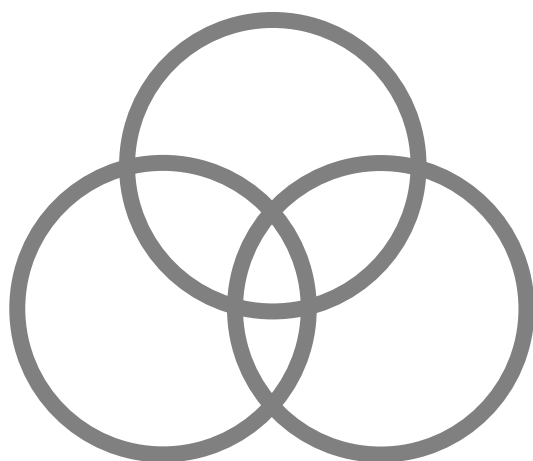


Changing Life Chances

Projects and endeavours in schools

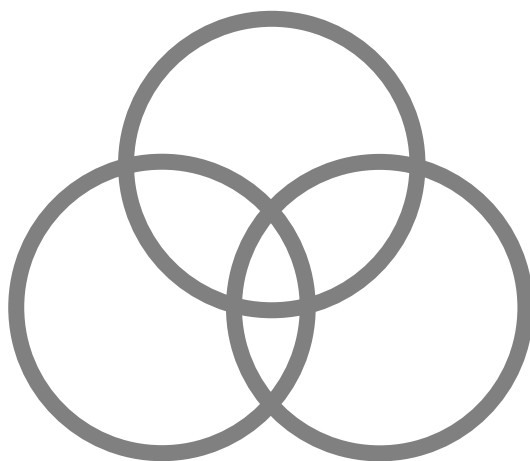


Changing Life Chances

Projects and endeavours in schools

Guidance for school improvement planning

Robin Richardson



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Acknowledgements

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This book was commissioned by Derbyshire County Council's Children and Younger Adults Department as a follow-up to two previous books: *Here, There and Everywhere* (2004, reprinted 2005) and *Holding Together* (2009, reprinted 2010). As was the case with the earlier books, the purpose is to provide a resource for school leadership teams as they review their recent and current programmes and activities, and as they consider future options and possibilities.

Most of the practical work described or referred to in these pages took place in Derbyshire. The book also, however, draws on work elsewhere. It has in mind the educational system in England, but the vast majority is relevant for the other three systems in the United Kingdom as well, and for the systems in other English-speaking countries.

Schools

Staff from the following schools in Derbyshire took part in courses and conferences which led to the compilation of this book:

Abercrombie Community Primary School, Chesterfield; Anthony Gell School, Wirksworth; Belper School and Sixth Form Centre; Bishop Pursglove CE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Tidewell; Brooklands Primary School, Long Eaton; Castle View Primary School, Matlock; Chaucer Junior School, Ilkeston; Clowne Junior School, Chesterfield; Creswell Junior School, Worksop; Frederick Gent School, Normanton; Glebe Junior School, Alfreton; Granby Junior School, Ilkeston; Hallam Fields Junior School, Ilkeston; Heritage Mathematics and Computing Specialist School, Clowne; Highfields School, Matlock; The Ormiston

Ilkeston Academy; Kirkstead Junior School, Pinxton; Lady Manners School, Bakewell; The Long Eaton School; Longstone CE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bakewell; New Mills Community School, High Peak; New Mills Primary School, High Peak; St Joseph RC Primary School, Matlock; St Laurence CE (Aided) Primary School, Long Eaton; St Philip Howard Catholic School, Glossop; Stenson Fields Primary Community School, Derby; Herbert Strutt Primary School, Belper; Tibshelf Community School; Wirksworth Infants School; Wirksworth Junior School.

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The photographs on the cover and inside the book are by William Wilkinson. In 2009 he co-founded Donkey Stone Films, a collective which produces evocative films on humanitarian themes. His work can be viewed at www.willwilkinson.co.uk and www.donkeystonefilms.com. The young people captured in the photographs were participants in the Diverse project described in chapter 10.

Contributors

Chapter 5 contains extracts from a paper by Sarah Peet; chapter 6 draws on a paper by John Tobin and Antony Thomas at the Antenna Media Centre, Nottingham; chapter 7 draws on work in Derbyshire by Gary Wilson; chapter 8 draws on a dissertation at the University of Nottingham by Helen Riley and Mary Bailey; one of the projects described in chapter 9 was organised in partnership with Javid Akram; parts of chapter 10 are based on a report written by Tricia Gardiner.

Others

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The project described in chapter 10 was coordinated by Tricia and Ian Gardiner from Greenshoots Arts, Education and Media and was run in association with the Donut

Creative Arts Studio, Chesterfield, and the Chesterfield and North-East Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Service and Action. Key staff involved in the leadership of this project included Mick Evans (Derbyshire's policy and research team), Steve Ford (education advisory service), James Lee (Derbyshire Black and Minority Ethnic Forums) and Dan White (Youth Service).

Sources of quotations

Quotations and extracts from other publications are acknowledged in the text, and fuller information is provided in the notes in appendix A. A selection is given from Case Law in appendix B.

Names

Throughout the text, the names of individual pupils, teachers and schools have been changed.

Responsibility

Opinions expressed or implied in this book are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent official policy of Derbyshire County Council. Nor do they necessarily reflect the views of any of the individuals, schools or organisations mentioned above.

Chapter 1

My experience was life-changing – background and subject-matter of this book

‘My experience,’ writes 17-year-old Peter, ‘to sum up in one word, was life-changing.’

Peter has just taken part in an educational project entitled ‘Diverse – Bringing People Together’. It has brought together young people from a range of different schools, geographical areas and age-groups, and from several different social, ethnic and religious backgrounds. It has involved a variety of creative and investigative activities, including interviewing, opinion research, acting, singing, dancing, fashion, graffiti and animation, and has culminated in two public performances for parents, friends, families, governors and teachers. Peter continues:

When I realised that I had been chosen from a group of students at my school, I wasn’t excited at all. But the first day, when we arrived at the Creative Arts Studio, I realised how amazing this project was, and the skills and new things that I could learn, which was exactly what happened.

Another young person who took part in the project, Teresa, writes:

I am so glad I was chosen to go, as it gave me something fun to do in my holidays, and it gave me a way of trying activities that I had never done before. I went there because I love music and I wanted to do something in music but when I got there, there were so many things that were new to me, and I just wanted to try them all out, because I knew I would probably never get the chance again.

The Diverse project is described in fuller detail on later pages of this book (chapter 10). Also, many other such projects and

endeavours are recalled in this book, sometimes in more detail, sometimes in less. These too had the clear potential to be life-changing for the young people and children who were involved in them. More generally, they were concerned with changing life chances – namely, chances of getting good qualifications and, in due course, a good job, and success and well-being both as an individual and as a member of society.

Many of the projects described in this book were part of a local authority programme which was itself part of the national programme in England known as Narrowing the Gap. In addition to the core concept of cultural difference, referred to above, the programme as a whole focused on issues to do with teachers’ expectations and beliefs, academic literacy, gender differences, film making, engaging with parents, monitoring and tracking progress, primary-secondary transfer, and the approaches and practical techniques of local community broadcasting. Running through all the various programmes there were two recurring themes:

- the crucial importance of what are sometimes known as soft skills, but are more accurately termed people skills, or emotional intelligence, or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the need to see literacy as being to do with much more than writing and reading – it must also be to do with talking, arguing and listening, and with – for example – film making, radio broadcasting and theatrical performance.

The book was compiled at the same time that the pupil premium was being introduced in England, aimed at helping schools to improve the life chances of children and young people from lower-income households. Many of the reports and discussions which it contains will be of practical relevance as schools set about planning and reviewing how best to use the premium.

Further, the book was prepared at the same time that the Equality Act 2010 was coming into effect. The book is relevant not only to the pupil premium and socio-economic inequality but also to the nine strands and areas (the 'protected characteristics', as they are known) of the Equality Act. These include disability, ethnicity and race, gender, religion and belief, and sexual identity.

In the background of these two developments – the pupil premium and renewed equalities legislation – there is the paradox that things are getting better and worse at the same time. For some young people the situation is getting better. But for many others – those who are not benefiting from recent trends – the gaps that separate them from others are getting wider.

The book is arranged in two parts. The first part consists of three scene-setting overviews.

Part One: Setting the scene

Chapter 2 – I balanced all, brought all to mind

Chapter 2 outlines the general and specific requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and explains the principles and thinking which underlie them. Also it shows that the Act provides a theoretical and practical framework for addressing other kinds of inequality as well, particularly socio-economic inequality. In this connection it cites the new Ofsted framework which came into effect in January 2012. The chapter's title is taken from a poem by W. B. Yeats that was cited in a landmark legal judgement about the meaning of the single most important concept in the Equality Act, 'due regard'.



Chapter 3 – Excellence, refinement, kind feeling

Chapter 3 considers teachers' views of the relationship between education and society. The words in its title are from some reflections by Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre shortly after she has become a teacher. She is a fictional character firmly fixed in England's north Midlands in the first half of the nineteenth century. But her thoughts about herself and her pupils, and about the purposes and role of education, are similar to those of real teachers at all real times and in all real places. Her thoughts appositely introduce discussion about education and social class, and about practical ways in modern England of using additional resources such as the pupil premium.

Further, Jane's musings introduce the critical key concept of teachers' expectations. Every pupil, the chapter emphasises, wishes to feel entitled to wear the IALAC badge – 'I Am Likeable And Capable'. But not every pupil, in everyday practice, has significant experiences which build and sustain such feelings. This is partly because of how individuals are seen. But primarily it is to do with how groups are seen – children and young people from certain social and ethnic backgrounds, for example, and those who are disabled.



'I Am Likeable And Capable': the IALAC badge is considered in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 – What then shall we do?

Chapter 4 recalls through its title a question asked famously by the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy in relation to socio-economic inequality. In the light of the policy directions recalled in chapter 2, and of the central importance of teachers' expectations and beliefs recalled in chapter 3, what should schools actually do? This is the basic question discussed in chapter 4. It is considered with particular reference to the role of schools in addressing socio-economic disadvantage. For example, and specifically, it is concerned with the use schools may make of the pupil premium. It contains some preliminary questionnaires about teachers' beliefs and opinions, and continues with lists of practical options and opportunities. The overall purpose is to provide starting points and frameworks for staff discussions and training sessions.



Part Two: Literacy in the twenty-first century

The projects and endeavours described in the second part of the book are all concerned with extending and enriching literacy skills, though in a wider sense than is customary when this phrase is used, and combined with qualities and abilities such as the following:

- being able to communicate orally at a high level
- reliability and perseverance
- knowing how to work with others in a team
- knowing how to evaluate information critically
- taking responsibility for, and being able to manage, one's own learning
- knowing how to work independently without close supervision
- being confident and able to investigate problems and find solutions
- being resilient in the face of difficulties
- being creative, inventive, enterprising and entrepreneurial.

The chapters are respectively about broadcasting, film, writing, academic literacy, talking and diversity. There are fuller details below.

Chapter 5 – Proud of myself and very cheerful

Chapter 5 is about the involvement of children and young people in podcasting and community radio, and the benefits of such involvement not only for themselves but also for their parents and families, and for their school's local community. Key features of the project included real writing tasks – for example, letters of application for jobs, and the creation of scripts; teamwork – different people learning and using different skills; the learning of new specialist words in real contexts, and the sense of power and self-confidence this gave; hands-on contact with state-of-the-art technology; and having to perform for a real audience and to a real deadline.



Chapter 6 – Amazing success stories

‘We had some amazing success stories,’ writes a local authority adviser, ‘where young people in care and those on the margins from vulnerable groups were able to re-engage with education as a result of working with film.’ Human beings live nowadays, chapter 6 recalls, in a world of moving images. To participate fully in society and its culture requires citizens to be as confident in the use and understanding of moving images as of the printed word. Both are essential aspects of literacy in the twenty-first century. The chapter describes a regional project in the East Midlands which involved professional filmmakers working alongside teachers and pupils to create short documentary films, and in doing so to share their expertise so that similar projects could be developed in the future.

Chapter 7 – Writing for growth

Chapter 7 starts with a scene in a novel for young people by Benjamin Zephaniah. A family is arguing about Ray, who’s 15 years old and has just been permanently excluded from his school for persistent disruptive behaviour. ‘What I say,’ says the father, ‘let him fend for himself ... He keeps telling everyone he’s a man, so let’s see how man he is, let’s send him to work, make him pay his way.’ At this point Ray’s mother intervenes: ‘He’s not a man, he’s a boy.’ This annoys Ray, who declares ‘I’m not a boy’, and this in turn provokes an intervention from Ray’s younger sister: ‘He’s not a boy, or a man, he’s a teenager.’ A final attempt at definition, before Ray storms out of the room, comes from his mother: ‘As far as the law is concerned he is a schoolboy.’ Chapter 7 explores some of the many issues and concerns which this family exchange raises, and discusses literacy within the context of teenage identity and masculinity.



Chapter 8 – Words, words, words

Chapter 8 is about the concept of academic literacy. It is a well-known fact that success in the school system depends on, amongst other things, being proficient in the genre of writing known as ‘curriculum English’ – including technical terms seldom used in everyday conversation, vocabulary derived originally from Greek and Latin, the passive voice, and impersonal and decontextualised statements. Some pupils seem to pick this up effortlessly, and this is partly or mainly to do with the fact that they encounter it not only at school but also at home. Others, though, struggle and flounder, partly because it seems alien and disconnected from the things and experiences which matter most to them. Chapter 8 considers the academic word list (AWL) developed in New Zealand, and two vocabulary-building projects in the United States.

Chapter 9 – not just any old discussion

Chapter 9 follows on directly for it is about the connection between academic literacy on the one hand and the development of oracy, as the technical term often is, on the other. It derives its title from the comments of some Year 7 pupils whose teachers had attended a course on teaching about sensitive and controversial issues. ‘We get to talk about things that other people wouldn’t talk about,’ wrote one of them. ‘We talk about the for and against of different things,’ said another. And ‘it’s not just any old discussion. It’s things that matter,’ said a third. Oracy and oral fluency are particularly likely to be developed when the subject-matter under consideration is controversial.

Chapter 10 – Engaging with difference

Chapter 10 describes the project in which Peter and Teresa, quoted at the start of the present chapter, took part. The project’s aims included: to provide opportunities for young people to explore their own and others’ cultural heritage; to gain experience and skills in researching, recording and archiving information about their cultural heritage; to research the diversity of cultures living within their own communities; to promote community cohesion and opportunities for cross-generational work with a wide range of cultures and nationalities; to enable young people from different backgrounds to explore and share their cultural heritage and experiences through a wide range of creative and engaging activities; and to enable young people to receive tuition and advice from practitioners who have experience of working within the creative sector. The chapter also contains an aide-memoire about the use and potential of creative activities in mainstream classroom lessons. The final aide-memoire of the chapter, and of the book, is about key concepts in curriculum planning.

Key messages

Box 1.1 opposite summarises the book’s key messages.

In a nutshell – key messages of this book

1.1

All equalities

The single most important key message of this book is that the intellectual and moral framework of the Equality Act 2010 is relevant not only to the nine features of human diversity named in the Act itself but also to issues of poverty, income and social class. Schools should have due regard for the disadvantages experienced by pupils who live in lower-income households in much the same ways as for issues of disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity.

This message is reflected throughout the book, and particularly in chapters 2 and 4.

Mix of universal and specific

In order to narrow and close gaps in educational achievement, three kinds of measure are required: a) those which are the same for all pupils, regardless of background b) those which are the same for everyone but which need to be tweaked or adapted to engage members of a particular groups and c) those which are special, distinctive or additional for a particular group.

This message is reflected throughout the book. It is particularly covered in chapter 7, which illustrates the need for both universal and specific approaches to developing literacy skills amongst boys.

Extended literacy

Literacy is an essential skill, of course, particularly in relation to the kinds of academic language, or specific curriculum language, required for educational achievement. But literacy is not just about the written word; it is also to do with, for example, film, television and radio. It is not a value in itself, for it needs to be combined with 'soft skills' (see below), also known as people skills, character skills or emotional intelligence, and as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Chapter 5 is about broadcasting, chapter 6 about film and chapter 8 about academic literacy. All of chapters 5-10 are about pupils developing skills of cooperation, teamwork, negotiation and empathy.

Soft skills

Certain skills are said to be soft or fuzzy because they cannot be defined, let alone measured and assessed, with as much precision as can be applied to cognitive skills in, for example, mathematics and science. Also known as people skills or character traits, key skills which all pupils need include curiosity, open-mindedness, willingness and ability to work in a team or group, helpfulness and consideration, persistence and staying on task, and emotional stability.

All of chapters 5-10 are about pupils developing skills of cooperation, teamwork, negotiation and empathy.

Pupil voice

Every pupil needs to have opportunities to make informed choices about what and how they learn, to express opinions and judgements, to ask questions, to think aloud and to be tentative, and to be attended to and listened to. Pupil voice is intrinsically valuable for pupils themselves. Also, of course, it can invaluablely help shape the knowledge and understanding of teachers.

Chapter 5 is about a community broadcasting project in which pupils make many choices, both in groups and as individuals. There was also a high level of personal choice in the Diverse project described in chapter 10. Chapter 9 is about skills in discussion and deliberation. Several chapters include quotations from the writings and conversations of children and young people.

Performance and exhibition

It is valuable for pupils to write, perform or create a display for a real audience, whether inside their school or beyond the school gates. This might entail performances of drama and music but can also be relatively modest activities such as writing to the media and elected representatives.

There are many examples in chapters 5-10. Chapters 5 and 10 are particularly relevant.

It takes a whole village

One of the advantages of performances and exhibitions is that they engage parents and the wider community and give expression to the famous African proverb that it takes a whole village to educate one child.

Chapters 5 and 10 are particularly relevant to the theme of parental and community involvement.

Mixing of age groups

All pupils benefit from working sometimes with pupils who are rather older or rather younger than themselves. When working with younger pupils, they act as tutors, mentors, leaders and guides. When working with older pupils, they see relevant and helpful role-models, and are helped in their own growth towards greater maturity.

The Diverse project, described in chapter 10, is a good example.

The real world

In the real world beyond the school gates there are conflicts and controversies, and anxieties and uncertainties. Schools cannot protect pupils totally from risk and uncertainty. They do, however, have a responsibility to help young people to cope with, as opposed to being bewildered and depressed by, the problems and issues of the wider world.

It is particularly in chapter 9 that there is consideration of real conflicts and controversies in the wider world.

Debate and disagreement

This chapter began with the stories and voices of two real people, Peter and Teresa. Both were full of hope and good cheer. It ends with a snatch of conversation between two fictitious teenagers, Roy and Yinka (box 1.2), one of whom is full of hope and resolution, like Peter and Teresa, and one of whom is doubting and sceptical – ‘you ain’t serious, right?’

‘Equality for a start, and justice,’ says teenage Yinka when declaring what she sees as the principles underlying good education. ‘Reducing inequality is ... the guiding ethical imperative of our education policy,’ declares the government (box 2.1). At the level of abstract ideas, the two extracts (boxes 1.2 and 2.1) are remarkably similar. With regard to register of language, however, there are marked differences. These are a reminder that in day-to-day practice, as distinct from in abstract statements of values, there are debates and disagreements about what words such as equality and justice really mean. This book is intended to be a resource for engaging in such debates. ‘No one has all the answers,’ says Yinka. Answers are reached, if they are, through discussion and action, and reflection on action. This book, hopefully, will assist and promote such action-and-reflection. Accordingly much of it consists of handouts that can be used in staff meetings and professional development activities. The items in the handouts can be used in a variety of ranking and sorting exercises, as outlined in box 1.3.

Your true potential – the purposes of education

1.2

Two teenagers, Yinka and Ray, are talking about education. Yinka speaks first.

‘... True rebels are responsible, true rebels know why they rebel and what they’re rebelling for.’

‘Hey, easy. So you expect me to have all the answers?’

‘No one has all the answers, but at least I’ve started to think about the questions, and at least I have some principles in place to build my ideas on.’

‘So what are these principles?’ Ray asked.

‘Equality for a start, and justice. Not the way we have it now, where there’s one kind of justice for the rich and another for the poor – real justice. And then there’s knowledge of self, which would mean creating an education system that is not just teaching you how to be a good worker and an obedient citizen, it would also tap into your true potential.’

Ray shook his head. ‘Heavy shit. You ain’t serious, right?’

– from *Gangsta Rap* by Benjamin Zephaniah, 2004

Diamond Nines – a structure for staff discussions

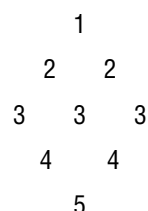
1.3

Diamond Nines is a ranking game devised by the World Studies Project in the 1970s. It was originally created with teachers and student teachers in mind, but it can also be used with pupils in classrooms. It is a useful format for discussing much of the material in this book.

Participants work in pairs or threes and each pair or three is given a set of nine statements and asked to discuss and agree which they consider most important or most stimulating. They have a large, diamond-shaped grid on which to place the statements. They place the statement they consider most important at the top of the diamond and the least important at the bottom. There are two statements in the second row, equal in importance, three in the third row equal in importance and again two in the fourth. The overall pattern is shown below.

The key point about this activity, as about all such ranking games or activities, is that simple movements of one's hands seem to facilitate purposeful talk.

When each pair or three has agreed on their pattern they explain and justify their arrangement to others.



One of the advantages of this exercise is that it dramatises open-mindedness – up until the moment when the group decides on its final pattern, there is the clear possibility of re-thinking and changing one's mind.

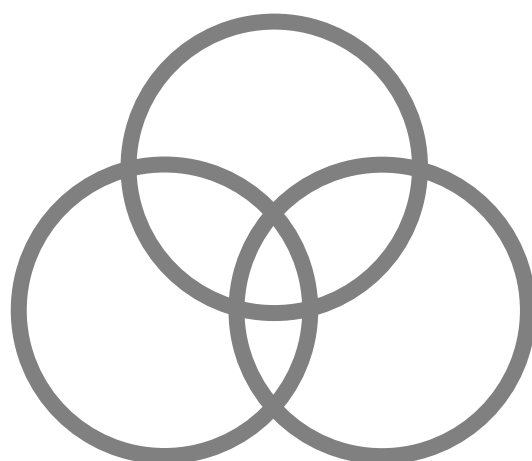
Another advantage is that it enables ideas and opinions to be considered – quite literally, to be tabled – which might not otherwise get a hearing.

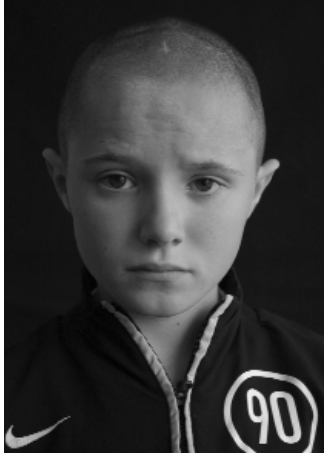
A Diamond Nines activity can be valuable as a way of clarifying the general climate of opinion, and for stimulating a focus group discussion.

Many of the boxes in this book, particularly those which contain checklists or aide-memoires, can be used in Diamond Nines exercises. In chapter 9 there is a description of how the exercise was used at a workshop for teachers on dealing with controversial, sensitive and difficult issues.

Concluding note

This chapter has summarised the book's background and principal themes. The rest of the book illustrates in various ways the key messages outlined in box 1.1, and contains much material designed for use in staff discussions and training exercises. The next chapter explores the single most important message of this book, namely that the intellectual and moral framework of the Equality Act 2010 is relevant not only to the nine features of human diversity named in the Act itself but also to issues of poverty, income and social class.





Chapter 2

‘I balanced all, brought all to mind’ – the concept of due regard

Due regard

Mrs Brown was disabled and couldn't walk far without acute discomfort and pain. One day in late 2007 she discovered to her dismay that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) intended to shut down a number of post offices in the area of Sussex where she lived, including the branch in her own village. It would be very difficult for her to get to another post office further away so, with the assistance of friends and disability campaigners, she challenged the DWP decision on the grounds that it had been made without due regard for the needs and interests of disabled people. The concept of due regard was fundamental in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended in 2005. But what, in practice, did it mean?

