

Response- RE: FOI/09/1416 - Racism in schools

1. What evidence is there that schools' equal opportunity policies are effective in combating racism?

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 already places a general duty on schools to promote race equality and a specific duty to produce a race equality policy. Two critical issues are the effective engagement of the community in developing the policy and its rigorous implementation and evaluation as part of a school improvement strategy. The new Ofsted Inspection Framework for Schools is supportive of this process through the inclusion of a limiting judgement relating to leadership and management:

'The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination'. Outcomes of school inspections will be an indicator of how effective policies are in combating racism.

In Kent LA our evidence of the effectiveness of schools' policies in promoting race equality includes:

- Our performance against statutory targets to improve outcomes for all Kent pupils, including minority ethnic groups. Overall Kent's minority ethnic groups achieve at least as well as or better than all Kent pupils and we are committed to narrowing the gap in outcomes for some smaller groups including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, children of White Eastern European Background and children new to the United Kingdom. A strand in our strategy is to ensure that schools' policies improve access and outcomes for these groups.
- Statutory reporting of racial incidents.
- Schools engagement in the duty to promote community cohesion and to prepare all pupils to live in a diverse and multi-cultural Britain.

Schools have reported positive impacts of their race equality policies including an increase the reporting and effective recording of racial incidents. This is an indicator of increased confidence in the school community. Our most effective schools have a clear strategy in place to address racism with a goal of reducing the number of incidents. Using first language speaking staff to support student/parent voice has been crucial in trying to resolve incidents many of which are instigated by tensions in the wider community. Schools in areas of demographic change have carefully monitored trends in reporting of racial incidents.

Schools have monitored the effectiveness of their Race Equality Policy through engagement with School Councils and through an annual review of the impact of the policy.

Schools have used Learning Mentors to perform the role of active listeners respond to incidents, worries or concerns of students.

Schools have tracked vulnerable groups and interventions have been put in place to develop their self esteem and confidence to become part of the School Community. Your Choice funding has enabled opportunities such as a Street dance club, boxercise club and residential experiences.

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.

Kent schools are adopting five strategic approaches to promoting race equality:

- **Thematic and project approaches** through national commemorations such as Black History Month, Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month, National Holocaust Day, Anti Bullying Week and cultural and religious celebrations and festivals. Exploration of diversity through music and art provides an additional dimension of partnership with the local voluntary and community sector (Music for Change, World Education Development Group).
- **Embedding race equality within curriculum development.** Examples include 'Knowing you, knowing me' project which provided opportunities for schools with diverse and distinct communities to link through ICT (flash meeting, making the news, blogs) in order to publish and share information about their culture, customs and traditions. The project is supported and celebrated by the South East Grid for Learning.

<http://www.segfl.org.uk/microsites2/kentknowing>
<http://www.kented.org.uk/ngfl/knowningme/index.html>

A further example is schools participation in the June 2009 "Who Do We Think We Are? - A celebration of identity and diversity across the UK".

<http://www.whodowethinkweare.org.uk>

- **Continuous Professional Development** for all school staff. Kent LA delivers professional development focused on dealing with and preventing bullying around race, religion and culture. National Strategies targeted programmes are successful in raising cultural awareness and implementing strategies to raise the achievement of minority ethnic and bilingual learners. Examples include the New Arrivals Excellence Programme and the Gypsy Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme. Kent LA was a national pilot for both the programmes.

http://www.culturaldiversity.org.uk/traveller_education/programme/gypsyromaandtravellerachievementprogramme.asp

- **Consultation and engagement with children and young people.** Kent Safe Schools conducts a survey during national Anti Bullying Week and

an annual survey of children and young people's views. Outcomes of survey inform service evaluation, review and planning.

<http://kenttrustweb.org.uk/CS/community/esafety/archive/2009/11/05/anti-bullying-week-2009-be-safe-in-cyberspace.aspx>

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/publications/council-and-democracy/survey-of-young-people-in-kent-2008.htm>.

- **Analysis of schools' census data and key stage outcomes for children** by ethnic group to inform targeting of resources and strategies to ensure equality of opportunity and narrow the gaps in outcomes.

Examples of published schemes recognised as successful by Kent schools in informing policy and practice are:

- Throwing Stones, a teacher's pack with activities and video produced by Network Educational Press.
- Kick Racism out of Football, a campaign supported by the Professional Footballers Association. www.kickitout.org
- Show Racism the Red Card a campaign against racism in football and society. www.srtrc.org
- Resources and strategies on Teachernet the web based resource for teachers, www.teachernet.org.uk

Schools have had the duty to promote community cohesion since September 2007 and this has been inspected by Ofsted since September 2008. Kent Local Authority has supported schools in implementing the duty and schools have indicated that they have valued this support. Kent Children Families and Education has:

- Briefed head teachers in 2007 in preparation for the new duty.
- Produced guidance for Kent schools explaining the duty, the Ofsted inspection framework and strategies to support implementation.
- Designed and delivered training to schools and the Kent Children's Trust through the 23 Local Children's Service Partnerships.
- Provided training as part of the 2007/8 Kent Children's Trust Development Programme under a theme of 'Building Bridges within the Community'.
- Designed and delivered workshops at the Primary Head teachers' conference focused on sharing effective practice and promoting an understanding of the duty in terms of the leadership of the school.

