1.6 Ethnic Differences in Educational Achievement

AQA 7192 · about 55 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For questions worth 4 marks or more, write in full sentences. Spend about 55 minutes in total.

1 State one finding from research which suggests some schools treat minority-ethnic pupils as a problem group, and give a brief implication of that finding for achievement.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Identify and explain two internal school responses that research recommends to reduce ethnic differences in achievement, referring to UK school practice.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Identify and explain two ways in which pupils' identities and teacher perceptions, as Archer and others have analysed, can influence the achievement of minority-ethnic pupils in UK schools.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Give one short example of how external community factors can support the achievement of a particular minority-ethnic group in the UK, and state why this helps.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Discuss how far sociologists would agree that school factors are the main cause of ethnic differences in educational achievement in the UK.

(Total for Question 5 is 12 marks)

6 Define what sociologists mean by the term 'ethnocentric curriculum' in the context of UK schools.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

7 Describe one internal school process that sociologists argue can disadvantage minority-ethnic pupils, naming the process and how it affects pupils in a UK school setting.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

8 Item A: A small secondary school's recent internal monitoring data. In Year 11 mock exams, the school recorded average mock scores: White British pupils 62%, Pakistani pupils 54%, Black Caribbean pupils 48%. Observations by senior staff noted that lower-attaining groups were more often placed in lower sets for mathematics and English and that some teachers described behaviour as a barrier to learning for several Black Caribbean pupils.

Using Item A and your own knowledge, explain two ways the school's internal practices might have contributed to the patterns shown in the mock exam scores.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

9 Define what sociologists mean by 'institutional racism' in the context of a school or the wider education system in the UK.

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

10 Identify and explain one criticism that sociologists have made of explaining ethnic differences in achievement solely in terms of cultural deprivation.

(Total for Question 10 is 2 marks)

11 Explain two ways in which teacher expectations, as an internal school factor, can influence ethnic differences in pupil achievement in UK classrooms.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

Mark scheme · 1.6 Ethnic Differences in Educational Achievement

Question 1

states a relevant finding, e.g. studies have found higher rates of exclusion or disciplinary sanctions among some minority groups	**B1**
brief implication, e.g. exclusion or repeated punishments lead to missed lessons and lower attainment	**B1**

Answer: Research has found higher rates of exclusion and disciplinary sanctions among some minority-ethnic groups, which leads to missed lessons and disrupted learning and therefore lower attainment.

Question 2

identifies one response, e.g. staff training on cultural awareness and anti bias teaching	**B1**
explains how it helps, e.g. reduces stereotyping and improves teacher expectations and interactions	**B1**
identifies a second response, e.g. review of setting and assessment policies to ensure fairness	**B1**
explains how it helps, e.g. fairer placement and assessment can prevent minorities being confined to lower sets and improve outcomes	**B1**

Answer: One response is staff training on cultural awareness to reduce stereotyping and improve teacher expectations and interactions. A second is reviewing setting and assessment policies to ensure fairness so minority pupils are not confined to lower sets and have equal access to challenge and support.

Question 3

identifies one way, e.g. teachers stereotype pupils into identities such as the 'ideal pupil' or 'pathologised pupil'	**B1**
explains impact, e.g. stereotyping can lead to differential treatment, affecting opportunities and attainment	**B1**
identifies a second way, e.g. pupil responses to labels, such as rejecting school values or adopting compensatory identities	**B1**
explains impact, e.g. identities that conflict with school expectations can reduce engagement and performance	**B1**

Answer: One way is stereotyping into identities like the 'ideal pupil' or the 'pathologised pupil', which leads to differential treatment and unequal opportunities. A second is pupil responses to these labels, such as rejecting school values or forming identities that conflict with expectations, reducing engagement and attainment.

Question 4

gives an example, e.g. community-led after school tuition or mentoring programmes	**B1**
brief reason why, e.g. provides extra academic support, role models and homework help that boost attainment	**B1**

Answer: An example is community-led after school tuition and mentoring, which provides extra academic support, role models and homework help and so boosts attainment for pupils from that community.

