

BONNER PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECT - GLOBETOWN EDUCATION ACTION ZONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Bonner School Project was undertaken in the Summer Term 2000, and has been managed by external Consultants/Facilitators in partnership with the Globetown EAZ.

The overall aim of the project was to undertake a benchmarking exercise within the school, to identify strengths and areas for improvement in relation to anti-racism. The research findings from this exercise will be used to develop appropriate strategies and a training/development and awareness programme in order, to make further progress in the area of anti-racism within the school.

2. CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

The benchmarking exercise was undertaken through a series of focus group discussions, involving key groups within the school community. Focus groups are small, carefully planned and facilitated discussions, designed to obtain qualitative information on a defined area of interest, in an informal non-threatening environment. They are helpful in exploring and understanding the perceptions, experience, knowledge, awareness, needs and aspirations of different groups.

The table below provides details of all the groups involved in the benchmarking exercise, together with participant numbers at each session.

FOCUS GROUP COMPOSTION	PARTICIPANT NUMBERS	ETHNICITY
Governors	7	1 BME, others White
SMT	3	All White
BME teaching staff	5	BME
White teaching staff	3	All White
Non teaching staff	4	All White(due to ill health)
Parents/Carers	5	2 White, 3 BME
African/African Caribbean boys	6	AFRICAN/AFRICAN CARIBBEAN HERITAGE
African/African Caribbean girls	7	AFRICAN/AFRICAN CARIBBEAN HERITAGE
Bangladeshi heritage girls	4	BME
Bangladeshi heritage boys	4	BME
White boys	7	White
White girls	7	White

NB. **BME** = Black and minority ethnic groups

In addition to the above focus groups, an interview was also conducted with Mr Tune, the head teacher of Bonner School.

A copy of the Topic Guides used in the facilitation of the focus group discussions is attached as an Appendix to this report (see appendix 2)

3. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The focus group research has been extremely useful in providing examples of good practice, areas for improvement and an indication of levels of knowledge, awareness and understanding, in relation to racism and anti-racism amongst the school community. However, because of the small scale of the research, the results are not conclusive. It should also be noted that the number of participants in some focus groups was disappointingly low, and in the case of non-teaching staff, there was no representation from BME staff because of ill health.

4. THE FINDINGS

4.1 KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF RACISM, ANTI-RACISM AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Racism

There were differing levels of knowledge and understanding of racism, both within and across groups. However, most groups linked racism with dislike or ignorance of differences including colour, language, religion, history or culture. Pupil groups made links between racist behaviour and bullying, and this was particularly noticeable amongst the BME groups; some teachers also made this link.

Pupils gave the following as examples of racism: cussing, nasty comments, name calling, picking on others, and fighting. They focused far more on verbal abuse than physical attack. The adult groups focused more on the unequal access to jobs and opportunities, stereotyping and discrimination. The power dynamics within racism were implied by comments from some adult groups, and mentioned specifically by a few people.

It was generally felt across all groups that racist beliefs and attitudes are largely passed on to children through their parents and family members, and it was suggested that parental attitudes and influence on pupils was one of the school's key challenges in progressing anti-racism.

"When the children are being racist it is easier to deal with. However, it's more difficult to deal with racism from the parents." (White teacher)

It was also acknowledged that the media, in its various forms, can have a negative impact on pupils through perpetuating stereotypes, presenting negative images, and using offensive and inappropriate language.

A significant number of pupil and adult participants across all ethnic groups consider racism to be something, which anyone can be guilty of, irrespective of colour.

"Racism is against anyone and anyone can be racist. Black children can be racist against Asian children, and Black and Asian children can be racist against a White child". (White teacher)

Some adult groups discussed whether or not primary school children could be racist. There were some strong views from some parents, non-teaching staff and governors that children cannot be racist.

