Bullying in Schools around Racism, Culture and Religion

– How to prevent it
and what to do when it happens

A set of workshop papers, 2007

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PLEASE NOTE

As a pack, these papers can be downloaded from http://www.insted.co.uk/race28.pdf

The papers are derived and developed from DfES advice on countering racist bullying at
www.teachernet.gov.uk/racistbullying

An article about the DfES advice can be downloaded from
http://www.insted.co.uk/classrooms.pdf

A JIGSAW ACTIVITY

An activity in three stages

Stage One: *formation of base groups* (10 minutes)

Each home group has four members. There are two tasks in this first stage:

- Introduce ourselves to each other

- Allocate ourselves to the four enquiry groups (A, B, C and D) listed and outlined below, with a different member of the base group going to each enquiry group.

Stage Two: *enquiry groups* (30 minutes)

We move from home groups to enquiry groups, so that each home group is represented at each enquiry group, and we follow the agendas set out below. The work is done in small groups, each with either three or four members.

Stage three: *reporting back to base* (20 minutes)

We return to the home groups and each member has five minutes in which to describe the activity and documentation of their enquiry group, and to add their reflections and answer questions.

ENQUIRY GROUP A: RACIST BULLYING AND OTHER BULLYING

Make two lists: (a) what you see as the similarities and (b) what you see as the differences, between racist name-calling and other name-calling. Then compare your own lists with those in Paper 2. If you have time, consider the newspaper editorial cited in Paper 2, and then also the general principles in Paper 8.

ENQUIRY GROUP B: CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Read the stories in Paper 3 and discuss one or more of them in relation to questions such as: What should happen next? What should be done to prevent such occurrences happening again? What general principles can be drawn out from such stories? Compare your own reflections with those in Paper 4 and, if you have time, in Papers 8 and 9.

ENQUIRY GROUP C STARTING POINTS FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Schools are required to evaluate the extent to which learners feel safe and adopt safe practices and as part of this are prompted to consider whether learners feel safe from bullying and racist incidents. If you were advising a school on self-evaluation in relation to countering racist bullying, what are the five most important suggestions you would make? Make a list of the five or six most important points. Then compare your own thoughts with the list in Paper 5. Also, look at Paper 8 if you have time.

ENQUIRY GROUP D: CLARIFYING TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Discussions of race and racism are often hampered by the fact that the same word can mean different things to different people, and by fears and feelings around so-called political correctness. Paper 6 consists of pairs of words or phrases and invites discussion of the differences between them, and of the nature of language. Compare your own thoughts with those in Paper 7.

RACIST BULLYING AND OTHER BULLYING

Introductory note

As mentioned in a recent Ofsted report many staff do not feel confident when dealing with racist incidents. One of the problems is that they do not feel sufficiently clear about how racist name-calling amongst pupils differs from other kinds of name-calling. This paper briefly summarises the features that all kinds of bullying have in common and then lists also the distinctive ways in which racist incidents are different.

Similarities

- Pupils who are targeted experience great distress. They may become fearful, depressed and lacking in self-confidence, and their progress at school may be severely damaged.

- The distress is connected with feelings of being excluded and rejected.

- Also, the distress is because a characteristic is picked out as a justification for the bullying that the person attacked can do nothing about – their size, whether they wear glasses, the colour of their hair, the colour of their skin, their religious or cultural background.

- Since all kinds of bullying cause distress, all are wrong.

- Those who engage in bullying develop a false pride in their own superiority.

- Teachers and even parents are sometimes not aware of the miseries that are being inflicted, or of the cruelty that is being perpetrated.

- When dealing with incidents, staff must attend to (a) the needs, feelings and wishes of pupils at the receiving end (b) the needs, feelings and wishes of their parents and carers (c) the children and young people principally responsible for the bullying (d) any supporters they have and (e) any bystanders and witnesses.

Differences

- Racism has a long history affecting millions of people and is a common feature in wider society. People are seriously harmed and injured by it, and sometimes even viciously attacked and murdered. Words such Spotty, Ginger, Fatty and Four Eyes are seldom used by adults and seldom or never used by adults to justify offensive behaviour. Racist words and prejudices, however, are associated with discrimination in employment and the provision of services, and with a range of criminal offences.

- The law of the land recognises the seriousness of racism by requiring that courts should impose higher sentences when an offence is aggravated by racist or religious hostility.