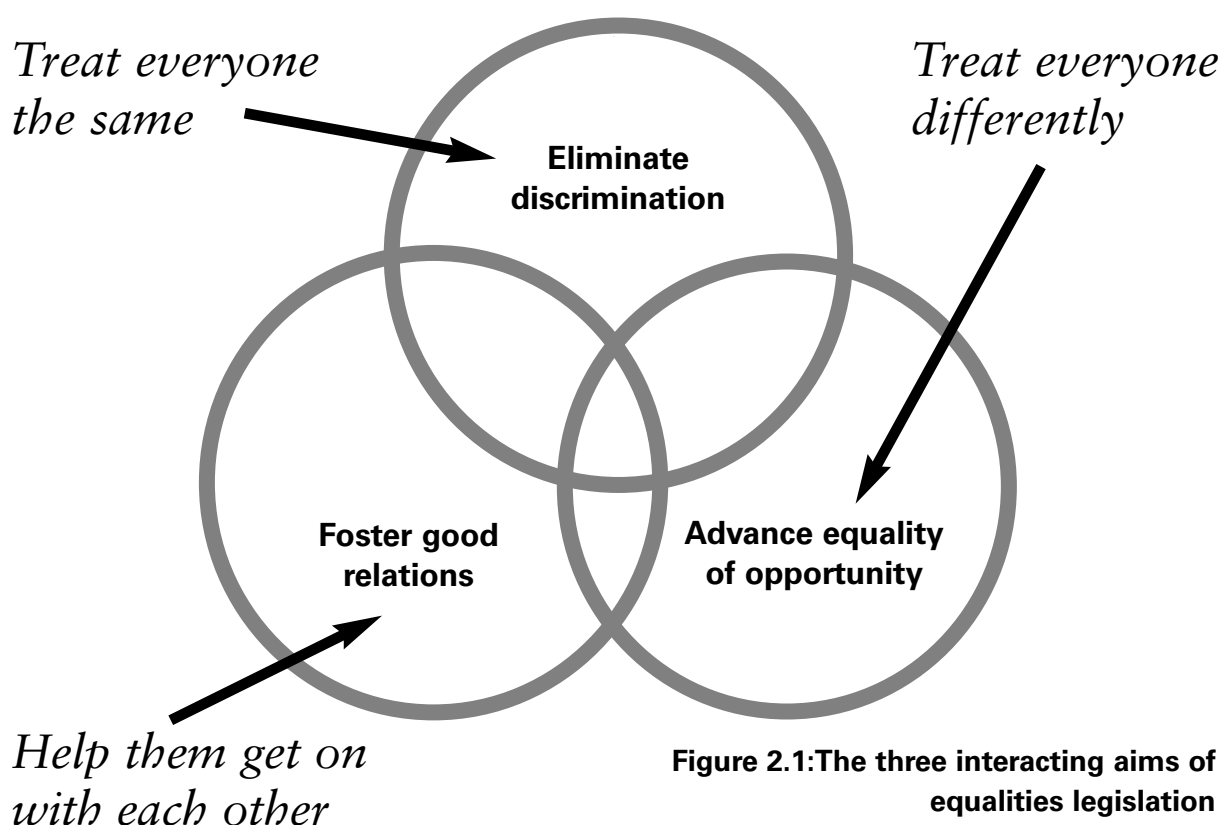
Mrs Brown's challenge was not successful. But it led to a landmark in the development of a national policy framework for issues of justice and fairness in British society, for it involved the formulation of what became known as the Brown principles of due regard. Later legal cases extended the principles beyond disability to all the protected characteristics – including, for example, age, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity – in the Equality Act 2010. When a senior judge explained the principles in his landmark legal judgement, he quoted a famous line by W B Yeats: ‘I balanced all, brought all to mind’. This, he said, is what the duty to have due regard entails.

This chapter explains the concept of due regard and applies it not only to the strands of equality named in equalities legislation but also to issues of social class, poverty and low income.

Briefly summarised, the six Brown principles of due regard are to do with awareness, timeliness, rigour, non-delegation, continuity and record-keeping. In relation to the everyday life of a school, these are as follows:

- **awareness** – all staff should know and understand what the law requires
- **timeliness** – the implications for equalities of new policies and practices should be considered before they are introduced
- **rigour** – there should be rigorous and open-minded analysis of statistical evidence, and careful attention to the views of staff, and the views of pupils, and the views of their parents and carers
- **non-delegation** – compliance with equalities legislation cannot be delegated
- **continuous** – due regard for equalities should be happening all the time
- **record-keeping** – it is good practice to keep documentary records, for example in the minutes of staff meetings and governor meetings.

The Equality Act is concerned with three broad aims. In legal language these are to do with eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. In more homely and everyday language they are to do with treating everyone the same (namely, eliminating discrimination), treating everyone differently (namely, advancing equality of opportunity) and helping people get on with each other (fostering good relations). These three aims are not entirely separate from each other. On the contrary, they affect, reinforce and constrain each other. They can be pictured as



a Venn diagram consisting of three interacting circles, as shown in figure 2.1 above.

The Department for Education has explained the concept of due regard as follows:

Having due regard means that we need to think in advance about the potential implications of our decisions, seeking not just to eliminate negative outcomes but also thinking about potentially positive ones. We also need to be able to demonstrate – ideally proactively, or otherwise if challenged – that we actually have paid due regard to the duties. One important way in which public bodies, and especially government departments, demonstrate that they have taken due regard is through equality analysis – analysing what we do and how we do it so that we are clear about the impact on equalities, and so that we take action as a result of our analysis in order to promote equality. (*Equality Analysis Workbook*, December 2011, updated April 2012)

Particularly important is the reference to maximising potentially positive outcomes, as distinct from just avoiding negative ones. In essence, the DfE maintains that in relation to every aspect of school life there are two basic questions, each accompanied by a follow-up question. These are:

Could this policy, or does this policy, have a negative impact on one or more of the dimensions of equality – could it increase inequalities that already exist?

If so, how can we change or modify it, or minimise its impact, or justify it?

Could this policy, or does this policy, have a positive impact on equality, by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist?

If so, how can we maximise this potential?

There is fuller explanation of the concept of due regard in Appendix C. To help schools and other public bodies to have due regard, the general duty in the Equality Act is supported by two specific duties. They are described and illustrated in Boxes 2.7 and 2.9 later in this chapter. First, it is relevant to consider issues of poverty and social class.

Poverty and social class

In addition to its explanation of due regard, the DfE also makes some important points about socio-economic disadvantage. It notes 'there is quite a lot of statistical overlap between poverty and disability, and between poverty and membership of certain communities' but then stresses that a policy designed to address socio-economic disadvantage will not necessarily or automatically help people protected by equalities legislation.

The concept of due regard is extremely relevant, however, not only to the nine strands of equality in the Equality Act but also to issues of social class and poverty. The bringing together of issues of social class with other aspects of inequality is explicitly seen in the equality impact assessment (EQUIA) which the DfE published in summer 2010 in connection with the legislation it introduced in the wake of its white paper entitled *The Importance of Teaching*. There is a substantial quotation from this document in box 2.1 ('Unacceptable and indefensible'). The quotation summarises well the overall policy issues with which this book is concerned.

To set this consideration of national policy relating to education and equality in a wider context, Box 2.2 contains a key quotation from the present government's overall strategy on equality. The statement refers not only and not primarily to education but to many other aspects of social policy as well.

Unacceptable and indefensible – inequality in schools and society

2.1

1. It is unacceptable for educational attainment to be affected by gender, disability, race, social class, sexual orientation or any other factor unrelated to ability. Every child deserves a good education and every child should achieve high standards.
2. We have one of the most stratified and segregated school systems in the world, with a gap between our private schools and the state system wider than in almost any other developed country. In 2006, England came near the bottom of a list of 57 countries for educational equality in an OECD report, and the gap is still vast. It is simply unacceptable that, in the most recent year for which we have data, just 40 of the 80,000 students eligible for free school meals went on to Oxford or Cambridge universities – fewer than certain private schools manage to send,
3. On an ethical level this gap between the rich and the poor is indefensible. But reducing inequality is not only the guiding ethical imperative of our education policy; it is also an absolute necessity if we are to compete economically on the global stage. The truth is that many other countries in the world are improving their schools faster than we are. Many other countries have much smaller gaps between the achievements of rich and poor than we do. But most importantly, the very best-performing education systems show us that there need be no contradiction between a rigorous focus on high standards and a determination to narrow gaps between pupils from different backgrounds.
4. Despite vast central government spending over the last thirteen years we are clearly, as a nation, still wasting talent on a scandalous scale. It is a moral failure and an affront to social justice. We must put this right, and it is a determination to do so that drives our vision for reform as set out in *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper, published on 24 November 2010.
5. The changes we want to make are the proven routes to success taken by the highest performing schools here and the best-performing countries internationally. Taken together, these reforms will be a real break with the past, ensuring that every child receives a high-quality education regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

Source: These are the opening five paragraphs of the equality impact assessment (EQUIA) published by the Department for Education in connection with the Education Act 2011, very slightly edited.

Why equality matters – overview of national policy

2.2

Inequalities matter to all of us. Failure to tackle discrimination and to provide equal opportunity harms individuals, weakens our society and costs our economy. For example:

- the national audit office has estimated that the overall cost to the economy from failure to fully use the talents of people from ethnic minorities could be around £8.6 billion annually
- the Women and Work Commission estimated the total potential benefits of increasing women's employment and tackling occupational gender segregation could be worth about £15 billion to £23 billion to the economy each year
- the economic cost of violence against women in the UK is estimated to be £37.6 billion annually.

At a time of global economic pressures, equality becomes more, not less, important. We are committed to tackling Britain's record deficit now, so that the next generation does not have to pay for the mistakes of this generation, and we will protect and safeguard those services that are crucial to individuals' life chances.

We want a fair society where every child has the opportunity to progress as far as their talents will take them, not one in which people's chances are driven by where they come from, how others see them, or who their parents are. We need a labour market that draws on the talents of all, not one in which people are written off because of outdated perceptions. Our democratic structures and communities are stronger and more effective if all voices are included, and everyone has the chance to shape and influence the decisions that affect them.

– from the UK government's *Equality Strategy*, November 2010

Our school is committed to equality – one school's declaration

2.3

Our school is committed to equality. Therefore –

We welcome the emphasis in the Ofsted framework on the importance of narrowing gaps in achievement which affect:

- pupils from certain cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- pupils who belong to low-income households
- pupils who are disabled
- pupils who have special educational needs
- boys in certain subjects, and girls in certain other subjects.

We welcome our specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 to publish information every year about our school population; to explain how we have due regard for equality; and to publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities, and reduce or remove them.

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, and our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to foster good relations between people of different backgrounds.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

We recognise that people have different needs, and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same.

We recognise that for some pupils extra support is needed to help them to achieve and be successful.

We try to make sure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example through talking with pupils and parents/carers, and through our School Council.

Source: derived from policy statements developed in Derbyshire in the period 2005-2010.

To complement the official statements of national policy in boxes 2.1 and 2.2, box 2.3 contains a specimen school policy statement, to recall a customary way in which a school may summarise what it stands for.

The policy implications for a local authority are shown in Box 2.4.

Our most vulnerable pupils – a local authority's commitments

2.4

We will offer targeted interventions to children and their families to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils accelerate their progress to close the attainment gap by tackling the barriers to their success. We will support schools in developing strategies that work.

Our compelling moral purpose is to accelerate the progress of our vulnerable young people in line with the progress made by their peers. The attainment of children in care, pupils with special needs and disabilities, children in poverty, and underachieving gifted and talented pupils, are priorities.

Improving outcomes for children in care

In order to improve outcomes for children in care we will:

- establish a headteacher group to identify evidence-based approaches which work
- strengthen the arrangements for virtual headteacher support to monitor the progress of all children in care
- extend one-to-one tuition to all children in care as an immediate entitlement, especially for speech and language development
- strengthen the quality of personal education plans at all key stages
- ensure closer working between schools and multi-agency teams for early intervention in vulnerable families
- implement projects to raise aspirations.

Improving outcomes for children in poverty

Children entitled to free school meals do less well at each key stage than their peers and the attainment gap widens with age progression. In order to close this gap we will:

- use RAISE online data to track the progress of these groups to inform early intervention
- support the active participation of these learners in our Inspire projects
- promote the effective use of the Pupil Premium to support one-to-one tuition and other intervention strategies for pupils at risk of falling behind
- develop closer working relationships between schools and multi-agency teams to inform early intervention and support for families and children in difficulties
- introduce the evidence-based Family Learning Signature project to enable families to develop their own capacity for cohesion and support for learning
- develop the application of social pedagogy across children's homes and social care to equip vulnerable young people with the attributes for self-determination and social responsibility
- broker support for healthy lifestyles through sex and relationships, nutrition, drug and alcohol education programmes.
- *from Journey into Excellence, Derbyshire County Council, 2012*

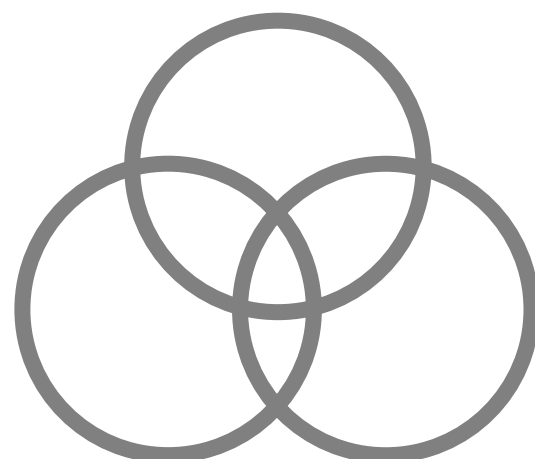
Inspection

The bringing together of the Equality Act and the narrowing of socio-economic gaps is a feature of the Ofsted framework that came into effect in January 2012. The explanatory notes issued to accompany the Education Bill 2011 stated that the framework would include 'consideration of how well a school provides for different groups of pupils' and indicated that such groups include not only those which are connected with disability, ethnicity and gender but also those which are connected with low household income, as reflected by eligibility for free school meals and the pupil premium. In a document issued in 2011 Ofsted introduced the new framework in these terms:

Persistent low attainment makes it harder for young people to get jobs or access further and higher education, and can have a deep and damaging impact on families and communities. It is therefore important that schools reduce differences in attainment between groups in the school, including those between looked after children, pupils from different social and ethnic groups and between boys and girls. The new inspection framework will pay particular attention to such gaps in attainment and inspectors will look at what is being done to close them.

'Inspection is primarily about how individual pupils benefit from their school,' says Ofsted. It adds and stresses, however, 'that it is important to test a school's response to individual needs by observing how well it helps all pupils to make progress and fulfil their potential, *especially those whose needs, dispositions, aptitudes or circumstances require particularly perceptive and expert teaching and/or additional support*' (emphasis added). In any one school, such pupils may include:

- disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
- boys
- girls
- groups of pupils whose prior attainment may be different from that of other groups
- those who are academically more able
- pupils for whom English is an additional language
- pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people
- looked after children
- pupils from lower-income households, for example those known to be eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium
- lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils, and those who are questioning their sexual identity
- transsexual pupils
- young carers
- pupils who have a family member in prison
- pupils who are refugees or seeking asylum.



Specific duties: a staff training exercise

Case law relating to the Equality Act has shown that there must be a conscious directing of the mind by decision makers to their obligations under the legislation and that the duty to have due regard must be exercised in substance and with rigour and based on sufficient information, appropriately analysed.

To support the conscious directing of the mind, and to promote substance and rigorous analysis, the general duty in section 149 of the Equality Act is supported by two specific duties. These are to do, respectively, with publishing information and publishing objectives. They are explained in the following pages through handouts for a staff training exercise. The exercise has three stages:

Base groups – each base group has four members. They are given descriptions (see box 2.5) of the enquiry groups in which they

Box 2.5 Four enquiries – a staff training exercise

2.5

A. Inspection and accountability (Box 2.6)

Ofsted is bound by the public sector equality duty (PSED), as are all public bodies, and is therefore required to have due regard for equalities in the inspections which it conducts and the reports which it publishes. Box 2.6 contains extracts from a statement by Ofsted about its priorities from January 2012 onwards.

Skim-read Box 2.6, and underline or highlight the phrases which strike you as particularly significant in connection with schools' duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Then, in relation to some or all of the points you mark, consider the evidence that Ofsted will probably look for and cite when making judgements. In particular, reflect and comment on what Ofsted may say about the school(s) you know best.

B. Due regard for equalities (Box 2.7)

Every school has to publish information which shows that it is complying with the Equality Act duty to have due regard for equalities.

On the basis of this information each school also has to set itself some 'equality objectives' (see box 2.9) and it is on the basis of this information that parents, carers, local communities, trade unions and equality organisations will hold a school's governing body to account.

What sort of information will count as showing that a school has due regard for equalities, and will enable

others to hold it to account? Box 2.7

contains a list of possible signs of due regard.

Which of these strike you as particularly important at the school(s) you know best?

C. What do I say, what do I do? – situations and scenarios (Box 2.8)

The Equality Act requires schools to 'foster good relations'. It is often useful in this connection to consider specific incidents or scenarios. Choose up to four in Box 2.8 and with each consider possible actions and developments in the next few minutes, the next few days, the next few weeks.

Then, in the light of your discussion, begin formulating some general principles for dealing with incidents such as these.

D. Being smart – choosing and writing objectives (Box 2.9)

Under the Equality Act 2010 each school has to decide on a number of specific and measurable objectives, and publish them and report on progress. Box 2.9 contains a handful of specimen objectives. Which of these, if any, would in your view be most appropriate at the school(s) you know best?

Then formulate at least one equality objective for the school(s) you know best, similar in its phrasing and length to the examples in box 2.9.

And ask and discuss, in relation to the objective you formulate, the questions at the end of Box 2.9.

will be working in the next stage and they decide amongst themselves who will go to which enquiry group. They go as representatives of their base group, with the responsibility of reporting back in the third stage.

Enquiry groups – each enquiry group has three members and each engages in one of

the tasks described in Box 2.5. The topics are Ofsted intentions and expectations (Box 2.6), having due regard (2.7), situations and scenarios (2.8) and setting smart objectives (2.9).

Base groups again – to give and receive reports on the four enquiry groups.

Inspection and accountability – Ofsted priorities

2.6

The following extracts are from a paper issued by Ofsted on the inspection arrangements for maintained schools and academies from January 2012.

Self-evaluation: ‘Inspectors will continue to take account of schools’ self-evaluation, involve school leaders and governors in the inspection process and listen carefully to the views of learners, parents and staff when coming to a judgement about the school’s effectiveness.’

Spiritual, moral, social, cultural: ‘Inspectors must consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; and the extent to which the education provided by the school enables all pupils to achieve, in particular disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs.’

Gaps in attainment: ‘Persistent low attainment makes it harder for young people to get jobs or access further and higher education, and can have a deep and damaging impact on families and communities. It is therefore important that schools reduce differences in attainment between groups in the school, including those between looked after children, pupils from different social and ethnic groups and between boys and girls. The new inspection framework will pay particular attention to such gaps in attainment and inspectors will look at what is being done to close them.’

Disabled pupils: ‘We will continue to evaluate the extent to which the quality of education provided meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school and, in particular, the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.’

Groups: ‘We propose to develop value-added information for particular groups of pupils, looking, for example, at how well boys or girls perform, including looked after children, or the comparative achievements of different social or ethnic groups.

‘We intend to ensure that inspectors are enabled to identify learners from particular groups who have done very well or underperformed, to promote more detailed discussion about their performance.’

Pupils feeling safe: ‘Despite the best efforts of many schools, bullying remains a concern for some young people and for their parents. Bullying at school can be a significant problem, especially in the 10-14 age group ... Although most pupils feel that their schools deal well with bullying and that they are safe at school, some do not believe bullying is dealt with well and do not feel safe ... A sharper focus on this issue, including greater emphasis on the views of pupils themselves, will highlight what needs to be done to improve the position. We propose, therefore, to include consideration of pupils’ acting safely and feeling safe and free from bullying, as key contributory factors in the judgement on behaviour and safety.’

Behaviour and safety: ‘We propose to judge pupils’ behaviour and safety by giving particular attention to ... their behaviour and attitudes towards others, and respect for other young people and adults, including the way pupils treat one another; how well they are protected from bullying; and the views of pupils, parents and carers.’

Leadership: ‘School leaders have a particular responsibility for narrowing the gap in achievement between potentially vulnerable pupils and their peers ... We shall specifically take account of how effectively leaders and managers discharge this fundamental responsibility when considering how well the school promotes equality of opportunity.’

Equality: ‘We propose to consider ... how well the school ensures equality of opportunity for all its pupils.’

Due regard for equalities – information and evidence

2.7

Data

1. The school has data on its composition broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender, and by proficiency in English.
2. The school has data on its composition broken down by types of impairment and special educational need.
3. The school has data on inequalities of outcome and participation connected with ethnicity, gender and disability, and with proficiency in English.
4. The school uses data on inequalities of outcome and involvement when setting itself objectives for achievable and measurable improvements.
5. The school has data on the composition of its workforce broken down by disability, ethnicity and gender, and by pay grade. (*Note: this information only has to be published if the school has at least 150 employees.*)

Documentation and record-keeping

6. There are statements of the school's responsibilities under the Equality Act in various school documents, for example in a formal equality scheme or statement of policy and in the school improvement plan, the prospectus, routine bulletins and newsletters, and occasional letters to parents.
7. There are references to the school's responsibilities under the Equality Act in the minutes of governors' meetings, staff meetings and senior leadership team meetings, and in the minutes of the School Council.
8. Before introducing important new policies or measures, the school carefully assesses their potential impact, positive or negative, on equalities, and keeps a record of the analysis and judgements which it makes.

Responsibilities

9. A senior member of staff has special responsibility for equalities matters.
10. A member of the governing body has a watching brief for equalities matters.

Staffing

11. The school's programme for continuing professional development (CPD) includes reference to equalities matters, both directly and incidentally.
12. There is good equal opportunities practice in the recruitment and promotion of staff, both teaching and administrative.

13. Other employment policies, including in particular the pay policy, reflect good equalities practice.

Behaviour and safety

14. There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents.
15. Surveys and focus groups show that most pupils feel safe from all kinds of bullying.

Curriculum

16. Focused attention is paid to the needs of specific groups of pupils, for example those who are learning English as an additional language, and there is extra or special provision for certain groups, as appropriate.
17. There is coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, particularly with regard to tackling prejudice and promoting community cohesion and mutual understanding.
18. There are activities across the curriculum that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
19. The school takes part in certain national projects and award schemes, for example the Accord Coalition Inclusivity Award; Black History Month; Bullying Intervention Group; Disability History Month; Equalities Award; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month; LGBT History Month; Refugee Week; Rights Respecting Schools Award; Stephen Lawrence Education Standard; and Stonewall School Champions.
20. In curriculum materials in all subjects there are positive images of disabled people; of gay and lesbian people; of both women and men in non-stereotypical gender roles; and of people from a wide range of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Consultation, involvement and engagement

21. The school has procedures for consulting and involving parents and carers, and for engaging with local groups and organisations, and has regard in these for the concerns and requirements of the Equality Act, particularly in relation to disability equality.
22. The school has procedures for finding out how pupils think and feel about the school, and has regard in these for the concerns of the Equality Act, particularly in relation to disability equality.

What do I say, what do I do? – situations and scenarios

2.8

My dad agrees with this

A pupil brings to school a leaflet advertising a demonstration taking place locally next weekend. 'End the creeping Islamification of our precious country,' it says. The pupil says to a teacher: 'My dad agrees with this. Do you, miss?'

On the bus

A girl tells a teacher she frequently gets touched sexually by boys on a school bus and when she says she doesn't like it and tells them to stop they call her a dyke. Other girls on the bus don't defend her, but say they suspect she fancies them and they need to keep away from her.

Not saying, miss

There's a class discussion of whether a new mosque should be built close to the school. The teacher addresses a (non-Muslim) pupil: 'What do you think?' – 'Not saying miss.' – 'Why not?' – 'Cos if I told you what I think you'd give me a detention.'

Playing football

Boys playing football in the playground are heard calling each other Nigger and Paki. Whenever someone fumbles a pass or misses a tackle the others cheerfully rebuke him with words such as poof, gay, fairy and wanker.

Doesn't appear to mind

A girl from Lithuania has joined the class. She is referred to by staff as Polish and addressed by other pupils as Pollywog. She doesn't appear to mind.

Same as most teachers

'You only ever pick on black or Asian kids,' says a pupil to a teacher. 'You're racist, that's why, same as most white people.'

Rather die

A girl gets teased because, say others, she's fat and will never get a boyfriend. 'I'll starve myself,' she tells a teacher. 'I'd rather die than put up with any more of this.'

It won't be his fault

The elder sibling of a learning-disabled pupil says to a teacher: 'I'm really worried about him. Other kids tease him all the time and he gets no support from teachers. One day he's going to snap and he could hurt someone, and he'll be excluded and it won't be his fault.'

Political correctness gone mad

'Children are children,' says a colleague, 'and they're sometimes nasty to each other, it's a fact of life. So kids need to be tough, resilient. It's political correctness gone mad to use words about them like racist, sexist, homophobic.'

What about the rights of Christians?

At a parents evening the head says children in the playground use the term gay too much as a casual insult. A parent stands up and says, passionately: 'We're a Christian family and we believe homosexuality is an abomination. What about the rights of Christians? Why doesn't the Equality Act respect the rights of Christians?'

Overheard

A colleague is overheard rebuking a group of boys who are talking together when they should be getting on with their work. 'You lot,' says the colleague, 'stop behaving like a bunch of girls.'

Complaint

Pupils report to staff they are getting wound up by a pupil with ADHD. Later the same day the deputy head receives a complaint from the child's parents reporting several incidents of the child being called names.

Dependent

The staff have observed a child with profound deafness being very alone in the playground. Her language and social skills are developing but are delayed, and she finds it difficult to interact without adult intervention, and is becoming increasingly dependent on adults.

Freedom of speech

Some Year 12 students announce they are going to organise a Draw a Picture of Mohammed Day. The headteacher rules that this is unacceptable. So the students draw up a petition saying that the head is denying their human right to freedom of speech. Many students sign it, also various people in the locality, and two of the school's governors, and a member of staff.

You'll be all right

The school has a system for receiving anonymous messages about problems and concerns. 'I told a teacher I get a lot of abuse from other kids because they think I'm gay,' writes someone. 'She said well you do appear to be gay. Stop acting so gay and you'll be all right.'

I feel they don't like me

'No-one's ever called me a nasty name,' a pupil tells a teacher, 'but all the same I feel the other girls don't like me, 'cos they often ignore me and leave me out, and I think they're spreading rumours about me. I think it's because of my colour, or else because of my religion, or both.'

Being smart – choosing and writing objectives

2.9

Introductory notes

Equality objectives have to be specific and measurable, and to be outcome-focused, as distinct from being focused primarily on making improvements in provision, crucially important though such improvements are.

This means the vast majority of equality objectives are likely to be about the closing and narrowing of gaps or else about fostering good relations. Some examples of such objectives are cited below.

Further, equality objectives have to be related to issues highlighted in the information which a school publishes to demonstrate compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED).

A possible way of writing equality objectives is shown below.

