Educating for Anti-Racism

INTRODUCTION

In March 1994 the General Teaching Council for Scotland approved a policy paper from its Education Committee on Multi-Cultural/Anti-Racist Education (MCARE). The paper was the work of an Education Sub-Committee which also included co-opted members of the black community. As part of its practices and procedures the Council reviews, evaluates and monitors publications on a regular basis. As a result, and following consultation with members of the original Sub-Committee and other key organisations and individuals, this booklet was revised in November 2000.

This booklet suggests ways in which individual teachers, schools, further and higher education institutions and employing authorities can evolve and refine their own policies and practices. The GTC for Scotland recognises that practical policies and guidelines have been produced in this area by a variety of groups including teachers' professional organisations and local authorities. Council policy, and this booklet, are designed to complement such existing documents. The critical importance of the MacPherson Report (*The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, (1999) The Stationery Office) in relation to examination and development of policies and practices must be unequivocally accepted.

The revision of this booklet coincides with the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights through the Human Rights Act 1998. This legislation has many implications for education.

THE RATIONALE

Anti-racist education is education for all in preparation for a diverse society where all members are empowered. It is an educational approach that seeks to address explicitly the existence of racism by raising such issues within the curriculum and in management and organisational procedures. It seeks to combat institutional racism which the MacPherson Report (1999) defines as:

'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

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> *prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.' (6.34)*

Multicultural education is an educational approach which positively seeks to acknowledge diversity in culture, creed, language and ethnicity through inclusion of this diversity in school ethos, curriculum and home-school-community partnerships.

The Council believes that **both** approaches must be adopted if racism in all its forms, personal, cultural and institutional, is to be challenged. Schools that avoid an explicit anti-racist approach run the risk of engaging with racism. The aim for all schools in Scotland must be to educate for the creation of a multi-racial and interdependent society in which all citizens' rights are respected and protected.

In this booklet the General Teaching Council for Scotland has highlighted seven key areas for consideration by schools, employing authorities and teacher education institutions.

1   School Ethos and Teacher Attitude

    (a)   It is essential that everyone within the school community acknowledges the existence of racism in society and that all young people are affected by it. It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, and in particular teachers, to oppose racism wherever they see it. The wholly incorrect assumption in some communities that they need not concern themselves with anti-racism because they do not have any, or many, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds must be rejected. Since racist attitudes and behaviour can be acquired at a very early age the importance of anti-racism in nursery and primary education is as great as in the secondary sector.

    (b)   All aspects of a school's practice should be scrutinised to ascertain to what extent negative perceptions of black and minority ethnic people, including groups such as gypsy/occupational travellers and refugees, are being perpetuated. It should also be recognised that racist attitudes can reach young people through what they hear, see and absorb from family, peer-group cultures

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and some elements of the media. Since racism can exist within and between all communities, anti-racist strategies must therefore be integral to the whole educational process.

(c)   All school staff have a responsibility to create an ethos of achievement and to convey high expectations of all pupils. Within this supportive but challenging ethos, it is particularly important that teachers ensure that bilingual and/or minority ethnic pupils are equally aware of these high expectations.

(d)   Racism, including the institutional practices which allow it, must not remain as a hidden issue. There should be clear strategies known to all on tackling racist incidents, including the use of abusive language and harassment. The strategies must be unequivocal about the seriousness with which such incidents will be regarded. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, commonly known as the Macpherson Report, (The Stationery Office, February 1999) defines a racist incident as *"… any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person"*, and stresses the need for such incidents to be reported, recorded and investigated with rigour, commitment and transparency. Procedures should be known by all staff and be administered by senior management.

(e)   Young people need to be empowered to raise their complaints in the knowledge that the complaint will be effectively dealt with. It therefore follows that teachers must be aware of appropriate strategies for handling such incidents effectively.

(f)   Schools must use both anti-racist and multi-cultural approaches, and must be aware that to avoid an explicit anti-racist approach is to risk engaging with institutional racism.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Does your school have a clear Anti-Racism policy known to all?
- Does it place particular emphasis on eradicating racism and racist attitudes?

- Does it indicate clearly how racist incidents will be tackled and provide a mechanism which allows pupils to come forward and discuss such incidents in confidence?

- Is there a framework for reporting, logging and monitoring racist incidents?

- Has a senior member of staff been designated, and trained, as a co-ordinator of anti-racist/multi-cultural education and is this function regularly carried out within the school?