- Racist bullying is in principle a criminal offence, and can lead to a pupil acquiring a criminal record.

- The distinctive feature of a racist attack or insult is that a person is attacked or insulted not as an individual, as in most other offences, but as the representative of a family, community or group. Other members of the same group, family or community are in consequence made to feel threatened and intimidated as well. So it is not just the pupil who is attacked who feels unwelcome or marginalised. 'When they call me a Paki,' explains nine-year-old Sereena, 'it's not just me they're hurting. It's all my family and all other black people too.'

- Racist words and behaviour are experienced as attacks on the values, loyalties and commitments central to a person's sense of identity and self-worth. Often, therefore,

they hurt not only more widely but also more deeply. 'They attack me for being an Arab,' remarks Ahmed. 'But I'm an Arab because my father is an Arab, and I love my father. Do they think I should stop loving my father? I couldn't do that, ever.'

❑ A message in all bullying is 'you don't belong'. In the case of racist bullying the message is not only 'you don't belong in this playground or this friendship group' but also 'you don't believe in this country'; it is therefore often even more devastating and traumatic, for the pupil who is attacked, than other forms of bullying.

❑ Racist attacks are committed not only against a community but also, in the eyes of offenders themselves, on behalf of a community – they see themselves as representative of, and supported in their behaviour by, their friends, family and peer group, and they may well feel it is right and proper to take the law into their own hands.

❑ Quite apart from whether those responsible see themselves as representatives of their own community, taking the law into their own hands, this is how they may be seen by those at the receiving end. So a Traveller child, for example, may then fear and distrust all settled people, not just those who engage in bullying.

❑ Most bullying involves a series of incidents over time. In the case of racist bullying, however, a single one-off incident may have precisely the same impact as a series of incidents over time. This is because it may be experienced by the person at the receiving end as part of a general pattern of racist hostility. It can in consequence be every bit as intimidating, rejecting and hurtful as a series of events over time.

A CASE STUDY

In April 2006 there was coverage in the media of a story about racist insults in a school playground. An editorial in *The Daily Telegraph* on 8 April included the following comments:

> Anybody who was ever called unkind names at school must be gasping with astonishment this weekend at the news that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has thought fit to bring criminal charges against a 10-year-old who is said to have called an 11-year-old schoolmate a "Paki" and "Bin Laden" in the playground. Every word uttered by Jonathan Finestein, the District Court Judge who is hearing the case at Salford Youth Court, rang with common sense. The decision to prosecute, he said, was "crazy". It was "political correctness gone mad" (there are times when only a cliché will do to describe the sheer crassness of modern British bureaucracy).
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> "I was repeatedly called fat at school," said the judge. "Does this amount to a criminal offence?… Nobody is more against racist abuse than me, but these are boys in a playground, this is nonsense… There must be other ways of dealing with this apart from criminal prosecution. In the old days, the headmaster would have got them both and given them a good clouting." The judge had other home truths to tell, which ought to give the Greater Manchester Police and the CPS pause for thought. "This is how stupid the whole system is getting," he said. "There are major crimes out there and the police don't bother to prosecute. If you get your car stolen, it doesn't matter, but you get two kids falling out … this is nonsense."

For expressions of a different point of view, see articles by Hannah Pool ('PC Plodder', 7 April) and Cameron Duodu ('I'm not racist, but…',10 April) at the *Comment is Free* (www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree) area at *The Guardian*. Both these articles drew much comment, much of it in support of Judge Finestein.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Introductory note

These stories are based on real events. What should happen immediately, in the next few minutes? What should happen in the next few days? The next few weeks?

What may have triggered off the event in the previous few minutes, or hours, or days?

What should we do to prevent such incidents occurring, and/or to prepare ourselves for them when they do occur, so that we respond as effectively as possible?

What general principles can we draw out from of such incidents?

Compare your answers with those in Papers 4, 8 and (in relation to the first story) 9.

Angry

This week I wrote a poem about the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. 'It's well expressed,' said the teacher, who's white, ' but terribly extreme. You don't really feel like that, do you?' - 'Of course I do,' I said. 'We all do. We're angry about what you people did to us, and you're still doing it.' - 'It wasn't me that did it,' snapped the teacher, raising her voice, 'and any way I don't like the way you're talking to me about this.'

