 | 82,323 | 8.5 |
| Part-time sub-degree | 18,436 | 11.4 | 184,150 | 19.0 |
| *All* | *162,092* | *100* | *969,943* | *100* |

Chart 3 shows that all minority ethnic groups are more likely to be in full-time degree study rather than of the other three levels but much lower Black Caribbean and Black African students are taking full-time degrees (around 53%).[102]

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[99] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 9-10.

[100] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 11.

[101] Helen Connor, Claire Tyers, Sara Davis, Nii Djan Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students in Higher Education: Interim Report* (Nottingham: The Institute for Employment Studies, 2003), accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.ligali.org/pdf/minority_ethnic_students_in_higher_education_rr448.pdf.

[102] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 13.

**Chart 4**[103]

### Participation of minority ethnic groups by level and mode of undergraduate study, England, at HEIs (excluding OU)
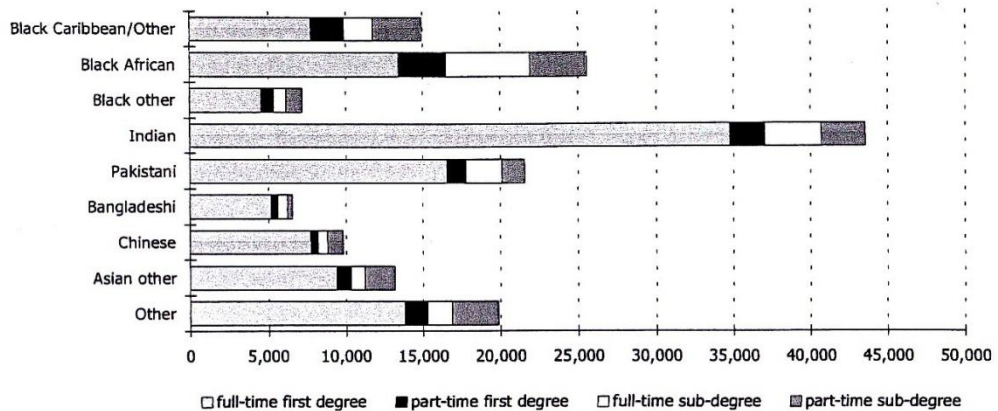


Note: For reasons of scale, White students are not shown. Their numbers are: 520,000 full-time degree, 59,000 part-time degree, 65,000 full-time sub-degree and 166,000 part-time sub-degree.

*Source: HESA, 2001*

**Chart 5** [104]

### White and minority ethnic undergraduate students, by level and mode, in each ethnic group, England HEIs, excluding OU (percentages of total known ethnicity)

| Ethnic group | First degree | | Sub-degree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time | Part-time |
| White | 82.1 | 82.3 | 78.3 | 90.0 |
| All minority ethnic groups | 17.9 | 17.7 | 21.7 | 10.0 |
| Black Caribbean/Other | 1.2 | 3.0 | 2.3 | 1.7 |
| Black African | 2.1 | 4.3 | 6.6 | 2.0 |
| Black Other | 0.7 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 0.6 |
| Indian | 5.5 | 3.1 | 4.5 | 1.5 |
| Pakistani | 2.6 | 1.7 | 2.8 | 0.8 |
| Bangladeshi | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.2 |
| Chinese | 1.2 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.5 |
| Asian Other | 1.5 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Other | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 1.6 |
| *Total known ethnicity (N)* | *632,277* | *71,193* | *82,323* | *184,150* |
| *% with known ethnicity* | *95.3* | *89.3* | *92.6* | *84.0* |
| *Total all (N)* | *663,428* | *79,676* | *88,825* | *219,142* |

*Source: HESA,2001*

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[103] Helen Connor, Claire Tyers, Sara Davis, Nii Djan Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students in Higher Education: Interim Report* (Nottingham: The Institute for Employment Studies, 2003), accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.ligali.org/pdf/minority_ethnic_students_in_higher_education_rr448.pdf.
[104] Helen Connor, Claire Tyers, Sara Davis, Nii Djan Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students in Higher Education: Interim Report* (Nottingham: The Institute for Employment Studies, 2003), accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.ligali.org/pdf/minority_ethnic_students_in_higher_education_rr448.pdf.