Narrowing the gaps

- To narrow the gaps in English at all key stages between boys and girls, and between pupils for whom English is an additional language and other pupils.
- To narrow the gap in attendance rates between Gypsy Roma Traveller children and other children throughout the school.
- To narrow the gaps in mathematics and science between children of certain specific minority ethnic backgrounds and other children at key stage 2.
- To narrow the gap in the experience of punishments and sanctions between pupils from lower-income households and other pupils.

(Please note: This not an equality objective within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, since belonging to a lower-income household is not a protected characteristic named in the Act. A school might well, however, wish to adopt such an objective, along with objectives which do count as equality objectives within the meaning of the Act.)

- To narrow the gap in participation in the public life of the school between disabled pupils (including learning-disabled pupils) and other pupils.
- To narrow the gap in mathematics between boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 1.

Fostering good relations

- To reduce the incidence of prejudice-related bullying, hostility and suspicion, particularly in relation to homophobia and sexism, and hostile attitudes and behaviour towards people who are disabled.

- To promote and enhance community cohesion and a sense of shared belonging in the school, and in the school's neighbourhood.
- To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the teaching of English and literacy, with particular reference to issues of equality and diversity.

Questions arising

With regard to each objective which a school decides on, it will need to consider questions such as the following:

1 Background

Why have we chosen this objective? For example, what relevant data do we have?

2 Specific activities

What are the principal things we shall do in order to pursue this objective?

3 Measurable success indicators

What will count as relevant and measurable evidence that we are succeeding, or have succeeded?

4 Timings

By when do we expect to see signs of progress or success?

5 Responsibility

Who will be responsible for ensuring the objective is pursued and achieved?

6 Training

Do some or all staff need special training?

7 Learning from others

What plans do we have for finding out what has worked well elsewhere?

8 Expense

How much are we budgeting, and on what items of expenditure in particular?

9 Problems

What problems or difficulties might arise, and how shall we deal with them? Who might be opposed or lukewarm, and how shall we respond?

10 Engagement with stakeholders

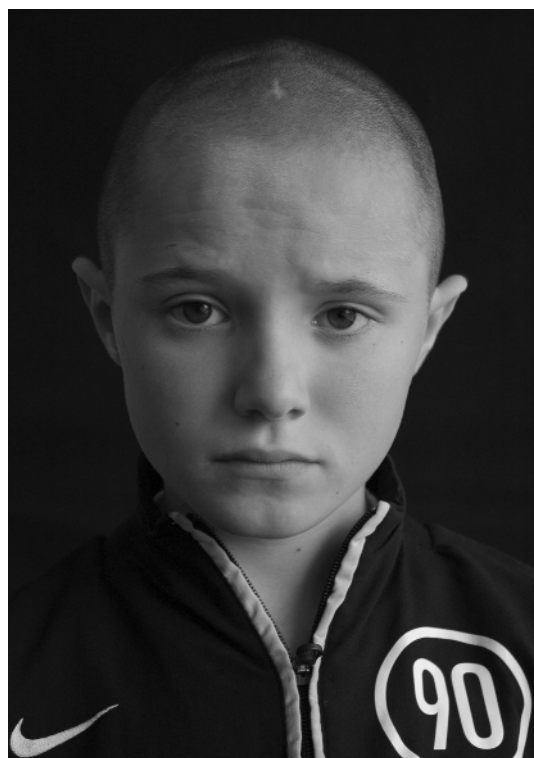
Who have we consulted when deciding on this objective?

Concluding note

‘Morality,’ Martin Luther King once declared, ‘cannot be legislated, but behaviour can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.’ He could have added: ‘Nor can judicial decrees change people’s minds. They can, however, restrain the mindless.’

The point of laws and requirements is that they can cause people to have regard for matters they might not otherwise have duly thought about. In schools, such matters include the perceptions teachers may have of their pupils, and the expectations they may have for them. Such perceptions and expectations are in their turn affected by the climate of opinion in wider society, and by teachers’ outlooks on social and political issues. These topics are considered and discussed in the next chapter.

Mind v. care, object, take offence, disapprove, dislike. regard, heed, pay attention, attend, mark, note, obey, watch, observe, be careful. look after, tend, take care of, watch over.
– *the Penguin A-Z Thesaurus*, 1986



Chapter 3

Excellence, intelligence, kind feeling – beliefs about people, schools and society

This morning, the village school opened

It is evening. I have dismissed, with the fee of an orange, the little orphan who serves me as handmaid. I am sitting alone on the hearth. This morning, the village school opened. I had twenty scholars.

With these words, Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre begins reviewing her first day as a teacher. The date is about 1830, and the place is south Yorkshire or north Derbyshire, England. Jane's thoughts reflect the particularities of her historical time and geographical location. Also, however, they are similar to the thoughts of all teachers at all times, and in all places. They are fitting introduction, therefore, to key themes running through this book.

Jane begins by considering the children's abilities and attitudes. 'But three of the number,' she says of the twenty children in her care, 'can read: none write or cypher.' (Cyphering, old dictionaries explain, meant 'doing arithmetic, working out by arithmetic, calculating'.) She continues by referring not only to abilities but also to attitudes:

Several knit, and a few sew a little. They speak with the broadest accent of the district. At present, they and I have a difficulty in understanding each other's language. Some of them are unmannered, rough, intractable, as well as ignorant; but others are docile, have a wish to learn, and evince a disposition that pleases me.

She then declares where she considers, regardless of the children's abilities and dispositions, her duty to lie, both as a professional and as a human being:

I must not forget that these coarsely-clad little peasants are of flesh and blood as good as the scions of gentlest genealogy; and that the germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, kind feeling, are as likely to exist in their hearts as in the hearts of the best-born. My duty will be to develop these germs.

There are words, phrases and references in Jane's vocabulary that no longer feature in staffroom conversations, or no longer have the meanings they had in the early nineteenth century – 'scholar', 'cypher', 'evince', 'coarsely-clad', 'scions', 'gentlest genealogy', 'germs'. But the same underlying sense of duty to children and young people remains, and the same desire for both personal and professional fulfilment:

Surely I shall find some happiness in discharging that office. Much enjoyment I do not expect in the life opening before me: yet it will, doubtless, if I regulate my mind, and exert my powers as I ought, yield me enough to live on from day to day.

Was I gleeful, settled, content, during the hours I passed in yonder bare, humble school-room this morning and afternoon? Not to deceive myself, I must reply – No: I felt desolate to a degree. I felt – yes, idiot that I am – I felt degraded ... I was weakly dismayed at the ignorance, the poverty, the coarseness of all I heard and saw around me.

In due course, however, Jane found her work worthwhile. Children whom she had misperceived at first to be 'gaping rustics' turned out to be, she says, 'sharp-witted enough'. And 'many showed themselves obliging, and amiable too; and I discovered amongst them not a few examples of natural politeness, and innate self-respect, as well as of excellent capacity, that won my good-will

and my admiration ... The rapidity of their progress in some instances was even surprising; and an honest and happy pride I took in it.' Her reflections are a vivid reminder of the concept of teacher expectations, and of the fact that the expectations of teachers are bound up with, and much influenced by, expectations in wider society. The words from a teacher quoted in box 3.1 are a reminder of the positive expectations that can and do exist, and can be nourished in spite of negativity in wider society. The brief aide-memoire quoted in box 3.2 can be used for reflection and discussion in staff meetings, training events and professional conversations.

Good morning – I smile because I see you

3.1

'What's wrong with you, miss? Why are you always smiling?' the students at my black-majority school ask me. 'I smile because I see you,' is my habitual reply.

But what I want to say is something like this: 'I smile to salute you, to salute all the learners here, who continue to hold tight to their dignity and self-belief in the endless and ugly face of racism, rejection and poverty. I smile to salute our teachers who work more hours than there are, before and after school, in holidays and at weekends, to struggle beside our students to try, through mentoring, after school classes, residential courses, to restore the balance and open the doors in a closed and unbalanced world.'

That's what I hope they hear in my smile. But even that ignores the poignancy of their question, their subtext that says a smile – respect, recognition, affirmation – is so unexpected as to be a symptom of illness, of deviance, their message that announces that there is nothing to smile about.

Quoted in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, Profile Books, 2000

Interviews and conversations

To begin focusing on teachers' beliefs about pupils, schools and society, it can often be valuable for colleagues to conduct interviews and structured conversations with each other. There is a possible set of topics in box 3.3.

The conversations focused by questions and topics such as those in box 3.3 can be extended to consider views of society as a whole. For example, brief quotations can be used from an influential book on inequality, as shown in box 3.4.

Respect, understanding, being yourself – aide-memoire for reflection

3.2

Respect

- Giving children and young people time to talk
- Giving them full attention
- Responding to what they say
- Avoiding put-downs or sarcasm
- Taking their opinions seriously

Understanding

- Seeing things from their point of view
- Checking if you have understood
- Offering interpretations
- Welcoming and using feedback
- Being non-judgemental

Being yourself

- Not having a façade
- Being clear and open about boundaries
- Taking risks
- Being prepared to admit mistakes, limitations, areas of ignorance
- Keeping promises and agreements

– handout for a staff training session, Derbyshire

Knowing your colleagues – possible talking points

3.3

(Please choose a handful of these to talk about. No need to consider them all.)

1. What are your earliest memories of a school or early years setting?
2. Describe a teacher or other adult who had a great influence on you when you were growing up.
3. How did your parents feel when they had contacts with the schools you attended?
4. If you have children yourself, how do you feel when dealing with their schools?
5. What do you like most about your current work?
6. What do you like least?
7. How are you feeling at the end of a good day? And at the end of a bad day?
8. Teachers are sometimes told they should know what gives each individual child a buzz of excitement. What gives you a buzz of excitement?
9. How religious are you?
10. How do you feel about the area where you live – likes and dislikes?
11. Has anyone ever been unkind or vicious to you because of the colour of your skin or because of your religion, or of your accent?
12. A good teacher, it has been said, shows respect, empathy and genuineness in their dealings with children and young people. How do you rate yourself in these respects?
13. What social class are you? Is it the same as the class your parents belonged to, or do belong to? When did you first begin to be aware of class differences?
14. How do you feel about political correctness?
15. How have your attitudes and opinions changed over the years in relation to issues of disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, social class?

Aspects of inequality – views and voices

3.4

The Spirit Level by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett is sub-titled *Why equality is better for everyone*. Each chapter is introduced with a quotation. Here are nine of them. Which three strike you as most thought-provoking?

It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society. *Krishnamurti*

A sad soul can kill you quicker than a germ. *John Steinbeck*

Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.

J.F. Kennedy

The degree of civilisation in a society can be judged by entering its prisons. *Fyodor Dostoevsky*

When justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organised conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither person nor property will be safe.

Frederick Douglass

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is piece of the continent, a part of the main. *John Donne*

The one who dies with most toys wins. *US bumper sticker*

Poverty is not a certain small amount of goods, nor is it just a relation between means and ends, above all it is a relation between people. Poverty is a social status ... It has grown ... as an invidious distinction between classes. *Marshall Sahlins*

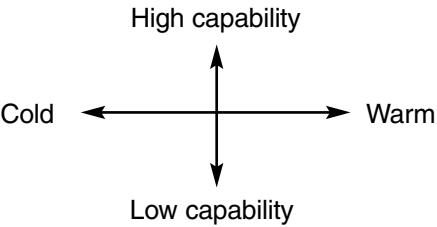
All the people like us are We, and everyone else is They.

Rudyard Kipling

Teachers’ expectations

Human beings tend to classify each other, particularly at times of conflict and consequent stress and anxiety, along the continua of a) likeability and b) capability. Figure 3.1 shows the two continua as being at right angles to each other, so creating four quadrants in the mental map which human use when they approach each other.

Figure 3.1: Perceptions and expectations of others



People perceived to belong to the top left quadrant are expected to be hostile, malevolent and troublesome. Since they also have high capability and power of various kinds they are seen as threatening. People perceived to belong to the bottom left quadrant are similarly expected to be hostile, malevolent and troublesome. But since they have low capability and power, and can therefore be easily contained and controlled, they are not seen as threatening.

People perceived to belong to the bottom right quadrant are expected to be well-disposed, friendly, cooperative – in a word, ‘nice’. But since they have low capability and power they are not seen as equals. People perceived to belong to the top right quadrant are both likeable and capable. They are sometimes known as ‘PLU’ – ‘people like us’, and are seen as having the right to wear the IALAC badge: ‘I Am Likeable And Capable’. In schools, children and young people perceived to have high ability and positive attitudes belong to quadrant A in figure 3.2.

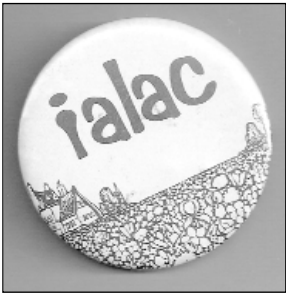


Figure 3.2: Four types of pupil in teachers’ mental maps

B High ability and negative attitude	A High ability and positive attitude
D Low ability and negative attitude	C Low ability and positive attitude

All four of the quadrants in figures 3.1 and 3.2 are illustrated in Jane Eyre’s musings. The bottom left hand quadrant is strikingly illustrated in box 3.5, which is an account of staffroom culture in a New York school the early 1950s. The author’s description of teachers’ beliefs and expectations at that time, and in that place, is unflattering in the extreme. But also, alas, it sounds plausible. In any case it is a striking reminder of the kinds of attitude amongst teachers that can and do exist, particularly on a bad day, though they are seldom if ever nowadays expressed with such fear and dislike.

Pupils perceived by teachers to belong to quadrant A (figure 3.2) have much higher achievements than those who are perceived to be in quadrant D. This is not at all surprising, of course, and is precisely what common sense would predict. Research, however, has shown that expectations of a particular pupil may not be rooted in objective evidence about that individual but in deep-seated beliefs and assumptions, many of them tacit, or by unconscious rather than articulated, to do with social class, gender, ethnicity, culture and

race. For example, even a pupil's name may affect teachers' expectations, as recalled in box 3.6. When the pupil is met face to face, the teacher may attend in the first instance to non-verbal cues – body-language, gesture, facial expression, demeanour and posture, complexion, physique, gait and movement,

Control is the big thing – a point of view

3.5

In the teachers' cafeteria there are two schools of thought. The old timers tell me, You're young, you're new, but don't let these damn kids ride all over you. Let 'em know who's boss in the classroom and remember, you are the boss. Control is the big thing in teaching. No control and you can't teach. You have the power to pass and fail and they know goddam well if they fail there's no place for them in this society. They'll be sweeping the streets and washing the dishes and it'll be their own fault, the little bastards. Just don't take shit. You're the boss, the man with the red pen.

... Younger teachers are not so sure. They've taken courses in Educational Psychology and The Philosophy of Education, they've read John Dewey, and they tell me these children are human beings and we have to meet their felt needs.

I don't know what a felt need is and I don't ask for fear of exposing my ignorance. The younger teachers shake their heads over the older ones. They tell me the war is over, these children are not the enemy. They're our children, for God's sake.

An older teacher says, Felt needs, my ass. Jump into a field full of krauts and you'll know what a felt need is. And John Dewey can kiss my ass, too. Just like the rest of these goddam college professors bullshittin' about teaching in high schools and they wouldn't know a high school kid if he walked up and pissed on their leg.

Stanley Garber says, That's right. Every day we put on our armour and go into battle.

– from *Tis: a memoir* by Frank McCourt, describing teaching in America in the 1950s

'Only natural' – what's in a child's name?

3.6

Teachers think they can tell which pupils are likely to play up by looking at their names, a survey suggests.

The poll of 3,000 teachers found more than one in three expected pupils with certain names to be more disruptive.

Pupils called Callum, Connor, Jack, Chelsea, Courtney and Chardonnay were among some of the ones to watch.

The online survey by parenting club Bounty.com found 49 per cent of UK teachers made assumptions about a child when they first looked down the register.

But it is not all bad news, with 57 per cent of the teachers surveyed saying the naughtier children tended to be more popular than their better behaved peers. More than a third said the naughtiest pupils were often the brightest and the more sensitive. And 71 per cent of teachers admitted to have a private chuckle over some of the more unusual names.

The survey also asked teachers what the brightest children tended to be called, with Alexander, Adam, Christopher, Benjamin, Edward, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Emma, Hannah and Rebecca coming in as the brainiest names.

Names of the most popular children in the class included Jack, Daniel, Charlie, Callum, Emma, Charlotte, Hannah and Anna.

Faye Mingo from Bounty.com said: 'Teachers are only human and make assumptions like the rest of us. Rightly or wrongly, most of us make assumptions based on something as simple as a person's name and we base these on our previous experiences. It's only natural for teachers to make judgments based on the behaviour and performance of former pupils with the same name, but I'm sure that they are happy for to be proved wrong.'

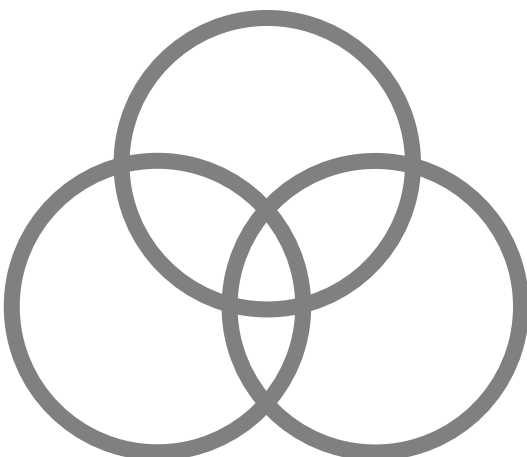
BBC NEWS, 8 September 2009

Being included, being left out – enduring memories

3.7

When adults recall and discuss their own memories of being included or excluded when they were at school, they mention feelings and perceptions such as those summarised here.

Aspects	Perceptions and experiences when I felt included	Perceptions and experiences when I did not feel included
<i>Being known</i>	There's at least one teacher who understands me, knows the real me.	There's this teacher who hasn't a clue what goes on inside me.
<i>Being liked</i>	There's at least one teacher who likes me, is pleased to see me, pleased that I'm in the classroom.	There's this teacher who thinks I'm a waste of space, doesn't want me in their classroom.
<i>Questions</i>	I am not afraid to ask questions. The teacher actually encourages me to ask questions, and I enjoy learning through questioning.	I get my head bitten off if I ask questions. The teacher thinks that I think that it's their fault if I haven't understood something. So they assume I'm a trouble-maker.
<i>Praise</i>	I get praised and I feel glad to be in the classroom.	I get told off or the teacher's sarcastic and I feel humiliated.
<i>Work</i>	I find the work interesting and enjoyable. It stretches me, and I wouldn't enjoy it so much if it didn't.	The work is boring. Either it's trivial, just set to keep me quiet, or else I can't do it.
<i>Sense of progress</i>	I feel I'm getting somewhere, the future is bright.	I'm going nowhere, I can't see any future in this.
<i>Adults and institutions</i>	Adults can basically be trusted, and institutions (school, but also for example the police and other authorities) are basically fair.	You can't trust adults and you can't expect to be treated fairly by them, particularly those who have power, for example those who wear a uniform
<i>Reference groups</i>	I care a lot about what the teachers think of me, and about how adults generally see me.	I'm much more concerned about how my friends and mates see me than how authority figures see me. If this gets me into trouble, too bad.



use of eye-contact, use of physical space, hairstyle and how tidy it is, how the school uniform is worn, and so on. And then as soon as the pupil opens their mouth, the teacher may be influenced by accent, intonation, use of standard or non-standard terms and syntax, tone, loudness or softness, readiness to interrupt or to be interrupted, and appropriacy and register of language when speaking to an authority figure. All these features are connected, of course, with class, gender, culture or sub-culture, ethnicity and race.

Pupils perceived by their teachers to be likeable and capable (quadrant A) have a different educational experience from pupils seen to be in quadrant D. There are five main kinds of difference:

A climate of respect. Quadrant A pupils feel they are respected and liked by their teachers. But quadrant D pupils, in contrast, feel they are unvalued. The communication of respect and liking takes place through a range of non-verbal means as well as explicitly.

Feedback. Quadrant A pupils receive more frequent feedback on how they are progressing, and the feedback they receive is not only more positive but also more focused and detailed.

Stimulus. Quadrant A pupils are given more engaging and interesting tasks, and receive more attention related to their learning. Quadrant D pupils, however, receive more attention related to their behaviour.

Expression. Quadrant A pupils have more opportunities to ask questions, and to clarify their thinking through talk and discussion. If quadrant D pupils ask questions, it may be assumed they are challenging, confrontational and troublesome.

Justice and trust. Quadrant A pupils feel that the education system, and the world generally, is just and can be trusted. Quadrant D pupils, however, do not easily trust their teachers or their school, or authority in the wider world. One consequence is that Quadrant D pupils are much more likely to look for moral support from their peers and from youth culture than from teachers, parents and adults generally.

These abstract points can be brought alive by an inservice training activity such the following. First, the map with its four quadrants is introduced and explained, and participants are asked to sketch their own version. They are then asked to jot memories in each quadrant of times when they themselves, while at school or college, were perceived and treated wrongly and unhelpfully. Next, they share these memories in pairs or threes. Then in perhaps slightly larger groups they draw up a tabulation of general differences between Quadrant A and Quadrant D, and compare and contrast their tabulation with the one in box 3.7. Finally, they consider practical ways in which they can ensure their pupils are likely to receive positive experiences,

Concluding note

Finally in this chapter, the concept of teacher expectations is illustrated by an ancient fable (box 3.8). The fable is not essentially about two different kinds of teacher but about the spectrum of feelings and attitudes that can exist in any one individual, or in any one staffroom. The next chapter is about practical options and possibilities. The fable suggests that whether or not these are successful will depend to a large extent on the attitudes and feelings amongst teachers by which these possibilities are accompanied.

The next stages of their careers – a tale of two teachers

3.8

One day, a teacher working at Selfbury School got a new job at Otherham School. During the holiday, before taking up her new post, she happened to meet two children. The children mentioned, to her surprise, that they knew Otherham School. 'What's it like there?' she asked.

'Well,' said the children, 'what's it like at Selfbury School?'

'Terrible,' said the teacher. 'The head's a little Hitler, the children are savages, and incapable of learning anything, my colleagues were for ever stabbing me in the back and the local authority officers and advisers were a pack of lifeless grey suits. I'll be glad to get away, I can tell you. But anyway, what's it like at Otherham?'

'I'm sorry to have to tell you,' said the children, 'that you'll find the school you are going to is very similar to the school you are coming from'.

The teacher went on her way depressed and full of foreboding, expecting the worst. The next stage of her career would consist of one battle and defeat after another.

During that same school holiday there was another teacher moving from Selfbury School to Otherham. She too happened to meet the children. 'What's it like at Otherham?' she asked.

'Well,' they said, 'what's it like at Selfbury?'

'Wonderful,' said the teacher, 'The head was unfailingly supportive, the children were keen to learn, my colleagues couldn't be more helpful and the local authority officers and advisers always knew what to say, and what not to say. I'm really sorry to be leaving, I can tell you. But anyway, what's it like at Otherham?'

'I'm pleased to be able to tell you,' said the children, 'that you'll find the school you are going to is very similar to the school you are coming from.'

The teacher went on her way rejoicing, sure that the best was yet to come. The next stage of her life would consist of one fruitful encounter and exchange after another.



Chapter 4

What then shall we do? – practical options and possibilities

In the light of the policy directions recalled in chapter 2, and of the central importance of teachers' expectations and beliefs recalled in chapter 3, what shall we actually do? This is the question discussed in this chapter. It is considered with reference in particular to the role of schools in addressing socio-economic disadvantage. For example, and specifically, it is concerned with the use schools may make of the pupil premium.

First, though, it is relevant to continue with the discussion in the previous chapter about teachers' views and beliefs about the wider society in which they operate. Why are some people so much poorer or richer than others?

Why do the children of those who are richer do so much better at school than those who are poorer? Are such differences fixed in the natural order of things, and can nothing much be done about them? Or are they changeable? If so, should they be changed? Why? And how? What, in any case, is the role of schools? To what extent and in what ways can they at least mitigate the most harmful effects of poverty? Teachers have to ask and discuss such questions, both as individuals and collectively, before they make choices between specific practical options. They are focused by the quotations in box 4.2, and are introduced by the selection of facts in box 4.1.

Poverty and educational achievement – key facts

4.1

- Almost 1.2 million children in England live in a lower-income household, as defined by eligibility for free school meals
 - That's about 18.5 per cent of pupils in primary schools and 15.4 per cent of pupils in secondary schools
 - Overall, secondary schools judged by Ofsted to be outstanding have far fewer pupils from lower-income households than do other schools – only 9.4 per cent of pupils in outstanding schools are from lower-income homes, compared with 15.4 per cent nationally
 - Only 44 per cent of children from lower-income households achieve a good level of development in areas such as communication, play and social interaction in the early years foundation stage (EYFS), compared with 62 per cent of other children
 - Only 27 per cent of 16-year-olds from lower-income households achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE, compared with 54 per cent of others
 - Only 56 per cent of 11-year-olds from lower-income households achieve the expected level in both English and mathematics, compared with 77 per cent of other pupils
 - Only 31 per cent of pupils from lower-income households achieve five A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, including English and mathematics, compared with 59 per cent of other pupils
 - Only four per cent of pupils aged 15 from lower-income households go on to university, compared with 33 per cent of others
 - Young people from lower-income households are twice as likely as other young people to be permanently excluded from school
- Source: Department for Education, 2010-11*
- The term 'lower-income household' refers to children known to be eligible for free school meals. Some of the percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

Poverty and educational achievement – things people say

4.2

It is a well-known fact that children and young people who live in households with low incomes, as measured by eligibility for free school meals, are likely to achieve less than others in relation to stage of development at age 5; SATs results at age 11; GCSE results at age 16; A level results at age 18; entry to a university, particularly a Russell Group university

Why? What are the reasons for the connection between living in a low-income household and low educational achievement?