In the playground

In the playground two children are arguing about something and the argument becomes heated and mutually abusive. One then calls the other 'Fatty', 'Spotty' or 'Carrots', or some such, and the second replies with a racist term such as 'Paki' or 'Gyppo', or with words along the lines of 'Go back where you came from.' Should the second child be treated more severely than the first? If so, why? If not, why not?

Not surprising

I mentioned to a pupil's mother that in a PSHE lesson her son had made some unacceptably negative and extreme remarks about Muslims and people seeking asylum. 'Well unfortunately it's not at all surprising,' she said. 'The fact is, my husband is an active member of the BNP.'

Multicultural stuff

I showed a few prospective parents round the school yesterday evening. After we had seen the classrooms and the hall, one of them asked if she could have a word with me in private. 'Look,' she said, 'I must be honest with you. I've heard some worrying things about this place. They say you do too much of that multicultural stuff. I'd like Sarah to come here, but I've got to reassure my husband. You do have a proper Nativity play, don't you? And you teach correct English, and you make all children feel British, and you don't teach Pakistani?'

There are notes on these stories in Paper 4. See also the principles in Paper 8 and the notes on teaching about slavery in Paper 9.

NOTES ON THE INCIDENTS

This paper contains notes on the incidents described in paper 3

Angry

It's important that white teachers should recognise and accept that black British people, and indeed black people throughout the world, have feelings of anger and bitterness about the history of slavery. In this story the teacher seems to have been in denial with regard to how the pupil feels, and is therefore unable to respond with appropriate professionalism, as distinct from personal pique and defensiveness.

The teacher could quite easily have reflected back the pupil's feelings by saying something like 'you feel strongly, don't you?' and this would then probably have opened up and supported a valuable, educative conversation.

The pupil needs to be able to talk about the episode to a sympathetic adult, so that legitimate disappointment about the teacher's indifference and lack of understanding does not fester into deeper feelings of alienation and disaffection. The adult the pupil speaks to may then be able to act as an advocate with the headteacher, or another senior member of staff, and this may valuably lead to staff training about the perceptions, stories and experiences of black British communities and individuals, and to significant changes in the curriculum and school ethos.

It is essential, in teaching about slavery, to emphasise the great African civilisations that were well established before the slave trade started, and to stress stories of survival, resistance, determination and hope.

There are fuller notes on teaching about the abolition of slavery in Paper 9.

In the playground

It sounds as if both children have acted badly – though not so very differently from the ways in which adults sometimes behave! It happens also in the adult world that arguments escalate, and people say things in the heat of the moment they later regret. It sounds further that the two children are equally matched in terms of power – so this is probably not an instance of bullying. (By definition, bullying always involves a disparity of power.)

The task for a member of staff, in the first instance, is to calm the children down and to act as a mediator. If sanctions are applied these should be the same for each.

However, both children need to be in no doubt that, as a general rule, insults such Paki and Gyppo are even more serious than insults such as Fatty or Spotty. Both types of insult are hurtful but the first type goes to the very roots of someone's identity and sense of belonging, and attacks not only the individual child but also his or her parents and grandparents and the wider community and tradition to which they belong. Hate crimes, including murder, are committed against people because they are black or Asian. People do not get murdered for being fat or for having ginger hair, or for wearing glasses, or having spots on their faces.

All bullying contains the message 'you don't belong here' – here in this group of friends, this playground, this neighbourhood. Racist bullying goes further – the message is also 'you don't belong in this country'. It can be deeply devastating and traumatic.

Not surprising

This story illustrates the need for a school to have an agreed policy on dealing with controversial issues, particularly when they arise in classroom discussions.
Public policy on refugees and asylum is, objectively, a matter of controversy – there are profound differences of opinion within the main political parties as well as between them. Similarly there are differences of opinion about Islam and Muslims. The educational task is to foster understanding. This is likely to involve examining a range of opinions, including – even – the opinions of organisations such as the BNP, and to comparing and contrasting opinions in different newspapers.

Discussions of public policy may involve not only controversy but also issues that are sensitive. Here, for example, some deep aspects of the pupil's identity appear to be involved, since he has been repeating, presumably with a measure of personal affection and loyalty, the views of one of his carers. It also appears that his two carers have different views from each other.

There is additional sensitivity involved in this instance, since there may well be other pupils in the classroom who will be hurt and distressed by the one pupil's remarks. It's important to recall in this connection that terms such as 'asylum-seeker' and 'immigrant' are often coded ways of referring to *all* people of minority ethnic backgrounds, not just to those for whom they are semantically accurate.

