Outline the ways in which factors in children’s home backgrounds may lead to differences in achievement levels between ethnic groups. (12 Mark)

An ethnic group are people who share the same heritage, culture and identity; this often includes the same religion and language. They see themselves as a distinct group, for example the Bangladeshi community in Britain.

One way in which a child’s home background can lead to differences in achievement levels between ethnic groups is cultural deprivation. Cultural deprivation is a theory where children are inadequately socialised and lack the culture for the education system and therefore they lack educational success. The first factor that is part of the culture deprivation is intellectual and linguistic skills. Bereiter and Engelmann say that a lack of the formal English language leaves low income black American families incapable of expressing abstract ideas. This then leads to further problems such as ungrammatical disjointed writing in English and problem solving. This means the lack of standard English as it isn’t their first language is a huge barrier for success in essays etc. However The Swan report found that language was not a major factor and Mirza found that Indian pupils do well despite English not being their first language. Also evidence of Asians doing well in school despite having poor English skills criticise’s this idea that language is a barrier.

Another factor within cultural deprivation is attitudes and values. Theorists see that a lack of motivation is a major cause of failure in black children. They argue that the black subculture does not strive for ambitions and success but rather they believe in the values of immediate gratification where they obtain the ‘live for today’ attitude which is the wrong attitude for educational success.

The last factor of Cultural deprivation is the family structure and parental support. This is where cultural deprivation theorists view that many lower class black and white boys do not have a stable family structure. Especially black boys usually lack a male figure in their life so they are not socialised properly without a positive male role model. Also Pryce argues that the blacks are not resistant to racism and it lowers their self-esteem, this may be due to the history of African in where about within the slave trade where the Afro-Caribbean’s culture was destroyed so there is no stability or moral values, because of this the blacks are not ‘pro-British culture’ as they do not deem it as important because of their past. However Driver argues that the family is not dysfunctional as it provides a female with a positive independent role model and it does not explain why the female Afro-Caribbean’s are able to do well in within the education system.

Another factor is Material deprivation. Material deprivation means a Lack of those physical necessities that are seen essential for life in today’s society, for example a computer to do work on. It is seen that ethnic minorities are more likely to face these problems. According to Flaherty , Unemployment is three times higher for Africa/Bangladeshis/Pakistanis people than for whites, 15% of ethnic minorities household are in overcrowded conditions compared to 2% of whites and lastly Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are over 3 times more likely than whites to be in the poorest 5th of the population. This shows evidence that ethnic minorities are more likely to suffer from material deprivation. Factors of material deprivation that can effect educational achievement is health, eating poor food and living in damp housing can cause a child to be ill and have days off school. Another factor is not having the adequate environment to do homework such as a computer or desk, furthermore a lot of distractions by the many people your living with. But it is argues that white ethnic groups with the same social class still have education achievement differences and there is still a divide of underachievement despite both ethnicities having material deprivation.

Overall there are many internal factors which affect a different ethnicities achieving in education and there is much evidence to show differences. However with every factor there is also valid reasons which criticize the factor. Overall I think it is all the factors combined which effect the child not individual ones.