

Paper 19: Overheard

This paper

This paper recalls the outlooks and objections that may be voiced at a training session or that participants may have heard elsewhere – not only from colleagues but also from parents and governors.

As mentioned by Ofsted (paper 9), such anxieties and concerns need to be addressed explicitly, not ignored. A useful discussion activity is to consider how one would reply to each of the quoted remarks, perhaps using role-play.

'Children and teenagers are for ever trading insults with each other, it's part of everyday banter and good humour. It doesn't do lasting harm and in any case they grow out of it.'

'It's political correctness gone mad to claim a term such as Paki or Gyppo is worse than fatty or four eyes.'

'The man who runs my local corner shop is Asian and he calls it a Paki shop. So if he doesn't mind the word, why should I?'

'Children don't understand what they're saying when they use racist name-calling. It's totally unfair to punish them.'

'It's the parents we should challenge, not the children. But that's easier said than done. And anyway, do we have the right to challenge parents? The BNP is a legitimate political party, after all.'

'Well, I suppose we have to record racist incidents, since the government requires it. But it's not fair – there are lots of other bad things children do and say, some of them worse than racism, yet we don't have to record and report them.'

'When I was at school I got teased because I was taller than most. I didn't like it but I had to put up with it.'

'I just tell children racism is against the law. There's no need to say anything else, surely? The whole problem is sorted in just a few seconds.'

'Talking about racism makes minority children feel even more vulnerable and insecure and makes white children feel guilty and resentful. It causes more problems than it solves.'