- Has there been any harassment or marginalisation of staff with responsibility for anti-racist policy/education?

- Does your school have procedures in place for dealing with racism experienced by any member of staff?

- Does the school development plan include annual equality audits to ensure that both multi-cultural and anti-racist educational approaches are being implemented within the school curriculum, policies and procedures?

- Does your school promote positive images of, and responses to, all cultures and communities in our diverse society?

2   The Curriculum

(a)   Schools must provide a curriculum which prepares young people for full participation in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual world. There is a real need for schools to take active steps to include in all areas and in all subjects of the curriculum the history, experience and achievement of black and minority ethnic people and their positive contribution to our own and global society.

(b)   Once teachers themselves are more aware of the historical, legislative and cultural framework in which anti-racist strategies can be developed, they will be in the position to review all aspects of the curriculum in order to eliminate areas of racial bias. They will look for and challenge negative and patronising images, stereotypes and myths in texts and illustrations.

(c)   All aspects of the curriculum – formal, informal and hidden – must aim to create an understanding of, and interest in, different world societies and to encourage

pupils to celebrate the diversity of different beliefs, traditions and living patterns. The curriculum must also develop in pupils the knowledge and skills to allow them to criticise and actively participate in all aspects of society.

(d)   To achieve the above aims, opportunities should be taken to study the political, social and economic reasons for the existence of racism and inequality and also scientific, technical, musical, artistic and literary achievements outside the western world.

(e)   Assessment procedures should not disadvantage bilingual pupils.   Many procedures and tests are inappropriate and biased when used with culturally and linguistically different individuals.   Assessment should be based on different kinds of evidence and judgements should be tested in different contexts. It is particularly important that teachers distinguish between issues of lack of English language acquisition and those of learning where there is concern about a pupil's educational progress.

(f)   The Council believes that while opportunities exist in many curricular areas to support anti-racism, permeation as a sole strategy is not enough.   Schools should therefore consider the need for specific curricular inputs.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Do you review and monitor your teaching to ensure an effective anti-racist curriculum?
- Have you selected appropriate teaching and learning methods for promoting equality and combating racism?
- Have stereotyped assumptions been identified and addressed in the curriculum and assessment procedures?
- Does your school language policy include clear references and guidance in relation to the language progress of pupils for whom English is an additional or other language?
- Is assessment of bilingual pupils appropriate, fair and accurate?
- Are opportunities created for the inclusion of anti-racist issues in personal and social education, environmental studies and other subjects?

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3   Bilingualism/Multilingualism and English as an Additional Language

From a global perspective bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm. Scotland is increasingly a multilingual and multi-cultural society and linguistic diversity the norm in many classrooms.

The term bilingualism is a simple term that hides a complex phenomenon. Here it is used to refer to pupils who have access to more than one language on a continuum from a receptive understanding to a high level of fluency and literacy in several languages.

The term English as an Additional Language is used in this booklet as an acknowledgement that English may well be the second or third language for pupils.

(a)   Bilingualism/multilingualism should be acknowledged as being linked with cognitive development and high achievement. It is therefore vital that schools have procedures for identifying and recording the linguistic background and skills of pupils. In this respect contacts with the pupil's family and community should be developed. This is particularly important when it is suspected that an individual pupil's difficulties in accessing the curriculum may have their roots in a special educational need.

(b)   Bilingual children have the right to receive the same intellectual challenge as their peers. The status in the school of Community Languages should be used both to enhance the image of bilingual pupils and to broaden the horizons of monolingual pupils.

(c)   It is imperative that the first language is both maintained and developed not only to improve individual self-esteem, but also to ensure the following cognitive benefits:

  • the enhancement of general conceptual development;

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- the benefits to second and subsequent language learning; and

- the possibility of enhanced academic development as the child moves from using the first language alone to using the first and second languages as a medium of thinking and learning.

(d)   Parents should be given clear advice in relation to current research findings on the positive benefits of bilingualism for educational achievement.

(e)   Where they exist, permanent EAL staff should be deployed to teach co-operatively across the curriculum both for the benefit of bilingual children and to foster a heightened awareness of the value of bilingualism among all pupils and staff.   They and other specialists such as community languages teachers should be included in whole-school initiatives so that their special expertise can be used in the context both of the curriculum in general and of the special needs of bilingual pupils.