It is entirely reasonable, and indeed extremely desirable, that schools should insist on certain rules of procedure when controversial and sensitive issues are being discussed in the classroom. Such rules have greater weight if they are discussed with pupils as well as by all staff and if they are discussed with, or at least known by, parents.

Multicultural stuff

The headteacher must communicate to the parent that she (the parent) has been heard and understood. Many white people feel a sense of dispossession and dislocation in modern society, and mistakenly attribute this to 'immigrants', to Muslims and and people seeking asylum. They also blame the government for not controlling Britain's borders and for pursuing policies of multiculturalism. They are often reinforced in such fears by sections of the media.

The headteacher needs to show empathy with the feelings, though not – of course – agreement or endorsement. The head needs also to assert without apology that the school is multicultural and is proud to be so.

There is no inherent contradiction between (a) treating all children with equal respect (b) recognising the traditions to which all children belong and (c) developing a shared sense of belonging. A good multicultural school does all of these, though striking a balance between them is sometimes tricky.

The parent's mistaken assumptions (for example that there is a language called Pakistani!) should be gently corrected. But the main thing is to invite her to come and see for herself how valuable multicultural education is for all children, and to see how fortunate she and her family are to be involved with a multicultural school.

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STARTING POINTS FOR SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

Introductory note

Schools are required to evaluate the extent to which learners feel safe and adopt safe practices and as part of this are prompted to consider whether learners feel safe from bullying and racist incidents, and the extent to which learners feel confident to talk to staff and others when they feel at risk. Inspectors will routinely seek views from pupils about their experience, including whether they feel free from bullying and harassment.

When assessing themselves on these points, schools will find much useful guidance in Ofsted's thematic report *Race Equality in Education*, published in November 2005.

This paper lists questions which schools may wish to ask themselves. It is derived not only from Ofsted's thematic report but also from the conferences, consultations and meetings which took place in preparation for this area of teachernet.

Not all the points in this list, of course, are equally urgent and relevant in all schools. They are offered as a menu from which to select, not as tick-list or score-sheet whose every item should be considered in turn.

Documentation

1.   Has documentation about dealing with racist incidents been thoroughly discussed by, and is it kept under review by, pupils and parents as well as by staff?

2.   Do we have a written code of practice which clearly outlines specific procedures to be followed for recording and dealing with racist bullying, as also with other kinds of abuse and bullying, on the school premises, and on journeys to and from school?

3.   Is our commitment to preventing and addressing racism and bullying clearly stated in posters and displays in corridors and classrooms?

Discussion, monitoring and review

4.   Is there shared understanding amongst staff – including support and administrative staff as well as teachers – of ways in which bullying based on background, colour, religion or heritage is *both* similar to *and* different from other kinds of bullying?

5.   Do we train lunchtime staff and learning mentors to identify racist bullying and to follow school policy and procedures on anti-bullying?

6.   Does a senior member of staff have responsibility for ensuring that incidents of racist bullying are appropriately dealt with and recorded?

The perceptions and involvement of children and young people

7.   Do pupils consider that the school has a history of taking racist incidents seriously and following them up?

8.   Has a user-friendly leaflet been provided for pupils and their parents on what to do if they experience racism against them?

9.   Ofsted states that responses to racist bullying should be 'swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective'. Do children and young people agree that this is how our own school operates?

10.   Are pupils involved in mediating in disputes and in peer mentoring?

11. Do we ensure that children and young people are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those who engage in bullying?

Ethos and curriculum

12. Do we give a high profile to rights and responsibilities by, for example, promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UNICEF programme on Rights Respecting Schools?

13. Does the general ethos of the school (displays, assemblies, some of the examples across the curriculum) reflect and affirm diversity of language, culture, religion and appearance?

14. Many analyses state that bullying can be a result of feeling powerless. What is our school doing to ensure that our children and young people do not feel powerless in the school community?

15. Is the school is involved from time to time in national projects such as *Kick Racism Out Of Football, Islamic Awareness Week, One World Week, Black History Month, Anti-Bullying Week* and *Refugee Week?*

16. Have we reviewed opportunities in the National Curriculum to teach about various kinds of intolerance and prejudice, and the values of justice, fairness and non-discrimination?