Here are some things which are sometimes said or thought. Which three do you yourself consider to be most relevant? Which three do you disagree with most strongly? Which three do you disagree with but believe that too many of your colleagues do agree with them?

1. 'Schools are geared to the interests, needs and outlooks of the majority of the population, not those of people who live in low-income households.'
2. 'Teachers have low expectations of these children.'
3. 'Basically, teachers do not like these children and do not know how to relate to them.'
4. 'The parents did not themselves achieve success at school and their aversion to education and teachers affects their children.'
5. 'There is much unemployment in the local area and the children and their parents can see no point in trying to achieve educational success.'
6. 'The parents have poor parenting skills – for example, do not set consistent boundaries, are inconsistent, do not show love and concern.'
7. 'The parents cannot afford to buy books, computers, foreign holidays, etc, that are helpful or essential for educational success.'
8. 'The parents do not encourage or teach their children to respect teachers.'
9. 'The children only come to school to meet friends and have fun and mess around – they have no work ethic or sense of the future.'
10. 'Lack of money means financial pressure and worry and puts a strain on relationships, maybe leading to ADHD.'
11. 'Lack of money means poor diet and unhealthy accommodation, and these have an adverse impact on how and whether children learn successfully.'
12. 'People in low-income households tend to be less intelligent and hard-working than other people.'
13. 'Teenagers from low-income households are likely to join street gangs that are opposed to most things a school stands for.'
14. 'Teachers do not know how to relate to the parents and grandparents of children who live in low-income households.'
15. 'Schools fail to insist on traditional standards and good manners, and on respect for adults and authority.'
16. 'Pupils are too influenced by celebrity culture and get-rich-quick talent shows on television.'
17. Government policies and Ofsted inspectors put too much emphasis on narrow definitions of what constitutes achievement.'
18. 'The economy needs, and has always needed, a certain proportion of the population to do unskilled work, or to be unemployed.'
19. 'Children from low-income homes tend to have a low birth weight, and are frequently affected by poor health.'
20. 'Schools mainly attended by lower-income children tend to be less well resourced than other schools – poor buildings, high staff turnover, low staff morale.'

Between them, the quotations in box 4.2 express a wide range of views. They have been assembled here to be used for discussion at staff meetings and training sessions. Ideally, perhaps, a whole staff needs to be agreed about which of the quotations best express the views which they wish to promote. Their preferred views need to be reflected in formal policy statements and in practices and projects based on the policies. Also, and perhaps equally importantly, they need to be reflected in everyday conversations.

The explanations quoted in Box 4.2, and all similar statements, can be categorised as follows:

- those which are essentially about out-of-school-factors (OSFs) – things which are beyond a school's ability to prevent; the best a school can do in relation to OSFs is mitigate their worst effects
- those which are essentially about in-school-factors (ISFs) – things which are entirely or almost entirely within a school's ability to change or respond to
- those which are the consequence of an interaction between out-of-school and in-school factors.

The out-of-school factors can be further categorised as being to do either with finance or with culture. Explanations which emphasise culture (as for example through the phrase 'the culture of poverty') are frequently referred to as the deficit model of disadvantage. Those which stress material disadvantage and deprivation, however, refer to matters such as low birth-weight and non-genetic prenatal influences on children; inadequate medical, dental, and vision care; food insecurity and inadequate nutrition; environmental pollutants; family relations and family stress arising from shortage of money, leading to attention disorders and oppositional behaviour; and neighbourhood characteristics and poor housing.

You do whatever you can

Billy Kwan is an experienced and seasoned freelance photo-journalist based in Jakarta, Indonesia. Guy Hamilton is also a journalist, a foreign correspondent from Australia, but as yet a relative novice. At one stage in the film in which they are both characters, they discuss whether they have responsibilities towards people in the situations which they photograph and, if so, what those responsibilities are.

BILLY: 'And the people asked him, saying, what then shall we do?'

GUY: What's that?

BILLY: It's from Luke, chapter three, verse ten. What then must we do? Tolstoy asked the same question. He wrote a book with that title. He got so upset about the poverty in Moscow that he went one night into the poorest section and just gave away all his money. You could do that now. Five American dollars would be a fortune to one of these people.

GUY: Wouldn't do any good, just be a drop in the ocean.

BILLY: Ah, that's the same conclusion Tolstoy came to. I disagree.

GUY: Oh, what's your solution?

BILLY: Well, I support the view that you just don't think about the major issues. You do whatever you can about the misery that's in front of you. Add your light to the sum of light. You think that's naive, don't you?

GUY: Yep.

BILLY: It's alright, most journalists do.

GUY: We can't afford to get involved.

– from the screenplay of *The Year Of Living Dangerously*, directed by Peter Weir, 1982

In 2011, inspectors in Wales summarised what they saw as the current situation in their country with regard to the link between economic disadvantage and educational achievement. Their judgements are listed in box 4.3, and are a useful basis for staff training or discussion.

In the light of the findings summarised in box 4.3, the inspectorate in Wales has compiled a self-evaluation aide-memoire, as shown in box 4.4.

In addition to gathering and analysing data, as summarised in box 4.4, schools need to consider measures and projects such as those listed in box 4.5.



Addressing disadvantage – findings from inspections

4.3

To what extent are these judgements true of the school(s) you know best?

1. Most schools still fail to target support specifically at disadvantaged learners and only a few analyse data effectively enough to identify disadvantaged learners.
2. Most schools do not use their assessment and tracking systems well enough to monitor the progress of disadvantaged learners.
3. The few schools that support their disadvantaged learners well implement systematic, whole-school approaches for teaching and learning that benefit all learners and support individual disadvantaged learners by providing mentoring or help with basic skills and homework.
4. Nearly all schools see themselves as community-focused and work with a range of agencies. However, school leaders do not usually co-ordinate multi-agency working systematically enough to ensure that disadvantaged learners are supported in the most effective and timely way.
5. Only a few schools plan explicitly to raise disadvantaged learners' aspirations.
6. Although many schools offer a range of out-of-hours learning, only in a few are these extra activities carefully planned to increase disadvantaged learners' confidence, motivation and self-esteem.
7. Where schools have had the greatest impact on raising learners' achievement, staff plan out-of-hours learning to match the needs of learners and to complement the curriculum.
8. School leaders generally have not received enough training on working with the community or services, or on using data to evaluate initiatives to tackle disadvantage.
9. Schools do not share best practice or collaborate effectively with each other in this area.
10. Most local authorities do not do enough to offer schools practical guidance on how to work with local communities and services, or how best to analyse outcome data for disadvantaged learners.

Source: Estyn (2011).

Gathering and using data – a self-evaluation checklist

4.4

Statement**Strongly
agree****Agree****Disagree****Strongly
disagree**

The school has clearly identified its disadvantaged pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school knows how well disadvantaged pupils are performing on key performance indicators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school knows the gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others, and how this compares to national and local averages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school tracks the performance of disadvantaged pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school targets interventions based on the findings of the tracking system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school supports all disadvantaged learners, including those of middle and high ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school has an agreed and public strategy that directly tackles disadvantage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school meets the needs of all pupils, without compromising on high academic standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school's annual self-evaluation update includes explicit reference to the performance of disadvantaged learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school development plan shows how the school is raising the performance of disadvantaged learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A senior leader has managerial responsibility for overseeing and co-coordinating the work on improving the standards achieved by disadvantaged learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disadvantaged pupils have equal access to the best teachers in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school has strategies to improve pupils' social and emotional skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school has strategies to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school tracks pupils' personal development as well as their academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The schools works systematically with parents to support disadvantaged pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school has many high-quality extra-curricular and out-of-school-hours provision and monitors the participation of disadvantaged pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are suitable arrangements to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have a genuine chance to have their say	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.4 (continued)

Gathering and using data – a self-evaluation checklist

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There is well-organised on-site support for pupils to do their homework after school or to have ready access to specialist ICT equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school actively seeks to work with a wide range of support agencies in the local community, including social services, health services and the voluntary sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching assistants are trained to work effectively with disadvantaged pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary schools enable a quick start on entry to school through early assessment and intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transition arrangements for key stage 2 to key stage 3 take account of the needs of disadvantaged pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secondary schools work with other schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to develop broad-based collaborative provision at key stage 4 and post 16 and there is a positive view of the value of vocational education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secondary schools ensure they have data on the extent to which former students are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: adapted slightly from documentation prepared by the Estyn inspectorate in Wales, 2011

Different

Scott Fitzgerald: The rich are different from you and me.

Ernest Hemingway: Yeah, they got more money.

– *legendary conversation, 1920s*

Easier

Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery easier to live with.

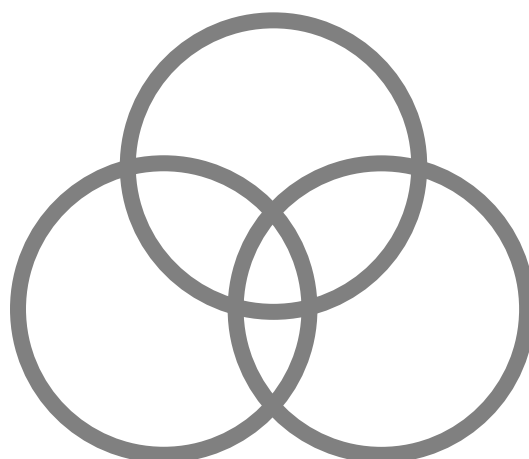
– Anon

Narrowing gaps – measures and projects to make a difference**4.5**

What can and should schools do to improve the life chances of children and young people who are currently failing to achieve much from their education, particularly those who are affected by economic disadvantage? Here are some of the things which are sometimes said or thought.

Which five do you consider most important. Can you rank them in order?

1. Include more stories and narratives in the curriculum about individuals and groups who fought successfully for better lives for themselves.
2. Show more empathy and sympathy for children, young people, families and households who struggle to make ends meet, both financially and emotionally.
3. Insist more on traditional teaching methods and content – whole-class instruction, streaming and setting, high standards in all subjects of spelling and grammar, traditional not modern subjects (history and geography, not sociology or economics).
4. Monitor the extent to which pupils from low-income households are achieving expected levels of attainment, and also the extent to which they are involved in extra-curricular activities, the public life of the school, school trips and sports teams, and take conscious steps to improve the situation if inequalities are identified.
5. Give a high profile to social and emotional aspects of learning.
6. Focus on the teaching of academic literacy in all subjects – key terminology, appropriate grammar and ways of talking, etc.
7. Teach more about controversial issues in the locality and in wider society.
8. Organise homework clubs, extended days, Saturday schools, summer schools, etc.
9. Organise more team teaching and partnership teaching.
10. Place greater focus on both generic and subject-specific thinking skills.
11. Place greater focus on speaking and listening skills in all subjects, and therefore on collaborative groupwork
12. Give more time to the visual and performing arts, including new media.
13. Put more emphasis on key transition times, particularly primary/secondary transfer.
14. Provide mentoring by adults who are not teachers.
15. Older pupils acting as mentors, instructors and tutors for younger pupils.



School improvement – what does and doesn't work

4.6

Smaller classes, uniforms, and primary homework among the least effective ways of boosting school performance

Reducing class sizes, setting homework during primary school, and introducing school uniforms are among the least effective ways of improving school results, according to a new 'Which?' style guide for education published by the Sutton Trust today.

Significant gains in attainment meanwhile come from proven classroom approaches – providing effective feedback on pupil's performance, encouraging students to think about their own learning strategies, and getting pupils to learn from each other. Implemented correctly, these approaches can increase pupils' performance by an extra eight or nine months in a school year for a very low cost, according to the guide.

The pupil premium toolkit, developed by academics at Durham University, provides an easily accessible guide for teachers. It details the approaches they should consider when allocating the Government's Pupil Premium, summarising the evidence gathered from thousands of studies involving millions of pupils across the world.

The toolkit finds that the benefits of reducing class sizes 'are not particularly large or clear, until class size is reduced to under 20 or even below 15'. Hiring more teaching assistants meanwhile is associated with 'very small or no effects on attainment'.

The results are at odds with the current views of most teachers. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of teachers identified reducing class sizes as one of their top three priorities when surveyed by the Sutton Trust as to how they intend to spend the pupil premium. And nearly half (44%) said that hiring more teaching assistants was one of their top three priorities.

Among other lessons, the toolkit finds:

On effective feedback – 'One study even estimates that the impact of rapid feedback on learning is 124 times more cost effective than reducing class sizes.'

On peer tutoring – 'Benefits are apparent for both tutor and tutee, though the approach should be used to supplement or enhance normal teaching, rather than replace it.'

On meta-cognitive approaches – 'Studies report substantial gains equivalent to moving a class from 50th place in a league table of 100 schools to about 25th.'

On homework – 'It is more valuable at secondary school level and much less effective for children of primary school age.'

On teaching assistants – 'Most studies have consistently found very small or no effects on attainment.'

On school uniforms – 'No robust evidence that introducing a school uniform will improve academic performance.'

On reducing class sizes – 'Overall the benefits are not particularly large or clear, until class size is reduced to under 20 or even below 15.'

On one-to-one tuition – 'Pupils might improve by about four or five months during the programme, but costs are high as the support is intensive.'

On ability grouping – 'There may be some benefits for higher attaining pupils, but these are largely outweighed by the negative effects on attitudes for middle and lower performing learners.'

Source: Sutton Trust, 26 May 2011

‘Seven vital ingredients’

A paper on the website of the national college for school leadership (NCSL) in 2011 noted that ‘the highest performing classrooms, schools and systems have a very narrow, or virtually no, gap’ in the achievement of pupils from higher-income and lower-income households. Put differently, there is no ‘tail of underachievement’ – the number of learners who fail to achieve what are defined as national and international norms and standards.

In the most effective schools, the paper said, and the most effective educational systems excellence is available to all and the driving imperative is to secure equity. But in the least effective schools and systems there is a tail of underachievement, and it is accepted that failure is for some pupils inevitable.

The paper summarised what it called ‘seven vital ingredients’ if the gap between richer and poorer pupils is to be significantly narrowed. It stressed that these need to work together and reinforce each other, and described them as follows:

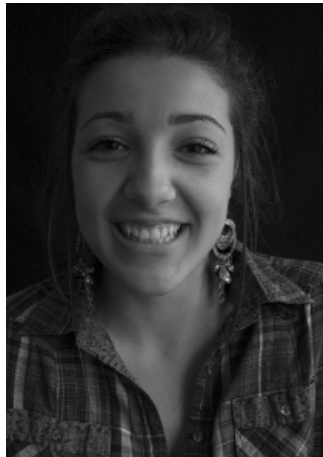
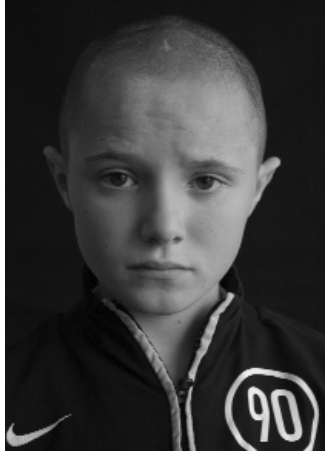
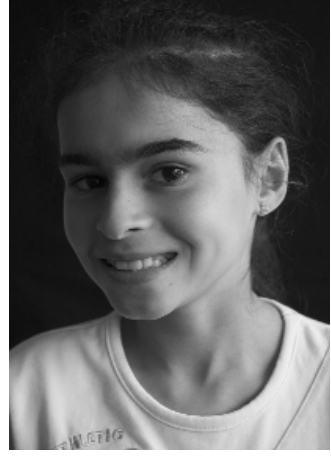
1. **An ethical imperative:** Closing the gap has to be seen as an ethical imperative rather than a policy initiative. Leadership is therefore focused on an explicit moral proposition that centres on securing effective teaching and learning for all.
2. **Explicit commitment:** There needs to be an explicit commitment to creating a learning community based on high trust and interdependence, and a shared language centred on high performance by all.
3. **Teaching and learning as the core purpose:** School leadership and governance need to see the quality of teaching and learning as the school’s core purpose.

4. **Collective leadership:** Leadership should be widely distributed across the school community, and work through collective capacity rather than personal status.
5. **Parents and pupils:** Parents and pupils should be active partners in the learning process, with a direct role in accountability strategies and the development of programmes that meet individual needs.
6. **Collaboration:** There needs to be active collaboration within and between schools to ensure that the best practices and resources are available to all.
7. **Rigorous planning:** Underpinning all of the above there needs to be rigorous and systematic planning, resource management and data-rich strategies.

Concluding note

This chapter has suggested that the legal and moral principles in the Equality Act, as outlined in chapter 2, can be appropriately applied to issues of poverty, class and low income. Accordingly, schools should see low income as similar in significant respects to the protected characteristics named in equalities legislation, and in connection with low income should have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. As expressions of due regard, they should monitor and publish relevant information, and should formulate specific and measurable objectives.

The chapter concludes the first part of this book. The remainder of the book is a series of case study descriptions of specific projects. All, though in a range of different ways, are about the essential key concept of literacy. The first (chapter 5) is about the power of community broadcasting.



Chapter 5

Proud of myself and very cheerful – the power of community radio

‘This week,’ writes Katie, ‘I was in the radio roadshow. I was a presenter. A presenter is someone who opens or closes the show.’ She continues: ‘The first thing we did was a play called The Stardis. Next was the chart show. There were interviews and a quiz. I learned many stuff on the way. I learned that mic live means everybody has to be silent. Also I learned that your voice sounds very odd on the radio but to someone else it sounds perfectly normal.’

Katie is a Year 5 pupil at a primary school in a former mining village. She is one of the many pupils at the school who come from a lower-income background and whose progress in literacy has so far been rather stumbling. Her experience of being the presenter of a radio programme has clearly had a significant impact on her. She writes further:

My favourite part was speaking in the mic and working like a team with your friends. It gave you some time to go and have a fantastic time. Before we went live I was nerves [sic] but I was ready for it. After the live show I was proud of my self and was very cheerful. The two men that helped us were called Dan and Iwan. They were a great help and taught me everything I needed to know about radio.

This chapter describes the project in which Katie was involved. A similar project has taken place in several other schools as well, both primary and secondary, and the chapter draws on some of this wider work. As a preliminary introduction to it, box 5.1 contains the voices of several of the other

children at Katie’s school and box 5.2 contains a summary of reflections about the project drawn up by teachers from a range of different schools.

What the project entailed

The radio roadshow project is an activity of the East Midlands gifted and talented partnership (Emgate). In each school the roadshow runs for four days, and builds up to a live internet broadcast at the end of the fourth day. By situating the children in a simulated professional environment, the project gives an opportunity to practise skills which they can potentially use in other contexts as well, not only orally but also in writing. It does this by requiring a powerful mix of ordinary, everyday language on the one hand – namely, the kind of language which children use habitually with each other, and at home and in their local community – and the more academic and technical kind of language demanded by the school’s curriculum.

Further, the project provides major opportunities for children to work together, to develop their team building skills and to listen to each other and build on each other’s ideas, and develop their relationships with each other. This is of vital importance since ideally learning a particular skill and learning how to relate to others socially should be inseparable. Boxes 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 give additional information about the project and about what

I learnt how to be a broadcaster – children's experiences

5.1

Hearing your voice

I made a logo and came up with a radio name. I learnt how to be the broadcaster and I learnt how to load songs on the broadcaster. The best bit was working with Dan and Iwan doing the recording the voices and the even better bit is hearing your voice on upstream. The exciting bit was the live show which I felt a bit nerves before the live show but I felt a better after the show. *(Sam)*

Nervous first

This week I did a radio road show. I had a part in a play called 'The Stardis' and in the radio there was sports news & world news & weather forecast & much much more. I learnt about mic live & mixing desk & on air & pop shade. I loved the interview game and using the mic. I felt nervous first and proud after. *(Brooklyn)*

An amazing machine

When I got chosen for the radio station with my friends, we walked down quietly to the ICT suite and down there we seen an amazing machine with loads of cables and wires and we sat down on the carpet and they said, 'Hi, this is the radio road show Team and our names are Iwan and my name is Dan'. We learned about amazing key words like string/radio/live and on air. My favourite bit was making the amazing play. I felt really shy of being on the show and after I felt really amazed. *(Jordan)*

Really happy and amazed

When I got chosen for the radio I was so so happy to be with all of my friends and glad to meet the people that was doing it. When we got in the ICT suite we played a game. I learnt how to use the touch screen computer and listen to my voice. I liked working with Dan and Iwan and my friends too. I felt really scared and happy when I went in the ICT suite. It was so so fun. I felt really really scared when we went live. I felt really really embarrassed when my mum came in and said 'good luck' to me. When we had finished going live I felt really really happy and amazed. *(Ellie)*

I hope I do it another time

The first day I was a bit scared and when we got there we had to speak into the broadcaster and say, 'hello my name is whatever your name is I am 9 or 10 years old I like what ever you like'. I said 'hello my name is Rachel I am nine years old and I like animals'. When every body had done that we listened to what we said we all laughed. Then we had to make a name up for the show. The choices what we had to vote for was ABELARD TECHNOLOGY, PITTON STARS or ABELARD MACHINE but most people voted for ABELARD MACHINE so that's what we called it. The best bit in the entire road show days was when we could talk through the broadcaster. I had learned what a fader is. A fader is where you turn the volume up and down and what a jingle is it is a type of news. It was worth missing all the lessons for 4 days. I really enjoyed it I hope I do it another time. *(Rachel)*

Fun and exciting

When I got chosen for the radio I was very excited I could burst. We did play called 'The Stardis'. After that we played the interview game and we did exciting things I learned that fader means turn up the volume and fader out means turn down the volume. I liked the scripts because they were fun and exciting. After few days we went live and I felt nervous. After we went live I felt proud because I did radio. *(Corey)*

children experienced and achieved through it. Box 5.3 shows how a secondary school made contact about it with parents and guardians.

For the live broadcast, the parents of the children involved were invited into school to listen to it together as it was broadcast – though also they could listen to it live on their computer at home, if they had one, and could listen to it later on the EMGATE website if that was more convenient. The project made the occasion extremely special for the children involved, and was an opportunity to build the confidence of parents in the schools' ability to

Community broadcasting – key success features

5.2

Reality

Tasks were real, for example letters of application for jobs, the creation of scripts, interviewing, research, collaborative workshop writing.

Teamwork

Different children learnt and used different skills, for example communicating, interacting with others, having their own voice and feelings valued.

Power and self-confidence

Pupils gained a sense of power and self-confidence through the planning process, including all elements of production and the final delivery.

Hands-on experience and new vocabulary

Pupils had hands-on contact with state-of-the-art technology, and within this real context learnt and used specialist vocabulary.

Real audience

Pupils had to perform for a real audience and to a real deadline.

Choice

Pupils had a sense that they had opted for whatever they did, and it was they themselves, not their regular teachers, who chose the principal themes and topics for exploration.

Immersion in a range of key skills – a letter to parents

5.3

Dear Parent/Guardian

Radio Roadshow

During November we shall be involved in an exciting curriculum project with our partner primary schools, Abelard Primary School and Woodstock Grange Junior School. It will involve some Year 9 students at this school and some Year 5 students in the primary schools.

The project is entitled Radio Roadshow and is delivered by a local company, EMGATE. It uses new technology and broadcasting practices to further the students' knowledge and skills in line with the national curriculum. It is a four-day programme using a portable broadcasting system that introduces the students to the three main areas of radio broadcasting – writing, presenting and production – and immerses them in a range of key skills, including speaking and listening, ICT, and higher-order thinking skills. The four-day programme finishes with a live broadcast on the internet at the end of day four. You will be able to listen to it at home, either live or later, and also will be welcome to listen to it live at school.

We shall also be given some 'radio kit' which we can use to continue broadcasting after the project has finished.

Your child has been chosen to participate in this project, and we hope that you will be happy for them to take part. If you require any further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

meet their child's needs. This showed the parents that their children were being fully included in the life of the school, and hopefully contributed, in a non-threatening and non-challenging way, towards changing any negative attitudes to schooling they may have acquired when they themselves were at school.

Box 5.4 contains an extract from the preliminary letter that was sent to participating schools. It shows not only the project's emphasis on cognitive and linguistic skills and at the same time, its concern with interpersonal and team-building skills.

Action research by a classroom teacher

'How,' a teacher asked herself, 'can I remove the barriers to achievement for the 19 children in Year 5 who are on free school meals?' She had the opportunity at the end of the NQT year to reflect on the progress she had made towards her targets and to look forward into the following year to identify new targets. She was taking up a new teaching position for this new academic year, so needed to think carefully about new targets. As part of its school improvement plan one of the schools was aiming to narrow the gap in writing between pupils from lower-income households and other pupils. She wrote as follows:

I felt that looking into the detail of this vulnerable group and conducting research into why this group of children are underachieving would not only benefit my personal development, by enhancing my ability to remove barriers to learning, but also would vastly benefit the children in my class ...My aims for my research project were to identify what barriers to their learning stand in these children's way and how I, as their class teacher, can remove them. I hoped to gain a better understanding of the children's attitude to their learning within this group, and develop my own teaching style to incorporate opportunities for all learners in the classroom.

Box 5.4 Cool to be clever – teamwork and showcasing

5.4

During the week it is important that pupils work as a team, for Radio Roadshow puts particular emphasis on the importance of teamwork behind the scenes, not just on the individuals who are heard. Pupils will learn to assist each other and to share out tasks, and to give each other constructive feedback.

The project will boost pupils' self-esteem, for the entire project will be their own. The final show will be a satisfying end-product showcasing their new and existing talents, and enabling them to take pride in their work.