For most Asian groups the percentages in degree study are higher in full-time than in part-time study (chart 4). Indians are clearly the dominant minority ethnic group (almost one in three of the minority ethnic total) and Bangladeshis have low percentages in all four levels (less than 1 %).[105]

There are also differences in subject subdivision within the minority ethnic groups. HESA in 2001 revealed that on first degree courses they are more likely to study medicine (dentistry) and computer science (35 % and 38 %), law (31 %), business and admin studies (24 %), mathematical science (22 %) and engineering/technology (21 %). They less likely study veterinary science or agriculture (less than five per cent), education or humanities (both six per cent), physical sciences or creative arts/design (under ten per cent both). Asian groups are better represented (Indians rather than Black students, especially Black Caribbean are poorly represented) in subjects which are most popular in overall – in medicine and dentistry Indian with Pakistani and Asian Other form over two-thirds of all the minority ethnic degree students in HEIs. In computer science Indians make 15 %, Pakistanis 7,5 %. In law, Indians, Pakistanis and Black Africans are each between five to eight per cent of the total. Indians are also the dominant minority ethnic group in business/admin studies (8 %). Black groups tend to be much better represented in "subjects allied to medicine." There are large numbers in nursing qualifications at sub-degree level. Concerning sub-degree programmes in computer science the largest groups participated are Indian (9 %), Pakistani (7 %), and Black African (4 %). Black groups are on a whole better represented than Asian groups in social, economic and political sciences.[106]

Another feature of minority ethnic groups in HE is the type of institution they study in. In aggregate they are attending mainly new universities in London. The majority of HE institutions have a low minority ethnic student population (generally under 10 %). There are three most commonly used categories within the HE system: new universities (or post-1992), old universities (pre-1992), and HE colleges (chart 5). The highest percentage of minority students attends new universities (compared to the old universities – almost fourteen per cent). The lowest number appears at HE colleges (9 %), and the Open University (5 %).[107]

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[105]see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 13.
[106] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 14-16.
[107] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 17.

Chart 6 [108]

**Minority ethnic and White undergraduate students in English institutions including the Open University, and Level 4+ students at FE colleges 2000/01 (percentages of total at each type of institution)**

| Ethnic group | OU | Old University | New University | HE Colleges | All HEIs/OU | FE Colleges |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White | 95.3 | 86.1 | 78.9 | 91.4 | 84.4 | 88.4 |
| All minority ethnic | 4.7 | 13.9 | 21.1 | 8.6 | 15.6 | 11.6 |
| Black Caribbean | 0.5 | 0.7 | 2.3 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| Black African | 0.6 | 1.5 | 3.9 | 1.2 | 2.5 | 1.4 |
| Black Other | 1.1 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.6 |
| Indian | 0.3 | 4.1 | 5.5 | 1.8 | 4.1 | 2.3 |
| Pakistani | 0.2 | 1.8 | 2.9 | 0.9 | 2.0 | 1.7 |
| Bangladeshi | 0.1 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| Chinese | 0.2 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| Asian Other | 1.1 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 1.1 |
| Other | 0.6 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 1.7 |
| N (known ethnicity) | 97,334 | 379,036 | 467,631 | 12,3276 | 1,067,277 | 130,221 |

*Source: HESA,2001; ISR (LSC), 2000/01*

## 5.7. Geographical distribution of minority ethnic students

Undergraduate ethnic minority students are clustered in large cities, especially in London (Greater London – 49 %). In all other regions the minority ethnic percentage is not that high. For instance, South West has 2,3 %, Northern England 2,0 % and East England 0,9 %.[109]

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[108] Helen Connor, Claire Tyers, Sara Davis, Nii Djan Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students in Higher Education: Interim Report* (Nottingham: The Institute for Employment Studies, 2003), accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.ligali.org/pdf/minority_ethnic_students_in_higher_education_rr448.pdf.
[109] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 18.

**Chart 7 – Regional distribution of minority ethnic and all undergraduate students, as percentages of totals at English HE Is (excluding OU), 2000/01.**[110]

| Region | Minority ethnic | All (known ethnicity) |
|---|---|---|
| Gtr London | 48.8 | 19.3 |
| West Midlands | 11.4 | 10.1 |
| South East | 12.1 | 17.8 |
| North West | 8.2 | 13.7 |
| Yorks and H'side | 7.1 | 13.0 |
| East Midlands | 7.2 | 8.7 |
| South West | 2.3 | 17.8 |
| Northern | 2.0 | 6.2 |
| East Anglia | 0.9 | 2.6 |
| *England total* | *162,092* | *807,851* |

The preceding chart mirrors the regional concentrations of minority ethnic groups in England and, analogically, the lowest percentages shows regions where there is a small minority ethnic population. The South East and South West are more cosmopolitan regions. It is obvious that the most concentrated are minority ethnic students in London (at new universities they make over 60 per cent of the full-time undergraduate population at these universities).[111] Almost half of English minority ethnic students are studying in Greater London. They are also more concentrated at new universities in London (over 60 per cent of the full-time undergraduate population at these universities). Black groups, Black African in particular, and also Bangladeshis are more likely to study in London than Indians and Pakistanis. One but not the only reason for the accumulation of ethnic minority students in London is that they are more likely to stay closer to home. They chose it also because of their choice of future job or career outcomes. The number of ethnic minority students in London corresponds to the significant portion of ethnic minority population in London.[112]

Mentioning prior education, there are also differences between minority ethnic backgrounds and White students. With A-levels, Scottish Highers or GNVQs (in combination) as their highest qualification entered the English HEIs the vast majority.