17. Do we make good use of drama, role-play, creative writing, music and art in our teaching about bullying and behaviour?

Working with parents

18. Do parents know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying?

19. Do we work with parents and other people in the local community to address tensions beyond the school gates that may be played out within school?

20. Do we make our commitments on countering racist bullying clear at parents' induction meetings?

21. Are parents confident that the school deals effectively and sensitively with incidents of racist bullying?

Partnership working

22. Do we have good working relationships with the police, and with voluntary sector organisations and networks concerned with racial harassment issues?

23. Do we make good use of guidance and advice provided by the local authority in connection with preventing and addressing bullying around racism, culture and religion?

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CLARIFYING TERMS AND CONCEPTS
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Introductory note

It is easier to deal with incidents of racist bullying, and to plan whole-school policies to prevent it, if first there is a shared vocabulary amongst staff.

This paper consists of pairs of words or phrases and invites discussion, with regard to each pair, of the differences in meaning and nuance between them. Such an exercise is helpful in allaying fears about political correctness; in acknowledging that language in this field as in others is not fixed and certain but continually changing; in recalling that language can unwittingly cause offence; and in developing shared understandings amongst colleagues.

After discussing the pairs, it is useful if group discussion turns to more general questions about the nature of language and the relationship between language and the world it describes.
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equality	diversity
Britain	United Kingdom
racist bullying	racist incident
racially motivated	racially aggravated
religion	faith
Islamophobia	anti-Muslim racism
Arab	Muslim
Derry	Londonderry
Gypsy	Traveller
terrorism	armed struggle
racism	xenophobia
Indian sub-continent	South Asia
Islamic	Islamist
West Indian	African-Caribbean
minority ethnic pupils	ethnic minority pupils
BME people	people of colour/coloured people
sensitivity	political correctness

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There are notes on these partings, and on language more generally in Paper 8.

ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE – MEANINGS AND USES

Some points about language

1. Words change in their meanings and implications over time, and mean different things to different people. Changes of language occur partly because the outer world changes, partly because our understanding of the world changes, and partly because various groups and communities ('speech communities') gain greater power and influence than hitherto and in consequence are able to make their views and voices better known.

2. So anxieties and uncertainties about language are often bound up with anxieties about changing relationships, and changing patterns of influence and power, in society at large. Concerns in the tabloid press about political correctness, for example, are connected with concerns about social change more widely, not just about language.

3. The choice of a word frequently indicates the speech community to which a person belongs or with which they wish to identify. For example, the terms Derry and Londonderry refer to the same place but are used in different communities.

4. It is by and large not helpful to maintain that certain words are always 'correct' and certain others always 'wrong'.

5. It is, however, worth trying not to give avoidable offence. This is a matter of simple courtesy, and also of prudence and self-interest.

6. It is important to develop shared usage and meanings within a group of colleagues.

7. In relation to any one word, it is valuable to be aware of its pros and cons, and of the different contexts and speech communities in which it is current.

8. People sometimes feel they dare not even open their mouth, in case they use the 'wrong' word. Such anxieties need to be acknowledged and talked about. They are not, however, an acceptable excuse for silence or for inaction.

9. 'The limits of my language are the limits of my world.' (Wittgenstein)

Notes on particular points

The following notes refer to the pairings in paper 4.

Equality/diversity
As moral and political values, these should be seen as two sides of the same coin. But they can be current in different speech communities, with discourse of diversity being more current in private sector organisations. In UK and European law, the preferred term is equality.

Britain/UK
According to most but not all dictionaries, encyclopaedias and style guides, the two terms are interchangeable. The term *Great Britain,* however, refers only to England, Scotland and Wales.

Racist bullying/racist incident
The former term is usually more accurate to describe racist behaviour in schools. The latter is used in the criminal justice system, and in data-collection by local authorities.

Motivated/aggravated
The latter term is preferable, since it focuses on effects not intentions. An offence is said to be aggravated if it affects more people than the individual victim.

Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hostility
The latter term is arguably clearer, since it does not imply a mental disorder. But the former is now current and is useful for referring to a general climate of opinion. Like antisemitism, it refers to a form of racism.

Religion/faith
Historically the former term has referred to a general tradition and to what academics sometimes call an ethno-religious identity, whereas the latter has referred to inner beliefs and commitments. Recently, this distinction has been changing, with 'faith' being used increasingly to refer to ethno-religious tradition rather than, necessarily, inner beliefs.