"I don't see kids as being racist. They may hurt each other and say things. Kids don't know how hurtful the things they say can be." (White non-teaching staff)

"Kids are always calling each other names. It's difficult to explain to a kid what racism is, but parents should tell their children off if they say things like Black Ape. I don't like schools using the word racism" (White mother)

However, when asked about racism, the children spoke openly and informatively about their understanding, and gave many examples of the types of language and behaviour which could be considered racist. It was noticeable that the BME pupils showed a deeper understanding of racism, and this may be because of personal experiences, or the experiences of family or community members. The BME pupils also seemed more aware of the emotional pain and upset of racist remarks and behaviour. One teacher observed the immediate impact, which a racist remark had on one BME child.

"There was a situation recently with a group of children playing football. A Black child, who was playing quite happily with the group, went to score a goal, and as he did so one of the White children in the group called him a Black monkey. He stopped playing immediately, withdrew from the group and became quiet and depressed." (BME teacher)

Anti-racism

Anti-racism was raised and discussed with the adult groups, but there was limited understanding of what it actually meant. There was also some confusion between multi-culturalism and anti-racism. Participants who understood the meaning of anti-racism felt it was important to Bonner, mainly because of the diverse composition of the pupil population and staff.

Institutional Racism

There were differing levels of awareness of Institutional Racism amongst the adult groups, with some having a good understanding and others with limited or no understanding.

4.2 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF RACISM WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

All groups were asked whether they felt there was racism within the school, and reactions were quite mixed. Some participants, who had been involved with the school for a number of years, felt that it had been regarded as a racist school in the past.

"When I first came to this school in the late 1980s people said to me the school is so racist you won't last a month. In the beginning there was some covert racism from the children, but the staff worked hard to make me feel comfortable. I have been happy and comfortable here." (BME teacher)

It was felt that the school had made many improvements since then and was no longer regarded in this negative light.

"The school has moved on considerably. Years ago children would not hold hands with pupils of different ethnic origin. Now children are far more integrated in the classroom" (White teacher)

Responses from pupils

There was a general feeling that most children in the school get on quite well, irrespective of their differences. Some pupils felt that there was no racism in the school, whilst others felt that there was some racism, but that it was limited, and not as bad as in other schools or within their local community. Their views were based on personal experiences or what they saw or heard in the classroom or playground. It was felt that most of the racism within the school was amongst pupils, that it was mainly name calling, and that it took place in the playground, the classroom and sometimes off the school premises. Specific mention was made of racism between White pupils and Bangladeshi heritage pupils, with examples of racist behaviour and language being initiated by both parties. They also talked about racism from White pupils to other BME pupils, racism between different BME groups, and racism towards White pupils initiated by BME pupils. They felt that most of the racism amongst pupils in the school took the form of name calling and insulting remarks about a person's colour, religion, culture, language, country of origin, parents and family.

All the pupils felt that there was no racism from teaching staff, but some pupils from the BME groups felt that there was racism from some of the non-teaching staff (teaching assistants), in particular the helpers, and from some of the white parents who work in the school.

"Some helpers are nice and praise you, but others talk about us behind our back. They may help but not in the way you want them to. For example, if someone hurts you on purpose they tell you to go to first aid and they don't punish the person" (Bangladeshi heritage pupil)

Whilst a number of pupils said they had not personally experienced any racism in the school, others gave examples of personal experiences within the school, which they considered to be racist. These personal examples came from the BME pupils, who felt strongly that they were not acts of bullying, but acts of racism. They included:

- name calling, e.g. Black monkey, Paki, crunchie;
- physical attacks, e.g. being hit, being thrown over a fence, being pushed and shoved;
- demeaning comments like "they're not like us", "go back to your country";
- given dirty looks and made to feel uncomfortable.

Many pupils expressed confidence in the way that racist behaviour is dealt with by the head teacher and the majority of teachers in the school. It was generally understood that racism was dealt with seriously and not tolerated.

"Racism is treated seriously in this school because it is recorded on a behaviour form and can go on your permanent record" (AFRICAN/AFRICAN CARIBBEAN HERITAGE pupil)

"After receiving a complaint of racism, the teacher would go and speak to both parties and ask them what had happened and then call on witnesses. Sometimes it goes in the playground book and sometimes the parents get involved" (AFRICAN/AFRICAN CARIBBEAN HERITAGE pupil)

Pupils talked about teachers dealing with racist incidents "calmly" and they gave a number of examples of racist incidents being dealt with effectively by the Head and teaching staff.

