

Boris: We need more black male teachers as role models

BORIS JOHNSON has pledged to encourage more black men into teaching to help tackle gang violence.

The Tory candidate for Mayor said having more men in primary schools would provide children with positive role models. He said he also wanted City Hall to have greater power over education policy.

Mr Johnson emerged from self-imposed "hibernation" to float ideas on crime, housing and transport, although he will not unveil his full manifesto until next year.

He told a meeting of think tank the Stockholm Network last night that preventing "angry, vulnerable and frightened" children being drawn into gang culture would be a priority. He said: "I believe this city needs

PIPPA CRERAR
Political Correspondent

someone willing to be frank about the underlying cause of the gun and knife crime causing unnecessary fear on the streets of London.

"That is why it will be an absolute priority of my mayoralty to raise educational achievement among the deprived and particularly among ethnic minorities."

He said: "There are not enough male role models in our inner city communities. A male teacher can encourage kids to compete academically and to think of themselves as people who will go on to acquire qualifications."

Mr Johnson, who has been accused

by Mayor Ken Livingstone of lacking credibility, said: "You're not to underestimate the seriousness with which I'm approaching this task."

He said his greatest competitor would not be Mr Livingstone, but New York mayor Michael Bloomberg. He said: "A city like London has to compete with cities across the world. We must remember that cities can rise and fall."

He warned that the Tube network would be crucial in keeping workers in London and said there should be a no-strike deal with the RMT.

On housing, he called for Victorian terraces owned by Transport for London to be restored rather than torn down and said that new homes should be built to last 100 years.