(f)   Care should be taken to avoid assuming that the needs of bilingual children are purely linguistic. Teachers should try to inform themselves about the linguistic and cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, dietary habits etc of bilingual children and should guard against inferring cultural features from pupils' names. An understanding of these issues will positively promote achievement and attainment across pre-school, 5-14 and post-14 curriculum.

(g)   Teacher education institutions, in preparing students for work in a multi-racial society, should sensitise them to these points relating to bilingualism. Universities and colleges as well as local authorities should make every effort to recruit more black and minority ethnic bilingual lecturers and teachers in order to reflect more accurately the reality of Scottish society.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Is information concerning pupils' language background identified, recorded and disseminated?

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- Are ability groups based on fair assessment of intellectual ability?

- To what extent are these judgements based on attainment in English language?

- Are EAL teachers and bilingual support staff deployed to enable collaboration and co-operation with class/subject teachers across the curriculum?

- Are bilingualism and biculturalism presented as having positive advantages for both the individual and the school?

- Is the expertise of the EAL specialist utilised in all areas of the curriculum?

- Does the language policy recognise and promote the cognitive and academic benefits of bilingualism?

4   Partnership with Parents and Community

The document *Targeting Excellence: Modernising Scotland's Schools* 1999 states clearly that:

> *'Parents are children's primary educators and their encouragement and support of children's learning is vital. Children learn more effectively and quickly if their parents are supportive, and parents and schools are in touch with each other about children's progress.'*

(a)   It is particularly desirable that parents should be involved in the development of policies and practice in key areas and it is therefore important that teachers are aware of the many barriers – not all of them linguistic – which may impede effective collaboration.

(b)   Languages other than English which are used in the pupils' homes should be used in displays and notices within the school. Illustrations and images should reflect a positive anti-racist ethos.

(c)   Arrangements appropriate to the needs of parents should be made so that they can discuss their children's education and careers effectively. This may mean the translation of material into Community Languages and the provision of interpreting services where needed. Schools should use qualified and trained interpreters and not rely on bilingual children or community members to carry out interpreting services. Education authorities should co-ordinate and monitor availability and access to interpreting and translation services for parents in order that they may participate fully in the education of their children.

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(d) Schools should encourage the developing of links with local organisations which represent the interests of a range of ethnic and cultural groups. For example, partnerships could be developed with parents whose first language is not English, local black and minority ethnic community groups and local racial equality councils.

(e) Schools should promote the involvement of black and minority ethnic parents and members of the community in the day-to-day activities of the school. Such an approach will benefit the pupils in the school, no matter what their cultural or linguistic background.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Are strategies in place in the school to ensure that all parents, regardless of linguistic, cultural or social background, are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school?
- Do the school's practices and policies demonstrate clearly that it values all its pupils and acknowledges their home culture?
- Does the image projected by the school appropriately reflect the cultural diversity of Scottish society?
- Do staff know how to access local interpreting and translation services?
- Are parents informed of the availability of interpreting and translation services?

5   The Role of Guidance

(a) While anti-racism is a whole-school responsibility, there are four areas which might be seen to have particular relevance for guidance teachers in secondary schools and those with similar responsibilities in other sectors: primary/secondary liaison; pastoral care; personal and social development and careers guidance.

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(b) All staff who have key responsibilities for the general well-being of pupils should be competent to deal with racial equality matters. Guidance staff in secondary schools are likely to be at the forefront of such work. It is therefore vital that such staff are properly trained to ensure that their practice is both ethnically sensitive and anti-racist.

(c) The transition between primary and secondary education is frequently worrying for children and may be all the more so where pupils do not fit the perceived cultural, racial and religious norms. Effective liaison between both schools and the home will help to forge links which can be maintained throughout a pupil's career.

(d) Anti-racist provision in the context of pastoral care should encompass and go beyond the support and counselling of those pupils who experience racism. It should involve using pastoral care provision for all pupils to counter ignorance and racist attitudes. Pupils should be given assurance that should they encounter discrimination or harassment of any type (including racial harassment) the guidance unit (secondary) or class teacher (primary) will act as a source of support.

(e) Personal and Social Development/Education is an integral part of curricular provision in all schools. It offers considerable scope for the incorporation of anti-racist concepts and materials and a means by which pupils might consider questions of social importance outwith the classroom. This might include issues such as discrimination in employment, higher education, housing, health, sport and other areas of life.