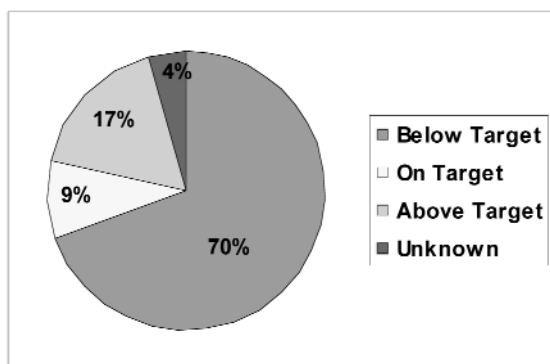
Pupils will be expected to work independently, with our guidance and support, and will pull in knowledge from other areas of the curriculum and from their own social experiences. They will ask their own questions – 'should we include this?', 'will this work better'? And since it is their own project they will become practised at making informed decisions.

Pupils have an opportunity to work creatively and within an open-ended context, and to understand that it's cool to be clever!

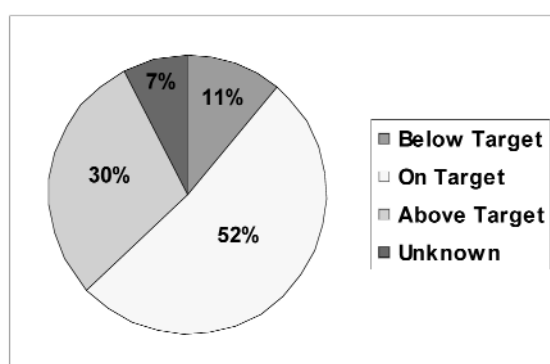
In order to identify the reasons why there is a gap in achievement, the teacher first needed to look at current trends of the children from within her literacy group. Using the school's tracking system, she analysed the data from the previous summer's optional SATS results, comparing it to the teacher targets. The results, which were staggering, are shown in figure 5.1. Seven in ten of the children from lower-income families were below target, compared with only one in ten of other children. Just over half (52%) of other children were on target, compared with only a tenth (9%) of children from lower-income families.

Figure 5.1: Analysis of tracking data at one school comparing the progress of children from lower-income families with the progress of other children

Children from lower-income families



Other children



Only a quarter (26%) of children from lower-income families were on or above their target, compared with over four fifths (82%) of other children. The raw figures were fairly small, as they are in most primary schools, so the percentages were not, therefore, statistically significant. But they showed clearly that the national picture, where numbers are most certainly large enough for inequalities of outcome to be statistically significant, was locally true. 'These results surprised me', she said, 'as I was not expecting the gap between children on free school meals and their peers to be quite so wide.' When the results were shared with colleagues they too were surprised.

So she could identify how she could remove any barriers to achievement, the teacher first needed to identify what barriers are present. She decided to conduct structured pupil interviews. All children, she was aware, even those with the most severe or complex needs, have views about their education and the choices before them. She wanted to get a full picture of what school life was like for the children in her own class, and she particularly wanted to know their views of literacy lessons, and especially of writing. At the same time she was keen to avoid asking leading questions or closed questions. The questions she focused on were as follows:

1. What is your favourite lesson and why?
2. Which lessons don't you like and why?
3. Think about a teacher that you like. What is it you like about them?
4. What makes their lessons good?
5. How do you feel when you've got something new to learn? And when you've got some writing to do?
6. What things help you most in your learning?
7. What things tend to stop you learning?
8. What do you find most difficult at school?

She found that the children favoured doing practical work – discussing why they enjoyed a particular subject, all made reference to what they enjoy 'doing' in their lessons, for example 'I like Literacy because I get to write stories', and 'I enjoy science because I get to do experiments'. Although these children were underachieving, four in ten said they felt happy when they had something new to learn, and six in ten said they felt excited when they had writing to do, showing that this group of children do enjoy a challenge, and enjoy the responsibility that comes with it. This showed that they had a good attitude towards their learning. When she asked them what helps most with their learning, she was surprised to find that over half of them referred to tools they found in the classroom rather than

relying on the help of the class teacher. All children need and want to be independent learners, she noted.

A problem holding the children back from being independent learners, she concluded, was low self-confidence and limited self-belief. She carried out a survey of 'How I see myself' with her 19 focus children, plus 19 of their peers for comparison. When asked 'Are you clever?' the focus children graded themselves significantly lower than their peers. It became clear through the initial research outlined above that to remove these barriers, the teacher needed to focus on building the children's self-esteem by allowing them to develop skills which could be used beyond school and to develop their independence. She noted in this connection the government guidelines on how to deliver personalised learning in order to make education more responsive to individual children:

- have high expectations of all children
- build on the knowledge, interests and aptitudes of every child
- involve children in their own learning through shared objectives
- help children to become confident learners
- enable children to develop the skills they will need beyond school.

Also, she needed to involve the children's parents somehow, for she suspected a reason for the children's low self-esteem might be that their parents had a sense of having failed at school because they too had not been 'clever' enough. With these concerns in mind, she invited a local company into school to run its radio roadshow for her 19 children. At the time of writing it is too early to demonstrate beyond doubt that the project had a quantifiable impact on the children's progress and achievement, as objectively measured through the school's tracking system.

However, the quotations in box 5.1 show clearly that the project had great potential for developing the skills and attitudes which are essential for effective learning. It is reasonable to believe that by building the children's self-esteem through the live broadcast the project had a positive impact on their learning within the classroom, and that their attitudes to their learning began to change, and their confidence in their own abilities was raised.

Informal discussions with the children following the radio roadshow showed that they felt fairly apprehensive before the event, but afterwards felt exhilarated and proud of their own achievements. Observations of the children showed that they were more inclined to answer questions in class, and happier to discuss the work they had produced. It cannot be proved that this was solely because of the roadshow, for many factors might have had an effect on their oral participation in class, for example the change in literacy topic and their relationship with their class teacher, since she played an active role in the roadshow. She concluded:

I feel that I have developed as a teacher throughout this project, as I have identified a barrier, and worked in order to remove it. I am going to continue to develop this through my teaching, by looking at the impact of this particular project on the attainment of the children, and identifying any further barriers to achievement in my classroom.

Later developments

Twelve months after the radio roadshow took place at Abelard School, the class teacher reported:

The children are still all involved with the project. We meet every week to record ourselves and have broadcast two further shows to the school. We are currently fundraising for our own speakers. We are hosting an evening of live entertainment, where the school choir are performing and other children can showcase their talents (singing/ musical instruments etc...) which has all been planned and organised by the radio group, including the business side of calculating the costs and profits for the evening, designing and making our own tickets, and selling the tickets themselves. This has all had a fantastic impact on the children themselves, helping to boost their confidence, having an impact on their work in class. I have arranged for the radio company to come back into school this year to work with my current Year 5s.

Concluding note

'A motivating, exciting, life-changing experience,' said a teacher about the project, 'raising self-esteem and self-belief.' Further reflections are quoted in box 5.2. They show the principal reasons for the project's success, as seen by teachers whose pupils were involved.

To close this chapter, box 5.5 contains the complete text of a message sent by Emgate to Abelard Junior School, after it took part in the Radio Roadshow project. It is an impressive and fitting summary of the project's values and benefits. The following chapter is then a further project concerned with extending the traditional concept of literacy. But whereas this chapter has been essentially about oracy and radio broadcasting, the next is about film, video and moving images.

A fabulous week – thank you

5.5

Dear all children and staff at Abelard Junior School

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you this week. It has been a fabulous week where the children have worked really hard to produce a wonderful live radio broadcast.

The group has shown excellent teamwork skills, whether it was developing ideas for the show, writing scripts, using the equipment or recording their voices. It has been a pleasure to watch boys such as Peter grow with confidence and become a key member of the team, speaking in the live broadcast, and along with Matthew producing and performing the review section.

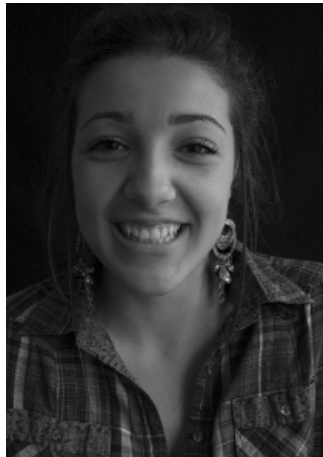
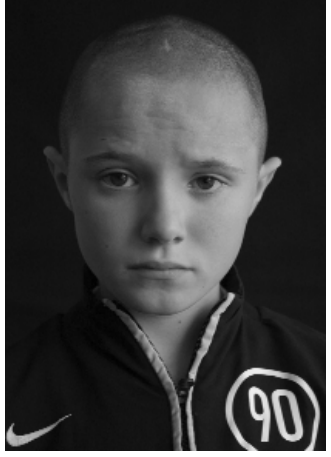
All the children showed great enthusiasm and ability throughout the week. Patrick and Will in particular showed real flair when using the equipment and became excellent production assistants.

All the children spoke clearly and with expression and really enjoyed the time spent using the broadcaster.

The staff and the children made us feel very welcome and we look forward to hopefully working with you again in the future. We hope everyone enjoyed listening to the show and we hope that with the equipment we leave behind there will be lots more Abelard radio shows to come.

Once again, thank you for a great week.

The Radio Roadshow Team



Chapter 6

Some amazing success stories – extending the definition of literacy

‘We had some amazing success stories,’ writes a local authority adviser, ‘where young people in care and those on the margins from vulnerable groups were able to re-engage with education as a result of working with film.’

She continues:

One of the most stunning stories is a young man who was 14 and had a reading age of 7. He made a relationship with the filmmaker in school and decided he must re-engage with reading and did so with support from the filmmaker. He continued to improve, attendance in school increased, there were no more fixed-term exclusions, and he has gone on to college to do a Btec media diploma and will eventually go into the industry as an editor.

This chapter describes the project in which that young person took part. The project was based in the East Midlands but was linked to a national programme run by the British Film Institute which sees film as an essential form of literacy in the twenty-first century. Its key beliefs and values are shown in Box 6.1

Box 6.2 overleaf contains a case study about the involvement of a Year 7 pupil in a film education project and shows well what the beliefs and values expressed in box 6.1 may mean in practice.

‘Cine Hubs’

‘Cine Hubs’ was the name given to the regional pilot project in the East Midlands that was organised within the national framework established by the UK Film Council. Schools selected by ten different local authorities were invited to participate in a series of training events for teachers and

A world of moving images – where we live now

6.1

We live in a world of moving images. To participate fully in our society and its culture means being as confident in the use and understanding of moving images as of the printed word. Both are essential aspects of literacy in the twenty-first century.

in the same way that we take for granted that society has a responsibility to help children to read and write – to use and enjoy words – we should take it for granted that we help children and young people to use, enjoy and understand images; not just to be technically capable but to be culturally literate too.

Teachers have seen how, starting with film, all children regardless of ability have been able to discuss narrative in a sophisticated manner. The use of film has allowed children to learn using a medium with which they feel comfortable and able to take risks. This allows for higher order thinking to take place which is then transferable, as well as giving them the tools to understand the media-rich world around them.

In the same way that media literacy is not simply a matter of private benefit but an essential ingredient of the public good, film education is not just about extending the private enjoyment and understanding of individuals. It also has a clear public value, making a real contribution to our sense of cultural identity and emotional articulacy, and to the UK’s future as an open, tolerant society built on the foundation of a knowledge economy.

Her life and community – a case study

6.2

Jenny is 11. In History, she made a trailer showing what happened in England during World War Two using an online editing tool called E-SEQ which lets you choose clips of archive footage and put them together with a voice-over, and to add your own music. Jenny had not been keen on black and white films but now thinks you can make them interesting if you add in your own stuff. She proudly showed her Nan the film and her Nan recounted stories about being a child during the war. Jenny's Nan took the film to the Help the Aged Community centre and now Jenny's school is working on a film reminiscence project in which the children interview older people and add their voice-overs to archive films.

Jenny sent the film to Film Street, a website for young children that introduces them to filmmaking techniques, so other people could watch it and compare it with their own. Teachers from other schools have used the film in their own teaching. Now Jenny wants to make films so future generations will know about her, and about her life and community.

What Jenny said

'Film is a great way to bring people together; I never knew the older generation had such hard lives, or great stories. The best thing was that you were working with people both more and less experienced than yourself. Not only would you learn from people who had more teaching ability than you, but also from teaching things you knew to others.'

What Jenny's mum said

'Jenny's film built a bridge with my mother's generation. It's really important that young people know that older people were young once.'

What Jenny's teacher said

'I've just been looking at their history exams and they're very good. It's helped them develop their knowledge so much more. In the class we can have debates about it because everybody's got a view and they're more willing to listen and to speak about it.'

Source: Film – 21st century literacy, by the British Film Institute, 2008

visits to cinema venues with pupils. In addition each school hosted a resident filmmaker to train the students to produce film content intended to benefit the curriculum and the school's wider agendas. At the end of the pilot the schools shared their work with the other participating schools in the spirit of critical friends.

The principal headlines to emerge from the project were as follows.

Critical engagement

Most schools involved in the project had not previously used film extensively within the classroom. All the teachers across the project reported that appreciating and understanding film had been a valuable experience for their pupils. They mentioned the value of moving from merely watching or 'consuming' a film to critically engaging with it, and had welcomed the opportunity to introduce children to films they might not

otherwise encounter, broadening their experiences of the world and of cultures different from their own.

Gender differences

Girls felt more confident than boys in exploring different kinds of film and seemed to approach film with greater intellectual confidence. For example, they were better able to describe the films and became more alert to their construction while they watched. It seemed that boys may be swept up in the spectacle of film and be more likely to perceive film as an event (for example, going to the cinema) rather than as an exploration of meaning.

The film viewing habits of both girls and boys were changed – over half the boys and over two thirds of the girls stated they will in future not stick to watching what they are used to, and both sexes said they are more likely to watch films they had not heard of before.

It was noticeable that girls value critical appreciation and discussion while the boys tend to be enthused by the practical application of film, and to enjoy learning new skills that are not normally applied in the conventional classroom.

The practical use of film engaged the boys, and the filmmakers proved to be valuable role models for them, particularly through their hands-on approaches to the technology and production process.

Timetable juggling and teachers' workloads

Each participating school adopted a different manner of working and aimed for different results. Occasionally a school had difficulty in managing the filmmaker days, but all the teachers said the effort and commitment had been worthwhile – the benefits of having a filmmaker present outweighed the logistical challenges of juggling timetables.

The majority of teachers involved in the project were new to using film in the classroom, but were not daunted by trying out this new classroom medium. Planning film projects appeared to take no more time than other creative activities and most found the digital filmmaking equipment to be intuitive. Those who found the filmmaking equipment an obstacle said they would value more training so that they could become more proficient in its use.

Personal development

Teachers reported that pupils had benefited immensely from the experience, noting improvements in writing, language and communication skills and in emotional literacy and wellbeing, and mentioning children who had overcome shyness and had discovered new talents.

Relationships

Most teachers reported that the project had helped to enhance the relationship between students and themselves.

Structure and concepts

Box 6.3 summarises the project's structure and objectives.

The same report points out that four- and five-year-olds arrive in school with some understanding already of narrative, genre, character, setting and time, even if they cannot express them very clearly. Long before they learn to read, they can readily answer questions about films like 'can you tell what is going to happen next?' and 'how can you tell?' Such questions develop their ability to infer and predict, an essential skill in the reading of any kind of text.

Case study from one cluster

The project at Averton School, paired with its two primary feeder schools, addressed the school agenda of applied learning, raising skills and confidence through learning by doing, and understanding real world concepts through simulation. The brief for the moving image work was to produce a series of ads or trailers imagining the kinds of programme that might be watched in Averton in 50 years time.

The results, though mixed, clearly demonstrate that film actively engaged the year 7 boys through the medium and technology. Two boys in particular created a niche role for themselves through the editing process, quickly mastering the mechanics of Final Cut Express and editing all the promos that were produced.

The school and the filmmaker gelled extremely well and it was noted that other staff at the school were extremely supportive and could see the value in utilising film within the classroom. The partner schools in the cluster were equally enthusiastic about the project. Their pupils acted as critical friends, reviewing and scoring the productions according to the three C's (colour, camera, character) and the three S's (sound, story, setting).

Box 6.3 Visual literacy – basic aims and concepts**Unit 1a. Engaging with film: practicalities and permissions**

A one-day conference to open the project with workshops delivered by national organisations involved in film education, so that teachers:

- appreciate how film can benefit classroom practice
- have permission to engage with film as a resource
- have a practical understanding of copyright with regard to the use of film
- are aware of existing resources
- understand the wider career paths in the film industry, and the range of skills required in relation to the whole curriculum.

Unit 1b. Critical understanding and visual literacy

Out-of-school workshops designed to introduce film as a classroom critical resource, so that teachers:

- can express an initial understanding of film language and visual literacy through the basic concepts of film style and form
- acquire knowledge and confidence for exploring critical understanding with children in the classroom.

Unit 2. Practical filmmaker training

Technical and convention instruction in digital filmmaking, so that teachers:

- can confidently use the filmmaking equipment – camera, sound and editing.
- have a good working relationship with filmmakers prior to the participation of pupils
- are able to provide technical support to children during the filmmaking.

Unit 3. Critical understanding

Pupils and teachers visit a cinema venue and receive training in critically understanding a film, so that pupils:

- start exploring film as a visual language, its form and representations

- understand that interpretation is personal.

In addition teachers take forward skills acquired in their own training in critical understanding, and a supportive peer-to-peer network for review and feedback is started between children and teachers from participating schools.

Unit 4. Filmmaking

Cine Hub schools host a resident filmmaker for nineteen days to produce experimental and curriculum-led or school agenda-relevant pieces of work, so that:

- pupils understand how to use the filmmaking equipment
- teachers and children understand and experience the range of tasks involved in filmmaking
- teachers and pupils are able to apply their understanding of film language to the technical aspects of filmmaking
- pupils are inspired by the filmmakers imparting their knowledge, skills and experience
- Teachers and pupils are able to produce film content – both experimentally and by responding creatively to a brief.

Unit 5. Reflection and critical feedback

Schools share their productions with the others who act as critical friends, so that pupils:

- feel empowered to review films produced at the Cine Hub schools and provide feedback in a supportive peer-to-peer network
- are able to explore the responses elicited in audiences, relate these to their own view of the films and carry this knowledge forward into their future filmmaking
- can share their filmmaking experiences with their peers.

All forms of literacy education, including film education, have much the same objectives, as summarised by a report for the UK Literacy Association, for all increase ability to:

6.3 Visual literacy – basic aims and concepts (continued)

- engage with, understand and respond to narrative and non-narrative texts
- deduce, infer and interpret texts
- respond to characterisation, for example, read facial expression, gesture and posture in moving and still images, and understand character as expressed in dialogue and description
- make judgements about the modality (i.e. reality status) of texts
- compare the structures and effects of different kinds of text, the different elements that make up a text and the authorial and editorial decisions that contribute to structure
- understand how elements of composition and stylistic devices combine in contributing to meaning, for example, lighting and focus in sound and imagery, shape and timing in animation, and layout and font in printed texts
- discuss authorial intent, for example in decisions about framing and point of view in communicating with the reader or audience
- relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts
- articulate a personal response and comment reflectively and critically on the text.

Survey of children and young people

A short survey was conducted to gain some valuable feedback about experiences of the project and any change in behaviour in the viewing of film. It produced the following results:

- Almost half the boys had not previously seen films made outside the USA.
More girls than boys had watched films before that they considered to ‘thought provoking’ or issue based.
- The viewing habits of both boys and girls had changed – over 50 per cent of boys and over 70 per cent of girls stated they would not stick to watching only what they were used to in future.
- After completing Phase 1 of the project, all felt they had greater understanding of how films are made and most that they had learned something new about how films are made.
- Virtually all had enjoyed the experience of making their own film and wished to make more in the future.
- Virtually all, particularly the girls, felt that they were now more able to describe and discuss films.

Artificial

Although it may appear to be an exact copy, the world we see on the screen is quite different from the world we live in. In particular, neither space nor time has the same characteristics ... Spatially, the screen shows us a dimension of depth and limited by the frame which surrounds it ... Time is constantly subject to contractions, extensions, breaks and jumps which do not occur in the continuous chronology of the real world ... By comparison with our ordinary experience the film world is an entirely artificial one,

Ralph Stephenson and Jean Debrix, 1965

Survey of teachers

The survey of teachers' opinions was a great deal more involved than the survey produced for the children and most answers were free text responses to queries about the experiential nature of the project, the effect on pupils and the pedagogy that was used. The findings included the following:

- All agreed that children and young people had improved their visual literacy and critical skills.
- Two thirds of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that it is important that children and young people should have access to a wide range of film, and that this broadens understanding of the world and other cultures.
- Similarly two thirds reported that children have an improved understanding of the techniques, language and conventions used in films, but were not sure if their pupils were able to debate and share conclusions about film with each other – this was in contrast to the children's own views, expressed above.
- For most, the project was the first time they had delivered a film project but most found it had taken no longer to plan than other creative activities; all considered the time and effort of project involvement to be worthwhile.
- Most said the project had helped to improve relationships between teachers and students.
- All agreed there should be increased opportunities to learn about film.

Concluding note

Literacy, this chapter has emphasised, is about more than just the written word. Visual literacy is of vital importance as well. Further, attention must be paid in schools to a range of skills – empathy, teamwork, getting on with others, talk, self-respect, performance – without which prowess in reading and writing is of only partial value. The next chapter focuses on this point with particular reference to the attainment of boys.

Central and necessary

Many people seem to assume that there is, first, reality, and then, second, communication about it.

We degrade art and learning by supposing that they are second-hand activities, that there is life, and then afterwards there are accounts of it.

The struggle to learn, to describe, to understand, to educate, is a central and necessary part of our humanity.

The struggle is not begun, at second hand, after reality has occurred.

It is, in itself, a major way in which reality is continually formed and changed.

– Raymond Williams, 1962

Chapter 7

Writing for life

– gender, identity and growing up

A family is arguing about Ray, who's 15 years old and has just been permanently excluded from his school for persistent disruptive behaviour. 'What I say,' says the father, 'let him fend for himself ... He keeps telling everyone he's a man, so let's see how man he is, let's send him to work, make him pay his way.' Ray's mother intervenes: 'He's not a man, he's a boy.' This annoys Ray, who declares 'I'm not a boy', and this provokes an intervention from Ray's younger sister: 'He's not a boy, or a man, he's a teenager.' Before Ray storms out of the room, a final attempt at definition comes from his mother: 'As far as the law is concerned, he is a schoolboy.'

The episode occurs in a work of fiction, *Gangsta Rap* by Benjamin Zephaniah. But the personal and family dynamics which are touched on here, and the conflicting definitions and understandings of one young person's identity – 'he's a man', 'he's a boy', 'he's a teenager', 'as far as the law is concerned he's a schoolboy' – belong recognisably to real life. They form the backdrop for this chapter, which is about raising boys' achievement at school, especially their literacy in general and writing in particular. It is apparently assumed that issues to do with boys' achievement cannot be separated from issues to do with identity and notions of masculinity. Essentially, the chapter consists of aide-memoires which can be used for discussion at staff meetings and in staff training sessions.

The checklists and aide-memoires in this chapter are listed below. They are preceded by an interview schedule adapted slightly from one developed and used at a secondary school in Derbyshire (box 7.1).

What can you tell me about yourself? – some talking points

7.1

1. What gives you a buzz or excitement in school and out of school?
2. What turns you off or bores you in or out of school?
3. What are your favourite teachers like?
4. What do some teachers do that causes you to dislike them?
5. What do you enjoy doing at home during your leisure time?
6. How much time do you spend with friends outside school?
7. How do you spend time with friends?
8. Do you think you are good at learning?
9. Do your parents talk about their schooldays? What are the main things they say?
10. Which of the following do you have at home: a PC or laptop, a mobile phone, games console, ipod, wide-screen TV, DVD or blue ray, books, magazines?
11. Do you have things at home you need at school, like pens, felt colours, a pencil case? How good are you at remembering to bring these to school?
12. Do you feel you have enough space to concentrate on school work when you're at home?
13. How often do you get help from your parents with homework?
14. How much time do you spend on homework each week? Do you always complete your homework?
15. Do you ever feel tired during the daytime?
16. Do you have a part-time job?
17. Have you ever got into any trouble outside school?
18. What are the things that sometimes worry you?
19. What's your favourite music? Your favourite movie?
20. What are you looking forward to?

Helping your son – tips and advice for parents

7.2

Help him get organised – draw up homework, revision and exam timetables

Break work down into small chunks so instead of ‘tidy your room’ ask him to ‘put your dirty clothes in the basket and your CDs in the rack’

Contact school immediately if you feel your son is under pressure from other boys not to work – pressure from others can be a very powerful barrier to boys’ learning

Make time to listen to him at meal times or when travelling in the car. Get him to talk about his feelings

Limit the time he spends sitting in front of the TV or computer – instead, get him to talk about things that interest him and always answer his questions

Help him learn by example – spending time reading with and learning from older male relatives or friends is really important

Share successes with other parents – talk about what works for you and your son!

Source: from a leaflet for parents provided in Derbyshire

What I’m working on next

A Year 8 boy had difficulty when he went home with reports about his work. His father would not take account of the positive points but always homed in on the negative ones. To improve the situation, the school changed the wording in reports so that negative points were called ‘what I am working on next’.

Ofsted report, 2008

- Helping your son – tips for parents (box 7.2)
- Who we are – our identity as gendered and sexual beings (7.3)
- Firm foundations – gender expectations in early years (7.4)
- Yes he can – schools where boys write well (7.5)
- Raising boys’ achievement – a self-evaluation checklist (7.6)
- Gender and writing – an aide-memoire (7.7)

At the end of the chapter, recurring themes are summarised in the form of a short story about a fictitious young man for whom everything turns out badly. The story is sad and depressing, but is included here as a reminder of what is at stake, both for individuals and for society.