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[110] Helen Connor, Claire Tyers, Sara Davis, Nii Djan Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students in Higher Education: Interim Report* (Nottingham: The Institute for Employment Studies, 2003), accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.ligali.org/pdf/minority_ethnic_students_in_higher_education_rr448.pdf.

[111] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 19-20.

[112] see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 18-20.

Black students much more likely enter degree study with Access course qualifications or with HND (Higher National Diploma)/ HNC (Higher National Certificate), GCSE qualifications.[113]

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[113]see Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey, *Minority Ethnic Students*, 25.

## 6. Sex and underachievement

### 6.1 Underachievement of boys and young men

Now I turn to look at another issue concerning the underachievement of British students-the role of sex and its influence on school performance. Google lists over 258,000 website results for "underachievement of boys." It seems that it represents a rich issue to write about.

During 1970's and 1980's there has been a concern about career aspirations and subject choices of girls because the curriculum disadvantaged girls. There were aims to attract more girls into a science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In 1990's the attention concerning underachievement and educational policy shifted from girls to boys. The underachievement debate was further defined in 1998 when the term "laddish" was used to describe the behaviour of boys in schools.[114] This debate has lasted in the UK for almost 15 years. According to Moreau the major contribution to underperformance of boys is a strong feminization of teachers and school values. Feminisation of schools is assumed to bring down boys' educational performance as well as their sense of masculinity.[115] Boys from one parent families are in danger of losing male role models.[116] It is assumed that children feel freer with teachers of the same gender and, consequently, boys are achieving better when taught by men teachers.[117] Nevertheless, relatively little is known about the influence of a gender of a teacher on boys' levels of academic motivation and achievement. According to Carrington et al. the gender of the teacher is largely irrelevant.[118]

Male underachievement can be explained in several ways. We can find natural-born differences between the two sexes. Boys are more likely to suffer from oxygen starvation at birth, they have poorer verbal explanation skills, they mature later than girls, their parents talk to them less in comparison with daughters, they have poorer verbal reasoning skills etc. Another explanation of the poor performance of young men in British schools

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[114] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 62.
[115] see Moreau, "The societal construction of 'boys' underachievement'," 165.
[116] see Moreau, "The societal construction of 'boys' underachievement'," 163.
[117] see Carrington, Francis, Hutchins, Skelton, Read, and Hall, "Does the gender of the teacher really matter," 398.
[118] see Carrington, Francis, Hutchins, Skelton, Read, and Hall, "Does the gender of the teacher really matter," 411.

can be seen in the replacement of the man with female bread-winner in the post-war rapid growth of heavy industry. It has led to a change in a gender regime.[119]

Another influence on boys in school is their so-called peer group. They are afraid to be called a girl if they show any extra activity or more intelligence than others during a lesson. Naturally, they do not want to be rejected from the peer group. In the case of male underachievement, a number of strategies have emerged. Nevertheless, whatever strategy is used, it should not reinforce boys to create an anti-school ethos. This concern should not be treated as the reverse of the educational success of girls in 1970s and 1980s.[120]

In 1996 Ofsted published *The Gender divide* which highlighted the gap between performances of girls and boys.[121] This publication was followed by a number of DfES and Ofsted documents such as looking at the attainment of black Caribbean boys.[122]

Smith points out, that the manner in which genders perceive and answer questions is different. Boys do it in isolation, girls more in context. Girls also tend to express themselves in a more thoughtful way than boys – this represents an advantage for them in subjects like English and humanities but it does not help them in science and maths. Types of questions are also perceived differently – boys prefer multiple-choice styled responses in general.[123] The different behaviour and learning of boys and girls has documentation. Boys are more reluctant and need more attention of teachers while girls are portrayed as being "ideal students" and need less attention. Boys like to have roles of jokers and risk-takers in the class. Consequently, they are often the focus of classroom activity. This behaviour has a destructive effect on their achievement. Another assumption suppose that for many teachers and pupils is such behaviour a relief, because is quite delightful, not rude or vulgar and, as a result, it has no disturbing impact on the rest of the class or on the teachers. [124]

There is an assumption that British Curriculum Assessment is gender-neutral and that boys and girls should achieve the same levels in school examinations. However, we can raise a question: is it realistic that the educational system should remain gender-neutral if gender characteristics are stimulated by social conditions, reinforced by schools or determined by the structure and differences of the brain? As we have already mentioned above, there is a

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[119] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 63-64.
[120] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 64.
[121] see Lloyd, *Boy's Underachievement in Schools*, 17.
[122] see Lloyd, *Boy's Underachievement in Schools*, 18.
[123] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement*, 65.
[124] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement*, 66-67.

distinction in the performance of boys and girls in English and language examinations.[125] There is a large-scale international survey called PISA, which stands for an international study. It began in the year 2000 and it aims to evaluate education system worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year old students in participating countries.[126] In 2001 it showed, girls are keener readers. Favourite genres of boys are action and fiction but they are required to read non-fiction as well. This can leave them disadvantaged. All in all, there is a little correspondence between achievement in English and success in later life.[127] Lloyd states that the underachievement of boys cannot be viewed just within the school environment. Changes in the workplace have raised concerns about this issue with an aspect to the decline of industry and manufacturing. This decline caused that young women were more in demand (service industries). [128]