However, some pupils from the BME groups expressed concern about what they **perceived as** the lack of consistency in dealing with incidents of racism.

"I think sometimes teachers take complaints of racism seriously and sometimes they don't" (African/African Caribbean Heritage pupil)

"Sometimes teachers don't believe something is racism; they think you are telling tales most of the time" (Bangladeshi heritage pupil)

They talked about some teachers shouting openly at pupils who made racist comments, and others dealing with pupils outside the classroom. Some pupils felt more confident about the visible approach, as they could see and hear that the child was being told off, and they felt this gave a clearer message to pupils that such behaviour would not be tolerated. A couple of comments were also made about teachers and the head teacher 'forgetting' about incidents they had reported to them. Their belief or perception that teachers had 'forgotten' about their complaints was based on the fact that they were not informed of the outcome of their complaint or action taken.

Not all racist behaviour which happens in the school is reported. Some children spoke about not reporting 'minor' incidents e.g. a push or a pinch, or preferring to deal with things themselves:

" Sometimes pupils don't report racism to the teachers because they want to handle it themselves. They don't want to be called chicken because they've reported it to the teacher" (African/African Caribbean heritage pupil)

The majority of the pupils who took part in the focus groups live near the school and are aware of some racist language and behaviour occurring in their neighbourhood. In spite of this, they believe that many adults and young people from the different communities get on well together. They gave examples of verbal abuse and physical attacks which included White on BME, BME on White, and incidents between different BME groups. Very few pupils had actually been involved in these incidents, but both BME and White pupils had close relatives who had been involved, and in one case a pupil's cousin died as a result of an attack. Most of the BME pupils would probably agree with the following statements made by one of the African/African Caribbean Heritage pupils.

" I think it is mainly White people who start racism. They get it from their mums and dads. Occasionally Black people or Bangladeshi heritage people might start it. Some fights are started by White kids and Bangladeshi heritage kids react" (Bangladeshi heritage pupil)

A significant number of pupils had heard stories about racism at Morpeth School. These involved fighting between different groups of pupils from the school, or incidents they had seen in the street around their neighbourhood. Interestingly enough, none of the pupils seemed deterred from progressing on to Morpeth after leaving Bonner despite what they had heard or seen they seemed to just accept that this is how things are.

Alasdair Macdonald, the Headteacher at Morpeth, confirmed that many in the local community believe that racist violence is common at Morpeth. He felt that although there were occasional racist incidents, much of the "mythology" about the school was based on a serious incident that took place 11 years ago. In addition many local residents automatically assume that any incident involving young people is the responsibility of the school.

Responses from staff and governors

It was generally felt that there was very little overt racism operating within the school and that most of this was amongst pupils. Some staff felt there was a thin line between bullying and racism, and that it was sometimes difficult to determine whether an incident between pupils was racist or not. Name-calling would appear to be the most common form in which the racism is expressed by pupils. Some staff spoke of divisions in the classroom and playground on the grounds of race or religion. However, they felt there were only a few incidents of fighting and physical attacks on the grounds of race or colour. Mention was made of particular difficulties between White boys and Bangladeshi heritage boys.

Staff from these groups were also aware of racism from parents and how this can influence the values and attitudes of the pupils.

"White parents don't like their children being read to in English and Bangladeshi heritage as there is a fear they are being taken over"

An example was given of an occasion six years ago when a parent came in to the school with his lawyer to tell the head teacher that he did not want his child sitting next to a 'Paki'.

With the exception of two people, most BME teaching staff involved in the discussions felt that they had not experienced any overt racism whilst at Bonner. The two exceptions included one staff member who has been in the school for many years, and who had in her earlier days experienced racism from parents, pupils and to lesser extent staff. The second staff member in the school who has been teaching for a number of years in the school received an abusive comment from a pupil making reference to her physical features. This comment caused her a lot of distress.

