

Area Five Ethos

This is perhaps one of the most difficult areas to assess – though everyone agrees that they can recognise an ‘ethos’ in the school, positive or negative. Clearly given all the aspects of the school’s work previously described the ethos was likely to be supportive of race equality. A member of the Education for Lifelong Learning team spent time in the school talking to pupils, staff, parents and the head teacher to gather evidence of their views and experiences of the ethos of the school. They had an overwhelmingly positive response.

It is important to stress that ‘gaining the badge’ was not the driving force behind the school’s race equality work. The school has been proactive in its work on race equality because it believes it is essential and necessary. However, when the school achieved the five standards and the award was presented to them by the Director of Education it was clear that the whole school community was proud that their efforts in this area had been recognised.

The following extracts are taken from the Leicester Mercury Dec 24 2002

- “For there to be peace in the nation, there must be peace in the city, and for there to be peace in the city there must be peace between neighbours,” they chant. “For there to be peace between neighbours, there must be peace in our homes, for there to be peace in our homes there must be peace in our hearts.”
- Peace was the theme of the winter assembly that has replaced the Christmas nativity play at Shenton Primary School in Leicester. It reflects all the religions among its pupils. Head teacher Maggie Welton decided last year to combine the separate celebrations it used to hold for Eid, Diwali, Christmas and Vaisakhi into one event where children could share their festivals and religious beliefs with each other. She said: “There was a strong feeling in the school that the festivals are so similar in their beliefs and what they are celebrating that it would be nice to celebrate them all together. It also enabled us to widen out the number of faiths that we were celebrating to reflect the different religions of children in the school, including Buddhism and Judaism. There is an ethos in this school where children respect each other’s religions, but we want to share that with the community as a whole. We feel the performance has done that.”
- As well as a Buddhist scene, there were presentations on Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity – with a traditional nativity tableaux played out by nursery children.
- Muslim dad Rashid Adam of Prospect Hill, Highfield, said: “My youngest daughter Fatima was Mary in the nativity scene. She was very excited about it and asked me to come to see her. It was a lovely performance. It gives me hope that our children are learning about other cultures from such a young age. I think it is the best way forward for a better understanding between people both in Britain and around the world.”

RACIST INCIDENT REPORT FORM

To be completed as soon as possible by member of staff/person observing/reporting incident & handed to designated member of senior management team. (See Guidance on p19).

Date Time Location

Name of person reporting incident

- 1. Type of Incident** (please tick all relevant box(es))
1. Refusal to work/co-operate with peer
 2. Verbal abuse:
 - a) names and comments
 - b) ridicule
 - c) threats
 - d) incitement

3. Written abuse:
 - a) graffiti
 - b) in/on books etc.
 - c) offensive pamphlets/cartoons
4. Physical abuse:
5. Vandalism/abuse of property
6. Organised racist activity:
 - a) badges/insignia
 - b) leaflets & other material
7. Other (please specify)

2. Those involved

Alleged victim/s

Alleged perpetrator/s (if known)

Witnesses (if known)

3. Has a written account of incident been provided?
(please tick) Yes No

Signed (teacher/other adult) Date

RACIST INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM

To be attached to Racist Incident Report Form, completed by designated member of management team within working 3 days of incident, copied to head teacher, recorded on Racist Incident Tally Sheet [to be circulated later] & filed. (See Guidance on p11).

1. Account of incident (if not covered by Report Form)

2. Those involved
Please mark * if incident involves asylum seeker/refugee

Alleged Victim/s	A. Status	B. Ethnicity*	C. Gender
Alleged Perpetrator/s	A. Status	B. Ethnicity*	C. Gender

3. Action taken

Victim/s

Perpetrator/s

Parent/carer/s

Action taken involving other agencies e.g. Education Dept., Police, etc

4. Comment (including incidents considered non-racist – use additional sheets if necessary)

Also recorded on (please tick) Form SO1 Form SO2

Signed Date

Bradford LEA The Schools Linking Project Education Bradford

This article describes a project in Bradford, now in its third year, which is trying to address the needs of the district – explained below – and also a national and international imperative to provide meaningful interaction between pupils of different cultural backgrounds.

The aims of the Schools Linking Project are to establish positive and sustainable relationships between pupils who attend schools in different parts of the district, so that pupils from diverse backgrounds have opportunities to meet and explore their commonalities and differences.

It is hoped that creating such relationships will have a preventative effect on the forming of prejudicial attitudes to people of different ethnic and/or religious backgrounds. These appear to occur where there is little or no contact with people who are different, as attitudes then develop through hearsay and the media, which in the current climate are rarely helpful. Social psychologists have shown that regular and frequent contact between young people is particularly effective in reducing fear of the unknown, which breeds conflict.