Aggression

In a discussion with the school council about aggression at break-time, several boys identified that trouble usually started with a verbal challenge from one pupil to another. This led to all classes drawing up ‘good talk/bad talk’ lists to encourage acceptable ways of speaking. A Year 4 boy came up with the idea of awarding coloured rubber bracelets to those voted by their peers as providing the best examples of how to behave at break-time and when moving around the school. This proved a popular development and awards were made regularly.

Ofsted report, 2008

Who we are – our identity as gendered and sexual beings

7.3

1. Do staff reflect on the complexity of their own identities as gendered beings?
2. Do adults and children recognise that not everyone thinks of themselves as male or female?
3. Do staff feel able to allow children the freedom to develop their gender in ways that help them to feel most at ease?
4. Do children learn that one can have a strong sense of one's gender as male, female or transgender without this fixing one's ways of behaving, expressing feelings, interests and attitudes to one's achievements?
5. Do adults discuss the extent to which they hold stereotypical views of gender roles and how expressing such attitudes can narrow the ways in which children express their gender?
6. Do adults and children avoid pinning down other people to a particular style of being a boy or a girl by labelling them as, for example, a tomboy?
7. Are adults and children involved in finding ways to reduce any overrepresentation of boys amongst those seen to be 'naughty'?
8. Do adults and children have a language to talk about gender, gender ambiguity and fluidity, masculinity and femininity?
9. Do children have the opportunity to engage in gender-mixed sport and PE?
10. Do adults and children challenge ideas that men and women should have different roles in the school, in other work, in looking after children or doing chores in the home?
11. Is the work that adults and children do as carers appreciated, irrespective of their gender?
12. Do staff educate all pupils to recognise that being the parent or carer of young children can be among the most important and satisfying activities people do in their lives?
13. Is it understood that for some people gender is a more important aspect of their identity than for others and that this may change over time, like the significance of religion or ethnicity?
14. Do staff and children discuss the cultural pressures on men and women to cover up or uncover parts of their bodies?
15. Are children discouraged from seeing one gender or form of masculinity or femininity as more important than another?

Source: slightly adapted from Section A1.9 (page 84) of Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow, published by the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE), 2011.

Firm foundations – gender in the early years

Here are various recommendations, suggestions and tips, taken from good practice guidelines on supporting boys' achievements in early years education. They have been given titles and are in alphabetical order. Which four do you consider to be most useful? Put four ticks in the 'most useful' column below. And which four do you consider next most useful? Put four ticks in the other column.

	Most useful (Tick 4)	Next most useful (Tick 4)
Avoid stereotypes		
Ensure resources and displays reflect positive images that do not stereotype according to gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building		
Display photos, posters and books about buildings, structures and tunnels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices		
Value the choices that boys make, for example learning out of doors and in the construction area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with incidents of exclusion and isolation		
When children exclude each other on grounds of gender, support the excluded child but also address stereotypes with all the children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documenting		
Celebrate achievement by involving boys in documenting what they have done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fathers		
Invite fathers and other male visitors to the setting, involving them in a range of activities, including some usually avoided by boys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indoor and outdoor		
Ensure that both indoor and outdoor learning environments meet the needs and interests of boys as well as girls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening and observing		
Listen to and observe boys to find out their interests, ideas, preferences and learning styles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making decisions		
Provide challenging opportunities where boys can make decisions, solve problems and think critically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect		
Respect and value every child's family and home background, their cultures and communities and the important events in their lives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Role play areas		
Include themes and resources for role play areas which reflect boys' interests as well as girls'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeing themselves as learners		
Help boys to develop positive images of themselves as learners and explorers by providing challenges in which they achieve success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Superheroes		
Have a collection in the book corner of superhero toys, and superhero comics, annuals, brochures and catalogues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Variety		
Plan opportunities for boys to express their ideas in a variety of ways, including through music, role-play, dance and model-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes, he can – schools where boys write well

7.5

The following features of successful schools have been identified by Ofsted. Which five are most strongly present in the school(s) you know best? Which are in most need of development?

Culture

There is a culture in the school and classroom where intellectual, cultural and aesthetic accomplishment by boys as well as girls is valued by all

Diversity

In responding to written work, value is placed on diversity of style and approach, succinctness as much as elaboration, and logical thought as much as expressiveness

Focused feedback

Marking is prompt, detailed and indicates clearly both what has been done well and where improvements can be made

Reading for pleasure

Many pupils, both boys and girls, read widely for pleasure and in this way absorb a range of models for their own writing

Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers

Teachers of English and other subjects are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about language and are able to link oral work, reading and writing skilfully and explicitly, thus developing pupils' vocabulary and understanding of style

Independence

A good balance is maintained between support and independence, with pupils always expected to be as independent as possible

Choice

Pupils are often given choice as to the content of their writing, even when the form or genre is prescribed

Real audiences

Efforts are made to make writing tasks purposeful, through seeking real audiences, through publication and display, and through the use of writing to support thought

Stages

Writing tasks are often tackled in stages, with feedback or review at each stage of planning and drafting

Stamina

Pupils write frequently and at length (often as homework) and in this way develop stamina as writers, but they seldom rewrite long pieces unless for publication

Boys can't write... oh yes they can

I was working with some primary teachers and they were sharing ideas about what kinds of writing-teaching seemed to have worked. One teacher talked about how he had originally trained in IT but switched to teaching. He said he had some Year 6 boys who really didn't want to write, didn't know what to write, didn't know what the point of writing is. So he had the idea of starting up a blogspot which this group of boys could contribute to ... The school has now bought the children a number of iPads which they are finding some very interesting ways of using. Incredible how engaged in their work the children become when using them.

Source: slightly adapted from Michael Rosen's blog, Sunday 15 January 2012

Raising boys' achievement – a self-evaluation checklist

7.6

- 1 Could our school or classroom better promote a culture and ethos which values literacy, intellectual and aesthetic achievement more widely (including physical environment, teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction, curricular and extra-curricular offer, and links with parents over literacy)?
- 2 Is sufficient priority given to promoting and sustaining personal voluntary reading, in English lessons and beyond? Is reading of all kinds undertaken and discussed in sufficient detail for boys to absorb the models it provides?
- 3 Do we do enough to demonstrate to boys that we value their writing and their progress as writers (by marking comment, oral feedback, display or publication)?
- 4 What qualities in writing do we show that we value most? Do they include succinctness, wit, logic, depth of thought, as well as appropriate elaboration, detail and length?
- 5 Are our expectations high enough in terms of regular extended writing, the intellectual challenge of tasks, presentation and accuracy?
- 6 Do we give boys enough scope to exercise choice as writers and express their own ideas?
- 7 Is the balance well struck between the provision of clear structure to writing tasks (that is, they know what is expected and are offered any necessary scaffolding) and the push for maximum independence?
- 8 Do we do enough to give writing a 'real' communicative function (by considering audience, publication and display, but also writing to aid thought)?
- 9 Is talk being used appropriately at different stages of the writing process to support boys as writers (to enliven contexts through drama, for sharing ideas, developing vocabulary or receiving feedback from readers)?
- 10 Do teachers of all subjects (not just English) have sufficient knowledge about writing and writing development to provide detailed feedback to pupils, or is more training needed?

Source: adapted slightly from documentation developed in Derbyshire

As if he exists

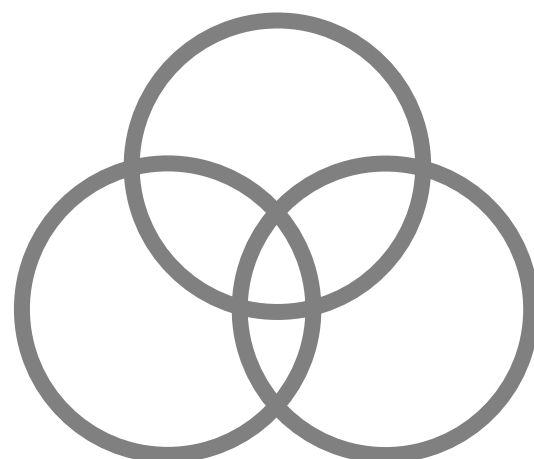
The school makes him feel as if he exists.

Parent of a Year 8 boy, quoted by Ofsted, 2008

I now know

'If I'm going to do something silly, I now know I've got to stop and think if it's the right time to do it.'

Year 6 boy quoted by Ofsted,



Gender and writing – an aide-memoire

7.7

Preliminaries and reminders

- There is a clear connection between developing independence, and the ability to learn independently. Giving boys increasing levels of responsibility supports the development of their learning – not do everything for them!
- Before you start, identify the things that boys are doing as well as or better than girls – build on them, celebrate them
- Remember that all generalisations are suspect, including this one. Not all boys learn in the same way

Teaching and learning

- Make sure lessons are carefully structured
- Chop up the lessons into chunks
- Set short term targets
- Give positive feedback. Ensure marking is prompt and indicates clearly what has been done well, and also where improvements can be made
- Introduce ways to develop a range of co-operative personal and social skills that will assist boys with their learning
- One very boy-friendly means of information transfer is the use of mind or concept maps
- Regularly reviewing learning during key points in the lesson is essential – and not just for boys
- When work is done well, letters and messages of praise to parents or carers have real impact
- Carefully controlled competitions – quizzes, for example – engage boys

Boys and literacy

- Writing tasks are best if they have a real purpose and a real audience
- Where possible, publish and display
- Writing tasks are best tackled in stages, and review and feedback at each stage of planning and drafting are essential
- Do not just use non-fiction reading – boys need fiction too
- Make sure the library is well stocked with boy-friendly reading material.

Source: material developed in Derbyshire with Gary Wilson.

Cocky and mouthy

School was a social gathering, you came for a laugh, see your mates, annoy the teachers, and it weren't for the learning ... I didn't really care a crap about school, went to lessons, didn't learn anything ...

... you wanted to hang around your mates, not learn stuff, we didn't learn anything, you didn't mature ... I used to truant, fight, I was generally cocky and mouthy and I'd backchat teachers ... I wanted to express myself, be unique ...

The worst lessons were when there was no socialising, no discussing, just copying out of a textbook or from the board, you just got bored being sat still, you couldn't talk or discuss anything, you just have to do what the teachers says and your mind goes somewhere else, you can't voice your opinion, what the teacher says goes, it's a bit tedious when teachers speak to you like you're a 10-year-old.

Source: interviews in Derbyshire, 2010

Concluding note

Finally in this chapter, there is a fictitious and nameless young person whose ending is despair (box 7.8). I don't care, he says, whether I live or die. And I don't care whether anyone else does, either.

How could this person's life-chances have been different? What experiences would have made him less of a danger to himself and to others, and more thoughtful, caring, resolute and responsible? These questions have been raised in this chapter, and are explored throughout the pages of this book. The next chapter steps back from them to a certain extent, and focuses on practical and down-to-earth matters relating to the learning and acquisition of academic language.

All his short life – one person's career

Early years

Some of the practitioners expected him to be a troublemaker. Had not the media and history books told them, or subtly suggested to them, that people like him are likely to be troublesome, even before the age of five? Was this assumption not in the very air they breathed?

Not that they were consciously aware they had been affected by media imagery, or by a legacy of negative stereotypes, or by the cultural contexts in which they daily moved and talked. But all the same they criticised and checked him more than they did other children, and more than was necessary. They had, they thought, to keep him under tight control.

Primary school

It slowly became clear to him, though he couldn't himself have yet voiced it like this, that he had a choice. Either he could accept the teachers' valuations of himself, as an object to be feared and controlled, or – with a sense of mounting injustice – he could resist, could assert himself, stand up for himself. He chose the latter.

To begin with, his assertiveness took the form of ignoring instructions, or at best being very slow to comply with them. Later, it took the form of questioning, asking for reasons, challenging, defying, disobeying. The teachers' expectations, as they saw the matter, were confirmed: he was indeed an aggressive troublemaker, he had attitude, he was someone to be kept under tight control if at all possible.

One result of these tensions and conflicts was that he became less and less interested in the whole business of writing. Since no one was interested in what he said or thought, why should he bother to write? Not only was he a troublemaker, his teachers could see, but not at all bright or academic either. Basically, they seemed to think, he was incapable of learning.

Lower secondary

To begin with, he was happy at secondary school. He felt that whatever had been wrong at primary school was now behind him. But within only a few weeks things began to go wrong again. There was that day a teacher said something slightly sarcastic about him, and other kids laughed. The day he was beaten in a playground fight. The day he was badly let down by his own poor writing skills. Embarrassed about this, he avoided writing as much as he could. Most lessons, he maintained, were *boring*.

He began to suspect – though he still could not have voiced this – that the school didn't care about him, for it didn't recognise and include him, didn't apparently want to engage him or interest him, didn't seem to know him. Also, to his dismay, he found his parents were unwilling or unable to help him. They too didn't seem to understand what he was going through.

His image and other kids' views of him, his yearning to be popular, his need to be entertaining and good at making people laugh, his physical presence and attractiveness, his hormones, his changing body.

He did, however, feel recognition, inclusion and respect from his friends. It was his friends who made coming to school each day worthwhile. But they were every bit as disenchanted as he was with the official school system. They too found writing a tedious chore. They too were seen as troublemakers. For they too questioned, challenged, didn't take kindly to being given instructions and orders. They too believed the school was often unfair. And they too were influenced, as he was, by young people a few years older than themselves who were anti-school, anti-police, anti-authority.

Troubles and tensions mounted. Getting involved in fights and needing, he strongly believed, to prove his manhood by being hard, being bad – he had to have respect from his peers, or life wouldn't be worth living.

Another good way to get respect was to publicly defy and be lippy to teachers, and to be seen publicly disrupting what teachers wanted to do.

Being thrown out of lessons. Detentions. Formal warnings. Various fixed-term exclusions. Eventually, he was permanently excluded from his school.

Young adult

He didn't settle at his new secondary school. He was entered for a full range of GCSEs, but missed most of the exams. He left school with minimal, indeed worthless, paper qualifications. No chance of employment. He wasn't interested in training, since so far as he could see there weren't any jobs available anyway. NEET. Drifted, along with his friends, into drugs and crime. Frequently stopped by the police. Eventually, convictions and detention.

I don't care, he said, whether I live or die.

And I don't care whether anyone else does, either.

Chapter 8

Words, words, words – highways and byways to curriculum language

‘What do you read, my lord?’ asks Polonius. Hamlet famously replies: ‘Words, words, words’. It is not clear whether he has deliberately misunderstood the question and is trying to fob Polonius off with an evasive answer, or whether he is so deeply depressed and lovesick that he is unable to make head or tail of the book open in his hands. Polonius tries again with a question which is appropriate either way: ‘What is the matter, my lord?’ Hamlet chooses, or pretends to choose, to interpret the word ‘matter’ in its sense of issue, dispute or disagreement. ‘Between who?’ he asks. Polonius explains he was thinking of the book’s subject-matter. The exchange continues then with barely intelligible remarks from Hamlet though there does seem to be, as Polonius recognises, a certain method in his madness. The exchange is an appropriate introduction to this chapter, which is about the importance of vocabulary in education, a topic which is both troubling and controversial.

The chapter has three sections. First, and principally, it refers to the academic word list (AWL) developed originally in New Zealand and to a small-scale classroom research project relating to it with Year 7 pupils in a secondary school in England’s east Midlands. Second, it summarises research on the vocabulary of young children when they first start primary school in England. Third, it outlines two relevant projects in the United States.

Classroom action research

A teacher of English was increasingly aware that pupils do not find it easy to select and use technical and academic vocabulary. For example, pupils at key stage three seldom use a varied vocabulary, and when her Year 10 class recently completed the English Literature GCSE they struggled to understand the meaning of the academic words in exam questions. It became apparent that in her own teaching, and possibly in the school more generally, it might be possible to raise attainment through helping pupils to acquire carefully chosen cross-curricular academic language. In liaison with the local authority adviser for English she engaged in a project based around the academic word list (AWL) compiled by Averil Coxhead at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

This chapter describes the action research project in which the teacher engaged. Also, it reviews research on increasing the word power of very young children and describes the Wordsift project developed in the United States.

Simple and basic

Anyone who takes up a book makes the simple and basic, but immensely significant, discovery that there are no people or houses or trees or dogs between the pages, but only words, words, words.

– *André Brink*

The academic word list – how it was created

8.1

The academic word list (AWL) contains about 3000 words altogether, grouped into 570 word-families. It does not contain words which are amongst the 2000 most frequent words of English and in the first instance was created to help teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) to prepare students for tertiary level study. It was derived from study of 414 academic texts in use in four principal university faculties – arts, commerce, law and science. Between them, these 414 texts contained about 3,500,000 different words. The compilation was based on three main principles:

Range

The AWL families had to be relevant to all four of the faculties, and to more than half of the 28 subject areas which the faculties contained. Just over 94 per cent of the words in the AWL occur in 20 or more subject areas. This principle ensured that the words in the AWL are useful for all learners, no matter what their area of study or what combination of subjects they take at tertiary level.

Frequency

The AWL families had to occur over 100 times in the 414 texts 3,500,000 word Academic Corpus in order to be considered for inclusion in the list. This principle ensured that the words will be met a reasonable number of times in academic texts.

Uniformity of frequency

The AWL families had to occur a minimum of 10 times in each faculty to be considered for inclusion in the list. This principle ensures that the vocabulary is useful for all learners.

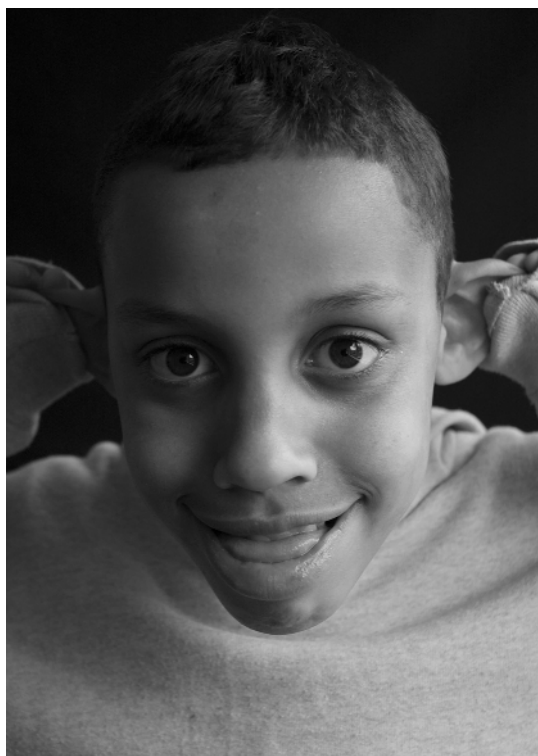
The academic word list – a selection from its contents

8.2

abstract	negate
adequate	network
alternative	neutral
ambiguous	nevertheless
assess	objective
attitude	passive
attribute	perceive
comprehensive	positive
comprise	potential
dimension	practitioner
diminish	precede
discrete	precise
discriminate	qualitative
found	quote
framework	rational
function	revolution
guarantee	rigid
guideline	significant
hierarchy	similar
highlight	simulate
hypothesis	technical
identical	technique
insight	technology
inspect	temporary
justify	undertake
likewise	uniform
link	unique
locate	valid
logic	vary
modify	welfare
monitor	whereas
motive	widespread
mutual	

The AWL has 570 word families. Word families are used because most regularly formed family members can be understood from knowledge of the stem and the affixes. For example, the word family *analyse* includes the regular inflections of the verb – analysed, analysing, analyses – and also various nouns, adjectives and adverbs, for example analysis, analyst, analytical, analytically, and so forth. Also it includes the American spelling of the verb, analyze. Box 8.1 contains a brief description of how it was created.

Box 8.2 gives a flavour of the list by citing at random about 60 of the words in alphabetical order. It shows that academic vocabulary is based more on Latin and Greek roots than Anglo-Saxon ones, and tends to consist of more complex words than pupils use in their everyday conversations and interactions with each other.



Classroom research

The teacher decided to work with a year 7 class of 28 pupils, of whom 26 took part in the research and six volunteered to be interviewed outside of class time. The project overall consisted of two stages. The first involved the pupils acquiring academic vocabulary. The second involved interviews to gain opinions on the successes and areas for improvement. Eighteen words from the AWL were selected to be the principal focus of attention:

- accumulate
- adapt
- advocate
- ambiguous
- clarify
- compile
- crucial
- deduce
- explicit
- implicit
- imply
- incline
- innovate
- integral
- persist
- subordinate
- terminate
- utilise

Before the teaching of these words began, the pupils were given a test. They were required to say whether or not they thought they knew each word, and then – in relation to the words they knew – to define it and to use it in a sentence. The teacher marked the tests, and the results included the following:

- The most words any pupil knew was 10.
- The average number of words known was 3.
- The gifted and talented pupils in the group knew between 2 and 5 of the words.
- The pupil who knew 10 words was not a gifted and talented pupil but was medium to low ability compared with others in the class.
- The words most pupils knew were ‘crucial’, ‘adapt’ and ‘terminate’.
- There were three words that caused confusion. ‘Deduce’ was assumed by several to be connected to the idea of reduce. Pupils defined it as ‘to take something away’, ‘use less’, or ‘divide or make something smaller’. ‘Imply’ was defined as ‘to say’, ‘to tell’, ‘an accusation’ or ‘to add something’. They did not generally provide an accurate definition but could most often write it into a correct sentence. ‘Explicit’ was understood as being to do with the content of a film or TV programme. One pupil defined it as ‘a lot’ and then wrote the sentence ‘this is too explicit for little kids’. Another pupil defined it as ‘adult material’ with the sentence ‘The CD contains explicit material’. It was also defined as ‘out of date’, ‘surprising’, ‘rude’, ‘bad words’ and ‘real’.

Over the following four weeks the words were taught in a variety of ways. These included games and activities, the use of dictionaries, the study of synonyms and antonyms, and the drawing of pictures. After four weeks the same test was administered, and the results included the following:

- All pupils now knew at least 5 words and two knew all 18.
- The pupils who got the fewest words had also got the fewest in the baseline test.
- The pupil who knew 10 words in the baseline test now knew 17 words, the word that he got wrong being ‘imply’. He put ‘say something quietly’ which was fairly close but not accepted as correct.
- The words all but one pupil now knew were ‘terminate’ and ‘adapt’. ‘Accumulate’ had improved the most, from only one person knowing it to 23 in the follow-up test.

The interviews investigated whether pupils used the new academic vocabulary in English alone, or also in other lessons, or outside school. Most reported they had not used the words outside the English lesson but one said ‘I have used adapt, accumulate and compile in science’ – this was the pupil who had known the most words at the start of the process. Then other pupils thought and said that actually they ‘had used one or two of the words in music, history and geography’. Some of them said they had used the words ‘persist’, ‘innovate’, ‘explicit’ and ‘clarify’ at home.

One of the aims of the project was to develop, trial and identify effective pedagogy, resources and materials. It was found that the pupils tended to engage most with activities they considered to be enjoyable, for example those that involved the interactive white board and required playful strategies such as drawing a word and guessing what it might be. They did not mention looking up the words and finding

definitions, possibly because no fun was involved. The teacher, however, believed this was a valuable way to begin.

A further aim of the project was to evaluate and create a publication that helps teachers to plan and teach for the acceleration of vocabulary acquisition in reading and writing. This aim has not yet been achieved at the time of writing. However, it is still intended that this small piece of action research will contribute to a wider body of research that will be of practical use to other teachers in the future, to disseminate successful strategies that engage and motivate pupils and ultimately improve pupils' learning. In the meanwhile, box 8.3 shows additional ways the word list can be used.

Measuring and highlighting academic language – useful resources

8.3

Measuring

A quick measure of a learner's grasp of this key vocabulary can be gained using a simple online test. This requires learners to match words from a list with a definition. The test can be completed at <http://awl.londongt.org>, and a score is provided together with feedback on the words correctly and incorrectly matched.

Highlighting

Familiarity with the academic word list can be developed using a profiling tool within the REAL Project Toolkit. Text can simply be pasted into a web page that will return the same text with the AWL words highlighted. This tool allows teachers and learners to highlight formal vocabulary in a text and uses the Define function in Google(tm) so that when a word is highlighted its meaning and use can be checked in several different contexts. It has been found that this simple tool can have dramatic benefits when used by learners themselves with minimal input from a teacher.

London Gifted and Talented, autumn 2010

It is relevant to note that the academic word list is likely to be of particular use to advanced bilingual learners. The London Gifted and Talented project has identified these as pupils who:

- have more gaps in their academic vocabulary and handle certain features of writing less confidently for academic purposes than their peers with English as their mother tongue language
- have less grasp of idiomatic speech, or take things more literally than intended. For example, in a text titled 'GM foods a political hot potato', a sub-heading said 'food under the microscope'. Pupils can take this literally to mean that food is placed under a microscope, rather than the intended figurative meaning of food being investigated
- lack cultural capital – the understanding and exposure to the diversity of history, society and experience which are critical to high achievement
- be unfamiliar with the conventions and expectations of academic writing, such as how a scientific report differs from a summary of a historical event
- have good 'playground' English but this quality and confidence in social talk may not be mirrored in their ability to use formal language and genre
- slip into an informal tone for a particular task when what is required is more formal language
- have good topic-level knowledge, but limited capacity to show what they know when answering questions; in consequence they may be topic-specific in answers rather than being question-specific, or write answers that read like lists.

Early years

Having a limited vocabulary can trap children in a vicious circle, since those who cannot read more advanced texts miss out on opportunities to extend their vocabulary and are also less effective in deploying the strategies necessary for independent word learning. Children with limited vocabularies need to be targeted early, since catching up is very difficult.

Research suggests that although many children acquire vocabulary naturally through activities at school, this cannot be left to chance in the case of children with limited vocabularies. There is a broad consensus that vocabulary can be taught effectively at school and that a range of approaches used together is most effective. Box 8.4 summarises advice from the National Reading Panel.

