

**Alright, innit?** Should children be banned from using slang in schools? [telegraph.co.uk/news](http://telegraph.co.uk/news)

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# The school that slung out slang

A SCHOOL has banned its pupils from using "street slang" as part of a strict behaviour policy which is transforming exam results, writes *Julie Henry*.

Pupils are not allowed to use the phrase "innit" or other examples of "playground patois" when talking to teachers. Formal language must be used at all times in communications with adults and pupils have been told that street slang should be "left at the school gates".

The measure, along with a strict uniform policy, is part of a tough stance on discipline at Manchester Academy, in the city's deprived Moss Side area, that has restored order. Since the school became an academy in 2003, exam results have improved from about 10 per cent of pupils achieving five good GCSEs to 33 per cent and the proportion who leave without a job or college course to go to is down from 26 to 6 per cent.

"Language is really important and we have to make sure pupils

## WHAT YOU CHATTIN' ABOUT?

LANGUAGE THAT IS 'JUST NOT ACADEMY'

- **Ballin'**: Doing well
- **Blood'**: Friend
- **Buggin'**: To act in a crazy or strange way
- **Cuss'**: Defame
- **Hulk out'**: To lose one's temper
- **Innit?**: Isn't it? Is it? You know? Oh, really?
- **Kickback'**: A get-together
- **Laters'**: Goodbye
- **Na'**: No
- **Phat'**: Stylish, desirable
- **Rank'**: Disgusting, horrible
- **Rep'**: Reputation
- **Slammin'**: Pleasing to the eye
- **Safe'**: That's all right
- **Trill'**: Someone who is considered to be well-respected
- **Wack'**: Weak, boring
- **What you chattin' about?'**: Shut up, you are talking rubbish
- **Word'**: I understand, really

realise that," said Kathy August, the head teacher.

"You can get five A\* to Cs in your exams but if you go to an interview and you can't shake hands, look someone in the eye and speak in the appropriate register, you are not going to get the job or place at university. It is hugely important. We have high expectations. It

makes me angry when I see... pamphlets on drug education or anti-gang material. They are appalling. The way they are written suggests that if you are black and from a particular postcode you will only understand the message if it is presented in a certain informal way, in a "street" form. It enforces the stereotype and ends up

glamorising what it is supposed to be preventing.

"There are 64 languages spoken at the school and 80 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds," she added.

"We realised very early on that children were coming into the community and picking up the lingo that young people use and that the intonation and patterns of speech of formal language were lacking."

She said that the message had been drummed into pupils that street slang was "just not academy".

Children are pulled up when using colloquialisms and told directly that it is unacceptable. "You have to be consistent. We make it clear in our tone of voice and with short imperatives that we are not happy. So it's not 'excuse me, do you mind not doing that, it's not very nice'. We say 'Stop. We don't do that. Thank you.'"