The most effective examples are where schools have worked in partnership with other schools or with stakeholders in the community:

- Local Children's Service Partnership

Practitioners were reporting numbers of EU Roma children missing education and also a lack of engagement with EU Roma families at parents evenings, school events etc. As a result schools put strategies in place to promote participation by identifying non-threatening opportunities for families to become involved in their children's education. Teaching Assistants have been employed to support learning and home school communication. Bespoke coffee mornings for parents were held where interpreters were available enabling discussions regarding education issues.

Cross-agency practitioners have identified activities to promote community cohesion in particular engaging the Roma. The partnership has recently employed a Roma Bilingual Teaching Assistant to support schools with families. A further planned development is to have a practitioner with specific responsibility to consult with the Roma community on a variety of issues.

In a number of schools parental involvement has increased and language classes have been requested to support participation. A multi-agency forum exists to review and address needs of this group resulting in a reduction in the number of Roma children and young people missing education.

- Supporting Nepalese families in the community

Kent Extended Schools Managers worked in partnership with specialist teachers and schools to establish English as Additional Language classes for Nepalese families. Delivered by tutors from Kent Adult Education classes been located at a number of schools to facilitate the accessibility for as many families as possible. Classes have been particularly successful in engaging Nepalese women who have been disadvantaged by their lack of English. Response has been very positive enabling a full participation within the school community.

Schools have also used a range of strategies to promote community cohesion:

- Focusing on promoting a sense of belonging and a shared vision through the PSHE curriculum.
- Translations of key communications when possible to enable young people accessing events, facilities etc in school.
- Intergenerational activities hosted and led by the school (Tea Dances, Allotment project).
- Strong links to Police and the voluntary and community sector to promote the inclusion of families new to the UK to give them a voice in development of school/community projects and resolve issues.
- Working in partnership with Further Education to develop learning hubs in the community (e.g. support community to develop basic IT skills in

- Specific projects focused on civic participation. (One school has an Ethos Project promoting key values of respect and sharing with a culmination of a parade through the local town in December displaying flags and banners produced by students as part of the Christmas lights celebration.)
- Employing first language speaking workers as part of pastoral and teaching teams and ensuring an understanding of the community through Family Liaison Officers and close links with Children's Centres.
- Working through sport to promote integration. The introduction of table tennis in one school has led to community members being trained as coaches and provided sessions on Saturdays and after schools.
- Promoting understanding of local area through a 'Village Day' where families were invited in to meet local organisations and find out more about the area.
- Whole school development project leading to a book 'before we came to Gravesham' depicting the life histories and cultures of students from various backgrounds.
- Visits to local faith centres and places of worship (Canterbury Cathedral, local mosque and Gurdwara).

3. Can you provide me with any evidence that the measures listed above have been effective (if this has not already been done)?

See above responses

4. Are further measures required to either maintain trust in the teaching profession or protect children and young people?

CFE has identified three key areas which should be focused on in order to protect children and young people from racism:

- Strengthening understanding and application at professional level

This involves looking at the routes through which teachers and Head teachers become qualified and strengthening requirements at training level. KCC believes that current practice does not sufficiently cover equality requirements and how the obligations that rise through legislation impact on teaching profession and practice.

Kent LA would propose that greater attention to and understanding of racism and equality should be explored initial teacher education and the National Professional Qualification for Headship. Structured continuous professional

development should provide opportunities at different points in teachers' careers to revisit these issues and included as part of performance assessment frameworks within schools.

Understanding and the impact of racism should also be applied to all those who work in a school setting. There should be a "levelling up" in the requirement to understand the impact that racism and inequality in general has on individual children and within a community. This levelling up should also be applied to early years settings

A key measure would be to make equality and race an issue of particular focus for school governors in fulfilling effective governance of schools. At present engagement in Governor Development Programmes on this agenda needs to be increased. Governors have a particular responsibility in relation to school policy and the functions of recruitment and selection, performance management of head teachers, admissions and exclusions.

- Culture of open and clear dialogue

Kent LA would propose that the links between race equality to other areas of concern are more clearly sign-posted within government strategy. For example, violent extremism can arise as a result of exclusion or marginalization on the basis of race. Race equality should not be seen separate to the key functions of the local authority and schools in terms of providing access to education and improving outcomes for all children.

- Media Engagement

Kent LA would propose that the negative impact (on children and young people) of media coverage concerning issues of race is fully explored. Capacity should be built within the children's workforce to respond to negative media coverage of race through the curriculum and teaching and learning strategies.

This is also a key aspect of community cohesion and there is also a link to the Equality Framework for Local Government which considers an excellent authority to be one where issues relating to equality are championed at leadership and operational levels.