**Chart 8 – GCSE achievements according to gender in England (1996-2003) (DfES)[129]**

| Year | 5+ A* -C grade (%) | | | English (%) | | |
|------|------|-------|------------|------|-------|------------|
|      | Boys | Girls | Differrence | Boys | Girls | Difference |
| 2003 | 48 | 58 | 10 | 52 | 68 | 16 |
| 2002 | 46 | 57 | 11 | 52 | 67 | 15 |
| 2001 | 45 | 55 | 10 | 51 | 66 | 15 |
| 2000 | 44 | 55 | 11 | 51 | 66 | 15 |
| 1999 | 43 | 53 | 10 | 50 | 66 | 16 |
| 1998 | 41 | 51 | 10 | 48 | 64 | 16 |
| 1997 | 40 | 50 | 10 | 46 | 63 | 17 |
| 1996 | 40 | 49 | 9 | 47 | 64 | 17 |

Smith states that underachieving boys are one of the most disturbing problems facing the system of the education.[130] She also declares that boys have failed to perform at the same rates as girls in recent decades and many of them leave school with poorer academic qualifications than girls. In 1996 the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) published

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[125] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 66.
[126] "What PISA is," OECD Programme for International Student Assessment, accessed March 11, 2012, http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_32252351_32235907_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.
[127] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 66.
[128] see Lloyd, *Boy's Underachievement in Schools*, 24.
[129] Smith, Emma. *Analyzing underachievement in schools.* King's Lynn: Biddles Ltd, 2005. Accessed March 9, 2012, http://books.google.cz/books?id=bBSqBnVUqw4C&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.
[130] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 61.

analysis of an assessment across England and Wales and the results were similar to those in the chart number 8 with respect to the number of 5+ A* -C grades. The chart number 8 shows that girls were more successful than boys during the years 1996-2003. The EOC suggests that the gap will become greater. [131]

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[131] see Smith, *Analyzing Underachievement,* 63.

## 7. Conclusion

The bachelor thesis concentrated on underachieving students and pupils of the United Kingdom. In the very first mini chapter a possible interpretations of the term underachievement was described. Definitions of this term were shown to get closer to the issue and to get a link with British schooling. The second chapter depicted the main points in the British school history from the middle ages. It is assumed, that the majority of girls and boys in the sixth and later centuries were underachieving because the education in secular schools was provided mostly for working class children who represented a minority. At the end of the seventeenth century a society which promoted Christian knowledge and financed many schools was found. This society was later replaced with the Sunday schools. All in all, the choice of type of school or educational organization was more dependent on financial possibilities of families than these days. Common day schools provided elementary education for children who were able to pay the fees. The main stress was placed on religion and industrial occupations. First attempts to establish a national system of state-funded elementary schools came in the second half of the nineteenth century. The next important steps made by local government for state education was the Balfour Act in 1920 and the Educational Act passed in 1944 which provided the secondary education free and compulsory to all to the age fifteen. The Ministry of Education created Local education authorities which were responsible for running of local schooling. The situation today is that most state schools are controlled by LEAs and faith schools are controlled by religious groups and the education in the UK is compulsory and free for all children between the ages of five and sixteen. In the independent sector (fee-paying) are involved 6 % of all British children from the ages of four to eighteen. The amount of money varies and can reach several thousand pounds a year.

The following part of my thesis was dedicated to pupils with special educational needs who represent 7 % of all British pupils. LEAs and other organizations provide parental support for parents with SEN children. To get closer to the problematic of educating child with special education needs, a brief general description of SEN children and educational procedures are included. In the educational act from 1970 there is a classification into two groups: subnormal and severely subnormal. The first group requires special education, training and medical care. The latter group is unable to function independently and requires custodial services. Schools in the UK have different opportunities of accessibility for

children with special educational needs. Schools have to guarantee disabled the accessibility to their classes, they should offer help in all areas. If the pupils are not able to go to schools, LEAs are responsible to continue their education.

Another crucial group of underachievers in Great Britain consists of ethnic minority students. We can differentiate following groups of ethnicity in the UK: white (English 83.6 %, Scottish 8.6 %, Welsh 4.9 %, Northern Irish 2.9 %) 92.1 %, black 2 %, Indian 1.8 %, Pakistani 1.3 %, mixed 1.2 %, other 1.6 % (2001 census). The fundamental role in defining underachievement plays the statistical analysis and the most widely used method identifying underachiever is called the "regression method." Nearly one in eight students comes from an ethnic minority community and at about 40 % of them attends school in London. In all other regions the minority ethnic percentage is not that high. For instance, South West has 2,3 %, Northern England 2,0 % and East Anglia 0,9 %.

