

Countering Racist Bullying

## Paper 8: My abiding memory is the racism

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My first memory of school was of a teacher kicking me with her high heels and telling me, 'You – your brain is too big for your body.' ... I remember going home and telling my mum about the incident. That's when she decided to take me out of that school and put me into private education. My mother took from that teacher's comment that she was inferring that I was too clever for a Black kid.

So then I went to the stage school and my abiding memory of the school is the racism. My teacher would call my mother in sometimes and would say something like: 'Ian [as I was called then] is going for an audition and I know you Blacks have problems speaking good English ... your lips are a bit too big and the way your mouth is constructed, blah, blah, blah.'

Another time she said to my mum, 'Ian has been seen holding hands with Amanda [my white girlfriend] and her father is a director and her mother works at Selfridges and they would be frightfully upset if they found out.'

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Source: 'Too clever for a black kid' by Kwame Kwei-Armah in *Tell It Like It Is: how our schools fail Black children*, edited by Brian Richardson, Bookmark Publications and Trentham Books, 2005