

### Inside school factors

**Becker's** views on labelling theory – can be both negative and positive – depending on the ethnic group.

**Gillborn** (*Race, Ethnicity and Education*) considers how teachers label Black learners in a negative way, referring to the 'myth of the Black challenge'.

**Mac an Ghail** says that African-Caribbean boys are seen as a threat, while Asian girls have more potential than African-Caribbean girls.

**Ethnocentric curriculum** focuses on White, European, middle-class cultures rather than having any association with ethnic minority groups.

**Institutional racism** is where policies and attitudes discriminate against ethnic minority groups (unintentionally).

**Wright** found that Asian girls received less attention from teachers, while African-Caribbean boys are more likely to be punished and sent out of class.

**Coard** argues that such factors may lead to low self-esteem, with Black students feeling inferior.

**Mirza** believes Black girls had positive attitudes and ambitions and even though they experienced discrimination, created strategies to counteract.

**Fuller** stated that African-Caribbean girls resisted negative labelling and worked hard to achieve.

**Mac an Ghail** discusses 'Black Sisters' (Connolly School) proud to be Black and female, rejecting any negative images with a certain amount of 'accommodation'.

### Outside school factors

**Language barrier** is a barrier for some Asian and African-Caribbean families upon arriving in the United Kingdom. However, the **Swann Report** found that language did not affect the progress of following generations.

**Driver and Ballard** found that Asian pupils whose first language was not English, did well in English – compared to some of their peers. Interactionists argue that it may not be language that is the barrier but dialects and accents that produce a negative perception by teachers.

**Family differences** mean the variation of family life amongst ethnic minority groups may have an influence on academic achievement.

**Driver and Ballard** found that Asian families are very close with parents who have high expectations of their children in education.

**Mac an Ghail** discovered that pupils from both African-Caribbean and Asian families saw their parents as their main source of inspiration.

#### However:

Some argue that the underachievement of African-Caribbean boys is connected to the high levels of single-parents and therefore they are lacking male role models.

**Pilkington** found that even though there were high levels of divorce amongst African-Caribbean families (and low levels amongst Asian families) – both groups had a higher level of students continuing their education post-16 compared to their White peers.

**Pilkington** also argued that economic factors such as material deprivation along with racism were as important as cultural reasons for the underachievement of some ethnic minority groups in education.

**Don't forget criticism – this is important for the exam!**

#### Also remember:

- ethnicity and class
- ethnicity and gender.

### Facts on ethnicity and academic achievement

#### Higher levels of achievement:

- Chinese, Indian and African Asian students have higher qualifications than their White counterparts.
- African-Caribbean girls achieve better grades than their White peers.
- More ethnic minority students continue their education post-16.



#### Lower levels of achievement:

- Bangladeshi and Pakistani girls were the least qualified along with African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys.
- Pakistani and African-Caribbean groups were less likely to enter university.
- African-Caribbean boys are more likely to be excluded from school or follow vocational courses and in lower streams.