Although BME teaching staff did not feel there was any overt racism within the school, some felt there might be racist undertones in some comments and language they had either heard or were told about.

"I have not experienced any overt racism whilst I have been in this school, but I have heard some comments made in a sarcastic way. For example, a White teacher was looking at a notice on the board about this focus group and, when she asked what the focus group was about, a White teacher replied "it seems to be only the Black teachers – is it because me Black sir?" This was said in a sarcastic way and I was left thinking was it racist or was it a joke"

" White teachers have told me that they have heard racist comments in recent times from cleaners and dinner ladies at the school. These have included things like, "We let them in" and " There are not many Asians where I come from and I prefer it there."

Members of the BME teachers group, together with members of other focus groups, discussed the use of derogatory and racist language. Some people felt that the use of words like 'Paki' and 'Jew' were just part of the East End way of talking, and that there was no racist intent.

"I was sitting in the staff room recently when one of the teaching assistants, who was talking to another member of staff, said, "when I go down to the 'Paki' shop". I don't think she realised what she had said. It's in her culture, it's what they have learned" (BME teacher)

"It's inbred the use of this language. It's the way East Enders talk, calling people 'Paki' or 'Jew'. It's common language; it doesn't mean anything" (White parent)

Examples were given of the use of these words, not just by White people, but also by East Enders from the BME community, whom they believed did not hold racist views. Many people were clear, however, that these words were also used in a malicious and hurtful way.

"I think some people mean it when they say 'Paki'. I think you need to see the person and the situation to know whether or not they mean it as an insult, or if it's just used as common everyday language" (BME parent)

"Sometimes you can tell if someone is racist by the expressions on their face" (BME pupil)

There was also a strong belief from many participants that the use of these terms needed to be challenged and eradicated, irrespective of the intent of the person using them.

Only a few staff appear to have had direct experience of dealing with incidents of racism within the school. Members of the governing body are involved in reviewing policies and receiving reports on complaints or incidents of a serious nature. Non-teaching staff tend in the main to pass complaints on to teachers. Volunteers in the classroom or playground may talk with children about 'minor' incidents, but often pass these on. Teachers spoke about the difficulty in determining whether incidents were racist or not, and the difficulty in unravelling situations when both sides are accusing the other. It appears that teachers deal with the less serious cases of racism, such as name calling, by speaking to both parties to find out what occurred and taking what they consider appropriate action. The way in which individual teachers are seen to deal with incidents of racism influences pupils' perception of that teacher's commitment. Comments from the pupils suggest that there is some inconsistency in this aspect, and some teachers spoke about the need for more guidance and confidence in identifying and dealing with incidents of racism. Incidents of a serious nature are passed on to the head teacher, who will often involve the parents and resolve the problem.

Responses from parents

The 5 parents involved in the focus group said that their children had not experienced any racism at Bonner. They were confident that there was no racism in the school, and that if it did occur it would be dealt with effectively.

"Racism is taken very seriously in this school by Mr Tune and the class teachers. None of my kids have experienced racism in the school, but if it did happen, I feel confident that it would be nipped in the bud. There are more positive influences in the school than negative" (BME parent)

The parents who lived in the locality of the school felt that there was a lot of racism in their neighbourhood and they gave some examples.

"I live on the Cranbrook Estate and the other day a group of White boys on the estate created a barricade. They allowed all the White people to go past but were throwing potatoes at the Black and Bangladeshi heritage people trying to pass" (White parent)

A comment was made about the 'separation' of parents in the playground.

"I think there is segregation in the playground amongst parents. You'll have Bangladeshi heritage and Somalian mums talking in one part of the playground and White mums in another part." (White parent)

The parents discussed this 'separation' and the reasons for it, which included language, cultural and community connections. BME parents also commented on the use of swearing and offensive language, smoking and the bringing of dogs into the playground by some White parents, which caused them, and in some cases their children, particular discomfort as it was alien to their culture.

4.3 THE PROMOTION OF ANTI-RACISM WITHIN THE SCHOOL

As discussed earlier in the report, many participants were unclear of the difference between multiculturalism and anti-racism. Some good examples were provided of the way in which the school promotes multiculturalism through both the formal and informal curriculum.