Arab/Muslim
Not all Arabs are Muslims and not all Muslims are Arabs. This point is often ignored by the tabloid press.

Derry/Londonderry
Used in different speech communities (Catholic/Protestant respectively).

Gypsy/Traveller
Not the same, since not all Gypsies are Travellers and not all Travellers are Gypsies. Usually best to use both, joined with *and* not a slash.

Terrorism/armed struggle
The choice of term depends, obviously, on which side you're on.

Indian sub-continent/South Asia
Since 1947, the latter has been preferable, as the sub-continent includes two large countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh, that are no longer part of India. Also, Afghanistan is now considered to be part of South Asia.

West Indian/African-Caribbean
The latter is now preferable. The former derives from the times of colonialism, and from the belief that Europeans had reached India by travelling West.

Racism/xenophobia
Arguably the same, though also corresponding to visible/invisible differences, i.e. to differences of colour and culture respectively. The latter term is much more used in other European countries than in UK.

Islamic/Islamist
Not interchangeable, the latter being to do with involvement in politics. Preferable not to use it, however, if there's any danger that it will be understood as derived from the name of the religion (on an analogy with Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, etc) as distinct from an approach to involvement in politics.

BME/people of colour
Neither term desirable in the UK, arguably, but the latter acceptable in the US. Problems with 'BME' include: it dehumanises; it implies black people are not also of a minority background; it cannot be used as an adjective before a single noun; it reflects a simplistic majority/minority distinction that is frequently inaccurate or inappropriate.

Global South/Third World
The former is now current in UN organisations and agencies. The latter was originally a translation of *tiers état*, meaning an estate of the realm, the ordinary people whose time was yet to come; but it was then widely misunderstood to imply third class or third rate.

Sensitivity/political correctness
The latter is usually a term of criticism, ridicule or abuse, and often implies opposition to measures to promote greater equality with regard to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion.

DEALING WITH RACIST BULLYING AND INCIDENTS:
FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES
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Introductory note

At one of the consultative meetings organised during the creation of the Teachernet material on countering racist bullying (**www.teachernet.gov.uk/racistbullying**) a group of professionals with many years experience of dealing with racism and bullying in schools formulated this statement of key principles. The statement was used throughout the creation and finalisation of the Teachernet material, and is provided here not only for interest and information but also for discussion.
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1) Acknowledge that racism exists in wider society, and that it can lead to racist bullying in schools

- Take the results of research and what pupils are telling you very seriously.

- Make sure that your school records, reports and takes action on racist incidents. Include bullying in your school self-evaluation, audits, monitoring and pupil and parent surveys. Analyse trends and use the information to inform planning.

- Bear in mind that some pupils have the constant experience of racism and bullying outside school, and that they may be affected daily by racist graffiti, name calling or intimidation on their journeys to and from school

2) Let the pupils know where you stand

- Make sure that pupils know you will not tolerate racism or bullying and that you will always deal with it

- Be approachable, available and askable

- Reinforce this principle through displays, newsletters, noticeboards and published information to parents and pupils

3) Listen to children and young people

- Never dismiss their experiences of bullying and racism, or put them down as unimportant. Acknowledge their feelings.

- Give them enough time to tell you everything they need to. It is often difficult for a hurt person to talk about what has happened to them. If a witness or a participant in the bullying is willing to talk to you, that child will also need enough time to explain and to be heard

- Cultivate the environment of 'the listening school'

- Ensure the school community – staff, students, parents, governors, have a shared clarity of understanding about the nature of racist bullying and where the school stands on the issue

- Provide training and professional development through courses, meetings, policies and classroom activities

- Establish shared responsibility and strong leadership. Countering racist bullying is the responsibility of the whole school community and everybody must know their role

- Involve and empower parents

4) Involve children and young people in solutions

- Children and young people have substantial insight into their experiences and those of their peers. They also have a sense of what works. Profit from and use their expertise.

- Involve and empower children and young people, through individual and group activities and through structures such as school councils

5) Implement strategies for both prevention and intervention

- Ensure that the school ethos is inclusive, and that the school community feels safe, valued and respected

- Ensure that the school curriculum is inclusive, and that the PSHE and citizenship curricula address issues of racism and bullying

- Ensure that the school's policies for bullying and discipline cover the procedures for addressing racism and bullying

- Never turn a blind eye to or an incident, or consider it too insignificant to follow up. Always take action when an incident occurs, using the most appropriate of a range of strategies.