Projects in the United States

A number of schools in Derbyshire have been experimenting with the Word Sift and Word Generation programmes developed in the United States to help teachers manage the demands of vocabulary and academic language in their text materials. The final section of this chapter briefly describes these.

The authors of Word Sift want it to be a useful tool, but also to be fun and visually pleasing. 'We would be happy,' they say, 'if you think of it playfully – as a toy in a linguistic playground that is available to instantly capture and display the vocabulary structure of texts, and to help create an opportunity to talk and explore the richness and wonders of language!' The authors' own explanation of the programme is quoted in box 8.5.

The vocabulary of young children – key points

8.4

Explicit instruction: in planning a reading experience look ahead at the text and select words that are likely to be found difficult. Teach what these words mean before sharing the text using props or images.

Indirect instruction: provide a broad and rich language curriculum. Provide rich and challenging experiences so that language is developed in meaningful contexts. Provide many daily opportunities for sharing books, rhymes and songs.

Multimedia methods: encourage children to use ICT texts that are hyperlinked to glossaries. Use the Internet with children to explore word meanings, particularly supporting children in connecting less familiar words with ones that they are using.

Capacity methods: children need high quality phonic teaching to be able to decode the words on a page so that they can get to the purpose of reading: understanding texts.

Association methods: help children to connect the new or less familiar words they are learning with words that they do know. Use these new words with children in meaningful contexts, 'Yes, you have built a really tall building, it's as big as a skyscraper'.

Source: adapted from National Reading Panel, 2000

The classroom as a kind of playground – words and play

8.5

WordSift helps anyone easily sift through texts – just cut and paste any text into WordSift and you can engage in a verbal quick-capture! The program helps to quickly identify important words that appear in the text. Creative teachers will find an endless variety of uses for WordSift, but here are some of them:

Lesson preparation: A teacher can use WordSift to review assigned text to identify challenging words or concepts prior to a lesson, and identify images and videos to use in class. The videos can be especially useful in the preview function since many schools do not allow access to YouTube, but teachers can download useful videos (such as a science lab demonstration) onto their laptop computer from home.

Previewing text: In whole class or individually, students can preview text. Reading comprehension research suggests that previewing text is a useful strategy for improving comprehension. Using WordSift to identify the key vocabulary, and playing with the images to use the example source sentence feature to ‘skim’ the text, can help students who might otherwise struggle with the complexity of the text.

Group activities: Teachers have found simple activities using small portions of WordSift useful. For example, one teacher has developed a simple routine in which she gives students the TagCloud, and has them working in small groups to write or draw a page using the words in the cloud. Another possibility would be to take the Visual Thesaurus® display of a word web and have students identify and discuss related words.

Literacy support: Individual students can use WordSift as they read text, or as they write a response or summary. Adult users of WordSift have reported using WordSift for their own purposes to skim text (as one teacher said, ‘I don’t skim, I sift’) and also to review their own writing drafts. It can also be used to preview and scout around documents that promise to be boring, such as long education policy documents, by clicking on key words.

Assessment: Whole-class vocabulary assessment can be done on-the-fly by showing the images from selected words, having students identify unfamiliar words, and having students talk about which picture is the best representation of a given word. Teachers can also tailor their own assessments by copying and pasting the images, words and sentences identified by WordSift into a separate file (such as in Word or Powerpoint) and printing it out for student work.

So, think of a word much like a soccer ball or hockeysack. Think of a classroom as a kind of playground in which words can be kicked around for fun and for learning – not drill and kill, nor list and define. WordSift enables teachers to create an environment where language is talked about as richly as possible. Much of language cannot be taught directly, but much of language is learned through active talk, so why not have a way of talking about language? Try pasting some text into WordSift, display it to your class, and talk about what you see. Be spontaneous and generative – that is the stuff that forms the basis of strong language acquisition.

Source: the WordSift home page at <http://www.wordsift.com/site/about>. The project was developed with the help and inspiration of middle school science teachers at the San Francisco Unified School District through collaboration supported by the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP).

Word Generation

Word Generation is a research-based vocabulary programme for middle school students, designed to teach words through English, mathematics, science and social studies. It employs a range of strategies to ensure students learn words in a variety of contexts.

Each weekly unit introduces five high-utility target words through brief passages outlining controversies currently under debate. The paragraphs are intended to help pupils join ongoing national conversations by sparking active examination and discussion of contemporary issues. The target words are relevant to a range of settings and subject areas. The cross-content focus on a small number of words each week is designed to enable pupils to understand the variety of ways in which words are related, and the multiple exposures to words provide ample opportunities for deeper understanding.

The programme focuses on academic vocabulary, namely words that pupils are likely to encounter in textbooks, but not in spoken language – interpret, prohibit, vary, function and hypothesis are examples. Academic vocabulary includes, in particular, words that refer to thinking and communicating, for example infer and deny, and words that are common across subjects but hold different meaning depending on the subject, like element and factor. Both types of academic vocabulary are likely to cause problems with comprehension unless pupils have been taught how to deal with them.

The target words are presented in the context of a paragraph that displays academic writing and introduces a controversial topic of interest to adolescents. The programme is meant to be implemented school-wide, or at least across an entire grade or team within a school. Teachers in different content areas

thus display the target words in different contexts.

Activities are suggested which link to standards and skills expected of students within the various content areas, for example interpreting a bar graph on the incidence of obesity as a mathematics activity, debating censorship questions as a social studies activity, analysing the use of non-literal language in hip-hop lyrics as an English activity.

The introductory paragraphs and supplementary activities introduce pupils to domains of world knowledge (global warming, the relationship between schooling and income, the relationship between obesity and diabetes) that are important for reading popular media with comprehension. Students might otherwise have little access to such domains.

Since teachers participate across content areas, the introduction and implementation of the programme requires groups of teachers who may seldom have the opportunity to discuss instruction to work together and to hold each other accountable for supporting students' vocabulary and literacy development.

Concluding note

The next chapter continues Word Generation's focus on controversial, sensitive and difficult issues, with particular reference to the use of academic vocabulary in discussion and conversation.

Chapter 9

It's Not Just Any Old Discussion – talking to learn

Three Year 7 pupils are commenting on a recent series of lessons. 'We get to talk about things that other people wouldn't talk about,' remarks Sariya. 'We talk about the for and against of different things,' says Max. 'It's not just any old discussion,' says Lola, 'it's things that matter.' Their teacher has been putting into practice various practical ideas introduced at a recent course on teaching about controversial and sensitive issues. This chapter describes the course and reprints several of the handouts that were used.

The three-part course was modelled on a format developed by the National Union of Teachers. First, the headteacher of each participating school sent two delegates to an introductory two-day residential workshop. Second, participants carried out practical projects in their own schools. It was during this second phase that the conversation mentioned above took place. Third, participants gathered about four months later to report on what they had done, and on what they had learnt. They were teachers in secondary schools of citizenship, history, English, religious studies or PSHE. Most held positions of responsibility and were therefore in a position to contribute to school or departmental policies on topics such as speaking and listening, equalities, building resilience, critical thinking, and community cohesion.

Participation in the pilot project was free of charge. In addition, each school received a grant to pay for supply cover, resources and consultancy during the project's lifetime. The formal statement of aims for the project indicated that teachers taking part would:

- consider Ofsted expectations about the importance of speaking and listening in classroom discussions, and develop their own confidence and practical skills in conducting discussions
- take into account current policy developments nationally, for example the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and national projects such as the Rights Respecting Schools programme pioneered by Unicef and the *REsilience* programme on building confidence in handling contentious issues, organised by the Religious Education Council for the Department for Education
- consider and assess a number of web-based or publication-based practical resources
- increase their awareness of practical ways of developing critical thinking and media literacy, and of building resilience
- clarify general principles for talking and teaching in schools about difficult, sensitive or controversial issues.

The workshop consisted almost entirely of structured activities and exercises in small groups. Therefore participants experienced directly – as distinct from merely being told about – the kinds of practical approach they could use with pupils in their own classrooms.

Exercises and activities

The introductory workshop began with a ranking exercise. Participants were given nine statements about the problems and difficulties experienced by teachers when handling issues on which society is divided and about which discussions in schools may accordingly be difficult and sensitive. A particularly valuable ranking game is Diamond Nines, devised by the World Studies Project in the 1970s and described in box 1.2. Box 9.1 shows the items which were used. Those which were selected most often were these:

- What should we do when pupils express views that are racist, sexist or homophobic?

- How do we deal with our own feelings of ignorance or inadequate knowledge, and our anxieties about provoking concern and criticism amongst parents?
- Where does our professional responsibility lie when we are aware there are disagreements between a pupil and their parents or family?
- How should we react when pupils are angered, offended, threatened or distressed by opinions expressed by others?
- What should we do when consensus amongst pupils seems to have been reached without due reflection or discussion?

Difficult topics – questions in our minds

9.1

Giving our own views

Should we express our own views when asked by a pupil about topics on which society is divided?

Avoiding indoctrination

How can we avoid the accusation that we are engaged in indoctrination rather than education?

Dealing with extremist views

What should we do when pupils express views that are racist, sexist or homophobic?

Anger and distress

How should we react when pupils are angered, offended, threatened or distressed by opinions expressed by others?

Avoiding premature agreement

What should we do when consensus amongst pupils seems to have been reached without due reflection or discussion?

Balancing of rights

How do we balance a) the right to freedom of speech, b) the need for pupils to learn through thinking aloud and c) the need for pupils not to be distressed or intimidated by what other pupils say?

Keeping discussion lively

How do we prevent discussions becoming apathetic and listless?

Responsibilities to parents

How do we respond to the fact that pupils' parents read a range of different daily newspapers, and vote for a variety of political parties?

Disagreements at home

Where does our professional responsibility lie when we are aware there are disagreements between a pupil and their parents or family?

Dealing with abuse

How should we respond when a pupil is openly abusive towards another?

Our own ignorance

How do we deal with our own feelings of ignorance or inadequate knowledge, and with anxieties we may have about provoking concern and criticism amongst parents?

Scenarios

It is useful if discussions of how to deal with controversial and sensitive issues refer to specific events or scenarios. Participants were given a set of short stories and asked to select the three or four they found most relevant to their own concerns, and in relation to each they then considered:

- the background – what might have happened beforehand, both immediately and over time
- the follow-up – distinguishing between the next few minutes, the next few days, the next few weeks.

Following this consideration of specific episodes there was discussion of general principles. These were later worked up into a handout, as shown in box 9.2.

Item 3 in the list of general principles (box 9.2) refers to the importance of safe spaces. This essential concept was illustrated at the workshop with a handout entitled Fostering constructive talk (see box 9.4)

Other exercises were concerned with media literacy, constructive and unconstructive ways of contributing to group discussions (see box 9.5), language and so-called political correctness, and the nature and importance of ground rules. Handouts included a list of useful websites, and extracts from a National Strategies paper on the nature and value of collaborative talking and listening. There was also an art activity, and a fascinating presentation by, and structured conversation with, a visiting speaker. One of the extracts from the National Strategies paper is shown in box 9.4.

Follow-up in schools

In the four months following the workshop there was a wide range of follow-up activities in schools. They included debates, conferences, games, simulations and surveys and took place within several different curriculum areas. Several of them involved contact and consultation with parents and in all there was much use of collaborative groupwork. Between them, they involved all age-groups in secondary schools. Specific topics included work with pictorial material, language and political correctness, British identity, national and international politics, global poverty, the involvement of soldiers from Pakistan in the two world wars, and history, landmarks and current issues in the school's local area.

What did the pupils learn? One written report responded to this question with seven bullet points:

- how to hold a debate
- how to speak in front of people
- to talk with confidence
- about different cultures
- how to be respectful
- why they should be sensitive.

Encouraged by evaluations such as this, the next stage was to share papers and lesson plans from the pilot project on a website. Looking ahead, it may perhaps be possible to organise or to contribute to a regional or national conference. In the meanwhile it is relevant to quote from an email message written shortly after the follow-up day:

It was full of innovative and fascinating work, beyond what I had expected. From the case studies presented and strategies, activities and work shared it was clear that there was a lot of thought given and work developed. There was a lot presented, shared and discussed, all extremely valuable. It was clear that in most cases the vital groundwork of involving senior leaders and whole school staff, and raising the profile of such important work had paved the way for greater development.

Difficult discussions – principles and guidelines

1 Values and standards

It is entirely appropriate for teachers to assert and stress the values in, for example, UK equalities legislation and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

2 Critical thinking

The fundamental educational task is to help pupils think for themselves, and to sort out and clarify their emotions and values.

3 Safe spaces

Fears of ridicule or of being isolated may lead pupils to be wary about expressing their own view, or asking questions, or thinking aloud ('exploratory talk'). So special care has to be taken to make sure they feel safe and secure.

4 Freedom of speech

Freedom of thought and expression is an important value and should be protected in schools as in wider society. It is not, however, an absolute value. It has to be balanced with the equally important right not to be intimidated or abused.

5 Ground rules

It is valuable to establish a set of ground rules setting out how pupils are expected to behave when discussing controversial and sensitive issues with each other. The rules should be clarified and negotiated through discussion, not simply laid down.

6 Controversy is a fact of life

It is miseducation or even indoctrination to say or imply there is consensus around certain issues when in fact there is not. It can be reassuring to children and young people, as distinct from merely alarming or depressing, to be reminded that their elders are in disagreement with each other about certain important matters.

7 Duty of care

The conflicts and controversies of adult life can leave young people feeling confused and anxious and things said in classroom discussions can cause distress. A key task for adults is to provide reassurance, and to help children and young people to develop resilience.

8 The teachers' own views

Teachers' own views should not be presented as inherently correct. They may well, however, be a useful resource for pupils as they seek to make sense for themselves of

troubling events. Children and young people do reasonably wish to know how adults see, feel and judge.

9 Teaching and practice of skills and conventions

It is valuable to focus explicitly from time to time on helpful and unhelpful ways of contributing to a group discussion. For example, an entertaining role-playing exercise can involve all pupils in a group trying to be unhelpful in various specific ways (see box 9.5). Also, lists of helpful and unhelpful ways of contributing can be used in 'fishbowl' exercises, where pupils observe how members of a group interact.

10 'Political correctness'

Discussions are sometimes inhibited because pupils are uncertain whether a word is offensive. It can therefore be valuable to focus explicitly from time to time on issues of terminology and to consider differences of meaning, nuance and offensiveness.

11 Engaging with parents

It is prudent and courteous to inform parents in advance if classroom discussions of sensitive and controversial issues are being planned.

12 Impartiality

Teachers are not allowed by law to promote partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in schools. The Education Act 1996 requires school governing bodies, headteachers and local education authorities to 'take all reasonably practical steps to ensure that, where political issues are brought to the attention of learners, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views'.

13 Media literacy

Pupils need to be able to distinguish between a) facts whose accuracy can be readily checked and b) statements of opinion and interpretation; to distinguish between language that is neutral and language that is emotive or loaded; and to identify bias, agendas and underlying interests.

14 Whole-school policy

It is valuable if all members of staff discuss and clarify together principles such as those outlined above.

Fostering constructive talk – an aide-memoire

9.3

1 Getting started: one, two, four

Start by asking each individual to do, decide, write or choose something on their own. This gives them a secure base, so to speak, from which to go out and engage with others. Then have them talk in pairs about what they have written or done. Then form fours or sixes, and share further.

2 Objects to handle

Give pupils things they can handle and arrange. For example, provide phrases, statements and quotations on separate slips of paper or cards rather than a single sheet of paper. This makes the material literally as well as metaphorically easier to manage and gives pupils a sense of being in control. Moving their hands seems to loosen their tongues and their minds.

3 Pictorial material

Arrange for pupils to handle pictorial material. For example, most obviously, postcards and photographs.

4 Ranking games and exercises

Give pupils several quotations or statements and ask them to rank them in the order in which they agree with them, or in the order they would put them in if they were using them in an essay, speech or talk.

5 Jigsaw exercises

A jigsaw exercise typically has three stages: 1) Pupils form base groups – usually of three or four in each group. They are given descriptions of the enquiry groups in which they will be working in the next stage and they decide amongst themselves who will go to which enquiry group. 2) Pupils work in enquiry groups, each enquiry group engaging in a different task. 3) They return to their base groups and report back on what they have done and learnt.

6 Precise tasks

Pupils benefit from being given precise unambiguous instructions about the outcome that is wanted. For example: 'Here are pictures of six people. Choose the two people you would most like to meet. For each of them write down the two questions you would most like to ask.'

7 Blind voting

To gain a sense of the general climate of opinion in a group, it helps if pupils close their eyes before raising their hands to signify their view of the topic under discussion. This decreases the possibility that certain individuals will simply go with the crowd or vote the way a certain other person votes, rather than think for themselves.

8 Listing without discussing

This well-known activity traditionally known as brainstorming is frequently invaluable. It involves a small group making a list without any discussion in the first instance. Listing without discussing does not come naturally, so it can be helpful and fun to practise it with non-serious material. For example: 'In one minute write down objects in this room'. Then: 'In a further minute write down things in this room that are unlikely to be on any other group's list'.

9 Moving around

If the physical space permits, it is often valuable if pupils move around. For example, they walk around the room looking at posters or quotations, and choosing those which they find most stimulating.

9.3 (continued)

Fostering constructive talk – an aide-memoire

10 Listening, talking, reconstructing

This is sometimes known as Dictogloss and is an excellent way of introducing a key idea. It typically has three stages. First, a short text is read aloud at normal speed. It could be an entry in an encyclopaedia, a book review, a passage in a textbook, a newspaper article or editorial, an extract from a guidebook, the abstract of an article and so on. The pupils listen without making notes. Second, the same text is read aloud more slowly and this time pupils make notes of key words and phrases. Third, pupils work in pairs or small groups, comparing their notes and attempting to recreate the original text as fully and accurately as possible.

11 Cloze procedure

This is another well-known activity that is invaluable for introducing a new piece of material. Pupils are given a piece of text in which certain key words are blanked out. In pairs or groups, they try to guess what the missing word might be. When they have chosen a word to fill a gap, they may be asked to consult a thesaurus to find a better word or to reassure themselves that the word they have chosen is indeed the most appropriate.

12 Reconstituting

Take two different texts and cut them up into their separate sentences, and shuffle all the fragments together. In pairs or groups, pupils have to sort the fragments into two clusters and then to sequence them. Or take ten quotations, proverbs or sayings and cut each in half – again, the task is to re-constitute them.

14 Committee games

It is frequently valuable to discuss material and ideas through a simulation exercise in which groups of pupils see themselves as a committee which has to choose between competing priorities. Typically, decisions have to be made about allocations of resources. It is sometimes possible to make the game real by providing some real money that has to be distributed.

14 Collective writing

It is often valuable if pupils crystallise their learning by producing a piece of writing. It is even more valuable if they collaborate in their writing, rather than each working on their own, and if they draft and re-draft.

15 Impacting on real audiences

Other things being equal, it is often useful if pupils communicate their views and ideas outside the four walls of a classroom. At the very least they can post messages and comments on blogs and social networking sites, and the 'Have Your Say' areas of news organisations. More ambitiously, they can write to elected representatives, or can create exhibitions and displays, and rehearse and perform sketches and playlets in public places.

Concluding note

'There is nothing out there,' says a teacher at Hogwarts School (box 9.6). This chapter has presented a contrary view, as does this book as a whole. 'It's not just any old discussion,' said 12-year-old Lola, quoted near the start of this chapter. 'It's things that matter.' The next chapter portrays young people engaging with matters of great moment – difference and diversity, shared humanity, globalisation, conflict resolution, justice, open minds.

There is nothing out there, Mr Potter – a teacher at Hogwarts

9.6

A lesson at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The teacher is Professor Dolores Umbridge, who speaks first.

'Now, it is the view of the Ministry that a theoretical knowledge will be more than sufficient to get you through your examination, which is, after all, what school is all about...'

...

'And what good's theory going to be in the real world?' said Harry loudly, his fist in the air again.

'This is a school, Mr Potter, not the real world,' she said softly.

'So we're not supposed to be prepared for what's waiting for us out there?'

'There is nothing out there, Mr Potter.'

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix by J K Rowling, 2003

Talk among teachers and learners – messages from research

9.4

Neil Mercer's research and writings on talk have stressed the special importance of language and thinking.* 'Education,' he writes, 'ought to be a means for helping learners develop ways of using language as a social mode of thinking, and this is hardly likely to be successful if their opportunities for using language are limited to narrow response slots in conversations with teachers'. He also emphasises the importance of social background and context to learning through talk and stresses the value of collaboration, with pupils needing to be taught how to collaborate. He analyses the language of pupils talking together in classrooms to come up with three ways of typifying talking and thinking:

disputational talk, characterised by disagreement and individualised decision-making.

cumulative talk, in which speakers build positively but uncritically on what the other has said. It is characterised by repetitions, confirmations and elaborations.

exploratory talk, in which partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas.

Mercer's and others' observations suggest that most classroom talk is 'disputational' or 'cumulative' and only involving some of the pupils. Furthermore, he asserts that exploratory talk deserves special attention because it 'embodies certain principles – of accountability, of clarity, of constructive criticism and receptiveness to well-argued proposals – which are highly valued in many societies'. His full definition of exploratory talk is:

Exploratory talk is that in which partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas. Relevant information is offered for joint consideration. Proposals may be challenged and counter-challenged, but if so reasons are given and alternatives offered. Agreement is sought as a basis for progress. Knowledge is made publicly accountable and reasoning is visible in the talk.

*Mercer, N (1995) *The Guided Construction of Knowledge: talk among teachers and learners*, Clevedon, Somerset: Multilingual Matters.

Source: *National Strategies*, 2008

Being obstructive, being helpful – the roles people play**NEGATIVE ROLES****Irrelevant anecdotes**

Telling long rambling stories about things one has done, or that one has been told by a friend of a friend, or has read about somewhere or other.

Flattery

Trying to make a good impression on one other person through compliments and strong agreement, and pointing out to the rest of the group how clever this person is.

Hobby horse

Using the discussion as an opportunity to expound a pet theory or gain support for a particular cause.

Poor little me

Using the discussion as an opportunity to gain sympathy for the hard life one has been having recently – so much to do, and so little time to do it in, and no one understands.

Name-dropping

Mentioning the names of books one has read or heard of, and of people whom one claims to have met, as a way of showing how intellectual and important one is.

Abuse

Being insulting towards someone else in the group, or everyone in the group, and being offensive about various people who are not present.

Closed mind

Refusing to consider the possibility that anyone else in the group might have a good idea or any positive qualities.

Apathy

Yawning, fiddling with a pencil, leaning back in one's chair, gazing at the ceiling, generally indicating with body language and the occasional remark that one thinks the discussion is pointless.

Interrupting

Continually butting in when someone else is speaking, and changing the subject.

Talking to one other person

Addressing one's remarks directly to one other person rather than to the group as a whole.

Generalisations

Asserting one's opinions and perceptions as self-evident truth and sweeping aside any objections or counter-views advanced by others.

POSITIVE ROLES**Clarifying**

From time to time asking that something should be explained in greater detail than hitherto.

Summarising

From time to time seeking to summarise where the group has got to and what it has agreed – and what the main points of disagreement seem to be.

Bringing in others

Asking if someone who hasn't yet said much would like to contribute some thoughts or an opinion.

I wonder

Prefacing a remark with the phrase 'I wonder', or something similar, to encourage speculation and enquiry.

Evidence

Requesting hard evidence for factual statements that are made, and the evidence and experience underlying opinions that are expressed.

Building

Prefacing some or most of one's contributions by referring back positively to something said by someone else.

Spread of opinion

Doing one's best to get a spread of opinion within the group, and recalling that there's a spread of opinion in the outside world.

Keeping the group on task

Accepting responsibility for getting the discussion started, keeping it relevant and guiding it to a conclusion.

Stirring it up

Contributing remarks that are surprising or even shocking, in order to get the group to think more imaginatively, and to express their feelings more honestly.

Feelings

Monitoring one's own feelings (anxiety, pleasure, interest), and expressing them if appropriate, and trying to gauge and respond to the feelings of others.

Chapter 10

Engaging with difference – research, performance and key concepts

Seething with humanity

‘The capital was seething with humanity,’ writes David Lodge in his novel *Paradise News*, describing London, as visited by Bernard, the main character. For Lodge the city is a symbol of what he calls ‘the relentless mass mobility of the modern world’ and he says that Bernard had never felt ‘so harassed and buffeted’ by it. If only, Bernard feels, there were a supreme being who would act like a schoolteacher and return the world to its former untroubled and untroubling simplicity and uniformity:

Victoria station was chaotic – foreign tourists frowning over streetmaps, young hikers shouldering massive backpacks, families on their way to the seaside, weekenders on their way to the country, rowdy football fans – all jostling and pushing and banging into each other. The air was full of shouts, oaths, snatches of football songs, and fragments of French, German, Spanish, Arabic. There were long looping queues for taxis, and for tickets in the Underground. Bernard had never been so struck by the relentless mass mobility of the modern world, or felt so harassed and buffeted by it. If there were by any chance a Supreme Being, it would be pleasing to imagine Him suddenly clapping His hands like the exasperated teacher of an unruly class, and saying, in the chastened silence, ‘Will you all stop talking and go quietly back to your places.’

Yes, the myriad interactions of the modern world can be baffling and harassing. And yes, wouldn’t life be so much more pleasant, at first sight, if a teacher could sort everything out, putting an end to mixtures and mobility entirely amicably and gently.

But since there is no teacher anywhere who can do that, the modern world being inescapably and irretrievably what it is, and where it is, what is to be done? What, in relation to the mass mobility of the modern world, are a teacher’s professional responsibilities? How to assist children and young people to cope with it, and indeed even to enjoy it, rather than being nervous, anxious, insecure? And how to give all pupils a sense of identity, a sense that they are a somebody not a nobody? These are the key questions explored in this chapter.