During 1980's and 1990's there was a lack of LEAs data on the performance of minority ethnic groups of students. In 1997 the Labour government published a white paper called "Excellence in Schools" which indicated that the underperforming gap is going to change. Another document called "Aiming High" was published in 2003. It put a strong emphasis on leadership and effective teaching and learning. Compared with all other ethnic groups, black pupils have the worst attainments and it was also discovered that one third of the pupils in London are black and live in the very poor parts of the capital. However, in 2010 there was a research suggesting that white British children have worse results in comparison to their ethnic minority companions. It showed that ethnic minority pupils progressed faster throughout compulsory schooling as they gradually improved the language.

The debate about underachievement lasts from the 1960's. A racist murder of Stephen Lawrence 1993 caused a creation of four specific recommendations for education: the National Curriculum should include themes of diversity and prevention of racism, schools and LEAs should think of strategies to cope with racism in schools, these strategies have to be reviewed by Ofsted and the last recommendation was that community and local initiatives should promote cultural diversity and prevent racism. It was also investigated that many policies of schools and LEAs are not as effective as they should be in coping with the underachievement of minority ethnic pupils.

Ethnic minorities in the UK universities are better represented in the United Kingdom than in general population. The best performing for recruitment of ethnic minority students were London universities. The smallest amount of ethnic minority students was found out

in Oxford and Cambridge. In 1992 the Higher Educational Act was passed and it established an integrated higher education system throughout the UK. The largest ethnic minority group participating in higher undergraduate education is Indian. The smallest are Chinese, Black Other and Bangladeshi. Minority ethnic groups tend to have a younger age profile than White people in England. Ethnic minority students are on first degree courses more likely to study medicine, computer science, law, business and admin studies, mathematical science and engineering/technology. They less likely study veterinary science or agriculture, education or humanities, physical sciences or creative arts/design.

The last view of the underachievement was dedicated to male underachievement in my paper. Natural differences between the two sexes can be found. Boys are more likely to suffer from oxygen starvation at birth, they have poorer verbal explanation skills, they mature later than girls, their parents talk to them less in comparison with daughters etc. However, the next explanation suggests that the poor performance of young men in British schools can be seen in the replacement of the man with female bread-winner in the post-war rapid growth of heavy industry. It has led to a change in a gender regime. Another influence on boys in school is their so-called peer group. They are afraid to be called a girl if they show any extra activity or more intelligence than others during a lesson. Underachieving boys are one of the most disturbing problems facing the system of the education.

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to explore who is the underachiever within the educational system of the United Kingdom, and what solutions are provided by government for them, how they are seen through eyes of modern society. I found out that the major groups of underachieving children are pupils form minority backgrounds, children with special educational needs and males to a certain level. I highlighted the main features of each group and attitudes of the state towards them. In the case of SEN children, their classification, accessibility to education and governmental support are picked up. Minority ethnic groups are viewed mainly from the point of higher education. I explore their attainments, choice of their field of study, location of study etc. The very last group of underachievers is represented by males in comparison to female classmates, but this issue is rather of a global character. Underachievement of ethnic minorities is not connected just with the intelligence and activity of pupils and students but a significant role play racist behaviour of other members of society which may affect their performance at schools.

## 8. Shrnutí

Bakalářská práce se týká podprůměrných žáků ve Velké Británii. V první kapitole jsou popsány možné interpretace termínu „podprůměrnost", aby mohlo být na problematiku britského vzdělávání nahlíženo více komplexně. Druhá kapitola obsahuje shrnutí historie britského školství od dob středověku, kdy vzdělání bylo výsadou dětí vysoce postavených rodičů. Na konci sedmnáctého století byla většina škol financována církví. V období druhé poloviny osmnáctého století bylo vzdělávání do větší míry otázkou finančních možností rodin. Školy vzdělávaly pouze ty děti, které byly schopné zaplatit školné. Značný důraz byl kladen na výuku víry a průmyslových zaměstnání. První pokusy o sestavení systému státního financování základních škol se uskutečnily ve druhé polovině devatenáctého století. Mezi další významné vládní kroky patří v oblasti státně-financovaného vzdělávání Balfour Act z roku 1920 a Educational Act schválený roku 1944. Tyto zákony bezvýhradně ustanovily povinné a bezplatné středoškolské vzdělání. Ministerstvo školství zavedlo úřady místní správy v oblasti školství, které byly zodpovědné za lokální průběh vzdělávání. Situace ve školách je dnes ve většině případů kontrolována těmito úřady. Soukromé školy vzdělávají šest procent dětí ve věku od čtyř do osmnácti let. Školné se liší, může činit až několik tisíc liber ročně.