TEACHING ABOUT THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Ten do's and don'ts

1. Make sure that every child in your class can maintain their dignity and self-esteem during the teaching of this topic.

2. Do not approach the topic from a deficit model position of 'poor, helpless black people in Africa and the Caribbean'.

3. Make sure that the resources you use do not compound a deficit model.

4. Make sure the pupils understand about great African civilisations. Never start with African people as slaves.

5. Teach the pupils the complex nature of cruelty in the Atlantic slave trade and in plantation life.

6. Include the stories of African heritage leaders of rebellion and opposition in the Caribbean.

7. Include the stories of freed African heritage slaves and servants in Europe who took part in the fight for abolition.

8. Include the stories of white abolitionists as role models in the fight against injustice and racism, but do not imply that only white people were responsible for the abolition.

9. Place the topic in a context of human rights.

10. Take care of your own professional development beforehand. This is a sensitive issue.

Source: 'Teaching about the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade: principles to adopt, pitfalls to avoid' by Berenice Miles, *Race Equality Teaching,* autumn 2006. The full article can be downloaded from http://www.multiverse.ac.uk/attachments/2fa83e4d-476e-4486-a36d-65159ef2ae24.DOC.

SOME CURRENT ISSUES, SPRING 2007

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A flag in every garden
It was Gordon Brown, a while ago, who advocated a "Britishness Day", and advised us to emulate America by planting a Union flag in every garden - a dark irony to those of us who doubt that the relentless drive to ape the United States, introduced by the Thatcher-Murdoch axis and rigidly cemented by New Labour, has had a beneficial effect on those "core British values" of which he affects to be so proud.
Matthew Norman, *The Independent*, 26 January 2007

I was wrong
Reader, I was one of the willing foot-soldiers of multiculturalism. During teacher training in the early 1980s, we were encouraged to take materials into the classroom that would offer pupils something of their own culture. I know it seems hard to believe, but it simply didn't occur to me to question what 'their own culture' meant for Muslim children who had been born in a red-brick semi in West London and had grown up watching Star Wars. What can I tell you? I was young, I was well-meaning and I was wrong.
Alison Pearson, *Daily Mail*, 31 January 2007

Some superannuated educational panjandrum
A paper commissioned by Alan Johnson, the education secretary, has recommended children be taught the immense benefits of multiculturalism and diversity in every subject they study. The paper, written by some superannuated educational panjandrum called Sir Keith Ajegbo, suggests, for example, that during maths lessons children should be told that Muslims invented nothing. By which I mean that they invented the concept of zero. So when a quadratic equation resolves to zero, the kids should be reminded that, in effect, Allah (PBUH) provided us with this wonderful conclusion.
Rod Liddle, *The Sunday Times*, 28 January 2007

Really, really comfortable
The Ajegbo review recommends more teacher training in diversity. "Teachers should feel really, really comfortable in dealing with controversial issues," Sir Keith said. "The kids we spoke to want to deal with these issues. If they felt another kid was racist, they would much rather be able to debate that than for it to simmer beneath the surface." Sir Keith said schools serving different communities should be encouraged to build links with others. He also emphasised that the identity and culture of white working-class pupils should not be neglected. Some white pupils in multi-cultural areas had said: "We would rather not be white. We would rather be something more exciting."
Interview with Keith Ajegbo, *Times Educational Supplement*, 26 January 2007

Persistent scaremongering
Persistent scaremongering in recent years has had a noticeably corrosive impact on attitudes towards British Muslims and it seems that this is precisely what those who engage in it want. To see Mr Cameron pandering to a rabid and discredited form of neo-conservatism from the other side of the Atlantic and to those who howl about the emergence of "Eurabia" is, to be frank, depressing. The Nasty Party indeed.
Inayat Buglawala, *The Guardian* website, 30 January 2007

Absolutely proud of Shilpa
I am absolutely proud of Shilpa. I am Asian (not Indian) and have lived in Britain for several years now and have been a victim of bullying and racism in a serious way, and despite Jade and allies being relatively non-educated, the people who bullied me are all highly educated. Shilpa didn't just stand up for herself with grace, but she stood up for all Asians and foreigners. She has made us all proud.
Entry on *The Sun* website, 30 January 2007

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