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**29 January 2010**

Dear Mr Walker,

**Re: Your request for information: 4517**

Thank you for your request for information received on 18 December 2009 in which you requested:

*Please provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 1) What evidence is there that schools' equal opportunity policies are effective in combating racism?*
- 2) What are schools in your area doing to promote racial equality and promote community cohesion? Examples of measures deemed to be good practice and recognised as being successful would be useful.*
- 3) Can you provide me with any evidence that the measures listed above have been effective (if this has not already been done)?*
- 4) Are further measures required to either maintain trust in the teaching profession or protect children and young people?*

In answer to your questions:

**1.** Schools in Southwark report all racist incidents. I have attached a spreadsheet showing reported racist incidents for 2004 to 2009, which shows a decline over this period. It is of course not possible to determine how much of this was due to Southwark Council's policies and how much to other factors.

**2.** All schools are required to evaluate their performance in the areas of racial equality and social cohesion through their Self Evaluation Form. School Improvement Partners validate these judgements. Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) also scrutinises the evidence given, seeks parental views and issues reports on individual schools. Ofsted reports on schools in Southwark have been very positive on these points. In particular each school is required to report and has been judged on:

The extent to which pupils feel safe

- the extent to which pupils feel safe from different forms of harassment and bullying, including those related to faith, race (including Gypsy / Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage) gender, sexuality or disability
- Whether or not pupils know how to complain and ask for help

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination

- The extent to which the school has regard for the Human Rights Act by promoting respect for human rights through developing understanding about differences and valuing diverse experiences
- the emphasis the school gives to processes and provision to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and ensure that stereotypical views are challenged
- How the school manages incidents and complaints

The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures

- The extent to which the school encourages and enables pupils to report any concerns or complaints including concerns about poor or abusive practices.

The extent to which the school promotes community cohesion

- The extent to which leaders and managers have placed due emphasis on each of the three strands of religion, ethnicity and socio-economic dimension in shaping the school's response to its analysis.

Southwark Council also works with schools to promote social cohesion through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Team. The work of this team is described on the Southwark Council website [here](#).

**3.** In addition to the figures on racist incidents in schools, I am attaching a copy of the Audit Commission's 2009 Area Assessment for Southwark. This rates Southwark as exceptional for social cohesion. Again, it is not possible to determine how much of this was due to the council's policies. However, in March 2009 Southwark Council was awarded beacon status for its community work by the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA).

**4.** This question is requesting an opinion, rather than specific information. It is however Southwark Council's policy that all schools should remain vigilant to ensure incidents of racism are recognised and addressed, as well as having a programme in place to prevent racist incidents in the first place.'

This information is being provided as a statutory obligation under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

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If you have any queries or concerns then please contact us using the above details.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make an appeal for a review of our decision, you should write to the Corporate Freedom of Information Manager at:

Corporate Freedom of Information Manager  
Southwark Council  
160 Tooley Street  
PO BOX 64529  
London  
SE1P 5LX  
Email: [accessinfo@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:accessinfo@southwark.gov.uk)

If you are not content with the outcome of your appeal you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted our internal appeal procedure and you should contact him within 2 months of the outcome of your internal appeal.

Further information on the Freedom of Information Act is available through the Information Commissioner at the:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire.  
SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 01625 545 700  
[Internet: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Sean Harrington  
Information Governance Officer – Children's Services