*"Multiculturalism describes a situation where there are many different cultures in a society and when the available services and facilities recognise this fact in a positive way."*¹

Examples of multiculturalism cited by the teachers at Bonner include the following:

- Whole school programmes with activities focusing on particular cultures, e.g. African Caribbean traditional stories and traditional Chinese stories
- Positive images through culturally mixed teaching staff
- Eid celebrations in the school
- Multicultural events
- Some teachers highlight issues through: selecting appropriate stories in RE or looking at different religions; the Personal, Social and Health Education, and Citizenship strand of the curriculum; addressing misconceptions about other countries and their people through geography.

Most of the above examples are essentially about multiculturalism, a vital part of the school's curriculum, programme and ethos, which should operate alongside anti-racism. Anti-racism *"describes the conscious effort people make to challenge and combat racism in all its behavioural and institutional forms."*² Anti-racism focuses more on the organisation culture, and the design, implementation and effect of its policies, practices and procedures.

Examples of anti-racist initiatives within Bonner include the following:

- Policies and practices to deal with incidents of racism
- Discussions about difference and respect, and behavioural issues in circle time
- Topics/ discussions in assembly or classrooms, some of which may be a response to incidents occurring in the school
- The Head and members of the teaching staff have communicated clear messages to pupils that certain attitudes and words are unacceptable
- The school's interest and voluntary involvement in this project

4.4 TRAINING AND AWARENESS OF SCHOOL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Pupils

Most pupils seem to be aware of the school's ethos and attitude towards racism, and understand that racist comments and behaviour are not tolerated. Most pupils were aware of the general procedure for dealing with incidents of racism, which involve the teacher speaking to both parties to find out what went on, and the possible recording of the incident. They were also aware that the incident could result in the involvement of the head and their parents, and that it could also lead to exclusion. Pupils acquired this knowledge through messages from the head and teaching staff in assemblies, class discussions, circle time and the action taken by staff.

¹ 'Toolkit for Tackling Racism in Schools' by Stella Dadzie

² 'Toolkit for Tackling Racism in Schools' by Stella Dadzie

Staff

There was limited knowledge of school procedures for dealing with incidents of racism, which was surprising, since all staff were aware of the school ethos and attitude towards the use of racist language and behaviour. The impact of this limited knowledge and the absence of training and briefings on anti-racism, has left some members of the teaching staff lacking in confidence and skills to deal with incidents of racism.

Parents/Carers

Parents were aware of the school's intolerance of racism and, whilst they weren't fully aware of the procedure to be followed, they were very confident that incidents would be dealt with effectively. They were also complimentary about the way in which the school maintains good communication with the parents and keeps them informed of any problems.

4.5 WHAT ADDITIONAL ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN BY THE SCHOOL TO IMPROVE ANTI-RACISM

Training

Training for staff in racism and anti-racism is one of the key areas for development identified through the focus group discussions. All Staff, teaching and non-teaching and governors need a clear and shared understanding of what racism is and how it should be dealt with. This should include an awareness of and training in the school's written policy and procedures. They also need to understand what the term anti-racism means, and how this can be promoted within the school on both an individual and institutional level.

Some teachers felt unsure about how racism or discussions about racism affect children, and wanted guidance on how to deal with their feelings.

"If we are talking about slavery, how are Black children going to feel and what can we do to ensure they don't feel awful". (White teacher)

Whilst some teachers felt quite confident about highlighting racism and bringing an anti-racist dimension into appropriate curriculum subjects, others felt they had a training need in this area, and required good accessible resources to assist them in this work. It was felt that the use of role-play and discussions based on realistic scenarios would be extremely helpful.

Other Initiatives

It was suggested that the school should take on the role of mediator when disputes occur between pupils. This would prevent pupils' parents from trying to sort things out themselves, as this often leads to further problems, with parents misjudging situations and blaming another person's child inappropriately. It was suggested that the school could act as mediator, and invite the parents and pupils from both sides to attend and discuss the issues.