Linking schools has the advantage of enabling children to meet and mix in 'normal' circumstances, i.e. doing what they would normally do. Spending a school day together incorporates a range of formal and informal activity, allowing for a broad range of communication skills to be encouraged and developed. This is an important aspect of the work and will impact on achievement as well as social cohesion. Therefore, careful planning and preparation based upon a clear understanding of teaching and learning of communication skills is crucial.

It is hoped therefore, that by addressing the issues of social diversity and cohesion in this way, we will be equipping young people in Bradford to become ambassadors for a more peaceful, productive and cohesive community.

Bradford has a diverse population with approximately 65% primary school pupils being white European, 27.8% Pakistani, 2.4% Bangladeshi, 2% Indian, 1% African Caribbean and 2% other. Demographic trends mean that the different ethnic and socioeconomic groups are fairly static and in terms of schools, this means that many have either almost entirely white or entirely Asian populations. There are a few notable exceptions. This 'ghettoisation' of housing and schools can mean that pupils can spend their entire school life mixing with only one sector of the wider community that makes up the city.

The riots during the summer of 2001 and the events of September 11 threw the city's divisions into sharp focus. There was an imperative to act, while even before these events, the Ouseley report had made strong recommendations for education in the city to try to address the simmering tensions exacerbated by division and virtual 'apartheid' in the schools.

A concurrent and related concern in education is the underachievement and disaffection of certain sectors of the population, particularly Pakistani boys and pupils from poorer English backgrounds. Strong differences start to show at Key stage 2 and 3 between these groups and the population as a whole. Related to this is an increase in emotional and behavioral difficulties experienced by even very young pupils. School staff struggle to manage these difficulties, they often lead to disruption for other pupils and certainly affect staff morale and consequently recruitment and retention.

One of the additional advantages of links between schools with ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse populations is that staff develop new skills by working alongside each other and by working with different pupils. This was something we noticed very early on in the project. This is not always a comfortable experience, but like all real learning, extremely worthwhile.

The major thrust of this project is to promote social cohesion and harmony, to raise achievement of underachieving pupils and to promote the developmental health of the entire Bradford community. Education Bradford, Bradford Vision and Bradford Council believe that we must make a commitment to building a context for honest dialogue in Bradford, in order to develop a truly diverse and cohesive community. Equipping young pupils to engage in this process is crucial.

How the project works

There are five key factors in the organisation and development of the Schools Linking Project:

- Central co-ordination
- Partnership working between teachers and creative sector workers
- Training and support for teachers and schools
- Financial support
- Internal and external evaluation

Central co-ordination is important, particularly in a district as large and diverse as Bradford. It allows for key messages to be disseminated and shared, for a pool of supportive creative workers to be linked to schools and for training and support materials to be developed. Crucially, it also provides a steer and a listening ear when schools need support.

We discovered that the most powerful tool for learning and teaching issues across the curriculum in a culturally diverse and challenging way was to use creativity, so that, for example; drama facilitates work on immigration, art can provide a way of expressing relationships and understanding experiences, dance and other physical activity develop new skills and teamwork. We discovered also that this does not come naturally in all classrooms and that good partnership working requires thought, planning and training.

Training days have been developed incorporating themes such as the use of cultural venues and working collaboratively with a range of different practitioners, as well as addressing organisational and practical issues and issues of race and cultural awareness. Feedback from teachers lead us to believe that this support is essential. Training days also provide important opportunities for the teachers to network and learn from each other. Further training is also offered to whole schools on any issues that participating in the project has raised for them. Close liaison with staff from Museums and Galleries, the Interfaith Education Centre and other members of Education Bradford's Diversity and Cohesion team, Ethnic Minority Achievement Team and Primary Strategy Team is a real bonus.

Financial support for the past three years has been provided by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund via the local strategic partnership Bradford Vision. Funding allows for co-ordination, training (2 days per year per key teacher) and an amount per school towards transport and consultancy. This last amount allows for several meetings of the linked classes during the year (an average of one per half-term) and the collaboration with creative sector workers mentioned above.

Evaluation of the Schools Linking Project is clearly essential. The co-ordinator conducted an in-depth evaluation at the end of the first complete year for the first twenty schools. This report is available on the project website (address below). An updated evaluation for the second year where forty-seven schools were involved, is also available. Currently an external evaluation is being

conducted, so that we will be able to have an objective overview of the successes and lessons of this work by the end of its third year, which will provide guidance for ways of working in the future. Meanwhile we have sixty primary schools busily linking in 2004-5 and several secondary schools becoming involved in a variety of ways.

The following case studies provide a snapshot of the Schools Linking Project. For more details, the website is noted below.

Girlington Primary and Eldwick Primary were the pioneers of the Schools Linking Project in 2001-2 and it is from the model developed organically with them, with drama and art and the use of Cartwright Hall, one of the city's cultural venues at the heart of it, that the project has grown.