Následující část mojí práce se zaměřuje na žáky se speciálními potřebami, kteří představují sedm procent všech studentů Velké Británie. Místní úřady pro vzdělávání a další organizace podporují rodiče dětí se speciálními potřebami. Aby byla problematika vzdělávání dětí se speciálními potřebami více zřejmá, jsou v kapitole zahrnuty jak historické tak modernější metody užívané ve školách při práci s těmito dětmi. Zákon o vzdělávání z roku 1970 přivádí klasifikaci na podprůměrné a těžce podprůměrné. Pro první skupinu je nezbytné speciální vzdělávání, trénink a lékařská péče. Děti s těžkou podprůměrností nejsou schopné samostatné existence a vyžadují stálou péči. Školy ve Velké Británii disponují odlišnými možnostmi pro výuku dětí se speciálními potřebami. Jejich povinností je nejen zajištění možnosti bezbariérového přístupu dětí do učeben, ale i pomoc ve všech ostatních oblastech. Pokud žáci se speciálními potřebami nemohou do školy chodit, místní úřad pro vzdělávání je zavázán zajistit pokračování studia.

Další zmíněnou skupinu podprůměrných žáků tvoří děti z menšinových etnických skupin. Ve Velké Británii nacházíme tyto etnické skupiny: bíla (Angličané 83.6 %, Skotové 8.6 %, Velšané 4.9 %, Severní Irové 2.9 %) 92.1 %, africká 2 %, Indická 1.8 %, Pákistánská 1.3

%, smíšená 1.2 %, další 1.6 % (Census 2001). Klíčovou rolí pro definování podprůměrnosti je statistická analýza a nejvíce užívanou metodou pro určování podprůměrných žáků je regresivní metoda.

Téměř jeden z osmi studentů ve Velké Británii je součástí minoritní etnické skupiny a 40 % z nich studuje v Londýně. Během osmdesátých a devadesátých let byl zaznamenán nedostatek dat o výsledcích vzdělávání minoritních etnických skupin. V roce 1997 labouristická strana vydala nařízení zvané „Excelentní výsledky ve školách", které předznamenalo, že podprůměrnost by se měla přestat prohlubovat a zlepšovat se. Další dokument zvaný „Míříme vysoko" byl vydán roku 2003. Zdůrazňoval iniciativnost a vůdcovské schopnosti učitelů, které by vedly k lepší efektivitě výuky. Ve srovnání všech etnických minorit prokazatelně nejhorší výsledky mají afričtí studenti. Třetina z nich žije v Londýně v těch nejchudších oblastech. Nicméně v roce 2010 výzkum poukázal na to, že studenti z etnických skupin předčili v dosažených výsledcích neminoritní britské studenty. U menšinových studentů byl zaznamenán progresivnější vývoj díky zlepšování úrovně angličtiny.

Problematika podprůměrnosti se stala předmětem diskusí již v šedesátých letech minulého století. Rasistická vražda Stephena Lawrence z roku 1993 ještě více poukázala na rasovou otázku a zapříčinila vznik čtyř základních tezí pro vzdělávání: učební osnovy by měly zahrnovat témata týkající se rasové různorodosti a prevence rasismu, místní úřady pro vzdělávání a školy samotné by měly přivést do praxe účinné strategie, s jejichž pomocí bude rasismus zvládán, tyto strategie musí být revidovány Úřadem pro vzdělávací normy (Ofsted) a společnost společně s místními úřady jsou povinny bránit rasistickému bujení v nejvyšší možné míře.

Studenti z etnických skupin jsou v Británii zastoupeni ve větším počtu, než udávají data z dalších států. Největší procento minoritních studentů studuje v Londýně (40%). V ostatních částech země není zastoupení tak početné: jihozápad - 2,3 %, severní Anglie 2,0 % a východní Anglie 0,9 %. Nejnižší počet je zaznamenán v Oxfordu a Cambridge. Roku 1992 byl schválen zákon o vyšším vzdělávání, který s sebou přinesl vznik státního integrovaného vysokoškolského systému. Nejvíce studentů z řad minoritních etnických skupin na všech britských vysokých školách představuje indická menšina. Čínská, bangladéšská a africká ostatní etnika mají zastoupení nejnižší. Věkový profil studentů z etnických minorit je nižší než u ostatních.

V rámci preferovaných studijních oborů volí menšinoví studenti především medicínu, informační a počítačové technologie, právo, obchodní a administrativní studia, matematiku

a technické inženýrství. Méně preferují studium veterinárního lékařství, zemědělství, pedagogiky, humanitní a sportovní studia, umění nebo design.

Otázka vztahu pohlaví a studijních výsledků zaujímá místo v poslední kapitole práce. Obě pohlaví jsou determinována biologickými rozdíly, které vedou k odlišnostem v dosahovaných školních výsledcích dětí. Chlapci jsou při porodu náchylnější k nedostatku kyslíku, nejsou tak výřeční jako dívky, dospívají později ve srovnání s dívkami, rodiče vedou více rozhovorů s dcerami než se syny a další. Nabízí se však jiná možná vysvětlení. Jedno z nich může představovat náhrada mužského živitele rodiny ženskou živitelkou v souvislosti s rozvojem poválečného průmyslu v Británii. Další vliv na chlapce školního věku může mít jejich postavení ve skupině vrstevníků. Mají obavy, že pokud projeví během vyučování svůj intelekt nebo jinou mimořádnou aktivitu, budou vystaveni posměchu ze strany spolužáků kvůli zženštilému chování.