A number of people recognised the need for parental understanding and support of the school's anti-racist ethos and relevant policies.

"Parents need to know how seriously we take anti-racism. We need to meet with parents to explain the school's policies." (White teacher)

"However much we do with the children, we are not the most important people in their lives" (White teacher)

BME parents said they would appreciate some changes to existing practices in order to prevent parents from bringing dogs into the schoolyard and from smoking and swearing on school premises. They felt that these changes would not only be more respectful of their culture, but might also help to break down some of the barriers to communication between parents of different cultural groups.

The need to do more work with parents was highlighted by many of the participants. It was suggested that the school should do more work with smaller groups of parents, perhaps having discussion groups for parents by class. This would provide parents with the opportunity to work more closely together, and to look at issues of immediate relevance to their child and his/her class. It was also suggested that the school should seek opportunities to involve parents in curriculum and drama workshops. This might, for example, involve parents in sharing stories or experiences, or they could be invited to participate in school celebrations such as the Eid parties.

Whilst the majority of pupils seemed generally satisfied with the way in which racism was handled by the school, most pupils in the BME focus groups felt that improvements could be made, by dealing with racism more seriously. They want to see consistency from all staff in taking racism seriously and dealing with it appropriately, in order to prevent further incidents. They also talked about punishments being given to pupils such as missing breaks and a period or periods of exclusion, depending on the nature of the behaviour. It was also suggested that children should be made to think about what they have done and the impact, rather than simply being told off.

Both BME pupils and White pupils wanted to have more activities or discussions in the school about racism and people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

"We need to learn about Black people and people from Bangladesh. We need more positive images of the countries". (White pupils)

"Pupils need to respect others and respect colour and religion" (BME pupils)

There were also shared opinions amongst pupil groups about the need to have more mixed groups in school activities such as in football, the ethnic makeup of each class and the seating arrangements.

Some work has been done in the school to equip pupils with strategies to deal with racism. Below are some additional suggestions, made by pupils.

- Older pupils could work with younger pupils to challenge racist attitudes or behaviour
- Pupils should be encouraged to provide honest witness accounts to the teacher of how things started and by whom. Concerns were raised in the Bangladeshi heritage boys focus group that:

"We get the blame when white kids hit us – teachers blame Black kids" (BME pupil focus group)

It was also suggested that the following would be helpful in supporting pupils to deal with incidents of racism:

" Teachers should get your friends to stay with you so that you are not on your own. They could get other pupils to be nice to you, to support you."

"English teachers don't believe us. It would help if there were more Bangladeshi heritage teachers as we could tell them what happened."

“It would be better if there were more Bangladeshi heritage teachers as they understand our language.”

5. CONCLUSIONS

Participants across all focus groups were, in the main, quite positive about the school in relation to anti-racism, and Bonner has clearly made significant progress from the 1980s, when it was regarded as a ‘White’ school and reputed to be racist. These changes and improvements have not happened overnight, and are due to the efforts of the head teacher, governors, staff and other members of the school community, who have worked hard to bring about changes to the culture, ethos and practices. Examples of good practice in relation to anti-racism and multiculturalism are highlighted above. They include examples in both the formal and informal curriculum, and in the procedures for dealing with incidents of inappropriate language and behaviour related to racism. The head teacher and staff have made it clear to all pupils that racism will not be tolerated, and it was obvious from discussions with pupil groups that they have received this message.

Both the children and staff felt that all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic background, do equally well in the school. Some teaching staff spoke about achievement having become more balanced and uniform in recent years, with ethnically mixed groups represented in the top, middle and bottom layers of the achievement levels.

Amongst the wider school community, racism is generally considered to be abusive language or behaviour towards another person or group because of their ethnicity, colour, religion, nationality or national origins. It is also considered that BME pupils can be racist to a White person or to each other.

The debate about what constitutes racism is extremely broad and sensitive, and needs to be looked at on different levels. On a societal level, racism is about prejudice and power; it is steeped in colonial history and imperialism, and it operates on an individual, community and institutional/establishment basis. At a more localised level, i.e. the school community, racism may be a perpetuation of societal racism passed on through policies, customs or practice, or it may be through attitudes and beliefs passed on or reinforced by family, community and the media in its various forms.

