Countering Racist Bullying

Paper 3: They used to call me names

When I was in the juniors they used to call me names in the playground all the time, like 'nigger'. They used to upset me and sometimes I would get so mad I would fight and then I would get in trouble. I was always the one who got in trouble. They didn't do nothing to the ones that was doing it. They sent me to the head. I was crying and he told me that I mustn't fight, he said it didn't mean anything, everybody gets called names and I must rise above it. But they still kept on doing it.

They was very crafty. They never did it so the teachers could hear.

The overriding feeling was a sense of injustice at the fact that everything about the content and structure of the curriculum seemed to be saying that black people are worthless at best, never had amounted to anything and never would without the white man.

We had Development Studies in history. I was taught that people in Ghana wore grass skirts and lived in mud huts until the white man came with intermediate technology.

At that time I was too young, not knowing about racism

There was one incident where people broke into my locker and wrote racist things on my books. But all of the big things happened outside school.

There was BNP marches and language like 'wog' and 'nigger' being used and I got the feeling that the world doesn't want me and I don't want it either. It can get stuffed.

You were forced into it. If you were black you were a target for racists. You are identified as a target and it comes to you. I don't know a single black person who hasn't been attacked at least verbally, and most physically. If you are a white person you can choose to be a racist at weekends and not show it during the week. It is optional whether you are involved in this stuff. It is optional whether you take it seriously.

The teachers are mostly white. You can't look at a white person and tell if they are a racist, so if they haven't told you their views you can't go to a white person and complain about white racism.

Source: interviews with young people who had recently left school, quoted in *Preventing and Addressing Racism in Schools*, London Borough of Ealing, 2003