Cílem bakalářské práce bylo osvětlit problematiku žáků a studentů s podprůměrnými výsledky ve školství Velké Británie. Tato otázka se týká především dvou skupin – dětí se speciálními potřebami a minoritních etnických skupin. Ohledně první z nich bylo uvedeno, kterých dětí se problém týká. Dále zmiňuji druhy a typy postižení a s ním spojené obtíže se studiem a způsoby, prostřednictvím kterých vláda zajišťuje vzdělávání těchto dětí. Na podprůměrnost etnických minorit nahlížím především z hlediska vyššího vzdělávání, zkoumám zastoupení jednotlivých etnik, jejich úspěšnost, výběr oboru, lokalitu studia a další. Závěrem práce přivádím problém podprůměrnosti v závislosti na pohlaví, který je spíše globálního charakteru, nicméně v rámci britského školství rovněž představuje výrazný problém. Z práce vyplývá, že podprůměrnost je těžko uchopitelný a vysvětlitelný problém, na jehož definici není snadné se shodnout. U minoritních etnických skupin nemusí být podprůměrné výsledky spojovány pouze s inteligencí a schopnostmi studentů, na rozdíl od dětí se speciálními potřebami, ale rasová nesnášenlivost ze strany společnosti nemalou měrou přispívá k jejich situaci.

## Annotation

Bachelor thesis deals with underachieving pupils in Great Britain. The first part describes possible explanations of the term "underachievement". The next segment is dedicated to the history of British schooling, types of schools, and the role of the state in education. Following part concentrates on children with special educational needs within the system of British schooling. The description of disabled children, early and modern educational procedures are included as well. The last part of this chapter deals with school accessibility for disabled in the United Kingdom. Underachievement of ethnic minorities forms the next chapter. Possible explanations of their low performance are being explored. Special attention is given to the participation of ethnic minority groups in higher education. In the final part the relation of sex and underachievement is being explored.

**Key words:**

Underachievement, Ethnicity, Minor ethnicity, Special educational needs, Educational system, Higher education, Further education, Primary schools, Secondary schools, Sex, racism, LEAs

## Anotace

Tématem bakalářské práce je podprůměrnost žáků ve Velké Británii. První kapitola se zabývá výkladem samotného termínu „podprůměrnost." Následující část popisuje historii britského školství, typy škol a úlohu státu ve vzdělávání. Další část je zaměřena na děti se speciálními studijními potřebami v rámci systému britského školství. Jsou uvedeny charakteristiky typů dětí se speciálními studijními potřebami i vzdělávací metody (rané i moderní). Poslední pasáž kapitoly pojednává o dostupnosti britských škol pro zdravotně postižené. V následující kapitole je rozebírána podprůměrnost etnických minorit, především její možná vysvětlení. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována jejich studiu na vysokých školách. Problematikou vztahu pohlaví a podprůměrných školních výsledků je práce zakončena.

**Klíčová slova:**

Podprůměrnost, Etnicita, Minoritní etnicita, Speciální studijní potřeby, Školství, Vyšší vzdělání, Další vzdělávání, Základní školy, Střední školy, Pohlaví, Rasismus, Místní úřady pro vzdělávání

