

Cambridgeshire Race Equality & Diversity Service



Race Equality & Diversity in Cambridgeshire - pack for schools

Race Equality and Cultural Diversity in Cambridgeshire

Aims of the Pack

- To help schools implement their race equality policies appropriately.
- To provide a framework within which schools can develop and mainstream race equality initiatives so that they are embedded in practice and are linked with all other aspects of educational inclusion.
- A self-evaluation tool to support schools in assessing and monitoring the impact of their policies, including the race equality policy, and practice, on different groups and individuals in the school.

Context

- The pack brings together a number of Cambridgeshire documents and guidelines on race equality and cultural diversity issues.
- It is available online and each school in the county can also request a hard copy.

Format

- The pack can be used sequentially or to focus on particular areas (useful when schools have done an audit or an Ofsted inspection has identified particular areas for development, e.g. diversity in the curriculum, working with the local community).
- It can be used as a reference document, e.g. for resources, contacts, equality legislation.
- It complements and can be cross-referenced with Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) documents – *The Race Relations Amendment Act Code of Practice* and *Learning for All: Standards for Racial Equality in schools*.

Target Audience

- School training and reference pack for use with all members of staff and governors
- Can also be used with pupils, parents/carers, community organisations as appropriate

For further information see the CREDS website:

<http://edweb.camcnty.gov.uk/serv/default.asp?target=education/services/mes/index.htm&menu=1>

norma.wildman@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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- The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report
- Curriculum 2000
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Introduction

This pack is designed to help schools assess, monitor and develop your policy, procedures and practice in terms of promoting race equality and cultural diversity.

It takes schools systematically through your policies, so that you can examine them for equality and respect for difference. It gives examples of good practice in procedures, includes awareness-raising professional development activities and provides a curriculum audit for self-evaluation and future planning. It includes mechanisms for communicating and consulting with your whole school community and a resource section, including teaching materials and websites which can be used by staff and pupils.

What do we mean by race equality and cultural diversity?

Young people's attitudes and sense of personal and collective identity are greatly influenced by their education. While much of this education takes place outside formal schooling, there is still a vital role for educators in developing young people's critical thinking skills, as the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report identified. This should include fostering positive attitudes to diversity and giving young people the skills to identify, challenge and tackle all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

The focus of the duties for schools in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act is race equality. The 1976 Act defines a 'racial group' by race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origin. However, an essential feature of any work on race should be the consideration of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, as recommended in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report and by the Parekh Report. While references to cultural, linguistic and religious diversity are not statutory requirements, diversity needs consideration in working for equality in education so that we can ensure our policies, procedures and practices are truly inclusive. Legislation and educational initiatives now talk about 'race equality', and while 'anti-racist education' is reminiscent of a political agenda of the 1980s, anti-racist education in the 21st century, as defined below, is about good education for all, and should be what all schools are aiming for in your strategies to promote race equality:

"Anti-racism in education is about ensuring that all students have access to an inclusive curriculum and that no-one is mis-educated into believing in their own superiority. It is about ensuring that all students are educated to respect and protect the equal human rights of others in school and in the wider community."

(Audrey Osler, Director of the Centre for Citizenship Studies in Education at the University of Leicester, *Multicultural Teaching 2000*)

Successful anti-racist practice depends on a school ethos which engenders a sense of belonging in all its members and a shared understanding of what you are trying to achieve. It is important that everyone feels valued and cared-for in school. For example, while research shows that some groups (such as Travellers or African Caribbean people), are more likely to suffer racism, the school community should know that your policy for dealing with racist incidents is there to protect everyone, not just your minority ethnic population.

If your school is largely 'all-white', it is important to highlight to pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors, the need to equip pupils with the necessary skills to become active and responsible citizens in a multi-ethnic society. When you examine issues of cultural diversity in the curriculum, make the diversity that is within the class or school your starting point. Highlight similarities as well as differences, so that 'different' is not regarded as exotic.

To promote race equality, value cultural diversity and counter racism successfully, your whole school community needs to learn about their rights and responsibilities for life in a multi-ethnic society. They need the knowledge and skills to appreciate differences, including those of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, culture, language and religion, to challenge prejudice and injustice and to resolve conflict. All your policies and practices should aim to promote racial equality and harmony, and this aim should be embedded in the curriculum and shared by all members of the school. Race equality measures are more likely to be successful in the long term if they are part of an integrated and systematic programme to redress and reduce all forms of inequality. The Burnage Report, *Murder in the Playground*, made this point in its criticism of school policies:

'The fundamental error of these...policies is that they assume that a complicated set of human relations, made up of many strands, including class, gender, age, size and race, can be slotted into a simple white versus black pigeon hole. This simple model assumes that there is uniform access to power by all whites, and a uniform denial of access and power to all blacks.'

It is vital, therefore, to ensure that all groups and individuals who make up your school community are engaged with your ethos, policy and practice so that they share a sense of collective identity and feel they receive fair and equal treatment as individuals and as members of a group.

Concepts and terminology

Many of the terms relating to the subject of race equality are interpreted in different ways by different people. Moreover, terminology changes in meaning and usage within a short space of time and depending on who uses it. The notes which follow indicate how these terms are used in this pack and give some 'official' definitions which are recommended by bodies who specialise in issues of race equality and cultural diversity, such as the Commission for Racial Equality and the Runnymede Trust.