(f) In careers guidance, schools should ensure that all necessary measures are taken to counteract stereotypes and self-stereotyping by ethnic origin. Advice and guidance to both parents and pupils must emphasise that all options for future study or employment are open to all children. However schools should also prepare all pupils for the reality of the racist attitudes they may meet in the world beyond the school and offer strategies for resisting it.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Is the consideration of racism an integral part of Personal and Social Development/Education?

- Are all relevant staff including guidance staff aware of, and supported in, the role they may play in promoting cross-curricular understanding and countering individual racist incidents?

- Does the guidance system give explicit support to **all** pupils and their parents, especially at the transition from primary to secondary?

- Is careers advice sensitive to stereotyping and self-stereotyping and the need to prepare pupils to overcome the difficulties they may encounter in the world of work?

6   Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development

(a)   The Council believes that anti-racism should be included in all programmes of initial teacher education and that all institutions should have in place monitoring systems to ensure that coverage is effective. With a greater proportion of initial teacher education now taking place in schools, it is important to ensure in programme design and implementation that anti-racism is adequately addressed. A specific input or course, in addition to the permeative approach, should be in place and students should be expected to incorporate anti-racist principles in their teaching.

(b)   At both the initial teacher education stage and through continuing professional development, planned opportunities should be provided for teachers to examine and develop an understanding of the value of bilingualism. Equally, classroom strategies for supporting bilingual pupils in their first and additional languages should feature in programmes.

(c)   Anti-racism is neither about addressing a problem nor is it of relevance only to schools in areas where there is a large black population. Opportunities for continuing professional development in this area must therefore be for all teachers.   As self-monitoring professionals, teachers should be given the opportunity to examine their professional activities from an anti-racist perspective.   Curriculum content, classroom organisation, assessment procedures and discipline can all be considered within the context of an established policy and set procedures.

(d)   Effective staff development depends on trained personnel at both local authority and school level.   In the training process use should be made of acknowledged expertise within the education system.   Designating particular members of staff within schools to promote and monitor policy development is desirable but the ultimate aim must be to ensure that **all** staff are involved in the process.   School Boards and parents should be part of the decision-making process and should be kept informed as to progress.

(e)   The main purpose of all staff development activities with a direct or indirect anti-racist focus should be to effect tangible change in terms of attitudes, practices and outcomes: they should aim to identify **which** changes are required and **how** they might be effected.   Furthermore, in all in-service activities – whether explicitly concerned with discrimination or not – there should be an equality dimension.   In this way the positive commitment of schools to justice and equity for all will be clearly demonstrated.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Does the teacher education institution audit initial teacher education and CPD programmes to ensure anti-racist, multicultural and bilingualism issues are addressed?
- Has a senior member of staff been designated and trained as a co-ordinator of anti-racist/multi-cultural education and is this function regularly carried out within the establishment?
- Does your staff development programme provide the opportunity for all staff to become involved in developing anti-racist strategies?

- Are all school staff trained in reporting and dealing with racist incidents?

- Are parents in general and the School Board fully informed of staff development activities in this area?

- Is the equality dimension a recognised aspect of **all** staff development activities?

- Are appropriate arrangements made to ensure that students on school placement are made aware of anti-racist/multi-cultural issues and of school and local authority policies?

7   Leadership and Management

(a)   School management teams should ensure whole school approaches to equality policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. This should include monitoring of enrolment, attainment, attendance and exclusions.

(b)   Local authorities, and school management where appropriate, should ensure that EAL staff play a key role, working with school managers and other staff in effecting change at school level and beyond.

(c)   Local authorities, and school management where appropriate, should ensure that racial equality standards apply to all school business eg recruitment and selection of staff/school board members, purchase of resources and the provision of services to the school.

(d)   Local authorities, and school management where appropriate, should actively seek to encourage applications from minority ethnic and bilingual candidates for all posts.

(e)   All other bodies which exercise a leadership role in Scottish education should consider the implications of this policy for their own organisation and practices. The General Teaching Council for Scotland recognises its own responsibilities in this regard.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Are all school evaluations eg target setting, discipline and exclusions monitored within the context of the Anti-Racist policy?

- Are procedures in place which encourage applications from minority ethnic and bilingual candidates?

Useful References

This booklet, together with a list of useful references can be found on the GTC website at www.gtcs.org.uk/…… This list will be updated regularly. If you have suggestions for additional publications/other sources of information please e-mail moiras@gtcs.org.uk

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