## List of pictures and charts

## List of attachments

## List of mentioned abbreviations:

ACE  - Advisory Centre for Education

AS - Advanced Subsidiary

DfE – Department for Education

DSAs - Disabled Students' Allowances

EOC- Education Opportunities Commission

ESRC – The Economic and Social Research Council

FECs –Further Education Colleges

GDP – Gross domestic product

GCE A-level - General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level

GCSE - General Certificate of Secondary Education

GNVQs - General National Vocational Qualifications

HE – Higher Education

HEFCE - Higher Education Funding Council for England

HESA – Higher Education Statistics Agency

HEIs - Higher Education Institutions

HNCs - Higher National Certificates

HND – Higher National Diploma

IALS – International Adult Literacy Survey

IEP - Individual Education Plan

IPSEA - Independent Parental Special Education Advice

IPSs - Independent Parental Supporters

ISR – Individualised Student Record

LEAs – Local Educational Authorities

LSDA – Learning and Skills Development Agency

LSE – London School of Economics

NPPN - National Parent Partnership Network

NVQs - National Vocational Qualifications

NUT – National Union of Teachers

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

Ofsted - Office for Standards in Education

OU – Open University

PLASC- Pupil Level Annual School Census

PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment

RADA - Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts

SATs - Standard Assessment Tests

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SENCO - SEN coordinator

SENDIST - Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

SPCK - Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

UCAS - Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

WEA - Worker's Educational Association

YCS – Youth Cohort Study

**Table 1-** Terminology and Degrees of Retardation According to Several Definitions of Mental Retardation[132]

| Proponents | Generic term | Intelligence Quotients |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | 95 | 90 | 85 | 80 | 75 | 70 | 65 | 60 | 55 | 50 | 45 | 40 | 35 | 30 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| Amer. Assoc. for·the Study of the Fëeble-minded* | feeble-minded |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | moron |  |  | imbecile |  |  |  |  |  | idiot |  |  |  |
| Tredgold & Soddy (Great Britain) | mental deficiency |  |  |  |  |  |  | high grade; feeble-minded |  |  | middle grade; imbecile |  |  |  |  |  |  | low grade; idiot |  |  |  |
| Amer. Assoc. on Mental Deficiency (Heber 1961) | mental retardation (adaptive behavior not included) |  |  |  |  | borderline mentally retarded |  | mild |  |  | moderate |  |  | severe |  |  | profound |  |  |  |  |
| Amer. Assoc. on Mental Deficiency (Grossman 1973) | mental retardation (adaptive behavior not included) |  |  |  |  |  |  | mild |  |  | moderate |  |  | severe |  |  | profound |  |  |  |  |
| World Health Organization | mental subnormality |  |  |  |  |  |  | mild |  |  | moderate |  |  |  |  |  | severe |  |  |  |  |
| Amer. Psychiatric Assoc. | mental deficiency |  |  |  |  | mild or slightly mild |  | moderate |  |  | severe |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wechsler (1949) (WISC) | mental deficiency |  | dull normal |  |  | border-line |  | mental defective |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Terman & Merrill (1960) (Stanford-Binet) | mental deficiency |  |  |  |  | border-line defective |  | mental defective |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Amer. Edu-cators (cited by Smith 1971) | mentally retarded or mentally handicapped |  | dull normal |  |  |  |  | educable |  |  | trainable |  |  |  |  |  | custodial, dependent, or low grade |  |  |  |  |

\* Note that the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-minded was formerly the Association of Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiotic and Feeble-minded Persons and is currently the American Association on Mental Deficiency.

From J. Kauffman and J. Payne, *Mental Retardation: Introduction and Personal Perspectives.* Reprinted by permission of the Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company. Copyright 1975.

[132] MacMillan, *Mental Retardation in School and Society*, 46.

**Table 2 -** Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (Percentages), Census 2011[133]

| Nationality | Measure | City of London | London | England |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All persons (count)** | count | 11 500 | 7 753 600 | 51 809 700 |
| **White** | % | 82,3 | 69,7 | 87,5 |
| **White: British** | % | 59,8 | 59,5 | 82,8 |
| **White: Irish** | % | 2 | 2,2 | 1,1 |
| **White: Other persons** | % | 20,5 | 8 | 3,6 |
| **Mixed** | % | 2 | 3,5 | 1,9 |
| **Mixed: White and Black Caribbean** | % | 0,5 | 1 | 0,6 |
| **Mixed: White and Black African** | % | 0,3 | 0,5 | 0,2 |
| **Mixed: White and Asian** | % | 0,6 | 1 | 0,6 |
| **Mixed: Other Mixed** | % | 0,6 | 1 | 0,5 |
| **Asian or Asian British** | % | 8,4 | 13,2 | 6 |
| **Asian or Asian British: Indian** | % | 4,3 | 6,2 | 2,7 |
| **Asian or Asian British: Pakistani** | % | 0,7 | 2,8 | 1,9 |
| **Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi** | % | 2,6 | 2,2 | 0,7 |
| **Asian or Asian British: Other Asian** | % | 0,8 | 2 | 0,7 |
| **Black or Black British** | % | 3,7 | 10,1 | 2,9 |
| **Black or Black British: Caribbean** | % | 1,1 | 4 | 1,2 |
| **Black or Black British: African** | % | 2,2 | 5,3 | 1,5 |
| **Black or Black British: Other Black** | % | 0,4 | 0,8 | 0,2 |
| **Chinese or Other Ethnic Group** | % | 3,5 | 3,5 | 1,6 |
| **Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese** | % | 1,1 | 1,8 | 0,8 |
| **Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other Ethnic Group** | % | 2,4 | 1,7 | 0,8 |

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[133] "Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (Percentages)," Office for National Statistics, accessed March 8,2012,
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do;jsessionid=hhYPPYhY6BpR
Y6yhKRWnyWYKhKF1vCVJLbm4RJm3j72TLdmyByk3!1519500766!1331206904254?adminCompAndTi
meId=24456%3A198&a=7&b=276743&c=london&d=13&r=1&e=13&f=24451&o=254&g=325264&i=100
1x1003x1004x1005&l=1812&m=0&s=1331206904254&enc=1&nsjs=true&nsck=true&nssvg=false&nswid
=1280.

"Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, is the highroad to pride, self-esteem, and personal satisfaction."

**Margaret Thatcher**

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