It is often argued that people from the BME community, who do not hold power in its widest sense in this country, cannot be racist; however, they can hold prejudicial views towards other groups, and they can try to exercise these prejudices if they hold some localised or temporary power. This may result in abusive language or behaviour based on the ethnicity, colour, religion, national origins etc of another person or group. Whilst this does not constitute racism in its true sense, it can be argued that the incident is racially motivated.

One of the ways in which BME people may respond to the racism they receive in society is through ‘reactive racism’. They respond to the abuse and powerlessness of their situation, by ‘acting out’ the racism they received against another person or group. The ‘power,’ which they hold in that situation, is extremely limited and short term, but it may be sufficient to cause extreme damage and harm to others.

All the behaviours described above are unacceptable and need to be stopped, and where appropriate ‘punished’. They are all damaging to the ethos and practice of anti-racism because they breed hostility and distrust. However, the school must not lose sight of the wider societal context of racism, as they have a responsibility to challenge and erase it through their operation and practices, and through the education of both young people and the wider school community.

There does not appear to be much overt racism in the school and that which exists seems to consist mainly of name calling between pupils, with some minor physical attacks. Most of these incidents are reported and those which are reported are generally, with the exception of a few cases, resolved to the satisfaction of the pupils. The way in which teachers are seen to deal with incidents of racism is of vital importance, because it either confirms or brings into question the school’s commitment to anti-racism. It may be exploited by perpetrators of racism, or it may lead to a loss of confidence in the school system by those who are actual or potential victims, as evidenced by some of the comments from pupils in the BME groups.

Comments made by both pupils and staff suggest that less overt racism also exists within the school, and is evidenced in the language and comments made by members of staff. Some of this may be due to ignorance or unintentional racism, but the impact is the same. It appears that most of this is from the non-teaching staff, who are less likely to have access to information or discussions around racism and anti-racism. The lack of understanding and confidence in identifying and dealing with racism and incidents of racism may also result in teachers not addressing issues or dealing with incidents effectively.

Dealing with the attitudes and beliefs of parents/carers, which are alien to the school ethos of anti-racism and equality, is a major challenge to the school. Communicating the school’s ethos and policies to parents may be helpful, but the school needs to look at more innovative ways in which it can help to educate and enlighten parents with limited exposure to the positive aspects of differences in culture, religion, ethnicity etc.

Whilst the school clearly appears to have an anti-racist ethos, and has taken a number of steps towards realising this, the research has highlighted some gaps and areas of weakness. These include the following:

- Very few staff members have had recent or indeed any training in race awareness or anti-racism, and some spoke of their lack of confidence in identifying or dealing with issues of racism. It was suggested that this may sometimes lead to an avoidance of racism, if the staff member is unsure of the motivation or how to deal with the incident.
- A significant number of staff, including teachers, are not aware of the school’s policies and procedures for dealing with incidents of racism.
- There is inconsistency in the way in which individual members of staff deal with racist incidents and this sends conflicting messages to the pupils about the school’s overall commitment.
- There also seems to be some inconsistency in the way individual teachers implement an anti-racist approach into their areas of the curriculum, which needs to be addressed through shared discussions, support and resources.
- There does not appear to be any analysis of data on racist incidents, within the school, which is communicated to staff

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 A Race Equality Policy with clear guidelines would support the above aims and objectives and ensure consistency of understanding and awareness within Bonner’s School Community (which includes all staff/volunteers/pupils/governors/parents/carers/visitors etc.)

In order to ensure that the Race Equality Policy is produced and communicated to all members of the Bonner School Community, we recommend the establishment of a working group, which is chaired by a named co-ordinator, which includes teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and parents/carers, to evaluate the procedures and assist the process and practices. The LEA Guidelines on dealing with racist incidents should be used. Staff from within the Globetown EAZ who have attended the 'Train the Trainers' course should be approached for advice and support.