Girlington is an inner-city primary, with approximately 98% pupils of Pakistani heritage and many starting school with English as an additional language. The school is a Beacon school for inclusion, is a resourced school for hearing impaired pupils and has an impressive achievement record, particularly in Key Stage 1. It was in the pursuit of continuing this through Key Stage 2 that innovative language work was being explored in 2001 when the project started.

Eldwick is a suburban school, with the majority of its pupils being of white British backgrounds. Also a Beacon school and with consistently high achievement, one of its major strengths is in use of drama across the curriculum. These two schools came together to explore what they had to offer each other, both in terms of learning and teaching communication skills and in terms of building positive and sustainable relationships between their communities, at a time when this seemed both difficult and crucial.

All the adults involved were apprehensive and yet hopeful about this work, but no-one was prepared for how eagerly the children grasped the opportunity and how clearly they expressed their views. Without ever telling them why we were bringing them together to work, after a few meetings they knew and told us that everyone should be doing this, so that 'we wouldn't have riots any more in our city'. These ten-year olds showed us that we had to have the courage of our convictions and through their work were able to express this more clearly than any adult could.

These two schools have gone from strength to strength in their relationship and both schools take it very seriously. Each year one year group is chosen to be involved and all sixty pupils in the year group are included, even if they have additional educational, physical or emotional needs. Activities engaged in and the organisational aspects of the work are described on the website, both in the report of the first year and the school report sections.

ShIPLEY CE, HEATON ROYDS SPECIAL SCHOOL and ASHLANDS PRIMARY are an interesting combination as they are a group of three, rather than a pair. Shipley CE, being on the edge of the city, has a changing population. Now, in the third year of linking, slightly more than half of the Year 3 class involved are Pakistani heritage pupils and the others are white British. Heaton Royds Special School is very close to Shipley CE and has a similar ethnic mix, although the class linking this year is predominantly Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and Ashlands is a semi-rural school with an entirely white British population.

The additional challenges for this link are to ensure that the meetings are well planned to cater for the needs of a group of pupils with very diverse ability, as well as to enable communication

between them. The aim is to explore commonalities and differences in safe, interesting and relevant ways. To this end, meetings over the three years have included trips to sports centres with clearly programmed schedules, an outdoor pursuits centre where team-building was key, drumming and weaving workshops, art and dance workshops as well as shared assemblies. A teacher from Ashlands noted that being invited to share an assembly where Muslim children recited prayers during Ramadan was 'very poignant'.

BRACKENHILL and SHIBDEN HEAD are in their second year and are also very committed to linking as one of a range of strategies in both schools to combat racism and to raise awareness of cultural diversity. Brackenhill is in an area of the city which is unusual in its diversity so the school itself works hard to draw on its own cultural mix in a positive way. Shibden Head is semi-rural, with an all white British population and was very keen to broaden the social experience of its pupils. Both schools are very strong on creativity and have been able to incorporate art and drama into some very powerful and exciting linking work in geography, science, PHSCE and literacy.

Common to all the schools is a clear understanding and commitment from the leadership that community cohesion is not an optional extra, but is fundamental to the education of its pupils and the extended community of the school. Common to all the work is good planning, rooted in the normal curriculum of the year group involved, augmented and enhanced by the creative aspects they are able to include. Common to all the teachers is a belief that this is a valuable and crucial aspect of their work and for many it has given them a renewed sense of purpose. They all give willingly of their time and energy and are rewarded by the heartwarming moments they witness when children who would not normally have occasion to meet, are sitting chatting side by side while completing a task and when they often comment how happy they are to make new friends and to discover that children who they expected to be so different are not so different after all.

We do not claim that this project has all the answers to the many challenges that we face in terms of community cohesion in Bradford. However, we can say that we have a model that seems to work in terms of starting a process which gives confidence to schools that to try to bring children together to learn must be better than not doing so.

For more information about the Schools Linking Project please see: www.schoolslinkingproject.com

Some useful publications related to this work:

Bradford, Cork, Odense, Rotterdam, Turin Members of the DIECEC Network of European Cities, *Shared stories, shared values: Approaches through Drama*. DIECEC, 2000.

Hill, L.D., *Connecting Kids: Exploring Diversity together*. New Society Publishers, 2001.
Kindersley, B. and A., *Children just like me. A unique celebration of children around the world*. Dorling Kindersley, 1995.

Richardson, R., and B. Miles, *Equality Stories: recognition, respect and raising achievement*. Trentham Books Ltd, 2003.

Richardson, R., *Here, there and everywhere: belonging, identity and equality in schools*. Trentham Books Ltd, 2004.

Smith, D.J. and S. Armstrong, *If the World Were a Village*. A & C Black Publishers Ltd, 2002.

The Multilingual Resources for Children Project, *Building bridges: multicultural resources for children*. Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1995.

In addition:

QCA guidance on cross-curricular links.

Angie Kotler
Schools Linking Project Co-ordinator
Education Bradford
Angie.kotler@educationbradford.com