The chapter is principally a description of a project in Derbyshire. Young people from different schools, geographical areas and age-groups, and from different social, ethnic and religious backgrounds, worked together in a variety of creative and investigative activities, including interviewing, opinion research, acting, singing, dancing, fashion, graffiti and animation. The programme culminated in two public performances for parents, friends, families, governors and teachers. The lived experience of those who took part was of diversity as exciting and energising, not baffling or burdensome. And each person grew to see himself or herself as someone who can not only understand diversity but create representations of their own personality and being, and share their representations with others, for everyone’s pleasure and everyone’s learning.

We were like a family – reflections and memories

10.1

I loved the project! I met so many new and amazing talented people! It's brought together lots of people who wouldn't normally be together. It has also given people loads more confidence.

I had a great week, I loved meeting new people and just having a chance to mix. When we had a big performance it felt great, getting together all the things we had done to show our friends and families. I think with all the effort we had put into the performance the audience could really tell.

The catchphrase Bringing People Together is exactly what Diverse did. We met lots of different people and worked with them, but most importantly of all we made friends. We are all still friends on Facebook, so we never lose contact with each other.

My favourite activity was dance, it was just so fun, I thought I was out of Fame.

Words can't describe how brilliant this project was! I have made so many new friends from different backgrounds which has made me understand more about their lives.

The project was brilliant! I learned to work with a music producer and develop my music tech and singing skills. My favourite activity was impressing people!

I have really enjoyed being part of the Diverse project as I have had the opportunity to be involved in lots of different activities. I have visited a mosque in Chesterfield where I had lunch and interviewed different people. I also helped on the workshops and some of my work was exhibited in the centre. It was great fun and everyone really worked hard together, we were like a family.

Diverse – the project's five stages

10.2

STAGE 1 – BRIDGING THE GAP

The young people developed research skills and methods of archiving historical information, and some of them conducted interviews with community organisations, including the Chesterfield Muslim Association and the Chesterfield Asian Association. The interviews were filmed and photographs, historical documents and original footage were collected wherever possible. The information was to be part of a final documentary and archive.

STAGE 2 – YOU SAY TOMATO AND I SAY TOMAATO

The young people worked with a poet, scriptwriter and musician to explore their language, rhymes, songs, sayings and games from their different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

STAGE 3 – BRING IT ON

The young people took part in workshops in dance, music, film, fashion, animation and graffiti, to explore the work created in stages one and two of the project, and to develop performance pieces.

STAGE 4 – SHOW AND TELL

The young people showcased their songs, rhymes, dances and performance pieces at the Donut Creative Arts Studio on two evenings, with the event on the first evening also being a presentation night to recognise the achievements of the participants. They also set up a static exhibition of photographs, rhymes and poems from the research with the community organisations and worked with fashion designers to create costumes for the performances.

STAGE 5 – ARCHIVE DOCUMENTARY

The young people produced a documentary to include original footage from different cultures, still photographs, historical documents, interviews and footage from the workshops. The documentary will act as a method of archiving the project, and has the potential to be disseminated as a DVD resource to help promote community cohesion within schools and the wider community.

The background to the project included the work of the local authority's education advisory service on cohesion, equality and diversity under the banner of its *Holding Together* handbook (Trentham Books, 2010); the desire expressed by local community forums for young people to have opportunities to share their cultures and experiences through the creative arts; the work and programmes of a recently opened creative arts studio; and curriculum development by the local authority's youth service.

Students from a secondary school set up a steering group of young people from various schools to discuss their cultural heritage and research the communities in which they live. They worked up a proposal for a creative arts project and this led in due course to a grant of £8,000 from the local authority's Community Cohesion Working Group. It was agreed that the project would be based around five stages, as summarised in box 10.2.

Difference and diversity

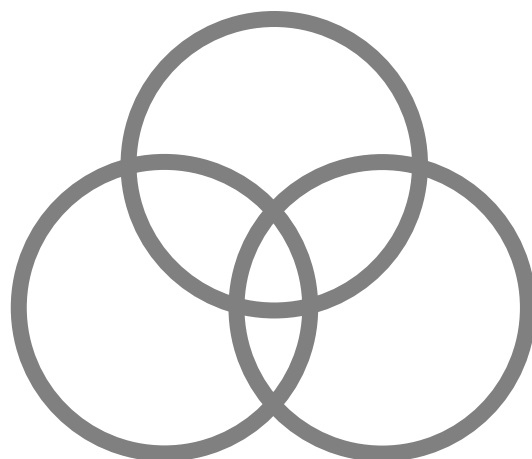
[The exhibition] ... questions our sense of welcome and acceptance of minority groups and calls upon us to reflect upon the journeys we make in our own lives. It asks us questions about belonging and identity and who owns the spaces in which we live. How do we live with difference and diversity and how do we make judgements about other groups? [The sculptures] can both intrigue and fascinate but also threaten. Are they oppressed or oppressor or both? Or neither? Are they the helper, the invaded or the scapegoat? How can our space also be theirs?

– Notes for the *Odyssey* exhibition of sculpture by Robert Koenig, London 2012

Workshops

Eighty-five young people registered for the workshops with many more desperate to attend. Students from 15 schools, ranging in age from 12 to 18, attended from across the county. Several nationalities or ethnicities were represented, including African-Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Italian, Pakistani, Polish, Portuguese and White British. The young people completed workshop option forms where they could select three preferred activities from the following list: animation, dance, drama, fashion, graffiti art, music technology and singing. They were given a timetable for the week although they had the option to change on arrival and could also have a taste of the other activities if requested. Many selected options they had chosen for their GCSEs, BTECs or A Level courses, as they wanted to develop their skills to improve their chances of a higher grade.

The first day consisted of ice breaking activities based around language. The activity was good fun and the young people mixed instantly and made new friends. The exercise resulted in all the young people performing a short rap-style piece at the end of the first day.



Singing

On applying for the workshops the young people were given the option of having individual singing lessons. Only six put their names on the list in the first instance. But as the week progressed and they grew in confidence, more came forward and wanted to access the tuition. Eventually over thirty wanted lessons and the singing tutor had to change her plans. Each person was given an audition where it was decided what their natural voice range was and each was placed in one of three groups: low, middle and high. They were then taken off into their groups and taught a three part harmony which they later performed as a whole group at the final showcase performance. Each day they attended singing sessions where they were given voice training and breathing exercises.

Dance

The young people had the opportunity to access dance classes where they could explore a range of dance styles. For example, the dance teacher from the Donut Centre delivered a street dance workshop. This style of dance proved popular with the boys, as it was very energetic and some of its elements required physical strength. In addition 40 young people worked with two dance tutors to choreograph a routine to Footloose. They had rehearsals every day for two hours and on one day they danced for five hours. The level of motivation, commitment and teamwork was extremely high. Several of the girls in this group had refused to participate in PE at school, so it proved to be an excellent way to get them exercising.

Animation

This proved to be a popular option with both the boys and the girls, and indeed some of those who attended the animation workshop on the first day decided they didn't want to do anything else as they wanted to really develop their skills and refine their final piece. A young deaf girl enjoyed the animation, as for her it was purely visual. Once she had been taught the process, she grasped the technology with confidence and could be heard laughing out loud as she produced her piece.

Food

Food cooked by local restaurants was provided for the young people. Many of them were not used to eating vegetables and would normally only eat fast food. They tried Indian curry and a range of Chinese food and many came back for seconds.

Performance

A showcase event was held at the Donut Creative Arts Studio a few weeks later at which young people showcased their musical and performing talent. Both were a sell-out to audiences consisting of friends, family, teachers, practitioners and youth workers, and staff from the local authority. The young people not only had the opportunity to showcase their talent to a receptive audience but also to develop their confidence both as individuals and as teams.

Photography

Over a thousands portraits were taken throughout the project of people who were interviewed or involved in the workshop. Many were displayed at the Donut Centre as part of the showcase event and are now part of a static exhibition. Several are featured in this book. The photographs had a great impact, visually representing the rich cultural diversity of communities living within Derbyshire. Donkey Stone films produced a multi media installation that presented soundbites from the interviews and was supported by all the photographs. Viewed on a big screen as part of the showcase event, it was played as the audience came into the centre. It powerfully reflected the depth of research and information gained through the interviews.

Implications for the everyday classroom

The Diverse project described above may not appear, at first sight, to be easy to replicate. However, its emphasis on creativity does in fact have many practical implications for the everyday life of schools and classrooms. So does its emphasis on cooperation and collaboration. Box 10.3 is an aide-memoire about creativity and cooperation that can be used by teachers in every curriculum area and with pupils of all age groups. It is based on Howard Gardner's concept of multiple intelligences, and serves as a summary not only of essential themes in this chapter but of essential themes in this book as a whole.

As is the case with other aide-memoires in the book, the aim is to provide discussion points at staff meetings, training events and professional conversations, and to suggest topics and matters that can be considered directly with pupils.

Drawing it all together

As a way of bringing this chapter and this whole book towards an end, box 10.4 recalls a key question in all educational planning – 'what's the big idea?' What are the essential generalisations teachers intend to present and to communicate, the key concepts they want learners to understand and make their own? Box 10.4 contains notes on six sets of big ideas. The ideas are connected to each other and overlap but can be separated and given names, for the sake of convenience

These ideas can be taught in all subjects and at all ages. Further, they can be taught through a school's general ethos and atmosphere, not just formally and directly through what used to be called chalk and talk. Also, they can be taught through the illustrative material to which reference is made in skills-based subjects. They are a summary of key ideas underlying spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that have been present, in a variety of ways, throughout this chapter and this whole book.



Creativity every day – an aide-memoire

10.3

Visual and spatial approaches

Can I make greater use of colours, symbols, posters, imagery, drawings, collages, evocative photographs, graffiti?

Do I encourage pupils to think about concepts in visual ways, for example through colour-coding, mind-mapping, linking abstract ideas to objects, using visualisations, sketching mental images?

Do I encourage them to present information visually, for example through infographics?

Musical approaches

Can I include a musical dimension to teaching my subject, for example performance, song, rhythm, musical notation?

Do I encourage pupils to present ideas using a musical medium?

Do I sometimes play background music while pupils work, or permit them to listen to personal stereos?

Bodily and kinaesthetic approaches

Can I make greater use of physical, hands-on approaches to teaching and learning, for example practical demonstrations, opportunities to move around, role-play, experiment, conduct interviews?

Do I provide materials and objects that pupils can move and manipulate?

Do I encourage pupils to exercise, relax or stretch their legs during lessons, or simply to stand up from time to time?

Interpersonal approaches

Can I make greater use of partner or groupwork to promote discussion, debate and reflection?

Do I encourage pupils to collaborate on joint written assignments, or in commenting on each other's draft written work?

Do I sometimes focus directly on skills of discussion and participation and groupwork (see for example the positive and negative roles summarised in box 9.5), and 'teach' such skills directly?

Intrapersonal approaches

Can I develop the ways I give constructive feedback to pupils on the ways they think and learn, and encourage them to set targets for themselves and to reflect on their progress?

Do I actively encourage pupils to give their views on the teaching and learning styles used in my classroom, so that I can better accommodate their needs and preferences?

Do I require pupils to keep a learning log, so that they report and reflect on how they are learning and progressing?

Source: slightly adapted from *Listening to Able Underachievers* by Michael Pomerantz and Kathryn Anne Pomerantz, 2002

Concluding overview – six key concepts

10.4

1) Shared humanity

Human beings belong to a single race, the human race. At all times in history and in all cultural traditions, they have had, and continue to have, certain basic tasks, problems, aspirations and needs in common – there is a shared humanity. Because all have the same underlying humanity, all are of equal value. All should be treated fairly and all should have the same basic human rights.

Art, drama, history, music, novels, poetry, religion and stories all explore humankind's basic humanity. In science, pupils learn about aspects of human biology that are universal, about universals in the inorganic world and about science as a universal human activity. Universals in biology are also encountered in health education and PE. In geography, pupils learn about recurring patterns in the relationship between human beings and their physical environment.

2) Identity, belonging and difference

To be human is to be rooted in a particular time and place and therefore to be different from most other people. The principal differences are to do with age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, nation, race, religion, sexuality and status. They are expressed through different perceptions, narratives, interests, standpoints and customs. Every individual belongs to a range of different groups, and therefore has a range of different belongings. Also, and partly in consequence, all individuals change and develop over time, as do all cultures, groups and communities.

In all subjects, the texts, visual material and electronic resources can reflect the reality that there are many different ways of being human and that cultural identities are continually developing. Similarly the tasks, problems and assignments that are set can reflect these aspects of the real world. In many subjects, in addition, there are direct opportunities for teaching and learning about cultural differences, and about differences of perception, interpretation, interest and narrative.

3) Globalisation and the global village

Countries, cultures and communities are not cut off from each other. On the contrary, there has been much borrowing, mingling and mutual influence over the centuries between different countries and cultural traditions. Events and trends in one place in the modern world are frequently affected by events and trends elsewhere. You cannot understand your own local world close at hand without seeing it as part of a global system. The global system has a range of interacting sub-systems: ecological, cultural, economic and political. There are benefits, but also dangers and difficulties, not least because globalisation threatens certain conventional and traditional notions of identity.

Economic interdependence is an essential concept in geography. Ecological interdependence is fundamental in biology, chemistry and physics. Political interdependence is central in all studies of causation in history. Cultural interdependence, involving fusion, cross-over and mutual influences and borrowing, is a recurring feature in art, design, drama, literature, music and technology.

4) Learning from other places and times

Examples of high achievement are to be found in a wide range of cultures, societies and traditions, not only in 'the west' or in modern times. They are the created by both women and men, by gay people as well as straight, and by disabled people as well as non-disabled. They are to be found in all areas of human endeavour – the arts and sciences, law and ethics, personal and family life, religion and spirituality, moral and physical courage, invention, politics, imagination.

In every subject, examples of achievement, invention, creativity, insight and heroism can be taken from a wide range of cultures, both in the present and in the past.

10.4 (continued)

Concluding overview – six key concepts

5) Conflict resolution and justice

In all societies and situations – including families, schools, villages, nations, the world – there are disagreements and conflicts of interest. In consequence there is a never-ending need to construct, and to keep in good repair, non-violent ways of dealing with conflict – rules, laws, customs and systems that all people accept as reasonable and fair, and enable them to get on with each other.

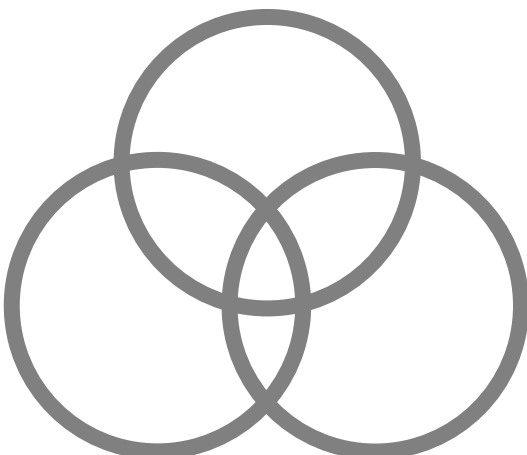
It is particularly in history, PSHE and citizenship education that social and political concepts to do with conflict resolution and justice are taught and developed directly. Indirectly, they can be a dimension in all subjects, particularly literature and stories and the creative and performing arts.

6) Open and closed minds

All advances of knowledge and substantial achievements require a readiness to review and examine assumptions, expectations and perceptions that may be false or distorted. Such assumptions may be about the inherent superiority of one's own country, culture or ethnicity; the inherent superiority of either women or men; sexual identity; disability; people of one's own generation; or the period of history in which one happens to live. Avoiding stereotypes and unexamined beliefs while also keeping one's mind open to new information, evidence and points of view, is a constant struggle.

It is particularly in history, PSHE and citizenship education that social and political concepts to do with prejudice and open-mindedness are taught and developed directly. Indirectly, they can be a dimension in all subjects, particularly literature and stories and the creative and performing arts. In science, technology and mathematics there is constant emphasis on attention to hard evidence and on the rigorous testing of hypotheses.

Source: Adapted from Holding Together: equalities, difference and cohesion, a resource for school improvement planning, published by Trentham Books for Derbyshire Education Authority, 2010



Appendix A

Notes and references

Chapter 1

Page 8: The conversation between Yinka and Ray (box 1.2) takes place on page 209 of *Gangsta Rap* by Benjamin Zephaniah, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004.

Page 9: The Diamond Nines activity (box 1.3) was first published in *Debate and Decision: schools in a world of change* by Robin Richardson, Simon Fisher and Marion Flood, London: One World Trust, 1979.

Chapter 2

Page 11: The poem by W. B. Yeats is entitled 'An Irish airman foresees his death', 1918. The case which led to the formulation of the Brown principles is known officially as *R (Brown) v Secretary of State for Work & Pensions [2008] EWHC 3158 (Admin)*, and is described on the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/relevant-case-law/>.

Page 12: The Department for Education's equality analysis workbook is on the DfE website at <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/policiesandprocedures/equalityanddiversity/a0077522/equality-analyses-equias-workbook>.

Page 13: The equality impact assessment for the 2010 Education Bill (box 2.1), leading to the Education Act 2011, is on the government's website at <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA11-008.pdf>

Page 14: The coalition government's equality strategy (box 2.2) is introduced on the Home Office's website at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-strategy/>. From the same page there is a link to a progress report published on 22 May 2012.

Page 16: The quotation from Ofsted about persistent low attainment is from the consultation document issued in March 2011. The quotation about individuals and groups is from *Evaluation Schedule for Schools*, autumn 2011.

Page 18: The quotations from Ofsted (box 2.6) are from the March 2011 consultation paper.

Page 21: For fuller discussion of smart objectives in the field of education, see 'Being SMART – developing and writing equality objectives' by Bill Bolloten, *Race Equality Teaching*, vol 30 no 2, spring 2012, pp 38–41.

Chapter 3

Page 23: Jane Eyre's reflections about teaching appear in chapter 31 of Charlotte Brontë's novel.

Page 24: The quotation from a teacher (box 3.1) appears on page 142 of *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: the Parekh Report*, Profile Books 2000.

Pages 26-9: The discussion of teachers' expectations draws on material in *Equality Stories* by Berenice Miles and Robin Richardson, Trentham Books 2004.

Page 27: The account of teachers' attitudes in a New York school (box 3.5) appears on page 324 of *Tis: a memoir* by Frank McCourt, Flaming 2000. The BBC news item about children's names (box 3.6) was published on 8 September 2009 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/education/8243684.stm>

Page 30: The tale of two teachers (box 3.8) is adapted slightly from a version in *Holding Together*, Trentham Books for Derbyshire County Council 2009.

Chapter 4

Pages 32 and 37: The things people say (box 4.2) and measures and projects to make a difference (box 4.5) are adapted from handouts developed in Derbyshire.

Page 33: The quotation from *The Year of Living Dangerously* is cited in an article about modern-day slavery by Charlene Fassa, 2005. <http://www.rense.com/general68/whatthen.htm>.

Pages 34-5: The findings from inspections (box 4.3) and the self-evaluation checklist on gathering and using data (box 4.4) are adapted slightly from Estyn's *Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools*, 2011.

Page 39: The NCSL paper was written by John West-Burnham.

Chapter 5

Pages 44-6: The passage describing classroom research is based with her permission on a dissertation by Sarah Peet.

Chapter 6

Pages 49-54: The description of the Ciné Hubs project draws with their permission on a substantial paper by John Tobin and Antony Thomas at the Antenna Media Centre, Nottingham.

Page 53: The quotation entitled 'Artificial' is from *The Cinema as Art* by Ralph Stephenson and Jean Debris, Penguin Books, 1965.

Page 54: The quotation entitled 'Central and necessary' is from *Communications* by Raymond Williams, Penguin Books 1962.

Chapter 7

Page 55: The conversation about Ray takes place on pages 30-1 of *Gangsta Rap* by Benjamin Zephaniah, 2004.

Pages 56-60: The quotations from Ofsted (2008) are from the report entitled *White boys from low-income backgrounds: good practice in schools. Work on raising boys' achievement in Derbyshire* (boxes 7.2, 7.6 and 7.7) was developed with advice and support from Gary Wilson.

Page 58: The material entitled 'Firm foundations' is based on documents developed in the London Borough of Ealing.

Page 59: 'Yes he can: schools where boys write well' (box 7.5) was the title of HMI report 505, published in 2003. It is summarised by Robin Lane in *Gender and Literacy: improving boys' writing* at <http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/nationalstrategy/literacy/download/file/GenderandLiteracy.pdf>.

Chapter 8

Pages 63-67: The description of action research is based with their permission on a dissertation by Helen Riley and Mary Bailey at the University of Nottingham. The quotation on page 63 from André Brink is from his book *The Novel: language and narrative from Cervantes to Calvino*, Macmillan 1995, page 5.

Page 69: The WordSift home page is at <http://www.wordsift.com/site/about>. The project was developed with the help and inspiration of middle school science teachers at the San Francisco Unified School District through collaboration supported by the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP).

Chapter 9

Page 78: The exchange at Hogwarts (box 9.6) appears on pages 219-20 of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J. K. Rowling.

Chapter 10

Page 79: David Lodge, *Paradise News*, Quality Paperbacks Direct 1991, page 33.

Page 79-83: The description of the Diverse project is based with her permission on a report by Tricia Gardiner.

Page 84: The checklist about creativity (box 10. 2) is adapted slightly from page 76 of *Listening to Able Underachievers* by Michael Pomerantz and Kathryn Anne Pomerantz, who at the time of the book's publication (2002) by David Fulton Publishers were senior educational psychologists with Derbyshire County Council.

Pages 85-6: The description of six key concepts (box 10.3) is adapted slightly from material in *Holding Together: equalities, difference and cohesion*, Trentham Books for Derbyshire County Council, 2009.

Pages 91-2: There is a full list of significant case law in the period 2008-12 on the website of the Equality and Diversity Forum at <http://www.edf.org.uk/blog/?p=17719>.

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Appendix B

Due regard – messages for schools from case law

1. Avoiding discrimination is not enough

A school which focuses only on avoiding what is prohibited by the Equality Act – discrimination, harassment and victimisation – will not be discharging the duty to have due regard properly. Schools must also think about the positive steps they can take to reduce inequalities of outcome and improve relations between different groups. To miss an opportunity to reduce inequalities is as serious as increasing inequality.

2. The duty applies before policies are finalised and decisions are made

A key purpose of the equality duty is to require public bodies to give advance and open-minded consideration to any likely impact on equality before deciding on a particular policy. A school must therefore engage in evidence-based policy, not collect policy-based evidence.¹

3. The duty is continuous

The duty to have due regard applies not only to the development and adoption of a policy but also to its practical implementation and to continuing review of it.²

4. Decision-makers must be made aware of the duty

A member of staff responsible for making a decision for a school that is likely to have an equality impact must be made aware of the school's obligations under the Equality Act. The same applies to a school's governing body.³

5. Responsibility for discharging the duty cannot be delegated or sub-contracted

Ultimate responsibility for discharging the duty remains with the decision-maker – for example, in the case of a school, the governing body. The process of assessing the impact on equality may be undertaken by others, of course, for example the headteacher and other senior members of staff, or by an external consultant.

6. A properly informed, open-minded view must be taken of the likely impact on equality

Carrying out an equality impact assessment according to a pre-determined procedure may be the best way of ensuring this. However, a formal document called an equality impact assessment is not actually necessary. The requirement is that due regard should be exercised in substance and with rigour and based on sufficient information.⁴

7. The process of having due regard should be documented and transparent

It is advisable for schools to have written documentation to show they have had due regard for equality. For example, reasons for decisions should be clearly minuted, showing the relevant evidence that was gathered and analysed.⁵

8. The degree of regard depends on how relevant a decision or policy is to equality

Assessing a school's compliance with the duty is not just a matter of showing whether it did or did not have regard to equality. It is about whether, in all the circumstances, the school gave the appropriate degree of regard. A high level of regard will be expected when decisions or proposed policies have or are likely to have a direct impact on pupils who are disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic.

9. Where negative effects are identified, potential mitigation must be considered

If a negative impact or the risk of one is identified, the school must consider whether it needs to discontinue or change the policy or proposal. If it believes it can lawfully justify the action, then it should clearly state this justification at the time of having due regard. If a policy or proposal may undermine equality of opportunity or harm good relations, the school should consider whether there are ways of eliminating the risk or mitigating the negative impact.⁶

10. The voices of the most vulnerable

When making decisions or reviewing current policies, schools can – and, indeed, must – take other considerations into account besides those identified in the Equality Act. However, the legislation always requires public authorities to listen with an open mind to the voices of the most vulnerable at a formative stage of the decision-making process and to remain vigilant to ensure that policies and practices are not creating disadvantage when applied.

References

- 1 Secretary of State for Defence v Elias [2006] EWCA Civ 1293 [274]
- 2 R (Brown) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2008] EWHC 3158 (Admin) [95]. The Brown principles were approved in R (Domb) v London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (2009) EWCA Civ 941 and restated in R (JG and MB) v Lancashire County Council (2011) EWHC 2295 (Admin)
- 3 R (Chavda) v Harrow LBC [2007] EWHC 3064 (Admin) [40]
- 4 Brown [89]
- 5 R (Rahman) v Birmingham City Council [2011] EWHC 944 [35]. See also R (Kaur and Shah) v London Borough of Ealing [2008] EWHC 2026 [45]-[46]. R (BAPIO Action Ltd) v Secretary of State for the Home Department and Secretary of State for Health [2007] EWHC 199 [69]. R (Baker) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (2008) EWCA Civ 141, and R (Equality and Human Rights Commission) v Secretary of State for Justice (2010) EWHC 147
- 6 See for example R (W) v Birmingham City Council [2011] EWHC 1147 [158]

Source: adapted from Equality Duty Toolkit, published by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), autumn 2011.