Black: In current British usage this term refers to people with origins in Africa or the Caribbean. In order to emphasise the fact that it is not strictly a descriptive term but rather a matter of social identity, the word is often written with a capital letter (as with 'Traveller'). The expressions 'non-white', 'coloured' and half-caste' are outdated and generally found offensive, since they represent an aspect of white ethnocentrism. First 'mixed race' and more recently 'dual heritage' have replaced the term 'half-caste'.

Cultural Diversity: For the purposes of this pack, the term 'cultural diversity' is used to refer to racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or national diversity. It is important to note that individuals fall into different groupings, and therefore take part in a range of different cultures. Because of this, most cultures are in a constant state of development and change and are affected by other cultures. There are often conflicts of interests and difference in power and status between groupings, and therefore between different cultures. The term 'cultural diversity' refers to the positive value of understanding and sharing between different cultures.

When we talk about 'culture' it is often useful to identify its wider meaning. As outlined above, a person may belong to a number of different 'cultural' groups, for example one person may be a boy, a teenager, a son, a brother, a boyfriend, heterosexual, a school pupil, a refugee from Iran, British, Muslim, a Farsi-speaker, an Arsenal supporter, a Londoner etc. This may be particularly helpful when looking at issues of cultural diversity in a seemingly 'monocultural' school.

Discrimination: Acting on a prejudice, resulting in the unfair treatment of an individual or group of people. The Race Relations Act 1976 states that 'a person discriminates against another...if...on racial grounds he treats that other less favourably than he treats or would treat other persons.' Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because they are, or are perceived to be, a member of a particular ethnic or 'racial' group. The CRE exemplifies indirect discrimination (which is also unlawful), as follows: '...when a condition or requirement is applied to everyone but is such that a smaller proportion of a particular racial group can comply with it than others; it constitutes a detriment to those who cannot comply; it cannot be justified.'

Equality: In this pack, the concept of equality assumes that all people are of equal value and should receive equal opportunities, access and treatment. Any inequalities should be actively challenged and every effort made to remove unjustifiable obstacles to equal opportunities. It is important to note that 'equal treatment' does not mean 'the same treatment'. It means, rather, that we treat groups and individuals in such a way that their needs are met so that there is greater opportunity for equality of outcome, and no group or individual is disadvantaged.

Ethnicity/ethnic origin/ethnic group: An ethnic group is one whose members have a long shared sense of history, a cultural tradition of its own, including family and social customs, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance, and a sense of collective identity which may derive from a common geographical origin and a common language. All human beings belong to an ethnic group. In popular usage, however, the term 'ethnic' often implies not-Western (as in 'ethnic food'), not-classical ('ethnic music'), not-white or not-British ('ethnic communities'). The word is not used in this sense in this pack.

Nationality: Not to be confused with ethnicity, a person's nationality depends upon which country or countries they have the right to reside in. Therefore, a person's ethnic origin may be different from their nationality, eg. a British (nationality) Indian (ethnic origin or group).

Prejudice: Prejudging (usually in a derogatory way) an individual or group of people without knowing them or without enough evidence to make a valid judgement.

Race Equality: This term came into use in many organizations in the 1980s, to make a distinction with other aspects or forms of equality such as gender equality. It was, and still is, used to refer to initiatives designed to combat racial discrimination and prejudice.

'Race' and 'racial': These words are still widely used, for example 'race relations' and 'racial equality', despite being left over from a historical belief that humans could be hierarchically categorised into distinct 'racial groups' on the basis of their appearance, and that each so-called 'race' had distinctive cultural and intellectual capabilities. It is now generally accepted that there is no *biological* substance to the notion of 'race', but it is a category which continues to be *ascribed* to a group of people, eg. 'the Black race'. Social scientists therefore tend to use the term in quotation marks, to indicate its status as a *social* construct.

Racial harassment: Verbal or physical violence which includes attacks on property as well as on the person, which is suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, race, nationality and ethnic or national origins, and where the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and/or there is evidence of racism.

Racism: Racism involves making generalisations about the characteristics of people whose appearance or culture is different from one's own, and using such stereotypes to justify their exclusion from resources, opportunities and power. This exclusion leads to racial deprivation, which in turn, is likely to lead to further prejudice and discrimination.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report defines racism as: 'conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form, it is as damaging as in its more overt form.'

This definition is consistent with the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Using this definition, all people may be victims of racism, but some groups of people (for example Black people, Asians, Gypsies and asylum seekers) are much more likely to suffer racism. Racism is sometimes used to refer to the power relationship between White and Black people. The basis of this viewpoint is that most of the social, economic and political decisions are made by White people and that these decisions may systematically disadvantage Black people. "Black" is used politically in this context to unite people who are not white or who are likely to be subjected to racism (for example Jewish people).

Institutional racism consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

Personal racism is exemplified in its overt form ('street racism'), in name-calling, abuse, harassment and violence. Covert personal racism can be more insidious and more difficult to tackle and is manifested for example, in people's patronising attitudes, stereotypical expectations and exclusive behaviour.

Racist incident: Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

It is worth noting that a racist incident does not necessarily have a victim – it could consist of a general comment or gesture.

Stereotype: An over-simplified generalisation about the characteristics of a particular group, which usually has derogatory implications.

Sources: The Commission for Racial Equality
The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report
The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain (the Parekh Report)
Equality Assurance in Schools (The Runnymede Trust)

The Open University