This Policy should be reviewed annually and the working group should have responsibility for recording, reporting, and reviewing racist incidents. This includes an analysis of the types of incidents and the action taken to deal with each incident.

The implementation of anti-racism procedures and practices will depend to a considerable extent on individuals within the school community cooperating in implementing anti-racism measures introduced by management; therefore, there is a need to impress upon all members of the School Community their responsibility for avoiding acts of racism/discrimination, nor attempting to encourage/induce others to practise racism/discrimination against any racial group/individual

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000- The general duty in the 2000 Act is as follows:-

The Government believes that the promotion of race equality is a positive way of tackling the institutional problems highlighted by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. The 2000 Act (new section 71(1)) inserts new provisions, which reflect that. It requires specified public bodies to have due regard to the need to **eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups** when performing their functions

7.2 The Race Equality Policy should relate to the Policy on Equal Opportunities and Diversity; the concept of 'diversity' embodying the principle of fair treatment for all and social inclusion.

7.3 The school should regularly find out the views and experiences of pupils, parents and staff, in order to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of its policies and practices and how they relate to the school's development plans on raising of achievement.

7.4 EMA should be involved in reviewing and monitoring the achievements of the BME groups to ensure 'fair treatment for all' and use this data to analyse the achievements of all pupils.

7.5 Anti-racism training and ongoing awareness should be provided to all staff and volunteers in the school. This training should be interactive and participative and should draw on the experiences shared by focus group participants. The training and awareness raising should: identify what racism is and where it comes from; look at the different ways in which racism impacts on pupils; discuss the procedures for dealing with incidents, including support and education.

The training, which would help to empower staff to address racism and deal with incidents, should not just be a one-off. It needs to be integrated into the School's Development Plan, with updates every couple of years, and training for all new staff. The school should also look at how it incorporates an anti-racist perspective into all other areas of CPD, Curriculum Development and the School Development Plan.

7.6 Briefings/discussions on progress and issues relating to anti-racism within the school, including an analysis of data on racial incidents, should be provided to all staff on a regular basis, e.g. every six months. These could be incorporated into team or staff meetings, or could be organised as specific anti-racist briefings.

7.7 The school should continue to develop the existing good practice already established by the home-school liaison teacher and could focus on ways to work more closely with parents/carers to inform them of school's policies and procedures, and to help them appreciate and understand the school's anti-racist ethos. The home-school agreements guidance suggests that:

Governing Bodies are encouraged to review their home-school policy with regard to asking parents what they expect from the school and what they think of the school, as well as finding ways of effective working relationships with the 'missing' parents.

7.8 The school should note and act on the suggestion made by BME parents about parent conduct in the playground and school premises, as this could help to break down some of the barriers between parents/carers of different cultural backgrounds which in turn would have a positive impact on pupils.

7.9 Consideration should be given to ways in which the school can work with parents to resolve disputes between pupils.

7.10 The school should work with the LEA School Development Team to provide guidance and resources to teachers on introducing anti-racist perspectives into specific aspects of the formal and informal curriculum, rather than leaving it up to individual teachers. Text, reference, and story books and toys should be reviewed, in order to ensure they have positive images of different ethnic groups. This policy should be reviewed and monitored to ensure consistency across the age groups.

7.11 The school needs to build upon the anti-racism work, which it has already begun with pupils. Work on the historical origins and impact of racism is vital and this could be carried out during Circle Time, discussions, drama workshops and role-play, and revisited in different ways through the key stages. Some pupils said that they found it difficult to discuss racism during Circle Time, so additional ways of reporting racism could be used i.e. box in each classroom and/or in places which were accessible, but not so noticeable that pupils would find it difficult to post their notes.

There is a need to promote positive images of people from different cultural backgrounds and their countries of origin, and this could be achieved through posters and displays in the entrances, halls, classrooms and corridors, and during the Curriculum Co-ordinators' reviews of the School Development Plan.

7.12 Staff should discuss the different seating arrangements, and how and when they arrange pupils into culturally and ethnically mixed activities or project groups, to promote greater interaction and awareness of cultural and ethnic groups (a written document would support consistency of understanding across the school).