Question 5

Level 1 Basic assertions about school factors or external factors with little development or supporting evidence.	**1-3**
Level 2 Some developed points on either school factors or external factors, with limited use of research and few alternative perspectives.	**4-6**
Level 3 Clear discussion including both school factors and external factors, supported by named research or theoretical perspectives, with some evaluation of their relative importance.	**7-9**
Level 4 A well-developed, balanced evaluation that argues a judgement, uses a range of sociological evidence and perspectives such as Gillborn on institutional racism, Archer on identity, and material deprivation explanations, and considers limitations of each view.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Arguments that school factors are main cause: teacher labelling leading to self fulfilling prophecy; setting and streaming concentrating minority pupils in lower sets; institutional racism in admissions, assessment and exclusions as Gillborn argues; ethnocentric curriculum marginalising minority identities; evidence of disproportionate exclusions or sanctions.
- Evidence and perspectives supporting external explanations: material deprivation and class overlap with ethnicity affecting resources and attendance; cultural capital differences affecting familiarity with school norms; family support and community contexts; statistical patterns where socioeconomic controls reduce ethnic gaps.
- Sociological research to use: Gillborn on institutional racism in assessment and policy, Archer on pupil identities and how schools construct ethnic minority pupils, Mirza on teacher racism and its effects, Sewell on cultural and peer influences on achievement for some groups, and evidence that controlling for social class reduces some ethnic gaps.
- Evaluation and synthesis: show how both sets of factors interact, not compete; for example, poverty can make pupils more likely to be placed in lower sets, while institutional bias can amplify disadvantages. Consider policy implications and the difficulty of isolating causes in complex systems. Conclude with a supported judgement on whether school factors are the main cause or one of several interacting causes, acknowledging the strength of structural external factors.

Question 6

identifies that an ethnocentric curriculum gives priority to the culture and history of one ethnic group, usually the dominant group (oe)	**B1**
development, e.g. it marginalises other cultures, languages or perspectives in what is taught	**B1**

Answer: An ethnocentric curriculum gives priority to the culture and history of the dominant ethnic group, marginalising other cultures, languages or perspectives in what is taught.

Question 7

identifies an internal process, e.g. teacher labelling, setting or streaming **B1**

describes how it operates, e.g. teachers form expectations about pupils based on ethnicity **B1**

development, e.g. negative labels can lead to lower expectations and lower teacher support, harming attainment **B1**

Answer: One internal process is teacher labelling, where teachers form expectations about pupils based on ethnicity; negative labels can lower expectations and reduce teacher support and encouragement, which in turn can harm pupils' attainment.

Question 8

identifies one internal practice linked to the item, e.g. setting and streaming placing lower-attaining groups into lower sets **B1**

explains how this could affect scores, e.g. lower sets may receive lower expectations, less challenging work and fewer opportunities, reducing attainment **B1**

identifies a second internal practice, e.g. negative teacher labelling of Black Caribbean pupils as having behaviour problems **B1**

explains how this could affect scores, e.g. labelling can lead to exclusion from lessons, reduced help and self-fulfilling low expectations, lowering mock exam performance **B1**

Answer: Placing lower-attaining groups into lower sets can mean less challenging work and lower expectations, which reduces learning and mock scores. Negative teacher labelling of some Black Caribbean pupils as having behaviour problems can lead to exclusion from lessons, less teacher support and lower pupil confidence, contributing to lower mock exam results.

Question 9

identifies that institutional racism refers to policies and practices within institutions that produce unequal outcomes for different ethnic groups **B1**

development, e.g. it may occur without individual prejudice, through standard procedures that disadvantage some groups **B1**

Answer: Institutional racism is where policies and practices within institutions produce unequal outcomes for ethnic groups, and it can operate without individual prejudice, through routine procedures that disadvantage some groups.

Question 10

identifies a criticism, e.g. it blames families and culture while ignoring structural factors like racism and poverty **B1**

brief development, e.g. this can lead to stereotyping and policy that does not address material inequalities or school discrimination **B1**

Answer: A criticism is cultural deprivation explanations blame families and culture while ignoring structural factors such as racism and poverty; this risks stereotyping communities and failing to address material inequality or discrimination in schools.

Question 11

identifies one way, e.g. low expectations lead to less challenging work set for some pupils **B1**

development, e.g. less challenge reduces progress and exam performance over time **B1**

identifies a second way, e.g. expectations shape teacher-pupil interactions, with more support and praise for those expected to succeed **B1**

development, e.g. differential interaction can increase confidence in some pupils and undermine it in others, affecting attainment **B1**

Answer: Low expectations can lead teachers to set less challenging work for some pupils, reducing progress and exam performance. Expectations also shape interactions, with more support and praise given to pupils seen as likely to succeed, boosting their confidence while others receive less support and lose confidence, affecting attainment.